

Desolate 171

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 34: Fated to be Master and Servant

“Whew.” Watching the sun rise in the east, Ning let out a soft breath. “Come, all of you, come. I’ll take on all comers!”

He had won two consecutive battles last night. The parting words of senior apprentice-brother Bu Ying and senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus allowed Ning to understand...that no matter what, the old disciples definitely wouldn’t just let things rest. They would have to win one round of battle, no matter the cost. Ning had to admit; some of the supremely talented disciples of the Black-White College would definitely find it hard to admit inferiority.

However, Ning wouldn’t easily admit defeat either. If he had to lose, he had to be thoroughly convinced of his defeat.

“If you want to defeat me, then you need to make me feel completely convinced of your superior power.” Ning’s eyes were filled with a readiness for battle. This entire night, he had been analyzing the [Lesser Five Elements Sword]; since he knew that he had to engage in battles tomorrow, he naturally had to seize every moment.

Whoosh.

Ning willed it, and a flying boat appeared next to him. He prepared to go meet with his master, Immortal Diancai...after all, there were many questions he had encountered when analyzing the [Lesser Five Elements Sword]. Perhaps by asking his master, he would have some of his questions resolved.

Swoosh! The flying boat instantly disappeared into the skies. But suddenly, a voice rang out. “Senior apprentice-brother Darknorth!”

Ning, atop the boat, turned to look. A middle-aged man, mounted on a sword, was flying towards him. A hint of nervousness and awe was on his face, and the borders of his sleeves were decorated with white and black embroidery. Upon seeing the embroidery, Ning immediately understood that this should be a formal disciple’s retainer.

Every single formal disciple was able to take on ten retainers. These Immortal practitioner retainers would carry out some some important tasks, deliver messages, stand as guards, etc. These were the tasks they would carry out.

“What is it?” Ning looked towards him. The middle-aged man replied respectfully, “There is someone outside the College who wishes to see you, senior apprentice-brother Darknorth. He calls himself Northmont Baiwei.”

“Northmont Baiwei?” Ning nodded. “I’ll head right over.” Swoosh! He immediately directed the boat towards the Black-White College’s main gate. Moments later, he arrived and saw that outside the gate, Baiwei was seated atop his Ninestar Immortal Carriage in an extremely ostentatious manner, with the driver still that female servant construct.

“Ji Ning.” Baiwei, upon seeing Ning fly over aboard his boat, immediately disembarked from the carriage. “Baiwei.” Ning landed. “Why have you come so early this morning to the College?”

Baiwei laughed, then pointed towards three people standing nearby. All of them had fairly exceptional auras. “I told you before that I wanted five slots from you. These three will fill up three of the slots. As for the other two...they’ll arrive after a period of time.”

“The three of them?” Ning sized them up carefully. Every single formal disciple could only have ten retainers. Once a master-servant relationship was established, they would generally be together for a century, or even centuries.

“These three are all not bad.” Baiwei pointed to the tallest one, a rather skinny youth. “His name is Cloudship. He’s a member of the Cloud tribe, and an early stage Zifu Disciple.”

Cloudship’s eyes were very bright. He immediately said with respect, “Cloudship pays his respects to senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.”

“This is Cloudship’s little sister.” Baiwei pointed to a devilishly beautiful, tall, willowy woman who was dressed in white muslin. This woman’s eyes were extremely large, soft, and moist. Her eyes were just as bright as her older brother’s. She gave Ning a deep look, then curtsied and said, “Cloudjade pays her respects to senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.”

Baiwei then pointed to the final person, a seemingly ordinary youth. “His name is Forgard. He was originally one of my guards, and is extremely loyal.”

“Forgard pays his respects to senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” The ordinary-looking youth also bowed with respect.

“Cloudship, Cloudjade, and Forgard.” Baiwei laughed. “They will be your retainers, Brother Ji Ning. If they treat you with any disrespect at all, you can immediately expel them from the Black-White College. As for myself, Northmont Baiwei, I’ll never meet them again after that. In dealing with them, you do not need to consider the question of giving me face at all.” Ning nodded.

“Here are another hundred ordinary mortals. They were all carefully selected, and all have some special talents. They are skilled in calligraphy, painting, cooking, and the likes.” Baiwei pointed towards a group of ordinary mortals. These were almost all women, with only two or three dozen being men.

When Baiwei pointed towards them, they all fell to their knees in respect, not daring to show the slightest hint of discourtesy.

“Sorry for the trouble, Brother Baiwei.” Ning nodded. Baiwei asked, “If you aren’t in a hurry, how about, in a few days, you, me, and that Mu Northson have a little get together?”

“Very well.” Ning hurriedly added, “Right. There’s something I need to trouble you about, Brother Baiwei.” “Oh? Pray tell,” Baiwei said.

Ning nodded. “Here’s the situation. When travelling to Stillwater City, I encountered three early stage Zifu Disciples of the Meng clan. Their names were Meng Xin, Meng Roch, and Meng Jun. Afterwards, they met with one of their seniors of their clan, someone they addressed as ‘Uncle Ming’, a balding, middle-aged man.”

“Of the three of them, Meng Roch once used a forbidden technique and harmed his foundations. I imagine that it will be hard for him to enter a school, and so I want to give one of the retainer positions to him. Only, I have no idea where he is living, so I’d like to ask you to help investigate, Brother Baiwei.”

“This is a minor matter,” Baiwei said with confidence. “The Meng clan is a major clan. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain will definitely be keeping track of the movements of the members of their clan. I’ll go investigate and will immediately find out.”

“Alright, if there’s nothing else, I won’t tarry.” Baiwei once more walked to his Ninestar Immortal Carriage. The two clasped hands towards each other, bidding each other farewell, and then the Immortal Carriage transformed into a blaze of light, disappearing into the horizons.

With but a thought, Ning made his flying boat increase in size, to a ship that was many tens of meters in length. “All of you, come aboard.” The three retainers and the many mortal followers all boarded the ship, and then the ship soared into the skies, flying at high speed towards Darknorth Peak.

.....

Baiwei, riding within the Ninestar Immortal Carriage, quickly arrived at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.

“I heard that the new disciple of the Black-White College, Ji Ning, defeated two of the old disciples in a row last night!”

“What sort of a person is this Ji Ning? He is that amazing?”

“No idea. All I heard is that he was accepted by Immortal Diancai as his apprentice.”

As soon as he left the carriage, Baiwei overheard two Immortal practitioners engaged in a conversation. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain was a place where fish and dragons intermingled; there was quite the free flow of information here.

“Oh?” A hint of a smile appeared on Baiwei’s face. “My brother Ji Ning actually did something so incredible last night, and I didn’t even know about it? Mm. First, I’ll help him locate that Meng Roch fellow. Since my brother Ji Ning remembered him, I imagine that this Roch must have some extraordinary qualities.”

.....

East Stillwater City. Within an exquisite estate. Meng Roch was seated here, drinking wine.

“Little Sister Xin, let me.”

“Little Sister Xin, I’ll help you package these.”

Meng Jun was quite the busy bee right now, helping Meng Xin take care of and package some of her household items. They had been living in their Third Uncle’s residence in recent days, but since they had entered a school, the school had given them three days time to prepare. Then, they would leave Stillwater City and head to the headquarters of the main sect, located a million kilometers away from Stillwater City.

Meng Jun glanced sideways at Meng Roch, who was drinking wine gloomily, then sighed, "Rocky, just endure it for a bit. In a few more years, when your injuries can no longer be detected, you'll be able to join a school as well. I must say though, it seems as though karma has bound myself and Little Sister Xin together. We actually ended up in the same school by coincidence. Haha, what luck."

Still drinking wine, Roch's face sank, and he crushed the beastskull goblet in his hand to dust.

"Hmph." Jun let out a snort, then turned his head and left.

"Despicable fellow." Roch gave him a glance.

Actually, he was able to guess that Jun had been following after Xin...and so, when Xin had entered a school, Jun had chosen that same school. Xin and Jun were equally talented, and so it wasn't strange for them to both join the same school.

Roch had been infatuated with Xin since he was young, but the same was true for Jun! This made Roch feel all the more miserable.

"Despicable fellow!" Roch ground his teeth. "I hate the fact that I..."

"Big Brother Rocky." Xin stood there next to him. Roch raised his head, looking towards her. "Don't give up. I believe that you will definitely succeed." Xin's eyes were slightly red. Roch instantly felt a warm feeling in his heart, and he nodded strongly.

"Succeed? Hmph." From nearby, a strange, bizarre sounding snort could be heard. "Little Sister Xin, let's go. We should go to our Thousand Rivers School." Xin gave Roch a deep look, but in the end, she had to leave. She had to go to the main sect. Had to embark on her Immortal path.

Roch silently watched as she left.

"Little Xin. Wait for me," Roch silently said to himself. However, the fact that he had been kicked out by various schools for three days in a row made Roch feel all the more miserable and frantic in his heart.

.....

Within the Black-White College. Ning was carefully observing Cloudship, Cloudjade, and Forgard. Although Baiwei had brought them here, if Ning truly disliked them, he could still kick them out. After all, masters and retainers would be together for a very long period of time. As for Cloudship, Cloudjade, and Forgard, they were rather nervous as well.

"This Forgard was originally a guard? And is quite loyal?" Ning had immediately felt well-disposed towards Forgard. "Cloudship, upon seeing me, immediately smiled; he knows how to flatter. As for his little sister, Cloudjade...what the hell was Baiwei thinking? Why'd he deliver such an alluring girl to me?"

Cloudjade definitely could be considered an alluring girl. In terms of appearance alone, she was not even inferior to Meng Xin, and more attractive than even Ninelotus. In addition, her entire body seemed to naturally exude a certain magnetism, and her soft, moist eyes were extremely seductive as well. It seemed as though ever since she had seen Ning, she was either consciously or unconsciously attempting to seduce him.

