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Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 24: The Grand Admissions Ceremony

It was late at night.

There were only two disciples of the Black-White College located in the plaza which held the Black-White Diagram. Ji Ning slowly opened his eyes. Although it was a late night in the twelfth lunar month, and it was extremely cold, Ning's heart was filled with a scorching heat. He stared at the words left behind by Immortal Northwalker, hidden amongst the countless words left behind on the stone wall, and his emotions continued to fluctuate for a time.

"My sword is the joyous sword, the sword of passion, the sword which exterminates all injustices! It is better to live passionately for a day, than to live a century while stifled."

Ning still remembered with perfect clarity that vision of that silver-haired old figure, who seemed to be as exalted as the heavens themselves. He clearly remembered that heaven-surgingly sword-intent, clearly remembered that sword technique. All of these things had been deeply engraved in his heart!

"What level of swordcraft is this? Comparing my swordcraft to it would truly be like comparing the light of a firefly to the brilliance of the full moon." Ning's heart was surging with emotions, and his eyes were filled with boundless admiration.

Suddenly...Ning's ear twitched. He immediately turned, only to see a white-robed figure walk over from afar.

"Eh?" Ning was startled. Today, the only two new students should have been himself and Mu Northson. Aside from the two of them, who else would come here in the dead of night?

The white-robed youth walked over from afar, and as he did, Ning felt as though endless, boundless waves were slowly surging towards him in a crushing flow. The entire world seemed to have transformed into waves...but when they reached Ning, things grew clear once more. There were no waves at all...just that white-robed youth walking towards him.

"How terrifying." Ning felt alarm in his heart. Although there was no oppressive, dominating aura, the sense of danger which this white-robed youth had given him wasn't one whit inferior to that which Northmont Blacktiger had given him. In addition, this white-robed youth was handsome to the point of being devilish.

Ning clasped his hands in a salute. "This junior, Ji Ning, pays his respects to you, senior." Before coming, Ning had already received an intelligence report from Northmont Baiwei regarding the school. Based on the information in that report, Ning already had an idea as to who this person was.

"My Daoist title is 'Jadesea'," the white-robed youth said. "I am fortunate enough to hold the position of headmaster for now." Ning responded with respect, "Greetings, Headmaster."

The headmaster of the Black-White College, 'Daoist Jadesea', was naturally a truly influential and powerful figure within Stillwater Commandery.

“Headmaster, junior apprentice-brother Northson is...” Ning looked towards Northson, who was still absorbed in meditation in front of the Black-White Diagram, seeming to be drunken or dazed.

“No need to disturb him,” the headmaster, Daoist Jadesea, said while shaking his head. “You are the one I’ve come to visit.” As he spoke, a scroll appeared in front of Daoist Jadesea. He then extended his arm, even more pure and jade-white than most women’s, and the scroll floated towards Ning. Ning respectfully accepted it.

“After reading it, you will understand.” Daoist Jadesea looked towards Ning. “As the Epochal Heir of Immortal Northwalker, you must not be indolent. Remember. After finishing reading this scroll, destroy it.” After speaking, Headmaster Daoist Jadesea turned and departed, quickly disappearing from Ning’s field of vision.

Ning stood there, stunned. Epochal Heir? Could not be indolent? Ning immediately unfurled the hide-bound scroll; this scroll was made from the hide of an ordinary animal, but the words and information atop it instantly drew Ning’s attention.

“Immortal Northwalker?” A look of delight appeared on Ning’s face. He had been wanting to learn more regarding this Immortal Northwalker. The upper part of this hide-bound scroll described Immortal Northwalker’s experiences as he grew in power, as well as some notable events he had been involved in. Ning was completely engrossed and mesmerized by the information within.

This was a true legend. The legend which the entire Black-White College held in the greatest respect. “In acting, one should act as senior Northwalker did,” Ning murmured softly to himself.

When senior Northwalker acted, he did so in a manner which could be described in two words; ‘straightforward’ and ‘passionate’! That was the only thing he cared about, to the point where, when he saw the disciples of a supreme clan acting in sinful, wicked ways, he annihilated them all in his anger and even destroyed their souls. This resulted in him being pursued and attacked by this supreme clan, a pursuit which lasted for centuries. Immortal Northwalker had even been forced to flee from this major world, but over the course of this pursuit, he had grown more and more powerful. Afterwards, when he had returned, many of the powerful experts of that supreme clan were killed or injured, and in the end, they had been forced to lower their heads and admit defeat, paying reparations and reconciling themselves to him.

“I wonder which supreme clan it was,” Ning mused to himself. “This scroll didn’t record their name; clearly, they don’t want for this matter to become public. Most likely, this was part of the reconciliation process that occurred.”

Given what a massive battle this had been, clearly, that supreme clan was truly incredible as well. At the same time, it also demonstrated how straightforward and passionate Immortal Northwalker’s actions were. He truly did act to exterminate all injustice!

The middle of the scroll recorded a dialogue. A junior disciple posed a query to Immortal Northwalker: “Countless vile actions were being carried out in this vast world; if one always went to exterminate evildoers, how could one possibly ever kill them all?”

Immortal Northwalker had responded thusly: “The number of sins and wicked deeds carried out in this vast world are numerous beyond count, and I can’t be bothered to take charge of all matters in this

world. Any injustices that I personally encounter, however, I will naturally exterminate, and so return joy and passion to myself.”

His meaning was simple and clear. If he didn't personally encounter injustice, he couldn't be bothered with it. But if he did? That would ruin his mood...and he would exterminate it.

“He truly did live a carefree life, where he did as he pleased.” Ning felt admiration for the man.

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After reading through the records of Immortal Northwalker, Ning turned to the bottom part of the scroll, which began to introduce the [Three-Foot Sword]. The [Three-Foot Sword] had a total of nine stances, and was the supreme technique which Immortal Northwalker had used to stun the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. It was the distilled essence of his million-plus years of experience, and it was so powerful that even Immortal Northwalker himself was unable to completely record down this technique in a manuscript for transmission to later descendants.

The Dao Repository Vault of the Black-White College only held the first six stances of the [Three-Foot Sword]. To this very day, no one was capable of recording down the final three stances in written form.

However, those words left behind on the stone wall had been personally penned by Immortal Northwalker. Only when there was a sword-intent resonance would an Epochal Transmission occur, and could the [Three-Foot Sword] be transmitted.

“So that's how it works. Occasionally, a later disciple of the Black-White College will receive an Epochal Transmission, but even if they do, it's quite rare for them to obtain the complete sword technique. The last time a complete sword technique was transmitted was more than thirty million years ago.” Upon reading this, Ning finally understood how astonishing a gain he had just reaped.

Ning also now understood why Headmaster Daoist Jadesea had given him this scroll. It was precisely because of how important the [Three-Foot Sword] was; if some of the enemy powers were to learn that the Black-White College had produced yet another genius who had gained the complete legacy of the [Three-Foot Sword], they would probably use any means at their disposal to ensure that this genius would fall early on.

Thus, this news absolutely could not be publicized. But of course, he could still use the [Three-Foot Sword]; after all, the Dao Repository Vault had the secret manuals for the first six stances of the [Three-Foot Sword]. As for using the seventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], if the situation called for it...then there was no need to keep the secret any longer. Once one possessed the power of the seventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], then one would already be standing at a peak of power. After all, the seventh stance was already something which even Immortal Northwalker was unable to commit to paper; from this, one could imagine how powerful it was.

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Two more hours passed. Only now did Northson completely come to his senses.

“Wonderful, absolutely wonderful.” Northson's eyes were blazing as he turned to look at the nearby Ning. He immediately called out in excitement, “Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, this Black-White

Diagram is simply too helpful in training. I feel as though I have made tremendous, tremendous progress in the Dao of Constructs.”

But immediately afterwards, Northson realized something; Ning had awoken before he did. Most likely, he hadn't gained as much from the Black-White Diagram as Northson himself did. This made Northson feel rather embarrassed.

“Indeed, I've gained much,” Ning said with a laugh. “It's late. I imagine that it will be dawn soon. Junior apprentice-brother Northson, it's time to get some rest. Two days later, we'll go to the Headmaster's Palace.”

“Right.” Northson nodded.

“Also,” Ning warned, “These words left behind by Immortals all have quite a history and are worthy of you viewing.” Northson walked the Dao of Constructs; naturally, he wouldn't have the heart of a Sword Immortal and wouldn't be able to receive the legacy of the Immortal Northwalker. However, although Ning had received the Epochal Transmission of Immortal Northwalker, it could very well be that there were other legacies left behind by other ancestors of the school on the stone wall.

“Right. It's almost dawn. I'll come here in the future and read through them slowly,” Northson said with a laugh.

Whoosh! Whoosh! The two left, one on a wooden boat, the other on an Azure Dragon construct. They each headed towards their own abodes.

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In the blink of an eye, two days passed. As had been predicted, on the second and third days, there were no applicants who were qualified to become formal disciples of the Black-White College! Thus, this year, the only new disciples of the Black-White College were Ji Ning and Mu Northson.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Ning and Northson were streaking through the air above the Black-White College like two streaks of light, moving directly towards the Headmaster's Palace.

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” Northson's eyes were filled with eagerness. “Today, we will receive black-white pellets. We'll be able to enter the Dao Repository Vault and exchange it for Ki Refining techniques or secret Immortal techniques. In addition...we will be paying our respects to our masters. We don't even know who they will be yet.”

“Right. I wonder who will be my master,” Ning mused in a soft voice. Master. For an Immortal practitioner to acknowledge a master was completely different from how he had acknowledged Blindfish to be his master when learning archery as a child. Archery was just the technique of an ordinary mortal, but your master on the Immortal path...what they passed down to you would help you on your road to becoming an Immortal. The value of this benevolence shown was far greater, and most likely the relationship between a master and apprentice would persist for centuries or even millennia.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Ning and Northson landed in front of the Headmaster's Hall. Quite a few formal disciples had already gathered together within the Headmaster's Hall, at least a hundred or more. They were casually chatting amongst themselves, and all of them had extraordinary demeanors.

When Ning and Northson entered the palace, quite a few of the formal disciples turned to glance at them. Most of them had kind looks in their eyes, and they nodded slightly, signifying greetings.

"It seems only part of the formal disciples of the Black-White College have come," Ning mused to himself. "It makes sense. Immortal practitioners can't always be staying within the school; I imagine many are outside."

Each year, there would be a grand ceremony for admitting new disciples. But sometimes Immortal practitioners would enter closed-door meditation for decades; thus, attendance at this sort of ceremony was not too important. Those who could come would; if one couldn't, it didn't matter much. Still...for most, as long as they weren't engaged in any pressing matters within the school, they would still come and pay their respects at the Headmaster's Palace.

"The Headmaster is coming," someone suddenly called out. Ning and the others immediately turned to look. A white-robed youth was descending from midair, and there were multiple figures behind him. All of them were Primal Daoists of the Black-White College; this entire group of Primal Daoists descended en masse.

"According to the normal customs of the Black-White College, new disciples of the College will generally take on Primal Daoists as masters," Ning mused to himself. The Primal Daoists of the Black-White College were not like those of ordinary schools; some of them had such astonishing power that they were comparable to ordinary Immortals. Thus, being able to become a disciple of a Primal Daoist of the Black-White College was quite a fortunate affair.

"I wonder which one of them will be my master?" Ning swept his gaze past all of the Primal Daoists, including the headmaster, Daoist Jadesea. He began to privately guess at which of them it would be.

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Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 25: Daoist Title, Darknorth

Daoist Jadesea sat on high in the headmaster's seat, staring downwards towards the Primal Daoists, who had lined up into two rows. Beneath the palace was a group of Wanxiang Adepts and Zifu Disciples.

Within the Black-White College, the various disciples were primarily divided into three generations of status. The Zifu Disciples and Wanxiang Adepts were considered to be of the same generation of status, and could refer to each other as junior or senior fellow disciples. This was because it was extremely easy for any of these Zifu Disciples to reach the Wanxiang Adept level.

Primal Daoists were on a higher level. Immortals, in turn, had the highest status. Generally speaking, when disciples like Ji Ning met with an Immortal, they would address them as 'Patriarch', while when they met with a Primal Daoist, they would address them as 'Uncle-Master'. But of course, if one was able to take on an Immortal as one's master, they would naturally refer to that Immortal as 'Master'. Still, in addressing other Immortals, one would still use the term 'Patriarch'.

Generally speaking, status amongst Immortal practitioners was determined by strength and power, and they each befriended people on the same level of power.

“Everyone,” Daoist Jadesea said, seated atop his high chair, his voice echoing throughout the hall. “Our Black-White College has taken on two new disciples. The skinny, fur-clad one on the left is Ji Ning.”

Ning gaped. Skinny? Well, it made sense; it wouldn’t be appropriate to refer to him as the ‘youth’ either.

“The one on the right, the even skinnier one who is dressed in white robes, is named Mu Northson,” Daoist Jadesea said.

Northson blinked as well. Even skinnier?

The hundred-plus disciples within the palace all began to laugh, and looks of amusement had appeared on the faces of the Primal Daoists as well. Clearly, they all knew what sort of a character their headmaster, Daoist Jadesea, was.

Daoist Jadesea grinned as he looked towards Ning and Northson as well. “The people present within this palace today consist of a portion of the disciples of our Black-White College. Many are either in closed-door meditation or wandering the world. In the future, you will meet them all. From today onwards, you are all members of the Black-White College. We must be of one mind and one heart; it is forbidden for members of the college to engage in fratricide.”

“Understood.” Ning and Northson both immediately acknowledged these words. Daoist Jadesea continued, “Mm. Then let us begin the Oath of Blood.”

Ning and Northson glanced at each other. They immediately stretched out one finger from their right hands, and a drop of fresh blood emerged from their fingers.

“Let our heart’s blood bear testament, and let the Dao of the Heavens stand witness. I, Ji Ning (Mu Northson), willingly and freely join the Black-White College. As disciples of the Black-White College, I shall obey the rules of the Black-White College...”

