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### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 14: Black-White College

“Right. Ji Ning, this book holds records of all of the major powers that are located within Stillwater Commandery. It is quite detailed.” Northmont Baiwei waved his hand, and a foot-long book, appearing as massive and as heavy as a shield, appeared. There wasn’t a single word on the cover of this book. He handed it directly over.

Ning stared at the enormous, shield-sized book. He blinked. “This is too big...”

Northmont Baiwei began to chortle. “Think about how large Stillwater Commandery is! This book holds detailed records regarding every single power within Stillwater Commandery, and it even describes some of the magic treasures and techniques which the more important Immortal cultivators of each sect possess.”

“It’s as detailed as that?” Ning was amazed. “I just want to choose a school to enter.” Baiwei grinned. “I couldn’t be bothered to compile something, so I just had my estate prepare a copy of the pre-existing intelligence report regarding the various major powers in the region. This is classified at a fairly low level. The top-secret version is hundreds of books long.”

Ning was speechless. All he needed to do was consider which school he was going to join, but Baiwei had prepared a copy of a full intelligence report. No wonder there wasn’t even a single word on its cover. “Take it,” Baiwei said. Ning immediately accepted it.

Baiwei continued, “I imagine you will need quite some time to read this intelligence report. Actually, given your current power, Brother Ji Ning, if you are to enter a school, you must select one of the absolute best schools which Stillwater Commandery possesses. Within our Stillwater Commandery, aside from the Raindragon Guard and the Marquisate, there are a total of eight supreme powers. I’ll give you a brief explanation of them. Later, when you read the book, you’ll be able to move through it much more quickly.” Ning nodded.

“These eight supreme powers are divided up as into three major schools, three major tribes, and the two major churches,” Baiwei said seriously. “They all have incomparably long histories, and their roots are unfathomably deep. Although some of the other powers might have Immortals guarding over them, compared to these eight supreme powers, they are still lacking in some manner. Their Immortals might not be strong enough, or their foundations might be a bit unstable, or they might not have existed long enough.”

“The three major schools refer to the Black-White College, the Skysplitter Sword Sect, and the Hundred Flowers Fairyland,” Baiwei said. “These three schools vastly surpass all of the other schools within Stillwater Commandery. The Thousand Rivers School, the North River School...they are all much weaker than these three major schools.”

“All three have an incredible background.”

“The Skysplitter Sword Sect is the only one of the three which focuses on swordplay. It has many disciples, and only by slaughtering a bloody path through the others will the elites of the school rise

to the peak. All of them are exceptionally talented, combat-eager figures.” Baiwei continued, “Enough about this one, though; you already know about it.”

Ning nodded. “Please describe the other two.” Baiwei smiled. “The Hundred Flowers Fairyland only recruits female disciples. Since they only accept female disciples, no matter how much of a genius you are, Ji Ning, you won’t be able to enter. This school is situated in a standalone dimension which a major power set up single-handedly. That place is known as the Hundred Flowers Fairyland.”

Established a standalone dimension? Ning’s own underwater estate was also in a dimension of its own.

“I have no intentions of joining the Skysplitter Sword Sect, and I can’t enter the Hundred Flowers Fairyland. Then what of the Black-White College?” Ning asked. Baiwei chortled. “For now, let’s not discuss the Black-White College.”

“Why not?” Ning asked urgently. “I have my reasons,” Baiwei said. “Let me now describe the three major tribes of the eight great powers. They are the Eastriver clan, the Dragonhunter clan, and the Bluewood clan.”

“The Dragonhunter clan has a divine ability suited for archers that it does not teach to any outsiders,” Baiwei said. “This Dragonhunter clan often produces some truly powerful master archers. Master archers, especially extremely powerful, top-tier ones....they can locate their enemies from far away with their divine sense, at a distance of a thousand kilometers or even greater, then release their arrow and badly injure or even kill their foes from that distance. Even if they cannot kill their foes, they can immediately retreat.”

Ning’s eyes lit up. He himself was in possession of a divine sense that could stretch to a distance of over a hundred kilometers. In addition, his divine ability, the [Starseizing Hand], allowed the power of his hands to reach a terrifying level. He could use one hand to grip the bow, and the other to knock the arrow.

“The Eastriver clan. They are extremely skilled in commanding water. I’d strongly urge you not to fight against experts of the Eastriver clan in an aquatic environment.”

“The Bluewood clan is the oldest of these three major clans, comparable to our Northmont clan in age. This is a tribe that was established as far back as the Fiendgod era,” Baiwei said. “The Bluewood clan is extremely skilled in controlling golems and constructs, and many of the constructs within Stillwater Commandery were provided by them. Over the course of countless years...who knows how many powerful constructs the Bluewood clan has amassed? They, too, are a power which no one wishes to antagonize.”

Ning nodded. Three major schools, three major tribes. All of them were extraordinary.

“The two major sects are the Heavenly Saint Church and the Blood God Church.”

“The Heavenly Saint Church acts in a manner which is big-hearted and honest, but also dominating and overbearing,” Baiwei said. “They have existed for an extremely long time, and they are also exceptionally mysterious.”

“The Blood God Church was erected sixty million years ago; it is extremely evil and crazed. The members of the Blood God Church can be described as ‘madmen’; they will often commit major sins, then suffer pursuit and assault from the Raindragon Guards.”

“The Raindragon Guards will pursue after and kill them?” Ning asked, puzzled. Baiwei smiled. “Ji Ning, you should know that in this world, there is such a thing as karmic merits, yes?” “Yes,” Ning nodded.

Of course he knew. It was precisely because of the good karma that he had accumulated that after being sent to the Netherworld Kingdom, he had been assigned to be reborn in the Heaven Realm. However, because of that disturbance in the Netherworld Kingdom, he had entered the mortal realm yet again. If he hadn’t been able to react quickly, he probably would’ve had his soul shattered.

“Acting benevolently accumulates positive karma; acting vilely results in the creation of sin,” Baiwei said. “The greater your karmic merits are, the more you shall be loved by the heavens, and the greater your luck shall be. But if your sins are too great, your ‘three disasters’ and ‘nine tribulations’ will be very terrifying, and your luck will be reduced as well.”

“Killing those creatures who have committed great sins will result in the accumulation of major karmic merits,” Baiwei said with a smile. “The Raindragon Guard serves as the army of the Grand Xia Dynasty. Per the orders of the Grand Xia Dynasty, they will seek out and slay those who have committed grave sins, resulting in the karmic merits of the Grand Xia Dynasty as a whole to rise...and thus, the Grand Xia Dynasty’s fortunes will grow increasingly rosy, and its foundations will become increasingly firm.”

Ning was astonished. So the reason that the Raindragon Guards around the world pursued those who had committed grave sins...was to improve the fortune of the Grand Xia Dynasty? He had no idea, but upon being informed, it was all so simple.

“Those who have rendered karmic merits shall have a clean aura swirling about them. But for those sinners, a corrosive aura will swirl about them,” Baiwei said. “Supposedly, those with extremely high levels of karmic merit will emit a golden light, while those who have committed tremendous sins will radiate a bloody, vile light. Unfortunately, only someone who has opened the Celestial Eye will be capable of seeing it.”

Ning now understood. He himself had opened his Celestial Eye, and had noticed through his divine sense that a faint, clear aura swirled about him. So this was ‘karmic merit’. However, although he had activated his divine sense many times afterwards, he had never found any others with this clear aura around them. Clearly, it was quite difficult to reach this level of karmic merit, much less the level of emanating golden light.

“How can one accumulate sufficient karmic merits?” Ning asked. “Only by doing good deeds can one gain karmic merits, while carrying out vile deeds will result in sin. As for the details...I’m not too clear on them either,” Baiwei said. “Karmic merits and sins; all of these things are determined by the heavens. They are too complicated. However, no matter what, Immortal practitioners must not wantonly slaughter ordinary mortals. It doesn’t matter if an Immortal practitioner kills another practitioner, but if he kills mortals...then his sins will definitely accumulate. This is something my father warned me of.”

Ning was startled. Killing common mortals would result in accumulating major sin? “Thank you for your guidance, Brother Baiwei,” Ning said gratefully.

“After you join a school, you will quickly learn about the various taboos and proscriptions,” Baiwei said. “Killing common mortals is forbidden. Killing one or two is one thing, but the more you kill, the more trouble it will be. That Bei Zishan you killed? It was precisely because he murdered far too many common mortals that he was covered in sin, and thus hunted by the Raindragon Guard.”

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After this topic of conversation, Ning suddenly thought of something. “You’ve already spoken of the Heavenly Saint Church, the Blood God Church, the Eastriver clan, the Bluewood clan, the Dragonhunter clan, the Skysplitter Sword Sect, and the Hundred Flowers Fairyland. These are seven of the major powers. Then the final one, the Black-White College; what’s that all about?”

Ning cared more about the schools. He didn’t wish to enter the Skysplitter Sword Sect, and wouldn’t be permitted to join the Hundred Flowers Fairyland. The Black-White College was the only one remaining.

“The Black-White College is the most powerful of the eight major powers!” Baiwei looked towards Ning. “Most powerful?” Ning instantly grew curious. “Yes.” Baiwei’s eyes were shining. “The other seven powers are on par with each other; they are all very ancient, and their roots are deep. But the Black-White College is the true cream of the crop. In fact, the Black-White College has even produced a Celestial Immortal.”

“A Celestial Immortal?” Ning’s heart instantly began to pound. Good heavens. Although quite a few of the powers located in the Stillwater Commandery had Immortals, those were all Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals. He had never heard of any power being in possession of a Celestial Immortal.

“Right. Celestial Immortal.” Baiwei continued, “The Black-White College, at its peak of power, was once comparable to my Northmont clan of Stillwater, as well as the Raindragon Guard.”

“Countless years have passed. Although that ancient Celestial Immortal departed long ago, the Black-White College remains the strongest of the eight powers.” Baiwei laughed as he looked at Ning. “And, do you know? Of the three supreme schools, the Skysplitter Sword Sect has a headquarters that stretches a hundred thousand kilometers, the Hundred Flowers Fairyland has its own separate dimension, but the Black-White College...it is located right here in Stillwater City.”

“Stillwater City?” Ning couldn’t believe it. “Stillwater City is so small. How could a school be located here, and such a supreme school at that?”

Baiwei laughed. “That’s because this Black-White College’s members range from Immortals to Zifu Disciples, and they only number in the hundreds. The entire Black-White College has, in total, a hundred Zifu Disciples, two hundred Wanxiang Adepts, thirty-plus Primal Daoists, and a number of Immortals who disappear and reappear randomly. Supposedly, they have at least six Immortals.”

Ning blinked. What? A hundred Zifu Disciples? Two hundred Wanxiang Adepts? There were even fewer Zifu Disciples than Wanxiang Adepts? They had a ridiculous number of Primal Daoists as well...and they had at least six Immortals! That was even more than the Skysplitter Sword Sect had!

“Now do you understand?” Baiwei looked at Ning. “The Black-White Palace has exceedingly few members. To enter it is also exceedingly difficult. Even though I think highly of you, all I can do is

recommend you for entry into the Skysplitter Sword Sect. However, now that you have already reached the Dao Domain level, you are qualified to enter the Black-White Palace.”

“Only someone like me can enter it?” Ning was curious.

“The Black-White College’s name is known even in the royal capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty.” Baiwei looked at Ning. “Each year, it will accept at most three or four disciples. Sometimes, it won’t accept any at all. They only accept those who are true geniuses with unparalleled abilities to comprehend things. If one’s foundation is even slightly lacking, one won’t be able to enter. The vast majority of those who are able to enter the Black-White College are the most monstrous geniuses of the various tribes within the Stillwater Commandery. Even some of the major powers outside Stillwater Commandery will send their geniuses over in the hopes of joining the Black-White College.”

### The Desolate Era

#### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 15: Capturing Fiendgods**

“The royal capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty?” Ji Ning felt a certain itchiness in his heart. He couldn’t help but immediately begin to flip through this enormous compiled intelligence report.

Northmont Baiwei, seeing how eager Ning was, laughed then said, “Intrigued? Now do you know what I saved it for last?”

Soon, Ning flipped to the relevant page regarding the Black-White College. “So actually...so it’s....” Ning, upon reading the information regarding the glorious history of the Black-White College, began to mumble to himself, his eyes shining.

“Black-White Diagram? The Black-White Bedstone Diagram?” Ning, after reading towards the end of the report, raised his head and looked towards Baiwei, his eyes filled with curiosity. “Brother Baiwei, is this Black-White Bedstone Diagram truly so incredible?”

“How could it not be?” Baiwei laughed. “After you join the Black-White College, you will personally see the Black-White Bedstone Diagram. By then, you’ll understand how miraculous it is.” Ning nodded lightly.

The Black-White Diagram was the most precious treasure of the entire Black-White College! It was an enormous sculpture that was carved into the diagram of a black-and-white bedstone. The black-and-white bedstone appeared ordinary, but in reality it was covered with complicated runes, with white and black lines crisscrossing it. It was so intricate and detailed...that the simple crisscrossings of the black and white lines created incomparably profoundness which contained many different types of Dao. It was simply unfathomable.

It allured many of the major figures from outside sects, who would come to stare at it and meditate. But of course, since this was the most sacred treasure of the Black-White College, the major figures of other powers who occasionally received a chance to view it would be given a time limit. Only the disciples of the Black-White College would be given unlimited amounts of time to meditate on it.

“My father once said,” Baiwei explained, “That the Dao is even profounder than the profound. If one wishes to comprehend it, it is like seeking a flower in a fog...while the Black-White Bedstone Diagram seems to summarize the profundities and mysteries of the countless Daos in a very detailed, expert

manner. Those countless crisscrossing black and white lines...by viewing them in a different way, you will gain different insights into different mysteries. Such a marvelous item must have been born from nature itself, which naturally formed this diagram.”

The Black-White Diagram had been found by an Immortal in one of the minor worlds, who had brought it back here. By relying on the Black-White Diagram, the College had grown famous and powerful, and had even changed its name after it, becoming the Black-White College.