"Forgard. Why do you have a name like this?" Ning asked.

Forgard said solemnly, "Originally, I had no name. Afterwards, I was given a name by the young master and served him for many years. Perhaps the young master felt that I would have great future accomplishments, and so he gave me this life-changing chance. And thus, he also gave me a Daoist title, 'Forgard'; he wished for me to forget that I was once a guard, and wished for me to truly become a formidable Immortal practitioner.

Ning nodded.

Whoosh. The ship descended towards Darknorth Peak. The nearby Cloudship, Cloudjade, and Forgard all nervously awaited Ning's questions...but unexpectedly, Ning didn't ask them a single thing.

"Uncle White." Upon landing, Ning spoke out, and the Whitewater Hound immediately appeared. Ning glanced towards the three retainers and many commoners, then said in a clear voice, "All of you, listen up. This is Darknorth Peak, of the Black-White College. Here in my Darknorth Peak...you must always obey the words of my Uncle White. Whatever Uncle White tells you to do, you do. You must never disobey."

"Yes." Cloudship, Cloudjade, Forgard, and the crowd of commoners all assented respectfully.

"Uncle White, those three are retainers, while the rest are all ordinary mortals." Ning looked towards the Whitewater Hound. "I'll hand full responsibility for all matters in Darknorth Peak to you, Uncle White. Give them their instructions and tell them about the rules here at the Black-White College."

The Whitewater Hound immediately transformed into mist, and when he reformed, he appeared as a white-robed, white-haired man.

The white-robed, white-haired man had a very gentle look in his eyes, and he seemed to extrude a natural aura of friendliness, as though he brought the gentle, warm spring wind with him. He laughed and said, "Ning, son, go ahead and leave these things to me."

"Alright." Ning immediately transformed into a ray of light, quickly departing from Darknorth Peak. As for the others, including the retainers, they were restricted as to where in the Black-White College they could go.

A short while later, Ning arrived before the mountain peak which was the residence of his master, Immortal Diancai.

"Ji Ning. Enter." A calm voice rang out by Ning's ears. "Yes, Master." Ning immediately descended towards the peak.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 35: Immortal Diancai's Guidance

There was no one within the hall, only the black-haired, black-robed Immortal Diancai. The Immortal was seated in the lotus position atop his jade bed. Ning stepped into the room, then immediately bowed with respect. "Master."

Immortal Diancai nodded slightly. He looked at Ning, a hint of amusement visible on his face. "Ji Ning, I heard that yesterday, you defeated two of your senior apprentice-brothers?"

“Yes,” Ning said. “Only, I’m afraid my fellow disciples won’t let the matter rest. Today, they will probably come challenge me again. Thus, I have come to you, Master, in the hope that you can provide me with some guidance.”

“Mm. At least you are grounded. You didn’t grow arrogant just because you defeated two Zifu Disciples.” Immortal Diancai nodded. “Everyone who has been accepted to the Black-White College is a supreme genius. The third generation is primarily divided into Zifu Disciples and Wanxiang Adepts.” Ning listened carefully.

“My Black-White College has more than a hundred Zifu Disciples, and more than two hundred Wanxiang Adepts. Why?” Immortal Diancai continued, “These disciples are all at fairly high levels of comprehension; if they wanted to enter the Wanxiang Adept level, I imagine that all of them would be able to do so. The reason why there are still a hundred-plus Zifu Disciples is for several reasons; first of all, they want to solidify their bases of power and prepare an ‘Immortal foundation’. The second is because they wish to increase their level of insight and comprehension; that way, when they encounter the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations, they will naturally have a greater chance of surviving them.”

Ning nodded. Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations...as an Immortal practitioner, Ning naturally knew of them. The power of these trials was something that was related to time; the more time passed, the more powerful they would become. In addition, they were also related to one’s karmic merits or sins. The greater the sin, the more difficult the tribulation. Finally, they were also related to one’s level of power. If they had trained for the same period of time, the tribulation for a Primal Daoist would be more dangerous than the tribulation for a Wanxiang Adept....

But of course, there were many other variables. It was difficult to predict the power of the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations, and in the end, it was the guillotine held over the necks of all Immortal practitioners.

However, there was one commonality: Strengthen one’s level of comprehension! Strengthen one’s soul! Strengthen one’s Dao-heart! The more stable one’s foundation was, the greater one’s chances at overcoming the tribulations would be.

“It is precisely because they wish to prepare for the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations, and because they wish to establish a foundation to become a Celestial Immortal, that none of them are in a hurry to make their breakthrough,” Immortal Diancai explained. “Generally speaking, new disciples will remain at the Zifu stage for ten or so years. But of course, those who are slightly weaker in terms of comprehension might stay at that level for fifty or sixty years. As for the extremely talented ones, they’ll stay at that level for half a year before making their breakthrough.”

“This is why the Wanxiang Disciples represent the true elites of the third generation.” Immortal Diancai looked at Ning. Ning nodded. He understood.

“The Wanxiang Adepts of our Black-White College are different from the Wanxiang Adepts of other schools. They are true geniuses amongst Wanxiang Adepts!” Immortal Diancai said. “For other schools, every so often, they might have one or two Wanxiang Adepts who reach the ‘Dao Domain’ level...but for our Black-White College, almost every single Wanxiang Adept is at the Dao Domain level.”

Hearing this, Ning felt shock in his heart.

“There are some who are even more formidable. They have an incredibly deep comprehension of their chosen Dao, and perhaps even many insights into other Daos as well. They are able to reach the ‘Dao Domain’ level in multiple, different Daos!”

“There are some who are even more monstrous. While at the Wanxiang Adept level, they have completely understand an entire ‘Dao Path’.”

Hearing this, Ning’s face instantly changed. A complete Dao Path?

“In other schools, generally speaking, only Immortals will comprehend an entire, complete Dao Path. But in our Black-White College, every single Primal Daoist has comprehended an entire Dao Path, and amongst the Wanxiang Adepts, a few of the most talented, most monstrous of the Adepts have comprehended an entire Dao Path as well.”

“However, Ji Ning, you have no need to feel embarrassed. These geniuses who were able to comprehend an entire Dao Path? Two of them are reincarnated Immortals, while the other three have been training for more than two hundred years. They might break through to the Primal Daoist level at any moment.”

“If you stay at the Black-White College for a bit longer, you’ll understand a few things. One of them is this; our Black-White College has an unspoken rule that only after one has comprehended a complete Dao Path will one make a breakthrough to the Primal Daoist level.” Immortal Diancai looked towards Ji Ning.

Wanxiang Adepts were the true elites amongst the crowd. For example, Ning himself; once his Zifu Lake expanded to the limit, he probably wouldn’t hesitate at all and break through to the Wanxiang Adept level. Thus, those who remained behind at the Zifu Disciple level were, generally speaking, the average-to-below-average bunch amongst these supreme geniuses.

“Wanxiang Adepts can be divided into three levels. The first level has only reached the Dao Domain level. The second has reached the Dao Domain level in multiple Daos. The third level has comprehended a complete Dao Path.”

Immortal Diancai looked towards Ji Ning. “Don’t worry. This time, your fellow disciples amongst the Wanxiang Adepts level won’t interfere too casually; they’ll first have the most powerful Zifu Disciples make their attempt. But if even they are unable to defeat you, only then will the Wanxiang Adepts make their moves! No matter what, however, those supreme few who have comprehended a complete Dao Path will not interfere. If they did, that would be going a bit far.”

Ning nodded. “Master, how many reincarnated Immortals are there amongst the Wanxiang Adepts?” Ning was curious.

Immortal Diancai laughed. “You disciples are always curious about the reincarnated Immortals. Actually, it’s even possible that you yourself might be a reincarnated Immortal. Amongst the Wanxiang Adepts, there are three who have been verified to be reincarnated Immortals. Two of them spent eighty years in training and have comprehended a complete Dao Path, while the other one has trained for twenty or so years.”

“After having heard me say so many things, you should now understand the situation.” Immortal Diancai sighed. “You’ve only defeated two of the Zifu Disciples, and they aren’t even two of the strongest Zifu Disciples, much less the Wanxiang Adepts.”

“Your student understands,” Ning nodded. Immortal Diancai concluded, “Alright. Time to display your sword arts to me. Show me everything without holding back anything; you won’t be able to damage this hall.”

“Alright.” Ning didn’t hesitate at all. He immediately executed his most powerful sword attack...the [Tripartite Lotus Sword]. The Darknorth sword in his hand shot out, and as it did, it divided into three colors. Lotus flowers began to bloom with incomparable beauty, but within the beauty, there was a sword light with astonishing power.

“The [Tripartite Lotus Sword]?” Immortal Diancai laughed. “The [Lesser Five Elements Sword]. I, your master, have also studied the [Lesser Five Elements Sword]. This sword attack you just displayed can be considered to have a tenth of its grace and charm.”

“A tenth?” Ning blinked. “Just a tenth?”

Immortal Diancai shook his head. “What do you expect? The [Tripartite Lotus Sword] focuses on it being ‘Tripartite’; it requires balance! Your comprehension into these three Daos, however, clearly shows that your understanding of the Dao of Rainwater is much stronger, while the other two are much weaker.”

Ning was speechless.

“You’ve only developed your Rainwater Sword Domain. If you were to develop two other Dao Domains, then at that point in time, you would be able to display the true [Tripartite Lotus Sword],” Immortal Diancai said.

Ning nodded in acknowledgement. He had to admit, it was true that the [Tripartite Lotus Sword] required balance. His comprehension into the various Daos, however, was unbalanced.

“Your comprehension of the Dao of Rainwater is stronger,” Immortal Diancai said. “Since that’s the case, then I’ll help you retrofit your [Tripartite Lotus Sword] into a [Neo-Tripartite Lotus Sword].”

Immortal Diancai immediately waved out a sword-finger. Slash! A sword light instantly flashed, and wherever it passed, flowers began to bloom. Only, the green color within the flowerbuds was noticeably stronger, while the other two colors served to accentuate it.

