

Desolate 1371

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 2: The Crazy Paragon of Pills

“The legends say that the Sithelands is the most dangerous place in the Chaosverse,” Lord Annihilation said. “It can threaten even the Autarchs! But it truly is filled with the most treasures as well.”

“There are some who are very stubborn and are willing to place themselves at high risk by repeatedly venturing into the Sithelands for the sake of their goals. Those people are absolutely mad, but they are often quite deadly. So long as they survive, their repeated journeys will usually result in them possessing several Sithe weapons.” Lord Annihilation said helplessly, “The Paragon of Pills is one such madwoman. She’s quite famous, and she has multiple Sithe weapons. Even I am merely on par with her in power! I would only have an advantage if we actually fought inside my otherverse.”

Ji Ning fell silent. For the sake of her goals, she was willing to repeatedly brave danger and tread the line between life and death. Suddenly, the image of a woman clad in black gauze appeared within Ning’s mind. This was a woman who was forever cold and distant.

Although they hadn’t known each other for too long, this woman had treated him as family and had asked him to address her as ‘Mistress’, with the Sword Hegemon being Ning’s ‘Master’. Ning still clearly remembered the final words the Paragon of Pills had said to him when they parted:

“You must be very careful on your path of cultivation. If you encounter any serious issues, you can use my name to warn those who would harm you. It might be of some use.”

“You can use my name to warn those who would harm you,” Ning murmured softly. In the past, he hadn’t really taken this to heart... but now, it seemed, she was known as a ‘madwoman’ who had so many Sithe treasures, even Hegemons would feel a hint of trepidation. She was also quite well-known, given how many trips she had made to the Sithelands. That meant that her name would indeed be quite useful as a protective talisman.

“Where is she now?” Ning asked.

“In the Sithelands,” Lord Annihilation said hurriedly. “My true body is there as well! Although I am an Otherverse Lord, I wasn’t a Hegemon prior to taking control over the otherverse and so am weaker than the Otherverse Lords in terms of my insights into the Dao. I’m supported by the power of my otherverse, but in terms of raw power I’m somewhere between a Hegemon and an ordinary Otherverse Lord.”

“Thus, I sometimes find it difficult to slay powerful Hegemons. Brother Brightshore is a good example; it’d be very hard for me to kill him,” Lord Annihilation said. “That’s why many major powers seek to kill me and then take my otherverse, which makes life quite miserable. I spend most of my time hiding inside of my otherverse.

“This time, the Paragon of Pills found a truly remarkable place which she felt certain was a Sithe treasury, but it was also a place of incredible danger. She sent out invitations for people to join her. I thought to myself, ‘Weak Sithe weapons are useless to you. If you are going to take a risk, go all out and

take a big one!' The Paragon of Pills has visited the Sithelands many times and is experienced in navigating it, and so I decided to take part in this trip."

"Myself, the Paragon of Pills, and two others headed off on this journey together. One of the two is just as crazy as the Paragon of Pills is. As it turned out, the Paragon's predictions were correct; she truly did find an enormous Sith treasure, but it was filled with many dangers," Lord Annihilation said. "In the end, we were defeated and one of us died, leaving just three of us alive; myself, the Paragon, and that other madman. However, all three of us ended up being separated."

"To be honest, when we headed in we already knew of your illustrious fame. Back then, many of us were actually commenting that the Paragon now stood a very good chance of achieving her goals. If she asked you to help out, she'd probably be able to revive her three brothers.

"However, she refused to send you a message, even after we fell into grave danger. She said that the treasure was far too dangerous, and she knew that if you found out you would probably go there to rescue her... but the end result might be that you yourself would also be trapped." Lord Annihilation continued, "Now, all three of us have been split apart. All of us are in mortal danger... and so I can no longer afford to respect her decision not to contact you. That's why I have come to ask you to help out, Darknorth."

Ning nodded somberly. The Sithelands was indeed extremely dangerous! Even the Autarchs had merely sealed it away, not daring to trespass too deeply within it. If they did, even they would be at risk of perishing.

Even the outer perimeter held a number of extremely dangerous areas which had simply been sealed off rather than penetrated and destroyed. Thus, even if Lord Annihilation was to ask an Autarch for help, the Autarch would probably be unwilling to assist. There were some unexplored places which even the Autarchs were unfamiliar with; it just wouldn't be worth it for them to risk themselves like that.

"Wait. You came here to ask Darknorth to go into the Sithelands to rescue you?" Hegemon Brightshore glared at him, hard. "Annihilation, that's not what you told me earlier."

"I was afraid that if I told you too much, you wouldn't help me." Lord Annihilation hurriedly apologized, "Brightshore, I'm sorry about this."

"You son of a..." Hegemon Brightshore was absolutely livid. "The Paragon of Pills is crazy, and you yourself said the third person is also a madman. I don't really approve of their behavior in general, but I have to admit that all of them are extremely well-versed in the dangers of the Sithelands. If both of them are trapped with no way out, then the area you were in was definitely an incredibly dangerous one."

"Yes." Lord Annihilation nodded shamefacedly. It was indeed incredibly dangerous. He could still remember that nightmarish battle which had claimed the life of their fourth party member. The other three had been lucky enough to survive, but had ended up being separated. Even when they had been together, progress had been arduous. Now that they were separated, their chances were exceedingly grim. That was why he had come to beg Darknorth for aid.

All of them were much weaker than Daolord Darknorth, who had slain even the Lonely King with a single swipe of the sword.

“Daolord, I really was out of options,” Lord Annihilation said, rather embarrassed.

“Tell me where you are in the Sithelands,” Ning said. “I’ll go there as soon as possible. Also... do everything you can to protect the Mistress. Otherwise... when I see you, you are still going to die.”

“The Mistress?” Lord Annihilation was stunned. He knew that Ning had a very special relationship with the Paragon of Pills, but he had no idea that Ning would refer to her using such a close and familial term.

“Star map.” Ning looked at him.

“Here’s the star map, Daolord.” Lord Annihilation waved his hand, causing a star map to appear before them. The only parts of the star map which were detailed were the parts involving the Sithelands.

Ning gave it a glance. The five Autarchs had long ago provided Ning with a highly detailed star map of the entire Chaosverse, and they had taken especially detailed notes on the Sithelands, the only place which was a threat to them. Ning had a far more detailed map of the Sithelands than Lord Annihilation, and as a result he immediately knew where they were.

“Alright. I understand.” Ning nodded, then turned and went back into the spacetime tunnel with Hegemon Brightshore.

The two returned to the Brightshore Kingdom of the Flamedragon realmverse. Hegemon Brightshore’s wizened old face was covered with embarrassment: “Darknorth, I had no idea that Annihilation was going to make a request like this one. We’ve known each other forever. I can’t believe he pulled something like this on me.”

Ning shook his head. “His life was at stake. Playing a little trick on you is nothing.”

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The Wildsky Realmverse. The Greatland Planet.

Ning’s true body was there alongside his eighth disciple Stonepool, Ji Brightmoon, Ji Yichuan, Yuchi Snow, Subhuti, Windfiend, Su Youji, Azurefiend, Protector Whitethaw, and the Flamewing God.

“I’m not going to lie. This trip to the Sithelands will be a bit risky,” Ning said. “I’m not sure I’d be able to keep you all safe, and so all of you shall wait here. I’ve already sent word to Realmlord Windgrace to come and pick you up.”

They only had just a single realmship, and Ning needed it to visit the Sithelands. Thus, he asked Windgrace to come and pick them up. The sooner he went off to rescue the Paragon of Pills, the better his chances would be. His family wouldn’t be in any danger here in the Wildsky Realmverse either.

They originally had two realmships, but Ning had already given the one he had taken from the Lonely King to Nuwa.

“Master, let me go with you,” Su Youji said hurriedly. “I’m not afraid of any danger.”

“Ning, my son...” Yuchi Snow was rather worried.

Ning shook his head. “None of you are to follow me! Flamewing, protect them all.”

“Don’t worry, Master... but make sure you are careful in there,” Flamewing said.

“I will.” Ning glanced at Azurefiend. “Azurefiend, you are more detail-oriented than him. Take good care of my family and my master. Your avatar can come by my side.”

“Understood.” Hegemon Azurefiend revealed a look of delight. A place which even Ning felt was dangerous was a place Hegemon Azurefiend would never dare to visit in person, but his avatar was a different story. Being able to experience a dangerous place like this would be of benefit to him in cultivation. He knew that Ning was trying to help him out.

As for Su Youji and Brightmoon? They also had avatars, but those were back in the Flamedragon Realmverse. More importantly, they were far too weak. Even if they did create new avatars, the distance between this place and the Sithelands was simply too far. There was no way their true body would be able to sense and connect to the avatar at such a distance, which meant that the tiny bit of godsense within the avatar would eventually disappear and dissipate from the lack of reinforcement.

Thus, the only person who was lucky enough to take part in this adventure would be Hegemon Azurefiend.

“Brightmoon, I have a task for you.” Ning looked at his daughter. “This new disciple of mine, Stonepool, has yet to truly embark upon the path of cultivation. I’ll temporarily leave his tutelage up to you. Teach him until you are back at the Flamedragon Realmverse.”

“Don’t worry. I’m a Daolord. Teaching him will be no problem.” Brightmoon was extremely confident. She glanced at Stonepool and said, “Junior apprentice-brother Stonepool, I’ll train you well.”

“Alright,” Stonepool said obediently. Everyone here was at an unfathomably more profound level of the Dao than he was.

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That very day, Ning led Azurefiend’s avatar in travelling towards the Sithelands via realmship.

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 3: Entry

After spending over 12 million years travelling a great distance via realmship, Ji Ning and Azurefiend’s avatar finally reached the outer perimeters of the Sithelands.

“So this is the Sithelands?” Ning stared at the titanic glowing sphere that lay amidst the endless darkness.

They were still quite far away from this sphere, and it was roughly comparable to twenty or so realmverses in size! This was the enormous base which the Sithe had secretly constructed after infiltrating the local Chaosverse. The process had been very fast, too fast to stop, because the Sithe had constructed the main parts outside of the Chaosverse, then brought them inside and assembled them together.

It was like a nail which the Sithe had driven into the body of the Chaosverse, a nail which the cultivators were completely helpless against.

Whoosh. The realmship quickly flew closer and closer towards the Sithelands. Finally, they entered the sphere. Light flashed past their eyes, resolving into a strange, delightfully bizarre world.

The Sithelands was like a self-contained ecosystem, with the world within it being completely different from the rest of the Chaosverse! It even contained a few stars in the sky, although the stars had all been battered and broken to the point where the Sithe machinery underneath could be seen. Mysterious runes continued to flow over the surface of those skeletal stars, and they continued to hum with power. Clearly, they must have been incredibly powerful in the past! There was no way for cultivators to take them away and move them elsewhere; they were simply too large in size. Autarchs might be able to do so, but they wouldn't deign to collect 'garbage' like this.

"When we broke through their outer defenses, the cultivators who were present already took away all the Sithe weapons they could move," Ning mused. "The only places in the outer perimeter that are still filled with many Sithe weapons are those forbidden regions which were sealed away."

"Master, we are probably heading into one of those sealed regions, right?" Hegemon Azurefiend felt a mixture of nervousness, excitement, and anticipation.

Ning nodded.

