

Desolate 1411

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 42: The Five Truncheon Chapter 16: Charging Into the Elder Hall

In the end, Ji Ning elected to begin silently training in the Spacetime Sword Dao atop that mountain peak within the Sacred Mountains.

“He’s training AGAIN?”

“This Daolord Darknorth is...!”

Bowenya and the others were so angry, their teeth hurt. Unfortunately, they wouldn’t dare to actually charge out and attack.

Ning had long ago mastered his Space Sword Dao and had reached Hegemony in both the Dao of Space and the Dao of Time.

“The Spacetime Sword Dao...” Ning silently visualized how it could be manifested. Twenty-six chaos cycles went past without him even realizing it.

Finally, Ning opened his eyes and shook his head slightly. He had made significant improvements at first, but now he had reached a major bottleneck and was stuck. He was far from being able to succeed in this Dao, which would most likely take tens of thousands of chaos cycles. He couldn’t waste all of his time here. The ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique was even more important.

“My true body only has six hundred chaos cycles of life left. I have no chance of mastering the Spacetime Sword Dao.” Ning rose to his feet, his eyes flashing sharply. “Then I suppose I’ll just have to take the risk and try to find a chance for myself.”

Ning turned to stare at the distant, towering Elder Hall. “Twenty-six chaos cycles have gone past, but Exalt Bowenya refuses to come out. He’s quite steadfast.” If the Exalt came out, he would almost certainly be defeated. Bowenya cared immensely about his own life; why would he come out?

“He’s coming! He’s coming!”

“He’s headed our way.” Bowenya and the others had been forced to watch as Ning had trained for multiple chaos cycles. Now, Ning was coming for them once more, but this time they didn’t feel too worried.

“Let’s see what this Daolord is planning to do,” Bowenya said calmly.

Swoosh. Ning reached the Elder Hall, then rested his hand against its outer surface. Moments later, he silently blinked past its outer shell and entered it.

“He came inside!!!” Exalt Bowenya’s eyes bulged out in shock. Moments later, they became filled with wild joy as he ordered, “All Hegemons and Emperors, prepare to follow my previous instructions! Stand guard over your stations and attack Daolord Darknorth. Worsen his injuries and make sure he dies within my Daoguard Tower!”

“Yes, Exalt!” The response came from throughout the Daoguard Tower.

“Ahahaha... Daolord Darknorth, you actually dared to come inside, eh? Even your Autarchs would probably be trapped for an extremely long period of time if they dared to enter my Daoguard Tower. You? A Daolord who failed the Daomerge? Haha... you’ll definitely die!” Bowenya was filled with confidence. He immediately turned and strode into the air, then vanished without a trace.

Within the very center of the Daoguard Tower was a dark and secluded region. This region was filled with an enormous millstone-like formation-base which was slowly swiveling at all times. It emanated ripples of spacetime, and Bowenya was standing atop it. This was the center of the Daoguard Tower, and the main control mechanism for this entire hidden dimension.

“This time... I, Bowenya, shall have accomplished something incredible for the Sithe! I’ll be able to truly transcend my service and gain freedom. Daolord Darknorth, you are going to die!” Bowenya stared towards countless globe-shaped illusions that were in front of him. One of the many globes was displaying a white-robed youth who bore a black sheath on his back – Ji Ning.

The many globe-shaped illusions represented the true shape of this Daoguard Tower. It was a spacetime maze!

.....

After blinking into the Daoguard Tower, Ning saw a brand new world appear before him. He was within a dark-red cave that was merely a million kilometers in size. This region was covered with countless flowing runes that brimmed with fiery energy. There was nothing within this region save for Ning himself.

“Up, down, left, right, forwards, backwards...” Ning stood there in midair, scanning his surroundings. He could vaguely sense that this region was connected to six other spacetime continuums.

“It doesn’t seem to matter which direction I choose.” At Ning’s level, his premonitions were extremely accurate. In truth, these ‘senses’ were a reflection of the whispers of the Chaosverse itself. Ning truly was blessed and doted upon by the prime essences of the Chaosverse, and so his senses were extremely keen. Even here in a spacetime maze, his senses would help tell him which was the best path to take.

Rumble... suddenly, all of the mystic runes within this region of one million kilometers began to flare up, producing dark-red flames that swarmed the region as they flew towards Ning. Ning was surrounded by his Sword Dao Domain, but the flames were omnipresent.

“What powerful flames.” Ning drew a Northbow sword. Sword-light spun out as he poured his divine power into his sword, using the Earth Sword Dao. It formed a triple layer of rippling yellow energy which surrounded him and protected him. The flames blazed away against him, but the earthen yellow energy simply rippled slightly while managing to endure.

Of Ning’s many Daos, the Earth Sword Dao was the best suited for dealing with these corrosive dark-red flames. However, its power would quickly be used up at an alarming rate. Most likely, it would be consumed within ten seconds.

“These flames are incredibly powerful. I imagine even the Blazesun Ruler would be roasted to death by them.” Ning quickly began to inspect this spacetime continuum in detail. However, it took him three

strikes with his sword to defend against the flames before he was able to locate the critical points to this spacetime continuum.

Boom! Boom! Ning began to furiously attack using his Space Sword Dao. His first sword scissored through space like paper, doing the groundwork necessary to allow his second sword to tear through this spacetime continuum.

Whoosh! A giant gaping hole in spacetime appeared. Ning immediately darted into it, then stared at the void before him.

Ning raised his head to glance at the 'skies'. These spacetime continuums all seemed to be globe-shaped, and the spacetime globes were all linked together. There were dimensional seams between them as well, and Ning was within one of those seams. As he flew through the seams, he carefully inspected the area around him, but in the end was only able to discover a total of four spacetime continuums. Everything else was completely blocked off by these four.

"So if I wish to advance, I have to enter one of these four?" Ning hesitated. Suddenly... crack! A bolt of lightning shot out from one of the nearby spacetime continuums, striking towards Ning and forcing him to use his Lightning Sword Dao to defend.

"Daolord Darknorth, even if you don't enter my maze you'll still die," a cold voice rang out.

Ning quickly understood that Hegemons were using treasures within the Daoguard Tower to assault him! If he entered one of the continuums, he would have to face the dangers inherent to each continuum. If he remained outside, he would be ambushed and assaulted by the Hegemons and Emperors.

Ning glanced at the spacetime around him. "What a formidable formation." Swoosh! Ning drilled into one of the spacetime continuums, flying inside. The spacetime membrane didn't block his path, allowing him to enter with ease.

This particular continuum was one filled with a boundless howling wind which felt as sharp as daggers. The wind cut everything within the continuum to ribbons, and Ning was forced to use his Water Sword Dao to defend.

.....

Danger was everywhere. Death was omnipresent. Ning's only choice was to defend while searching for ways to defeat the mechanisms inherent to each continuum! It must be remembered that within this spacetime maze, every single spacetime continuum contained a powerful offensive formation. As a result, they weren't exceptionally stable. These Daoguard Towers weren't built to trap foes; if trapping the foe was the goal, the Sacred Realm and Purgatory was more than enough. They existed to actively kill enemies!

Alas, they were invaders into this Chaosverse. As a result, the Daoguard Towers were only able to draw upon the energy provided by the local generator they had set up. There was a limit to how much power they could draw. Back in their own homeland, they could draw upon the power of the entire Chaosverse. Only then would they be at peak power! Every single spacetime continuum would become dramatically more powerful. Even Autarchs would be attritioned to death.

As for now? It would be hard for this Daoguard Tower to slay an Autarch, but it could certainly trap one for an extended period of time. As for killing a Daolord whose lifespan was limited... Bowenya felt certain that it would be quite easy.

“This one here.” Ning broke out of another spacetime continuum, following his premonitions and advancing without hesitation towards a brand-new continuum.

His senses wouldn’t deceive him. This was definitely the path which led him closest to where he needed to go. If he followed this path, he would definitely be able to reach the core of this Daoguard Tower!

“Hahaha! Daolord Darknorth, if my count is correct, you’ve already attacked more than fifty times.” Exalt Bowenya’s voice echoed within this mist-filled continuum. “As expected of the first master of an Eternal Omega Dao in this Chaosverse. You truly are impressive, and your senses truly are sharp! Even in a spacetime maze, you are able to find the best path available.”

Ning completely ignored him, choosing to instead focus on analyzing the new region he was in. He wanted to find the center of this tower, then assault it with all his power. His strikes against it would be far more effective than his strikes anywhere else; two or three strikes would be enough to grant him escape.

“But even if you can find the best path, it’ll be of no use. You’ll die of exhaustion before you ever reach it.” Exalt Bowenya roared with laughter. “Let me tell you a little secret. You are still at the outer edges of the spacetime maze. You aren’t even close to me yet!”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 42: The Five Truncheon Chapter 17: The Epiphany Within the Spacetime Maze

Ji Ning did in fact feel anxious. He could sense that although he had indeed chosen the quickest path, the journey before him would be a long one and he would need to traverse over a thousand different spacetime continuums.

He had to strike at least four or five times within each spacetime continuum to break free. Some cost him seven or eight strikes! He had only been fighting for a short while but had already struck over fifty times. This was rapidly depleting his lifespan! Although Ning had expected that this would be dangerous, there was nothing he could do upon being trapped within the spacetime maze.

“I didn’t have to use full power on each strike, but I really don’t have many strikes left in me. My truesoul is crumbling faster and faster now. I can’t predict when the final collapse will come.” Ning was worried. More and more cracks had appeared upon his truesoul, hastening the day when it all came crashing down. These cracks were accumulating at an alarming rate!

Ning’s lifespan was rapidly decreasing, but he didn’t slow down in the slightest. He wouldn’t give up until the last moment came.

Drip. Drip. Drip. Ning was within a world of rain. His sword-light cut a hole into the world, allowing him to flee this spacetime continuum.

He had always been charging forwards fearlessly, but suddenly he came to a halt and turned backwards to look into the rain.

For some strange reason... perhaps because he knew he was about to die... when Ning saw the rain, he couldn't help but think back to his father and mother. His father had personally taught him the [Raindrop Sutra] sword-arts. Later on, Ning had then understood the True Meaning of the Raindrop and embarked upon the path of the Dao...

Whoosh. The giant gaping hole behind him began to rapidly close as spacetime reached out to merge together and seal the breach. The hole began to shrink in size, and he was able to see less and less of the rain behind him.

Suddenly, Ning's entire body froze. When he saw how spacetime reached out to 'heal' that wound, he suddenly had the feeling that spacetime had a type of life and vitality of its own, as though it was a living being that was struggling to grow, develop, and heal.

"Spacetime." Ning stood there, an epiphany going off in his mind that illuminated his thoughts.