“I want to go for a stroll,” Ning said, rising to his feet. “Go where?” Baiwei asked. “The Black-White College,” Ning said. “Haha, you can’t resist taking a look?” Baiwei laughed. “Only when I see it with my own eyes will I have a better grasp of whether or not I will choose to join this Black-White College.” Ning was indeed quite eager to see this Black-White College; after all, every single disciple of a school such as this could be described as a unparalleled genius. Ning was naturally quite eager to see what this place, a gathering spot for supreme geniuses, was like.

“Come, I’ll accompany you.” Baiwei rose to his feet as well.

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Ning, Baiwei, the Whitewater Hound, and that golem maidservant walked together within the estate, heading towards the outside. “Eh?” Baiwei suddenly noticed several distant figures from the corner of his eyes.

It was his father, Northmont Blacktiger, and that triangle-pupiled old man, along with a third, tall, skinny man. “Xuan Six?” Baiwei frowned, musing to himself. “Why has Six returned to the estate? Can something major have occurred?”

As the only child of Blacktiger, Baiwei naturally knew many secrets. He instantly recognized that tall, skinny man.

“What is it?” Ning asked. “Nothing. Let’s go to the Black-White College,” Baiwei laughed. “We’re in no hurry today. Let’s just walk.” “Alright.” Ning laughed, then followed Baiwei out.

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Blacktiger and the old triangle-pupiled servant just stood there, listening to the report from that tall, skinny man – Xuan Six. The triangle-pupiled old man glanced sideways, noting the distant Baiwei and Ning.

“After discovering his whereabouts, we did everything we could to set down an all-encompassing net. In the end, we finally captured that Primordial Fiendgod. We captured him alive!” The tall, skinny man spoke with great respect. “Our side lost a squad, a Primal Daoist, and twelve Wanxiang Adepts.”

“Mm. Well done.” Blacktiger nodded, his deep, abyssal eyes flashing faintly with lightning. “And where has this Fiendgod been imprisoned?” Blacktiger asked. “In the second ‘Kun’ trigram character,” the tall man replied respectfully.

Blacktiger nodded gently. “You can leave now.” “Yes.” The tall, skinny Xuan Six immediately, quietly slipped away.

The nearby triangle-pupiled servant hurriedly whispered, "Congratulations and felicitations, master. You caught a Primordial Fiendgod alive." Blacktiger responded in a low voice, "Let's first see what sort of Fiendgod it is, how strong it is, and what divine abilities it is skilled in. These Primordial Fiendgods have been able to struggle at death's doorstep and survive to this era; none of them are easy to deal with. Even the weakest of them...might have others of the same race in hiding. No matter what, we have to take a look. Come, let's leave the city."

"Alright." The triangle-pupiled old servant replied with respect, and soon...

Whoosh! A wave of black energy appeared. Eight black divine dragons, pulling a carriage behind them, flew out from the Northmont Blacktiger Estate, flying directly into the heavens, finally disappearing into the skies above Stillwater City.

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Ning and Baiwei, by contrast, were quite relaxed. The two strolled through the incomparably wide streets, moving a kilometer with each blink of the eye. The Whitewater Hound and the maidservant were able to effortlessly keep up.

"Here we are. The Black-White College is up ahead," Baiwei said, pointing towards the front. The two quickly came to a halt. Ning lifted his head, staring straight ahead. Up ahead was an enormous edifice, the main gates three hundred meters tall and nearly six hundred meters wide. The main gates had three characters inscribed onto it – 'Black-White College'. In addition, in the center of these characters, there was a complicated black-and-white diagram of a bedstone.

"The Black-White Bedstone Diagram?" Ning took a look, and as he did, he could sense infinite mysteries contained within it...but when he took a closer inspection, he felt as though they were all blurred, and that he couldn't get a clear grasp on them.

"Those characters in front of the Black-White College, along with that bedstone diagram, were left behind by that Celestial Immortal to the Black-White College." Baiwei explained, "It isn't the true Black-White Bedstone Diagram; the true Black-White Bedstone Diagram is far larger than this one, and far more complicated."

"So that's how it is." Ning nodded. On the second floor of the main gate of the Black-White College, there was an enormous inky-jade stone sculpture of a lion, as well as the inky-jade stone sculpture of a divine dragon. They stood at each side of the bedstone, with many soldiers in the nearby area as well.

"Those soldiers belong to my Marquisate of Stillwater," Baiwei said. "They've been sent here to help guard this place. That lion and that divine dragon? They are the true gate guards for the Black-White College."

"Them? Guards?" Ning was astonished. Even with his vision, he hadn't been able to tell that the stone lion and the stone dragon were guardians.

"These are two constructs which the Black-White College purchased from the Bluewood clan at enormous cost," Baiwei explained. "Supposedly, these two constructs have close to an Immortal's power, and they have intelligence no lower than an ordinary person's. They have already stood guard here for countless years."

Ning was speechless. Constructs? That were close to Immortals in power?

“Blackcurrent!” Baiwei suddenly called out in a high voice. “Baiwei!” From within the Black-White College, a white-robed youth who was leading a group of followers laughed in surprise.

Baiwei immediately sent mentally to the nearby Ning, “This person is named Northmont Blackcurrent. He, too, is a member of our Northmont clan of Stillwater. However, he’s from an extremely distant branch of the family. Although his talent was exceptional, he wasn’t viewed as being very important. Afterwards, however, he actually was able to successfully enter the Black-White College. His status within our Northmont clan instantly rose dramatically.”

“Oh?” Ning looked at the white-clothed youth with surprise.

“Still, be careful of this person. This person is extremely good at putting on false pretenses. My father once said...this Northmont Blackcurrent is a viper dressed in a sheepskin. You cannot let yourself grow too close to this sort of person, but there’s no need to create any grudges between you either.” This was what Baiwei sent to Ning.

Ning nodded. A viper dressed in a sheepskin?

The Northmont clan of Stillwater had managed to last from the Fiendgod era to the modern era. One could imagine how many members it had. Some of the more distant branches...probably wouldn’t have statuses that were much higher than that of the Ji clan’s. Only if they produced a supreme genius would the Marquisate of Stillwater value them.

“This person had probably been stifled terribly in the past, and so his personality became distorted.” This was what Ning guessed.

“Baiwei, why have you come?” Blackcurrent laughed. “I brought my good friend, Ji Ning, to come take a look,” Baiwei replied. “Brother Ji Ning also wishes to enter this Black-White College.”

Ning spoke out: “It is extremely hard to enter the Black-White College. I just want to give it a try.”

Northmont Blackcurrent glanced at Ning. He instantly felt a hint of dislike towards him! His experiences in his youth had caused him to view all of the members of the primary lineage of the Northmont clan, all those exalted young masters, with extreme jealousy and dislike! Thus, he now easily began to view Ning as being on Northmont Baiwei’s side.

“Oh. Even though you might fail, you should still make an attempt,” Blackcurrent said with a laugh. He looked at Ning...but a hint of pity was in his gaze. “You might be lucky. You might get in. By then, we will be fellow disciples.”

Ning could sense that this Blackcurrent had an arrogant, lofty demeanor about him. Clearly, as Blackcurrent saw it, he himself was an unparalleled genius. As for this Ji Ning? Since he had come alongside Baiwei, Ji Ning’s status was extraordinary, but what of it? What the Black-White College cared about was a person’s innate talent and comprehension ability.

“Baiwei, I can’t stay here for too long. I have business. Let’s have a good chat, sometime in the future.” Blackcurrent clasped his hands, then led his group away. Every member of this group had an



extraordinary demeanor. Based on what Ning could sense, it seemed as though all of these followers were Immortal cultivators.

“What’s going on with those followers?” Ning asked. “Didn’t you say that he is an ordinary member of a distant branch of your Northmont clan? Why are there so many Immortal practitioners following him?”

Baiwei shook his head. “Every single disciple of the Black-White College is an unparalleled genius. You can’t expect them to all do everything for themselves, can you? Thus, the Black-White College will permit every single formal disciple to accept ten retainers. Thus, although the Black-White College only has a few hundred disciples, it has thousands of retainers.”

“These thousands of retainers will act on behalf of the Black-White College, and they can also go listen to the Primal Daoists, or perhaps even the Immortals, expound on the Dao. They can also be gifted with Ki Refining techniques. If there is a particularly talented person amongst them, they might even be promoted to the rank of full disciple. But of course, it’s rare for even a single retainer to be promoted to full disciple, even after a hundred years. The Black-White College’s requirements for its full disciples are quite strict, after all. Still, no matter what, to be a retainer in the Black-White College is better than going to be an ordinary disciple in an ordinary school,” Baiwei said. “Thus, many Immortal practitioners are willing to go be retainers.”

Ning nodded. Formidable. By accepting retainers, these genius disciples essentially formed their own coteries! This helped make the Black-White College more stable as well.

“However, this fellow clansman of mine, Blackcurrent, seems to not hold you in particularly high regard, Brother Ji Ning,” Baiwei said. “When the time comes, after you enter the Black-White College, the look on his face will be priceless.”

Ning laughed. “My mind is settled!” Baiwei was startled. “Are you saying...?”

“At the twelfth lunar month, I will enter this Black-White College.” Ning raised his head, staring towards the words left behind by that Celestial Immortal.

Black-White College...this was the place where he would begin his sudden rise to prominence!

## **The Desolate Era**

### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 16: The Twelfth Lunar Month, Entering a School**

Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, the twelfth lunar month arrived. The first to the third days of the twelfth lunar month were the days which many of the schools located in Stillwater City would accept disciples.

“Wow.” Meng Xin, Meng Jun, and Meng Roch walked out of an alley, arriving at the main street. “There are so many people here,” Meng Xin breathed in amazement. Meng Jun said, his expression exuberant, “That goes without saying. Today is the first day of the twelfth lunar month, the very first day in which one can join a school. There are countless people in Stillwater City who will join a school today. There are ordinary mortals, Xiantian lifeforms, and also Zifu Disciples like us! However, those top-tier schools generally will only accept early Zifu stage experts! We are all early Zifu stage experts; it should be much easier for us to join a school.”

Meng Xin secretly gave the nearby Meng Roch a sideways glance. Previously, when the Snowdragon Mountain experts had ambushed them, Roch had executed a forbidden technique in order to save her. This had resulted in damage to his cultivation base, and it would now be much harder for him to join a school.

“Little Sister Xin, let’s go,” Jun said. Suddenly, he gave the nearby Roch a sidelong glance, and then a look of amusement appear on his face. “Rocky, although your cultivation foundation was damaged, you are still an early stage Zifu Disciple. If you are lucky, perhaps you’ll encounter some schools that didn’t investigate too carefully, and you’ll still be able to join them.”

Roch found it hard to hide the anger from his face. What did Jun mean by ‘didn’t investigate too carefully’? Accepting new disciples was something which determined a school’s future. Which school was careless in doing this?

“Oho, you are angry.” Jun let out a snicker, then turned and left.

“Big Brother Rocky.” Meng Xin couldn’t help but call out to him, but Roch said in a low voice, “You two can go. I’ll go by myself to try out some schools.” Xin hesitated, then said, “Big Brother Rocky, I’ll go with you. Let’s go join a school together.”

Roch couldn’t help but feel surprised and delighted. But right at this moment, Jun, who had already walked quite far away, turned and called out to Xin, “Little Sister Xin!” Xin stood there by Roch’s side. “I’ll stay with Big Brother Rocky,” she said. This caused a hint of excitement to appear on Roch’s face.

Jun stared. “You’ll go with him? How can he possibly enter any decent school?” Xin replied, “When Big Brother Rocky used that forbidden technique, he saved your life as well. And you actually treat him like this? I won’t go with you.”

Because she was both beautiful and talented since she was a child, Xin had always been doted on. Thus, she had a bit of a spoiled streak. Although she slightly looked down on both Roch and Jun, she still felt very grateful towards Roch for having rescued her life on the journey over. As for Jun...Xin naturally now held Meng Jun in great contempt, due to the way he treated his savior.

“You...” Jun stared. “Hmph.” Xin just snorted coldly. Jun turned and left. As he did, he said, “You just wait and see. I want to see what sort of a school you two will end up joining.”

Meng Xin turned to look towards Meng Roch. “Big Brother Rocky, let’s go.” As for Roch, a blazing fire was in his heart, and so he followed Xin forward. The two would try to join a school on their own.

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West Stillwater. Northmont Blacktiger’s Estate.

“Brother Baiwei, no need to send me off,” Ji Ning laughed. Northmont Baiwei laughed as well. “Then I’ll wait for your good news, Ji Ning.” Ning clasped his hands, then turned and left, taking his Whitewater Hound with him as he headed directly towards the Black-White College.

The recent days he had spent in Northmont Blacktiger’s Estate had all been quite calm and peaceful. Ning had learned through Baiwei that in recent days, thanks to the power he had displayed in the

Carefree Caverns, there had indeed been quite a few schools which had sent people to the Estate with the goal of having Ning join them.

All of them had made extremely good offers. Some offered an Immortal as his master; others offered five hundred kilograms of liquefied elemental essence; still others had prepared a Heaven-ranked magic treasure for him.

Many offers had been made, and these offers were good enough to make even a Primal Daoist envious. In terms of value, there weren't at all inferior to the entire value of the elemental ore mine that had been discovered in the Ji clan's territory. Unfortunately, the Skysplitter Sword Sect wasn't amongst them, nor the Black-White College.

Of the three major schools that were amongst the eight great powers of Stillwater Commandery, the Hundred Flowers Fairyland only accepted female disciples, while the Skysplitter Sword Sect was extremely proud and wouldn't go recruit disciples. As for the Black-White College, of course it would never, ever proactively reach out to potential disciples.

"Those schools are all much weaker than the three major schools. The Ki Refining techniques, divine abilities, and secret arts they have to offer are all on a lower level as well." Ning shook his head. This lower level represented a difference that was as great as that between the heavens and the earth. The more top-tier a Ki Refining technique was, the better a chance one would have of becoming an Immortal.

Moments later. "Here we are." Ning raised his head, staring towards the distant Black-White College. The Whitewater Hound looked at it as well.

"There really are quite a lot of people here today," Ning sighed. The Whitewater Hound sent mentally towards him, "This Black-White College is extremely exacting in its standards for taking on new disciples. Ning, son, don't be careless and end up eliminated."

"Don't worry, Uncle White." Ning nodded.

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Today, the gates to the Black-White College were wide open. People were allowed to freely enter, and Ning entered, the Whitewater Hound by his side. Within the thronging masses of people present were the various Immortal cultivators who wished to enter the Black-White College.