A nameless, ancient aura began to circulate throughout the hall. Nobody else said a word; the only ones speaking were Ning and Northson, and their voices echoed within the grand palace.

An Oath of Blood, sworn to the Dao of the Heavens!

This was a mighty oath that absolutely could not be foresworn. This was also the reason why it was extremely rare for someone to betray their school in the Grand Xia Dynasty. If one did betray one’s school, even before the school came to punish them, the punishment of the Dao of Heaven would have already slain the traitor. But of course, if the school had wronged the disciple, or if it had expelled the disciple, then it would no longer be the disciple’s fault.

Since every single disciple was willing to swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens, it was still quite fair.

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After hearing the swearing of the Oath of Blood to the Dao of the Heavens, Daoist Jadesea nodded in satisfaction. “Excellent. You have now formally joined our school. Since you have joined us, you need to choose your Daoist titles. Each of you can choose a title you like.”

Ning and Northson both began to ponder this. A Daoist title...for example, Daoist Jadesea's Daoist title was 'Jadesea', and Immortal Firedragon's Daoist title was 'Firedragon'.

"If you don't wish to choose a Daoist title, you can use your own given name as your Daoist title," Daoist Jadesea said with a laugh. "There are some disciples who are accustomed to using their own names and unaccustomed to Daoist titles. There are thus quite a few who use their own names."

"My Daoist title shall be 'Twinwood'," Northson suddenly said. Daoist Jadesea nodded lightly. "Twinwood? Very well." He looked towards the nearby Ning next. "Ji Ning, what about you?"

Ning said slowly, "My Daoist title...let it be Darknorth."

"Very well." Daoist Jadesea nodded. "Since your Daoist titles have been chosen, let the elders of our Black-White College discuss amongst themselves who will take you as their student. If you aren't willing, you can speak out at this time."

"Understood," Ning and Northson both said. Unwilling? What sort of a joke was this? As long as there was no enmity between them, generally speaking, as long as an elder was willing to be their master, the disciple would not refuse to be their student.

"Mu Northson." Suddenly, from amidst the crowd of Primal Daoists near Daoist Jadesea, a white-haired, baby-faced old lady suddenly spoke out. She looked at Northson, a hint of benevolent love in her eyes. "I heard that you walk the Dao of Constructs. I, Jadevine, have also gained quite a few insights into the Dao of Constructs. I wonder if you would be willing to accept me as your master."

Ning's heart thumped. Jadevine? According to the intelligence report which Northmont Baiwei had provided him, Daoist Jadevine had the highest degree of understanding of the Dao of Constructs in the entire Black-White College.

"Your disciple is willing." Northson respectfully fell to his knees. "Your disciple pays his respects to you, Master." Daoist Jadevine smiled, then nodded. "Mm."

Ning turned to look at the various Primal Daoists up ahead. Which one of them would become his master? Which one? But Daoist Jadesea and the other Primal Daoists didn't say a single word.

"Hrm. Strange. Why aren't any of them accepting junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning as their disciple?"

"Right. None of our uncle-masters are saying a thing."

The other disciples were secretly chatting amongst themselves. But Daoist Jadesea, seated above them, suddenly turned to stare towards the outside of the palace. A figure had appeared within the doorway to the palace; a black-haired, black-robed man was walking in. His gaze was both stately and fierce, and as soon as he stepped into the palace, it was as though the entire palace had been steeped into darkness. All of the disciples turned to stare at this man.

"My respects to you, Patriarch." Many of the disciples quickly spoke out. A few of the others were a bit lost; clearly, they didn't recognize this man. Still, they hurriedly imitated the other disciples in bowing respectfully. As for Ning and Northson, they followed the crowd in bowing as well.

"My respects to you, Uncle-Master." The Primal Daoists in front all called out respectfully as well. "Uncle-Master." Daoist Jadesea rose as well.

The black-robed, black-haired man's figure had instantly become the center for the entire palace. It was as though the entire world was revolving around him.

"Ji Ning." The black-robed, black-haired man looked towards Ning. "Are you willing to become the senior disciple under my tutelage?" Ning was shocked. As soon as this man had spoken, Ning had immediately realized who he was.

The intelligence report Baiwei had provided had very little information on the various Immortals in the palace, with just a few lines of information for each; after all, the information on the Immortals was very highly classified, while the report Baiwei had provided him consisted of fairly open secrets. Thus, there was just a very simple introduction regarding Immortal Diancai..

Immortal Diancai: An Earth Immortal of the Black-White College. Highly specialized in swordplay. No disciples to his name.

Of the living Immortals of the Black-White College, Immortal Diancai was the only one who had never accepted any disciples. Upon hearing the words, 'senior disciple under my tutelage', Ning immediately understood who the person before him was.

If he didn't apprentice himself to this man, then who?

"Your disciple is willing." Ning fell to his knees, respectfully kowtowing in a ritual manner. "Your disciple, Ji Ning, pays his respect to you, Master."

"Mm. Follow me." A rare hint of a smile was on Immortal Diancai's stern face. Nodding to the others and saying a few words, he immediately left the hall, and Ning hurriedly followed after him.

As for the other disciples in the hall, they all stared in astonishment. An Immortal had taken a direct disciple? This was extremely rare. Only the most monstrously talented of their generation had been accepted by one of the Immortals as a disciple, and all of these monsters were rumored to actually be reincarnated Immortals.

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The clouds swirled about Immortal Diancai and Ning as they flew at high speed towards an estate. They entered the estate, then into the main hall.

Immortal Diancai sat down atop his jade bed. As for Ning, he stood there to one side, incomparably respectful. He could tell that Immortal Diancai was normally quite a stern, taciturn person.

"In my entire life, the person I hold the most admiration for is senior Northwalker," Immortal Diancai said. "I once swore that I would not accept any disciple who did not receive the sword-intent transmission from senior Northwalker. As for you, not only did you receive his sword-intent transmission, you even inherited his legacy, the complete [Three-Foot Sword]. Even I don't know anything at all regarding the final three stances of this technique."

Ning just listened respectfully. Given that even the headmaster knew about this matter, for his own master to know of this was only natural.

"The only ones who know that you inherited the complete legacy of the [Three-Foot Sword] are myself, Jadesea, and the other Immortals," Immortal Diancai said. "Thus, you cannot reveal it either."

Ning said respectfully, "Your disciple understands."

Immortal Diancai looked towards Ji Ning. "You should know that in our Black-White College, if you wish to gain a top-tier Ki Refining technique or top-tier divine ability, you have to use black-white pellets to trade for them." Ning nodded. The black-and-white book he had read earlier had described these things.

If one wished to acquire the divine ability, 'Heavenly Transformation', one needed a certain number of black-white pellets. If one wanted to gain a certain Ki Refining technique, one would also need a certain number of black-white pellets. If one wished to acquire a technique for their spirit-beast, one would still need to use black-white pellets to trade for it!

Black-white pellets were rewarded to disciples by the school. For example, if one reached the Dao Domain level, one would be rewarded with black-white pellets. If one became a Wanxiang Adept, one would also be rewarded with black-white pellets. Upon becoming a Primal Daoist, one would receive still further black-white pellets. If one joined the Raindragon Guard, one would be bestowed black-white pellets...

In short, the better one's performance was, the more black-white pellets the school would bestow. Naturally, this would allow one to gain access to ever more profound techniques owned by the school.

"Has your soul reached the 'divine sense' level?" Immortal Diancai asked. Ning couldn't help but feel shocked; he had never revealed this before.

"Receiving the complete [Three-Foot Sword] legacy places enormous strains on the soul. In the past, virtually every single person who ever acquired the complete [Three-Foot Sword] legacy was a reincarnated Immortal whose soul was at least at the 'divine sense' level," Immortal Diancai explained.

Ning said respectfully, "Your disciple's soul has indeed reached the 'divine sense' level, but as for being a reincarnated Immortal...it seems your disciple...'

"After having drank Granny Meng's Elixir, you naturally will have forgotten the memories from your previous life." Immortal Diancai shook his head. "However, given how powerful your soul is, even if you aren't a reincarnated Immortal, you must have encountered a tremendously great karmic event."

Immortal Diancai fell silent for a moment, then started to muse to himself. "You've just entered the school, so you can receive the basic reward of a thousand black-white pellets. You have reached the Dao Domain realm, so you can be rewarded with another thousand black-white pellets. Your soul is at the divine sense level, and so you can be awarded two thousand black-white pellets. As your master, I can bestow you with another two thousand black-white pellets. Thus, you have a total of six thousand black-white pellets."

Immortal Diancai said seriously, "Since you have already received the complete legacy of the [Three-Foot Sword], in the future, you will definitely be forced to use it. Thus, when you go to the Dao Repository Vault, you must trade for the first scroll of the [Three-Foot Sword]. The [Three-Foot Sword] is the swordplay which has secured the foundations of our Black-White College; thus, even the first scroll will cost you two thousand black-white pellets."

Ning was speechless. He clearly had inherited the entire legacy of the [Three-Foot Sword], but in order to hide it, he would actually have to go trade for the first scroll of the [Three-Foot Sword]? And the price

was two thousand black-white pellets! So this was the reason why his master had bestowed him two thousand black-white pellets.

“As for your Ki Refining technique...remember, you absolutely must select a Ki Refining technique that you can use to train all the way to the Immortal level,” Immortal Diancai said. “As for divine abilities and sword techniques...choose as you see fit.”

“You can go now. Go directly to the Dao Repository Vault and withdraw your black-white pellets and your liquefied elemental essence. Afterwards, go choose your Ki Refining techniques, sword techniques, divine abilities, and what-not.” Immortal Diancai concluded, “If there is something you cannot comprehend, come ask me.”

“Yes.” Ning bowed with respect. And then, he departed, heading directly to the Dao Repository Vault.

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Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 26: Within the Dao Repository Vault

The morning sun rose, and the light of the dawn shone upon the entire Black-White College.

Whoosh. Ji Ning, mounted atop his flying boat, was soaring through the skies. Soon, he saw a majestic, towering vault beneath him. This was the edifice which, within the Black-White College, had a status that was not inferior to the Black-White Diagram's; the Dao Repository Vault! Whenever the disciples of the Black-White College wished to learn top-tier Ki Refining techniques, divine abilities, or secret arts, they would come here.

A large, muscular man, dressed in a beautiful set of armor, was currently seated next to a stone table, holding an exquisite goblet of wine and enjoying it.

Ning landed on the ground. “My respects to you, Uncle-Master,” Ning said with a bow. “Oh?” The large, muscular man glanced sideways at Ning. “You are the new disciple, Ji Ning?”

“Yes,” Ning said. This large, muscular man was one of the Dao-Protectors of the Vault, a position generally given to Primal Daoists. “Here are six thousand black-white pellets.” The large, muscular man waved his hand, and a black jade bottle flew out towards Ning.

Ning accepted it and filled it with his elemental ki. Within this jade bottle, there really was a veritable mass of pellets, all of which were black and white in color.

“Here are fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. For disciples of the third generation, every ten years, they will receive this amount of liquefied elemental essence.” The large, muscular man tossed another jade bottle to Ning. “Alright. You've collected your black-white pellets and your liquefied elemental essence. You can go in now.”

Two bottles; one a dark jade color, the other an emerald jade color. They were used to store six thousand black-white pellets and fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, respectively.

“The Black-White College lives up to its reputation,” Ning said to himself with a sigh. “Someone like me, a third generation disciple, will receive fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence each decade. Doesn't that mean that every century, I will receive five hundred kilograms? An ordinary Earth-ranked

magic treasure is only worth around a hundred taels of liquefied elemental essence, while most Heaven-ranked magic treasures are worth just ten thousand taels or so.”

The five hundred kilograms of liquefied elemental essence which disciples of the Black-White College received each century were already enough to trade for a Heaven-ranked magic treasure. But of course, no one would be so stupid as to save them all up; this liquefied elemental essence was meant to help them rise in power by allowing them to not need to waste a great amount of time in slowly absorbing energy from nature.

“Thank you, Uncle-Master.” Ning immediately strode into the Dao Repository Vault.

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There were a total of three levels to the Dao Repository Vault. As soon as Ning entered the first level, he felt as though he had entered a sea of books. One enormous book shelf after another could be seen, with countless numbers of books placed on them. At first glance...Ning dared to guess that there had to be more than a million books here, and the vast majority of the books which lined the largest walls and shelves had a single large character on the sides: ‘Technique’!

“Techniques!” Ning mused to himself, “The Dao Repository Vault has three levels. The first level focuses on techniques, the second on arts, and the third on miscellaneous things.”

The word technique, in this case, referred to refining techniques, such as Ki Refining and Fiendgod Body Refining techniques.

The word arts referred to secret magic arts used by Immortals and Fiends. They included ingenious ways of using power, and included the ‘divine abilities’ of Fiendgods, the ‘sword arts’ of Sword Immortals, the ‘forbidden techniques’ which one could use in a crisis, the ‘evasion arts’ one could use when fleeing...all techniques which relied on special tricks and applications of power were classified as skills.

As for miscellaneous, they consisted of things that were not classified with the first two. Constructs, formations, venomous pests, refining magic treasure, refining magic pills, poisons...

“Master said that I absolutely must trade for the first scroll of the [Three-Foot Sword], as well as a Ki Refining technique that can be used all the way up to the Immortal level.” Ning didn’t hesitate at all, immediately beginning to search through the first level of the Dao Repository Vault.

Ki Refining techniques were divided into Immortal-rank, Heaven-rank, Earth-rank, Mortal-rank, and so on. Immortal-rank...this meant that this was a Ki Refining technique that could be used to train all the way up to the Celestial Immortal level.

“All the way up to Celestial Immortal?” Ning sighed with emotion. “Although supposedly one can use Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques to train all the way up to the Celestial Immortal level, even the Black-White College has only produced a single Celestial Immortal in its entire history. Even Immortal Northwalker and those other outstandingly talented figures were unable to become Celestial Immortals. The path to becoming a Celestial Immortal is indeed as difficult as Judge Cui described; the tribulations one must face are boundless.”