Exalt Bowenya frowned from his position at the very center of the Daoguard Tower as he stared at the small, illusory figure who stood within one of many illusory globes before him. "Why did Daolord Darknorth suddenly come to a halt in the dimensional seams? Hmph. Does he really think he'll last longer if he doesn't go into the next spacetime continuum?"

"Fuze, attack Daolord Darknorth," Exalt Bowenya instructed.

"Understood." Upon hearing the order, a Sithe Emperor who was lying in wait within the dimensional seams of the spacetime maze immediately prepared to launch an attack with the treasures within the Daoguard tower that had been assigned to him.

.....

Ning was in the middle of a prajna-state of epiphany. When you were weak, you might be unable to control yourself upon entering such a state. In fact, you might even forget the entire world around you, including any danger you were in.

Ning, however, had reached an Autarch's level of insight. Even though he was in a prajna-state, he was able to remain somewhat aware of his surroundings.. He first accelerated time by 100x around him, then carefully continued his meditations.

Not just him; even the black-robed Primaltwin in the outside world had also entered a prajna-state.

Swish! A streak of black wind howled straight towards Ning. The meditating Ning was able to divert a bit of his attention to dealing with it, using the Water Sword Dao to form a curtain of water which protected and surrounded him.

"He's still not leaving?" Exalt Bowenya was able to watch everything from afar. When he saw that Ning remained within the dimensional seams, he immediately ordered: "Continue. Do not stop! Since he has chosen to remain within the seams, bombard him with attacks until he dies."

The black wind attacked again and again, but Ning continued to stand there without moving. If he entered a new spacetime continuum, he would have to deal with incessant attacks which would come from every direction. This black wind, however, was only able to attack roughly once every five seconds.

Each time Ning used his sword-arts, he would be able to defend for roughly twenty seconds! During this period of time, Ning kept himself at an 100x temporal rate while continuing to maintain his prajna-state.

Time continued to flow on. After Ning executed the eighteenth stance from his sword-arts, his eyes suddenly lit up.

“Spacetime is alive and sentient in its own way. So this is the Spacetime Sword Dao!” Ning’s heart was filled with joy.

If he had been forced to just sit in the outside world and quietly ponder the mysteries of spacetime, it truly would have taken him over ten thousand chaos cycles to understand all of this! But he was in a life-and-death state in a region where spacetime had been manipulated to an unbelievable degree. Thanks to his mastery of the Space Sword Dao and the many insights it had brought, Ning had also come to understand some of the mysteries behind this spacetime maze, which had been developed by the Sithe Lord of Chaos and was incredibly profound and abstruse.

All of this had resulted in Ning entering a prajna-state, and in doing so he had shattered through all the obstacles in his path, allowing him to break through to the next level. Oftentimes, aeons of normal cultivation wouldn’t be as effective as a single moment of epiphany.

It had been a long, long time since Ning had entered a prajna-state. Generally speaking, the higher a level of insight you reached, the harder it would be for you to truly enter such a state. Back when he was young and living in the Three Realms, he had entered this state on multiple occasions. However, ever since he had become the incredible Daolord Darknorth, master of the Eternal Omega Sword Dao, he had never entered this type of state again. Although he gained the occasional insight, those were not true epiphanies.

But this time... Ning had a true epiphany!

“It seems that I, Darknorth, am not destined to die in this place. Nor are Mistress and the others.” Ning revealed a smile, unable to disguise his excitement. If the Paragon of Pills had truly died here, he would forever feel ashamed of himself.

.....

Ning suddenly flew into one of the nearby spacetime continuums.

“I thought he’d just stay there for quite some time.” Exalt Bowenya smiled coldly. “This is my Daoguard Tower and my spacetime maze. He can do nothing save passively endure attacks from within my spacetime continuums, and in the end he shall die.”

Within the new spacetime continuum. Everything was blurry and indistinct in this region, but the air was filled with many flowing runes that brimmed with electric power.

Ning raised his head to glance at the runes. Given his mastery over the Spacetime Sword Dao, a single glance was all it took for him to discover the secrets behind how the lightning formation was connected to this spacetime continuum.

Rumble... Ning’s Sword Dao Domain spread out, quickly covering every inch of this spacetime continuum. It even reached out to penetrate spacetime itself, disrupting the lightning runes and bringing

the power flowing through them to a sluggish halt. Both the lightning formation and the spacetime continuum were disrupted, making it extremely difficult for them to draw upon the power of the Daoguard Tower and then release it.

Previously, Ning's only choice was to passively endure the hits while searching for the critical points in each continuum, then breaking through them. This time, he had twisted spacetime itself to disrupt the local formations. This was a testament to how much control over spacetime the Spacetime Sword Dao granted him.

"This spacetime continuum..." Ning inspected it carefully. He was able to instantly see that there were a total of 360 nodes here, but it would take him time and careful analysis to figure out a way to break through them without using any of his own power at all.

"Daolord Darknorth... what have you done? What have you done?!" Exalt Bowenya's enraged and panicked voice rang out from far away.

How could he not be angry? He was in control of the entire Daoguard Tower, and as a result he could instantly sense that the spacetime continuum Ning was in was now unable to draw upon the power of his Daoguard Tower and no longer attacked Ning!

How had this happened? Why did the attacks come to halt? He didn't understand!

"Could it be that he is incredibly talented in the Dao of Formations and was able to deconstruct the lightning formation?" Exalt Bowenya was puzzled. "But these are all top-tier formations. Even Autarchs would find it extremely hard to breach them."

But of course, he had no idea that Ning hadn't actually deconstructed the formation itself; rather, he had severed the connection between the formation and the local spacetime continuum. Now that the formation was severed from its power source, it was naturally unable to launch any attacks.

"Daolord Darknorth..."

"Daolord Darknorth!" Exalt Bowenya shouted repeatedly.

Ning completely ignored the Exalt's rants as he continued to carefully analyze the local spacetime continuum. There were now fewer and fewer runes before him, awaiting his analysis. He was already able to merely use his Sword Dao Domain to deconstruct this spacetime continuum, but he continued his studies because he wanted to learn how to best deconstruct the other continuums as well.

All of these spacetime continuums had to share certain commonalities. The more he researched one of them, the easier it would be for him to understand the others.

Finally, however, Exalt Bowenya was no longer able to hold back. "Destroy!" Whoosh. The spacetime continuum Ning was in finally began to break apart. Exalt Bowenya was in complete control over this entire spacetime maze, and as a result was able to create and destroy new spacetime continuums as he saw fit.

"Eh?" Ning blinked, then chuckled. "Exalt Bowenya... since you are so impatient, I'll hurry it up a little. I'll be seeing you soon." As he spoke he began to fly forwards, expanding his Sword Dao Domain as he flew. His domain quickly expanded to the point where it pushed against the surrounding spacetime

continuums, which Ning glanced at with a relaxed smile on his face. "Every continuum within this spacetime maze is pretty much constructed in the same manner."

Just two seconds later, Ning had completely taken over and destroyed the five spacetime continuums around him, while his Sword Dao Domain expanded to an even greater size.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 42: The Five Truncheon Chapter 18: Iyerre

When Exalt Bowenya saw this, he felt as though a bucket of cold ice had just been dumped over his head. He was completely stunned, shaken, and stupefied.

As a Sithe Exalt, he instantly knew what the scene in front of him represented! Daolord Darknorth had been surrounded by five spacetime continuums, but he had been able to simultaneously destroy all five of them in two seconds. Clearly, the spacetime maze was no longer any danger to him at all, as he was able to easily see through the mysteries of spacetime they employed.

"I'm finished." Exalt Bowenya's face turned ugly. "Thankfully, I still have a bit of time left. The closest path to me will still require him to pass nearly a thousand spacetime continuums. It'll take him a while to get here." Bowenya began to frantically consider what options were available to him.

"Obey my orders!" Exalt Bowenya immediately began to issue new orders: "All Hegemons and Emperors, attack Daolord Darknorth's position with everything you have. I'll give you his exact location."

"Understood."

"Understood." The various Hegemons and Emperors all acknowledged his orders. As for Exalt Bowenya, he took control over some of the Daoguard Tower's treasures and used them to assault Ning, who was still surrounded by countless spacetime continuums.

Now that the spacetime maze was no longer of any threat to Ning, Bowenya's only choice was to use his Emperors and the Daoguard Tower's own treasures to attack him.

Boom! Whoosh! Slash! All sorts of attacks rained down upon Ning from every direction, passing through various spacetime continuums. Exalt Bowenya remained in full control of spacetime here, and thus he was able to make it so that the various continuums allowed attacks to pass through them without impediment.

Ning stood there without moving, his Sword Dao Domain active around him. He was able to use it to sense how spacetime was operating around him, and in doing so he was able to quickly dissolve the various continuums his domain touched. This time, he was actually a bit faster than previously. Every single continuum was deconstructed with ease.

What he needed to do was to get a clear picture of how each of the continuums operated. Upon doing so, he would be able to deconstruct them!

"Eh?" Ning suddenly felt a premonition that dangerous attacks were raining down towards him from every direction. "What's with all these attacks?"

The Hegemons and Emperors were all scattered throughout the Daoguard Tower, which was why prior to this Ning had only had to deal with a single attack each time. Now that Exalt Bowenya had abandoned using the spacetime maze to trap Ning, all of the Emperors were attacking at the same time.

Some were so very far away that their attacks had to fly through spacetime for an extremely long period of time before reaching Ning, who was able to use his Illusion Sword Dao to dodge the vast majority of them. The only ones which were dangerous were the ones coming from nearby Hegemons and Emperors who were attacking from close range. The ones who were just ten or twenty million kilometers away were especially dangerous.

Whoosh. Ning was forced to use his Water Sword Dao to defend. His Sword Dao Domain was currently only able to expand to a maximum of eight million kilometers, and so these attacks were able to easily saturate this entire region with attacks.

Pop! Pop! More surrounding spacetime continuums were destroyed, with Ning continuing to deconstruct them faster and faster.

“Daolord Darknorth!” A voice rang out from afar. “I know that we are going to lose this battle. My only request is that you spare the countless mortals who live within our homeland. Give them a chance to survive!”

“Boundless, how dare you betray me! Attack! Attack and kill Daolord Darknorth!” Exalt Bowenya screamed frantically.

“Boundless... why even bother with him?” Angry, desperate, and grief-filled voices rang out. These came from the other Hegemons and Emperors within the Daoguard Tower, and the rain of attacks pouring down upon Ning began to slow down.

Pop! Pop! Pop! Just four seconds later, Ning was able to destroy four more continuums towards his left. He instantly saw the Hegemon known as ‘boundless’ who was controlling treasures from the dimensional seam beyond those continuums. He was looking at Ning, a pleading look in his eyes... and his aura was rapidly weakening.

His truesoul was breaking apart. Even his body began to break apart and decompose.