During the Dawn War itself, time was of the essence. Thus, the Autarchs simply did whatever was the most expedient. They sealed away the toughest and most dangerous regions in the outer perimeter, trapping their foes inside. The trapped foes would no longer pose any further threat, after all! They had sealed away many regions during the final invasion. In the end, the heartland regions of the Sithelands had proved to be so deadly that the Autarchs had sealed it away as well, after killing any and all Sithe who dared to come out and fight back!

There had to be many powerful experts who were still alive within the heart of the Sithelands, including a number of Sithe Exalts, but they were no longer able to leave it.

They might be able to win a battle on their own terms and on their own turf, but the Autarchs wouldn't go inside to fight them. Thus, their only choice would be to fight outside... but without the geographical advantage, the end result would be defeat followed by imprisonment, just like the others.

"There are many barriers in the outer perimeters. Over the aeons since the Dawn During, many have been slowly unlocked," Ning said. "The Autarchs are not opposed to watching Hegemons unlock the barriers and test themselves inside." Even if the Hegemons perished, their truesoul fragments and energies would return to the Quintessence. This wouldn't have much of an impact on the Chaosverse as a whole.

But of course, if for example 70% to 80% of all the Hegemons in the Chaosverse were to perish? This sort of large-scale death would certainly have an impact, in that the Chaosverse would be poorly equipped for dealing with any foreign invaders. It simply wouldn't have enough defenders! Yes, the Autarchs had played a major role in defending it against the Sithe, but the many Hegemons who had bravely stood up had also played an important role.

In the end, there simply weren't enough Autarchs to go around.

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Another month went past. By now, Ning had finally reached the region where the Paragon of Pills had been trapped.

Ning stood there in the air, staring at a planet that was surrounded by a billowing black fog. As for Azurefiend's avatar, it stood behind Ning to one side.

"This is one of the sealed regions. The Autarchs didn't attack it, and so it is in perfect shape," Ning mused softly. "Even from here, I can dimly sense the threat it poses. I imagine the Autarchs were able to sense the same, which was why they sealed it off instead of attacking it. Oh, Mistress... how could you be so impetuous as to challenge a place like this?"

"Powerful Sithe weapons can only be found in undamaged places that were completely sealed off," Hegemon Azurefiend said. "If you are careful enough, you might be able to avoid some of the dangers."

"Everyone's putting all their faith on luck." Ning shook his head. Some cultivators would succeed, true, but many would end up dying.

"Let's go inside." Whoosh. Ning led Azurefiend in flying towards the planet of billowing black fog at high speeds. Hiss... the black mist was so highly corrosive that weaker Eternal Emperors would quickly be rotted away into a pile of noxious water. However, Ning's Sword Dao Domain was able to easily hold the mist at bay.

The two continued to fly together through the sea of black mist. They flew for over ten billion kilometers before finally passing through to the surface of the planet below. This was a desolate planet whose surface was filled with countless streams of freezing energy. As Ning and Azurefiend landed on the ground, they turned to stare at the world around them.

"Master, where should we go?" Azurefiend asked. "I can feel a powerful sense of danger coming from this place, as though moving in any direction will result in annihilation."

"The Autarchs sealed away this place because they weren't willing to spend their energies here, and also because this place can kill Hegemons with ease." Ning shook his head. As he spoke, he continued to carefully scrutinize the world with his karmic senses.

As soon as he descended upon this world, he was able to use his karma lines to sense and locate both Lord Annihilation and the Paragon of Pills. The karmic connection between Ning and Paragon of Pills went without saying, while Lord Annihilation's decision to beg Ning to rescue him had also established karmic ties between them.

"They are both in that direction." After carefully tracing his karmic ties, Ning was able to fix on their location and he turned to stare towards his left. "Both of them are over there." This freezing wind howled through the entire area with such intensity that not even he was able to see to a great distance here.

"Let's go," Ning said. He immediately headed off, with Azurefiend hurriedly following from behind.

Whoooooosh! Far away from them, a ghostly humanoid figure suddenly manifested out of thin air within a crevice in the ground. It stared towards Ning's direction, followed by its body emanating excited ripples.

"Outsiders! More outsiders! Sisters, more outsiders have arrived!" It didn't speak at all, it simply used those strange ripples to communicate with its underground comrades.

Soon, even more streams of energy began to surge from underground, each of them manifesting into ghostly humanoid figures within the crevice.

"Two outsiders have come, sisters!"

"Let's eat them!"

"Quick, let's eat them all!" Dozens of the humanoid creatures had appeared. They all transformed into streams of energy once more, merging into a single awesome stream of energy that flew like the wind in Ning's direction. The surface of this world was covered with so many gusts of cold wind that they weren't particularly noticeable at all.

Ning and Hegemon Azurefiend continued to advance via walking on the surface of this planet. Ning was extremely careful with each move he took. He too felt a sense of grave danger as soon as he stepped foot onto this planet, and he knew that rescuing the Paragon of Pills would be no easy task. He had to be very careful with this.

"Eh?" Ning suddenly turned to glance towards the right, his gaze following upon a distant stream of energy. This stream of energy seemed to be identical with the other howling streams of wind energy that filled this place, but Ning was vaguely able to sense that it was filled with malevolence, greed, and murder.

"What's wrong, Master?" Hegemon Azurefiend didn't feel anything yet.

"Freeze!" Ning barked. His Sword Dao Domain suddenly expanded dramatically, instantly stretching out to encompass the area where the deadly stream of energy was.

The power of his Sword Dao Domain was capable of unleashing a suppressive effect. The stream of energy instantly trembled, then transformed into a series of humanoid figures. These creatures weren't even able to maintain their ghostly image and thus were revealed to reveal their true appearances. These were fairly short creatures with grayish-black skin, and their features were fairly handsome... but the nails growing out of their fingers and toes were as sharp as knives.

Trapped by the Sword Dao Domain, the grayish-black creatures all let out agonized shrieks. They struggled fiercely to break free, their claws dancing in the air as they tried to tear the power surrounding them apart.

"So these are the legendary 'vilefiends', the most commonly seen creatures within the Sithelands?" Azurefiend was rather excited.

"Yes. They aren't all that powerful and are the easiest creatures to deal with here, but for this many to attack at once would still be rather problematic to deal with." Ning glanced at the dozens of contorting

vilefiends, then unleashed the power of his Sword Dao Domain with but a thought. The vilefiends let out ear-piercing screams before their bodies shattered apart and disappeared.

Vilefiends were quite unique. They were only able to survive within the Sithelands; even if you managed to capture one, they would instantly dissipate once you took them outside of this area!

Cultivators had noticed something special about these creatures. Generally speaking, the more of them there were in a place, the more dangerous that place was. Ning had immediately encountered dozens of them as soon as he had descended upon this sealed planet; this meant there was an abnormally high concentration of them here.

“I hope the situation isn’t as bad as it looks.” Ning felt even more nervous. The five Autarchs had given Ning extremely detailed maps and notes pertaining to the Sithelands, and Ning couldn’t help but feel increasingly worried for the Paragon of Pills.

“Let’s move fast.” Ning led Azurefiend in advancing towards the other end of his karma lines at high speeds.

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 4: Daoguard Tower

Shortly after Ji Ning’s group walked past this region, the surface of the ground suddenly became liquid, almost watery. A pair of four-hooved creatures appeared from underneath the ground. Each creature had a golden horn atop its head, while their entire bodies were silver in color. Each was over thirty meters large and extremely muscular. As for their eyes, they were gray and looked as cold and desolate as death itself.

“Outsiders have passed through the territory we control. They are headed in that direction over there.” The two four-hooved creatures stared towards the distant Ning and Azurefiend.

“All invaders must die.”

“Kill them!”

Boom! Boom! The two four-hooved creatures charged through the air at terrifying speeds, moving towards Ning and Azurefiend. They moved far more quickly than the vast majority of Hegemons, with only the most powerful Hegemons who reached Hegemony via the Dao of Lightning or the Dao of Light being able to match up to them in speed. They didn’t try to disguise themselves at all as they galloped towards Ning’s group at maximum speed.

Ning and Azurefiend both instantly were able to sense the furious power which had erupted behind them, and they hurriedly turned to look at the two streaks of light that had almost reached them.

“Those things?” Ning turned pale. “Silver Goldhorns? Not good!”

“DIE!” The two galloping beasts charged straight towards Ning and Azurefiend, their eyes filled with the cold remorselessness of death.

Azurefiend instantly felt a chill go down his spine. These two creatures were definitely capable of killing him!

Ning expanded his Sword Dao Domain, using it to suppress and weaken the two Silver Goldhorns, but the two were able to continue to charge forwards while growling angrily. Moments later, streaks of sword-light began to appear and assault the hooves of those two silver beasts.

How could these two creatures possibly comprehend or defend against the marvelousness of Ning's sword-arts?

Thud! Thud! The two Silver Goldhorns stumbled to the ground after their hooves came under assault, but they quickly clambered back up. This time, they chose to fly through the air. Although this resulted in them being slowed down, they were still able to fly through the suppressive effects of the Sword Dao Domain.

"Azurefiend." Ning waved his hand, tossing out six long black chains. "Hurry up and bind them. Use these weapons and wait for my signal."

"Yes, Master," Azurefiend acknowledged. He recognized that these six black chains were the chains that had previously been used to bind Flamewing. At the same time, he couldn't help but feel secretly shocked that these creatures were actually able to force his Master to use these chains.

In truth, Ning was capable of easily defeating these creatures if he himself attacked, but that would require him to use up some of his own energy, which meant using up his own lifespan. Thus, unless absolutely necessary, Ning wanted to avoid using any of his power.

"Gwaaaaaar!" "Kill!" The two Silver Goldhorns continued to charge towards Ning, who continued to unleash the power of his Sword Dao Domain against them. Streaks of sword-light shot out in accordance with Ning's marvelous sword-arts, allowing him to easily toy with them and force them to stumble, stagger, and even be knocked backwards. There was no way for them to approach Ning at all.

The sword-light from Ning's Sword Dao Domain was capable of slaying even Hegemons with ease; these were blows comparable to full-strength strikes from Otherverse Lords. Even though he wasn't able to kill the Silver Goldhorns, he was still able to make things incredibly difficult for them.

"They are strengthened by the Daoguard Tower. Although they are strong, in the end they are nothing more than golems. They have a low level of insight, making it easy for me to toy with them." Ning commanded, "Get ready for my signal to use your chains to trap them and then pull them away."

"I've already bound the chains to myself," Azurefiend said immediately. His avatar manifested a total of six arms, each of which held onto one of the black chains.

"NOW! Catch the one on the left!" Ning ordered.

Right at this moment, the Silver Goldhorn on the left was knocked down as multiple streams of sword-light converged upon it. Azurefiend immediately hurled out his black chains, sending them flying through the air towards the beast. The Silver Goldhorn hurriedly moved to dodge, but four of the six chains still managed to coil around it and bind it tightly. It struggled to fight back, but was completely incapable of breaking free. Soon, it turned limp and stopped resisting.

"These chains have a powerful sealing and draining effect. Flamewing has an almost limitless amount of energy and so the draining meant very little to it, but the Silver Goldhorns draw their power from the Dao Protector Hall. There's a limit to how much energy they can use." Ning shook his head.

“Get in here!” Azurefiend immediately drew the bound Silver Goldhorn into one of his top-grade Eternal estate-treasures. A short while later, he retrieved the black chains.