Ning continued to search carefully. Soon he found, deep in the depths of the Dao Repository Vault, a black, wooden table. Atop it, there were a total of twenty nine golden books arranged in a row. This table had a single character carved on its side – Immortal!

“Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques?” Ning hurriedly picked up a golden book. This book was named [Samgha Sutra of Ascending to Heaven]. This was just a simple, abridged tone; after all, an Immortal-ranked Ki Refining technique was definitely one of the most important, foundation-establishing texts for a school. It absolutely would not be permitted for it to be leaked to the outside world.

“This first scroll of the [Samgha Sutra of Ascending to Heaven] actually costs 1500 black-white pellets.” Ning was secretly speechless. Turning his head, he saw that atop the tall bookshelves, there were rows on rows of Earth-ranked Ki Refining techniques, and all of them were complete copies, not abridged ones...

“These are so cheap, just a hundred black-white pellets,” Ning mumbled to himself. Suddenly, a voice rang out by his side. “Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.”

Ning turned to look. He saw, from afar, a white-robed youth who had just arrived; his junior apprentice-brother, Mu Northson. Northson was clearly quite excited. “Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, there really are very many Ki Refining techniques here.”

“The school has existed for so long. How can it not have many techniques?” Ning replied. And then, the pair of fellow disciples began to once more earnestly search for their own Ki Refining techniques.

An hour passed.

“I’ll choose this.” Ning picked up a golden book; it was the Immortal-ranked Ki Refining technique, the [Flowing Watersource]. The first volume could be purchased for 1500 black-white pellets. The Ki Refining technique which Ning had trained in since he was a child was the [Water Element Art]; after having established his Zifu, of the Five Elements, he was naturally most suited to water-attribute techniques.

“When adding the cost of the first scroll of the [Three-Foot Sword], which I have to acquire, I need to pay 3500 black-white pellets. I have another 2500 black-white pellets I can use.” Ning began to ponder to himself. He needed to acquire a technique for Uncle White. He also needed to acquire a divine ability. He also needed the later parts of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens].

“Uncle White is at the early Zifu stage; he is in urgent need of a Ki Refining technique. In addition, of the Five Elements, he too is most suited to water. This [Flowing Watersource] is very suited to him as well.” Ning continued to ponder.

Although he had just chosen a single copy of the [Flowing Watersource], if he wanted to let Uncle White train in it as well, then he would have to pay another 1500 black-white pellets! If he didn’t...then that would mean that they had stolen the technique, and an Immortal-ranked technique at that. This was a tremendously grave crime, and the Oath of Blood he had sworn to the Dao of the Heavens, by itself, would deliver a punishment that would probably shatter Ning’s soul.

“I have a thousand more black-white pellets remaining.” Ning instantly felt as though he didn’t have enough black-white pellets to spend. But what he didn’t realize was, no one else would be willing to spend such a fortune on a spirit-beast.

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A short time later, within the first level of the Dao Repository Vault, Ning was able to find the books focusing on Fiendgod Body Refining. He also found the later scrolls introducing the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique, the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]; the so-called ‘second scroll’ to the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens].

The second scroll of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] also had nine stages to it. It consisted of the tenth, the eleventh, the twelfth...all the way to the eighteenth stage.

These levels corresponded to the Wanxiang Adept, Primal Daoist, and Void stages.

Upon reaching the eighteenth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], one would undergo a tribulation. If one successfully endured that heavenly tribulation, one would become an Empyrean God!

As for Ki Refiners, once they overcame their tribulation, they would become Celestial Immortals!

Empyrean Gods and Celestial Immortals...these were two different branches.

“A hundred black-white pellets? So cheap.” Ning, upon seeing the price, couldn’t help but sigh in relief. “Although it will let you train all the way to the heavenly tribulation, it only costs a hundred black-white pellets. It really is the most easily acquired technique.”

It was the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique. It was also the most easily acquired technique. And, in turn, it was the most difficult technique to learn.

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Ning took a copy of the [Flowing Watersource] and a copy of the second scroll of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], then left the first level of the Dao Repository Vault and went to the second level. The second level was also filled with countless bookshelves.

“Arts!” Ning took a deep breath. These were the secret arts of Immortals and Fiends. They represented ways in which one could apply the Dao, divine abilities, sword arts, spells, forbidden techniques, evasion techniques, and more. All of these were classified as ‘arts’.

“Divine abilities.” The first thing Ning did was to head to the bookshelves which held the records on divine abilities. Divine abilities...these were extremely rare. Even his mother’s Yuchi clan had only been in possession of a single divine ability, the [Windwing Evasion] technique.

“So few. So expensive!” Ning finally found the shelf which contained the divine abilities, but the entire shelf only had five abridged books. In other words, despite the passage of countless years, the entire Black-White College was only in possession of five divine abilities! They were even more rare than Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques!

These five techniques were the [Heavenly Transformation], [Divine Thunderbolt Eye], [Myriad Hibernating Venoms], [Three Heads, Six Arms], and [Eye of the Luminous Heart].

“[Three Heads, Six Arms]?” Ning’s eyes instantly lit up. The [Heavenly Transformation] technique was the most common divine ability; generally speaking, all top-tier schools and sects had it. As for the other three divine abilities, [Divine Thunderbolt Eye], [Eye of the Luminous Heart], and [Myriad Hibernating Venoms], these were divine abilities which, according to rumor, some major powers would often use.

“[Three Heads, Six Arms]; it seems to be ordinary in effectiveness, but in reality, once one reaches the late stages of this divine ability, it grows tremendously powerful,” Ning mused to himself. Humans only had two arms; even though, by relying on their divine power or elemental Ki, they could coalesce additional arms, these arms couldn’t possibly compare to true arms.

But the [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique...once this divine ability was executed, one truly would gain four additional arms and two additional heads. The power of these four additional arms was comparable to that of one’s true arms; it would be as though three Ji Nings were linking hands against a single foe! It must be understood that just by wielding twin swords, one’s power would increase multiplicatively; with six swords joining together in an attack, the power would reach a truly ridiculous level.

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Five divine abilities. After seeing them, a look of lust was in Ning’s eyes. [Three Heads, Six Arms] was extremely famous; naturally, there was a reason for that. And thus, the price of the first scroll alone was three thousand black-white pellets.

The [Heavenly Transformation] technique was the most commonly seen technique, but when trained to the later stages, it was also capable of unleashing astonishing levels of power. Its first scroll cost five hundred black-white pellets.

The [Myriad Hibernating Venoms] was also a true killer technique; the first scroll to this divine ability cost five thousand black-white pellets.

The first scroll of the [Divine Thunderbolt Eye] cost two thousand black-white pellets as well.

As for the [Eye of the Luminous Heart], the first scroll cost five thousand black-white pellets.

“This is too...” Ning had to grit his teeth and pick up the abridged version of the [Heavenly Transformations] technique. As for the other four divine abilities, there was no way for him to acquire them at all. The cost of these techniques was vastly greater than the cost of those Immortal-ranked Ki Refiner techniques. But it was only reasonable; these were divine abilities, incomparably precious.

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Ning, those books in hand, continued forward through the second level in search of even more unusual ‘arts’. After searching for a long time...

“Found it.” Ning finally found, atop a bookshelf, three golden books. The entire shelf only had these three golden books atop it; apparently, the value of these books wasn’t at all inferior to those divine abilities.

Ning immediately picked up one of the golden books. Atop the cover, there were three words: “Soul” “Shaker” “Art”. [Soulshaker Art]!

This was precisely what Ning was searching for; an art which would allow him to use his soul to engage in an attack. This was an extremely rare type of art.

The Desolate Era

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 27: Training in the Still Room

The [Soulshaker Art] was something only a person with a divine will could use; it could be used to shake the opponent’s very soul. If the enemy’s soul was particularly weak, it might even cause their soul to be extinguished.

“This is it.” Ning nodded. “Previously, during the recruitment, Uncle-Master Wu Xiu used the [Soulshaker Art] to cause hundreds of Zifu Disciples to all fall down from midair. Something only capable of being used at the ‘divine will’ level? I’ve already reached the ‘divine sense’ level!”

Ning continued to read carefully. It really was alluring. Given the power of his soul, once he used the [Soulshaker Art], he would be able to deal with the vast majority of Wanxiang Adepts! After all, it was virtually guaranteed that only Primal Daoists would have souls at the divine sense level! Ning’s soul was so very powerful that if he were to use the [Soulshaker Art], he would naturally be able to dominate the vast majority of Wanxiang Adepts.

“Two thousand black-white pellets?” When Ning saw the price of this art, he immediately shook his head.

There were a total of three books on this shelf. One was the [Soulshaker Art], one was the [Soulcharmer Art], while the other was the [Soulslayer Art]!

Of the three, the [Soulshaker Art] and the [Soulcharmer Art] only required someone’s soul to be at the divine will level in order to learn them. The prices for them were two thousand and three thousand black-white pellets, respectively.

As for the [Soulslayer Art], this was truly used to extinguish an opponent’s soul, an art used for divine souls to engage in battle. In addition, it required a person to be at the divine sense level to learn it...and in terms of rarity, it was even rarer than divine abilities! To trade for it, one would need ten thousand black-white pellets.

“All I can do is stare at it and drool.” Ning laughed, then shook his head. He immediately turned to go look at the other arts available.

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The Dao Repository Vault was divided into techniques, arts, and miscellaneous. Virtually all of the skills available were extremely powerful or particular sinister. There were also all manner of brilliant sword arts as well.

Ning had, in total, just six thousand black-white pellets. Which should he purchase? Which shouldn’t he purchase? He had to gain a clearer understanding.

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Six full hours later, Ning finally departed from the third floor of the Dao Repository Vault, then walked out of the vault.

“You’ve chosen?” The tall, muscular Dao-Protector gave Ning a glance.

“Right.” Ning nodded, but he couldn’t help but turn to look backwards. It really was...really was...he really wished he had a few hundred thousand black-white pellets and was able to pick from those skills as he pleased. There were all sorts of Immortal and Fiend techniques that were simply too mysterious and godlike, as well as some truly powerful evasive techniques that made Ning truly tongue-tied. Only now did he truly understand how deep the roots of the Black-White College were.

Unfortunately, he only had six thousand black-white pellets, and he absolutely had to choose the first scroll of the [Three-Foot Sword], as well as an Immortal-ranked Ki Refining technique.

“Let me take a look,” the Dao-Protector said. Ning handed over the abridged books in his hands. The Dao-Protector, after accepting them, immediately saw that on top was the first scroll of the [Three-Foot Sword]. He immediately said with a frown, “The [Three-Foot Sword] is one of the techniques which secured the legacy of our Black-White College, and its power is absolutely astonishing. But to comprehend it...will be extremely, ,extremely hard. It is a bit too early for you to start training in the [Three-Foot Sword]; in addition, it will cost you two thousand black-white pellets to trade for it.”

Ning felt helpless. He didn’t want to choose it this early either, but his master, Immortal Diancai, had ordered him to do so. He had no one to blame but himself for having received the legacy of senior Northwalker.

“The [Lesser Five Elements Sword]?” The Dao-Protector, upon seeing the second book, immediately nodded. “The [Lesser Five Elements Sword] is also one of the top five sword techniques of our Black-White College, and it is unfathomably deep and profound, allowing one to start at a basic level but progressively comprehend more. It is very suitable for someone who wishes to focus on the Dao of the sword, and it costs eight hundred black-white pellets as well. Actually, I recommend that you only trade for the [Lesser Five Elements Sword], and temporarily set aside the [Three-Foot Sword] for now.”

“The [Flowing Watersource]. An Immortal-ranked Ki Refining technique. Not bad.” The Dao-Protector nodded, then raised his head and looked towards Ning. “You made up your mind? These are all you want? You won’t change your mind?”

“I will not.” Ning shook his head. There were many arts that were quite enticing to him, but Ning had given them up. He had even given up acquiring the second scroll of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. After all, training in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] required one to absorb the energy of the Solar Star and the Lunar Star...Ning was currently only at the seventh level. To reach the ninth level, he would still need a long period of time. During this period of time, he would probably be able to acquire more black-white pellets.

“Even if I’m not able to acquire the second scroll of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] in the Black-White College, I can join the Raindragon Guard and acquire it there, or even purchase it from other places,” Ning mused to himself. The second scroll of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was fairly easily obtained.

As for those various sword arts...Ning had spent a long period of time analyzing them in the Dao Repository Vault. Given that his divine ability, the [Starseizing Hand], was with him, so long as his swordplay was strong enough, his own power would naturally rise.

For fleeing, he had the [Windwing Evasion]. In a true battle of divine abilities, he already had the [Starseizing Hand], and so wasn't in a rush to obtain other divine abilities. What truly mattered was his Ki Refining technique and his sword arts!

The [Lesser Five Elements Sword] was the most suitable technique for him, because he had a deep level of insight into three of the elements already; water, wind, and fire.

"2000 black-white pellets for this, 1500 for this, and 800 for this. The three come to a total of 4300 black-white pellets." The Dao-Protector looked at Ning. "Give me the black-white pellets, and I'll go get the copies for you."

Ning shook his head. "Not only am I going to train in the [Flowing Watersource], I am going to give my spirit-beast a copy as well."

"Your spirit-beast?" The Dao-Protector was shocked. "You are going to give your spirit-beast such a good Ki Refining technique? That costs 1500 black-white pellets. Moreover, you have just started training; this is a critical moment for you. With 1500 black-white pellets, you can purchase many powerful secret arts to protect yourself. There's absolutely no need for you to spend so much effort on your spirit-beast. Just have him wait a bit longer; in a few decades or in a century, purchase it for him then. Or, just give him a slightly weaker Ki Refining technique."

As this Dao-Protector saw it...Ning was a formal disciple and a truly monstrous talent. For him to give a spirit-beast such a great benefit was a rash, hot-headed act.

Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques! Something like this could only happen within the Black-White College. If they were roaming in the outside world, even if a Zifu level monster risked his life for centuries, he would still find it virtually impossible to acquire an Immortal-ranked Ki Refining technique.

"My mind is decided," Ning said. The Dao-Protector shook his head. "Alas. Why must you be such a fool?" Ning did not respond, but his gaze told the Dao-Protector that his decision was an incomparably firm one.

"Fine, then," the Dao-Protector said, rising to his feet. "I will help you find these copies. Give me those 5800 black-white pellets." "Mm." Ning nodded, watching as the Dao-Protector entered the Dao Repository Vault.

Uncle White...Uncle White wasn't just his spirit-beast. More importantly, he was family. If Ning were to acquire a large pile of divine abilities and secret arts, but give nothing to Uncle White, he truly would feel terrible in his heart! In addition, even if he was able to trade for a large number of secret arts, he would still need a large amount of time and energy to focus on training in them.

"I will spend my time focusing on comprehending this [Lesser Five Elements Sword]," Ning mused to himself. The [Flowing Watersource] was something he could simply train in. The [Three-Foot Sword]? His current level of swordplay was somewhat lacking; he couldn't even execute the first stance of the

[Three-Foot Sword]. The only thing he could slowly spend time on comprehending, for now, was the [Lesser Five Elements Sword].

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The Black-White College. Darknorth Peak.

Ning was standing atop a flying boat in the air, and he sent the boat charging downwards as he entered Darknorth Peak.

“Uncle White,” Ning called out as he landed into the courtyard. Whoosh. A large white hound bounded over from nearby. It was the Whitewater Hound. “Ning, son. You have apprenticed yourself? Which one is your master?”

“Immortal Diancai,” Ning replied, his face covered with joy. The Whitewater Hound’s face became filled with delight and astonishment as well. “An Immortal?” Prior to this, he had chatted with Ning and also made guesses regarding which Primal Daoist would be Ning’s master.

“Uncle White, this is the Ki Refining technique I traded for you, the [Flowing Watersource],” Ning said. “You absolutely cannot reveal this technique to any outsiders; if you do, the Oath of Blood sworn to the Dao of the Heavens will punish you, and your soul will be destroyed.”

“I know.” The Whitewater Hound nodded. Formal disciples, retainers, spirit-beasts...all those who lived within the Black-White College had to swear the Oath of Blood to the Dao of the Heavens! After all, retainers and spirit-beasts all had the chance to learn some top-tier techniques.

“Take it,” Ning said, handing over the [Flowing Watersource], a thick, coiled up booklet. “This is the first scroll; you can train with it directly to the peak Primal Daoist level. After we reach the Primal Daoist level, we can go trade for the second scroll.”

“Thank you for troubling yourself, my boy Ning.” Although the Whitewater Hound had never heard of this technique before, he could guess that given Ning had purchased it for him, it definitely wouldn’t be poor.

Ning chuckled. “Uncle White, I’m going to go train.” Swoosh! Ning’s heart was pumping mightily right now, and he was filled with eagerness. Naturally, he charged directly towards the underground quiet room he had prepared for himself.

Darknorth Peak had many buildings atop it; naturally, it also had some private rooms that were used for Immortal cultivators to train in. All of these private rooms had grand formations set up around them that were linked up to the grand formation which protected the entire Black-White College as a whole. Once one entered secluded meditation, not even Immortals could hope to barge in.

“Creaaaaak!” The stone door slammed shut.

Within the ten foot wide stone room. The ceiling up above was filled with many luminous jewels; these jewels naturally weren’t as extravagant and costly as the ones in the Carefree Caverns, but they were still extraordinary. The light from them made it so that the stone room was perpetually kept bright by the light of the jewels.

Ji Ning sat there in the lotus position atop his jade bed. The runes inscribed onto the jade bed had the effect of calming one's heart. "[Flowing Watersource]!" Ning flipped through the [Flowing Watersource] in his hands, spending a full hour reading it as he completely memorized the entire book. The memories of Immortal practitioners were exceptionally good. For someone like Ning, who had reached the 'divine sense' level, they could actually flip through all the memories in their soul which they had acquired since they were a child, just like flipping through a book.

"Whoosh." A flame appeared out of nowhere within Ning's hand, and it burned the [Flowing Watersource] to ash. An Immortal-ranked Ki Refining technique like this definitely was not permitted to be revealed to the outside world. Thus, upon finishing reading this technique, one had to destroy it. Thus, killing a disciple of the Black-White College in order to gain some top-tier techniques was completely impossible.

"Let's begin." Ning waved his hand, and a jade green flask landed on the floor before him. He opened the bottle, and a dense elemental aura wafted out. The green jade bottle had fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence within. Originally, Ning had used up just five kilograms of liquefied elemental essence in order to break through from the peak Xiantian level to the early Zifu level, and had also solidified his base as an early Zifu level.

"Absorb." Ning opened his mouth, and instantly, the liquefied elemental essence began to surge out from the green jade bottle and enter Ning's mouth. As it did...it quickly distilled into vast amounts of elemental energy, which surged into his Zifu Violet Palace.

Within the boundless void of his Zifu Violet Palace. There was a lake there. "Rumble..." Suddenly, the entire Violet Palace began to shudder as an endless torrent of elemental energy surged inwards and was converted into elemental ki. The lake of elemental ki began to slowly expand in accordance with the method prescribed in Ning's [Flowing Watersource] technique, and it began to slowly swivel as well.

Splash...splash...it continuously swiveled, and as it did, it began to move faster and faster. Soon, the entire Zifu Lake had transformed into an enormous whirlpool, causing the deep heart of the lake to grow deeper and deeper.

The formerly placid, flat lake had transformed into a whirlpool; it was like an awl, its depth having instantly increased hundreds of times over.

"BANG!"

A thunderous explosion. In the deepest part of the whirlpool Zifu Lake, a hole suddenly appeared, which ravenously began to produce new elemental ki. This hole was the 'Watersource' of the [Flowing Watersource]!

"Middle Zifu level." Ning continued to absorb the liquefied elemental essence from the jade bottle, continuing to increase his power.

Rumble...

The deepest part of his Zifu Lake was now a thousand times deeper than it had been in the past. The absorption and transformation process was clearly much faster than it had been, and the elemental ki that was transformed and produced by the Watersource was purer than before as well.

“The late Zifu level!”

The Desolate Era

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 28: Tradition

Ji Ning had already reached the Dao Domain level, and his highest level of accomplishments was in the water-element of the Five Elements. For him, comprehending the [Flowing Watersource] was naturally very easy. Although this was his first time training in it, he thoroughly understood the Zifu level portion of the technique, and even comprehended the majority of the Wanxiang level of the technique.

In other words, if he so chose, Ning could, at one breath, train straight to the Wanxiang Adept level. But of course, the prerequisite was that he had enough liquefied elemental essence.

“Rumble...” The elemental ki in his Zifu Lake was slowly swiveling. The waters of the lake were now swirling in a very slow manner, but the closer to the bottom, the faster the whirling motion was. At the very bottom of the lake, in the Watersource, the whirlpool was spinning with incredible force. As the amount of elemental ki in the Zifu Lake grew, the power of the whirlpool grew as well.

In addition, the Watersource grew deeper and deeper. The elemental ki it produced grew more and more pure as well!

After training for roughly an hour...with a rumble, the entire Zifu Violet Palace began to tremble. The vast lake of elemental ki's Watersource once more transformed, and the purity of the elemental ki once more skyrocketed.

“Peak Zifu level.”

Within the vast Violet Palace region, the turbid waters of the lake continued to slowly expand. However, in terms of quality, the elemental ki had already reached the ultimate level possible at the Zifu Disciple level; there was no way to increase it any further. The only thing possible was to constantly increase the quantity of ki and expand it in size.

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Within the still room. The bright jewels continued to gleam brilliantly. Ning, seated on the jade bed in the lotus position, opened his eyes and glanced at the emerald jade bottle placed before him. He nodded slowly. “I spent nearly forty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, and managed to surge all the way to the peak Zifu Disciple level as a Ki Refiner. Only, to break through from the peak Zifu level to the early Wanxiang level, and while using a top-tier Ki Refining technique...the amount of liquefied elemental essence that will be needed is quite shocking.”

The Wanxiang ‘Myriad Manifestations’ level was an extremely unusual level. Some of the Manifestations possessed by Wanxiang Adepts were merely those of countless stars gleaming in a night sky. But some Manifestations, such as those of Daoist Mu Xiao or Daoist Xu Li, had a brilliant moon amidst the sea of stars. Thus, the Manifestation technique they demonstrated was that of a grand moonlight hand!

However...

According to legend, top-tier Manifestations would generate trillions of stars, the brilliant moon, and the blazing sun, all at the same time! And only the truly supreme Manifestations could, during the peak

Wanxiang stage, have the 'Jade Rabbit emerge from the brilliant moon, the Golden Crow emerge from the blazing sun'.

The emergence of the Jade Rabbit, the appearance of the Golden Crow.

This, and this alone, symbolized that one's foundations were perfect. This was the so-called 'foundation of a Celestial Immortal'. If you didn't reach this stage, there was no way you could become a Celestial Immortal at all.

But where did the supreme Manifestations come from? In truth, they relied on the practitioner having built up an extremely large 'Zifu Lake' during the Zifu level. The Zifu Lake is the fundamental foundation for an Immortal cultivator; the deeper and wider the lake is, the deeper the practitioner's elemental ki foundation would be, and the more astonishing a Manifestation they would be able to create.

"Some poor-quality techniques will result in a Zifu Lake that is both shallow and small. Upon reaching the peak Zifu level, they won't even be able to expand the size of the lake; they won't have any hope of becoming Wanxiang Adepts." Ning sighed to himself. That was exactly the case for his own Ji clan; their techniques were simply too poor, and the Zifu Lakes that they were able to create were correspondingly weak to the point where they could never break through to acquire Manifestations!

The Manifestation of the Stars was the weakest Manifestation.

The Manifestation of the Bright Moon was on a slightly higher level.

The Manifestation of the Sun and the Moon was the best Manifestation.

And, for the Jade Rabbit and the Golden Crow to appear during the peak Wanxiang Adept level was proof that one's foundation was perfect.

"Based on the recorded experiences of disciples of the Black-White College regarding the [Flowing Watersource]," Ning mused, "Upon reaching the peak Zifu level, if one absorbs a further 250 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, then one will gain the Manifestation of the Sun and the Moon. If one absorbs 400 kilograms before one breaks through to the Wanxiang Adept level...then at the peak Wanxiang level, the Manifestation will produce the Jade Rabbit and the Golden Crow."

This was one of the benefits of having a sect; the experiences of the forerunners would guide the latecomers in knowing what to do.

Fortunately, this was an Immortal-ranked Ki Refining technique. If it was a poorer technique...even if one had unlimited amounts of liquefied elemental essence, one wouldn't be able to absorb it all. It would be useless.

.....

He had spent two hours to reach the peak Zifu Disciple level. Next, Ning flipped through the [Lesser Five Elements Sword] tome.

This was how things were in supreme schools, for disciples the schools cared about. Training was as simple as this. Once they reached a certain level of insight, the school would make it so that they could save as much time as possible in training, allowing them to focus their attention on comprehending the Dao, analyzing sword arts, divine abilities, etc.

“Sword arts!” Ning’s eyes were gleaming, and a hungry look was in them. Ever since he had reached the Dao Domain level, the sword arts manuals of the Ji clan had become useless to him; his level of insight was simply too high.

To a true Sword Immortal...an incredibly deep and profound sword art could let them unleash incredibly great power in battle. Although Ning was only at the Dao Domain level, if he focused on comprehending sword arts, he could gain insights into sword arts which were on a higher level than he himself was at.

“The [Lesser Five Elements Sword]! One of the top five sword arts in the entire Black-White College, something which even Immortals would be willing to study.” The cost of this sword arts manual was close to that of a divine ability manual; from this, one could see how powerful it was.

Ning gently flipped through the pages. Stretching out his fingers, he formed them into the shape of a sword, testing the movements. These still rooms inside the Black-White College were specially designed for its formal disciples to train in, and the formation protecting these rooms were linked together with the grand formation which protected the entire College. Even if one tested out techniques within...as long as one was not an Immortal, there was no way one could possibly damage the still rooms in the slightest.

“Crackle.”

“Slash.”

Ning read while testing out the movements, completely absorbed in this sword technique. He felt as though he were back in his youth, when he was training in the [108 Swords of the Gods and Demons] for the first time. Back then, his father taught him, but this time, Ning analyzed everything by himself.

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As Ning was analyzing this sword technique. Within the estate located on another mountain peak within the Black-White College.

“Junior apprentice-brother Bladask, junior apprentice-brother Bladask,” a voice rang out. “Senior apprentice-brother Bu. Please, come in.”

A calm voice rang out from within the estate. Instantly, an azure-robed, long-haired man drifted in. This estate had a Zifu Disciple and some ordinary mortals within it, all of whom saluted. They naturally couldn’t compare in status to a formal disciple of the Black-White College.

“Might I ask why you have come here, senior apprentice-brother Bu?” A white-robed youth walked over. It was Bloodrinker Bladask.

“Junior apprentice-brother Bladask,” the azure-robed man laughed, “I heard that during our recent recruitment, the mountain tunnel which you guarded was broken through, correct?”

Bladask’s face sank. This was a humiliation for him! That time, Ning had forced him to use a sword formation to block. Given his proud nature, he naturally remembered the matter. Thus, when Ning and Northson had undergone the formal ceremony, he had not attended.

“Right,” Bladask said coldly. The azure-robed man laughed. “Junior apprentice-brother Bladask, don’t be angry. I imagine you don’t know this yet but...that Ji Ning is so talented that he has already been accepted by our College’s Immortal Diancai as his first, senior apprentice.”