It must be remembered that these Hegemons and Emperors had all sworn lifeblood oaths to obey Exalt Bowenya’s orders! Exalt Bowenya had ordered all of them to attack Ning. If they were perhaps a bit slow while they attacked or took it easy on Ning, that would be one thing... but if they suddenly and completely halted all of their attacks, that would constitute a violation of orders and therefore a violation of their oaths. They would be punished for it.

They had all sworn oaths with extremely heavy consequences. As a result, every strand of truesoul within Boundless’ body was breaking apart, as his body itself began to crumble and break apart as well.

“Brother Boundless.”

“Boundless.”

Many voices rang out. Quite a few of the Hegemons and Emperors present were Sithe descendants, and they all felt grief. Clearly, Hegemon Boundless had many friends amongst their ranks.

Ning gazed at Hegemon Boundless, who continued to stare at Ning with a pleading expression even as his body broke apart. Ning couldn't help but let out a sigh. Why?

The Sithe descendants... they felt much more love and attachment towards this hidden dimension than the true Sithe did, as this was the place they were born and bred. They had lived here for countless aeons, and they were willing to die for the sake of their homes. Now that they had no further hopes of defeating Ning in battle, their only choice was to beg him.

"When I captured the other Hegemons and Emperors, I promised long ago that I would not destroy your homeland. There's no need for you to worry." Ning's voice echoed throughout the Daoguard Tower as he continued to destroy the spacetime continuums surrounding him. By now, it took him less than a second for each 'cycle' of destruction. Ning could as easily deconstruct nine or ten continuums simultaneously as he could two or three. There was no real difference. Anything he could 'see' through his Sword Dao Domain, he could deconstruct.

"Farewell, Brother Boundless."

"Brother Boundless."

Some of the Emperors and Hegemons began to dramatically slow down their attack rates. They were bound by their oaths to continue attacking, but now they were just doing the bare minimum necessary.

Ning's Sword Dao Domain continued to expand, reaching ten million kilometers, twenty million kilometers, and more. It gradually began to encompass some of the nearby Hegemons and Emperors, who Ning captured and transferred into his estate-world. Almost none of the descendants fought back; in fact, most were quite calm. The true Sithe, however, resisted fiercely, unwilling to give up.

Ning could sense the deep feelings the Sithe descendants had towards their home. This caused him to feel a sense of admiration towards them, but it also increased his distaste of Bowenya. Bowenya truly didn't treat these people as living beings at all!

Rumble... the Sword Dao Domain continued to rapidly expand in every direction, destroying more and more spacetime continuums as Ning moved closer to the heart of the Daoguard Tower.

.....

Within the dark room inside the heart of the Daoguard Tower. The giant formation-base millstone continued to slowly swivel, and next to it were three other formation-base millstones of varying sizes which were swiveling slightly faster and the big one.

Bowenya flew over to the smallest millstone. This one was merely three meters long and it was semi-translucent.

"Focus." Bowenya took control over that millstone, pouring the power of his Daoguard Tower inside it.

Rumble... a pillar of blurry light instantly appeared above the semi-translucent millstone. The pillar of light slowly began to resonate with another distant location. Finally, a blurry humanoid figure began to appear in the middle of the light. The figure slowly began to solidify further, resolving into a barefoot, gray-robed man who had a benevolent smile on his face, one which seemed to whisper of the pity he felt for the plight of mortals. He was dressed in loose robes and was balding, but his body was extremely

muscular. His eyes contained a strange, irresistible magnetism, as though anyone who stared into his eyes would be forever trapped within them. Not even Exalt Bowenya would dare to stare this man in the eye.

“Almighty Iyerre!” Exalt Bowenya bowed reverently.

The respect he showed came from every fiber of his being. He was like a servant in the presence of the master.

“Bowenya, why have you contacted me directly?” The tall, balding, barefoot Iyerre cast his gaze across spacetime to stare at Bowenya. Bowenya felt both embarrassed and terrified, and as a result his voice became even more respectful: “Almighty Iyerre, I have discovered that this Chaosverse has given birth to a Daolord who controls an Eternal Omega Dao.”

“An Eternal Omega Dao? Yes, I’ve heard of this as well. His name is ‘Daolord Darknorth’, I believe. His name has been spread throughout this entire Chaosverse. My servants have notified me of this long ago,” Iyerre said calmly.

“He is currently within the dimension I control. In fact, he’s right here inside my Daoguard Tower!” Bowenya said hurriedly.

Iyerre’s eyes suddenly shone with dazzling light. He wanted very much to kill Daolord Darknorth, but he knew that the man would be able to summon Autarchs to assist him. Killing him anywhere in this Chaosverse would be extremely difficult. Iyerre was the supreme commander of the Sithe forces here, and his goal was to take over this entire Chaosverse. It was important that the local cultivators not even know of his existence.

Thus, all high-ranking Sithe had been forced to swear oaths not to divulge his presence! As a result, neither Ning nor the Autarchs even knew of Iyerre’s existence.

“Have you killed him?” Iyerre asked.

“I have not. He’s already solved my spacetime maze and will reach the heart of my Daoguard Tower soon,” Bowenya said hurriedly. “I’m no match for him at all.”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 42: The Five Truncheon Chapter 19: Descent

“He’s solved the spacetime maze?” Iyerre hesitated slightly, then said in a calm voice, “I’ll send an Apocalypse-class servitor over. Remember, you must not reveal any traces of my existence.”

A hidden weapon was only effective when it remained hidden. Once his presence was revealed, the cultivators would be on their guard against him, which would drastically weaken the impact he might have. During the previous Dawn War, Iyerre could tell that the situation was unfavorable for them. Even if he led his forces in a final attack, they would at most be able to cause the cultivators to suffer heavy losses. Victory would still elude them... and so he instead chose to hide, waiting for a better opportunity.

He was a very patient man! There was no way he would be willing to risk exposing himself merely to kill Daolord Darknorth.

"I understand," Bowenya said respectfully. Sharp light flickered in his eyes. He had sacrificed too much in his efforts to kill this damnable Daolord Darknorth.

"An Apocalypse-class servitor... hmph. Those are some of the most powerful servants under almighty Iyerre's control." Bowenya was filled with eagerness. "This time, we'll definitely be able to kill you, even if we have to simply attrition you to death."

He had previously used an 'Apocalypse-class' castle and formation against Ning. In truth, Apocalypse-class simply represented an overall level of power. Apocalypse-class servitors, however, were actual living beings. Every single attack they launched was comparable to the power of an Apocalypse-class treasure, making them far more deadly than the treasures themselves.

.....

Rumble...

Deep within the spacetime maze. Ning stood there at the center of the maze, his Sword Dao Domain continuing to furiously expand as he 'popped' the various spacetime continuums and destroyed them. Each continuum was only able to last a single second in the face of Ning's might, and just a short while later his Sword Dao Domain had already stretched out to encompass a hundred million kilometers.

"We've lost."

"I really can't accept this."

"Who would've thought that after surviving the last great war in this Chaosverse, we'd end up dying here?" The true Sithe Hegemons were filled with despair as the Sword Dao Domain reached out to encompass them. They were captured without being able to fight back at all.

Ning continued to furiously expand his Sword Dao Domain as he moved closer and closer towards the center of the Daoguard Tower. Suddenly...

"Daolord Darknorth, I'm truly impressed. You were actually able to solve my spacetime maze. Not even my Daoguard Tower can suppress you! Heh. Still... since I know that I've lost this battle, I'm not going to stay here any longer. Before leaving, I'm going to give you one final gift." Bowenya's voice rang out from afar.

"Exalt, take us with you!"

"Exalt, save us!" Instantly, some Hegemons and Emperors began to beg for rescue. This hidden dimension was able to capture enemies from afar; naturally, it was also able to allow Exalt Bowenya free passage in escaping.

"As far as Bowenya is concerned, his life is the only life that matters. He won't care about whether the rest of you survive or not, much less whether this dimension will survive," Ning said coldly as he continued to furiously break apart the various spacetime continuums. However, it would still take him hundreds of seconds to reach the core of this tower. He simply didn't have enough time to stop Exalt Bowenya from leaving.

“My final gift to you is the most terrifying of the many creatures which have been kept suppressed within this hidden dimension. If you can survive it, you’ll be able to leave this place. I, however, won’t be staying to watch,” Bowenya called out.

Rumble... a deep thrumming sound pervaded the entire Daoguard Tower as dimensional ripples spread out.

“He left?” Ning was quickly able to ascertain that Exalt Bowenya had indeed fled.

“Damn it.”

“Bowenya!”

“Bowenya, why couldn’t you take us with you?” Many Hegemons and Emperors were cursing at him.

.....

Within the core of the Daoguard Tower. An enormous hand tore through space, ripping open a dark dimensional tunnel that led straight to the core. A giant tree suddenly came flying out from that dimensional tunnel! This giant tree was covered with countless branches and leaves, and the main trunk had a single giant eye on it. When it flew out of the black passageway, it gave Bowenya a cold glance.

Bowenya said, “I’ll leave the rest up to you.” He quickly fled into the dimensional tunnel.

Although this Exalt-class Daoguard Tower did indeed hold other creatures within it, those were all insane prisoners. How could he possibly have an Apocalypse-class servitor with him? These powerful beings always followed by Iyerre’s side.

“Mm.” The giant tree grunted, watching as Bowenya disappeared within the darkness of the tunnel. The tree was now in charge of protecting the core of this entire Daoguard Tower, and it quickly took control of it as the tunnel behind it vanished.

Whoooosh. Its countless branches all stretched out, extending out of the central room and towards the outside world as its countless branches grew longer and thicker. It must be understood that this creature had lived in the Infinite Void prior to being captured and tamed by Iyerre. Its true form was as vast as any celestial object! Its current form was just a miniaturized version of itself.

The spacetime maze was quite enormous. Ning had only dealt with a small portion of it. The branches quickly extended outside the Daoguard Tower, then began to twist themselves around it. As soon as they exited the Daoguard Tower, the branches began to rapidly expand in size, with each branch coiling around the tower like a titanic python. The entire Daoguard Tower was almost instantly surrounded by a cocoon of countless leafy branches. The branches covered every single inch of the Daoguard Tower in a tight embrace.

Next, the branches began to extend in every other direction, including both the Sacred Mountains, the skies, and the depths of the earth. They continued to furiously expand in size, snaking out longer and longer. After just ten seconds, the branches had filled every inch of the entire Sacred Realm, completely covering every inch of it.

.....

Within the Daoguard Tower. As soon as the giant tree completely covered the Daoguard Hall, it began to attack Ning as well.

“Eh?” Ning turned pale. He could subconsciously sense that something incredibly dangerous was happening. Moments later, a series of enormous black branches shot through the air and entered the range of his Sword Dao Domain.

“Illusion Sword Dao!” Ning kept his illusory realm active, hiding the location of his true body.