.....

Four hours later, Immortal Diancai’s guidance came to an end.

“I’ve already explained as much as I can regarding the mysteries and secrets of the [Neo-Tripartite Lotus Sword] and the [Three-Foot Sword]’s first stance,” Immortal Diancai said. “Given your current level of understanding, you should completely focus your attention on analyzing these two sword arts. When the day comes where you are able to release the power of both sword arts, come find me again.”

“Yes.” Ning bowed with gratitude. The saying was true; listening to a master say a few words was superior to training by one’s self for a year.

The [Neo-Tripartite Lotus Sword] was something which he had already begun to vaguely grasp; most likely, he would soon be able to unleash its power. As for unleashing the true power of the original [Tripartite Lotus Sword], he would have to wait until he comprehended three Dao Domains. When the three became one, he would be able to unleash the most power possible from the [Tripartite Lotus Sword]. What he was able to unleash right now was nothing more than some scraps.

As for the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], that was simply unfathomably profound. The [Three-Foot Sword] focused more on the heart; training in the sword was also training in the heart.

Swoosh!

Ning immediately boarded his flying boat and departed from his master's residence.

The Golden Crow hung high in the sky. The Dao Debate Palace, atop the Dao Debate Peak. Today, this place was incomparably lively. One streak of light after another flew towards here, riding on flying swords, flying boats, flying chains, flying gourds, flying red banners, flying leaves, and all sorts of curious magic treasures. One after another, they flew into the Dao Debate Palace.

"Senior apprentice-brother Icezen, weren't you wandering outside?"

"I just so happened to be over at the Raindragon Guards' place, and I heard that one of our new disciples, Ji Ning, defeated two of his Zifu Disciple colleagues in sequence. I'm quite curious, so I came over to take a look."

"Quite a few fellow disciples have come today. It has been a long time since our Black-White College has been so lively."

The two figures chatted amongst themselves as they flew to the Dao Debate Palace.

The battle arena was at the heart of the Dao Debate Palace. At the sides of the arena were many chairs. The higher-ranking disciples of the College sat down, while the Zifu Disciples remained standing to the side, chatting amongst themselves and in no rush to sit. After all, who knew how many fellow disciples would come today?

"Senior apprentice-brother Northmont Blackcurrent came as well."

"Senior apprentice-brother Gatherform came as well."

One Wanxiang Adept after another arrived, all quite well-known. One high-ranking leader after another arrived; naturally, these junior fellow disciples all had blazing looks in their eyes. As latecomers, they naturally had limited experience in adventuring in the outside world. But these fellow disciples who had joined more than a century ago already had shocking stories and legends about them that circulated in the outside world. It was actually quite a frequent occurrence for the Wanxiang Adepts of the Black-White College to be able to battle at a higher level and combat even Primal Daoists.

"It's senior apprentice-brother Holyfire."

"Senior apprentice-brother Holyfire!"

"Even senior apprentice-brother Holyfire came as well."

The entire Dao Debate Palace was now filled with disciples. All of them, Zifu Disciples or Wanxiang Adepts, turned to look. A bald, barefoot, handsome youth who was dressed in fiery red robes came walking in. His forehead had a svastika symbol in the middle, and wherever he passed, it was as though a sea of flame moved with him, as the temperature of the surrounding area instantly skyrocketed.

Holyfire!

He was an absolute leader amongst the third generation disciples of the Black-White College. Although he wasn't a reincarnated Immortal, he had still comprehended an entire, complete Dao Path. He could become a Primal Daoist of the College at any moment.

"Senior apprentice-brother Holyfire." Blackcurrent was the first to draw close to him.. "Blackcurrent." Holyfire glanced at Blackcurrent, then said calmly, "Has the new disciple, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, arrived yet?"

"Not yet. There was a junior apprentice-brother who went quite some time ago to junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning's Darknorth Peak, but he hasn't come yet," Blackcurrent explained.

Holyfire nodded, then strode forward, taking a seat atop one of the centermost stone seats. The fellow disciples seated around Holyfire were all formidable figures within the College. For the likes of the Zifu Disciples, they could only stare at him from afar; after all, they didn't have a relationship with him.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 36: Junior Apprentice-Brother Ji Ning Welcomes All Chapters

The winter wind was quite refreshing. Ji Ning stood atop his boat, soaring through the skies, and in his mind, he continued to think back to the scenes of his master, Immortal Diancai, displaying sword arts for him to see.

"Master's sword arts have truly reached an inconceivable level," Ning sighed to himself Diancai has often referred to as the 'second coming of Immortal Northwalker', and also as the disciple of the Black-White College with the greatest chances of becoming a Celestial Immortal. Immortal Diancai's sword arts vastly surpassed the level which Ning was able to comprehend.

"Hm? Someone's here?" As his flying boat reached the air above Darknorth Peak, Ning saw that there were currently two people standing outside the gates to his estate. It was a white-robed Mu Northson and Winterain, dressed in white cotton clothes.

Swoosh. Ning landed on the ground. "Master." The ordinary mortals standing at the gate immediately saluted.

"Junior apprentice-brother Northson, senior apprentice-sister Winterain, why are you here?" After landing, Ning smiled towards them. Only now did Winterain let out a long sigh of relief. "Junior apprentice-brother Darknorth, can it be that you don't know about today's matters?"

Of course Ning knew. "Senior apprentice-sister Winterain, are you referring to the challenges at the Dao Debate Palace?"

“Of course.” Winterain nodded. “Today, many of our fellow disciples have hurried over there. Even some of our fellow disciples who were not present in the college, upon hearing this news, have hurried back. I’ve come to invite you to the Dao Debate Palace, junior apprentice-brother Darknorth.”

Ning nodded. Winterain continued, “Let’s hurry. I imagine many of our fellow disciples are growing impatient.”

“Alright.” Ning looked towards the nearby Northson. “Junior apprentice-brother Northson, why didn’t you go to the Dao Debate Palace, and instead came to find me?”

“Need you ask?” Northson stared. “The entire Black-White College only has two new disciples; you and me. The two of us are on one side. All those people at the Dao Debate Palace are older, more senior disciples. If I go there, what am I supposed to do? Just stand there like an idiot and be stared at by everyone?”

Ning laughed. “Let’s go.” There was no way to back off now. If he backed off, he would be looked down upon by everyone. He might as well openly go welcome the challenges.

Whoosh. The three rode atop their respective magic treasures or construct, quickly disappearing into the skies as three rays of light which sped towards the Dao Debate Palace.

.....

It was rare for so many fellow disciples to be gathered here at the Dao Debate Palace. Every single one of the disciples present today could be described as truly heroic figures.

“Why hasn’t that junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning arrived yet?”

“That young junior apprentice-brother, Ji Ning...he wouldn’t be afraid, would he?”

The fellow disciples were all chatting in small groups amongst themselves as they waited. It was, however, almost noon. Some of those who had come earlier had been waiting for nearly four hours. Naturally, they were growing rather impatient.

Suddenly...three figures flew towards them from afar, then landed at the gates to the Dao Debate Palace. This instantly attracted the attention of many of their fellow disciples.

“He’s here.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning came.”

“That’s junior apprentice-brothers Ji Ning and Northson. Next to them is junior apprentice-sister Winterain.” Ji Ning and Northson had appeared at the grand ceremony of initiation, after all; most of the people were still able to recognize them with one glance.

Senior apprentice-brother Holyfire, seated in the center, glanced at them then said softly, “That fur-clad one is Ji Ning?” Northmont Blackcurrent, seated next to him, immediately said hurriedly, “Right, he is Ji Ning.”

“Just from the look in his eyes, I can tell that his Dao-heart is very resolute,” Holyfire said softly. Blackcurrent replied, “If junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning knew that you were praising him like this, senior apprentice-brother, I imagine he would be endlessly overjoyed.”

.....

After entering the Dao Debate Palace, Ning went directly to the side room where he had previously activated the Thousandwords golem, and then brought the golem to return to the hall.. He stood there, in the hall, sweeping everyone with his gaze.

There were familiar figures, such as Ninelotus and the others. There were several figures he didn't recognize, but who the other fellow disciples surrounded; clearly, these were extremely high-ranking figures of the College, such as that bald, fiery-robed youth, that black-robed maiden, or that sloppy-looking fat youth, or that large, muscular youth whose entire body gleamed with magic treasures but whose skin was jade-white...

“Those people being surrounded by others are probably the most supreme members of the third generation. They have probably either comprehended an entire Dao Path or are reincarnated Immortals,” Ning mused to himself.

Swoosh. Ning leapt forward like a streak of light, moving three hundred meters and landing on a distant stone pillar. Staring at his surroundings, he said in a clear voice, “My senior fellow disciples.”

Instantly, the entire Dao Debate Palace grew silent.

“Yesterday, I was lucky enough to defeat two senior apprentice-brothers,” Ning said in a high voice. “Thus, today I have come again. Any of my senior fellow disciples who wishes to discuss the Dao with me can come up and do so. As for the wager...I've recently joined the school, and can't afford too large a wager, and so we'll just go with the smallest wager of a hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. I will wait here. Anyone who wishes to discourse on the Dao with me can come up.”

His words concluded. The entire Dao Debate Palace remained quiet for a moment of time.

That seemingly sloppy-looking, pudgy youth who was surrounded by many others laughed, his face covered with delight, as he looked towards Ji Ning, who stood there in the distance atop the stone pillar. “This junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning really is straightforward and passionate. I like him.”

This sloppy-looking, pudgy youth...was, awe-inspiringly enough, the undisputed number one figure of the third generation of Black-White College disciples. In the outside world, he was often referred to as the ‘Sloppy Daoist’, but his actual Daoist title was ‘Threefat’. Although he was not a reincarnated Immortal, Daoist Threefat was able to suppress the two reincarnated Immortals in might, and so became known as the number one figure amongst the third generation. One truly couldn't judge by looks alone.