"Father, I will definitely work hard. I'll enter the Black-White College at one try."

"The Black-White College. I'll definitely enter!"

"I will definitely become a disciple of the Black-White College. Sister Ru promised that she would be my wife if I succeed."

All of the Immortal cultivators were gritting their teeth. Near them, many spirit-beasts, servants, family members, and friends were present as well. "There has to be thousands of people here," Ning said to himself, speechless.

From up ahead, an angry voice rang out. "Why have you, a middle stage Ki Refiner, come to my Black-White College? Hurry up and leave. Everyone who wishes to enter our Black-White College, listen up;

you must be an early stage Ki Refiner. Our Black-White College will only accept early stage Ki Refiners! If you aren't an early stage Ki Refiner, hurry up and leave, unless you want to listen to me curse at you. NEXT!"

"Mmm. The toughness of your meridian channels is insufficient. Begone. NEXT!"

"You've used a forbidden technique, and you still have come to my Black-White College? Scram! NEXT!"

"Your meridian channels are insufficiently wide. Begone. NEXT!"

"Mmm. You barely qualify. Go inside and wait."

Ning heard every single evaluation with perfect clarity. Hearing the voice ring out from far away, he couldn't help but feel surprised. The vast majority had been eliminated, just based on their physical qualifications. From this, one could tell how strict the standards were.

A short time later. Ning moved closer to the front, and he saw the scene happening up ahead. There was a lake in the distance, and above the lake there was a boat with a black-haired middle-aged man seated on it. The man sat there, holding a flagon of wine, appearing quite relaxed. An enormous bronze mirror hung there in the air above him, and it shone down towards the Immortal practitioners that flew towards the man.

"Greetings, senior." A young man flew forward, standing atop the water without sinking down. Rumble...the light of the bronze mirror shone down upon him. "Mm. You just barely qualify. Go inside and wait," the black-haired, middle-aged man said casually.

"Thank you, senior." The young man instantly walked forward atop the water, moving at high speed across the lake and arriving at the opposite end of it. There were tens of young men and women waiting there already, as well as a few youths.

One Immortal cultivator after another was eliminated, and they all had to return to the side of the shore from whence they had come. As for those who passed, they all flew to the other shore.

Yet another graceful young master glided towards the top of the lake. Cupping his hands, he said, "Meng Tang greets you yet again, senior." The giant bronze mirror shone down on him from above, and the black-haired, middle-aged man revealed a rare hint of a satisfied smile. "Go in." Meng Tang bowed modestly, then flew to the other shore.

"Uncle White. Wait here for me." Ning looked at the Whitewater Hound by his side, then sent him a mental message. The Whitewater Hound nodded. Swoosh! Ning's figure flickered, and he too appeared atop the lake. Clasp his hands, he said, "My respects to you, senior."

"He's dressed in animal furs?" "This young man is dressed in animal furs? How rare." "I wonder where he came from." "He looks quite young...I imagine he must be quite talented." The spectators were all chatting amongst themselves.

.....

Ning, however, was quite calm. Although some of those people looked down on his animal fur clothes, these clothes were a perfect copy of the fur clothes his mother had personally sown for him. When he wore these furs, he felt incomparably comfortable, as though his mother was right there by his side. As

for the actual fur clothes his mother had sown, he couldn't bear to wear them, for fear of wearing them out. He kept them safely hidden away.

The black-haired, middle-aged man on the boat gave Ning a glance. "Move faster. No need to put on airs." The bronze mirror in the sky shone down towards Ning as well.

"Hrm?" Ning suddenly had a strange feeling, as though this light had penetrated through his skin, flesh, and bones throughout his body. "Eh? A Fiendgod Body Refiner?" The black-haired, middle-aged man gave Ning a surprised glance, then nodded in satisfaction. "Your talent isn't bad. And you've already reached the Zifu level as a Fiendgod as well, and seemingly in a very perfect manner. What technique do you train in?"

"The [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]!" Ning gave a direct response, and his words instantly elicited surprised cries.

"The [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]?"

"The legendary number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique? Someone was actually able to train to the Zifu level in it?"

"He appears to be simply a youth...it really is true that the younger an Immortal cultivator appears, the more one must be wary of them. For him to be able to successfully train in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] at such a young age...formidable, formidable."

"There really are quite a few geniuses that have come to join the Black-White College. I came very early in the morning, and this is now the second person I have seen here who trains in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] and is at the Zifu level."

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Ning's ears twitched. Oh? He wasn't the only one here who had successfully trained in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]?

"Mm." The black-haired, middle-aged man nodded with a smile. "Go. Still, you must not be the slightest bit careless. Perhaps you might be able to enter my College after all." Ning bowed, his heart filled with surprise. "Thank you, senior."

It seemed as though the Black-White College's requirements for accepting new disciples truly were exacting. Even someone at the seventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]... only 'might' have a chance at entering? Still, the Black-White College attracted the interest of all of the supreme talents of Stillwater Commandery, and even some of the supreme geniuses outside of Stillwater Commandery would come here. Each year, they would at most select three or four disciples, or perhaps none at all!

Just by relying on the fact that Ning was at the seventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], he could probably easily enter the Skysplitter Sword Sect. But it was incredibly difficult to become one of the very few disciples of the Black-White College!

Swoosh! Ning moved forward, and it was as though he was one with the water under his feet. Quite easily and simply, he flashed across the surface of the water, arriving on the opposite shore.

“Fifth Bro, yet another practitioner of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] has come.” A youth was currently speaking to a black-clothed youth next to him. The black-clothed youth gave Ning a glance, and Ning glanced back at him.

“What stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] have you reached?” The black-clothed youth asked. But Ning just turned his head, not even glancing at him.

The black-clothed youth frowned. Within his clan, he was viewed as a peerless, heaven-favored genius. He was used to being pampered. Moreover, he had reached the seventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], and was now at the Blood-Drop Rebirth level of power. He, too, had decided to join the Black-White College. He was accustomed to not holding others of the same generation with any regard, and by relying on his divine ability, he was even able to fight those at a higher level. Naturally, he was an extremely proud man.

“Hmph. He doesn’t know his place.” The black-clothed youth gave Ning a glance, then paid him no more attention. As for Ning, he chose a large rock, then sat down atop it in the lotus position. He couldn’t be bothered to notice that black-clothed youth.

As time passed on, the number of young men and women nearby grew more and more numerous. Some were from major tribes, and there were even those from outside Stillwater Commandery. Even members of the Northmont clan of Stillwater had come. Ning occasionally would glance at them, but he wouldn’t engage any of them in conversation. He knew that of the people in front of him, most likely at most one or two would actually be able to enter the Black-White College.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 17: Myriad Thunderbolts Launched Together**

Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, it was sunset. By now, only the silhouette of half the sun could be seen.

“Today, things will end here. Those who wish to join my Black-White College, please come early tomorrow morning.” The black-haired middle-aged man on the boat within the lake waved his hand as he spoke, and the bronze mirror in the air above him rapidly began to shrink to the size of a palm as it landed towards his hand. After that, the ship automatically began to move towards the other side of the lake.

The man stored away the ship, then disembarked. He looked at the thronging masses of youths, then nodded slightly. “Those who are confident in themselves will generally come on the first day to apply for entry. The majority of those who were accepted by my Black-White College all came on the first day.”

“A total of 962 of you have passed the preliminary selection process on the first day, but the number of which you who will truly be able to join my Black-White College can be counted on one hand. Thus, all of you must be incomparably cautious. You must put forth your full effort.”

“Yes.” The nine hundred plus selectees all responded in unison. The black-haired man nodded. “Mm. Follow me.” Turning, he walked away.

Instantly, this group of young Immortal practitioners all moved to follow him. Ning turned to glance backwards, and he saw that on the other side of the lake, there were quite a few people still waiting

quietly. These should most likely be the family, friends, and servants of the selectees. There was also a large Whitewater Hound who stood there, quietly staring towards this side.

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The Black-White College, located within Stillwater City, took up an area with a circumference of roughly nine hundred kilometers. Amongst the various Immortal practitioner schools, this was definitely one of the smaller ones. Still, nine hundred kilometers...in his past life on Earth, one of the trillion minor worlds, it would be comparable to a local county. As for Stillwater City, the very heart of Stillwater Commandery and a place where countless powerful experts gathered, it was larger than entire countries back on Earth.

Given that it was roughly comparable to a county in size, strictly speaking, the Black-White College couldn't be described as 'small' per se. And within the Black-White College, there was even a small mountain range.

Ning and the rest of his group, under the guidance of the black-haired man, quickly advanced more than a hundred kilometers, arriving within a gorge. "Halt," the black-haired man said. The nine hundred plus individuals all came to a halt.

"Arise," the black-haired man suddenly barked.

Rumble...

This wide, spacious gorge had a perimeter of many kilometers. Suddenly, from far away, a curtain of clear water could be seen, which had formed into an enormous grand sealing formation. This grand sealing formation was extraordinary large; not only did it cover the entire gorge, it even covered several of the nearby mountain peaks. Naturally, the nine hundred plus selectees were trapped within it as well.

"Rumble..." "Rumble..." "Rumble..." Multiple mechanical noises rang out. From within one of the caverns within the region covered by the grand sealing formation, multiple giant shadows suddenly flew out. 810 of these shadows flew out consecutively, halting in midair.

These were 810 dragon heads, all of which had their mouths open wide as they stared down below.

"A grand construct formation." "A grand formation formed from more than 810 constructs!" Some of the nine hundred plus Immortal cultivators below instantly began to call out, quite a few of their faces ashen.

Swoosh! The black-haired middle-aged man charged into the skies, flying to the top of those 810 dragon heads. At the same time, five additional figures flew out from the cave next to him, each with powerful auras. There were a total of six figures, including the black-haired man; five men, one woman. All of them stared downwards.

"Listen up," the black-haired man barked. "Afterwards, the grand golem formation will launch attacks...what all of you need to do is endure the attacks and charge into the skies, and to arrive at this cavern by my side. You have as much time as it takes for a stick of incense to finish burning. If you do so, that means you've succeeded. But if no one manages to reach this cave before the stick of incense is burnt up, that means none of you are qualified to join my Black-White College!"

Some of the nine hundred plus youths below were confident, while others were nervous. Still others just waited quietly.

“Hiss.” A stick of incense appeared out of nowhere within the black-haired man’s hands, and then it was immediately set alight. At the same time, those 810 dragon heads simultaneously began to glow with a dazzling azure light, and then, from the mouth of every single dragon head shot out rays of azure lightning. The sound was thunderous! Boom! Boom! Boom! One bolt of lightning after another rained down upon them.

It was as though ten thousand bolts of lightning were descending at the same time!

“It begins now!” The black-haired man barked at them.

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Given that the dragon heads had begun to vomit lightning, and that the stick of incense had already been lit, everyone knew that it had begun.

“Charging into that cave won’t be easy.” Ning raised his head, giving it a glance. In his heart, he instantly realized that because the 810 dragon heads were next to the side of the cave, if one wished to enter it, one would have to fly directly past those 810 dragon heads...which were constantly raining thunderbolts downwards towards them.

Down below, given how much space there was, each person wouldn’t have to face too many thunderbolts. But the closer one flew towards the cave, the more tightly packed the thunderbolts would be.

“Bang!” Ning, wielding his Darknorth swords, chopped directly towards one of the encroaching thunderbolts. The Darknorth swords were filled with elemental ki, and were capable of blocking lightning.

“So powerful.” Ning felt his hands tremble violently. “The power of this lightning is significant.”

“Up!” “Let’s go!” “Charge!”

Instantly, multiple figures mounted their magic treasures and, in unison, charged towards the sky. But the farther up they went, the more thunderbolts awaited them. They were only able to hold on for a few breaths, making it halfway up, then were knocked downwards by the dense rain of thunderbolts, forced to land again.

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The six Primal Daoists of the Black-White College who were above the dragon heads watched on, chatting and laughing amongst themselves. “Everyone, of these youths, how many do you think will enter the caves?” A middle-aged man with a long beard laughed as he asked this question.

A short, chubby, bald man chortled. “Perhaps not even a single one.” “It shouldn’t be that bad,” a white-robed woman said with a laugh. “There should at least be three or four who can enter the cave. Look, there’s someone charging upwards. She shouldn’t be too weak.”



Instantly, the other Primal Daoists turned to look carefully. A black-clothed woman was charging into the skies, her body surrounded by multiple tendrils. When the lightning bolts struck against her, the tendrils and vines would actively go block the lightning, defending against one bolt after another.

Soon, she made it to the halfway point, and moved closer and closer towards the formation of dragon heads. "Half of the grand golem formation." The black-haired, middle-aged man suddenly spoke softly, and instantly, of the 810 dragon heads, 405 of them focused on that black-clothed woman.

Instantly, thousands of bolts of lightning wildly, completely focused on that black-clothed woman. Although those tendrils and vines struggled ferociously, they weren't able to do anything. BOOM! Vines and tendrils exploded, and the black-clothed woman fell down from the skies.

"She couldn't even withstand half." The black-clothed, middle-aged man shook his head. The white-robed woman shook her head as well. "She can't be considered a true genius."

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Ning was in no rush to charge forward. He watched for a period of time first. He watched as that black-clothed youth who also trained in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] charged upwards. As that youth moved extremely close to the formation of dragon heads, he suddenly suffered the attack of every single dragon head. As the youth slammed to the ground, Ning understood everything.

"At the very bottom, you only have to meet an occasional bolt of lightning. The higher up you go, the more bolts will strike you. If you pass the halfway point, you will suffer an attack from half of the dragon heads. And, when you are extremely close, you will suffer mass attacks from all the dragon heads."

"You have to be able to withstand the full might of all of the dragon heads in order to enter the cavern. At such short range...even if two or three people joined forces, upon suffering the full bront of the attacks of the dragon heads, whether or not they work together becomes of little importance." Ning understood this principle. When they were extremely close to the dragon heads, the amount of space for maneuvering was too small. The myriad thunderbolts would form a nearly complete, solid attack. A web of lightning would completely surround that entire region, and to pass, one would have to charge through. There were no shortcuts around it!