“Huh. Master, why is it that the Silver Goldhorn seems to be extremely weak within my estate-world?” Azurefiend was surprised.

“Because it can no longer sense the Daoguard Tower.” Ning instructed, “Hurry up and catch the other one.”

A short while later, the tag-team of Ning and Azurefiend captured the second Silver Goldhorn and drew it into the estate-world as well.

“What’s a Daoguard Tower?” Azurefiend asked. “Why have I never heard of it before?”

“The Daoguard Tower...” Ning had a rather ugly look on his face. “It is literally the most dangerous type of location the Sithelands has.”

As soon as Ning saw the Silver Goldhorn, his heart had turned cold. He knew that the situation was even worse than he had thought. Golems like the Silver Goldhorns were extremely powerful, and they were only possessed by Daoguard Towers! Now that he knew that this world was where a Daoguard Tower was located, he knew just how difficult this journey would be.

The Daoguard Tower... as the name implied, it was meant to guard a certain area. Even beings as powerful as the Sithe needed to train and cultivate, and so the most powerful Sithe would generally pay absolutely enormous prices to construct extremely safe, secure, and stable places where they would live and train. These places were known as Daoguard Towers! The powerful Sithe would use everything available to them to reinforce the Daoguard Tower, using it to fight back against foes.

Even the most powerful of foes would generally find it very hard to breach the defenses of a Daoguard Tower, but they did have a weakness – they were completely immobile!

In the Sithe Chaosverse, Daoguard Towers were able to draw upon the natural energies of that Chaosverse. In Ning’s Chaosverse, the Sithe were unable to do the same, and so they had to first pay an absolutely enormous price to set up this place, the ‘Sithelands’! This was a place which held an enormous energy generator within it.

For the Sithe, the ‘Sithelands’ actually served as a ‘miniature’ Chaosverse in many ways. They were able to make use of the energy generator and then build Daoguard Towers throughout the area. Once they were built, they could no longer be moved; this was their main weakness. However, they were tremendously powerful and were perfect for protecting important locations!

Every single Daoguard Tower was extremely difficult to deal with, with the best Daoguard Towers capable of claiming the lives of even the Autarchs! This was why the Autarchs hadn’t fought their way inside. Every single Daoguard Tower represented extreme danger! But of course, they also had a correspondingly great amount of treasure inside of them. It could be said that Daoguard Towers were literally built out of a giant mound of treasures.

“Silver Goldhorns generally are used to patrol the area outside a Daoguard Tower and locate enemy intruders,” Ning said. “As soon as we ran into those Silver Goldhorns, the master of this Daoguard Tower was probably alerted to our presence as well.”

“Alerted?” Azurefiend was worried.

“Yes. In other words, we are now in a great deal of danger.” Ning smiled. “I might not be able to protect you, in which case your avatar will be finished.”

“Don’t worry about me, Master. I would at most lose the materials needed for an avatar,” Azurefiend said.

“Let’s continue.” Ning didn’t waste any more time on words as he led Azurefiend towards the other end of the karmic lies tying him to Lord Annihilation and the Paragon of Pills.

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Deep within the heart of this planet, there was indeed a tower that was protected by many layers of traps and barriers. This tower had a total of eight levels to it.

A short creature that was merely one meter tall was seated on an altar inside the tower. He was a true Sithe, but he merely had the power of an ordinary Eternal Emperor.

The short creature opened his eyes, staring at the images which had begun to appear in front of him. The images displayed two Silver Goldhorns battling against Ning and Azurefiend. In the end, the two Silver Goldhorns were captured and taken away.

“Cultivators?” The short creature frowned when he saw this. “How odd. Both of these cultivators are odd. One is a Hegemon, but the white-robed cultivator with that black sheath... he looks to be a Daolord. In addition, his truesoul is actually crumbling away, which makes him a Daolord who has failed the Daomerge. What’s going on? From the looks of it, the Hegemon is actually subservient to him.”

“And what’s with that odd domain? It was able to defeat those Silver Goldhorns with ease.” The short creature had the feeling that something was off.

“Ugh. Ever since the barriers were breached, Master slipped away and ordered me to stand guard over the Daoguard Tower.” The short creature gritted his teeth, rather unhappy. He had originally been a mere retainer of this Daoguard Tower’s owner. Once the barrier had been opened, it was guaranteed that this tower would eventually be conquered by the cultivators, and so the master of this tower had fled, leaving him behind to stand guard.

“Given how easily they dealt with the Silver Goldhorns, I have to be careful with them. Hm... yes, I’ll put them in the ‘secondary dimension’.” The short creature immediately began to activate the power of the Daoguard Tower.

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 5: Hope of Release

The short creature was unable to disguise the excitement in its eyes. Each time he took control of the Daoguard Tower and used it to deal with powerful figures, he felt extremely happy.

This was because if he truly engaged in a ‘fair fight’ against those powerful cultivators, he would probably be annihilated with ease. But with the Daoguard Tower at his disposal, he was able to toy with

them instead! By now, this was the only bright spot in his life, the reason for him to keep living. The Sithe had been defeated, after all, and his master's orders meant he had to stay here forever. His life was one of solitude and despair. If he didn't have the occasional bit of entertainment, how could he have possibly been able to stay alive? His Dao-heart probably would've crumbled long ago, resulting in suicide.

"Those two are the most powerful cultivators I've ever encountered. I have to be careful. They won't be beaten as easily as other cultivators." The short creature took control over the Daoguard Tower's powers, watching the scenes of Ji Ning and Azurefiend advancing at high speed.

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After dealing with the Silver Goldhorns, Ning and Azurefiend continued to advance at nearly maximum speed.

"What's that?" Ning soon saw some scattered weapons and armor.

"Master, is this connected to the Paragon of Pill's team?" Azurefiend asked.

"This belonged to their slain comrade." Ning scanned the area, his gaze causing time to flow backwards. Soon, Ning was able to see the scene of the Paragon of Pills, Lord Annihilation, a short, fat old man, and a silvery-haired woman fight against a total of four Silver Goldhorns.

The four Silver Goldhorns were overwhelmingly powerful. Although the Paragon of Pills and the others had many tricks up their sleeves, their techniques were blown away in the very first exchange. The short and fat old man was the closest to the four and the first to die, while the other three scattered and fled.

The four Silver Goldhorns were about to pursue, but all of a sudden they gave up the pursuit and left. Ning narrowed his eyes. "As I thought. This Daoguard Tower has someone controlling it."

The Dawn War had ended long ago, and the barrier sealing the Daoguard Tower had also been breached quite some time ago. Logically speaking, the powerful Sithe who owned this Daoguard Tower had probably slipped away long ago, and so Ning had harbored the faint hope that this Daoguard Tower was now unmanned! However, he knew that even if the Sithe who owned this tower had fled, he might've arranged for a servant or a golem to control it in his stead.

Ning knew that chances of this Daoguard Tower being unmanned were slim... and now, his hopes were crushed entirely.

"I hope the controller of this Daoguard Tower is a wise man." Ning shook his head slightly, then waved his hand and collected the armor and weapons lying on the ground.

"Master, where should we go next?" Azurefiend asked.

"That's odd." Ning suddenly frowned. "The Mistress and Annihilation clearly fled in two different directions. Why, then, are my karmic senses indicating that they are in the same region right now?"

"Follow me." Ning trusted his karmic senses, and so led Azurefiend in a high-speed advance towards the Paragon's location.

A short while later, Ning came to a sudden halt because a series of ripples had appeared in the air before him. The world around him was beginning to twist and contort as well.

“Master of the Daoguard Tower,” Ning said with a frown, his voice echoing within the world around him, “I am simply adventuring in this place and do not intend to enter the Daoguard Tower itself! There is no need for us to fight against each other.”

“Ehehehe...” A low, hoarse laugh rang out and echoed within the air around Ning. “What a formidable Daolord. I am truly rather mystified by you! But this is my territory. Now that you have dared to trespass here, your fate is under my control. Ehehehe... but let’s not be impatient! We have plenty of time. Let’s take it slow and have some fun together.”

“Is this about those two Silver Goldhorns? I can give them back to you,” Ning said.

“Hah! Once I capture you, they’ll become mine again regardless. All the treasures you carry shall be mine! Even you yourself, you diverting Daolord, shall become mine.” The voice was filled with a hint of wicked glee.

Ning’s face hardened slightly. He barked coldly, “So you are a madman. It seems you’ve been alone for so long you’ve gone insane.”

Daoguard Towers were used by powerful Sithe to protect their lairs. Generally speaking, so long as you didn’t try to attack the towers they similarly wouldn’t expend too much effort in attacking you! This was why Ning had tried to be fairly low-key and hadn’t caused too many problems. He had come here to rescue his friends, not to defeat the Daoguard Tower! He had thought that if he didn’t cause a fuss and didn’t infringe upon the Daoguard Tower itself and threaten its controller, the controller wouldn’t start a life-and-death fight against him. Clearly, he was wrong. The controller of this Daoguard Tower was a madman.

The madman by himself wasn’t that frightening, but the Daoguard Tower was!

“Eheheh... no one who has come here has ever been able to escape and survive. You won’t escape either.” As the voice fell silent, the surrounding dimensional ripples quickly began to reach out towards Ning.

“Master?” Azurefiend was a bit worried.

“I’m done playing nice!” Ning’s face hardened and a sharp look flashed through his eyes. “Sword Dao Domain!”

Rumble... countless blades of sword-light appeared throughout this entire planet. Clearly, Ning had just expanded his Sword Dao Domain to an incredible size, using it to cover the entire planet!

“Suppress!” Ning held nothing back at all. In the past, he had kept his Sword Dao Domain reigned in to cover a fairly small area because he didn’t wish to cause too much of a problem with the master of the Daoguard Tower... but since they were already at loggerheads, he wasn’t going to show any mercy at all.

Rumble... the terrifying Sword Dao Domain instantly crashed down, bringing a terrifying amount of power against everything within this planet.

“Damnit!” The short creature within the Daoguard Tower instantly turned pale, and his eyes became filled with both terror and excitement. His body began to quiver. “This is the domain of an Eternal Omega Sword Dao! Ahaha, it’s actually an Eternal Omega Sword Dao! All my defenses have to hold!”

A series of membrane-like barriers appeared across the surface of this entire planet, each of which covered part of the planet in an interlocking way. Thus, when the membranes rose together, they were able to block off all of the sword-light.

“The Daoguard Tower’s energies are being depleted at an incredible rate.” The short creature was rather nervous. Defending against this much sword-light was consuming power from the Daoguard Tower at a shocking rate, but Ning’s Sword Dao Domain drew energy from the power of the Dao itself; in other words, it drew from the power of the Chaosverse! Its energies were limitless.

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In a different part of this planet, where space and time were both distorted. The Paragon of Pills, dressed in black gauze, was seated in the lotus position within a field of light. Ever since she had been trapped here, she assumed the lotus position and didn’t move around.

“I still haven’t been able to see through the secrets hidden behind this place. The more I move about, the closer I will be to death.” The Paragon of Pills weighed the area around her with her gaze. She had traversed many places in the Sithelands and had quite a bit of experience in this regard. She was also extremely patient and had reached extremely high levels in the Dao of Karma, the Dao of Formations, and the Dao of Spacetime. Thus, in most places she was usually able to discover the mysteries behind the various traps and then escape.