.....

“Hear that? Even little Sloppy likes this Ji Ning.” In a corner of the Dao Debate Palace, the similarly sloppy-looking short elder chortled. Next to him, the black-haired, black-robed Immortal Diancai said resignedly, “Senior apprentice-brother Fivecraze, why did we have to come here to the Dao Debate

Palace? We could've stayed in our own estate and used a water-scrying technique; wouldn't we still be able to see everything going on here? Our apprentice-nephews such as the headmaster are definitely all watching this in their own estates through a water-scrying technique."

The short elder glanced sideways at Immortal Diancai. "When we watch here, we can also hear the conversations going on between the third generation disciples. That's so much more fun. As for little Sloppy, he really is the disciple I love the most; even his thoughts are identical to mine. Don't worry; we'll watch here secretly, and those third generation disciples won't notice a thing."

"Alas." Immortal Diancai shook his head helplessly. This old fellow really was getting crazier and crazier.

Birds of a feather flock together; 'Sloppy' had even given himself the Daoist title 'Threefat', and was incredibly sloppily dressed. Immortal Diancai was an extremely strict person; naturally, he disliked this tremendously. But there was nothing he could do... 'Old Crazy' was the oldest of the Loose Immortals of the Black-White College, while 'Young Crazy' was the most talented disciple the Black-White College had to offer.

"I hope that I can live to witness little Sloppy become an Earth Immortal. If I can witness him become a Celestial Immortal, I'll die with no regrets." The short elder suddenly turned somber and serious.

"Senior apprentice-brother?" Immortal Diancai was startled. The short elder stared at the fat, sloppy-looking youth who was surrounded by many other disciples. "Just you wait and see. Little Sloppy will definitely be more powerful than me."

Immortal Diancai's gaze fell towards the distant stone pillar, and towards Ji Ning who was seated atop it. This was the only disciple under his tutelage.

"It's about to begin." The short elder's eyes lit up. "It's the fellow called Qinghe."

.....

There were very many third generation disciples gathered here at the Dao Debate Palace. The first to stand out was Qinghe, the man who was publicly acknowledged as the strongest of the Zifu Disciple students.

Swoosh. An azure-robed figure moved forward like a blur, flying directly towards the distant stone pillar before coming to a halt atop it. The golem he controlled moved with him, landing on the arena below.

"Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning." The azure-robed figure stared at the distant Ning. "My name is Qinghe. I joined a few years before you did, and would like to discuss the Dao with you."

"Alright." Ning nodded.

"Begin." The white-haired elder let out a loud shout, and the grand sealing formation instantly covered the entire arena. Ning sat down calmly in the lotus position, and senior apprentice-brother Qinghe did the same.

"Be careful, junior apprentice-brother. I am going to use a secret art which I discovered when adventuring in the outside world; it is an art which a dying senior left behind, which allows for the control of many flying needles. This isn't a technique which our school has records about," Qinghe said.

“Senior apprentice-brother, feel free to use it,” Ning replied clearly. The territory controlled by the Grand Xia Dynasty was too vast. Over the course of countless years, there were quite a few legacies left behind by Fiendgods or various major powers. As for legacies left behind by senior Immortal cultivators...those were countless beyond counting. Only, these relic sites also involved tremendous levels of danger. Without having enough ability, one could not rashly enter them.

“Watch carefully.” Qinghe appeared quite relaxed, but suddenly, his gaze sharpened.

Swish swish swish swish swish. Countless flying needles suddenly flew out of the body of the golem below him. Those countless jade-green flying needles spun in midair, resonating with each other and actually forming an enormous green scorpion. This giant jade-green scorpion’s eyes were flashing with a ferocious intent.

For some reason, this caused Ning to feel alarmed. “Not easy to deal with.” He had been planning to once more use his [Duality Azureflame Sword], but he instantly decided to use his current most powerful technique; the [Neo-Tripartite Lotus Sword].

What he didn’t know was that Qinghe, as the publicly acknowledged number one expert of the Zifu Disciples, had a level of insight into the Dao that was comparable to that of most Wanxiang Adepts already. He, too, had reached the Dao Domain level. In terms of insight, he definitely was not inferior to Ning. In addition, he had spent many years analyzing this ‘Scorpic Godneedles’ technique. Given his power, if Ning didn’t fight back at full strength, he would probably be crushed instantly.

“Swoosh.”

Three swords suddenly lit up. One transformed into a watery light, the second into a fiery glow, and the third into an azure aura. The three flying swords formed into a tripartite formation, and as they flew forward, suddenly transformed into an enormous lotus flower, which had an incomparably sharp and fierce sword light within the blossom.

.....

“He wins.” The short elder in the corner of the Dao Debate Palace sighed. “This sword art was born from the [Tripartite Lotus Sword], but is more heavily focused towards the water-element of the Five Elements. However, this power really is quite something! Ji Ning just entered the College, and yet was already able to learn such a powerful technique. He’s definitely not weaker than any ordinary Wanxiang Adept disciples. Sword Immortals...they are famous for their combat abilities. With the heart of a Sword Immortal and a sword art such as this...if he encounters someone at the same level of insight, he will win for sure.”

As the short elder was speaking, the sword light in the form of a lotus flower was clashing repeatedly in midair against the giant, jade-green scorpion. With each clash, a few of the needles would be knocked loose. After six consecutive clashes, the giant, jade-green scorpion completely shattered, transforming back into countless flying needles.

“Slash.” The protective armor of the Godneedles Golem was pierced by that sword light as well.

The entire Dao Debate Palace instantly fell silent. He had lost? The most powerful of the Zifu Disciples, Qinghe, had actually lost? If even he had lost...could it be that one of their senior apprentice-brothers at

the Wanxiang Adept level would enter the fray? For the sake of a new disciple, they were going to have a Wanxiang Adept do battle?

“Ji Ning wins.” The white-haired old man spoke out, and his voice echoed within the Dao Debate Palace.

The Desolate Era

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 37: Two-Clawed Raindragon Guard

On the distant stone pillar, Qinghe rose to his feet, then clasped his hands. “I lost. I whole-heartedly acknowledge my defeat.”

Ji Ning rose as well, also clasping his hands, and then he swept the entire palace with his gaze, looking towards each of his fellow disciples. In a clear voice, he said, “Are there any other fellow disciples who wish to exchange pointers with me?”

His voice echoed within the entire palace.

“Alas.” Qinghe shook his head, then leapt three hundred meters and landed next to the white-haired elder. He took out two jade bottles, then placed them in front of the elder. This was the wager he had lost. Turning his head, he left.

For a period of time, the Dao Debate Palace was silent. Nobody took up the challenge.

“Even junior apprentice-brother Qinghe lost.”

“The Dao Debates are a competition of one’s comprehension of the Dao, as well as one’s skills. It doesn’t have much to do with one’s elemental ki. Even many of the Wanxiang Adepts amongst us are only on par with junior apprentice-brother Qinghe.”

“I imagine that only those who have comprehended multiple Dao Domains are capable of defeating junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.”

Of course there were people who could defeat Ning! In addition, there were quite a few. For example, those three reincarnated Immortals who were at the Wanxiang Adept level. Anyone who had comprehended a complete Dao Path could effortlessly crush Ning. There were also a pile of disciples who had comprehended multiple Dao Domains. But which one of them would stand out?

“Which of my senior fellow disciples wishes to provide me with some guidance?” Ning stood there atop the stone pillar, speaking in a clear voice. “If no one else comes, then I shall retire.”

In this moment, Ning felt filled with a heroic aura. How joyous. He faced a group of supreme geniuses, and he, a newly recruited disciple, was challenging them. This really was a wonderful feeling.

“Since my other fellow disciples aren’t going to participate, then I’ll embarrass myself by volunteering.” A clear, cold voice rang out and a white-robed, white-haired youth strode forward. With a single step, he transformed into a streak of light which entered the side room. Soon, he returned with a golem by his side.

“That’s senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow!”

“Senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow is skilled as a Fiendgod Body Refiner and at close combat; he isn’t skilled in a golem-based Dao Debate!”

“I heard that senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow is already a two-clawed Raindragon Guard. In a real battle, he probably isn’t one whit inferior to an ordinary Primal Daoist. But senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow’s power primarily stems from his various divine abilities, his Bloodforged weapons, as well as his Fiendgod Body Refining Technique, the [Indestructible Bloodshadow Body]! In terms of controlling golems, though, he’s a bit weaker.”

As the white-robed, white-haired youth appeared, a buzz of conversation swept the entire palace. Ning’s ears twitched. He couldn’t help but feel secretly surprised. What a tremendous background this senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow had. The Rites of Bloodforging...although the likes of the Ji clan had never heard of it, the Black-White College had. Only, one needed five hundred black-white pellets to trade for the technique.

“And he’s actually a two-clawed Raindragon Guard as well!” Ning was privately shocked. After entering the Raindragon Guard, one would become an ordinary one-clawed Raindragon Guard, and the Black-White College would reward you with a thousand black-white pellets. If you became a two-clawed Raindragon Guard, you would be rewarded with five thousand black-white pellets. Upon becoming a three-clawed Raindragon Guard, the reward would be increased to fifteen thousand black-white pellets...

However, it was very difficult to become a two-clawed Raindragon Guard. Generally speaking, only someone at the Primal Daoist level of power could become one. Only a very few, exceptionally monstrous Wanxiang Adepts were able to reach that level. As for that so-called ‘genius’ of Snowdragon Mountain, Xue Hongyi, by comparison, he was far inferior to this senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow.

“Swoosh!” The white-haired, white-robed Bloodshadow’s body flickered, and he appeared on the opposite stone pillar. “Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” Bloodshadow stared towards Ning. “I’m more used to engaging in close combat. I’m not that skilled in controlling magic treasures to attack. However, I’m still a bit stronger than junior apprentice-brother Qinghe. You must be careful.”