“Daolord Darknorth, mm? Do you think you can hide from me?” A sonorous voice boomed out as a large number of twisting veins appeared on the surface of every single branch. The countless branches began to sweep through every inch of the Sword Dao Domain. There were simply too many of them, while Ning’s domain was merely a hundred million kilometers in size. There was nowhere for him to hide.

“Break!” The Northbow sword in Ning’s hand suddenly flashed with light. Crack! Twelve branches were instantly severed by this blow. It seemed as though this creature was actually more fragile than the other creatures Ning had encountered.

Still, Ning’s face remained quite somber. There were simply too many of these branching tendrils, and the ones he severed began to quickly regrow.

Whoosh. Whoosh. The branches quickly managed to locate where Ning was, then began to lash out at him with abandon. Each strike was just as powerful as the strikes from the first beast Ning had encountered.

What he didn’t know was that while this Apocalypse-class creature’s attacks weren’t all that strong, it was extremely difficult to actually get rid of and defeat. Iyerre had sent this servant because it was a perfect counter for Ning, whose truesoul was already crumbling away. The goal was to kill him through attrition.

“There are too many branches. I can’t get rid of them.” Ning was forced to strike eight times in a row, seeking to carve an escape path for himself, but each time new branches would spring up to cover the ones he had destroyed. Worse, Ning had the vague feeling that there were even more branches waiting for their turn!

“How could this Daoguard Tower have such an irritating creature within it?” Ning’s face was grim. If he was an Autarch, he could continue to attack with abandon, unleashing thousands of full-strength blows in an extremely short period of time. But he didn’t have much time or energy left. At most, he only had a few dozen strikes left in him. There was no way he could escape at all.

Boom! Boom! The branches continued to furiously rain blows upon Ning, who was forced to use the Spacetime Sword Dao to create a tiny miniature spacetime continuum which served as a form of armor which covered him. This was his most powerful defensive technique thus far.

Focusing on defense allowed him to conserve more energy. Attacking consumed it far too quickly.

“Die! DIE!” The countless branches lashed at him like a thousand whips, furiously slamming against the spacetime armor covering Ning. They attacked at such high speed that they were like countless leafy blurs, and each strike was slightly stronger than a blow from the Blazesun Ruler! Ning continued to fly

about and dodge while letting his armor absorb the blows, but just one second later he was forced to once more use his sword-arts to recreate the armor.

His divine power and Immortal energy was depleting at a fast pace, and the cracks in his truesoul were growing larger and larger as the crumbling process accelerated.

“Autarch Mogg, hurry up and deconstruct this hidden dimension!” Ning felt extremely anxious. “I’m not going to be able to hang on for much longer.”

He had been just one step away from success. If he died here, that meant the Paragon of Pills would die here as well! Ning truly couldn’t accept this outcome.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 42: The Five Truncheon Chapter 20: The Autarchs Arrive

The outside world.

There were three figures located in the dark void outside this hidden dimension. They were the black-robed Ji Ning, the bald, red-robed avatar of Autarch Titanos, and the skinny, black-robed avatar of Autarch Mogg.

Boom! As Bowenya departed from this dimension and the tree-creature arrived, a dimensional ripple suddenly spread outwards.

“A spatial ripple!” Autarch Titanos revealed a look of delight, as did the black-robed Ning. Both of them turned to look at Autarch Mogg.

The black-robed Ning said, “Bowenya probably fled out of the hidden dimension.”

Autarch Mogg’s azure eyes narrowed intently as he stared at the dimensional ripples before him. He said softly, “Yes, I can sense a dimensional tunnel... but it was opened in an extremely careful and intricate way. The ripples are very minute.” The dimensional tunnel had not actually opened up from within the hidden dimension itself. If it had, the ripples would be far greater. This was a passageway created from afar by Iyerre, and the ripples were very subdued as a result.

“I’m being attacked by some sort of strange lifeform. It is incredibly powerful, and I won’t be able to hold on for much longer,” Ning blurted out.

“I’m moving as fast as I can,” Autarch Mogg said.

Fifteen seconds went by. “Found it!” Autarch Mogg’s eyes lit up. Those ripples were minute, but he was still able to use them to lock onto the location of that hidden dimension. Autarch Mogg was the Autarch of the Space Daobirth Essence, after all, and he was in his own Chaosverse. He had every factor on his side, and as a result he was naturally able to locate that dimension.

“Hurry up and open a path into it!” Autarch Titanos urged.

“Alright.” Autarch Mogg drew an extremely slender saber with his right hand, then gave it a wave. Slash! The space before him was torn open as easily as paper, producing a neat ‘wound’ in space. This slash

tore through multiple layers of different dimensional continuums, reaching all the way towards the hidden dimension which Autarch Mogg and located.

Riiiiip! The slash clashed against the tenacious exterior membrane protecting the hidden continuum.

“There it is.” Autarch Mogg blinked in surprise. “The membrane is quite tough. BREAK!” Autarch Mogg instantly manifested a total of six arms. Each of them was grasping an extremely long and slender blade, and he leapt forwards to soar towards the membrane. Thousands of beautiful flowers seemed to bloom before him, with each snowy-white flower being formed from a slash of dimensional saber-light. Autarch Mogg was definitely the paramount expert in chopping apart dimensional membranes, and it took him just a single second to tear through it.

“Impressive.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh in amazement. He might have his Space Sword Dao, but its power was still fundamentally that of the Dao of the Sword; the Dao of Space was just a supporting Dao. There was no way it could compare to Autarch Mogg’s ‘Space Daobirth Essence’. Without question, Autarch Mogg’s mastery over space was superior to all others within this Chaosverse.

If Autarch Titanos had to assault the dimensional membrane, he would’ve been forced to tear through it by hammering it repeatedly through brute-force attacks. Autarch Mogg was able to accomplish it much more easily.

“Let’s go inside!” Autarch Mogg led Ning into the hidden dimension. As soon as the two avatars and the black-robed Ning entered it, they saw the countless leafy tendrils which completely filled this entire world. There were many places which were completely surrounded by those countless branches! This sight caused even Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos to reveal looks of surprise.

“DIE!” When the great tree saw that outsiders had arrived, it instantly sent countless tendrils sweeping towards them.

“My true body is right in the center of the Daoguard Tower,” Ning said hurriedly.

“Titanos, you take care of Darknorth’s Primaltwin. I’ll go to the Daoguard Tower,” Mogg said.

“Better that we go together. Darknorth’s true body isn’t going to be able to hold on much longer. Darknorth, go inside my estate-world for a short while.” Autarch Titanos waved his hand, sending the black-robed Ning into his estate-world. Ning didn’t try to resist it.

“Attack!” The avatars of Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos drew their weapons and began to fight. Thanks to their mastery over space and karma, they were able to accurately sense the location of the Daoguard Tower, and the two worked together to charge closer and closer towards it.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Autarch Mogg’s six slender sabers chopped through everything within their path. His weapons were like dimensional blades that could chop through all matter, and his strikes actually extended out on a multidimensional level to continue cutting through space itself. His attack speed was absolutely incredible.

“Die.” Autarch Titanos was wearing a set of inky black gloves on all six of his hands, and each glove unleashed boundless mystical power as he struck out towards the opponent. Although his movements seemed much more relaxed, each strike caused countless branches to decay and rot away. In terms of raw damage, he vastly surpassed Autarch Mogg.

“This creature has incredible vitality. Most of these creatures are unable to take more than three palms from me.” Autarch Titanos frowned as he realized how strong this creature’s vital force was.

The two continued to advance at high speed, with black gloves annihilating countless branches on one side and slender sabers chopping through everything on the other. The tree was suffering more and more injuries. It didn’t really care too much about Autarch Mogg’s chops, because it could regrow the parts that had been severed; Autarch Mogg’s attacks weren’t causing too much real damage. Autarch Titanos’ karmic strikes, however, were assaulting its very essence and causing it much more damage.

“I have to kill him.” The tree was under orders, and it began to fight in an even more frenzied manner. It didn’t have much time left; it had to kill Ning as soon as possible.

.....

Within the Daoguard Tower.

Countless tough tendrils and branches were continuing to furiously rain blows upon Ning, whose truesoul was crumbling at an extremely fast pace. In order to conserve as much energy as possible, he didn’t launch any counter-attacks and instead focused completely on defense.

Ning’s body was covered by a miniature spacetime cocoon which accompanied him as he fled, dodged, and was occasionally knocked flying. Each time he was struck, he didn’t try to resist the momentum, instead borrowing from it to conserve as much of his own power as possible.

Time continued to flow on. Ning repeatedly used his sword-arts to defend, but each time it resulted in his truesoul crumbling faster and faster.

“Hurry up... hurry up! I can’t hold on much longer.” Ning grew increasingly desperate. “I have nothing left!”

BOOM! An enormous explosion rang out. The countless branches within the Daoguard Tower began to tremble as two figures charged inside the tower.

“No. No! I have to kill this Daolord!” The great tree was already heavily wounded, but it still had a considerable amount of power left. It continued to rain attacks down against Ning while sending many tendrils out to block the two intruders.

Whoosh! Boom! Saber-light flashed while black gloves struck out as Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos unleashed the power of their Daos. In the face of their attacks, these branches seemed unspeakably weak and were destroyed on a large scale.

A snowy-white streak of saber-light suddenly flashed out, severing all the branches and leaves within its path. Some of the branches which were furiously assaulting Ning were severed as well, and Ning could sense that the attacks against him had suddenly lessened. The saber-light was followed by two consecutive strikes from the black gloves, causing the surrounding branches to wither away and rot into nothingness.

Ning finally allowed himself to relax. He landed atop one of the undamaged spacetime bubbles, then sat down and took a deep breath. “Whew.” Ning smiled as he looked at Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos. “You finally made it.” Ning laughed, and his laughter was very joyful.

They had finally succeeded.

Autarch Titanos' terrifying black gloves finally demolished the great tree's remaining life force. The Daoguard Tower was now completely empty, with just a few remnants of the spacetime maze left behind as well as some terrified Sithe. The great tree had not gone out of its way to slay these Hegemons and Emperors.

"Darknorth." Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg both looked at Ning. They quickly turned pale.

Ning's truesoul was crumbling at an incredibly fast rate. It was now so badly cracked that the truesoul itself was shuddering violently, as though it was going to break apart at any moment. If Ning absolutely had to, he might be able to unleash four or five strikes at most... but even if he didn't, the truesoul was still going to completely crumble apart soon.

"As soon as my true body became trapped in here, I knew that my chances of surviving would be slim. I'm happy that I was able to survive as long as I did... and to tell the truth, I benefited greatly from my experiences here," Ning said with a smile.

"You..." Autarch Titanos could sense that Ning's truesoul suddenly began to crumble many times faster than before. Clearly, it was about to completely break apart.