The reason why she had reached such high levels of skill in these Daos was because she knew she would have to rely on them and herself to revive her departed brothers. She had invested enormous amounts of effort into studying spacetime and karma, and they had become her secret weapons in ensuring that she was able to survive her trips into the Sithelands. Otherwise, she would’ve died long ago in one of her crazy expeditions here.

Boom! Suddenly, the entire field of light around her shook violently.

“Eh?” The Paragon of Pills lifted her head to stare into the skies. She could sense that outside the field of blurry light, there were two enormous surges of power that were clashing against each other. Both powers were so vast as to cause her to feel shocked.

“Could it be Darknorth?” The Paragon of Pills had a rather complicated look on her face. Her avatar was alongside Lord Annihilation’s avatar, and so she knew that Lord Annihilation had gone against her will and asked Ning to come save them.

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“Either we stop now, or we continue until you are gone.” Ning’s voice was cold, and it rang out throughout the entire world. The walls of rippling spacetime around him blocked out his senses, but he knew that the Daoguard Tower had to be using up an enormous amount of power.

“Stop now? Ahahaha! Go ahead and try to attack the Daoguard Tower. Just try to kill me! Hah! If you can’t, you’ll be the one to die! Did you really think you are able to contend against me, puny cultivator?”

Besides, if I can take out someone who is in control of the Eternal Omega Sword Dao, my death would have been worth it!" The short creature had never felt this berserk before, because everyone in his own Chaosverse who was in control of an Eternal Omega Dao would have an extremely high status that was far superior to that of the Autarchs.

This was because Emperors who mastered an Eternal Omega Dao were on par with ordinary Autarchs in might, but the Autarchs had reached the end of the road; there was no way for them to become any more powerful. Omega Emperors, however, still had a chance to take one more step and become Omega Autarchs.

This local Chaosverse was a weak one, and its cultivators were barbaric... which meant that for them, a cultivator who mastered an Eternal Omega Dao would only be even more important!

"If you were a true Emperor, I would probably stand no chance at all. However, your truesoul is crumbling, which means I have a chance to kill you." The short creature had gone completely berserk, because he knew that if managed to kill an Eternal Omega Sword Dao wielder, he would have rendered incredible merits to his side. Even if he died, his truesoul would return to his homeland, at which point he would almost certainly be revived and brought back to life for his efforts.

He had thought that his only choice was to await death, that there was no longer any hope in his life... that toying with impudent trespassing cultivators was the only thing left. But now? Now he saw hope, hope of release!

"Die! Dimensional Separator!" The short creature no longer chose to be as cautious as he was at the start. His eyes filled with madness, he immediately used a vicious technique that had a serious backlash effect.

Whoosh!

Ning suddenly felt as though this entire planet had suddenly been split apart like a watermelon. It was separated into two parts, which was then separated into hundreds of different parts! The area he was in was just one 'shard' of the watermelon, a shard that was in a completely different dimensional continuum that had been completely locked away, trapping himself and Azurefiend within.

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 6: They Meet

"Since I've chosen to fight, I'm going to use everything I have and give him no chance at all." The short creature's eyes were filled with madness. He knew just how terrifying someone who controlled an Eternal Omega Dao could be! Even his master, the original owner of this Daoguard Tower, was far from being a match for Ji Ning. In their own Chaosverse, this short creature would probably never even be given the chance to meet such an august personage.

And precisely because he knew just how fearsome Ning could be, he immediately attacked with all his power!

"In the end, he's someone who has failed his Daomerge. Sands of Time, arise!" The short creature held nothing back at all, immediately using yet another one of the Daoguard Tower's killer techniques.

Spots of sparkling, sand-like grains of light instantly flew out of the Daoguard Tower, falling under the spacetime dominion of the tower which synchronized it with and sent it into the sealed dimension which Ning and Azurefiend were trapped in.

“Now for the killing blow. Charge to the maximum power!” The short creature gritted his teeth, and the very tip of the Daoguard Tower suddenly began to light up as a large amount of energy began to gather together there.

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By now, this entire planet had been separated into hundreds of sealed dimensional pockets, with Ning and Azurefiend being trapped in one of them. Azurefiend was starting to panic a bit, because he could sense an enormous amount of danger, as though he could die at any moment.

“Azurefiend, go into my estate-world for now.” Ning waved his hand, pulling Azurefiend into his estate. He then scanned his surroundings. “What a vicious technique... he’s actually willing to destroy his own territory for the sake of killing me! What the hell? Why does he hate me so much? This is the first time we’ve ever met.” Ning couldn’t help but feel puzzled at how viciously his opponent was behaving. His opponent’s very first act was to destroy the very world which the Daoguard Tower had been created to protect. The world itself had also served as an additional defensive layer for the Daoguard Tower. Now the world was gone; the only thing left was the tower itself.

This was clearly a technique which was dangerous to both the user and the target. Generally speaking, most people wouldn’t use such a powerful, double-edged technique until things truly grew desperate. Still, the technique was indeed powerful; not even Ning’s Sword Dao Domain was capable of breaking through a completely sealed dimension like this.

Clink. Ning drew a Northbow sword from the sheath on his back.

Whoooooosh! Just as Ning was about to use his sword to chop apart this cage of sealed spacetime, the entire region suddenly rippled with rainbow light that twisted time wherever the light appeared. In some places, time sped up a million times over; in other places, it froze completely.

Ning’s face hardened. “The Sands of Time?” The Sands of Time was yet another type of treasure the Sithe had access to, and it was described in great detail in the records which the Autarchs had given Ning. This type of treasure was extremely dangerous when used against most cultivators, but against Ning it was absolutely lethal!

When activated, it was possible that time would be frozen for the upper half of your body, while time would be accelerated a trillionfold for the lower half of your body. This sort of temporal twisting would cause ordinary Emperors and Hegemons incredible discomfort during battle, lessening their combat prowess... but Ning wasn’t an Emperor, he was a Daolord whose truesoul was breaking apart. His truesoul could very well collapse and die from this!

“He first destroyed his own territory, then used the Sands of Time... just to kill me?” Ning had no time to think. He immediately sent a serious, horizontal chop towards the space in front of him.

This blow from his sword seemed to have enough power to completely sever apart everything in Heaven and Earth. The passage of the sword-light was followed by a tiny thread of water, but a heartbeat later

the thread of water transformed into a raging river, and then into a titanic wave. Endless waves of sword-light crashed through the skies with absolutely terrifying power, completely overwhelming the onslaught of the Sands of Time and sweeping through all of the rainbow light!

The terrifying sword-intent had completely submerged and annihilated the Sands of Time. This was Ning's Water Sword Dao!

After destroying the Sands of Time, the wave of sword-light was dramatically weakened as well, but it still continued to sweep forwards and crash against the dimensional membrane of this sealed space.

BOOM! The entire region shuddered violently, as a large amount of cracks began to appear at the margins of this space, both in the skies and deep underground. The cracks spread out like ripples, while Ning stood at the center of the region and watched carefully.

"I thought that strike would've been enough to annihilate both the Sands of Time and this pocket dimension I'm in. It seems I didn't put enough power into that strike. This dimensional pocket is more stable than I thought," Ning mused. He was extremely miserly with his energies right now, and would hold back power whenever necessary without overusing even the slightest amount.

"Go." Ning stabbed out with his Northbow sword once more. This time, he himself transformed into a streak of sword-light that shot outwards. The tip of the sword-light was Ning's Northbow sword, and it easily pierced through the crumbling dimensional seal and appeared outside.

In the instant that he broke through the dimensional membrane, Ning was able to see the hundreds of dimensional shards that hung in the air like lonely little islands. At the very center, there was a clearly visible eight-story tower that was sitting on a foundation of earth that was millions of kilometers in size. The ground was covered with countless runes and ley-lines, allowing it to serve as the foundation of this tower.

It must be remembered that Daoguard Towers were immobile and had to be anchored somewhere. Through the foundation it was anchored to, it was able to maintain contact with and draw power from the energy generator fueling the entire Sithelands.

"Is that..." Ning instantly saw the dazzling light building at the very tip of the Daoguard Tower.

"Die! DIE!" Spittle was flying out of the mouth of the short creature within the Daoguard Tower, and his eyes were completely deranged. The Dimensional Separator and the Sands of Time were two of his killer weapons, capable of slaying even ordinary Otherverse Lords with ease. The Sands of Time in particular should've been a perfect counter for a Daolord whose truesoul was crumbling, but it had still ended up failing. He had never fought someone like this before, after all... but everything was as he had expected.

"DIIIIIIIE!" the short creature howled hoarsely.

BOOM! The light on the top of the Daoguard Tower suddenly shot out, moving at an absolutely terrifying speed. Ning was roughly a billion kilometers away from the Daoguard Tower; given the short distance and the incredible speed of the attack, not even Otherverse Lords would be able to dodge in time.

Swish. Ning suddenly transformed into a streak of electric light that moved with equally terrifying speed. He was able to dodge the attack with ease and then charged straight towards the tower. As for the

attack, it shot past the location Ning had been in and then continued on to pass through the distant black fog behind him.

“He dodged it?!” The short creature was both angry and anxious. “He’s too fast. He’s too strong and he’s too fast!” He wanted to kill Ning and then be rewarded for it; this was his only chance of salvation! Alas... the only tool he had available to him was the Daoguard Tower.

“He’s too fast and his sword-arts are too furious. There’s no way I can kill him at long range,” the short creature mused. “I’ll wait for him to come inside. Once he actually enters the Daoguard tower, I’ll unleash all of the Daoguard Tower’s powers at the same time. He’s a Daolord who has failed the Daomerge. He HAS to die from that!”

The farther away two fighters were, the more difficult it would be for one to kill the other. Daoguard Towers were built with layers of defenses. They had roving patrols to keep invaders at a distance, ranged attacks to deal with those who made it past the patrols, and also self-destruct options meant to take out invaders who made it into close range.

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As for Ning, he couldn’t help but sigh to himself. “The records indicate that the closer you get to a Daoguard Tower, the more dangerous it is, with the insides of the tower being the most dangerous of all. I’ve been quite far away from it, but it was still able to force me to use power thrice.”

The first time was when he used his sword to break through the Sands of Time. The remaining power hadn’t been enough to break through the sealed dimension. He used a fair amount of power in this strike.

The second time had been when he pierced through the sealed dimension and fled, while the third time had been when he used an evasion-art to dodge that strike. He had used up very little power here, with the evasion-art using up the least.

“If I really wanted to break into the Daoguard Tower, I’d probably have to use several times as much energy. In fact, I could well die there,” Ning muttered to himself. He once more turned to follow his karmic senses, quickly using his karmic lines to locate the Paragon of Pills. He immediately turned towards one of the hundreds of sealed dimensions. Now that the entire world had been shattered, he was able to find her with ease.

“The Mistress is located in that region over there.” Ning was certain of it. As for Lord Annihilation, he was located in another dimensional pocket that was quite close to her’s.

Swish! Ning was able to move at incredible speeds when transformed into a streak of electric sword-light. In fact, he was a bit faster than when he had first mastered the Eternal Omega Sword Dao. He instantly appeared in front of the sealed dimensional continuum where the Paragon of Pills was located, then delivered a blow with his Northbow sword.

Whoosh! The sword-light carved a giant gaping hole within the sealed pocket that was thousands of meters long.

Ning had no choice but to do this. These sealed dimensions were so strong and stable that he wasn’t going to be able to breach them unless he used his sword.