“I await your instructions, senior apprentice-brother,” Ning said solemnly.

This was no joke. A freak capable of becoming a two-clawed Raindragon Guard, even one who was primarily a Fiendgod Body Refiner, definitely wouldn’t be weak when controlling magic treasures. Fortunately, he would be doing so through the golems...and so his divine body and divine abilities would be of no use. Otherwise, there would be no need to compete at all. Ning would simply admit defeat.

“Begin!” The white-haired elder called out in a high voice. Rumble...the grand sealing barrier once more covered the entire arena.

Ning sat down in the lotus position. Bloodshadow did the same. “Junior apprentice-brother, be careful!” Bloodshadow called out in a cold voice. Instantly, the strange flying swords on the back of the Nineswords Golem began to fly out. Nine of the queer flying swords flew through the air, beginning to emit a dense, bloody light. The flying swords were all connected by the bloody light, and they quickly formed into an enormous...

Something. It had enormous cicada wings, a head with three horns, a mouth that was as long and sharp as a blade, and a savage, flashing gaze. In fact, the killing aura coming from this creature was even more terrifying than that of the Direwolf which Blood eater Bladask had summoned.

“Mosquito?” Ning, staring the beast that had appeared, couldn’t help but feel astonished. This was a titanic mosquito.

Swoosh! That sinister-looking, baleful giant mosquito of blood suddenly charged forward, howling through the air, its blade-mouth formed from one of the flying swords. The power and invisible pressure from this creature caused Ning’s heart to clench.

“[Neo-Tripartite Lotus Sword]!” Ning didn’t hesitate at all, immediately executing his most powerful sword art. Instantly, three flying swords flew out from the back of his Thousandwords Golem. They soon formed an enormous, blooming lotus flower of sword light which stabbed directly towards that baleful, heaven-defying mosquito of blood.

“Bang!” The two attacks were both as fast as lightning, and they instantly crisscrossed in the sky. The blooming lotus flower’s sword-light trembled, beginning to grow unstable.

“It’s going to collapse.”

“Although senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow is not skilled in using flying swords, it isn’t too hard for him to suppress a young, newly recruited disciple.”

“He’s won.”

Quite a few fellow apprentices nodded musingly to themselves. As for Northson, he clenched his fists nervously as he watched, his heart filled with worry. It was as though he himself wanted to personally charge up. “You must win. You must win.”

“Not good.” As soon as he began fighting, Ning began to sense how terrifying the penetrative power of the blood mosquito’s blade-mouth was. “Bang!” The blood mosquito moved as fast as a shadow, quickly smashing yet again against the lotus flower. Instantly, the blooming lotus flower crumbled, and the three flying swords were scattered to one side.

However, Ning had expected this long ago. He had already prepared six more flying swords, which shot out from the back of the Thousandwords Golem.

“Go, go, go.” A savage look was in Ning’s eyes. Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Every three flying swords formed a blooming lotus of sword-light, and even the three original scattered swords once more reformed into a giant lotus of sword-light. All of a sudden, the air was filled with three enormous flashes of sword light, each of which bloomed into giant loti. They flew out in a straight row, simultaneously striking towards the blood mosquito. Meanwhile, Ning’s eyes were filled with savagery as he controlled them in attacking.

“What!”

“He’s actually able to simultaneously unleash three of those [Tripartite Lotus Swords]?”

“How can this be?”

The spectating disciples were all speechless. Using top-tier sword arts was tremendously taxing on one's mental faculties. For something like the [Tripartite Lotus Sword]...most would be able to unleash just a single one at most. To unleash three at the same time was rather ridiculous.

.....

At the corner of the Dao Debate Palace. Immortal Diancai nodded gently.

"He simultaneously executed multiple sword arts." The nearby short elder shook his head repeatedly. "There's only two possibilities. The first is that his current comprehension of the Dao is far beyond the level of this sword art, and so it is simplicity itself for him to use it; only then can one simultaneously use multiple sword arts. The second is that his soul is incomparably powerful, and so he can easily withstand the pressure this sword art creates, allowing him to use it multiple times simultaneously."

Either one had a high level of insight, or one had an extremely powerful soul.

"Your disciple's soul...is at the divine sense level?" The short elder looked towards Immortal Diancai, who nodded. "Right."

"As I thought," the short elder said softly. "If he has a 'divine soul' at the divine sense level...I imagine he can execute two or three more sword-lights. This battle...your disciple is probably going to win."

.....

The giant blood mosquito blurred, then transformed into three smaller blood mosquitoes, simultaneously defending against the three [Tripartite Lotus Swords].

Boom! Boom! Boom! There, in midair, the three [Tripartite Lotus Swords] battled against the three smaller blood mosquitoes. Everything was a blur as they clashed and battled against each other repeatedly. Each side wanted to break through the protective armor of the other's golem, but they also wanted to block the enemy attacks...for now, they were battling to a standstill.

"Go, go!" Ning's eyes were bloodshot, and the veins on his forehead were protruding. Clearly, he was now going all out. Instantly, six more flying swords flew out from the back of the Thousandwords Golem. The sky was soon filled with two more [Tripartite Lotus Sword] attacks. A total of five [Tripartite Lotus Swords] were surrounding and attacking the blood mosquitoes.

"Eh?" Seated in the distance, Bloodshadow's face changed. He immediately willed the three blood mosquitoes to once more transform into a giant blood mosquito. The cicada-like wings of the giant blood mosquito fluttered, wrapping around that Nineswords Golem while the blade-beak struck repeatedly against those [Tripartite Lotus Swords].

The five [Neo-Tripartite Lotus Swords] attacked wildly in unison.

"Five!"

"Five [Tripartite Lotus Swords]?"

The spectating disciples were all rather stunned. They knew exactly how much stress would be placed on the soul when one executed five powerful sword arts simultaneously. To an ordinary person, dividing

their mind to carry out just two tasks simultaneously was already very difficult. Dividing one's mind to execute multiple supreme sword arts...and five in total, at that!

"Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning's comprehension must be at a very high level, or his soul must be very strong."

"He cannot be underestimated."

"It seems as though senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow is about to suffer from it."

.....

If one remains perpetually on the defense, one will eventually lose. Under the repeated strikes of Ning's five [Neo-Tripartite Lotus Swords], in the end, the blood mosquito wasn't able to block an attack, and the protective armor of the golem was breached.

"Ji Ning wins!" The white-haired elder called out in high voice. Only now did Ning finally relax.

He had won.

He had actually defeated a two-clawed Raindragon Guard! Although this Raindragon Guard was more skilled as a Fiendgod Body Refiner and in using divine abilities, and although this was just a competition of the arts one could use based on their comprehension of the Dao...the fact that he had defeated a two-clawed Raindragon Guard still filled Ning's heart with incomparable joy.

"I lost." Seated atop the distant stone pillar, Bloodshadow rose to his feet. Shaking his head, he laughed. "Junior apprentice-brother, you are already so impressive after entering our school. In the future, you will definitely not be any weaker than me."

"Senior apprentice-brother, you praise me too much." Ning rose as well. "If we were in a real life-and-death battle, I probably wouldn't have been able to withstand a single blow from you."

Bloodshadow laughed. This junior apprentice-brother of his was incredibly talented, and yet clear-minded and modest. He hadn't turned smug from his victory in the Dao Debate. Most likely, in the future, this youth would have astonishing accomplishments. He was worth befriending.

"Haha..." Bloodshadow laughed, then with a flicker, disappeared from the arena, reappearing before the white-haired elder, who he gave two jade bottles to.

Ning took a deep breath. He had gone all out in his earlier battle against Bloodshadow. The sword art he had used was the strongest one available to him, and by relying on the power of his soul, he had gone all out to generate five of those [Tripartite Lotus Swords]! This was his limit. He had nothing further up his sleeve...and would probably lose the next match.

However, if he was going to fight, he was going to fight to the bitter end.

"Are there any other senior fellow disciples who would like to exchange pointers with me?" Ning looked about the room and spoke in a clear voice. His voice echoed in every corner of the palace.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 38: My Heart Holds Only the Sword, The Sword Immortal's Path

The entire Dao Debate Palace once more fell silent. Everyone turned to look at their neighbors. Since Ji Ning was even able to defeat Bloodshadow in a Dao Debate, defeating him would be no easy task. Who would be the next?

“His heart...it has changed!” In that quiet corner, the short elder suddenly spoke out. “This last Dao Debate was a form of baptism for your disciple.” Immortal Diancai turned to look towards Ning as well. There was no hesitating in Ning’s eyes at all; instead, there was a frightening desire for battle.

“Right.” Immortal Diancai nodded lightly. “His heart has indeed changed. It is purer now. Before this, he had many miscellaneous thoughts in his heart, but right now, all he desires is the next battle. This is indeed a rare baptism for his Dao-heart.”

.....

Ning had only one thought in his heart right now; to engage in the next battle! If he was going to fight, he was going to fight to the very end!

The entire Dao Debate Palace was silent for three breaths. Finally, an azure-robed woman walked out.

“It is senior apprentice-sister Whitesnow.”

“Senior apprentice-sister Whitesnow’s [Celestial Silknet Formation] is extremely powerful. In terms of just the Dao, not even senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow is a match for senior apprentice-sister Whitesnow.”

“Right. I wonder if this junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning has anything else left up his sleeve. If he does not, he is probably going to lose.” Conversations were going on everywhere.

As for senior apprentice-brother Holyfire, surrounded by many fellow disciples, he stared into the distance, then said softly, “If my guess is correct, that was the limit of junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning’s power. This next battle...junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning is going to lose.”

“When he encounters junior apprentice-sister Whitesnow’s [Celestial Silknet Formation], this junior apprentice-brother is going to lose.” This was the soft comment by the fat, sloppy-looking youth as well.

.....