A look of shock appeared on Bladask’s face. “Immortal Diancai?” Immortal Diancai was a Sword Immortal! As for Bladask, the path he walked was the Dao of the Sword as well. In the past, he had desired to become Immortal Diancai’s apprentice, but formal disciples, upon entering the school, were generally apprenticed to Primal Daoists. It was very rare for Immortals to directly choose them as an apprentice. As time had gone on, they had all grown accustomed to this, and he felt that it was normal that Immortal Diancai had not taken him as a disciple. But this Ji Ning had actually become apprenticed directly to Immortal Diancai!

“What about it?” Bladask had a sharp look in his eyes. “His future level of strength will depend on himself.”

The azure-robed man nodded. “Right. Training depends on one’s self. However, junior apprentice-brother Bladask, the reason why you lost to Ning last time was only because you were only permitted to use a single flying sword. You weren’t able to unleash your true power at all.”

Bladask didn’t say a word. In terms of power, he felt that he was far more powerful than that kid named Ji Ning.

“And, junior apprentice-brother Bladask, you should also know,” chuckled the azure-robed man, “That our Black-White College has an unspoken custom; all new apprentices will be taught a lesson at the Dao Debate Palace.”

Bladask nodded. The battles at the Dao Debate Palace were an extremely safe sort of sparring matches. The Black-White College’s formal disciples loved to engage in this sort of battles against each other!

“All new disciples were supreme geniuses in their former organizations, and are accustomed to being arrogant. The Dao Debate battles...they can help these new disciples wake up. Help them understand a certain principle; that there is a heaven beyond the heavens, and that there are geniuses beyond geniuses.” The azure-robed man laughed. “I wonder, junior apprentice-brother Bladask...would you be interested in having the chance to help that genius, Ji Ning, wake up and understand that in the Black-White College, he’s nothing more than an ordinary figure?”

Bladask’s eyes instantly lit up. After hesitating just a moment, he said in a cold voice, “I will only spar with Ji Ning!”

“There are quite a few other fellow disciples who want to fight,” the azure-robed man said with a laugh. “What we need to do right now is to go invite Mu Northson and Ji Ning to a battle.”

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Northson was currently standing atop his Azure Dragon construct, flying through the air towards his own residence. “The Black-White College really lives up to its name.” Whenever he thought about the secret manual on constructs which he held in his hands, he felt a blazing fire in his heart. This manual held answers to many of the questions he had regarding the Dao of Constructs, and he had been completely absorbed by it.

Whoosh.

The Azure Dragon construct which Northson stood upon descended from the skies.

“Junior apprentice-brother Twinwood.” A blue-clothed maiden in front of his gate called out to him. “Who are you, senior apprentice-sister?” Northson remembered seeing this woman amongst the other formal disciples of the Black-White College; she had been with them during the grand initiation ceremony. Immortal practitioners had formidable memories; after having seen her once, he had firmly memorized her appearance.

The blue-robed woman laughed, “My name is Winterain. You can simply address me as senior apprentice-sister Winterain.” Northson said happily, “I don’t have a single servant yet, and thus ended up treating you discourteously by having you wait outside. Please forgive me, senior apprentice-sister.”

Seeing the way in which he acted, the blue-clothed woman felt a hint of goodwill towards Northson. She thus said, “Junior apprentice-brother Northson, I’ve come here to invite you to the Dao Debate Palace...”

“Dao Debate Palace!” Northson’s eyes instantly lit up. He had read the black-and-white book, and knew that the duels in the Dao Debate Palace were extremely safe. They had nothing to do with elemental ki, power, or magic treasures; what they competed in was comprehension regarding the Dao and the ways in which they would apply the Dao. This is why it was described as a ‘Dao Debate’. In addition, there would generally be stakes in these ‘debates’, such as black-white pellets or liquefied elemental essences.

“To be able to spar with you, senior apprentice-sister, is something I’ve been looking forward to,” Northson said eagerly. “Then let’s go,” the blue-clothed woman said.

“Alright.” Northson’s eyes were filled with an eagerness for combat. Geniuses all had their pride. In the past, they had never before met their matches. Although they knew that these old disciples of the Black-White College were all extraordinary, in their hearts, the new students would still feel an eagerness to do battle.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The blue-clothed woman and Northson flew rapidly through the air, heading towards the Dao Debate Palace.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 29: Ji Ning’s Early Insights Into the Sword

The towering Dao Debate Palace was located at the very top of a mountain peak, and the figures of quite a few people could be seen within it.

The Dao Debate Palace...it had always been the place where the disciples of the Black-White College enjoyed to gather at the most. These genius disciples, all of whom had arrogance bred into their bones, would often spar with each other here.

“Swoosh!”

A ray of light shot out from the Dao Debate Palace. Immediately afterwards, a blue-clothed maiden flew out after it. "Junior apprentice-brother Twinwood, junior apprentice-brother Twinwood!" The blue-robed woman was standing atop a giant flower basket, chasing after him at high speed.

"Senior apprentice-sister Winterain, why are you chasing after me?" Mu Northson, standing atop that Azure Dragon construct, had a look of rage on his normally bashful face. "This was what you all planned this entire time, wasn't it? Hmph!"

The blue-robed maiden, Winterain, shook her head and said, "Junior apprentice-brother Twinwood, actually, you can't blame your fellow disciples. In our Black-White College...throughout our history, each time a new disciple joins us, that person will be taught a vicious lesson at the Dao Debate Palace. This has already become a tradition. Although it isn't one of the laws of the College, it has been passed down for countless generations."

"Teach a lesson to new disciples?" Northson stared at her. "If it really was just a lesson, why did the need to pretend to be on par with me at the start?"

"That makes the lesson a deep one, one that you won't forget," Winterain explained. "It is to help you understand that there is a heaven beyond the heavens, and geniuses beyond geniuses! Actually, when I first joined the college, I suffered in a similar manner. This happens in each generation; every new apprentice-brother and apprentice-sister will suffer this lesson. It is meant to tamp down their pride. The elders of our College all tacitly approve of it."

Although Northson understood this principle, he was still only fourteen years old. In addition, the two Dao Debates he had just engaged in had caused him to lose two hundred black-white pellets and ten kilograms of liquefied elemental essences. Although it was just a small bet, his losses had still caused him quite a bit of heartache.

Northson clasped his hands and said, "Senior apprentice-sister, you actually gave me a veiled warning earlier. I was too rash and impetuous. However, there's no need to say too many words of reconciliation."

Swoosh! Northson, mounted on his Azure Dragon construct, departed at high speed.

"Alas." Winterain watched as Northson departed. She couldn't help but shake her head. Although she had gone to invite Northson to participate, the simple interactions she had with him had made her feel very well disposed towards this junior apprentice-brother of hers. But because this was a tradition...it wasn't appropriate for her to intervene in the Dao Debate Palace. At most, she could give a hidden warning. Fortunately, this time, he had only lost twice before giving up. If he had continued to duel, his losses would have grown increasingly dire.

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"A heaven beyond the heavens, and geniuses beyond geniuses!" Northson was seated on the rooftop of one of the houses in his estate, a jade bottle of wine in his hands. He raised his head, taking a swig.

"Cough, cough." Northson drank too quickly, and he began to cough. "In the future, I can't be too careless." Northson had slowly calmed down and regained his mental clarity. He had entered the Black-White College at the age of fourteen. Ever since he was young, he had never met a match. The

unconscious pride and arrogance he felt was what made him go spar against his fellow apprentices. He knew that the foes were very powerful, but he still felt he should be remarkable.

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Darknorth Peak. The still room. Ning was still completely absorbed by the [Lesser Five Elements Sword].

Ning was carefully meditating on the [Water Element], [Fire Element], and the wind of the [Wood Element] parts 1. These were the three aspects of the Dao which he had the deepest level of understanding about. As for metal and earth...he was lacking considerably in these two aspects. Naturally, he wouldn't squander his energy in analyzing them.

"Drizzling Rain!" Ning murmured to himself, and the sword-fingers of his right hand shot out. In midair, drops of rain began to appear out of nowhere. These raindrops struck downwards like meteors, slamming against the walls of the still room. A hazy, blurry light appeared on the walls of the room, covered with layers of mysterious runes.

"Success." A look of joy appeared on Ning's face. "This skill is even more powerful than my 'Rain Line' technique."

When developing new techniques, one could only develop techniques at the level of one's own enlightenment. But when learning, one could learn techniques that were at a higher level than one was currently at.

"Fire, water, wind. I've learned a total of seven major sword stances from these three parts. They are considerably superior to the sword techniques I developed myself, but the increase in power isn't that noticeable." Ning immediately flipped through the book in front of him, straight to the [Duality] part. "Only when these different insights regarding different Daos are merged together and unleashed in a single attack will the power of the attack increase explosively."

The [Duality] part had a total of eighty nine different sword stances! For example, there were two Duality stances formed from joining the wind and the fire. There were two others formed from joining the earth and the fire. There were yet two more from joining metal and earth.

In short, the sword techniques developed from joining together the profundities of two different Daos were all included within this part, the [Duality] part.

Joining different Daos together truly could allow for the power of a technique to increase explosively. The power could jump to a whole new level! This is what 'sword arts' were! There were some Ki Refiners who could rely on exceptionally powerful sword arts and flying sword formations to kill same-level Fiendgod Body Refiners, even if they were in possession of divine abilities.

Sword arts, when trained to an ultimate level, were not at all inferior to divine abilities!

After another hour passed...

"Swish!" Ning's right hand waved out once more, and a sword-finger shot out. Instantly, a ray of azure fire slashed through the air in the form of a fiery sword, seeming to vaguely shatter space itself. It slammed directly against the stone wall, and the glowing layer of runes atop the wall once more lit up.

“Success. The [Azureflame Duality Sword]!” A look of delight immediately appeared on Ning’s face. The [Azureflame Duality Sword] was a sword technique that contained the fusion of the True Meaning of Water and the True Meaning of Fire.

The power of this technique vastly outstripped Ning’s former supreme attack, [Drizzling Rain]. As for the [Rain Line] technique he had developed at Swallow Mountain? That couldn’t even be mentioned in the same breath. The power of this new technique was formed from joining together two completely different True Meanings of the Dao! But of course, the reason why he was able to develop it so quickly was because Ning had a high level of comprehension regarding the Dao to begin with, and his foundation was very solid. In addition, he had seen the Black-White Diagram, which had been of great help in inspiring him regarding how to join together different Daos. Naturally, he had only needed an hour in order to be successful.

This was a case of making a natural breakthrough after accumulating experience!

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As for Ning, however, without question, he was only capable of learning a very small part of the stances within; the sword technique formed from the fusion of wind, water, and fire. But there were a total of eight stances for this type of [Tripartite] sword attack.

It was dark. Only now did Ning leave the still room, jubilant. “I spent ten-plus years at Swallow Mountain, then comprehended the Dao within the Stellar Hall of the underwater estate...but I’ve never been able to acquire a truly powerful sword art. Now that I have obtained the [Lesser Five Elements Sword], I really am like a tiger who has gained wings.” Ning laughed with delight and glee. He truly felt wonderful. This feeling of learning a truly powerful sword art really was wonderful!

The [Tripartite Lotus Sword], compared to Ning’s Waterflame Lotus, was like a different melody that was played with the same level of skill; they were two different approaches that led to the same result. However, it was actually even more profound and sharp! This was because Ning had only developed it after comparing the similarities between the two techniques.

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In a single short day, as a Ki Refiner, he had risen from the early Zifu level to the peak Zifu level. His sword arts had consecutively risen by three complete tiers. After having learned a powerful technique from the [Lesser Five Elements Sword], the [Tripartite Lotus Sword], he had reached a limit. This caused Ning to naturally feel an incomparable joy in his heart.

“Ning, son.” The Whitewater Hound was walking over from far away. He sent mentally, “There is another formal disciple of the Black-White College within your estate who has come to pay you a visit. He has waited for a very long time.”

“A formal disciple? Here to see me?” Ning was surprised. He hurriedly walked towards the door; he couldn’t slight his fellow disciples.

He soon walked out and saw, from afar, an azure-robed man who was standing leisurely with his hands clasped, staring at the crescent moon in the sky. The man seemed to sense Ning’s footsteps, and he immediately turned to look, a smile appearing on his face. “Junior apprentice-brother Darknorth.”

“Might I ask who you are, senior apprentice-brother?” Upon seeing this person, Ning immediately knew that he was a fellow disciple, because he had met this person in the Headmaster’s Palace.

“My name is Bu Ying.” The azure-robed, long-haired man laughed. “My Daoist title is Hawkfish.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Bu, why have you come here?” Ning asked. The azure-robed man laughed loudly. “I saw how talented you appeared at the Headmaster’s Palace, junior apprentice-brother Darknorth, and then I saw you be accepted by Immortal Diancai as an apprentice...I imagine that you must be extraordinary, and so some of our fellow disciples wish to have a sparring competition with you.”

“Competition?” Ning had a sudden thought. “A spar at the Dao Debate Palace?”

The azure-robed man laughed. “Right, the Dao Debate Palace. To engage in a discussion on the Dao at the Dao Debate Palace is a superb affair.”

Ning was intrigued. The black-and-white book he had read had discussed the Dao Debate Palace; there was no danger at all in sparring within the Dao Debate Palace, and the disciples of the Black-White College all delighted in sparring there.

However...because he had read the intelligence report Northmont Baiwei had given him, Ning knew that the Black-White College had a certain tradition where some of the new disciples would be taught a lesson and made to suffer a loss at the Dao Debate Palace. In addition, the old disciples loved to watch this happen. The first reason was to help these newer disciples wake up and temper their pride. The second reason? They, too, had suffered this in the past.

“Very well.” Ning’s eyes lit up, and he laughed, “I, too, would deeply desire to spar against my fellow disciples.”

“Hahaha.” The azure-haired man, Bu Ying, began to laugh. “Let’s go. Let’s go to the Dao Debate Palace.” The two immediately mounted on their magic treasures and soared into the skies, heading towards the Dao Debate Palace.

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Ji Ning and Bu Ying were flying through the night sky. Suddenly, a ray of light shot towards them from the ground below. “Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” A white-robed youth, mounted on an Azure Dragon construct, came to greet them.