"Charge!" After making sure that there were no other oddities, Ning's body instantly became surrounded by six full layers of Waterflame Lotuses. At the same time, a flying sword appeared beneath his feet, and he immediately controlled the sword to soar into the skies.

"Let's go!" "Charge!" At virtually the same instant Ning flew upwards, eight other figures charged upwards as well. These had all been watching silently. After seeing how the black-clothed man had, in the end, suffered attacks from all the dragon heads...they all realized that there were no shortcuts to be taken, and so had decided to charge.

"Charge!" The black-clothed man, who had fallen down halfway, gritted his teeth upon seeing the others charge upwards. He, too, flew upwards yet again.

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The 810 dragon heads were clustered in one location, quite close to the cave. To enter this cave, one would have to pass through the center of them...which ensured that one would have to face all 810 attacks.

The Six Primal Daoists stared downwards, watching. "This fellows are all quite spirited. None of them are holding back now." The black-haired, middle-aged man laughed. "Everyone, who do you think will pass?"

"That fellow controlling the Azure Dragon construct." The white-clothed woman's eyes lit up as she stared at a white-clothed youth who stood atop an Azure Dragon. This white-robed youth was clearly quite young; there was still a hint of youthful shyness on his face, but the Azure Dragon construct under his control was incomparably nimble, occasionally dodging while knocking aside the bolts of lightning at other times.

"Within this grand sealing formation of ours, one can only use a golem or construct which one personally made." The white-clothed woman continued, "Look at how he controls that construct. He's at the level where it is like controlling part of his body; he is the construct, and the construct is him. He is absolutely a genius of the Dao of Constructs."

"Mm." "Right." "Formidable." The others all nodded and assented. These Primal Daoists were no ordinary Primal Daoists; they were the Primal Daoists of Black-White College. All of them were naturally extraordinary figures, and their judgment was impeccable. They could instantly tell that this white-clothed youth had astonishing talent in the Dao of Constructs.

"What do you think of the others?" The black-haired, middle-aged man laughed.

"The others?" "I don't see anyone particularly outstanding." "They are average."

These Primal Daoists all had extremely high standards; although all of the others, Ning included, had displayed formidable abilities, there was nothing which could make these Primal Daoists feel surprised.

"Hahaha." The black-haired, middle-aged man instantly began to laugh loudly. "All of you bury yourselves in training. We've asked you to come this time to organize the acceptance of new disciples, but you aren't aware of many things. As for this old Daoist...I collect news from everywhere, and know that there is a true genius in this group. Look over there; that fur-clad youth whose body is surrounded by those blooming lotuses of fire and water."

"Him?" The other five Primal Daoists looked over. The white-clothed woman said, "Although his lotuses of fire and water is quite marvelous, it can't be described as astonishing. What about him?" And indeed, the other Primal Daoists didn't understand either.

The black-haired man laughed. "He is dressed in furs, can create lotus flowers of fire and water, and uses a sword...nine out of ten says that he is that youth, Ji Ning, of the Carefree Caverns. A young, early stage Zifu Disciple who has already gained insight into a Dao Domain."

"Gained insight into a Dao Domain?" The other five Primal Daoists were all shocked, and they all lowered their heads, looking towards Ning, who had seemed so ordinary and unremarkable.

## [The Desolate Era](#)

### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 18: Ji Ning and Mu Northson**

Ten thousand thunderbolts shot down simultaneously, crashing down towards the figures below. Those Immortal cultivators, in turn, all flew for the skies, each displaying their own abilities. Layers of golden light appeared around some of their bodies, while others had illusory divine dragons appear about them. In this situation, the Waterflame Lotus swirling around Ning's body truly wasn't that special.

"Go."

"Go."

A white-clothed youth was currently standing atop an Azure Dragon construct. The Azure Dragon coiled about, its body occasionally lashing out while its sharp claws swept out in each direction. Even its draconic tail whipped about. For now, not a single bolt of lightning was capable of drawing close to him.

"Azure Dragon Swings Its Tail."

"Azure Dragon Flies Skyward."

The white-clothed youth was gently mumbling a few words every so often, his eyes blazing with heat. Clearly, he was completely lost in controlling his Azure Dragon construct, and he appeared to be incomparably excited.

"Half the construct formation, focus." The black-haired, middle-aged man hovering high in the air gave the order. Instantly, more than four hundred of the dragon head constructs began to focus their lightning bolts down towards Ning and the others who were charging skywards.

"Awesome, wonderful, incredible!" The white-clothed youth grew increasingly excited. The Azure Dragon construct he controlled was displaying all of its unique points and releasing tremendous amounts of combat power. It was able to effortlessly block all of the oncoming bolts of lightning.

"Bang!" With but a twist of its tail, multiple lightning bolts were knocked aside by the dragon, but Ning was right by its side. The Waterflame Lotus swirled around Ning, who had the Darknorth swords in his two hands. Those lightning bolts, despite being able to pass through the protective Waterflame Lotus, were easily blocked by Ning's two swords.

Ning's sword light flashed forward like water, moving with ease and grace as he blocked all of the bolts of lightning. "Eh?" Ning's face changed. Three bolts of lightning had suddenly attacked him, and they were too close. They instantly arrived, catching Ning, who had been unprepared, completely off-guard.

"Watertight." Ning's swords instantly changed directions, hurriedly moving to block those lightning bolts. At the same time, Ning couldn't help but give that white-clothed youth close to him a glance. Just now, he had been affected by the actions of that youth.

The white-clothed youth was currently looking towards Ning as well, and a look of embarrassment was on his face. He hurriedly sent, "I'm ashamed, I'm ashamed. It was accidental."

Seeing how the white-clothed youth was sending a mental message, even at a critical time like this, Ning actually felt kindly disposed to him. He sent back, "No worries."

"I'll be more careful in the future," the white-robed youth sent back. "Just be careful. We're about to face the combined attacks of all those constructs," Ning said with a laugh.

The two were both able to converse mentally at a time like this; clearly, they still had energy to spare. They continued to fly higher!

The outlines of the dragon heads up above them grew increasingly clear. The 810 dragon heads were clustered together quite tightly, and of the group that had charged up alongside them, two had already been struck down. Only eight figures were able to continue to fly upwards.

“The entire construct formation, focus!” The black-haired, middle-aged man gave the order once again.

**BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!**

Instantly, it was as though the skies had shattered and the earth had collapsed. All of the dragon heads focused their attacks on a single area, and for a moment, it seemed as though the entire world was filled with lightning bolts. Every inch of the surrounding area seemed to be filled with azure bolts of lightning; clearly, they had completely saturated the area.

“Waterflame Lotusess!” Ning’s eyes flashed with a fierce look, and one layer after another of Waterflame Lotusess began to manifest around him. Whenever one layer was damaged, a new one would be born. As for the two swords in Ning’s hands, they flashed about, filling the area around Ning with sword light. Not a single bolt of lightning was capable of penetrating Ning’s swordplay defense.

“Charge!”

In an instant, Ning managed to pass through this saturated field of attacks.

Swish! As he charged through the heavens and past the formation of dragon heads, Ning was now able to clearly see, with a single glance, the six Primal Daoists who were watching this event.

“Rumble...” An incomparably dominating Azure Dragon charged into the heavens, also moving past the dragon head formation. The white-clothed youth atop the Azure Dragon, seeing that Ning had charged out as well, revealed a hint of a friendly smile towards Ning.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Ning immediately flew towards the cave, and the white-clothed youth also flew over, then stored away his construct.

“Bang!” “Clash!” “Boom!” Continuous sounds of explosions could be heard, with furious roars mixed in. Three more figures charged past the saturated field of lightning and into the cave.

The cave was many tens of meters wide. The white-robed youth walked forward alongside Ning. “My name is Mu Northson. I truly am embarrassed for what happened earlier. My mastery over my craft was insufficient, and I ended up harming you, fellow Daoist.”

“My name is Ji Ning.” Ning smiled towards him as well. “You can’t be blamed. You were trying to enter the school, just like me. How could you be careless?” The white-clothed youth hurriedly nodded.

Ning could clearly sense that this white-clothed youth seemed slightly immature. By the looks of him, he was even younger than Ning himself. Most likely, he had reached the Xiantian level even before Ning had. He immediately asked, “Brother Mu, I’m sixteen years of age this year. How old are you?”

“Fourteen.” The white-clothed youth, Mu Northson, gave an honest response. Instantly, the other three youths who had charged into the cave had changed looks on their faces. The three of them looked

towards Ning and Northson with incomparably complicated looks on their faces. Monster...monsters! One was sixteen, while the other was fourteen! How young were they? And yet, these two had actually broken through the lightning construct formation before everyone else.

The black-clothed man even had some injuries on his body. He gave Ning a hard look. "This person named Ji Ning is only sixteen, but he's already at the Zifu level in terms of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. In addition, he was actually able to charge in with ease. I had to make two attempts before succeeding."

Earlier, he had been the first to try to charge in, but had ended up failing on his first attempt. It was only after seeing him fail did Ji Ning and the others make their charge.

He had immediately charged in behind Ning, and then followed the Azure Dragon construct of the white-robed youth, Northson, in charging past. With the Azure Dragon construct blocking some of the lightning, things had been slightly easier for him. Still, it had only been slightly easier; he still suffered an injury in order to enter.

"It truly was hard." The white-clothed youth, Northson, glanced downwards, then sighed, "This grand lightning construct formation truly was hard to pass through. The Black-White College really lives up to its reputation."

Ning looked downwards as well. Below them, the other Immortal cultivators were still continuing to charge upwards, time and time again. "It is hard," Ning agreed softly. "However, the vast region controlled by the Stillwater Commandery holds many geniuses."

Swoosh!

Yet another figure passed through the blocking field of lightning. Slashing forward in a lonely arc, it landed at the entrance to the cave. This was a violet-robed maiden whose face was like the frost and the snow. Judging from the look in her eyes...clearly, she had been arrogant since she was a child. Still, every single person who was able to enter the cave was a true talent.

A few moments later. "The time has come to an end." The black-haired, middle-aged man spoke out in a high voice, and instantly, the 810 dragon heads came to a halt. Those Immortal cultivators who were in midair still wanted to fly upwards, but...

"All of you, go down!" The black-haired man gave a sudden roar, and his eyes instantly became terrifying to behold. A terrifyingly powerful divine sense swept downwards, and instantly, all of the Immortal cultivators who had wanted to fly upwards came to a halt. And then, all of them began to drop downwards.

"Divine sense?" Ning's eyes lit up as he saw this. "A divine sense attack!" When those Immortal cultivators had been hit by the attack, their gazes had turned dim, and then they had fallen out from the skies. Clearly, their souls had been impacted by the attack.

"So there are attacking techniques for the divine sense as well?" Ning instantly felt an itchiness in his heart. His greatest strength was his divine soul, which was already comparable to a Primal Daoist's. In addition, by relying on the [Nuwa Painting] visualization technique, his divine soul was continuing to grow stronger by the day. At this point, however, he had only been able to use his divine will to control

items to assist himself. He had never heard that there were techniques which could allow one to use one's divine sense to directly attack someone's soul!

"A divine sense attack? How would that even work? I've never heard of it...it must be an extremely high-level technique. Since that black-haired man is able to use it, then I imagine the Black-White College must have this divine sense technique amongst this records." Ning instantly made up his mind that no matter what, he had to acquire and learn this technique.

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The black-haired man and the rest of the six figures flew into the cave. They all appeared different; one looked graceful, another was short and chubby, a third was cold-faced...but they all possessed shockingly powerful auras.

Ning and the rest of the nine called out respectfully, "Respectful greetings, seniors." The six Primal Daoists swept Ning and the rest of the nine with their gazes. "Mm." Quite a few gazes paused for a period of time after landing on Ning.

"You." The black-haired, middle-aged man pointed to a blue-clothed youth who wore a crown and whose gaze was flashing. The blue-clothed youth's face changed, and he hurriedly said, "Senior, this junior is Eastriver Lush."

Ning and the others gave him a glance. Eastriver clan? That was one of the eight major powers.

"Eastriver clan?" The black-haired, middle-aged man laughed coldly. "I don't care where you came from. Everyone, even a member of the Northmont clan of Stillwater or the imperial clan of the Grand Xia Dynasty, must obey the rules of the Black-White College if they wish to join our Black-White College. You used a Dao-seal. You violated the rules. Hurry up and begone."

The crowned youth gritted his teeth, then immediately transformed into a ray of light as he flew towards the cave entrance.

"He used a Dao-seal?" Ning stared in astonishment at this disciple of the Eastriver clan. When testing new disciples, there had been, at the gate, a list of the various necessary requirements. Dao-seals and other external sources of support were forbidden. One had to rely on one's own power to pass the trials. All who used external sources of power would be expelled.

"You are Mu Northson?" The black-haired man turned to look towards the white-robed youth, a smile on his face. "Greetings, senior," Northson said respectfully. The black-haired, middle-aged man nodded. "Fourteen years. Not bad. Let me take a look at your construct."

"Alright." Northson knew the rules; there were restrictions on utilizing constructs. If one was an Immortal practitioner who walked on the Dao of Constructs and golems...if they wished to bring a construct into a trial, it was forbidden for the construct to possess sentience! Nor could there be an elemental energy core within the construct. It had to be completely controlled by their own elemental ki.

Actually, during the earlier trial, the six Primal Daoists could already tell the truth of the matter. This 'examination' was just for the sake of following the rules to the letter.

The inspection concluded. “Mm.” The black-haired, middle-aged man nodded. “Acceptable.” Northson immediately accepted the Azure Dragon construct back.

“The eight of you.” The black-haired, middle-aged man swept Ning and the other seven with his gaze. “You’ve passed through the first test. Next is the second and final test. As long as you can pass it, you will become a disciple of our Black-White College. If, however, you are unable to pass, I’ll have to ask you to all leave.”

“The second and final test?” Ning was surprised. Even that black-haired youth who had reached the seventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] had just barely passed the first test. And yet, there was a second, follow-up test?

“Chong, child.” One of the six Primal Daoists, that white-robed woman, spoke out. The black-clothed youth said respectfully, “Aunt.”

“Once you reach the ninth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], you will definitely be able to enter our Black-White College. But you are only at the seventh...” The white-robed woman shook her head.