“Senior apprentice-sister. Will junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning win?” Ninelotus was next to the black-robed maiden, who stared into the distance. “Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning is probably at his limit. This should be his final battle.”

.....

The short elder, standing in the corner of the room, nodded as well. “It’s about time. This series of Dao Debates should be coming to a conclusion. Your disciple is at his limit.”

“Right.” Immortal Diancai nodded lightly, continuing to stare towards his disciple...

On the pillar. Ning stood there, waiting quietly.

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, win. Win! I believe in you. You will definitely win.” Mu Northson’s fists were clenched tightly, and he called out in a high voice in the distance. Ning smiled towards him.

The azure-robed woman stepped out from the side-door, leaping gracefully atop the opposing stone pillar. She looked towards the distant Ning, her gaze bringing a cold, quiet feeling. Looking at her was like looking at a sickly, yet beautiful woman. She finally spoke out. "Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, I have chosen the Skynet Golem. Be careful."

"Senior apprentice-sister, please feel free!" Ning sat down in the lotus position, and the azure-robed woman did the same. The two stared at each other.

"Begin!" The white-haired elder let out a loud shout. Rumble...the grand sealing barrier once more covered the entire battle arena.

"Go!" The gaze of the azure-robed woman, seated in the lotus position, was cold and dim. The Skynet Golem beneath her instantly began to emit one line of silk after another, transforming into streaks of light.

"[Neo-Tripartite Lotus Sword]!" A sharp look flashed through Ning's eyes. Not hesitating at all, he immediately, consecutively released fifteen flying swords from the Thousandwords Golem, creating five [Tripartite Lotus Swords]. These five flashes of sword-light...they blossomed into lotus flowers, streaking forward to greet the flashing lines of silk.

Whoosh...

The silken rays of light suddenly slashed out in various arcs. Instantly, the entire world seemed to change, as these silken ribbons of light actually formed a giant, completely sealed spherical region, trapping Ning's five [Neo-Tripartite Lotus Swords] within them. The five flashes of sword-light wildly struck at one location, and a large bulge appeared on the side of the silken ribbons of light, but it still successfully kept the sword-light trapped within.

"Constrict!" The azure-robed woman, seated in the lotus position, shouted softly. The silken ribbons of light, in the shape of that giant sphere, began to swivel and shrink, beginning to crush down upon the five flashes of sword-light within it.

Although Ning could release these fifteen flying swords and control new ones...if he wasn't able to defeat this technique, even if he unleashed more flying swords, the end result would simply be that they would be trapped.

"Break!" Ning strove to control his swords to break through.

"Go." The azure-robed woman once more pointed. Whoosh! Yet another silken ribbon of light flew out from the golem, this one moving directly towards Ning's Thousandwords Golem.

"Hmph." Ning's gaze turned cold. Three more flying swords flew out from the Thousandwords Golem's back, transforming to yet another [Tripartite Lotus Sword] and intercepting the ribbon.

There were six [Tripartite Lotus Swords] that had been unleashed, and Ning's eyes were now completely bloodshot. Taxing. This was incredibly taxing. But Ning didn't think of anything else. In his heart, there was only one thought; to use all of his power and fight to the bitter end! To force his flying swords to unleash the greatest amount of power possible!

In this moment, the only thing in Ning's heart...was the sword!

.....

Within the arena.

Ning and the azure-robed woman stared at each other, the golems they were controlling clashing against each other time and time again. Clearly, the azure-robed woman held the upper hand...but no matter what, she wasn't able to defeat Ji Ning. In particular, with that giant, spherical region, one enormous bulge after another would appear. Clearly, the five rays of sword light within were still struggling, and with greater and greater power. The azure-robed woman couldn't help but focus a great deal of her attention on that sphere.

In the corner of the Dao Debate Palace. The short elder's eyes suddenly lit up, and he murmured to himself, "My heart holds only the sword?"

Immortal Diancai stared at his disciple as well. He, too, had noticed Ning's change. "My heart holds only the sword!" Immortal Diancai said softly, "Finally, his sword-heart has finally begun to reach this level."

"Now things are unclear," the short old man sighed. "This disciple of yours truly is a rare talent. This Dao Debate Palace is currently filled with the disciples of our Black-White College. So many geniuses are present...this disciple of yours is welcoming all challengers, and so in the end, he will definitely be defeated. And yet, this process has caused his sword-heart to grow brighter and brighter."

"It's still early. Let's see if he can actually comprehend it thoroughly." Immortal Diancai stared at Ji Ning. Stared at him without blinking.

.....

Simultaneously executing six [Tripartite Lotus Swords] was Ning at his absolute limit, and he even felt his head going dizzy. But Ning didn't think of anything else; the only thing he wanted to do was fight! Fight with all his power!

His heart was completely focused on those flying swords of his. In this moment...Ning, who had gained insight into the heart of a Sword Immortal long ago, was currently seeing his own Sword Immortal's heart grow brighter and brighter. In fact, one memory after another began to flit up through his mind.

"Ji Ning, I am going to demonstrate the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] to you – the Lustrous Sword-Heart!" Prior to this series of Dao Debates, Ning had gone to see Immortal Diancai, who had carefully explained the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] to him.

"This is the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]!"

Sword-light flashed like fire, slashing through the air but not dissipating.

"This, too, is the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]!"

A ray of sword-light flashed like water, circling and spinning in the air, as though the sky itself had been parted from the world by this layer of water..

"This, too, is the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]!"

A cyan light that tore open the skies themselves.

One sword technique another another...they were clearly different sword techniques. Some were average in power, while others were incredibly powerful. But according to Immortal Diancai, all of these techniques were the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].

“The [Three-Foot Sword] is a supreme sword technique which leads to one of the Grand Daos, the Dao of the Sword. In order to become a true Sword Immortal who has comprehended the Grand Dao of the Sword, the first thing you need is a sword-heart. Over many years of training, you have long ago unconsciously developed the heart of a Sword Immortal, but the so called sword-heart requires one to truly have supreme loyalty to the ‘sword’. You must understand your own sword-heart.”

“Once you truly comprehend your sword-heart and learn what it means to be a Sword Immortal...only then will you have opened the gates to actually becoming a Sword Immortal. That will be the moment when you will naturally learn how to execute the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].”

“The first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] – Lustrous Sword-Heart!”

“After your sword-heart becomes lustrous and bright, you will be able to see the true path a Sword Immortal must follow.”

.....

The scenes of Immortal Diancai displaying the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], the ‘Lustrous Sword-Heart’, played over and over in his mind. Some of the attacks were extremely weak, while others were extremely strong. However, all of them were flashing through Ning’s mind, and Ning felt vaguely moved; he began to dimly understand something, although he didn’t fully comprehend yet. However, he knew that he had already begun to gain a few insights.

Whoosh! Sword-light continued to flash and dance. The [Tripartite Lotus Sword] continued to flash in the air, and the sword-light grew sharper and sharper, the more growing mightier and mightier, to the point where they began to press down on the silken ribbons of light.

“Rumble...” The five [Tripartite Lotus Swords] within the enormous spherical region were beginning to struggle more and more forcefully as well. One giant bulge after another appeared on the surface of the sphere of silken light, each bulge greater than the last.

Whitesnow, the distant azure-robed woman who was seated in the lotus position, began to sweat.

“What?!” Holyfire, watching from afar, had a changed look on his face.

The fat, sloppy-looking youth’s eyes instantly turned round. “How the hell...he actually, he actually made a breakthrough in comprehending the sword.”

The black-robed woman’s face, formerly as cold as frost, suddenly had a look of shock appear on it. “A Sword Immortal?”

.....

BANG!

A sudden explosion rang out. The sphere of silken light, which had been stretched to its limits, finally exploded. Silk ribbons scattered everywhere, and the six [Tripartite Lotus Swords] once more rose into

the skies with incomparable sharpness. The power of the swords was clearly much greater than before, and they charged directly towards the Skynet Golem. Soon, the protective armor of the Skynet Golem was shattered.

“Ji Ning wins!” The white-haired elder called out in a high voice.

A look of disbelief filled the face of the azure-robed woman. Someone had actually made a breakthrough mid-battle? She couldn't help but mumble to herself, “A monster, he really is a monster of the Dao of the Sword.”

Ning rose to his feet, turning his gaze towards the entire hall. He called out in a high voice, “Are there any other senior fellow disciples who wish to exchange pointers with me?”

.....

The short elder in the corner couldn't help but say, “A true genius of the Dao of the Sword. He really is a genius of the Dao of the Sword. This Ji Ning was born to walk the path of the Sword Immortals! His innate affinity towards the sword surpasses that of others; in fact, we can use the word ‘monstrous’ to describe it. In addition, he has a heart which is supremely devoted to the sword.”

“Right.” Immortal Diancai stared at the distant Ji Ning. “He was meant to be a Sword Immortal.”

“Yet another disciple has gone up.” The short elder nodded. “It's good that he did. What Ji Ning needs right now is battle experience. The greater a pressure is brought to bear on him, the more lustrous his sword-heart will become.”

“Perhaps...through these battles...he might even comprehend the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] – Lustrous Sword-Heart!” Immortal Diancai mused to himself.

.....

Ning stood there atop the stone pillar. On the other stone pillar was a black-robed youth. Ning's eyes seemed to be filled with the light of the sword, and he said in a clear voice, “Senior apprentice-brother, please make your move!”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 39: [Three-Foot Sword] – The First Stance

“Junior apprentice-brother, for you to gain sudden enlightenment regarding the sword in a moment of battle means that you truly are a marvelous talent for training in the sword. No wonder Immortal Diancai took you on as his disciple.” The black-robed youth said calmly, “Junior apprentice-brother, my techniques are far more vicious than senior apprentice-sister Whitesnow. You must be careful.”

“Senior apprentice-brother, feel free to use everything you have!” Ning sat down in the lotus position, and the black-robed man did so as well. The two stared at each other from afar.