“Junior apprentice-brother Northson?” Ning was surprised. Northson was reeking of wine. What Ning didn’t understand...was that just before this, Northson had been drinking wine on the roof of his estate. When he saw Ning and Ying soar past, he had flown into the air as well.

Northson said frantically, “Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, have you been invited to go to the Dao Debate Palace...”

“Junior apprentice-brother Twinwood!” The azure-robed Bu Ying frowned. But Northson continued frantically, “Don’t believe them. They are going to intentionally deceive you to make you lose black-white pellets and liquefied elemental essence to them. I lost to them; don’t be deceived by them as well.” Northson was clearly quite frantic, afraid that Ning would suffer in the same way he had.

The azure-robed man, Bu Ying, barked at him, “Junior apprentice-brother Twinwood, there are always some small stakes when one engages in a duel in the Dao Debate Palace. For someone to win, someone must lose. Can it be that you think things are only fair when you win? If everyone has to be a winner, then there’s no point to even going to the Dao Debate Palace.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Ning.” Northson was extremely nervous. “Junior apprentice-brother Northson,” Ning said reassuringly, “No need to say anything more. I know what is going on. If I lose, I can’t blame anyone else. However, I, Ji Ning, still have a certain degree of confidence in my heart.”

Northson was frantic. “Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you...!”

“Let’s go.” Ning, who had read the intelligence report long ago, actually knew exactly what was going on.

“I’m going with you,” Northson immediately said. In his heart, he thought to himself that if he were by Ning’s side, he could at least try to help persuade Ning and ensure Ning didn’t lose too much.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The three flew towards the Dao Debate Palace at high speed. Soon, the towering Dao Debate Palace could be seen at the top of the mountain peak, shrouded by the night sky. Ning’s group of three charged downwards, moving towards the Dao Debate Palace.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 30: The Battle at the Dao Debate Palace

Ji Ning’s group of three landed at the gates to the Dao Debate Palace. As they looked inwards, they saw that although it was night, the insides of the Dao Debate Palace were brightly lit, and the sound of calm laughter rang out from within.

“Senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus, I’ll accept these hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.” The speaker was a white-robed man, who had a blood-drop pattern atop his white robes. It was Bloodrinker Bladask. Bladask had a hint of delight on his face; clearly, he was quite happy at having won a victory in the Dao Debate.

In front of him, seated in the lotus position, was a long-haired maiden dressed in water-blue robes. She arose and flew over, landing nearby and shaking her head. “Three years ago, I was able to beat you by a hair, junior apprentice-brother Bladask. I didn’t expect that this time, I’d be defeated by you.”

“Your junior apprentice-brother had to work very hard to just barely eke out a victory.” Bladask, normally quite prideful, was currently quite humble.

“Senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus, when sparring, it’s all about that hint of a chance at victory. You and junior apprentice-brother Bladask are comparable; only, junior apprentice-brother Bladask’s attacks are just a hair sharper than yours.”

“Senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus...” The various men and women were chatting amongst themselves. At this moment, Ji Ning, Mu Northson, and Bu Ying entered the Dao Debate Hall, and they all turned to look towards them.

“Ninelotus?” Ning’s gaze instantly turned towards that woman who had been referred to everyone as ‘Ninelotus’. She was dressed in casual, water-blue robes, and had long, black hair. Although her face could be considered beautiful, she was slightly less attractive than even Meng Xin. Only, this senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus had a certain graceful aura about her. She was like a fairy lotus, causing the fellow male disciples around her to unconsciously be drawn to her.

“Given her aura and demeanor, I imagine she must have an extraordinary background,” Ning mused to himself.

“Senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus.” Upon seeing Ninelotus, Bu Ying’s voice went slightly higher. A smile on his face, he hurriedly said, “These two are the new disciples that just joined our Black-White College. This is Mu Northson, and this is Ji Ning.”

Ninelotus turned her gaze towards them, a hint of a smile on her lips. “I heard that during the day, junior apprentice-brother Mu Northson was defeated twice while sparring here at the Dao Debate Palace, and was so angry that he left.”

Northson was rather bashful to begin with. A hint of awkwardness immediately appeared on his face. “That’s only because he just entered the school, and has never before suffered a setback like that,” Ning spoke out.

Ninelotus looked towards Ning. “So you are Ji Ning, who Patriarch Diancai took on as his senior apprentice.” Ning nodded. “I am.”

The nearby Pu Yinig hurriedly said, “Junior apprentice-brother Darknorth, you are the disciple of Immortal Diancai. Senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus, however, is the disciple of Immortal Fivecraze.”

“The disciple of Immortal Fivecraze?” Ning was surprised. “I just arrived back at the College tonight, and so I wasn’t able to attend the grand ceremony earlier,” Ninelotus said softly. “Now that you’ve arrived, junior apprentice-brother, are you willing to begin a Dao Debate?”

Laughing, Ning nodded. “I would very much like to spar against my senior fellow disciples.” Ninelotus laughed. “Then you have to be careful. I just lost a round myself, just now.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning!” A cold voice rang out. Ning turned to look. The speaker was the white-robed Bloodrinker Bladask. Bladask’s purpose for coming was to defeat Ning, and thus vent the anger in his heart. He hadn’t expected to encounter Ninelotus, whom he had always admired very much. He had gone all out to defeat Ninelotus, in the hopes that this senior apprentice-sister would remember him in the future. Who would have imagined that after Ning arrived, he would immediately get into such an involved conversation with senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus.

“Senior apprentice-brother Bladask,” Ning laughed. Bladask responded in a cold voice, “Do you remember our battle at the cave?” Ning nodded. “I do. That time, I wished to tell you my name, but you, senior apprentice-brother Bladask, refused to let me do so. You said that we’d never meet again.”

The look on Bladask’s face changed as he heard this. Ning laughed and continued, “I didn’t even tell you my name, but it appears you already know it, senior apprentice-brother. Might I ask why you are calling for me?”

Bladask's gaze was filled with a cold light. "Dare you go onto the dais and debate the Dao with me?" Ning turned his head to look towards the giant Dao Debate Palace. "Go onto the dais and debate the Dao?" The giant palace was quite similar to a giant dining room from his past life. There were quite a few seats nearby, and in the center, there was an enormous battle arena. At the same time, at each side of the arena, there was a tall stone pillar. The Dao debaters would seat themselves atop the stone pillars and rely on golems to engage in a battle!

Ninelotus, standing to the side, said, "Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you must be careful. The person I just lost to was junior apprentice-brother Bladask." Bladask, hearing this, felt all the more jealous, and the cold light in his eyes grew increasingly sharp. "Dare you, or dare you not?"

"I've come here precisely to spar with my fellow disciples. Why wouldn't I dare?" Ning shook his head and laughed. "It's just a hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquefied elemental essence."

"Haha, a hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquefied elemental essence is just the smallest wager possible." Bladask laughed coldly. "Black-white pellets are gifted to us by the College and are extremely rare. I'm willing to wager fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. Do you dare accept?"

Ning frowned. Bladask continued in his cold voice, "Oh, right. As a new disciple, you only have fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. I imagine that you probably wouldn't be able to produce so much, junior apprentice-brother." As he spoke, he waved his hand and produced an insignia. "This is an elemental mark from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. It represents a thousand taels of liquefied elemental essence, which is to say, fifty kilograms. If you take it to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, you can trade it for fifty kilograms!"

"Dare you accept my wager?" Bladask looked towards Ning.

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The atmosphere instantly turned stiff. The other disciples immediately understood that there was something not quite right between Bladask and Ning. Previously, when they had battled Northson, they had only made the smallest of wagers; after all, nobody wanted to generate enmity and strife amongst their fellow disciples. For Bladask to increase the wager was a clear sign that he wanted to mistreat Ning.

If a new disciple were forced to take out fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, wouldn't that mean they wouldn't have anything to train with?

But of course, they had no idea....that although Bladask originally did want to fight against Ning, he hadn't planned on being so nasty. Only, he had noticed how engaged Ninelotus had been in her conversation with Ning. Ninelotus normally would say just a few meaningless phrases to him when he spoke to her, but towards Ning, she voluntarily spoke out to him. This made Bladask feel quite mistreated.

"How am I inferior to this Ji Ning? Why is it that senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus seems to treat him differently, from the very moment they met each other? In terms of treasures, family heritage, power, or clan, this Ji Ning is inferior to me!" The look in Bladask's eyes grew still colder.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning,” Ninelotus said. “You just joined the school. Let me lend you fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.” When he heard these words, the angry aura emanating from Bladask grew only more terrifying.

But Ning only laughed. “No need. Since senior apprentice-brother Bladask wishes to wager fifty kilograms, then I will accept.” Ning waved his hand, and several insignias appeared as well. “These are elemental marks of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. They can be traded for a thousand taels as well.”

“Eh?” “Elemental marks of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain?” All of them stared at the elemental marks. Bladask had entered the school long ago, and had gone adventuring in the outside world; it was normal for him to have acquired some treasures and traded them to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain for elemental marks! But Ji Ning had just entered the school, and yet he was able to casually bring out a thousand taels as well...this was quite extraordinary. What none of them realized was that Ning had won these marks at the duel at the Carefree Caverns.

Although news regarding the battle at the Carefree Caverns had spread out, these disciples of the Black-White College knew very little about it. Of the Primal Daoists, only Wu Xiu knew a bit more about these matters.

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“A hundred black-white pellets and fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essences.” An old voice rang out. A white-haired old man who stood at the side of the Dao Debate Palace had spoken out. “Since you both accept, then let this be the wager.”

“Now, I’m going to ask the two disciples to each select their golem.” The white-haired elder continued to speak. He was a golem as well; he was responsible for some of the matters here in the Dao Debate Palace.

Ning and Bladask both immediately headed towards a side door; there were many golems placed within this side door to the Dao Debate Palace.

They entered a small hall. The white-haired elder pointed to the many golems; there were at least hundreds of them present. These golems were black, and looked like stone sculptures. “These golems have identical elemental ki cores. The energy they release will all be at the early Wanxiang Adept level. That way, those reincarnated Immortals who are within our school who are in possession of a divine sense won’t be able to use it to influence the battle significantly.”

Ning nodded. Divine sense was slightly superior to peak Zifu level power, but roughly the same as the early Wanxiang level. Even if it was used to control weapons, it wouldn’t impact the battle too much.

“These golems all come with their own weapons,” the white-haired elder continued. “They include flying swords, flying needles, giant warhammers...in short, all types of magic treasures are present! Choose a golem based on the type of weapon you prefer.”

Bladask was very quick to make his choice. He immediately walked towards a golem, placing it on the golem’s body and quickly binding it.

“I’ll go now. You can take your time in choosing.” Bladask gave Ning a glance, then immediately left. As for that golem, it transformed into a blur as it followed after him.

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The spectating disciples within the Dao Debate Palace, Northson and Ninelotus included, numbered eight.

“The wager is actually this large. A hundred black-white pellets is one thing, but fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence! Junior apprentice-brother Bladask is going a bit too far. Hazing the new disciples is one thing, but you can’t do it like this.”

“It is a bit much, I agree.” The fellow disciples were all chatting amongst themselves. Right at this moment, Bladask walked back from the side door, then leapt directly forward by more than three hundred meters before landing atop a stone pillar that was thirty meters tall. He took a seat atop the stone pillar. Swoosh! That golem also leapt up and landed within the battle arena, then quietly waited there.

“He chose the Polaris Golem.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Bladask really is being quite vicious; he actually chose the Polaris Golem which he is the most proficient with.”

“I wonder which golem junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning will choose.”

There were no differences in quality in the golems; the only question was whether or not one was accustomed to using them. If, for example, Ning were to choose a golem that used a giant warhammer, he wouldn’t be able to unleash much of his power.

“He’s coming out.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning is coming out.” They all looked over. Northson’s eyes were filled with worry. As for Ninelotus, she stared carefully at Ning, her eyes filled with curiosity.

Ning walked out, a golem following him. Swoosh! Swoosh! Ning and the golem, in quick succession, leapt up then landed; Ning landed atop a stone pillar, sitting down, while the golem landed in the battle arena below, causing the arena to shudder slightly.

The two sat on their stone pillars, staring at each other from afar. Ning and Bladask’s gazes crossed. They were roughly three hundred meters away from each other. The golems below them were roughly three hundred meters away from each other as well.

“Begin!” The white-haired old man barked.

Rumble...instantly, a barrier of clear water immediately appeared. It was an enormous, barrier-type grand sealing formation that completely sealed the entire arena. Northson and the others were all outside of it, while Ning and Bladask were within it.

“The Thousandwords Golem!” Bladask, seated in the lotus position on the distant stone pillar, gave it a glance, then snorted coldly. “He doesn’t know his own limits.”

“I’d like to ask you for some guidance, senior apprentice-brother,” Ning called out in a high voice.

“Please.” Bladask shouted back.

The surrounding disciples all watched with bated breath. The newcomer who had been accepted by Immortal Diancai as his disciple, Ji Ning. Senior apprentice-brother Bladask, who had entered the school many years ago. Which of the two was the stronger?

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Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 31: Shock and Awe (part 1)

“Win. Win. Win.” Mu Northson stood outside the grand sealing formation, staring towards Ji Ning, who was seated on that distant stone pillar. His eyes were blazing with hope. “You have to win.” Prior to this, he had lost two rounds in a row. In his heart, he viewed himself and Ning as standing on the same side; they were both new disciples.

As for those old disciples, they were simply teaching the new disciples a lesson in accordance with that ‘tradition’. He lost; naturally, he now hoped that Ning would win a round and gain a bit of face for them, the two new students. In addition, this Bloodrinker Bladask had gone too far in making the wagers so large.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning is in for it now.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Bladask really did set a high wager. He showed no mercy at all.”