“I can’t wait any longer. I’ll need at least ten to twenty years to reach the ninth stage,” the black-clothed youth replied impatiently. The white-robed woman shook her head. “You won’t be able to pass the final test.”

“Aunt. I wish to try.” The black-clothed youth gritted his teeth. How could he casually give up at a time like this?

His response caused the white-robed woman to shake her head.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 19: The Final Guardian**

As one of the managers of this recruitment effort, Fairy Hua Yun naturally knew how difficult the final test would be. This junior of her clan, Hua Chong, had no chance of success at all.

“The eight of you, follow me,” the black-haired, middle-aged man said. The six Primal Daoists began to walk in front, while Ji Ning and the rest of the eight followed from behind.

Ning glanced sideways at the nearby black-clothed youth. The youth’s eyes were filled with defiance and madness. His aunt was Fairy Hua Yun...her status in the Hua clan was extremely high, and although the Hua clan had an Immortal guarding it, since Fairy Hua Yun was a Primal Daoist of the Black-White College, her combat prowess was definitely comparable to an Immortal’s.

He had to honor and respect the words of Fairy Hua Yun. But...he also had to enter the Black-White College. He, too, wished to be like his aunt and be a member of the Black-White College! “I have to enter. The Dao of the Heavens ensures that one will always have a chance.” The black-clothed youth gritted his teeth.

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After walking through the dark, gloomy caves for a period of time, they arrived at an exit. Up ahead, there were nine different entrances.

“Halt,” the black-haired man said. Ning and the other seven all came to a halt. “These nine entrances are each guarded by a Zifu Disciple of our Black-White College.” The black-haired, middle-aged man swept Ning and the others with his gaze. “The eight of you shall each choose a passageway.”

The faces of Ning and the rest of the eight all changed. What?! Guarded by full disciples of the Black-White College? These were people who trained in supreme techniques and arts, while the eight of them were all only early Zifu Ki Refiners.

“After you each enter your chosen corridors, you will encounter these guardian disciples. As long as you are able to charge through out of cave while they are guarding it, you will become a disciple of our Black-White College.” A smile was on the face of the man. “Don’t worry. These Zifu Disciples on guard are only permitted to use a single type of technique, while all of you can go all out. In addition, there is no need for you to defeat the guardian disciple; you only need to charge out of the cave. Afterwards, we shall all reunite at the peak of this mountain.”

“Alright.” Ning and the rest of the eight all nodded. “Go, then,” the black-haired, middle-aged man instructed.

They quickly each selected a corridor. Ning pondered slightly, then chose one for himself as well. Only the black-haired youth hesitated for a period of time...and then, gritting his teeth, he entered a corridor as well. All of them entered their corridors.

“Wu Xiu.” The short, pudgy, bald man laughed. “You are in charge of this disciple recruitment, and are managing it from start to finish. Tell me, of the eight, which will be able to become disciples of our Black-White College?”

The black-haired, middle-aged man hesitated. “If I have to choose...of the eight, I’d say Ji Ning will definitely succeed!”

“Right.”

“Yes, he’ll definitely succeed.”

“Everyone knows that Ji Ning will succeed, old Daoist Wu Xiu. What about the other seven?” All of the others were laughing while speaking.

The black-haired, middle-aged man pondered for a bit longer, then said, “Of these eight, only Ji Ning will definitely succeed. It will be hard for all of the other seven. If you insist on me choosing someone...that fourteen year old kid who controls the Azure Dragon construct, Mu Northson. There’s a chance for him as well.”

“Mm.”

“Right. Aside from Ji Ning, the others will all find it quite difficult, especially that clansman of Fairy Hua Yun. He found it rather difficult to even make it through the lightning construct array; he definitely won’t make it past this one.”

“Everyone knows how smart you are.” The white-robed woman gave the bearded, middle-aged man who just spoke a hard look.

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While the Primal Daoists were chatting amongst themselves, they were also using their divine senses to investigate what was going on within each of the mountain tunnels.

“Oh, it’s Bloodrinker Bladask.”

“The corridor which Ji Ning chose is guarded by that kid, Bladask? He’s quite arrogant. He definitely won’t make it easy for Ji Ning to pass through.” The Primal Daoists all leisurely watched the events going on through the eight corridors.

Within the corridor Ning had chosen. Roughly a hundred meters past the entrance, there was a white-robed youth. This youth had three bloodstains on the side of his chest. A white vest, with three drops of blood on the chest...only the genius disciples who had acquired the legacy of the Bloodrinker clan were qualified to wear this.

The Bloodrinker clan...was one of the supreme tribes that was located outside of Stillwater Commandery.

“They had me stand guard?” The white-robed youth, Bladask, just stood there, a flying sword hovering around his body. He gently stretched out a finger and tapped it. Rumble...a sword hymn instantly filled the cave. He couldn’t help but close his eyes, revealing a look of enjoyment on his face. “No matter how much of a genius you are, you can forget about successfully passing through the tunnel I have chosen.”

Bloodrinker Bladask’s arrogance made it so that he definitely would not permit any juniors of the early Zifu Disciple stage to successfully pass through his cave.

“A single sword...they only permitted me to use this single sword. Still, it will be enough.” The white-robed youth tapped the sword again, and the sword hummed out in response, as though it were behaving coquettishly towards him. He couldn’t help but smile.

Since the day he was born, he had held a wooden sword as he slept. His parents had named him ‘Bladask’, and in the past thirty years, he had focused all of his efforts on his blade. He was at the point where he was his blade, and the blade was him. Although he was in possession of the consummate skills of the Bloodrinker clan, the clan had still sent him to the Black-White College of Stillwater Commandery. He had lived up to their expectations and had entered the Black-White College.

“He’s coming.” The white-clothed youth sensed the impending ripples. Suddenly, he heard a resigned voice ring out from outside. “Nine corridors, eight contestants. Mine ends up being the only one with no selectee...my fellow disciples, I hope that none of you will let these juniors make it through.”

“Don’t worry, senior apprentice-brother Ox.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Ox, how sad for you.”

“You’ve waited all this time for nothing.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Ox, although I’m only permitted a single magic treasure, these juniors definitely won’t be able to pass through.”

One voice after another rang out in response. Bladask also shouted back, “Junior apprentice-brother Ox, please wait just a moment. After I turn back this kid, we’ll go back together.”

Footsteps rang out. Bladask immediately stared forward carefully. He saw, from afar, a figure emerge from the depths of the tunnel. A youth with delicate, handsome features emerged, holding a sword in each hand, dressed in furs, and a smile on his face.

“Junior.” Bloodrinker Bladask tapped the flying sword in front of him, and the sword hummed in response. Bladask said calmly, “In the future, remember this clearly – the one who prevented you from entering the Black-White College is me, Bloodrinker Bladask.”

“I am...” Ning was about to say something, but Bladask interrupted calmly, “No need to tell me. We won’t meet again. You don’t need to give me your name.”

Ning frowned. How arrogant. Since this was the case...then he might as well just go ahead and win this quickly and cleanly.

“Let the lightning descend!” Bladask called out softly, and as soon as he did, that flying sword in front of him began to emit a thundering sound. One bolt of lightning actually appeared in the surrounding area, all swirling around that flying sword, then flooding towards Ning with shocking power.

The strength of this blow alone was far superior to the power of Adept Xu Li and the Monoceros. The sword seemed to have transformed into countless bolts of lightning, striking at an astonishing speed.

“Let the lotus flower bloom.” Ning had a faint smile on his face. Instantly, Waterflame Lotus appeared around him. One layer after another of the flower bloomed; a total of six layers of flowers appeared.

Crackle crackle crackle...

The sword of lightning cut directly through all six layers, but its speed had clearly dropped somewhat. Ning’s Darknorth swords swept out in a deceptively simple manner, deflecting that powerful, vicious sword blow to one side.

“Such power.” Ning frowned slightly. It had appeared as though he had received that blow with ease, but in reality, his hand had cracked slightly at the point between his thumb and index finger.

“So you do have some ability. It is useless, however!” Bladask suddenly let out a loud roar. “Thundergod’s Hell!”

The flying sword continued to hang there in midair, but around it, one violet bolt of lightning after another appeared. These bolts of serpentine lightning zigzagged into the shape of a prison, and a powerful pressure filled the entire caverns.

“Feel proud that you were defeated by this technique of mine,” Bladask said coldly. “Go.”

**BOOM!**

The Thundergod Prison technique flew rapidly towards Ning.

“The Black-White College’s disciples live up to their reputation. With but a single flying sword, he’s still able to unleash such power and activate so much of the energy of the world.” Ning mentally sighed in praise as made one flying sword after another appear in the area around him. In total, 729 flying swords emerged.

“A sword formation!” The distant Bladask’s face changed. Anything that had to do with the word ‘formation’ could not be belittled, and there were many swords in this one. If one could perfectly focus all of the energy into a whole, then the power of that one blow would be explosive! As a disciple of the Black-White College, Bladask naturally also was in possession of sword formation techniques, but for the purposes of this assignment, he was only able to use a single sword.

The 729 flying swords hung there in the air. Amongst them, there were eighty one Mortal-ranked flying swords; they included the Nine Yang Sword Formation swords that Ning had acquired from the underwater estate, and the seventy two flying swords Ning had acquired after killing Adept Xu Li. Although he had some other other Mortal-ranked flying swords as well, there weren’t enough of them, and they were all varied and different in nature. Thus, Ning didn’t use them.

The nine flying swords of the Nine Yang Swords served as the core formation base, while the other seventy two Mortal-ranked flying swords, all of which came from the same origin, swirled around them, forming a grand formation of eighty one flying swords. They, in turn, guided the six hundred-plus unranked flying swords.

“Rumble...” Ning’s elemental ki filled those flying swords and was transformed by them. His divine soul, which was at the divine sense level, was completely capable of controlling all of these swords, and soon, in front of his chest, a shocking, awe-inspiringly powerful sword light appeared.

The power of this technique was now truly astonishing. The reason why it was so strong was primarily because of those nine incredibly rare flying swords he had acquired from the underwater estate. Every single one of them was comparable to an Earth-ranked magic treasure, and they all came from the same source, which was even rarer.

“Kill!” Ning willed the attack. Swish! The sword light, now completely in the shape of a real flying sword, shot out through the air, forcibly slashing open the impending prison of lightning.

BOOM! Moments later, the lightning prison detonated in awe-inspiring fashion.

“Go, go, go.” Ning hurriedly executed three more attacks of sword light, striking out in succession.

“Not good.” Bladask’s face changed dramatically. He was a peak Zifu Disciple, after all, while Ning, by controlling and transforming his ki through the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] and forming it into his sword light, had a purity of ki that was comparable to a Wanxiang Adept’s. In terms of sword techniques...Bladask was of the Bloodrinker clan and was an elite member of the Black-White College; naturally, he was formidable. But in terms of true insight and comprehension, Ning was on an even higher level. Thus, when Ning activated his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], Bladask actually was at a disadvantage.

“Polaris.” Bladask had no other choice. In an instant, seven flying swords appeared, flashing with lightning. The seven flying swords swirled around him, forming into the pattern of an enormous constellation; it was the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper.

“Down!” Bladask growled. Bang! Bang! Bang! Ning’s three flashes of sword light were all shattered by the slowly revolving Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper.

“Hmph.” Bladask turned his head, collected his flying swords, then transformed into a ray of light and departed. Per the rules, he was only permitted to use a single flying sword...since he had been forced to bring out his other magic treasures, he had naturally lost.

“How formidable.” Ning watched as that disciple of Black-White College, ‘Bloodrinker Bladask’, departed. He couldn’t help but sigh in amazement. “The school should have limited him to using just a single flying sword. As soon as he showed his real power...he instantly suppressed my [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. He’s a peak Zifu Disciple, after all, while I am an early stage Zifu Disciple. The difference in elemental ki strength...when I encounter another unparalleled genius, the difference is clear.”

What Ning didn’t realize...was that actually, all he had to do was fly out of the cave. And yet, he had insisted on forcing the guardian to show his real power instead.

“The Black-White College.” Ning slowly strolled forward, walking out of the cave. He stepped onto a flying boat, then stared at the boundless, beautiful mountain scenery around him. From this day forward, he would truly be a member of the Black-White College.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 20: Ji Ning, Disciple of the Black-White College**

The six Primal Daoists at the entrance to the caves were roaring with laughter. “Hahahaha...this Ji Ning really is formidable. He lives up to his reputation as someone who has gained insight into a Dao Domain. That sword formation technique...although I’ve never heard of it, it clearly is an extremely complicated and powerful sword formation. For it to control more than seven hundred swords...the demands it must place on his soul and on his level of comprehension are definitely extremely, extremely high.”

The short, chubby old man shook his head. “He, an early stage Zifu Disciple Ki Refiner, was able to force the peak Zifu-level Bloodrinker Bladask to release his own sword formation to block it. Bladask didn’t have any face to remain after that, and so he immediately left.”

“Right. Formidable.”

“He clearly could’ve just charged out of the cave, but he insisted on fighting one-on-one, fighting to the point where he forced the guardian disciple to voluntarily retreat.”

These Primal Daoists all sighed with praise. Naturally, all of them took a liking to such a formidable disciple. This meant that their Black-White College would rise in power yet again. Centuries later, perhaps the Black-White College would produce yet another formidable Immortal.

“We must provide him with good guidance and tutelage. This Ji Ning has the potential to become an Immortal,” the black-haired, middle-aged man said. The white-robed woman nodded. “Indeed, he must be properly guided. He can’t be pampered; if we end up ruining this piece of unpolished jade, that would be a huge waste.”

Tutelage was an art all its own. Geniuses were naturally endowed with arrogance and pride, and the path of Immortals was that of the three calamities and nine tribulations. One would grow up in the midst of battle, and there was no way one could avoid establishing grudges with anyone. All these things could possibly result in a genius perishing!

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Ning rode atop his boat, moving straight to the very peak of the mountain. "A total of eight people went for the trial. I wonder how many passed." Ning continued to wait there. "I wonder if that Mu Northson was able to pass or not." Of the others, the only one who Ning had spoken with was Northson, and he had quite a good impression of him.

Swoosh!

From afar, a ray of light flew towards Ning, followed by yet another ray of light.

"Hey, someone passed? Which cave was it? Which of our fellow disciples was guarding that cave?"