The surrounding area was silent once again. Previously, the two Wanxiang Adepts, Bloodshadow and Whitesnow, had been defeated consecutively. The person who had now joined the fray, Venomblood, was naturally even more formidable than the two of them in a discourse on the Dao. Otherwise, he wouldn't have come.

“Go! Go! Go!” The black-robed youth’s eyes flashed with cold light. Instantly, oily-jade hooks began to fly out from the back of the golem he was controlling in the arena below. Eighteen oily-green poisoned hooks slashed through the air, and while flying over, the tips of these eighteen poisoned hooks began to faintly glow with a venomous, tricolor light. The eighteen poisoned hooks flew straight towards the Thousandwords Golem which Ning was controlling.

It seemed as though the power of this attack was compressed; he didn’t sense any danger at all.

“Eh?” Ning’s face changed slightly. A tricolored poisonous light? Previously, he had fought against Bloodshadow and Whitesnow. Bloodshadow was apparently someone who focused on a single Dao, and had mixed in his insights into other Daos into his techniques; much like Ning, he had reached the Dao Domain level in just a single Dao, and not in the others. However, Bloodshadow had reached an extremely deep level of understanding into that Dao, most likely far surpassing Ning’s understanding of his own. Ning had to rely on the power of his ‘divine soul’ to defeat Bloodshadow.

As for Whitesnow, she should have mastered two different Dao Domains! And this Venomblood...should have mastered three different Dao Domains!

Immortal Diancai had told him that after he reached the level of having three Dao Domains, he would be able to unleash the true power of his [Tripartite Lotus Sword]. But this Venomblood had already reached this level.

“So what if you have gained three Dao Domains? Go!” A fierce sword-light flashed in Ning’s eyes, and eighteen flying swords instantly flew out from the back of his Thousandwords Golem.

The eighteen flying swords slashed through the air, instantly booming into lotus flowers and transforming into eighteen flashing sword-lights of the [Tripartite Lotus Swords]. Although a sword-light formed from three swords was very powerful...when dealing with a foe who shot out eighteen attacks, Ning naturally would use eighteen of his own to deal with it!

A competition on quantity? Ji Ning had never feared anyone in this regard!

“Cling!” “Clang!” “Swish!”

Eighteen blooming lotuses of sword-light on one side, and eighteen venomous tricolored hooks on the other. It was as though eighteen Immortal practitioners were controlling them; they clashed in midair time and time again.

Those eighteen venomous tricolored hooks possessed shocking power and were able to completely suppress Ning’s attacks, but Ning’s sword-light attacks were aligned with water, and possessed tremendous resilience and elasticity. In addition, the tremendous pressure caused Ning to once more enter that earlier battle-mode; to enter the mindset of discarding everything, leaving behind only the sword in his heart!

My heart holds only the sword!

“Kill! Kill! Kill!” The lotuses of sword-light flew about, growing sharper and sharper, to the point where even the distant, spectating disciples could visibly notice that the power with which Ning controlled his [Tripartite Lotus Swords] was slowly growing. The sword-lights seemed to be growing ‘sharper’, to the point where they were slowly taking on a life of their own.

They were continuing to grow more powerful! The might of the lotus sword-lights continuously rose!

.....

“He’s still in a prajna-state of comprehending the sword.” Holyfire stared into the distance. “This junior apprentice-brother possesses truly terrifying potential. He truly is a marvelous student of the sword.”

.....

“The power of the sword-light is continuously rising. Can it be that this junior apprentice-brother is really going to enter the first stage of the Sword Immortal today?” The fat, sloppy-looking youth watched quietly. On the path of Immortals, where were many subtle, varying branches of enlightenment, such as the ‘Yin-Yang branch’, the ‘Taiji branch’, the ‘Sword Immortal branch’, and more.

Sword Immortals traversed the Grand Dao of the Sword! Sword Immortals had always been famous for their combat power, and could be described as the branch most suited for combat. For example, Immortal Diancai, or Immortal Northwalker, the most famous figure in the entire history of the Black-White College. They were all Sword Immortals!

.....

“Formidable.” The black-robed maiden let out a soft exclamation of praise as well. As for Ninelotus, upon hearing this, she immediately stared towards Ning in the arena, her eyes filled with curiosity.

.....

In the corner of the Dao Debate Palace, the short elder was leisurely holding a calabash of wine. Taking a mouthful of the Immortal wine, he glanced sideways at Immortal Diancai, who was staring at the battle without blinking. Fivecraze let out a snickering, strange laugh. “Junior apprentice-brother Diancai, don’t worry. Judging from the situation...this disciple of yours is almost there. Soon, he shall truly understand what his sword-heart is.”

“Mm.” Immortal Diancai’s lips moved slightly, but his eyes continued to focus unblinkingly on the battle going on. This was, after all, his very first disciple.

.....

The black-robed youth, Venomblood, continued to sit there in the lotus position, the look on his face growing increasingly ugly. “How can it be like this? A prajna-state of enlightenment should have a limit; how it is that his sword-light is continuously rising in power? At first, he was at a disadvantage, but now he’s slowly beginning to gain the upper hand. When exactly will there be a limit to this prajna-state?”

“What the hell is he gaining insights into?” The black-robed youth gritted his teeth.

For the likes of the Sloppy Daoist and the other supreme disciples, they were able to tell at a single glance that Ning was walking onto the path of Sword Immortals. However, Venomblood’s experience was clearly a bit lacking; all he knew was that Ning was in the middle of a prajna-state of enlightenment, but he had no idea that Ning was embarking onto the path of Sword Immortals.

In midair, those eighteen lotus flowers of sword-light clashed more and more frenetically against those eighteen venomous tricolored hooks. Those venomous hooks were struggling as much as they could...but they were clearly at a disadvantage.

“Grr!” The black-robed youth’s gaze flashed with a fierce light, and a berserk feeling filled his heart. Those eighteen venomous hooks instantly began to transform, forming an enormous venomous tricolored hook that was more than thirty meters long. The entire venomous tricolored hook glowed with a hazy light, and it swept directly towards Ning’s Thousand Swords Golem.

“Break!” The eighteen lotus flowers of sword-light instantly transformed as well. With six flying swords forming a formation base, they instantly changed into an enormous [Tripartite Lotus Sword] which went to welcome the attack.

“BANG!” An explosive collision. The venomous hook was instantly blown apart. The enormous [Tripartite Lotus Sword] howled through the air, piercing directly through the protective armor over the body of the Venomhook Golem.

“Ji Ning wins!” The white-haired elder’s voice rang out once more, and at the same time, the grand sealing barrier began to disappear.

“I lost.” A gloomy look was in the eyes of the black-robed youth, who had struggled for so long and yet had still lost. He gave the fur-clad youth seated atop the other stone pillar a glance from the corner of his eyes. Then, he leapt forward, transforming into a streak of light as he left the battlefield. He handed the two jade bottles to the white-haired elder, then turned and left.

The entire Dao Debate Palace was completely silent for a moment. And then, all sorts of discussions rang out.

“He lost.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Venomblood lost. Senior apprentice-brother Venomblood has gained three Dao Domains.”

“Even senior apprentice-brother Venomblood lost. What should we do next?”

Variations on this conversation filled the entire Dao Debate Palace. Many of the disciples were saying the same thing; if even Venomblood had lost, which of them should go up next?

“Well done! Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, well done!” Northson resolutely supported Ning. He was the only person who called out in support of Ning...and he and Ning were the only members in the new disciples ‘faction’.

The other fellow disciples were all chatting amongst themselves, and also discussing who amongst them should be the next to go up. Only, none of them noticed that something unusual was happening to Ji Ning right now.

.....

In fact, not even the Primal Daoists that were watching this through a water-scrying technique were able to notice. After all, they weren’t actually present and able to witness things firsthand. Only two did – Immortal Fivecraze and Immortal Diancai. They noticed something unusual about Ning.

After defeating the black-robed youth, Venomblood, Ning hadn't risen to his feet as he had in the past. Instead, he continued to stay seated in the lotus position.

"Sense his aura." Immortal Fivecraze's eyes were growing brighter and brighter. "Ji Ning's aura...his aura is sharpening and intensifying."

"Right." Immortal Diancai's eyes were shining as well. He stared fixedly at Ning, seated in the lotus position atop the stone pillar. For a powerful Sword Immortal like Diancai, he could feel that the distant Ji Ning was also beginning to emit a similar sword aura as Diancai himself had. Although it was incredibly weak, it was slowly beginning to manifest.

"He's growing more and more powerful." Immortal Fivecraze couldn't even be bothered to drink wine. He stared excitedly at the distant Ning. "I feel as though he has completely changed into a sword."

"He made the breakthrough." A smile appeared on the face of Immortal Diancai as well.

As soon as his words came out...the distant Ning arose from the lotus position, coming to his feet.

.....

When he had been battling against Whitesnow, Ning's mind had become filled with the scenes of his master, Immortal Diancai, teaching him about the sword. At that time, he had gained a vague feeling for what the 'Lustrous Sword-Heart' was. Now that he had battled Venomblood, his insights had grown even deeper, and the power of his sword-light was growing increasingly great as well.

In the instant he had defeated Venomblood, he felt as though he were a bubble that had stretched to its limit, then instantly exploded. All of those doubts and questions in his heart had vanished. Ning's heart had become truly lustrous!

"If you wish to become a Sword Immortal, you must have the utmost sincerity towards the sword! The sword, and the sword in your heart. If you have the sword in your heart, then even with a rock, a throwing hammer, or a wooden stick, you'll still be able to execute sword arts."

"For a Sword Immortal, everything is part of the Dao of the Sword. The Rainwater Dao, the Daos of Wind, Fire, and other Daos...they will all be merged into the Dao of the Sword."

"The sword is my body. The sword is my life. The sword is my path."

Ning opened his eyes. His eyes, his entire body...every single part of him seemed to be brimming with sword-ki! It was as though Ning himself was a peerless sword!