"Oh. Don't be in a rush to kill these Hegemons and Emperors. Many of them are Sithe descendants. They are quite pitiable," Ning said hurriedly.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 42: The Five Truncheon Chapter 21: Glad You Are Safe

"It doesn't really matter if we kill them or not. They're nothing more than foot soldiers," Autarch Titanos said. "But if we don't kill them, I recommend that we at least imprison them. We shouldn't let them escape and reinforce the other Sithe."

"I understand." Ning smiled. "There's something else I'll need to trouble you two with."

"Hm?" Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg both looked at Ning.

"Please don't tell the Paragon of Pills and the others about my true body dying here," Ning said.

Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos blinked. Autarch Titanos said with surprise, "Don't tell them? You came to the Sithelands for the sake of the Paragon, I believe. They'll probably be able to guess the truth."

"Let's hide it as best we can. Otherwise, they'll feel guilty about this," Ning said with a smile. Suddenly, Ning's gaze grew distant. He murmured softly, "What an odd feeling. So this is what it feels like for my truesoul to crumble..."

Boom! His truesoul completely fell apart. Ning could feel his mind and his thoughts turn sluggish. The entire framework of his truesoul was completely collapsing, like a cracked dike which was falling apart. Countless truesoul fragments spread out in every direction at a pace which was thousands of times faster than before.

So much of his truesoul was breaking apart that it was actually visible to the naked eye. Countless specks of light flew out from Ning as his divine power and Immortal energy both vanished as well.

“Everything... feels... slow. Going... back... to... Chaosverse?” Ning’s sluggish mind could sense that an enormous, warm location was calling towards him. This had to be the Quintessence of the Chaosverse.

Suddenly, Ning’s seated figure lit up like a ball of fire, instantly transforming into countless specks of light that blasted out in every direction, leaving nothing behind. Ning’s body was completely gone. The only things left were his clothes and magic treasures.

Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg simply watched silently.

.....

Within an estate-world. The black-robed Ning was silently standing on his feet. The death of his true body had no impact on his Primaltwin at all, as the two were completely different ‘lives’. His Primaltwin would only perish if a powerful foe was able to use a karmic attack to slay the true body and then follow the karmic connection between the two to slay the Primaltwin as well! A normal dissipation, however, wouldn’t result in any connected consequences. Ning’s Primaltwin continued to slowly disintegrate, but it had yet to engage in any combat since his Daomerge attempt and so the process was still quite slow for it.

“So this is what it feels like for one’s truesoul to dissipate?” the black-robed Ning murmured softly.

His true body had died. If his Primaltwin was unable to devise the ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique, it would face the same fate. “I have to seize this opportunity.” The black-robed Ning’s eyes were shining with hope.

“Autarch Titanos, let me out,” the black-robed Ning said.

“Very well.”

.....

Within the Daoguard Tower. Ning’s true body had dissipated, while the black-robed Ning had appeared next to Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg.

“Come.” The black-robed Ning waved his hand, summoning his Northbow swords and his other treasures to him. Moments later, his clothes immediately changed as well, going from black to white as he sheathed the Northbow swords on his back once more.

“From this day forth... there is no ‘true body’ or ‘Primaltwin’; just me,” Ning murmured softly. This was the only life he had.

“Break.” Ning released his awesome Sword Dao Domain, instantly beginning to destroy the few remaining spacetime bubbles of the maze that had trapped him.

The nearby Autarch Mogg chuckled. “Let me give you a hand.” As he spoke, he unleashed an awesome wave of power that swept across the entire region, instantly annihilating the continuum bubbles and destroying them in just two seconds.

Autarch Skyfeeder and Autarch Mogg were most likely superior to all others in this Chaosverse when it came to solving spacetime mazes. One was the master of the Time Daobirth Essence, while the other was the master of the Space Daobirth Essence.

With the various continuum bubbles destroyed, the Hegemons and Emperors who had been scattered throughout the various seams were all revealed.

Some of the Sithe descendants managed to remain quite calm, but the true Sithe were driven to both rage and despair because they knew that Ning would never spare them.

“Daolord Darknorth... you didn’t die?”

“It is all your fault. Why did you have to come here?! We grew tired of the war long ago and were enjoying a peaceful life in this dimension. You had to come and ruin everything!” Some of the true Sithe were howling angrily at Ning.

“My fault?” Ning shook his head. “You know the secrets behind this hidden dimension. Do you really think I would’ve been able to enter on my own? Clearly, it was the controller of this hidden dimension, Bowenya, who forcibly teleported me here.”

The formerly-howling Sithe suddenly fell silent. Right. It had to have been Bowenya who teleported Ning here... but he did so because he wanted to render great merits to the Sithe and be rewarded for it. This was on the standing instructions of the supreme Sithe leader. Who could blame him?

“You wanted to kill me, so I had to fight back,” Ning said. He then expanded his Sword Dao Domain to cover all of the Hegemons and Emperors.

“Get in here.” He instantly teleported them into his estate-world. Now, the only figures left in the Daoguard Tower were the two Autarchs and Ning.

Next, Ning willed the Paragon of Pills, Hegemon Tia, Hegemon Flameleft, and Lord Annihilation to appear.

“Darknorth.” The Paragon and the others turned to look at the two Autarchs, both of whom radiated auras of ineffable power, then at Ning. Ning’s truesoul was clearly disintegrating at a very, very slow pace. They all revealed looks of delight.

“Respectful greetings, Autarch!” All four of them bowed respectfully.

Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg both nodded slightly, but their gazes flickered a little when they glanced at the Paragon of Pills, who Ning clearly cared about deeply. It was for this woman’s sake that Ning had lost his life.

Ning continued to maintain the illusory effect around his Sword Dao Domain, ensuring so that his truesoul appeared to be crumbling faster than it actually was. He didn’t wish for the Paragon of Pills and the others to be able to see any flaws in his pretense.

His Primaltwin had never engaged in battle after the Daomerge, and so its truesoul was crumbling at a pace which was slower than his true body’s prior to his true body entering the Sithelands. This was an obvious problem, and so Ning quickly masked it.

He didn't wish for the Paragon of Pills to feel too much guilt. He had already accomplished his goal and saved her; there was no point in making her feel guilty about it.

"I'm glad you are safe." The Paragon of Pills was all smiles.

"I knew that Daolord Darknorth would be able to defeat those Sithe with ease!" Lord Annihilation said flatteringly.

"I was just lucky. I also have to thank these two Autarchs for managing to get here in the nick of time. Otherwise, I would've been in serious trouble," Ning said. "Mistress, since you have realmships you can head off on your own. I have a few things to discuss with the Autarchs."

"Very well." The Paragon and the others all nodded.

"Autarch Mogg, please help send them outside the Sithelands," Ning said.

"That's easy. Let's leave this dimension first." Autarch Mogg sent out a powerful wave of dimensional might which captured all of them. Swish! They instantly reappeared in the black void of space outside.

A surprised look appeared on Ning's face. "We left? As easy as that?"

"When we broke into this place, I went ahead and bound the core of this Daoguard Tower to myself. I can now control it with ease," Autarch Mogg said. "That's why we were able to leave so easily."

"The rest of you can be off now." Autarch Mogg waved his hand, cutting through space with ease. Riiiiip! An iridescent dimensional tunnel appeared before him, leading out of the Sithelands.

The Sithelands was quite a dangerous place, after all. Who knew what would happen if they had to fly out? Given how strong the Paragon was, once they made it outside the Sithelands they would definitely be safe.

"Darknorth, I really have to thank you for everything." The Paragon looked at Ning. She felt extremely grateful towards him. Not only had Ning ensured that her three 'brothers' were brought back to life, he had also helped her survive this place, allowing her to reunite with them in person. She had no idea how she was supposed to repay him. Thankfully, Ning didn't suffer any serious injuries during their time in this dangerous dimension. Otherwise, she truly would've been wracked by guilt.

"Off with you. Shoo." Ning smiled at her.

The Paragon of Pills and the others quickly entered the dimensional tunnel and disappeared. Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos glanced at each other, then sighed.

Clearly, the Paragon of Pills had no idea that Ning's true body had already died within this hidden dimension. She would probably never know the truth.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 43: Final Fate Chapter 1: Sealed Away?

A dazzlingly beautiful and fragrant meadow. A barefoot, gray-robed man was seated in the lotus position here. He reached out to gently pluck a flower, then closed his eyes to sniff it. A gentle yet

infectious smile appeared on his face which affected even the nearby Exalt Bowenya. This caused the latter to feel an even-greater sense of awe.

“You handled this matter very poorly,” Iyerre said while continuing to enjoy the flower’s fragrance.

“I made a mistake. I was too desperate for glory,” Bowenya said rather nervously.

Iyerre stared raptly at the flower before him, as though he wanted to memorize every millimeter of it. “Your hunger for glory and your unwillingness to share it resulted in you not notifying me about this until the very last moment, when the Daoguard Tower itself was about to be destroyed. In other words, you only reported it when you were out of options. You didn’t give me enough time at all.”

Bowenya was silent. He didn’t dare to say a word, especially since Iyerre was correct. He had indeed waited until the situation was quite grim, with Ning ripping his way through spacetime and charging towards the heart of the tower.

Iyerre didn’t have enough time to fully prepare a counter-plan, and so his only choice had been to send in a servitor who he thought would have the highest chance for success.

“Losing a servant is a minor matter,” Iyerre continued, “But I’m concerned that the local Autarchs will discover that our heartlands have not been truly sealed by them.”

“Impossible. They won’t be able to discover anything. We didn’t make any mistakes at all,” Bowenya said hurriedly.

“I sent over a servant and tore a dimensional tunnel for it and you to traverse. This created a dimensional ripple,” Iyerre said. “It was thanks to this ripple that Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg were able to enter the dimension and slay my servitor.”

“I acted to mislead Daolord Darknorth,” Bowenya said. “I made sure that he thought I fled out of fear while unleashing the creature being suppressed by my Daoguard Tower. It all fits together perfectly. There were no mistakes made at all.”

Iyerre nodded slightly. If certain secrets were revealed, their chances at victory during the final battle would be lessened. The most important secret, of course, was the existence of himself – Iyerre! Thankfully, this wouldn’t be a problem so long as he didn’t accidentally reveal himself. Everyone who had met him and knew of his identity had been forced to swear lifeblood oaths. They couldn’t even mention him in the most oblique of ways!

Ning had reviewed the memories of many Hegemons and Emperors, but he knew nothing at all of the supreme leaders of the Sithe invasion. He knew that the Sithe had a Lord of Chaos, but the Sithe Chaoslord was a transcendent figure that could be described as truly invincible, even in all the Infinite Void.

He wouldn’t be so foolish as to actually enter Ning’s Chaosverse, because once he did he would lose his connection to the Chaosverse he controlled. Not only would he be dramatically weakened, he would also be suppressed by this Chaosverse. If enough things went wrong, he could theoretically be killed here! However, so long as he avoided other Chaosverses he would be completely invincible. Thus, the Autarchs of Ning’s Chaosverse felt certain that the Sithe Chaoslord would never come here in person.