Ning stared into the distance. He could just barely make out the appearance of a disciple of the Black-White College. That disciple gave Ning a few curious glances, then departed.

Moments later. Whoooosh. That distant ray of light shot over; it was an Azure Dragon construct. "Mu Northson." Ning was surprised, then immediately clasped his hands. "Congratulations, felicitations."

"Same to you, same to you." The white-robed youth, Northson, landed and stored away his construct, his face filled with joy. "Brother Ji Ning, you truly are formidable. I was nearly defeated, but in the end, I finally managed to charge out of the caves. But you were even more formidable; you made it out so quickly."

Ning could sense the joy radiating out from Northson as he spoke. His eyes were filled with excitement as well. "Success. I've finally become a disciple of the Black-White College. If Mother finds out, she will definitely be very happy."

"Right." Ning nodded, his gaze growing distant. If his own mother knew that he had become a disciple of the Black-White College, she would definitely be proud as well.

"Father...mother...just wait and see. I, Ji Ning, will definitely have my name be spread throughout these vast lands. I will become one of the supreme existences of this world. Definitely! Those disciples of Snowdragon Mountain who caused your deaths...I will definitely execute them all!"

"Hahaha." Six figures flew out in an arcing pattern, laughing as they did so. They instantly arrived at the top of the mountain. It was the six Primal Daoists.

The short, pudgy, bald one laughed, "This year, our Black-White College has taken in quite a few disciples; two at once!" The black-haired, middle-aged man said, "Today's only the first day. We still have two more days."

"Hmph. Everyone capable of joining our Black-White College is a true, unparalleled genius. Geniuses like that are all supremely confident; if they were to join, they would make us their very first choice. Thus, they would come on the first day." The short, pudgy, bald man shook his head. "It's been so many years; how many people ended up joining our Black-White College on the second or third days? If they did, it was only because they were delayed slightly and unable to make it."

The black-haired, middle-aged man looked towards Ning and Northson. "Ji Ning. Mu Northson. The two of you, starting today, are now the disciples of our Black-White College." Ning and Northson both felt surges of joy in their hearts.

“The grand ceremony of formal apprenticeship will occur after the next two days of recruitment are finished.” The black-haired man waved his hand, and two insignias appeared. One side of each insignia was white, while the other side was black. “This is the insignia of our Black-White College’s disciples. You can bind it now, and in the future, you will be able to freely enter many of the locations of the Black-White College without being attacked by the various restrictive formations within.”

“Alright.” Ning and Northson each accepted an insignia. They naturally were able to easily bond it, and upon doing so, Ning could immediately sense that there was a grand formation throughout the entire Black-White College. He could sense...that this was a terrifying formation indeed. It encompassed the entire college...and he could sense that it acknowledged him. Ning felt as though this insignia was quite similar to the control talisman for the underwater estate.

“A disciple of the Black-White College.” Ning looked at the insignia. How many people desired this insignia? That Hua Chong, the black-clothed youth who had also trained to the seventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]...he had failed, in the end. There were also several other geniuses who were even more talented than Hua Chong, but they had been eliminated as well. Only Ning and Northson had been accepted as disciples of the Black-White College.

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“Wu Xiu, we’ll let you make the arrangements for their residences. We’re going back now,” the bearded, middle-aged man grinned. “Yes, we’re leaving.” The other Primal Daoists immediately flew into the air, quickly departing.

The black-haired, middle-aged man waved his hand. A mist instantly arose, lifting up the three of them. “Let’s go.” The black-haired Wu Xiu immediately guided Ning and Northson to fly forward.

“The entire Black-White College is divided into multiple areas, and it has many rules.” Wu Xiu waved his hand, then took out two books which he tossed to them. “This book has the rules of our Black-White College, as well as some other things which you must know. You must memorize everything within it.”

Ning and Northson accepted the book. Lowering their heads, they saw just two words on the book; ‘Black’ and ‘White’.

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Atop the peak of a small mountain, there was a graceful little villa. There were multiple buildings surrounding it, but at the peak of this little mountain, Ning was the only person present.

“From today onwards, I am the master of this peak.” Ning stood in midair, staring down at his mountain peak. Because the Black-White College had so few formal disciples, one could choose any mountain one wanted to become one’s estate. Ning thus selected this one, giving it the name ‘Darknorth Peak’.

Darknorth...this was also the name of the swords he wielded. They symbolized that he would embark on a path of his own.

Darknorth. This also was the place where his parents had met and fallen in love. This was a way of memorializing his parents.

“Father. Mother...” Ning was silent for quite some time as he reminisced. And then, he turned his head and immediately flew towards the skies atop his flying boat.

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Soon, he arrived at the formal gates to the Black-White College. His Uncle White had been waiting here the entire time. Ning immediately saw that large, snowy white dog who was quietly waiting by the side of the lake. The Whitewater Hound was simply standing there, waiting.

“Uncle White.” Ning immediately charged down. The Whitewater Hound lifted his head, a questioning look in his eyes. “It’s done.” Ning landed, then nodded. “I’m already a disciple of the Black-White College.”

“If Big Brother Yichuan knew this, he would definitely be ecstatic.” The Whitewater Hound’s eyes became filled with delight and excitement as well. The Black-White College! What sort of a school was this? The status of a formal disciple of Black-White College was far higher than that of a Wanxiang Adept of an ordinary school.

Right at this moment...

“Hahaha, Brother Ji Ning, you only have eyes for this spirit-beast of yours. You didn’t even notice me.” A voice rang out, and Ning immediately turned to look. There was a carriage parked before the gates, and Northmont Baiwei was descending from that carriage.

“Brother Baiwei.” Ning immediately went to greet him. Baiwei said, “I expected that you would definitely become a disciple of the Black-White College, so I predicted that you would return at around nightfall.”

“Sorry for making you wait so long, Brother Baiwei,” Ning said. Baiwei’s eyes radiated excitement as he spoke. “Not long at all. You have no idea how happy I was as I waited. Especially towards the end, when those other geniuses emerged, like Hua Chong, Liu Shuilian...they have been famous for quite some time now, but in the end, all of them had been eliminated.”

Ning nodded gently. “Hua Chong and the others you mentioned; they should have been eliminated after the final trial.” Ning had a fairly deep impression regarding Hua Chong, who also had reached the seventh stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] and whose aunt was a Primal Daoist of the school.

“No matter what, they all slunk away in defeat,” Baiwei said. “In the end...the Skysplitter Sword Sect, the Hundred Flowers Fairyland, and the other schools will still accept many disciples. Given their talent, they can easily enter. Only the Black-White College...unless one is truly a supreme, unparalleled genius, they won’t accept them. Even the most talented of geniuses must undergo a thorough examination. Given their pride, of course they came. What a pity, what a pity.”

There was no hint of pity on the face of Baiwei at all; all he had on his face was a look of schadenfreude.

“Right. How many disciples did the Black-White College accept this time?” Baiwei hurriedly asked.

“Today was the first day. They took in two disciples,” Ning replied. “I was one. Another is named Mu Northson.”

Baiwei nodded lightly. “Mu Northson? This is a name I’ve never heard of before. It seems as though some of the backwater, out-of-the-way areas will occasionally produce a supreme genius from time to time. When you are free, why don’t you bring this Mu Northson over? We’ll meet and make friends with each other.”

“Easily done,” Ning nodded. Baiwei said, “I came for two reasons. First, to congratulate you on becoming a disciple of the Black-White College. Secondly, to ask you for some help.”

Ning laughed. “As long as I can help, I will.” Baiwei looked at Ning. “Here’s the situation. You should know that formal disciples of the Black-White College are permitted to bring in ten retainers with them, right?”

Ning nodded. Ten retainers...to be a retainer of a disciple of the Black-White College was far more alluring a position than being a disciple of an ordinary school. This was because the retainer would live within the Black-White College! Even though it would be very, very hard for them to acquire any techniques, anything they did acquire would be supreme, top-tier techniques.”

“Loan me three of those positions,” Baiwei said. “You should know that I have many family and friends. There are many that I will find hard to reject, once they ask me to help.”

Ning laughed. “Why the courtesy? Of the ten positions, you can take nine of them. Just leave one for me!”

That one...

Ning thought back to Meng Roch, who he had encountered on the road to Stillwater City. He knew that after Roch had used a forbidden technique, he had definitely harmed his own foundation. He would most likely find it hard to join any school.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 21: Viewing the Sculpture at Night**

“Leave you with just one?” Baiwei hurriedly shook his head. “How can I do that? Although your Ji clan isn’t too large, you still have people who broke through to the Zifu Disciple level. I imagine some of them would wish to become a retainer for a full disciple of the Black-White College. In addition, in the future, you might encounter a powerful figure who would ask you for a slot. How about this; I’ll shamelessly take five of your retainer positions, while you hold on to the remaining five. If, in the future, the five you have is insufficient, come talk to me...I’ll come up with some methods for having those Zifu Disciples enter a good school. But of course, they must be of the early Zifu stage.”

Ning laughed, then nodded. “That’s fine as well.” But in truth, he really did only need a single slot. Retainers entered the Black-White College for the sake of gaining top-tier Ki Refining techniques, but they ideally needed to be early stage Zifu Disciples as well.

If one entered as a middle stage or late stage Zifu Disciple, one’s path would have become set; there was no way to go back! The Ji clan’s Zifu Disciples consisted of Patriarch Ji Ninefire, Granny Shadow, Ah Xing, and Ji Truekeep.



The Patriarch and the others were all peak Zifu Disciples, while Truekeep was a middle stage Zifu Disciple; their paths were already set. As for the younger members of the Ji clan? For one of them to reach the Zifu Disciple would probably need some time.

“Even if our Ji clan is capable of producing a new Zifu Disciple, they can still rely on their own power to join another sect,” Ning mused to himself. “If my help is truly needed, in a few years, my power and status will most likely be higher as well.” In his heart, though, Ning wanted to let those future descendants of the Ji clan fight for their paths.

At most, he would occasionally give them some opportunities! Only when one adventured through the world by one’s self would one not fear the wind and the waves of life.

“Alright.” Baiwei nodded. “In two days, after the Black-White College has concluded its recruitment cycle, I will send five Zifu Disciples to you, as well as some ordinary commoners.”

“Ordinary commoners?” Ning was startled. Baiwei smiled. “Given how few in number the formal disciples of the Black-White College are, each of them take up an entire mountain for themselves...although the Zifu Disciple are servants and retainers, they still have to train as well. You can’t make them spend all their time boiling water, watering the plants, or doing cleaning, right? You can give them some important tasks, but for the normal tasks, you can have the commoners carry it out.” Ning now understood.

“I won’t tarry any longer. Take a good stroll around the Black-White College.” Baiwei laughed. “The Black-White Diagram of the Black-White College has attracted jealousy from countless powers for many years now. Even the Grand Xia Dynasty will occasionally send people over here, begging for a chance to see the Black-White Diagram. Only formal disciples like you, however, can view it whenever you want.”

After speaking, Baiwei laughed then entered his carriage, departing. Ning turned to look at the Whitewater Hound by his side. “Uncle White, let’s go.” The Whitewater Hound nodded, following him. “Right.”

Swoosh! The man and the snowy white hound both boarded a flying boat, then sped into the air at high speed. It was already dark. The Black-White College, shrouded by the night sky, appeared incomparably tranquil.

“Uncle White,” Ning laughed, “You are at the early Zifu stage. Don’t be in a hurry to train. Soon, I will ask the school for a top-tier Ki Refining technique for you.”

“Thanks for taking the trouble, Ning, son.” The Whitewater Hound looked at Ning. That child who had ridden atop his back while training in archery in the mountains had already grown up. Had become even more powerful than the hound’s elder brother, Ji Yichuan. “Yichuan...I will watch as Ning becomes a truly majestic, heroic figure within these lands.”

Ning didn’t know what his Uncle White was thinking. He instructed, “Uncle White, your status within the College will be that of my spirit-beast, and so you’ll be able to follow me around and listen to some Primal Daoists and even Immortals expound on the Dao. When following me, you’ll also be able to enter the various parts of the Black-White College. If you are moving about by yourself, however, you’ll only be able to enter these places.”

Ning waved his hand and retrieved that black-and-white book, flipping to one of the pages within it. "This is the map of the Black-White College; there are red lines marking the places where you, Uncle White, can go freely," Ning said.

The Whitewater Hound gave it a quick look, memorizing everything. "Thanks for taking the trouble, Ning." Ning laughed. "No trouble at all." When he looked at Uncle White, he felt as though he had returned to those days when he had lived together with Uncle White, Father, and Mother. His parents were now gone...and Uncle White was his closest family now.

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Spirit-beasts and retainers were different. Retainers who wanted to train in top-tier techniques had to work hard for themselves and be acknowledged by the Black-White College; only then might they have the rare chance to acquire a top-tier Ki Refining technique. In addition, they would only have access to a small number of top-tier Ki Refining techniques. The retainers had to do everything for themselves. For the formal disciples to allow them to enter the Black-White College alongside them was kindness enough.

If Uncle White had entered the Black-White College as a retainer, he too could've relied on his own power, but things would have been very difficult.

As for spirit-beasts, spirit-beasts themselves absolutely could not acquire top-tier Ki Refining techniques. But Ning, by paying a certain price, could ask for a Ki Refining technique for him. It was incomparably easier for a formal disciple to acquire a top-tier Ki Refining technique, compared to a retainer.

However, given how exacting the requirements the Black-White College placed upon its formal disciples, they couldn't hurry fast enough to learn techniques and arts; how many of them would be willing to sacrifice their own advancement chances for the sake of their spirit-beasts?

"Whoosh." The boat flew to the top of Darknorth Peak. "This is Darknorth Peak." Ning pointed down towards the mountain peak below. "From today onwards, this peak shall belong to me, Ji Ning."

"Uncle White, the only people living at Darknorth Peak for now are you and me. Go and get some rest. I'm going to the restricted area of the Black-White Diagram to take a look," Ning said. "The Black-White Diagram is located in the innermost reaches of the entire Black-White College. Only formal disciples may go view it. Retainers and spirit-beasts are not permitted to do so."

"Go." The Whitewater Hound laughed, then leapt downwards from the boat, transforming into a streak of light that landed atop Darknorth Peak.

Ning nodded. Whooooosh. His ship immediately turned and flew towards another direction.