The old disciples were all chatting amongst themselves. But as for Ninelotus, she stood there, staring carefully at Ning, who was within the grand sealing formation. She said softly, “My fellow disciples, it’s too early to say such things. It’s hard to say who will win; junior apprentice-brother Bladask or junior apprentice-brother Darknorth.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Bladask entered the school many years ago. Can it be that he is inferior to Ji Ning?”

“Senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus, it isn’t very likely that Ji Ning will be able to win.”

All of the disciples present, Northson included, felt surprised at the words of Ninelotus. After all, Ninelotus, logically speaking, should be on the side of the old disciples.

“Just watch.” Ninelotus still had that calm smile on her face.

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Bladask sat there atop his stone pillar in the lotus position. He noticed that Ninelotus, standing outside the sealing formation, was paying more attention to Ning. This caused his gaze to grow ever-colder.

“Once the protective surface armor of the golems you two are controlling has been broken, that means that you have lost.” The white-haired elder watched from afar while speaking out. Ning nodded lightly.

The golems were representations of themselves. Breaking through the golem’s armor, in a real battle, was something comparable to truly killing the enemy! Naturally, that represented defeat.

“Since you know the rules, then...begin!” The white-haired elder called out. Within the vast, empty space inside the sealing formation, the two golems simultaneously began to move. Ning controlled the Thousandword Golem, while Bladask controlled the Polaris Golem.

“Swish!” “Swish!” The two golems retreated at the same time, pulling away from each other. Neither of them wished for their golems to be too close, because once their protective armor was breached, that would mean they had lost.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning! Watch out for this!” Bladask, seated on that distant stone pillar, let out a loud shout. Immediately afterwards, he began to control his Polaris Golem, which had seven flying swords on its back. A savage, baleful aura filled one of the flying swords which instantly shot out, filling the entire area nearby with a dense, bloody light.

“Ursae Majoris Warbreaker!”

“As soon as junior apprentice-brother Bladask attacked, he immediately used the Ursae Majoris Warbreaker. He really is filled with a killing intent right now.” The spectating disciples in the distance were all stunned.

The flying sword slashed through the skies, and as they did so, it was like an iron-blooded army was marching forth. A series of bloody lights flashed, and even the vague sounds of slaughter and warcries could be heard. They struck directly towards Ning’s Thousandwords Golem.

“He really does have quite a bit of a killing intent.” Ning sat there in the lotus position on his stone pillar. Seeing this, he just let out a soft laugh. “Let me extinguish that killing intent of his. Go.”

Clang!

One of the countless tiny swords on the back of the Thousandwords Golem instantly flew out. When it flew out, it was only the size of a sewing needle, but soon it expanded to the size of a palm. The flashing sword flew out...and as it did, the entire area became filled with flowing water, with the flashing sword light submerged within the water.

“Break!” Bladask’s face sank. That flying sword of his, filled with a boundless killing intent, didn’t give way in the slightest. It struck directly towards the flowing water. This Ursae Majoris sword...what it needed was its imposing manner! It couldn’t lose that!

The flying sword struck directly towards the flood of water. Splash! The flowing water was blasted apart, but the water then swirled and reformed around the flying sword, once more entrapping it. As the saying goes, one can swing a blade at water, but the water will still flow; even a blade that had been tempered a hundred times, when faced with this sword light that flowed with endless water, would become as weak as a finger.

The first blow was filled with energy. The second was weaker. By the third, there was nothing left. “Not good.” Bladask’s face changed slightly. He knew that Ning had blocked him with but a single flying sword.

“Formidable.”

“He used just a single flying sword to block junior apprentice-brother Bladask’s Ursae Majoris Warbreaker sword attack. I imagine that junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning isn’t much weaker than junior apprentice-brother Bladask.”

The azure-robed man, Bu Ying, said with a frown, “This is the ‘Flowing Water Sword’ of the [Lesser Five Elements Sword].”

“[Lesser Five Elements Sword]? Are you sure about that, senior apprentice-brother Ying?” The others all looked towards Bu Ying, puzzlement on their faces. They had all heard of the famous [Lesser Five Elements Sword], but they didn’t focus on swordplay...naturally, they didn’t understand the sword stances of the [Lesser Five Elements Sword] very well.

Bu Ying nodded. “I’m sure. I’ve meditated on the [Lesser Five Elements Sword] before. This technique is the ‘Flowing Water Sword’ technique within it. I didn’t expect that although junior apprentice-brother Darknorth has just entered our school, he has already begin to gain insights into the [Lesser Five Elements Sword].”

Ninelotus just listened, smiling gently as she watched the battle.

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Bladask couldn’t hear the conversation going on outside, but he could guess at it. Both sides had used just a single flying sword, but Ning had actually blocked him. How could he not feel humiliated? After all, he had joined the school many years ago.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, receive my Polaris Direwolf Skyripper!” Bladask let out an angry roar. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The other six flying swords on the back of the Polaris Golem all flew out at the same time. The first flying sword flew back as well, and the seven flying swords instantly formed into a Polaris Sword Formation. Rumble...in midair, one enormous star after another began to appear. The seven giant stars formed into the shape of the Big Dipper, and then a flashing sword light began to expand rapidly.

“Howwwwwwwwwl!” At the core of this sword light, an enormous black wolf phantom actually appeared out of nowhere. The Direwolf raised its head, letting out an angry howl. And then, still howling, it charged straight towards Ning. It looked as though the Direwolf was bounding towards Ning, but in reality, those seven flying swords were launching a simultaneous attack.

“Go!” Ning’s cold voice rang out. Eight more flying swords flew out from the back of the Thousandwords Golem. Along with the first flying sword, they instantly joined together into a simple ‘Nine Palaces Sword Formation’. Ning had acquired the ‘Nine Yang Sword Formation’ in the underwater estate, and this formation contained quite a few profound mysteries as well. Although it wasn’t as complicated as the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], it was still extraordinary.

Ning had quite a bit of ability with regards to formations, and this ‘Nine Palaces Sword Formation’ was quite an excellent one as well.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Nine rays of sword light howled through the air, leaping forward to greet the giant, advancing Direwolf. As they flew over, the light of the nine swords suddenly flashed, then transformed into more than a hundred densely clustered sword shadows. These hundred-plus sword shadows then quickly transformed into drops of rain, and it was as though a hundred-plus meteors of rain were pummeling into the Direwolf.

Smash! Smash! Smash! Smash! Smash! Smash! The hundred-plus meteors of rain smashed downwards, every single drop containing awe-inspiring power.

“Not good.” Outside the formation, the azure-robed Bu Ying leapt to his feet, his eyes filled with astonishment. “How could he have...”

Every single drop of rainwater contained awesome power. Rumble...the unceasingly destructive strikes actually completely smashed apart that baleful, heaven-menacing Direwolf, and it also blasted apart those seven flying swords.

“How can this be?” Bladask, who was seated on the stone pillar, controlling everything, had a completely different look on his face now.

“Swish!” Immediately after disintegrating the Direwolf phantom, several flying swords continued to charge forward, not weakening in the slightest. Howling through the air, they instantly struck against the body of that Polaris Golem. BANG! They slashed straight through it, and the black, rocky exterior of the Polaris Golem was instantly split open, revealing the fiery red body of the golem within.

“Ji Ning wins!” The distant, white-robe elder immediately called out in a high voice.

As for Bladask, his face instantly turned completely ashen.

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Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 32: Shock and Awe (part 2)

“Lost. I lost. How could...” Bloodrinker Bladask sat there atop the stone dais, his face ashen. He couldn’t believe what had just happened.

When Immortal cultivators engaged in a battle, life and death was separated by a hair. If they lost a single exchange, they could die.

“He used a golem. I also used a golem.” Bladask simply couldn’t accept this. “The two golems have identical elemental ki cores, and the same amount of elemental ki. It is an extremely fair situation; what we compete in is our comprehension of the Dao, our sword arts, and other skills. How could his sword arts actually be even more powerful than mine?”

How could he have known that Ning had actually reached the Dao Domain level long ago? The Dao Domain level was, normally speaking, the level which Primal Daoists were at. But of course, at the Black-White College, everyone was a supreme genius, and so there were many powerful Wanxiang Adepts who were at the Dao Domain level. Bladask, however, was still a hair away from being able to reach the Dao Domain level.

Through his swordplay, he could just barely touch the Dao Domain level. This was much like how, when Ning was young, when executing the [Raindrop Sword], he was able to unleash the power of being ‘one with the world’ with his sword attacks, even though he himself had not yet reached that level. This was one of the strengths of possessing powerful sword arts!

In terms of comprehension, Ning was at a higher level. In terms of sword arts, after having been doubly baptized by the Stellar Hall of the underwater estate and the Black-White Diagram, and after having meditated on the [Lesser Five Elements Sword], Ning’s sword arts had reached a limit.

In terms of soul, Ning was at the 'divine sense' level. Even amongst the Wanxiang Adepts of the Black-White College, only those reincarnated Immortals, so few they could be counted on one hand, were comparable to Ning.

In every single field, he was inferior. How could he not have lost?

"Senior apprentice-brother Bladask, I was lucky enough to win by one stroke." Ning rose to his feet with a laugh, and the grand sealing formation around them disappeared. With a tap of his feet, Ning flew out of the arena, landing in the distance.

Bladask had an ugly look on his face. He flew out of the arena as well. He walked straight towards Ning, and with a wave of his hand, produced two jade bottles which he tossed to Ning. "A hundred black-white pellets and fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. Take it."

Ning naturally stretched his hand out to accept them. "Hmph. Ji Ning." Bladask stared at Ning, his eyes filled with a desire for battle. "No wonder Immortal Diancai accepted you as his disciple. I have nothing to say about my defeat. Next time, however...I will challenge you again."

"I will wait for you." Ning laughed. If someone wanted to deliver more black-white pellets and liquefied elemental essence to him, why would he refuse? "Hmph." Bladask immediately walked towards Bu Ying. "Senior apprentice-brother Ying!"

The azure-robed man, Bu Ying, gave him a glance. "Don't worry. Leave it to me." This time, it was Ying who had set up and arranged for the new disciples to be taught a lesson, and he had also been the one to personally invite Bladask over. Clearly, now that Bladask had lost, no matter what, he, Bu Ying, couldn't just let Ning leave victoriously.

Bu Ying's gaze fell towards his fellow disciples nearby.

"Formidable."

"Junior apprentice-brother Darknorth's power truly cannot be underestimated." This geniuses all had looks of caution in their eyes. From watching Ning's attacks just now, they sensed that Ning's power was definitely not lower than theirs. Without a certain degree of confidence, they naturally wouldn't be willing to proceed."

"Senior apprentice-brother Ying."

"Senior apprentice-brother Ying, you are the only person who can succeed."

"Right, senior apprentice-brother Ying, you have also trained in the [Lesser Five Elements Sword], and the time you have spent training in it is longer. Your chances of winning are greater." Everyone was saying this.

Bu Ying cursed to himself. So what if he trained in it for longer? Training in sword arts wasn't a matter of time; it was a matter of how much one understood regarding the Dao. An Immortal training in the [Lesser Five Elements Sword] for the first time would, in half a day, train to an extremely high level in it.

But Ying also knew...that since he was the instigator of this event, no matter what, he had to get involved. One had to be able to bear responsibility for one's actions.

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Ji Ning had immediately won with his attack; this had caused Mu Northson to be incomparably excited. "Well fought! Let those old disciples know that they can't just teach lessons to every new disciple as they please."

Ning laughed. Winning was quite enjoyable. In addition, a hundred black-white pellets and fifty kilograms of liquefied elemental essence was his, just like that. Previously, when he had advanced from the early Zifu level to the peak Zifu level, he had used less than forty kilograms of it.

"Junior apprentice-brother Darknorth." Bu Ying emerged from the group of old disciples. "Senior apprentice-brother Ying," Ning responded.

"Junior apprentice-brother Darknorth, your power truly is formidable. I didn't expect that shortly after joining our school, you would have already reached such a level in your understanding of the [Lesser Five Elements Sword]. I imagine that your insights into the Dao are at a very high level," Bu Ying said..

Ning knew that his opponent wanted to gain some intelligence about him. He immediately laughed and said, "I just gained some initial insights into it, and have much to learn." Bu Ying laughed loudly. "You are being too modest, junior apprentice-brother. I, your senior apprentice-brother, also train in the [Lesser Five Elements Sword]. As I watched you execute your sword arts...I couldn't help but feel my hands itch. What say you and I spar for a bit?"

"Oh, this is what I wish for as well!" Ning immediately said. Someone was delivering more gifts to him? Why wouldn't he want it?

Based on Ning's calculations, especially given how strong his soul was, he felt that he should hold a major advantage over the other. There were probably not many Zifu Disciples who could match him, unless a reincarnated Immortal emerged to battle.

"What is the wager?" Ning asked. Bu Ying laughed. "Naturally, just a hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. Overly large wagers will hurt the camaraderie amongst us fellow disciples." Ning nodded. "Alright."

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Moments later. Ning and Bu Ying were each seated in the lotus position atop their stone pillars. "Begin," the white-haired elder barked. Instantly, the grand sealing formation once again appeared.

"The golem which I have chosen is known as the Six Harmonies Golem." Senior apprentice-brother Ying's voice rang out. "Be careful, junior apprentice-brother."

"Senior apprentice-brother. Please proceed." Ning's voice rang out as well.

The two sat on opposing stone pillars, staring at each other. The two golems below stared at each other as well.

"Kill!" Previously, Bu Ying had a smiling look on his face, but his face now turned solemn as he let out a low growl. Instantly, the Six Harmonies Golem simultaneously shot out thirty-six flying swords, every single one of them covered with unique runes. The reason why this golem was named the Six Harmonies Golem was precisely because it was capable of executing this 'Six Harmonies Formation'.

Ning, seeing this, frowned. "Go!" Twelve flying swords emerged from the back of the Thousandwords Golem. These twelve flying swords hissed as they slashed through the air, transforming into a dense layer of rain, each containing inexhaustible amounts of power.

Rumble...

The thirty-six flying swords swiveled as they flew, six of each forming into a formation base, with the six bases forming the Six Harmonies Formation. In addition, the entire formation transformed into a giant windmill.