All that aside... the fact that the Sithelands had not truly been sealed away was another extremely important secret! The seals which the cultivator Autarchs had placed over the Sithelands were so powerful that the Autarchs felt that if the Sithes wished to escape, they would have to fight their way through. As a result, the cultivator civilizations entered an era of peace, with just Autarch Mogg and the avatars of Autarchs remaining behind to keep a watch over things here.

In reality, however, Iyerre was able to open dimensional tunnels to the outside world with ease. The tunnel he had established to send out his servant and bring Bowenya back was proof of this... which meant that the entire Sithes army was capable of slipping out without anyone being the wiser!

"There were still a few gaps in our masquerade which might be discovered." Iyerre glanced sideways at Bowenya. "We didn't have enough time, and I really did want to kill Daolord Darknorth and swallow his truesoul."

"I was at fault," Bowenya said immediately.

"However... I don't think the cultivators will be able to notice them," Iyerre said calmly. "Either way, the fact that this Chaosverse has given birth to someone who has mastered an Eternal Omega Dao means that we'll need to launch the final war sooner than anticipated! If we wait for too long, this Chaosverse might give birth to an Omega Autarch, in which case we'll truly be finished. You can make up for your mistakes once the war begins."

"Understood," Bowenya said. Iyerre then waved his hand, causing Bowenya to disappear without a trace. The meadow remained as calm and tranquil as ever. The only beings here aside from Iyerre were a few ordinary animals.

"Last time, I saw that the tide was turning against us so I feigned weakness and allowed you to 'seal' us here," Iyerre murmured softly. "I've waited and prepared for a very long time. This time, I understand you far better than I did in the past. I'm definitely going to win."

.....

Immediately after Ji Ning sent off the Paragon of Pills and the others, Autarch Mogg's face turned grave. "Let's go back into the hidden dimension," he said, then teleported Ning and Autarch Titanos inside once more.

The three of them stood in midair within the Sacred Realm, staring at the distant Daoguard Tower. The entire Sacred Realm looked as though it had been through hell and back. The ground was filled with craters and crevices, a testament to the earlier battle that had rocked this place.

"It's been ruined." Autarch Mogg stared at the distant Daoguard Tower. "The dimensional control formations have been wrecked. This Daoguard Tower can no longer be used to monitor the surrounding area, nor can it be used to activate the dimensional teleport function which was used to capture cultivators."

"The dimensional formation has been destroyed?" Ning was startled. The grand formation which had captured him was formed by a combination of nine mighty dimensional formation-bases. When it had activated, Ning had been teleported straight to this hidden dimension.

"The Sithe definitely arranged for guards to watch over those nine formation-bases," Autarch Mogg said. "Once we took over this hidden dimension, they moved to destroy the formation-bases to avoid us making use of them."

"If they've been destroyed, they've been destroyed. This hidden dimension is useless to us cultivators," Autarch Titanos said with a smile. His gaze suddenly turned towards the devastated landscape. He frowned: "Mogg, did you have the feeling that the creature we fought against was much more troublesome than usual?"

Autarch Mogg blinked, then nodded. "It really was a handful."

"Exalt-class Daoguard Towers generally don't suppress creatures of such strength," Autarch Titanos said. "As I recall, the previous ones we dealt with I could kill within just four or five palm strikes. This time, the two of us had to work together to fight for quite some time before it died. During the Dawn War, it wasn't until the very end that the Sithe released creatures of such power."

"This secret dimension was used to spy on the outside world. It was probably quite special to the Sithe, which was why they stationed a particularly powerful creature here," Autarch Mogg said.

"Possible, I suppose." Autarch Titanos nodded. "We've always felt certain that the Sithe were completely sealed away, especially since we've taken full control over the outer perimeter of the Sithelands. I never would've imagined that such an enormous dimension could've been hidden from us for so long! If they weren't so desperate to get rid of Darknorth, we probably would've never discovered it."

Autarch Mogg frowned. "I've been standing guard over this place for countless aeons, but I never noticed it."

"That's why I'm worried. How many other secrets are the Sithe hiding?" Autarch Titanos frowned as well.

"Hahaha... we've completely locked away the Sithe heartlands. If they made it out, I'd definitely notice," Autarch Mogg said with a chuckle. "It doesn't really matter if a few Sithe are hiding in the outside world. How many of them could there be?"

Autarch Titanos nodded as well. All of the Autarchs had worked together to forge those seals over the Sithe heartlands. They felt quite confident in its efficacy.

Ning simply gazed at the world around him. This was very important, but with his truesoul crumbling away the most important thing for him to do was to use his remaining years to create the 'Truesoul Everlasting' technique. There was no way he could take part in any battle against the Sithe.

"Gentlemen," Ning said, "As you know, I acquired the []. This is something which would be tremendously beneficial to the entire cultivator civilization. I acquired it from Hawkfang after I entered the Sacred Realm! I promised him that I would guarantee a peaceful life for the countless Sithe descendants who lived here."

"That's easy. I have to admit, Hawkfang did something incredible for us. I'll give them an otherverse of their own," Autarch Mogg said with a smile. "An otherverse will be more than enough for all of them to reside within."

"I feel sorry for them. The Sithe clearly don't care about them at all; they treat them as pawns to be sacrificed." Ning shook his head and sighed. Suddenly, he frowned and his face turned pale. "Wait a second!"

The Desolate Era

Book 43: Final Fate Chapter 2: Mistake

The avatars of Autarch Titanos and Autarch Mogg turned to stare at Ji Ning, puzzled.

"That great tree was clearly capable of exhausting me to death... so why did Bowenya immediately flee upon releasing it?" Ning added, "And when you fought against it, it showed that it was sentient and capable of rational thought. It wasn't like those other insane prisoners. It followed Bowenya's orders to continue assaulting me even though the two of you were destroying it. I doubt it would've accidentally injured Bowenya... so why did he flee?"

Autarch Mogg hesitated momentarily. "Perhaps... since this was his final trump card, he felt rather nervous because you defeated all his previous ones? As a result, he fled immediately after using it, to avoid you exceeding his expectations once more and making it impossible for him to flee."

"Darknorth, what are you suggesting?" Autarch Titanos asked.

"There's some sense to Autarch Mogg's explanation," Ning said, "But Autarchs... what you don't realize is that after I entered the Sacred Realm, I had to first deal with a combined attack from 2,800 Hegemons and Emperors, then had to deal with two Daoguard Towers which broke free from their foundations to assault me. The Sithe were clearly willing to pay an enormous price to try and kill me. If you were Bowenya and had access to such a powerful tree-creature, how would you employed it against me?"

Ning shook his head, then continued in a low voice, "If I was Bowenya, I would've sent the tree to attack before the 2,800 Hegemons did. The giant tree could've completely surrounded the dimensional trap, giving me nowhere to run. They could've surrounded and killed me with ease."

"That tree was clearly sentient and clear-minded. There was no reason to wait that long before employing it. Why sacrifice a pair of Daoguard Towers and thousands of Hegemons and Emperors before releasing it?" Ning said. "Losing that many Hegemons and Emperors... even if he would still be rewarded, the rewards would've been reduced."

"Most importantly of all... in the Sacred Realm, I meditated and trained on multiple occasions for extended periods of time. In fact, I even pretended that I would rather wait for death than actually enter the Daoguard Tower. Bowenya's response? He said that he would rather watch me die outside than take the risk of fighting me." Ning frowned. "If he had that tree at his disposal, why would he have chosen to just watch as I died of natural causes?"

Mogg and Titanos both blinked. They didn't know all the details of what Ning had experienced in this hidden dimension, but upon hearing this they too began to feel that something was off.

That great tree had been an intelligent, sentient being which was under orders to kill Ning no matter what. Given how powerful and obedient it was, why not use it earlier? Why flee immediately after using it, instead of continuing to watch over things from within the Daoguard Tower?

The giant tree was extremely powerful and possessed tremendous amounts of vital energy. It was perfect for dealing against a failed Daolord like Ning! Unless Bowenya was a complete fool, he should've known early on that the tree would be a perfect counter for 'Daolord Darknorth'... but he refused to use it. He waited until all of his other resources were used up and until his Daoguard Tower was at the brink of collapse before using it.

Why?

He would've rather watched Ning train from his position within the Daoguard Tower, waiting for Ning's truesoul to naturally collapse instead of releasing that creature. Why?

"Unless..." Ning's eyes flashed with a cold, hard light: "Unless that tree originally wasn't here."

"Wasn't here?" Autarch Mogg and Autarch Titanos both narrowed their eyes.

"It wasn't here... which was why Bowenya was unable to do anything to me. I trained for multiple chaos cycles, and all he could do was watch! If the tree had been here this entire time, there would've been no reason for him not to use it," Ning said. "He waited until I was at the verge of conquering his Daoguard Tower. He probably grew desperate, at which point he begged the Sithe commanders for help, and they sent over that tree-creature in response."

"So where did the great tree come from?" Autarch Titanos said heavily.

"One of the formation-bases? Another hidden dimension, perhaps? Or..." An ugly look appeared on Autarch Mogg's face: "Did it perhaps come from the Sithe heartlands?"

Mogg and Titanos shared a worried glance. The two of them had learned much of the Sithe's capabilities during the Dawn War. Creatures like the giant tree would've definitely been classified among the most powerful of Sithe war assets. They were even more important than Sithe Exalts!

They didn't really want to believe it, but... it now seemed that the likeliest explanation was that it really did come from the heartland regions of the Sithelands!

"But we've already locked the Sithe heartlands away," Autarch Mogg muttered irresolutely. "Even if they came out, I should've been able to sense something."

"Too much time has gone past. The Sithe were probably able to devise a way to avoid the seals without us noticing," Autarch Titanos said heavily. "They are superior to us in so many areas."

"Darknorth, thank you for informing us." Autarch Titanos turned to look at Ning. "We didn't suspect a thing at all. Once the next war begins, the Sithe would've been able to slip out with us none the wiser. We would've continued to stand guard over this place while they assaulted the rest of the Chaosverse. We would've been caught completely flat-footed."

"Autarchs, you only arrived at the very end to rescue me and so you didn't know the details of what happened here. It was only when I reflected on all the things that occurred since my arrival into that hidden dimension that I realized that the way Exalt Bowenya employed the great tree made no sense at all," Ning said. "It was my pity for the Sithe descendants that led me to realize something was wrong."

"Mm." Titanos and Mogg both had extremely serious looks on their faces.

“Although other explanations are possible and we can’t be completely sure that the tree-creature came from the Sithe heartlands,” Autarch Mogg said, “I’d say there is a better than 50% chance of it being the case.”