Through the gaping hole, he was able to clearly see what was inside that dimension. He saw a cold, austere-looking woman dressed in black gauze who was seated in the lotus position. No matter how calm and collected the woman normally was, she was unable to prevent a look of shock from appearing on her face as she turned to stare at the white-robed youth standing behind the gaping hole in the dimensional wall.

“Darknorth?” She recognized this youth right away.

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 7: Playtime is Over

This was the only disciple her big brother had ever taken. In her heart, Ji Ning was arguably more important than even her own disciples. She had always felt that Darknorth was someone she had to protect... but somehow, without her even realizing it, the kid had grown up. She had received word that the kid had grown to become an absolutely incredible figure, slaying the Lonely King with just a blow of his sword. How unbelievable was this?! She was absolutely delighted to know that her big brother had taken in a truly remarkable disciple.

And today... the young fellow had appeared before her once more, rescuing her from her plight.

“Mistress, let’s hurry up and get out of here!” Ning sent mentally. At the same time, he sent out his Sword Dao Domain to ‘plug’ the gap, preventing it from healing. The Sword Dao Domain was unable to tear through the dimensional seal, but it was able to dramatically slow down the healing process.

“Alright.” The Paragon of Pills rose to her feet, a smile on her face as she transformed into a streak of light and flew out of the dimensional tear. As she did so, she cast a radiant and joyful smile towards Ning. For some reason, she felt even happier than she would’ve if it was her own disciple who had reached such a level of power.

“I was vaguely able to sense that we would meet again, but I never would’ve imagined that the circumstances would be you rescuing me.” The Paragon laughed. “I rather thought that it would be the other way around.”

Ning could sense how happy the Paragon of Pills was. He was quite happy as well. There weren’t that many people who truly treated him as family, but the Paragon of Pills was definitely one of them. In fact, Ning could sense from the Paragon of Pills a sort of motherly love that reminded him of the love which his true mother Yuchi Snow bore him.

“Mistress, you seem quite calm and relaxed. I’ve been worried sick over you! Thankfully, you are alright.” Ning let out a sigh of relief.

“There’s always danger when adventuring through Sithe ruins. I’ve been in situations like this on multiple occasions,” the Paragon said.

“But this place is different. There is a Daoguard Tower here!” Ning couldn’t help but feel a sense of fear. There was no way the Paragon of Pills or any of the others would’ve been able to flee on their own. A double-edged technique like the Dimensional Separator, which had completely shattered the planet apart and divided it up into many different pocket dimensions, were powerful enough to slay even Otherverses Lords... and that was just one of many techniques the Daoguard Tower had access to!

“Daoguard Tower? What’s a Daoguard Tower?” The Paragon of Pills was rather puzzled, but she hurriedly said, “Let’s not waste any time, Darknorth. This place is extremely dangerous. Let’s leave right away. If you can save my two companions, you should do so; if you cannot, don’t try to force it.”

“I’ll rescue them, but they need to wait a bit.” Ning smiled mysteriously.

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Within the Daoguard Tower.

The short creature stared at the images of the outside world, puzzled. The white-robed Daolord had easily dodged his attack, then immediately moved to another sealed dimension and used his sword to slice through the dimensional membrane. He had rescued the woman who had been trapped inside that dimensional pocket, and the two clearly seemed quite happy to meet each other.

“He came here to save his friends?” The short creature was puzzled.

“Let’s go.” Ning let out a happy laugh, then led the Paragon of Pills in transforming into streaks of light that flew off towards the horizon.

“What?! They are leaving?!” The short creature was stunned. His original plan had been to wait until Ning attacked the Daoguard Tower, then continue his own assaults. His hope was that Ning would actually enter the tower!

But now... Ning did the exact opposite. After locating the Paragon of Pills, he had immediately moved to depart. Ning had gained a thorough understanding of the Daoguard Tower from the Autarchs; he obviously wasn’t going to be foolish enough to charge into the Daoguard Tower when he already knew how deadly it was.

As a result, the short creature’s ‘perfect plan’ came to nothing.

“Did you really think you could just leave whenever you wanted?” The short creature was completely berserk. This represented his only chance of escape and release. Even though his chances were slim, he was still going to use all his power to fight for it!

“Triple Dimensional Hallway Chains!” The creature ranted in a crazed manner, “All Silver Goldhorns, move out and trap them! Daoguard Tower, release the seals and unleash those monsters!”

Upon seeing that Ning was about to leave, the short creature finally unleashed all the tools at his disposal! There were some traps he was unable to use as Ning hadn’t moved closer towards him, but he had fully unleashed everything else.

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As Ji Ning led the Paragon of Pills in departing, he sent mentally to her: “That eight-storied tower is known as a Daoguard Tower, a truly terrifying Si the guard tower. I’m unwilling to actually enter it, but it seems as though the tower’s master is hellbent on killing me. Now that I’m ‘leaving’, he’ll probably grow a bit anxious. Let’s see what he tries to pull.”

Just as his words finished, Ning’s eyes widened. “What the...”

The distant Daoguard Tower began to rumble menacingly as the entire thing began to tremble and crack apart like a turtle shell. Even the enormous foundation beneath it was beginning to split apart.

The overwhelming power of the Daoguard Tower spread throughout every pocket dimension surrounding it. The pocket dimensions that had previously hovered around it like little islands suddenly began to shoot out in every direction, forming a series of dimensional membrane walkways. The only things Ning could see in front of him were those dimensional walkways; he could no longer see the outside world at all.

Ning turned to glance backwards at the Daoguard Tower, which was now filled with innumerable cracks. "He's wrecking the Daoguard Tower?" Ning could hardly believe it. "Even the foundation is splitting apart!"

The foundation was the most important part of the Daoguard Tower, but even it was beginning to break apart! Ning could tell how terrifyingly determined the Daoguard Tower's controller was.

A series of thunderous roars rang out, followed by Silver Goldhorns charging out of the various dimensional islands. They were completely unimpeded by the pocket dimensions, coming in threes and fives as they charged towards Ning. All in all, there was a total of sixty-five of the creatures!

Not just that. Two creatures that looked like stone pythons suddenly came flying out of the crumbling Daoguard Tower. When the two stone pythons first flew out, they were quite small, but they quickly expanded in size to many tens of thousands of kilometers long. They were completely formed from stone, and their eyes were a dull gray color. They radiated an aura of life, but their eyes were completely dead.

"They are clearly alive, but they don't seem to be sentient at all?" Ning was rather shocked.

"Darknorth, can you handle it? Do you need me to help?" The Paragon of Pills couldn't help but feel nervous when she saw the sixty-five Silver Goldhorns swarming towards them. Her original team had been instantly defeated by four Silver Goldhorns, and so she knew that every single one of them was capable of battling an Otherverse Lord.

It was said that the most dangerous Sithe bases were the ones which held Daoguard Towers, and the number of Silver Goldhorns this place held was proof of it.

This was why the cultivators had been unwilling to actually attack these places during the Dawn War. They had lured the Sithe into the outside world, ensuring that the strongest Sithe bases were taken out of the equation. Only then did they manage to win and decimate the Sithe forces. Only after doing so did they attack the Sithelands, but even then they had only been able to successfully breach the outer perimeter. As for the Daoguard Towers in the outer perimeter, they had merely sealed them away rather than actually assault them.

"Don't worry." Ning let out a chuckle as he released his Sword Dao Domain, causing countless streaks of sword-light to fill the entire area and begin to assault the Silver Goldhorns. The Silver Goldhorns began to stumble, stagger, or even be knocked backwards. There was no way for them to close in on Ning at all.

As for the two stone serpents, they were slowed down by the Sword Dao Domain but they still managed to move closer towards him.

Clack! Clack! Clack! The foundation of the Daoguard Tower splintered apart. Ning cast the shattered foundation a glance. The Daoguard Tower had always given him a sense of danger. Now that the foundation had shattered, he felt that the danger level was actually rising.

A massive creature was slowly beginning to arise from within the vast, shattered foundation. Her body was unmistakably massive, nearly a hundred thousand kilometers in size. This creature had the lower body of a centipede but the upper body of a humanoid female. The nagapede's face was beautiful and her eyes were shut, and as the foundation and its barriers crumbled around her, the power within her body began to skyrocket.

She slowly opened her eyes. At first, there was a lost look in her eyes, but it was quickly replaced with endless malevolence. She opened her mouth, unleashing an earth-shaking roar of terrifying power that spread out in every direction.

The short creature within the cracked Daoguard Tower stared at the distant Ning, his eyes filled with madness. "Now that I've destroyed the Daoguard Tower and released the monster beneath it, I'll die... but you will die as well. This entire region has been locked by three levels of dimensional walkway chains. You won't be able to escape. You'll have to fight... and if you do, you failed Daolord, you won't be able to withstand her power. You'll die in battle, and the glory shall go to me! Ahahah!"

BOOM! As the short creature laughed wildly, his body suddenly disintegrated as the shockwave from the nagapede's earth-shaking roar washed past it, destroying even some of the weapons he was carrying before continuing to blast outwards.

Even Ning turned slightly pale when he saw this. As for the Paragon of Pills, she was completely terrified by this display of power. "Such power!"

"I didn't expect that I would be so 'lucky' as to encounter something like this in my very first Daoguard Tower." Ning had a solemn look on his face. He had learned many secrets from the Autarchs, and so he knew exactly what this creature which had been imprisoned beneath the Daoguard Tower was.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 8: The Nagapede

The shockwave from the roar blasted outwards from the vast creature, causing space itself to tremble and shudder.

This roar alone was capable of heavily injuring Hegemons, but it was still a bit weaker than Ji Ning's Sword Dao Domain. Long before it even got close to Ning, it was blocked off by those endless streams of sword-light.

"What is this freak?" the Paragon of Pills asked.

"Many dangerous areas in the Sithelands have been sealed off, and some of those areas are places with Daoguard Towers," Ning said. "Daoguard Towers vary in power; there's obviously no way that a

Hegemon's Daoguard Tower would be as strong as an Exalt's Daoguard Tower. This Daoguard Tower we ran into wasn't all that strong; the owner definitely wasn't a Sithe Exalt. However, all Daoguard Towers contain a multitude of attacks, ranging from long-distance strikes, traps to capture foes, close-range attacks, and a final kamikaze attack."

"A kamikaze attack?" The Paragon of Pills was surprised.

"For example, this Daoguard Tower was used to suppress a creature known as a nagapede," Ning said with a laugh. "Even back during the Dawn War, our side only encountered a total of nineteen such creatures. I didn't expect to run into one of them today."

It was quite rare for a Daoguard Tower to be hiding such a powerful creature beneath it, which was why Ning had mocked himself as being 'lucky'.

The Autarchs and the cultivator civilizations all lived in a single enormous celestial entity known as their 'Chaosverse', while the Sithe hailed from a different Chaosverse. Chaosverses were the largest celestial bodies in the Infinite Void, but the Void did hold some other creatures within it as well. On the whole, these creatures were generally less intelligent than beings who lived within the Chaosverses, as only the vitality of a Chaosverse could give rise to truly perfect beings and the incredible figures who would become the Lords of Chaos.

The creatures who lived within the Infinite Void were somewhat inferior... but many of them were born with incredible strength! However, their low level of intelligence made it easy for them to be manipulated and made use of. The Autarchs had once slain two strange creatures who were comparable to Autarchs in power. Both of them came from the Infinite Void.