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Ning descended from the skies. This was a very wide square, and the innermost heart of the entire Black-White College, a restricted area amongst restricted areas. Even the Grand Xia Dynasty or the various supreme powers would have to strive mightily and use all their connections they had in order to come view this Black-White Diagram. Retainers and spirit-beasts were naturally forbidden to come.

“The Black-White Diagram?” Ning stared at the giant stone wall that was erected within the center of the square. The stone was of an unknown type; it radiated an inky black aura, and was covered with dense, crisscrossing black and white lines that formed countless structures. These two different colored lines intersected in innumerable ways, but in doing so formed the image of an enormous, circular bedstone.

Black. White. It was like the night and the day. Like yin and yang. Like water and fire. Like darkness and light...

With Pangu’s creation of the universe, everything in the universe had a ‘dark’ side and a ‘light’ side; upon seeing those crisscrossing lines, Ning felt as though a powerful aura was surging towards him, and he immediately even felt his soul begin to ache in pain.

“That’s not right.” Ning hurriedly turned around. “The Black-White Diagram actually has so many different lines all tangled together.” Ning was secretly amazed. The Stellar Hall of his underwater estate allowed the various Dao Paths to be completely condensed into separate lines, so that those within could separately focus on comprehending these various Daos. But as for this Black-White College...it mixed in countless Daos, and some were only fragmentary.

But those various fragmentary Daos, when mixed with the other Daos...actually formed this complete Black-White Bedstone Diagram!

“Although in terms of comprehending the Dao, this Black-White Diagram is inferior to the Stellar Hall of the underwater estate...in terms of how the various Daos complement and connect with each other, this Black-White Diagram is actually on a higher level.” Ning understood, however, that the Stellar Hall was comparatively far more valuable.

The Dao was one’s foundation; swordplay and techniques were all extraneous. When Ning had risen in comprehension and gained the Dao Domain, he had done so because he had risen in his understanding of his Dao!

As for the likes of the Waterflame Lotus, it was a technique that was fused from aspects of various different True Meanings of the Dao; it was a matter of applying the Dao.

The Dao was the foundation. Techniques were an application. The Stellar Hall...it separated the various different Daos, allowing others to clearly comprehend them. Its value was priceless, and it was the reason why Immortal Juhua, a Loose Immortal, was able to live for millions of years, so that even the princes of the Grand Xia Dynasty sought to become his disciple to no avail.

The Black-White Diagram was most likely formed by nature itself, and thus contained many different things within it. It allowed others to easily gain insights into some of those things and develop certain techniques, such as the Waterflame Lotus.

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“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” An Azure Dragon construct, a figure on its back, descended from the skies. It was Mu Northson. “I didn’t expect you’d arrive even earlier than me, senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Northson.” Ning laughed, then instructed, “No matter what, don’t stare directly at that Black-White Diagram. The Daos contained by the Black-White Diagram are simply too vast and unfathomable; we aren’t capable of withstanding them. Just look at a small part of it at a time.”

Unfortunately, his words were slightly too late.

As soon as he had landed, Northson had unconsciously glanced at the Black-White Diagram; naturally, in doing so, he had stared at the entire thing. Instantly, he felt the world start to spin, and his body began to slump and fall from the Azure Dragon construct. Clearly, in terms of the strength of his soul, he was far inferior to Ning, and so his ability to withstand the Black-White Diagram was weaker as well.

Hearing Ning’s words, Northson hurriedly nodded. “Right. We can’t stare directly at the entire Black-White Diagram.”

“Come. Let’s view it slowly.” Ning immediately walked past the stone wall. He stood next to the Black-White Diagram and began to inspect it closely. Actually, next to it, there were two other walls to the left and to the right of it, made from similarly unusual materials which radiated white light. Ning could sense that these three stone walls all had incredibly powerful formations overlaid atop them; most likely, the Immortals of the entire Black-White College paid extremely close attention to this place.

After all, the Black-White College had only risen to power after acquiring the Black-White Diagram. This was their life, their heart.

Each new Immortal of the Black-White College had frenetically added their own powerful formations to seal the diagram, causing it to become terrifyingly powerful by now. Upon being activated, the formations of countless elders of the Black-White College would simultaneously explode. Most likely, even Celestial Immortals would find it hard to survive.

“A three-sided wall. One is the Black-White Diagram, while the other two must have been left behind by the previous Immortals.” Ning glanced at it all. The three-sided stone walls were all more than three hundred meters wide, and they were covered with dense, clustered words, most likely more than ten thousand utterances. From this, one could estimate how many Immortals had been born from the Black-White College.

Ning’s gaze quickly halted at one of the corners of the Black-White Diagram. He began staring at a small part of it, focusing on that part.

The white lines and black lines intersected...they were opposite, and yet alike. A sensation of the marvels of nature completely engulfed Ning. Northson, by his side, was absorbed by the Black-White Diagram as well.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 22: , The Words Left By An Immortal**

Throughout the history of the Black-White College, whenever a disciple came to view the Black-White Diagram for the first time, they would gain from it. The experience they had accumulated normally, the insights they had gained normally...upon viewing the Black-White Diagram, they would gain corresponding enlightenment.

Rustle, rustle, rustle...

Ning sat there in the lotus position, meditating as Waterflame Lotus began to form around him. One petal after another blossomed, slowly swiveling about him.

A total of six layers of petals had formed...but suddenly, all six layers vanished, reforming into four layers which appeared even more real and solid than the six.

Time flowed on. In the blink of an eye, an hour passed.

Whoosh. The four quite solid-seeming layers of petals vanished as well, reforming into a total of two layers of petals. One of two layers of lotus petals was formed from red petals, while the other was formed from green petals. The two looked identical to the lotus petals of a real lotus flower.

Rustle...

The lotus flower slowly swiveled, and the grinding, killing power of the two layers of lotus petals grew increasingly powerful. The lotus petals became increasingly clear and lifelike, especially the green lotus petals; slowly, it continued to grow so lifelike that one could see the plant veins as well. Even at close range, most would probably take it to be a naturally grown lotus petal.

“Eh?” Ning suddenly woke up, then nodded gently. “I gained from my previously accumulated experiences. It seems as though my understanding of the Dao has reached a bottleneck in terms of being able to combine water, fire, and wind.”

He looked towards the nearby Mu Northson. Northson was still absorbed in his trance, appearing either drunk or mesmerized. “I have the Stellar Hall in my underwater estate. Although the Black-White Diagram is of use to me, it isn’t as useful as it was to Northson.” Ning turned to walk to the stone wall on the other side. This wall was covered with words left behind by countless generations of Immortals.

One row after another of words.

“The path of Immortal cultivation is the Dao of the grand struggle. These are the words of Five Disgraces!” The powerful intent that surged forth from these characters made Ning feel as though he could see an Immortal cultivator who was constantly advancing, struggling against the heavens, against the earth, against other men, against monsters...

“Consider all things carefully, but act with bravery and resoluteness.” An invisible, grim callousness radiated from these words.

“Where my heart leads me is where I shall go.” A confident, prideful aura radiated from these words, as though no one could block him from moving forward on the path which his Dao-heart had decided upon. Any who tried would be slaughtered.

“All mortal and worldly things shall decay; I ask for just two words; Immortal Life.”

Domineering.

Arrogant.

Fierce.

Leisurely.

Calm.

Simple.

The words left behind by the Immortals of the Black-White Diagram caused Ning's Dao-heart to be baptized time and time again. He felt as though he could look past time itself to ages past; as though he could watch as these Immortal cultivators held firm to their own Dao-hearts and embarked on their own paths.

"Such powerful, resolved, and untainted Dao-hearts," Ning murmured to himself. Power. Resolve. Purity. These were the things Ning sensed from the words left behind by these Immortals. Anyone capable of becoming an Immortal had understood his or her own heart long ago, and knew what their heart's desire was! In addition, their Dao-hearts would be incomparably pure and resolved; they wouldn't succumb to temptations or let themselves be led astray. The passage of countless years had caused their Dao-hearts to grow incomparably strong.

But if the Dao-hearts of these Immortals somehow grew bewildered, then their faith in themselves would collapse, and they might lose everything they had built up over a thousand years! In fact, in the worst case scenarios, they might not even be able to control the incomparably powerful elemental ki in their bodies, resulting in death.

From this, one could see that the path of Immortal cultivation was an extremely difficult path; it was the path of challenging destiny.

"The only desire in my heart is to be carefree, to be able to do as I please. I only ask that my destiny be in my own hands." As Ning continued to read, his own Dao-heart grew increasingly pure as well.

The pain and agony he had suffered in his previous life made it so that he was not willing to submit to fate. Not willing to allow his destiny to be controlled by others. In this life, his parents had both died; this caused Ning to feel an even greater desire for the ability to not be controlled by destiny.

However, if one wished to surpass the bonds of fate, then one would have to gain tremendous power! Only by being powerful would one truly be carefree and be able to act as one pleased!

.....

Ning read the words of one Immortal after another. Although Immortal cultivators read very quickly, by the time he finished reading that section of the wall, it was already very late at night.

"Eh?" Ning turned to look at Northson. Northson continued to sit there in the lotus position, staring at the Black-White Diagram. Around him were various parts and pieces that were formed from natural, elemental energy. The countless parts and pieces sometimes joined together and sometimes split apart, forming dragons, tigers, serpents, turtles...all sorts of monstrous beasts and strange creatures appeared, constantly forming and reforming.

"He's making a breakthrough. Junior apprentice-brother Northson's insights have reached a tipping point." Ning felt secret admiration; he had spent less than two hours in meditation, but his junior apprentice-brother Northson had spent far more time than he had in comprehending the Black-White Diagram.

“The other stone wall.” Ning turned to look at the final, third stone wall. The words left behind by the various Immortals were actually meant to help refine the Dao-hearts of their successors. For juniors whose Dao-hearts were not sufficiently stable, it could have the effect of helping them to constantly train and test their hearts. Thus, although the Black-White Diagram served as the foundation of the Black-White College, the words left behind by these Immortals to train the Dao-hearts of their successors could also be considered one of the important things which this supreme, top-tier school relied upon as it passed down its traditions over the course of countless years.

This, too, was their foundation!

.....

The night sky.

A short old man, dressed in ragged beggar’s clothes, stood atop the clouds, holding a calabash of wine and appearing quite at ease.

He seemed to be the very center of the world around him, as though everything would obey his commands. This natural feeling of dominance, of power...it gave the short old man an aura that was definitely not inferior to Northmont Blacktiger’s, and perhaps even more astonishing and terrifying. However, as long as one was not too close to him, one couldn’t sense his majestic presence at all.

“I’ve overcome the ninth-century tribulation... what a wonderful, wonderful feeling.” The short old man shook his head, seeming completely delighted with himself. “I’ll have nine hundred more years of good living.” Raising his head, he gargled in a large mouthful of Immortal wine.

“Uh?” The short old man suddenly halted, staring down at the Black-White Diagram below him. “Two youngsters?” The short old man nodded slightly. “Come to think of it, today is the day in which our Black-White College is accepting new recruits. It seems these two are new disciples. This old Daoist wants to take a good look at them.”

“That white-robed kid...he walks the Dao of Constructs? And he seems quite impressive; quite talented, in fact. It seems as though although I have been in seclusion for many years, the quality of the disciples of our Black-White College hasn’t dropped in the slightest.” The old man nodded in satisfaction, then turned his gaze towards Ji Ning, who was staring at the the stone wall with writing atop it. “That kid dressed in furs; he’s actually reading those words that were left behind? Can it be that he has finished viewing the Black-White Diagram? I wonder how long that kid viewed the Black-White Diagram for, and how his potential is.”

The longer one was able to view the Black-White Diagram, the more one would gain from it.

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Ning continued to read the words left behind by the Immortals on the wall. Every single character was a representation of the path an Immortal had followed. Amongst these Immortals, there was only a single Celestial Immortal; the rest were all Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals. From this, one could tell how difficult it was for someone to truly escape the confines of the Three Realms and no longer be bound by the Five Elements.

“Eh?”

Ning looked towards a new line of words, but as soon as his gaze fell upon it, he suddenly felt as though a sword was being pointed at his eyes.

“My three-foot sword in hand, I shall exterminate all injustices! These are the words of Northwalker!”

A very simple line of words. Ning stared at this line of words, left behind by Immortal Northwalker, and could vaguely sense the powerful energy emanating from these words. As Ning carefully sensed and probed it with his own soul, instantly, a powerful aura instantly sprang out from these words, completely filling his consciousness.

A silver-haired old man stood in the void, a sword in his hand. Hua! His entire body became filled with a heaven-towering sword ki, as though he himself had transformed into an enormous sword.

“What a sharp sword.” When Ning saw the silver-haired elder, he had the feeling as though the elder himself was a sword as well, and the most indestructible, the toughest, the most overbearing sword in existence at that. In fact, Ning even felt as though nothing could possibly withstand this silver-haired elder.

Ning trained in the sword ever since he was young. The sword was the weapon of his choice, and his father had personally taught him. By now, Ning had the heart of a true swordsman. When he saw this figure, who appeared to be the utmost embodiment of that which swordsmen aspired to become...the desire Ning felt in his heart and the sincerity he felt towards the sword slowly began to transform, causing that aura that had filled him to begin to resonate with him..

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“Eh? That fur-clad little...” The short old man in the clouds above stared down in shock. “Is this...?”

Ning, in the plaza below, was standing next to one of the giant stone wall, and on that stone wall, a certain line of characters was slowly beginning to glow and radiate light. The characters were, ‘My three-foot sword in hand, I shall exterminate all injustices! These are the words of Northwalker!’. Every single character was lighting up, and a powerful sword-intent completely filled each and every one of them.

Ning just stood there, his entire body faintly radiating a sword intent as well. The two had actually begun to resonate with each other. The sword-intent radiating from Ning was far from being able to compare to the heaven-shaking profoundness of the line of characters, but without question, the sword-intent radiating from him was resonating with that of the wall.

“He actually...he actually managed to activate the sword-intent ripples left behind by senior Northwalker?” The short elder stared downwards in astonishment. Although Immortal Northwalker was a Loose Immortal, it could be said that within the Black-White College, his status was comparable to that Celestial Immortal’s, and in fact, his influence was even a bit greater. He had lived for over a million years before finally perishing under the weight of the increasingly powerful heaven-sent Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations.