“It’s possible that our seal has been rendered useless, if it was even effective to begin with,” Autarch Titanos agreed. “It seems we need to start preparing.”

Iyerre didn’t make any ‘mistakes’ in sending the great tree to kill Ning per se, but it clashed with Bowenya’s previous words and actions. If Bowenya had access to the great tree all along, why would he have needed to turtle up for so long? Why would he rather wait and watch as Ning’s truesoul naturally broke apart, rather than use it? It didn’t add up... and that was the mistake.

.....

Ning, Autarch Titanos, and Autarch Mogg continued to stand in midair. By now, the area in front of them was filled with an enormous amount of Emperors. There had to be over three thousand of them, and all of them were Sithe descendants! Around thirty or so were at the Hegemon level of power... Clearly, the Sithe were far superior in rearing and teaching their Emperors.

Ning looked at the group before him. “Although you are descendants of the Sithe, you are still part of our Chaosverse. The true Sithe were invaders who came here from another place. They don’t care about you at all. We won’t demand that you take part in our war against the Sithe, but you are not to assist them either. We’ll arrange for you to stay in an otherverse of your own, and you can live quiet lives there. Don’t take part in this clash of civilizations.”

“Thank you, Daolord Darknorth.” Hawkfang led the group in expressing reverent thanks.

“Thank you, Daolord.” A few others quickly followed his lead.

“Thank you, Daolord.” Finally, all of them bowed towards Ning, with many of them tearing up as they did so. They had long ago sensed that the Sithe treated them differently, and they had been discriminated against for many, many years.

“You can go now. Evacuate all the mortals from the six mortal realms,” Ning instructed. “This place isn’t safe.”

“Understood.”

“We’ll go right now.”

“Let’s go.” The awesome army of over three thousand Hegemons and Emperors quickly flew away, beginning a large-scale evacuation of this realm. Although the six mortal realms in this dimension held many living beings, over three thousand Emperors were working together to evacuate them. They gave the mortals some time to prepare for their departure, but it still only took them just half a day before completing the evacuation process.

Ning then led the Sithe descendants in departing from the Sithelands. He brought them to an extremely distant, out-of-the-way location within the Great Dark.

Rumble... a massive otherverse suddenly appeared within the darkness.

“Go ahead and bind it, Hawkefang,” Ning said, glancing at the three thousand-plus Emperors before him. All of the Emperors were filled with excitement. If given a chance to live in peace, who would choose to serve as cannon fodder instead? This was doubly true when they would only be repaid for their sacrifices with contempt and belittlement.

“Alright.” Hawkefang’s eyes were shining brightly. He could sense that the life he had been longing for was finally at hand.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. After Hawkefang bound the otherverse to himself, the thousands of Emperors all began to fly inside it. Ning, Mogg, and Titanos all smiled at the sight.

“This is a secluded place where I once trained. If any Sithe come here, I will be alerted instantly,” Autarch Mogg said.

“Let these Sithe descendants live a peaceful life here,” Ning said.

“Once we defeat the Sithe, the entire Chaosverse will be at peace as well,” Titanos said with a smile.

All three of them were looking forward to that day.

“Gentlemen, now that everything has been taken care of, it’s time for me to depart,” Ning said.

“I’ll send you back,” Autarch Mogg volunteered.

“Haha, no need.” Ning shook his head and smiled. “I’m not exactly busy. The only thing I’m concerned with is creating a ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique. Although the journey back to my homeland is a long one, I’ll take this opportunity to do some sightseeing. Who knows, I might even find something which inspires me.”

“Very well.” Mogg and Titanos didn’t try to press the issue.

Ning re-entered his realmship. Azurefiend’s avatar once more began to pilot it, sending it disappearing into the Great Dark under the watchful gazes of Mogg and Titanos.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 43: Final Fate Chapter 3: Meeting Autarch Stonerule

Within the realmship. Ji Ning sat in the lotus position, staring at the dazzling prismatic spacetime tunnel as marvelous realmverses flickered past them, but his mind was occupied on the ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique.

“A Truesoul Everlasting... if I can create a technique like this, it would allow even the damage caused by a failed Daomerge to be reversed, with the truesoul being healed.” Ning was keenly attuned to the sensations of his truesoul crumbling away.

His Immortal energy, his godsense, his azureflower mist energy... all of it was filled with his truesoul. But now, every speck of his soul was beginning to crack apart, with tiny flakes of it slowly drifting off and disappearing...

“This crumbling is taking part in every part of my truesoul. Not a single inch of it remains intact,” Ning mused. “How should I reverse it?”

When Ning had been a Daolord of the Third Step, he had 'died' once but been revived thanks to the Lifeblood Dao-seal. The Lifeblood Dao-seal was filled with a portion of Ning's undamaged truesoul, making revival a simple process. But now that Ning's truesoul had already begun to crumble... there was no known technique which could be used to stop it.

"How to reverse it? How do you reverse that which has already crumbled apart?" Ning mentally reviewed the mysteries of the [] while comparing it to his own crumbling process, and as he did so he would occasionally make a few changes and improvements to the.

After five million years of non-stop meditation, Ning finally woke up. "Azurefiend, where are we?" Ning asked.

"We're halfway there. Give us another six million years and we'll reach the Flamedragon Realmverse," Azurefiend's avatar said.

"No need for us to rush. Let's explore the surrounding realms while we are here," Ning said.

"Yes, Master," Azurefiend's avatar said hurriedly. The time he had spent following Ning had shown him far more stunning sights than everything he had experienced in the past. They had captured over two thousand Hegemons and Emperors, fought against a Sith Daoguard Tower, seen strange creatures which came from beyond the Chaosverse, and more. He had never seen such incredible things in the past! Ning also treated him very well, and he in turn would silently pray: "I hope Master can remain alive forever. That would be wonderful."

So long as Ning remained alive, he would have a powerful backer supporting him.

They continued to wander through the cosmos, visiting the marvelous sights the Chasoverse had to offer as well as the many unique lifeforms it had birthed. Every so often, Ning would enter periods of silent meditation to reflect on what he saw.

.....

A vast planet which was teeming with life.

Ning was seated at the peak of a mountain, silently meditating with Azurefiend's avatar standing guard next to him. Ning had been training here for billions of years now, and ever since he started there had been no creatures who could move near this peak. A maze formation had been established halfway up the mountain, and those who escaped the maze would find themselves back at the base of the mountain.

"Young fellow, the destiny that brought us together must come to an end today. Your future accomplishments will be up to your own efforts. I accepted a total of six disciples before you. If you ever meet them, you'll know it right away. Remember – you must not battle amongst yourselves." Azurefiend's avatar remained by Ning's side, while he had created an incarnation to chat with a youth at the base of the mountain.

"Your disciple understands, Master." The youth's eyes were brimming with tears. The past year he had spent with his master had been a truly transformative one for him.

“Go,” Azurefiend’s avatar said, then vanished without a trace. The youth repeatedly kowtowed before departing as well.

At the peak of the mountain.

“Azurefiend, you actually took on seven disciples during the years I was training?” Ning’s voice rang out.

Azurefiend was badly startled. He turned to glance at Ning, who had already risen to his feet, then let out a deep chortle: “Don’t tease me, Master. I was bored and had nothing to do. I spent my time just watching the countless people who lived in this world, and every so often I would find one I liked and take him or her on as a disciple.”

“Hahaha! Well, it is time for us to return to the Flamedragon Realmverse,” Ning said. “We’ll be leaving soon, so go ahead and finish making any arrangements necessary for your disciples.”

“No need. I’ve made those arrangements long ago and have given them everything they should be given. The rest will be up to them. The path of cultivation is a path of self-reliance, after all,” Azurefiend said.

“Very well. Let’s head off.”

Whoosh. The realmship flew away from the snowy peak, and the maze formation which had surrounded it for so many years finally vanished as well, becoming nothing more than a mystery and a legend to this planet.

Ning ended up spending nearly half a chaos cycle on the return trip back to the Three Realms. He had gained quite a few insights into the ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique, but he also gained a better understanding of how difficult it would be.

The crumbling of the truesoul involved countless tiny little flakes disappearing and returning to the Quintessence of the Chaosverse. To reverse this process by seizing those truesoul fragments back from the Quintessence was impossible! Not even Autarchs could succeed in this.

The only other possibility was to use the remaining fragments to somehow remake a complete, undamaged truesoul anew! This was very similar to the concept of ‘Blood-Drop Rebirth’, wherein Fiendgods who had reached the Zifu Disciple stage of cultivation would be able completely remake their entire bodies from a single drop of blood, if they had enough divine power to do so. This was because that single drop of blood contained the essence and foundation for the entire body! Now, however, Ning was trying to accomplish this with something that was even more fundamental... the truesoul.

His goal was to allow a powerful cultivator whose soul had shattered and whose truesoul was breaking apart to be able to remake the truesoul anew. So long as just one scrap of truesoul was remaining, the cultivator would be able to use the ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ to recreate the entire truesoul, then reconstitute the spirit and the body.

A very familiar realmverse appeared before them. “We reached the Flamedragon Realmverse.” Ning revealed a delighted look from within the realmship. Finally, they had returned. Home was home, and the feeling of being home was unlike any other.

“Eh?” Ning turned to look in a different direction. He could sense through karma that another powerful figure, Autarch Stonerule, was located within the Flamedragon Realmverse.

Just one second later... whoosh! Space rippled around Ning, followed by the dazzlingly handsome Autarch Stonerule appearing.

“Autarch Stonerule.” Ning flew out of the realmship to greet him, with Azurefiend’s avatar following obediently from behind.

“Darknorth.” Autarch Stonerule smiled.

“Why have you come here, Autarch?” Ning asked curiously.

“Because of you, obviously!” Autarch Stonerule said with a laugh. “I’ve been waiting for quite some time.”

“Sorry, sorry. I wasn’t in a rush so I took the scenic route while taking the occasional cultivation break,” Ning explained. “That’s why it took me a while to come back. If I had known you were here, I would’ve immediately returned.”

“I’m just teasing you. I’m not in a rush either,” Autarch Stonerule said. “I came here because there are a few things I need to tell you.”

“Hm?” Ning looked at Autarch Stonerule.

“All of us have been analyzing the [] you gave us. We’re in the process of completing the [], but as for the most important []... I’m sorry to say we probably won’t be able to help you much,” Autarch Stonerule said helplessly.

“There’s nothing you can do?” Ning felt rather anxious. Although he had made some improvements in recent years, he knew just how difficult it would be to create a ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique. He had been counting on the Autarchs being able to help him out with it.

“We want to help you, but the ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique revolves around reversing the process of a truesoul’s decay,” Autarch Stonerule said. “The problem was... all of us Autarchs have perfectly intact truesouls. We’ve never experienced the crumbling process ourselves! We’ve seen the truesouls of quite a few failed Daolords break apart, yes, but just watching it as an outsider doesn’t really mean much. We don’t know what it is like to have the truesoul break apart, so we have no idea where we should even begin to fix it.”