When the Sithe invaded Ning's Chaosverse, they not only lost the benefit of having the Dao empower their strikes, they were also suppressed by the 'foreign' Chaosverse itself! This was why the local cultivators were able to make their invasion so difficult. But in the Infinite Void? There, they weren't strengthened by the Dao but also weren't suppressed. As a result, they were much more powerful and able to capture many of the strange beings which lived in the Void.

"This creature is fairly powerful. It is probably on par with Sithe Exalts," Ning said.

"On par with Sithe Exalts? What are we supposed to do, then?" A look of worry appeared on the Paragon's face.

"Leave it to me," Ning said.

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The titanic creature's lower centipede-body slithered forward slightly, its giant head focused straight towards the area Ning was in. The Silver Goldhorns, Ning, and the Paragon of Pills were all there.

"Kill! Kill! Kill!" the nagapede growled.

"Can you tell me your name?" Ning said, his voice transmitting directly into the ears of the creature.

The nagapede stared back at Ning with a savage, maddened look in her eyes. Suddenly, she let out a fierce howl and shot forwards, her centipede-like body scuttling forwards like a crawling streak of light that shot straight towards Ning.

“Yet another one which has been driven mad. Many of these creatures caught by the Sithe end up being driven mad by them.” Ning shook his head. These powerful creatures weren’t very intelligent, but they were at least comparable to ordinary mortal adults. This one, however, was more like a madman.

Whoosh! She scuttled forwards at incredible speeds. Ning and the Paragon of Pills were far away, with countless streams of sword-light barring the nagapede’s path towards them. Thus, she turned her attention towards the Silver Goldhorns.

“Kill! Kill! Kill!” She flew next to the nearest Silver Goldhorn, then reached out towards it. Her giant alabaster fingers took a firm grip over the Silver Goldhorn, which howled and struggled fiercely. Alas, it was like a toy that had been firmly gripped by a pair of alabaster pincers. The nagapede clenched her fingers, causing cracks to appear throughout the surface of the Silver Goldhorn’s body.

Clack! Clack! Clack! BOOM! The Silver Goldhorn was crushed to death!

Ning raised an eyebrow when he saw this. “She’s strong.” The Sithe had brought only the most terrifyingly powerful creatures they had found and enslaved in the Infinite Void outside the Chaosverse. Every single one of these creatures possessed absolutely apocalyptic levels of power. Judging from the clench, this nagapede was clearly much stronger than even the Flamewing God. She might be able to rival even the Sithe Exalts!

“Kill! Kill!” She continued to growl this single word as she reached out once more, her fingers moving like a blur to latch onto yet another Silver Goldhorn. Her long, slender white fingers once more clenched tightly, shattering that second Silver Goldhorn.

She was going to kill and destroy everything she saw. By now, she no longer had any clarity of mind; she had gone completely mad. In fact, she had been driven mad and transformed into a creature that only lived for murder even before she had been sealed away by the Daoguard Tower.

“Poor woman.” Ning watched silently from afar as he continued to use his sword-light to keep the Silver Goldhorns at bay.

Time flowed on. Some of the Silver Goldhorns began to flee, but the Sword Dao Domain gave them nowhere to run. Ning drove each and every one of them towards the nagapede, which crushed all of them! There was no point in him subduing and collecting them, after all, as to this very day the cultivators were still unable to find a method for controlling the Silver Goldhorns.

Crunch! Crunch! Crunch! One of the stone pythons was captured by the nagapede, which latched onto it with both hands and tugged at it fiercely to no avail. The nagapede then lowered her head to bite the stone python. CRUNCH! This time, the stone python was broken into two halves.

After roughly the time needed to boil a kettle of tea, all of the Silver Goldhorns and both of the stone pythons had been slain by the titanic nagapede. As for Ning, thus far he had merely maintained his Sword Dao Domain without actually exchanging blows against the creature.

“Kill!” The nagapede focused her full attention upon the distant Ning and the Paragon of Pills. They were the only living creatures left in the region.

“Mistress, please enter my estate-world for a short while,” Ning said.

The Paragon knew that she couldn't afford to be a distraction to Ning. She immediately said, "Be careful." This was definitely the most terrifying creature she had ever seen. She had thought that the Silver Goldhorns were tough, but this giant 'nagapede' had crushed them like bugs.

"Don't worry." Ning waved his hand, collecting the Paragon into his estate-world.

"Kill! KILL! KILL!!!" the titanic nagapede howled, charging towards Ning. There was simply no way for the Sword Dao Domain to hold her back.

Clang! Ning drew a Northbow sword, then murmured softly to himself, "I hope I'm lucky enough to be able to get rid of her within three strikes."

The giant nagapede scuttled forwards towards Ning, emanating an aura of earth-shaking power that was far more baleful than even the Blazesun Ruler's. In the Infinite Void outside the Chaosverses, she had annihilated an entire celestial body in just this manner. She definitely stood at the very apex of power amongst the creatures that resided in the Infinite Void, but upon being captured she had been converted into an insane beast that lived for slaughter.

Unfortunately for Ning, being in this Chaosverse hadn't lessened her power at all! This was because her power came from her own body, rather than the power of the Dao. As a result, there was virtually no difference in power between when she was in the Infinite Void and when she was in a Chaosverse.

Swoosh! A streak of dazzling golden sword-light appeared, swiping forwards in a completely unblockable manner. It pierced straight into the titanic nagapede's body, which was unable to impede it despite being extremely tough.

Slash! Slash! Slash! Sword-light appeared a total of six times inside of her body. Finally, she trembled and her eyes turned dim. Her gigantic body quickly began to shrink as it came to a halt in midair. A streak of light flew out from the injury to her chest. It was Ning, Northbow sword in hand.

"I had to attack a total of six times before I was able to land a fatal blow." Clink! Ning resheathed the Northbow sword back into the scabbard.

"Every part of this creature is an absolute treasure and has many uses." Ning waved his hand, pulling the giant body of the nagapede into his estate-world. Next, he released Azurefiend and the Paragon of Pills.

"Darknorth, just now I believe I saw the nagapede's corpse appear within your estate-world." The Paragon of Pills had a look of surprise and delight on her face when she appeared. She immediately inspected Ning carefully. "You disposed of it quite quickly. It seems you truly have reached an unfathomable level of power."

"Long ago, the Autarchs informed me of the weak spots these creatures possess. That made it much easier for me to deal with this one," Ning said. Only a fool would've engaged the creature in a 'proper' battle. These creatures all had weak spots inside their bodies, but their outer shells were so tough that only Ning and the Autarchs were able to dispose of them with ease.

The short creature who had been in control of the Daoguard Tower had hoped that the powerful creature would be able to exhaust Ning and cause his death in such a manner. In truth, he couldn't be blamed for this belief. Amongst the Sithe, he was a low status servant who had never before encountered a Daolord who had failed the Daomerge yet was in control of an Eternal Omega Dao. He

was operating on guesswork when he believed that the nagapede would be able to exhaust Ning, and indeed if Ning knew nothing at all about the nagapede then she really would've proven to be rather troublesome. The nagapede had been the short creature's only hope of dealing with Darknorth... but it had fallen far short.

"Darknorth, is it time to rescue Annihilation?" the Paragon of Pills asked.

"Not just yet. Right now, it'll be quite hard to break through those dimensions to rescue them," Ning said. The sealed dimensions had been rearranged to form the Dimensional Hallway Chains, which were extremely difficult to break through. "These dimensions were all extremely stable because they drew power from the Daoguard Tower. Now that the Daoguard Tower has been destroyed, they will be like rivers which are running dry. They won't be able to replenish any of the energy which they have used up. Eventually, they'll transform back into ordinary space which can be torn through with ease."

"Now... let's go take a look at what's inside the ruins of the Daoguard Tower." As Ning spoke, he began to fly towards the shattered remnants of the toppled Daoguard Tower.

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 9: Sweeping the Loot

Ji Ning, the Paragon of Pills, and Azurefiend flew over together. All eight floors of the tower had already crumbled apart, with the shattered remnants of the tower forming a pile of rubble atop a foundation of dirt that hovered there in space.

"Darknorth, why is it that the Daoguard Tower crumbled without you even attacking it?" The Paragon of Pills was puzzled. "I distinctly remember that it collapsed on its own."

"This Daoguard Tower wasn't all that strong; I expect that its owner was just a Hegemon," Ning said. "It would be too difficult for him to personally subdue a nagapede like that, and so he used the entire Daoguard Tower to keep it sealed and suppressed! So long as the tower was in good shape, the creature would be unable to break free... but once the tower began to crumble, the nagapede would appear and massacre everything around it."

The Paragon of Pills nodded slowly.

"Now, if this was an Exalt's Daoguard Tower, we really would've been in much more trouble." Ning let out a sigh. "Still, we're merely in the outer perimeter of the Sithelands. Almost all of the Daoguard Towers owned by Sithe Exalts are located in the heartland."

"The Sithe heartland?" The Paragon said, "I've visited the Sithelands on many occasions. I could sense that spacetime was in a state of complete disorder and that there were many places that were unexplored."

"Those places were never meant for cultivators to challenge," Ning said. Very few knew the true details and secrets behind the Dawn War. The Paragon of Pills naturally didn't know the secrets either. Yes, she had learned a few things thanks to her crazy, repeated adventures within the Sithelands, but the heartland was a place which not even the Autarchs would dare trespass lightly.

Rumble... as Ning flew towards the toppled tower, his Sword Dao Domain rippled outwards, brushing away the pieces of rubble as he closely inspected the remains of the tower.

“Now this is a fun little toy.” Ning removed a dark red globe which had been affixed to one of the top floors. This globe was the object which had unleashed that terrifying attack of light.

“Once it accumulates and stores enough energy, it can unleash an attack of incredible power.” Ning chuckled. “This is a decent Sithe weapon, Mistress. Azurefiend, help me search through the rubble. I want to sweep this place clean.”

“Heh heh, my pleasure! Master, perhaps you would be willing to bestow some of the treasures you are uninterested in upon me,” Azurefiend said, a look of utter shamelessness on his wizened old features.

“Depends on my mood.” Ning chuckled. He wasn’t just going to give this shameless old man what he wanted.

“I’ve never encountered a Daoguard Tower before. In fact, I’ve never even heard of it before you mentioned it.” The Paragon of Pills was filled with curiosity as well. The dangers she had experienced here, especially the terrifying nagapede, had all served to ensure that she understood that this site was very different from the other Sithe ruins she had visited in the past.

The previous ruins she had scoured had been unoccupied. This time, she ran into one with a controller. If it hadn’t been for Ning, she truly would’ve been doomed this time.

Boom! Bang! Rip! Ning, Azurefiend, and the Paragon of Pills happily dismantled the remainders of the Daoguard Tower, taking out all usable Sithe artifacts and even a few unusable ones.

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Daoguard Towers were exclusively employed by extremely powerful Sithe, who placed many of their treasures inside the towers. Some of the weapons could even come together in incredibly powerful combinations.

During the previous battle, Ning hadn’t even entered the Daoguard tower. As a result, many of the powerful internal defenses hadn’t even been used! None of the external weapons were capable of killing Ning from a distance of a billion kilometers. At this distance, Ning was able to dodge with ease even the quickest of attacks. Otherverse Lords might not be able to dodge, but Ning was a different story.

“Not bad.”

“This one is decent.”