A Loose Immortal who had survived for a million years? This was something out of the legends. Loose Immortals capable of surviving for a hundred thousand years were already incredibly powerful figures; afterwards, surviving for another hundred thousand would be very difficult. Loose Immortals that had



survived for two hundred thousand years and three hundred thousand years...they were all completely different, but the longer they lived, the more terrifying their power was.

Loose Immortals who crossed the threshold of one million years were absolutely comparable to Celestial Immortals. However, in terms of the foundation of their elemental ki, they were clearly weaker than Celestial Immortals; the reason they were said to be comparable was because in terms of their comprehension of the Dao, their degree of enlightenment, and their techniques, they were superior to Celestial Immortals! This was why, despite being mere Loose Immortals, they were comparable to Celestial Immortals!

“Sword-intent? The sword-intent ripples are this strong?” The short old man stared, wide-eyed, at the scene below.

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Within Ning’s consciousness. The sword-intents of himself and the words had reached an astonishing level of resonance. The figure of that silver-haired elder in his mind...suddenly began to move and display sword techniques. At the same time, he began to chant out the words to a song.

“What is the purpose of a life lived?”

“All I ask for is to be joyful.”

“Kill, kill, kill.”

“Exterminate all injustices!”

“Exterminate all those who deserve killing!”

“Only then will I be exultant.”

“As Loose Immortals, there is no path to immortality.”

“Thus...”

“Better to live passionately for a day, than to live a century while stifled.”

“My sword is the joyous sword, the sword of passion, the sword which exterminates all injustices. The name of this sword technique is the [Three-Foot Sword].”

The voice of the old man echoed within the vast, empty void of Ning’s consciousness.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 23: Immortal Diancai**

The short elder clutched that gourd of wine in his hands, but completely forgot to drink from it. He stared downwards towards the fur-clad youth. The sword-intent radiating from the youth was incomparably firm and resolved, and it continuously resonated with the glowing words on the stone wall.

“Epochal Transmission!”

“Senior Northwalker is transmitting his sword intent to him. And, from the looks of it, this fur-clad youth seems to be receiving it with ease; clearly, he too has the heart of a true Sword Immortal.” The short elder took a deep breath, tamping down his excitement, then turned and sent mentally with a howl, “Junior apprentice-brother Diancai, hurry the hell out!”

“Hurry the hell out!”

“Hurry the hell out!”

His voice transmitted through the air, past countless layers of restrictive spells, and entered the ears of a black-robed, black-haired man who was currently seated in the lotus position atop a jade bed.

“Eh?” The black-haired man revealed a hint of puzzlement in his eyes as he opened them. But then, a look of understanding appeared. “It seems as though senior apprentice-brother Fivecraze has successfully endured the great tribulation which occurs every nine centuries. And he seems to be in quite a good mood!”

The black-robed, black-haired man took a single step forward, then disappeared from his room.

The night sky. The black-robed, black-haired man strode through the skies, moving a hundred kilometers with each step. If one didn’t stare at him carefully, it would seem as though he wasn’t even present.

“Senior apprentice-brother Fivecraze,” the black-haired, black-clothed man said. The short old man gave him a glance, blinked, then mumbled to himself, “You freak. You are growing more and more powerful. It’s been less than a century since we last met, but you’ve reached such a level of power. After I entered the Black-White College, you are the only one I have met who I believe has a great chance of becoming a Celestial Immortal.”

“The path to becoming a Celestial Immortal is incomparably difficult. All I can do is strive as much as I can and to use all my power to attain that goal.” The black-haired, black-clothed man laughed. “Your junior apprentice-brother has to congratulate you, senior apprentice-brother Fivecraze. You once again overcame the nine-century tribulation.”

“I didn’t call you over to chat about becoming a Celestial Immortal.” The short elder pointed downwards. “Quick, look.” Immortal Diancai stared downwards. There were two people in the plaza; one was currently meditating in front of the Black-White Diagram, clearly reaping great rewards from it, while the other was in front of one of the stone walls with words left behind by the Immortals. A line of characters atop that stone wall was currently glowing with light, and the light from each character was incomparably blinding. At the same time, surges of deep, powerful sword-intent radiated from the characters.

The line of words was: ‘My three-foot sword in hand, I shall exterminate all injustices! These are the words of Northwalker!’

“Senior Northwalker’s Epochal Transmission?” Immortal Diancai was stunned. He was an absolute genius which even the Black-White College saw only once in a million years, and the member of the Black-White College with the greatest chance of becoming a Celestial Immortal. When Immortal Diancai had originally entered the Black-White College, he, too, had received an Epochal Transmission from Immortal Northwalker.

“In the past, you received the sword-intent transmission from senior Northwalker, right?” The short old man laughed. “Right.” Immortal Diancai stared down carefully towards that fur-clad youth. His gaze was extremely focused; he was carefully weighing this youth.

“Who is he?” Immortal Diancai finally spoke out. The short elder knew that Immortal Diancai was asking about the fur-clad youth below, and he shook his head and said, “How should I know? I just came out from seclusion and happened upon him by chance, and so I immediately called for you. However, today is the day in which our College accepts new disciples; I imagine this youth should be a newly admitted student.”

Immortal Diancai nodded slowly.

All the higher level members of the Black-White College knew that ever since Immortal Diancai had entered the school and received the sword-intent transmission from ‘senior Northwalker’, and had learned about the life of senior Northwalker, he had felt incomparable respect and veneration for him. Diancai had considered himself to be Northwalker’s apprentice, and had frantically sought out any information he could find about Northwalker, as well as regarding his sword techniques...he had even visited all of the places which his revered master, Northwalker, had ever travelled to, in the hope of finding his tracks.

During this process, Immortal Diancai had grown more and more powerful, to the point where he could be described as the second coming of senior Northwalker. All the Immortals of the Black-White College acknowledged him as the one amongst them with the highest chances of becoming a Celestial Immortal.

“Well? Will you take him as your disciple?” The short elder chortled, lifting his gourd of wine up and taking two drinks. This junior apprentice-brother Diancai of his had never before accepted a disciple, because junior apprentice-brother Diancai had once said...only someone who had also received the Epochal Transmission of senior Northwalker’s sword-intent could become his disciple.

Immortal Diancai had trained for less than a thousand years. During the course of these thousand years, there had been quite a few who had sensed the unusualness of that line of characters, but none of them were capable of receiving the sword-intent transmission.

“He’s not bad.” Immortal Diancai nodded gently. “Only...I still need to watch him to determine whether or not I will take him as a disciple.” The short old man shook his head. “Your standards really are high.”

Immortal Diancai didn’t respond. He continued to focus on the fur-clad youth below. He watched in silence. But suddenly...

“Rumble...” The glowing characters on the stone wall suddenly flared with blinding brilliance, to the point where the characters themselves, formed from light, seemed to leap out of the stone wall. One character of light after another hung there in midair. ‘Hand’ ‘Wield’ ‘Three’...

Every single character radiated with blinding light; they seemed to be characters, but every single stroke of the characters contained the shadow of a sword, as though these were words formed from countless sword-shadows.

“The [Three-Foot Sword] technique. The complete [Three-Foot Sword] technique.” Immortal Diancai’s eyes were shining, and a look of shock and delight was in them.

“That sword technique...that’s the legendary [Three-Foot Sword] technique!” The short old man didn’t appear to be the slightest bit relaxed as well, and his eyes were filled with shock, surprise, and ardor.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

At virtually the same instant, three more figures suddenly appeared in the night sky. One was an old man with a long beard, a crown on his head, and who had an extraordinary bearing; when he strode forward, it was as though an emperor was walking past, naturally capable of commanding a realm. The second was a childish-looking boy who radiated an inexhaustible frigid aura, and whose eyes appeared incomparably ancient. The third was a tall, muscular man whose entire body was covered with chains.

The three of them all stared downwards.

“The [Three-Foot Sword].”

“The [Three-Foot Sword] has once more revealed itself to the world!”

“Our Black-White College has recruited yet another incredible disciple.” The three stared downwards towards Ning, their eyes filled with anticipation and excitement. Immortal Diancai and the short elder also stared downwards. The five of them didn’t say a single word.

Swoosh!

Suddenly, yet another figure appeared in the air. This was a white-robed youth who was incomparably handsome, almost devilishly so. The white-robed youth appeared, then immediately said respectfully, “Greetings, Uncle-Masters.”

“Don’t say a thing.” The short elder immediately gestured at him. The white-robed youth nodded. Although he had the exalted status of headmaster of the Black-White College, in front of these five, he still showed the respect due to seniors. He stood there obediently, not saying anything further.

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‘Hand’ ‘Wield’ ‘Three’ ‘Foot’ ‘Sword’ ‘Kill’...the characters formed from sword-shadows hung there in the air, radiating light. But suddenly, all of the glowing characters flew straight towards Ning’s eyeballs.

Ning shut his eyes. And then, in the same instant, the glowing line of words atop the stone wall suddenly dimmed, becoming ordinary looking and no longer emanating any radiance or aura whatsoever. Perhaps, when the time was right and when yet another disciple capable of receiving its sword-intent transmission appeared, it would once more display its extraordinariness.

“It’s over.” The short old man laughed. “Senior Northwalker’s complete [Three-Foot Sword] has been transmitted to this kid.”

“Right. The complete [Three-Foot Sword].” The bearded, crowned elder sighed with emotion as well. “How many years has it been? The last time the [Three-Foot Sword] emerged was nearly thirty million years ago. Finally, yet another disciple has inherited the complete [Three-Foot Sword].”

“The [Three-Foot Sword]...it exterminated countless vile demons, and killed until the heavens grew dim and the earth turned dark. It killed so many that even the entire Grand Xia Dynasty was shocked, and it

even slaughtered a path out of our very world of existence.” The tall, muscular man who was covered in those bizarre chains spoke in a low, rumbling voice as well. His eyes were filled with eagerness as well.

They were all Immortals, but the difference in their power was great. Immortal Northwalker was at a level where he was no weaker than a Celestial Immortal, and where even some Celestial Immortals would be afraid of him. For someone like him...killing an ordinary Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal was as easy as slaughtering a chicken.

This was precisely why, despite the passage of countless years, the Black-White College continued to feel the utmost of veneration for Immortal Northwalker. In fact, he was the only person in the entire history of the Black-White College whose status was considered to be even higher than that of the Celestial Immortal they had produced.

“The [Three-Foot Sword].” Immortal Diancai spoke very slowly. “According to the legends, it has a total of nine stances; the first six stances are recorded in the secret annals of our Black-White College, but the final three stances...they were what Immortal Northwalker truly relied on when he roamed the world and dominated it with invincibility. They were impossible to record down through words and pictures; the only way one can receive them is through the profounder-than-profound Epochal Transmission.”

“This child has the heart of a Sword Immortal.” The bearded elder stared downwards at Ning. “In addition, his Dao-heart is incomparably firm and pure, and his soul is very powerful. Only one who fulfills all three criteria can receive a technique such as this [Three-Foot Sword].”

The juvenile-looking boy nodded. “In each generation, our Black-White College has a good number of disciples who have firm Dao-hearts and powerful souls, but the heart of a Sword Immortal...this is too rare, too rare.”

“The heart of a Sword Immortal represents the true essence of a swordsman, that which stems from the heart.” The short old man said with a sigh, “In addition, being able to develop the heart of a Sword Immortal is a prerequisite for embarking on one of the Grand Daos, the Dao of the Sword.”

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“Junior apprentice-brother Diancai, are you going to accept this excellent disciple or not? If you won’t, I will,” the bearded elder said with a laugh.

The juvenile-looking boy’s eyes were blazing. “Junior apprentice-brother Diancai, I’ll take this disciple. Although he isn’t able to execute the [Three-Foot Sword] right now, it has already been imprinted onto his soul. Once he reaches the proper level, he’ll be able to execute it. I am quite eager to have the chance to cultivate a Sword Immortal who will be in possession of the [Three-Foot Sword].”

“Junior apprentice-brother Diancai...” All of them spoke out. But Immortal Diancai just glanced out of the corner of his eyes at the four. “I haven’t even taken a single disciple. Are you all going to fight with me over him?” The other four all laughed.

“Jadesea.” Immortal Diancai looked towards the white-robed youth. “Uncle-master.” The white-robed youth immediately nodded. Immortal Diancai chuckled, then asked, “Who is that young fellow below us?”

The white-robed youth, Daoist Jadesea, immediately responded, "He is one of the two disciples which our Black-White College has just accepted. His name is Ji Ning, and he comes from a minor tribe, the Ji clan, which lives in the Swallow Mountain region of our Stillwater Commandery. His parents are already deceased. Ever since he was young, he displayed astonishing, unparalleled talents, and at the age of eleven, he executed the Zifu Disciple, Bei Zishan, who was being pursued by the Raindragon Guard."

"Then, because Immortal Firedragon made a breakthrough in the territory of the Ji clan and caused an elemental ore mine to appear, a local branch of Snowdragon Mountain sought to annihilate the Ji clan, but the end result was that Snowdragon Mountain lost a Wanxiang Adept and more than twenty Zifu Disciples. The main reason why Snowdragon Mountain suffered such a catastrophic loss was this Ji Ning."

"Afterwards, he became friends with Northmont Baiwei, who is of the direct, primary lineage of the Northmont clan. He engaged in a battle in the Carefree Caverns, and during the battle revealed that he was already at the level of comprehending a Dao Domain. He is currently sixteen years of age. The other person who entered our Black-White College, Mu Northson, is fourteen years of age."

The five Immortals, upon hearing this information, all nodded. Ning's growth rate was monstrous and astonishing in the ears of others, but in the eyes of these Immortals of the Black-White College, Ning's growth rate was just decent at best. After all, they had all even seen quite a few reincarnated Immortals.

"This Ji Ning shall be my disciple." Immortal Diancai glanced at the surrounding individuals. "My four senior apprentice-brothers, please support me in this."

"Haha."

"I thought you'd never take on a disciple, junior apprentice-brother Diancai."

"I won't fight with you over him. You have gained the deepest level of insight regarding the swordplay of senior Northwalker; if you don't teach this boy, who will? If I taught him, wouldn't I hamper his progress?"

And so, over the course of this conversation amongst Immortals, Ning's future master had been determined, just like that.