"Rumble..." The power of it crushed downwards.

Crash crash crash....

The countless droplets of rain smashed viciously against that giant windmill, but the thirty-six flying swords of the windmill swiveled about, easily dissipating the smashing power.

"Can't block it. This Bu Ying truly is much more formidable than Bladask; fortunately, I was prepared long ago." Ning's face changed, and a fierce look flashed through his eyes. The twelve flying swords under his control suddenly separated into two parts. One part spun in a circle in midair, while the other formed a cross.

Whoosh! The twelve flying swords merged with each other, transforming into an azure, flaming sword. BOOM! The giant, azure flaming sword pierced directly through the windmill. The windmill was only able to take it for a brief moment before crumbling.

"[Duality Azureflame Sword]!" Bu Ying, seated there on the pillar, saw this. His face turned ashen, and then he let out a sigh. He didn't even try to fight back, allowing Ning's azure, flaming sword to pierce directly through the protective layer of his golem.

"Ji Ning wins!" The white-haired elder once more called out in a high voice.

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The Dao Debate Palace was a hubbub of noise right now. Bu Ying was definitely an outstanding figure amongst the Zifu Disciples of the Black-White College, and could be considered one of the movers and shakers. In terms of power, he was far superior to Bladask. And yet, even he had been defeated by this new disciple who had just joined the Black-White College?

"They are all supreme geniuses...but this Ji Ning is an absolute monster." Ninelotus watched everything happen, and she murmured in her heart, "He reached the Dao Domain level at merely sixteen years of age? And his soul has supposedly reached the divine sense level...he's absolutely a monster, like those reincarnated Immortals."

"To lose to a monster like him...their defeats are nothing to be ashamed of."

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Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 33: Two Major Factions

With a thought, Ning removed his binding from the Thousandwords Golem, then leapt three hundred meters and landed outside the battle arena. He secretly sighed to himself, "Although I have reached the

Dao Domain level, and my soul is at the 'divine sense' level...if I hadn't meditated on the [Lesser Five Elements Sword] and increased the power of my sword arts, it would be hard to say if I would have won, or this Bu Ying would have won."

His foundations were exceptionally stable, at the level of a reincarnated Immortal. However, prior to joining the Black-White College, his sword arts had been very weak; only after learning the [Lesser Five Elements Sword] had he been able to address this shortcoming.

If he hadn't learned it, he would have had to rely on the power of his soul and controlled even more flying swords to achieve victory through numbers.

Swoosh! Bu Ying landed next to Ning as well. "Senior apprentice-brother Bu Ying," Ning greeted him modestly.

Bu Ying sighed. "No wonder Immortal Diancai accepted you as his disciple, junior apprentice-brother Darknorth. I whole-heartedly acknowledge my loss. You were able to simultaneously control twelve flying swords and execute the 'Drizzling Rain' technique. Your level of insight is very high, and your soul is powerful; all of these things inspire admiration in me. In addition, junior apprentice-brother, you were even able to execute the [Duality Azureflame Sword]...I have nothing to say about my loss."

"Here are a hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquefied elemental essence." Bu Ying tossed two bottles to Ning, who accepted them. "However, junior apprentice-brother, you've now defeated both Bladask and myself." Bu Ying looked towards Ning. "Make your preparations. This matter will not conclude here." After speaking, Bu Ying began to walk towards the outside.

"It won't conclude here?" Ning frowned, then followed him outside.

"Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning." Northson excitedly ran over. It was as though he was even more excited than Ning by Ning's victory. "That was too incredible. And to think those old disciples wanted to teach us new disciples a lesson. Hahaha! They've lost two rounds in a row now. This time, the old disciples really did lose face."

Ning laughed. "It was nothing more than a spar." Northson disagreed. "No, this was about face. This year, there are only two new disciples, you and me. Now that you've won, senior apprentice-brother, as your junior apprentice-brother, I've gained face as well."

While chatting, the two moved to the outside. As for the old disciples, none of them, including Bu Ying, Winterain, and Bladask, moved to speak to Ning. The atmosphere was clearly rather awkward. The only person to move closer to him was Ninelotus.

"Senior apprentice-sister." Ning felt his heart clench. Ninelotus truly was a naturally mesmerizing figure. In terms of appearance, she could be described as a peerless beauty; of all the beauties Ning had ever seen, she was second only to Meng Xin. But in terms of grace and aura, she was unquestionably number one.

"Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning." Ninelotus' voice was very soft and gentle. "You must be careful. You won two rounds in a row. The old disciples won't just let things slide like this. No matter what, the traditions of our Black-White College will not be broken just for you. When you go back, you need to make your preparations."

Ning's pupils contracted slightly. He nodded. "I, Ji Ning, have always looked forward to the opportunity to spar with my fellow disciples." Ninelotus nodded as well, then departed.

Ning glanced at the other old disciples. However, given that even Bu Ying had been defeated, none of the others felt any confidence in being able to win, and so they naturally didn't say a word.

"Let's go." Ning immediately led Northson away, and the two left the Dao Debate Palace. Swoosh! The two quickly disappeared into the night sky.

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They watched as Ning and Northson left. Only now did the old disciples within the Dao Debate Palace begin to speak amongst themselves.

"We actually lost two battles in a row!" A tall, skinny youth said in a hoarse voice, "We old disciples are meant to teach a lesson to the newer disciples, to let them understand the principle that there is a heaven beyond the heavens, and geniuses beyond geniuses. This is a tradition of our Black-White College that has lasted for countless years! All of us are old disciples who joined years ago. No matter what, we can't just admit defeat like this!"

"Right. If we admit defeat, then that means that we old disciples are admitting inferiority to the newer disciples." Even Winterain nodded as well. The old disciples all nodded. This was a tradition!

The old disciples were to teach the new disciples a lesson. These old disciples had joined many years ago, and although some of the weaker ones amongst them would occasionally lose to a new disciple, the stronger ones amongst the old disciples would gain a victory back in turn! If they weren't able to do so...didn't that mean that every single one of them was inferior to the new disciples?

"From ancient times to modern times, there has never been anyone capable of forcing the old disciples of the Black-White College to admit defeat. Not even reincarnated Immortals!" Bu Ying nodded solemnly as he spoke. "I will go ask junior apprentice-brother Qinghe." After speaking, Bu Ying left the Dao Debate Palace.

"Let's go!" The old disciples all departed from the Dao Debate Palace, transforming into streaks of light and disappearing into the sky.

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The disciples of the Black-White College were divided into three generations. The third generation consisted of Zifu Disciples and Wanxiang Adepts. Amongst the Zifu Disciples...the most outstanding and dazzlingly strong one was Qinghe.

Qinghe entered the school at eighteen years of age, and had also reached the Dao Domain level. Given his current level of insight, he could easily reach the Wanxiang Adept level, but he needed to further solidify his foundation. Only with a sufficiently stable foundation would the Zifu Lake within his body truly expand to the limit, allowing his future potential to be greater.

Late night.

“Junior apprentice-brother Qinghe, junior apprentice-brother Qinghe.” Bu Ying charged into the skies above a towering mountain, then immediately began to shout, his voice echoing within the entire estate.

The Zifu Disciple retainers and the commoner servants in the estate below all began to react.

“Senior apprentice-brother Bu Ying, why have you come to speak to me so late at night?” A figure suddenly emerged from the courtyard, head upraised and staring towards Bu Ying, who stood there in the night sky. Bu Ying immediately landed within the courtyard.

“I’ve come here this late at night to inform you about something, junior apprentice-brother.” Bu Ying shook his head and sighed. “I’m ashamed to even say this. Each year, the new disciples of our Black-White College will go to the Dao Debate Palace and be taught a lesson by us old disciples. In the past, the two of us experienced this as well.”

Qinghe laughed and nodded. “Right. The old disciples have all been in the school for many years. Naturally, they will win.”

“Except, we lost.” Bu Ying shook his head. “Just now, several of us old disciples were at the Dao Debate Palace, sparring with the new disciples, Ji Ning and Mu Northson. We defeated Northson twice in a row...but afterwards, when we sparred with Ji Ning, we were defeated by him twice in a row. In fact, even I lost to the hands of junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.”

“What?!” Qinghe was shocked. “Senior apprentice-brother, you lost?”

“Right. That’s why I came to invite you,” Bu Ying said. “You can be said to be the Zifu Disciple amongst us who is at the very peak of power, and so...”

Qinghe nodded. “Senior apprentice-brother, don’t worry. Naturally, I won’t shirk my duties in this matter.”

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“Senior apprentice-sister, senior apprentice-sister.” Ninelotus stood there in midair, staring down towards a graceful estate below.

“Little sister, you came?” A clear, cold voice rang out. “Why don’t you come in?” Ninelotus immediately landed. There was a black-robed maiden standing there, beneath the moonlight. In front of her there was an exquisitely carved wine flask and wine goblets.

This maiden’s beautiful features were absolutely superior to that of even Ninelotus...and that cool, indifferent aura made her seem like a true Immortal of the heavens. And, in truth, this black-robed maiden was indeed a reincarnated Immortal. Within the Black-White College, she was an extremely famous reincarnated Immortal, the Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei! As one of the extremely few reincarnated Immortals, although she was currently only at the peak Wanxiang Adept level, her status was comparable to that of the Primal Daoists.

“Senior apprentice-sister.” Ninelotus sat down as well. “Are you aware that amongst the new disciples, there is one who is apparently a reincarnated Immortal as well?”

“Are you referring to junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning?” The black-robed maiden sat down, then nodded gently. “I heard that Immortal Diancai chose him as his disciple.”

Ninelotus immediately said, “Senior apprentice-sister, you don’t know this, but even before joining the school, Ji Ning has already reached the Dao Domain level, and his soul has supposedly even reached the ‘divine sense’ level.”

“His soul has supposedly reached the ‘divine sense’ level?” The black-robed maiden was rather surprised. Ninelotus nodded. “This is what my master told me.”

“Immortal Fivecraze?” The black-robed maiden nodded gently. “Intriguing. I didn’t expect that one of the new disciples would be such an impressive figure.”

Ninelotus continued, “And just now, at the Dao Debate Palace, this Ji Ning consecutively defeated two of the old disciples. I trust that once this information spreads out, the old disciples definitely won’t let this matter rest. No matter what, they will have to win it back.”

“Mm. Win. Yes, it will be necessary to win a match back.” The black-robed maiden nodded, then smiled. “But if he really is a reincarnated Immortal, given his current level of insight, he might even have some of his former memories from his past life. If you aren’t careful, his power might suddenly explosively increase. Defeating a reincarnated Immortal won’t be an easy matter.”

Ninelotus glanced at this senior apprentice-sister of hers, this Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei. Of course reincarnated Immortals were terrifyingly strong. All of them had astonishing levels of talent, and when they started to train, they increased in power at a shocking rate.

“This Ji Ning is only sixteen,” Ninelotus said. The black-robed maiden laughed. “If he hasn’t awakened any of his former memories, beating him shouldn’t be too hard. When are they going to go challenge him? I will go and take a look.”

“It should be tomorrow,” Ninelotus said. “Fine. I’ll definitely go.” Yu Wei nodded.

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Wanxiang Adept Northmont Blackcurrent frowned. “Ji Ning?”

“Right. Ji Ning. He consecutively defeated two of the old disciples. Even Bu Ying was beaten by him.” A black-robed youth sat there, chatting leisurely.

Blackcurrent laughed. “I didn’t expect that the Ji Ning who Northmont Baiwei befriended is actually as powerful as this. I previously misjudged him. Since he is going to be challenged tomorrow, I’ll go and take a look as well.”

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“Ji Ning? I heard that in the Carefree Caverns, he unleashed a Rainwater Sword Domain. Clearly, he’s already reached the Dao Domain level, yes?”

“What? Dao Domain level? No wonder he is this powerful.”

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“The new disciple, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, defeated two of the old disciples? How can we accept this? No matter what, we have to win a match back.”

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One told ten, and ten told a hundred.

There were only so many disciples in the Black-White College to begin with, and most of them had known each other for many years and were on quite good terms with each other. As they exchanged this news amongst each other...by the second day, this news had already spread throughout the entire Black-White College. In fact, even some of the well-connected major powers within Stillwater Commandery, such as the Northmont clan, had received word of it.

For now, the other disciples all felt that, no matter what, they had to win a match back.

The disciples of the entire Black-White College had naturally divided into two major factions. The first was the new disciples faction; this consisted of just Ji Ning and Northson. The second was the old disciples faction; that consisted of all of the other disciples.

“Senior apprentice-brother, did you just say that this disciple of mine consecutively defeated two of the old disciples?” The black-robed, black-haired Immortal Diancai had a hint of curiosity in his eyes.

“Right. Virtually all of the third-generation disciples are going to the Dao Debate Palace. They definitely want to win a match back..” The short elder, dressed in ragged beggar’s clothes, said with excitement, “Hahaha, it’s been a long time since something so amusing has happened within our Black-White College. Myself, an ole madman, just survived the ninth-century tribulation, and now I’ve encountered this. Intriguing, intriguing. When the time comes, I’ll definitely go watch. Are you going?”

Immortal Diancai nodded gently, then laughed, “Since you are going, senior apprentice-brother, as your junior apprentice-brother, I’ll naturally accompany you.”

“Hahahaha. Great, great, great. Intriguing, intriguing.” The short elder, Immortal Fivecraze, suddenly waved his hand. “Now hurry up and bring out that Centiflower Immortal Wine and let your senior apprentice-brother have a taste.”

“Centiflower Immortal Wine? But I got that in one of the minor worlds...” Immortal Diancai’s face turned ashen.

The short elder stared at him. “I, your senior apprentice-brother, probably will only be able to live another nine centuries. And you can’t even spare me some wine? If you refuse to give me any wine to drink, then when Ji Ning competes against the old disciples, I’ll play some underhanded tricks in secret!”

Immortal Diancai let out a long, helpless sigh. “Fine, I’ll give it to you!”