“Now this hammer is scary powerful.” Ning and the other two continued to loot the tower, with Azurefiend and the Paragon of Pills occasionally testing out the items they found.

The Paragon of Pills was fairly blasé, as she had adventured through the Sithelands many times and already owned multiple Sithe weapons. Azurefiend, however, didn’t own any Sithe weapons at all. Even the suppressive black chains were merely on loan from Ning, who had yet to actually ‘gift’ them.

After spending a full hour combing through the ruins, the team completely looted the area clean. They even took many fragments which were completely unusable. They found a total of twenty-one usable Sithe weapons, and they all had different effects. Some were actually used to scry and scan.

“That is a lot of fine weapons,” Azurefiend said excitedly.

“We found so much treasure from this one site.” The Paragon of Pills was delighted as well.

Ning, however, was rather disappointed. “Is this it? This is much less than what I expected. We didn’t find a single major artifact at all.”

Realmslord Windgrace’s ‘Blacksun’, the castle that was used to defend the Three Realms, the city of Houwu in the Blazesun Domain, the Blazesun Ruler’s giant warship... all these counted as ‘major artifacts’. In contrast, the treasures which Ning had acquired after combing through the tower were all quite mediocre. There wasn’t even a single major artifact. All of the treasures combined were probably just barely on par with the Blacksun in value.

“This is already a good haul,” the Paragon of Pills said.

“No. According to the Autarchs’ records, even the most ordinary of Daoguard Towers would have more than this,” Ning said. “I suspected early on that the original owner of the Daoguard Tower had slipped away long ago. Now, I’m sure of it. The original owner must have taken the most valuable treasures out of the Daoguard Tower, leaving behind just the ones he was unable to physically remove from the tower itself.”

The Paragon of Pills cast a puzzled glance at the armor and items left behind by the deceased short creature. “Isn’t that dead Sithe the owner?”

“Probably not,” Ning said. “A mere roar from the nagapede was enough to transform him into dust. He probably wasn’t at the Hegemon level of power! Mistress, you might not know this, but amongst the Sithe only Hegemons can build Daoguard Towers. And, to be more precise, only an incredibly small fraction of Hegemons are qualified to do this.”

In the Sithe Chaosverse, weak Eternal Emperors were all permitted to build their own Daoguard towers... but here, they were invaders! They had invaded Ning’s Chaosverse, and their resources were extremely limited. Building Daoguard Towers was extremely difficult, and erecting a weak one was pointless. Thus, only the most supreme of Sithe Hegemons as well as the Sithe Exalts were permitted to build Daoguard Towers, which they used as focal points for massacring unsuspecting cultivators.

“Azurefiend, go and bind the estate-world that Sithe left behind. Let’s see if there are any interesting treasures inside of it,” Ning said.

“Right on.” Azurefiend excitedly flew over and began to bind the estate-world. Right now, he was on his absolute best behavior in front of Ning. This was partially due to Ning’s overwhelming power, partially to convince Ning to give him more pointers, and partially because he hoped that he might be lucky enough to receive a Sithe treasure reward from Ning.

“Whoah.” Azurefiend’s wizened old face suddenly twisted in shock, his eyes bulging out. “That is a LOT.”

“Wipe that freaky look off your face. What treasures does it hold?” Ning laughed.

“So all the treasures were hidden here! Master, take a look at all these treasures!” Azurefiend waved his hand, causing a series of treasures to appear and levitate in the air before them. Light shone from the Paragon of Pills’ eyes, and even the formerly-calm Ning revealed a look of shock.

Twenty... twenty-one... twenty-two... a total of twenty-nine treasures appeared before them. There were even TWO realmships in this cache!

“So all the good treasures were here.” The Paragon of Pills let out an amazed sigh, then turned to stare with shock at a gray spear that was covered with a fiery red floral pattern. “Isn’t that the Exterminatus Spear of the Almighty Seeker of Defeat?”

“The Exterminatus Spear?” Azurefiend was shocked as well. He stared intently at the spear, then said, “Paragon, are you sure? Is it possible that this is another, similar weapon?”

“There’s no way I’m wrong about this. When the Almighty Seeker of Defeat first acquired this spear, it didn’t have that red floral pattern on it. The Seeker added it later on. Supposedly, he put that fiery red floral pattern on every single weapon he used. The floral pattern probably had some sort of special meaning for him.” The Paragon of Pills shook her head. “He died long ago, and I heard he died in the Sithelands. I never would’ve thought that he actually died here.”

Ning nodded. “That explains it all. Most of these treasures were probably left behind by the cultivators who invaded this place over the course of many aeons. That short Sithe collected all of their treasures after killing them. I was wondering why there were TWO realmships in that estate-world. It seems that they came from slain cultivators.”

The Paragon of Pills let out a sigh.

“Mistress, take whatever you need,” Ning said with a laugh.

“To be honest, these are of no use to me.” The Paragon of Pills looked at Ning. “Darknorth, I think you know what I want above all else. As for these treasures? Even if I took all of them, they probably still wouldn’t be enough to convince an Autarch to help me out.”

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 10: Space Sword Dao

“I have a request to make. I know it is a bit excessive, but I truly am out of options.” The Paragon of Pills looked at Ji Ning. “I have no choice but to shamelessly ask you to help me out, Darknorth. Please ask an Autarch to revive those three brothers of mine.”

The Paragon of Pills rarely begged others. She was, by nature, an extremely proud person. However, reviving her three brothers was virtually her entire reason for existence, something which she wanted above everything else. It was much like how Ning desperately wished to be able to revive his wife Yu Wei!

The Paragon of Pills had repeatedly risked her life in diving into the Sithe ruins, but she still wasn’t even close to having as much treasure as the Autarch had demanded for his aid. The Autarch had asked for a thousand realmships worth of treasure! This was an incredible request, so high as to cause her to feel despair. This was why she had become even more crazed in her pursuit of treasure.

Now, she was able to sense hope when she looked at Ning. She viewed Ning as she would a son, and in her heart she truly didn’t want to ask this of him. However, she really was out of options. Thus, she had ‘shamelessly’ begged him for help.

“Mistress.” Ning knew how the Paragon of Pills felt. He smiled. “Mistress, don’t worry. I’ll definitely go ask the Autarchs to help out. I can’t speak on their behalf, but I can say that there is a 90% chance they’ll agree.”

“90% chance?” The Paragon’s heart swelled with indescribable excitement. Even her face turned ruddy. She had been waiting for far, far too long. For the sake of this goal, she had nearly driven herself insane. In pursuit of this goal, she had accomplished many things which were viewed as miracles. When she had first gained eternity, she was an ordinary Eternal Emperor, not a Hegemon... but she had managed to slowly train to the Hegemon level, then reach incredibly high levels of skill in many different Daos. All of this was for the sake of reviving her three brothers.

Ning smiled upon seeing this. The reason why he had said there was a 90% chance was merely because he hadn’t actually asked any of the Autarchs yet. In truth, Ning knew that the Autarchs were desperately looking for ways to help him out in order to express their gratitude. Bring something back to life? This was a fairly minor ask. So long as it was possible, the Autarchs would definitely agree!

“Once we leave the Sithelands, I’ll immediately ask the Autarchs to help out,” Ning said.

“Darknorth.” The Paragon of Pills’ entire aura seemed to have transformed. In the past, she was incomparably cold and remote... but now, a hint of lively fire seemed to course through her.

“Haha. Now, Mistress, can you go ahead and choose the treasures you want?” Ning said.

“I already have multiple Sithe weapons. A few more won’t make much of a difference,” the Paragon refused. She felt that she had already taken too much advantage of Ning. She couldn’t accept any further gifts.

Seeing this, Ning nodded. “Ah, but you don’t have a realmship yet, right?”

The Paragon blinked.

“Realmships make life much more convenient. Take this one.” Ning waved his hand, sending a realmship to float in front of the Paragon of Pills.

The Paragon of Pills no longer held back. She immediately said, “Fine, I’ll accept this.” She truly did feel as though destiny was a marvelous thing. When she had led Ning to the Trileaf Realm, he was just a child... and now, this child had completely changed her destiny.

“This suit of armor can be used to cover your entire body. It is highly defensive, but it’ll also increase your attack power dramatically. It’s quite multifunctional. With this by your side, you should be able to survive even an enraged Otherverse Lord.” Ning waved his hand, choosing a heavy suit of coppery red armor and sending it over to Azurefiend.

Azurefiend was rather stunned. He truly did badly desire a Sithe treasure, but he himself felt that he had done too little for Ning to warrant one yet. He felt a bit embarrassed to be given one.

“Master, I’ll accept it.” Azurefiend had a solemn look on his face. “I’ve been alive for so many years, but I never had a Sithe weapon to call my own. I, Azurefiend, shall never forget your benevolence, Master.”

In his heart, Azurefiend silently decided that although his master would one day perish, he would continue to safeguard his master's family and friends.

"It is just a toy to me. No need to get too emotional." Ning waved his hand, collecting all of the other treasures. He didn't really care about them, because his original plan had been to wait until the later stages of his truesoul's disintegration before doing a bit of adventuring in the Sithelands. Since he was already here, he was going to continue wandering through the Sithelands after asking the Autarchs to revive the Paragon of Pills' three brothers.

In other words, he would have plenty more treasures coming his way! Hegemons might have to risk their lives to acquire Sith treasures, but Ning was able to acquire them with ease.

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After fully looting the Daoguard Tower, Ning turned to stare at the many dimensional hallways barring their path. "These dimensional hallways have been completely sealed off. For now, there's no way out. If I used all my power, it would take me ten or twenty sword-strikes to carve a path open for us, but it really isn't worth it. Now that the Daoguard Tower has been destroyed, they no longer have a power source and will quickly use up the little energy they have."

Rumble... his awesome Sword Dao Domain descended and began to furiously smash against the distant dimensional hallways. The criss-crossing hallways were able to endure the assault, but flickers of light began to appear on their surfaces. Clearly, they were using up a great deal of power to resist.

"Master, how long will it take?" Azurefiend asked curiously.

"How should I know?" Ning laughed. "Less than a chaos cycle."

Ning was able to keep his Sword Dao Domain continuously activated. It drew from the power of the Chaosverse itself; not one iota of Ning's own energies were consumed. It would last for as long as he wanted it to last! While doing so, Ning began a period of silent meditation and cultivation, as did the Paragon of Pills and Azurefiend.

Time flowed on, one year after another. The dimensional hallways continued to hold firm; clearly, they had been infused with quite a bit of power. Over eight million years went by in the blink of an eye.

Rumble... a ripple suddenly spread out with Ning at its center. The Paragon of Pills and Azurefiend were seated in the lotus position atop boulders within the tower ruins, and they both opened their eyes as the ripple washed past them. They both felt a thrill of fear go down their spine, and both sighed at how incredible Darknorth was! One was Ning's retainer, while the other was essentially one of Ning's teachers, but both marveled at how unfathomably powerful he had become.

At their level, they couldn't even truly understand how terrifying Ning's Sword Dao was. Just the tiniest bit of leakage from its aura was enough to cause them to feel fear. When that invisible ripple washed past them, they felt as though invisible blades were slicing at their bodies.

"The Space Sword Dao." Ning opened his eyes, then reached out with his hand. Whoosh! An ethereal sword appeared above the palm of his hand, emanating ripples of dimensional power.