“What?” Ning was stunned. The Autarchs had never experienced their truesouls breaking apart, which meant that they were unable to make any headway with regards to the ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique?

“But the Sithe’s Lord of Chaos...?” Ning said.

“He’s at a much higher level of insight than us, which was why he was able to come up with a ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique,” Autarch Stonerule explained. “The six of us are merely on par with you, and we’ve never truly experienced our truesouls breaking apart. Our chances of being able to reverse the truesoul process via a ‘Truesoul Everlasting’ technique are extremely slim. I came to tell you this in person because I don’t want you to place too much hope on us being able to help you.”

Ning nodded. "I understand." This had always been a path which would likely result in failure. Autarch Stonerule's words were a bit discouraging, but Ning was able to accept them calmly.

"But of course, we're still going to keep working at it," Autarch Stonerule said. "There's something else I wanted to discuss with you."

"Something else?" Ning was puzzled.

"The Sithe are desperate to kill you. We believe that the Sithe are paying close attention to whether you are dead or not," Autarch Stonerule said. "That's why I came in person to take a look at the Flamedragon Realmverse. I followed up on quite a few clues, and in the end I managed to find a few Sithe spies."

Autarch Stonerule waved his hand, causing a total of six individuals to appear before him. All of them simply stood there, their gazes vacant. One was a Hegemon, while five were Emperors.

"Spies?" Ning frowned.

"They've infiltrated the Brightshore Kingdom and Vastheaven Palace, hoping to be able to keep track of your status via your heartlamp and similar items," Autarch Stonerule said.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 43: Final Fate Chapter 4: Solving the Heart of Eternity

Ji Ning stared at the six captured Sithe spies, then chuckled: "I'm a failed Daolord. Why would the Sithe be willing to expend this much effort on me?"

"It's best if we keep your status a secret," Autarch Stonerule said seriously. "The Sithe have never given up on their efforts to keep our entire Chaosverse under surveillance. In the past, we didn't really care as we were sure their army remained permanently sealed within the Sithe heartlands, but it now appears highly probable that they long ago found out a way to slip out undetected. They've been biding their time, waiting to deliver a fatal blow to us. We're quietly making arrangements for our forces throughout the Chaosverse to prepare for war, but this will take time. So long as you are still alive, the Sithe will be hesitant to start the war."

"Right." Ning nodded. The Sithe would naturally be unwilling to start the war while Ning was alive. Not because they feared him; rather, because they worried that the high-pressure life-and-death environment created by the war would result in Ning suddenly making a breakthrough and mastering an Autarch-level Dao! If that happened, Ning would be able to easily take control over the entire Chaosverse, and the problem with his crumbling truesoul would disappear.

Although chances of this happening were remote, the Sithe were unwilling to take this risk. Anyone who was able to master an Eternal Omega Dao on his own, without any guidance at all, was without question an incredibly talented figure who would have the blessing of the entire Chaosverse itself. It was entirely possible that a 'miracle' would happen, resulting in him gaining Autarchy.

Thus, it was best for the Sithe to play it safe. They would wait for Ning's truesoul to completely break apart before launching the war! By then, the cultivators wouldn't have even a single Eternal Omega Dao wielder at all, much less an Omega Autarch. The greatest fear of the Sithe would've been avoided.

"With your Eternal Omega Sword Dao serving as the guide, we've already begun to lead some of the most talented geniuses of the entire Chaosverse onto the path of the Omega Dao. However, the birth of a new Omega Emperor will take time! We might need millions of chaos cycles or even longer. I'm afraid the Sithe won't give us the time we need," Autarch Stonerule said. "But so long as you remain alive? They'll have something to fear, something which holds them back."

"I understand. I know what to do." Ning smiled.

"Then I'll be leaving now. Let me know right away if there's anything you need." Autarch Stonerule waved his hand, collecting the six spies and then disappearing without a trace.

Ning watched as he vanished, already beginning to consider what his next steps should be.

.....

That very day, Ning went to meet with Hegemon Brightshore and Emperor Solesky.

"Brother Brightshore. Big brother Solesky." Ning said, "My truesoul has been crumbling away ever since I failed the Daomerge. I'm worried that the remaining Sithe are trying to keep tabs on my status! Thus, we must destroy the heartlamp in the Sword Palace of the Brightshore Kingdom and the other life-monitoring artifacts pertaining to me in the Dao Alliance and in Vastheaven Palace."

"Destroy?" Brightshore and Solesky were both puzzled.

"Then, we'll replace them with fake ones," Ning said. "The fake ones we create will always show that I am 'alive', even if ten million chaos cycles go by. I want the Sithe to always believe that I might be alive."

Solesky couldn't help but argue, "Creating a fake one will be easy, but your truesoul is breaking apart! Even if the fake soul lamps are lit for a million chaos cycles, do you really think the Sithe would believe that you are still alive?"

"Solesky, that could be explained away by temporal deceleration, yes? A million chaos cycles could go by in the outside world, but for Darknorth only ten thousand chaos cycles would have gone past."

Hegemon Brightshore looked at Ning. "Darknorth, what are you planning to do next?"

"Go into secluded meditation," Ning said. "After this, we probably won't be meeting again."

"Do you have a way to reverse the crumbling of your truesoul?" Hegemon Brightshore said rather anxiously.

"A way?" Ning smiled. "Maybe. Alright, enough of that. I'm going to leave with Youji and Pillsaint."

That very day, Ning departed from Vastheaven Palace with Su Youji, Pillsaint, and his other retainers in tow. They went back to the Three Realms.

Everything which was able to detect Ning's status, such as his heartlamps or his life towers, were all destroyed and then replaced with fake versions. In all the Chaosverse, the only ones who would know

for sure if Ning was alive or not were the Autarchs, Nuwa, and Subhuti! Not even his daughter Brightmoon or his parents would have a way to know for sure.

.....

After finishing all of his arrangements, Ning entered the Azureflower Estate by himself. He needed the help of the Autarch's stone dais for this project.

"Daolord Darknorth." The estate-spirit was clearly much more respectful towards him than it had been in the past.

"I'll be spending almost all of my remaining time on researching the 'Truesoul Everlasting' technique." Ning smiled. "Sorry to disturb you."

"Daolord, if you really were able to create such a technique, you would've brought boundless blessings upon the entire Chaosverse. Not only would you yourself survive, you will have saved countless future generations of cultivators to come. Our entire Chaosverse shall thrive and grow strong." The estate-spirit was filled with anticipation.

Time continued to flow on. Every so often, Ning would take a break from researching the 'Truesoul Everlasting' to work on solving Autarch Awakener's 'Heart of Eternity'.

More than 1600 years after he had entered secluded meditation

Crack! Crack! Crack! Ning finally solved the seals covering the ninety-ninth level of the Heart of Eternity hovering before him. The final layer of incredibly complicated runes vanished from the sphere, and it was as though some mechanism had been activated within it. Moments later, the insides of the sphere were revealed.

Rumble... a streak of light shot out, resolving into a scholarly youth who was dressed in white robes with blue fringes. Ning immediately recognized this person as being Autarch Awakener! Autarch Awakener had been the most scholarly Autarch, the one with the biggest dreams. He had spent countless aeons working on the tenth chaos seal.

"Young friend," the white-robed scholar said. Ning immediately understood that this was a projection which Autarch Awakener had left behind before his death.

"Since you were able to solve the ninety-ninth seal covering the Heart of Eternity, you must be at or near my own level with regards to the chaos seals I devised," the white-robed scholar said with a smile. "Thus, you are probably strong and wise enough to know of the great danger our entire civilization is facing, and of the foes threatening our entire Chaosverse... the Sithe. The Sithe are still there, and they are still as dangerous as ever."

"The Sithe are able to repair even shattered truesouls, allowing them to attempt the Daomerge repeatedly. They also have a more perfect energy system, allowing them to generate far more Autarchs than us.

"I have always hoped to create a similar technique which would allow us to birth more Hegemons, and perhaps as many as ten or twenty Autarchs! If I succeeded, we would easily win the battle which is yet to come.

“I have left behind my Nine Chaos Seals to this Chaosverse. Although their flaws mean that one can only successfully start to train in them prior to reaching the World level, I actually fixed those flaws long ago in my own version. I imagine that you, my young friend, can easily do the same as well. The reason why I intentionally published a flawed version of the Nine Chaos Seals is because those who cannot master it prior to the World level cannot be considered true geniuses. There is no chance that they can succeed in helping me to perfect the tenth stage of the technique.

“Within the Heart of Eternity lies the true, perfected version of the Nine Chaos Seals, as well as two lines of thought I have pondered while researching the tenth seal. I wasn’t able to succeed through either of these two paths, but I feel that both can theoretically lead to success. They represent my greatest accomplishments, and I entrust them to you along with my hopes and dreams.

“This is all the Heart of Eternity holds. In terms of value, this probably is not that valuable to someone who is incapable of solving the Heart of Eternity... but to one who was able to solve it, they may perhaps be of some use.

“My young friend... after spending countless aeons in painstaking research, I discovered that I was unable to advance any further. This is why I gave up. I hope you can complete the Ten Chaos Seals and give our civilization a chance to defeat the looming threat. If you can... then I, Awakener, will be grateful even in death.” Autarch Awakener smiled, then his projection vanished.

The white-haired elder who was the estate-spirit had been watching this entire time. Tears streamed down his face.

Ning could sense the powerful will which had driven Autarch Awakener to do so much. He felt a deep sense of admiration for Awakener, who truly had been a leader for the cultivator civilizations.

Ning turned to inspect the contents of the Heart of Eternity, which indeed held many techniques and records left behind by Autarch Awakener. One of those techniques was the perfected Nine Chaos Seals.

The perfect Nine Chaos Seals could be trained in by World-level cultivators, Daolords, and even Emperors. After doing so, it could be used like ‘divine power’ inside the body and ‘Immortal energy’ outside the body. This was a truly flawless type of energy... but it was limited to the first nine stages.

“Perfecting it was simple.” Ning was at such a high level of enlightenment that he immediately grasped the principles behind it. Given enough time, he too would be able to duplicate the work which Awakener had done.

Ning began to greedily read through Autarch Awakener’s notes. Over the course of aeons of research, Autarch Awakener had clearly gained many more insights than Ning with regards to these two paths. He also had many different ideas of his own, which quickly gave Ning new insights and ideas.

Ning became completely focused on reviewing Autarch Awakener’s work and adding it to his own. A thousand chaos cycles... two thousand chaos cycles... five thousand chaos cycles... ten thousand chaos cycles...

Time continued to flow onwards, as cold and uncaring as ever.