Prior to coming here, Ning had spent three thousand chaos cycles wandering the Chaosverse with his daughter and had nearly finished infusing his Dao of Space into his Eternal Omega Sword Dao. After seeing the dimensional hallways, he gained new insights into the Dao of Space. This sped up the infusion process, allowing him to break through and master his Space Sword Dao.

The Space Sword Dao was highly suited for dimensional travel, allowing him to tear through space like it was nothing more than tofu.

From this day forth, the amount of distance he could travel when he used his sword to tear through space would skyrocket. The Autarch of Annihilation, 'Autarch Ekong', was not particularly skilled in the Dao of Space, and so he wouldn't be able to travel as far or as fast as Ning!

Ning had reached the Hegemonic level in the Dao of Space long ago, after all. Now, he had infused it all into his Sword Dao and formed the Space Sword Dao.

"Mastering the Space Sword Dao clearly took much more time than the Lightning Sword Dao or the Five Elements Sword Dao." Ning shook his head to himself. "But the further down this road I go, the more time will be needed. I just don't have enough time."

With each improvement, Ning could sense that his foundation was broadening and that he was getting slightly closer to success. Ning felt certain that if he had enough time, he had a very good chance of reaching the ultimate pinnacle via this route.

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Another half-million years went by after Ning mastered the Space Sword Dao.

Finally... Crack! Crack! Crack! The dimensional hallways that had been for many years just barely able to endure Ning's sword-light finally began to twist, shudder, and crack.

Looks of delight appeared on the faces of Ning, Azurefiend, and the Paragon of Pills.

"Haha, we've finally broken through!" Azurefiend grinned. "I thought that we'd actually spend an entire chaos cycle here."

"I'm impressed it managed to last as long as it did. I kept my Sword Dao Domain active this entire time, assaulting them without pause, but they still managed to last for many years. Honestly, if I used the brute-force method, I don't think twenty blows of the sword would've been enough. I probably would've had to kill myself," Ning said with a laugh. As he spoke, some of the dimensional hallways began to completely break apart and collapse.

Countless dimensional hallways began to break apart and crumble. The Dimensional Hallway Lock was an extremely complicated technique which not even Ning could solve, despite his mastery of the Space Sword Dao... but now that its energies had been exhausted, it was still going to crumble.

Soon, all of the dimensional hallways vanished without a trace, leaving behind just a few pocket dimensions which hovered in the skies like lonely little islands.

Thanks to the karmic lines tying them together, Ning knew exactly which pocket dimension Lord Annihilation was in.

“Let’s see what the other dimensions hold,” Ning said with a laugh. With but a thought, he sent out countless streams of sword-light to surround and assault the hundreds of pocket dimensions, piercing through them to reveal what lay within.

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Book 41: The Daoguard Tower Chapter 11: Tamed

Ji Ning, the Paragon of Pills, and Azurefiend all stared at the pocket dimensions as the streaks of sword-light pierced through them. They instantly saw that two of them held the two companions of the Paragon. One held Lord Annihilation, whose eyes were filled with murderous bloodlust. The other was filled with a gray-robed woman who had silvery hair.

Lord Annihilation raised his head to stare at the outside world, a murderous look in his eyes. The gray-robed woman turned to stare at Ning as well.

“Annihilation!” the Paragon of Pills barked coldly. “Wake up!”

Lord Annihilation’s gaze slowly returned to his normal calm. Swoosh! Swoosh! Both he and the gray-robed woman immediately flew out of their pocket dimensions.

“Thank you, Paragon of Pills. Thank you, Daolord Darknorth.” Lord Annihilation had a delighted look on his face and behaved with tremendous respect.

“What was going on just now?” Ning was rather surprised.

“Annihilation was being constantly assaulted by illusions. Every so often, he’d be drawn into a berserk state,” the Paragon said. “However, each time he would eventually regain his clarity of mind after giving vent to his rage.”

Lord Annihilation said in a rather embarrassed manner, “But the amount of time I was able to remain clear-minded was slowly shrinking. If I was trapped for a few hundred more chaos cycles, I probably would’ve completely lost myself to the madness. I only escaped that fate because you saved me, Daolord Darknorth.”

Ning continued to keep his Sword Dao Domain active, using it to scan through the secrets of that dimensional pocket. He couldn’t help but secretly sigh in amazement at what he found. The illusions had been set up in a truly intricate and marvelous way which would allow them to silently and soundlessly penetrate a prisoner’s defenses, then affect his mind. However, Ning suspected that many of the formations in this Daoguard Tower had not been personally set down by the master of the tower.

The Sithe had major powers who specialized in formations or artificing. They would mass produce these things, then auction them off. The ‘Dimensional Hallway Lock’, for example, was something which only a Sithe Exalt could create.

“Tia greets you, Daolord Darknorth.” The silvery-haired gray-robed woman flew over and bowed respectfully.

Ning knew that this woman was viewed by many as being just as ‘crazy’ as the Paragon of Pills. She often went adventuring in the Sithelands. However, she was different from the Paragon, who was more distant and cold. Hegemon Tia was calm and tranquil, as though nothing could cause a stir in her soul.

She was someone who would react calmly to anything and everything. Even if she herself was about to die, she would respond with this calm equanimity.

“Master, look over there.” Azurefiend pointed towards a distant pocket dimension.

Ning, the Paragon, Tia, and Lord Annihilation all turned to look. This was a dimension filled with black mist. Inside, there was a towering mountain that had a beautiful palace located at the very peak. There were even a few servants in front of the palace.

“It seems rather lavish. I imagine that’s where the Sithe normally resided,” Ning said. “Come, let’s go take a look.” Ning’s group quickly flew through the air towards that floating pocket dimension.

The palace was quite beautiful. Some servants were busy keeping it clean, while others were standing watch. As soon as Ning’s group landed, they all bowed respectfully and called out: “Masters.” All of them, however, seemed rather puzzled.

“They are all Daolords.” The Paragon of Pills was rather startled. She asked, “You’ve never met any of us. Why do you call us ‘Masters’?”

The servants exchanged glances, rather nervous. The Paragon of Pills frowned. “You were able to become Daolords. How is it that you are this spineless?” She pointed at the old Daolord who seemed to be the most powerful. “You. Answer my question.”

The old man said respectfully, “Everyone who comes here is a ‘Master’. We are eternal servants.”

Ning stared intently at them, scrying the pasts of these servants. These Daolords all felt rather terrified when they saw Ning staring at them like this. They felt as though this white-robed Daolord was able to completely see through them. This sensation caused their hearts to quiver.

“They all used to live within the estate-world.” Ning sighed. “Afterwards, they were chosen by the Sithe to come here and serve. All of them have been trained to be incredibly obedient.”

“Since when were Daolords so easily tamed?” Azurefiend was rather surprised. Most Samsara Daolords would rather die than submit.

“Not just Daolords. Even Hegemons have been tamed.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh. When he scried the pasts of these Daolords, he was also able to see some other information regarding this palace.

“All of you, come out!” Ning barked, sending out his Sword Dao Domain to press down upon every inch of the palace. The formerly-quiet palace suddenly changed, with five figures flying out of it like streaks of light. All of them had awesome auras of power. They were all either Hegemons or Otherverse Lords, and their eyes were completely dead and devoid of all emotion.

“This is Master’s estate. How dare you trespass here?” The five figures were filled with malevolence.

“Are you... Lord Starbearer?” The Paragon of Pills was able to recognize one of the Otherverse Lords.

“Brother Skypillar?” Hegemon Azurefiend called out in shock, “Y-you... do you recognize me?”

“Azurefiend?” A red-haired man replied coldly, “Of course I recognize you. However, this is my master’s territory. Now that you have come here, you must die.”

“Kill!” All five figures quickly charged forwards, seeking to slay Ning and the others.

“Freeze!” Ning commanded softly. Instantly, four of the five charging figures were completely paralyzed by the suppressive might of Ning’s Sword Dao Domain. Only the Otherverse Lord who the Paragon had called ‘Lord Starbearer’ was able to continue his charge towards Ning, thanks to his entire body being covered by the power of his otherverse. However, Ning was able to send out incredibly powerful blows of sword-light to keep him at bay with ease.

“Azurefiend, chain him down,” Ning commanded.

“Yes, Master!” Azurefiend had been patiently waiting for a good opportunity. When he saw Ning knock down Lord Starbearer with a streak of sword-light, Azurefiend immediately attacked with all six black chains. He quickly bound Lord Starbearer in layers of chains, ensuring that he was no longer able to move at all.

“Brother Skypillar, what’s wrong with you? We journeyed together and adventured together. Have you forgotten?” Hegemon Azurefiend couldn’t believe that this good friend of his would attack him. He had wandered through many places, and Hegemon Skypillar was someone he counted amongst his life-and-death friends.

“All who offend Master must die!” the bound Hegemon Skypillar said through clenched teeth, a frenzied look on his face. As for the others... their eyes remained completely dead, but they also had berserk looks on their faces. They truly wanted to kill Ning and his team.

Ning suddenly understood what was going on. He let out a sigh. “Although they kept their memories, they’ve already lost their sense of self. They’ve been tamed and transformed into a type of special Sithe golem.”

“Golem?” The Paragon of Pills and the others didn’t understand.

“Their bodies were unchanged and they kept all their powers and memories... but they’ve completely lost their id, their ego, their sense of self. They are like golems in that they will simply do whatever their master commands. They will obey any order their master gives them,” Ning explained. “They might be ‘alive’, but in reality they are like golems. Those two stone pythons who attacked me earlier were also living creatures who were transformed into golems.”

Most golems were created via magic treasures. The Sithe, however... they were able to convert living beings into golems.

“For all intents and purposes, they died long ago.” Ning looked at the five powerful cultivators, sighing at the savage, murderous look on their faces. “Let us grant them rest at long last.”

Slash. Slash. Slash. Slash. Slash.

All five were ground to dust by Ning’s sword-light. Even Lord Starbearer was slain, due to the black chains suppressing his power and preventing him from fighting back.

A look of heart-ache and grief was on Azurefiend’s old face.

“Hegemons and Otherverse Lords can be transformed into golems?” The Paragon of Pills shook her head.

“It is extremely difficult to convert powerful creatures into golems, and the stronger their Dao-heart is the better. For these five to have been converted is a sign that their Dao-hearts simply weren’t strong enough. In addition, the conversion process requires an extremely long period of time. The process has to be slow and gradual, without the cultivators even noticing anything. If the cultivators knew that their terrifying fate was to be transformed into golems, they would probably commit suicide instead. That’s why the process has to be gradual; not the slightest bit of haste is acceptable! By the time the cultivator realizes what has happened, it is already too late,” Ning said. This was part of the information which the Autarchs had provided to him.

Lord Annihilation was greatly shocked by this. “Then when I was being repeatedly assaulted by those illusions... was that part of the taming and transforming process?”

“Most likely, yes.” Ning nodded.

“I could sense some charming spells aimed at me in my pocket dimension as well,” the Paragon of Pills said. “But I just stayed there without daring to move anywhere. It didn’t seem to affect me much.”

“Given how strong your Dao-heart is, Mistress, there is no way the Sithe would’ve been able to convert you.” Ning glanced at the palace. “I can sense that this palace holds quite a few prisoners inside. Almost all of them are Daolords who refused to obey orders, which is why they were imprisoned and tortured by that short Sithe. I can also sense that a Hegemon has been imprisoned there as well. Most likely, the taming process failed with him.”