The sword of a Sword Immortal was the Sword Immortal himself. He was the sword, and he could use any magic treasures in executing sword arts.

The sword of a Sword Immortal was his Dao. This Dao, when taken to its absolute peak, led one to supremacy amongst the Three Realms.

The sword of a Sword Immortal was what he relied on. On his path as an Immortal cultivator, only by using the sword...would he be able to carve a path to the very top. If Gods blocked him, he would kill Gods; if Buddhas blocked him, he would slay the Buddhas. He would carve a path through all which would oppose him, and he would rely on his sword to do this!

“I want for my mother and father to be able to live forever.”

“I want my loved ones to be able to live joyful lives.”

“I want for tragedies to never befall me.”

“I want to never again be controlled by the hands of fate!”

Ning’s sword-heart was now completely shining and translucent; all of his hopes, his desires, his dreams, they were all embodied within his sword! His body, his life, even his future hopes and aspirations; they were all entrusted to the sword. The sword was what he would rely on to carve out his future and his path.

“The first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], the Lustrous Sword-Heart.” Ning instantly comprehended the very first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].

There were many different ways in which the first stance could be executed. What one needed to do was to release the technique in accordance with the insight one had gained into one’s own sword-heart. That would be enough.

.....

Ning rose to his feet. Standing there, atop the stone pillar, he stared at his fellow disciples in the Dao Debate Palace, then once more spoke out.

“Are there any other fellow disciples who wish to provide me with guidance?”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 40: That Chop

The Black-White College disciples within the Dao Debate Palace began to turn their gazes towards a small number of people. Venomblood was already quite a powerful Wanxiang Adept in terms of the Dao Debates, and yet even he had been defeated by Ji Ning. Then, in order to defeat Ji Ning...they would need someone even more powerful. There were only so many who fit the criteria.

There were only ten or so disciples who had multiple Dao Domains and were extremely strong.

“Given the situation, I would like to test your strength for myself, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” A white-robed man who was standing next to Holyfire suddenly stood out with a calm laugh.

“Northmont Blackcurrent?”

“Senior apprentice-brother Northmont Blackcurrent is about to engage. Senior apprentice-brother Blackcurrent’s ‘Five Energies Grand Grappling Hand’ technique is astonishingly strong, far more so than senior apprentice-brother Venomblood’s technique.”

“If senior apprentice-brother Blackcurrent engages, he will definitely win.”

Debates rang out once again. Blackcurrent, amongst the Wanxiang Adepts of the Black-White College, could be considered a well-known figure. But of course, in normal, real battles, the Fiendgod disciples would be even stronger. The likes of Bloodshadow, for example, possessed real combat power that was

simply heaven-defying. On the battlefield, Fiendgod Body Refiners possessed an innate advantage to begin with.

Although Blackcurrent was a Ki Refiner, if one only looked at comprehension of the Dao, he definitely was one of the most impressive of the disciples who had comprehended multiple Dao Domains. He vastly surpassed Venomblood and the others.

“Northmont Blackcurrent?” Ning looked towards him, immediately recognizing him. When he had first gone to visit the Black-White College, he had encountered this Blackcurrent fellow. Back then, Blackcurrent had held him in no regard. “Brother Baiwei, back then, described this Northmont Blackcurrent as a viper dressed in a sheepskin. Now, it seems...at least I see the sheepskin part.”

Blackcurrent had a smile on his face. He moved with leisurely grace, and was dressed in white clothes. Indeed, he appeared quite elegant, and it seemed as though he had quite a few friends.

Soon, Blackcurrent emerged from the side room with a construct. With a step, he flew directly atop the stone pillar, and his golem also landed at the arena below.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” Blackcurrent stood on the pillar, staring into the distance. Laughing, he said, “When I first met you, I had no idea that I would be discussing the Dao with you today at the Dao Debate Palace. The changes of the world truly are marvelous and remarkable.”

“To be able to battle with you, senior apprentice-brother...I, too, am amazed by the countless transformations of the world,” Ning replied.

Blackcurrent nodded gently, but the desire for combat was quite evident in his eyes. Because he was born from a fairly remote branch of the Northmont clan of Stillwater, he had always looked down upon those main lineage disciples who had relied on the protection of their parents. He had long ago relegated Ning to the side of people such as Baiwei. Ning’s earlier repeated successes had caused him to feel all the more unhappy.

“His talent is quite exceptional. However, it’s enough for him to have won this many battles,” Blackcurrent mused to himself.

Suddenly...a white-haired, white-robed man standing amidst the many fellow disciples within the Dao Debate Palace spoke out. “Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” Ning turned his to look, and as he did, he clasped his hands. “Senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow.”

Bloodshadow was a bit weaker in terms of the Dao Debate, but in a real battle, he was definitely one of the top-ranked disciples of the third generation.

“Junior apprentice-brother, first you defeated three Zifu Disciples, then you defeated myself, Whitesnow, and Venomblood. And now, you are going to battle with Northmont Blackcurrent...I am truly in admiration of you. Junior apprentice-brother Blackcurrent is exceptionally talented, while you, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, are a peerless genius. It is hard to say who will win this fight. I’m willing to take out a treasure and add to the intrigue of this battle. If you are able to defeat junior apprentice-brother Blackcurrent, I will give this treasure to you.”

As soon as these words came out, there was instantly a hullabaloo. Bloodshadow’s words were rather ‘damaging’ to Blackcurrent’s face, and he clearly was closer to Ji Ning’s side.

“Hmph.” Blackcurrent felt some unhappiness in his heart, but Bloodshadow was one of the third generation disciples he could least afford to irritate. On the surface, he maintained his calm, smiling demeanor.

“How can I accept this?” Ning immediately said. “No need to be humble,” Bloodshadow replied. “This treasure is a Mortal-ranked magic treasure; to me, it’s not very useful. When I was carrying out an assignment for the Raindragon Guard, I accidentally entered an Immortal estate, and I was lucky enough to manage to pick up a sword formation technique. I saw that you, junior apprentice-brother, are skilled in controlling flying swords, and quite a few of them at once at that. This flying sword formation I acquired is a [Heavenly Spirits, Earthly Fiends] sword formation with a total of 108 flying swords. They are useless to me, but to you, junior apprentice-brother, they will definitely be of great use. However, if you want to acquire them, you’ll have to show off your abilities in this battle, junior apprentice-brother.”

The white-robed, white-haired Bloodshadow had a smile on his face. He did indeed have a very good opinion of Ji Ning.

He had also been the first of the Wanxiang Adepts to engage Ning. In reality, he was simply ‘throwing a brick to attract jade’, seeking to draw out the others. He often engaged in life-and-death battles, and so his senses were exceptionally acute. He could vaguely sense that the distant Ji Ning was like a sword, and he had understood that this junior apprentice-brother of his would have an unlimited potential.

In taking out this set of flying swords...although he said that it would be the reward for a victory, even if Ning lost, when the time came, Bloodshadow could still find an excuse to give it to Ning. And so, the two would naturally grow closer to each other.

“I will definitely work hard,” Ning said. How could this Mortal-ranked flying sword formation be truly useless to Bloodshadow? If nothing else, he could take it to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain and exchange it for quite a few elemental badges. Clearly, this senior apprentice-brother wanted to befriend him.

.....

“That kid Bloodshadow is the first to move to befriend your disciple.” The short elder held the gourd of wine in his hand, and was drinking it while chatting leisurely.

Immortal Diancai nodded lightly. “Bloodshadow is also a truly heroic figure amongst the third generation.”

“He stands on the side of your disciple, so he’s a heroic figure?” The short elder gave him a stare, then said with pursed lips, “Still, to tell the truth, although this kid Bloodshadow is a bit slow in terms of comprehending the Dao, he’s moved stably and confidently. In particular...he’s quite good at enduring suffering. Of the various Fiendgod Body Refining Techniques, the [Indestructible Bloodshadow Body] is described as the most painful technique to train in. If one is successful, however, the results are bizarrely, astonishingly powerful. In addition, this kid, Bloodshadow, often takes on dangerous missions for the Raindragon Guard. With his special, unbreakable body, he has walked the path between life and death on multiple occasions, and his power is increasing at a faster and faster rate. His divine ability is fairly powerful as well, now...when he first joined, he was unremarkable, but now he’s one of the most

powerful third generation disciples. I imagine that in a few more centuries, he will have become one of the most powerful members of our Black-White College.”

“You have such a good view of him?” Immortal Diancai was surprised. The short elder sighed. “Although comprehending the Dao is important, the Dao-heart is even more important. Once you’ve seen as much as I have, you will understand.”

“Alright.” Immortal Diancai gave Bloodshadow a long, deep look.

“Battle’s starting.” The short elder’s eyes lit up as he stared at the distant battle. Ning and Blackcurrent had each already begun to control their golems in combat. “Junior apprentice-brother Diancai, who do you think will win? As I see it, although your disciples has comprehended the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], that first stance involves comprehending one’s own sword-heart!”

“What is his sword-heart like? No one knows. How powerful will the techniques he unleashes be? Hard to say. But this ‘Five Energies Grand Grappling Hand’ of Blackcurrent is far more powerful than the technique that Venomblood kid was using.” The short elder looked at Immortal Diancai, eagerly awaiting a look of concern to appear on his face.

But Immortal Diancai remained as solemn as ever. “What is his sword-heart like? We’ll know if we watch.”

“Oh.” The short elder mumbled a response, then shook his head and sighed. “Ohoho, your disciple is at a disadvantage. Seems as though it’ll be dangerous for him.”

.....

Everyone watching what was going on within the sealed arena was holding their breaths.

“Will this junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning be able to produce another miracle?” Holyfire’s eyes were narrowed.

.....

“It seems as though the sharpness of his sword-light is no longer increasing. Has his prajna-state come to an end?” The fat, sloppy-looking youth frowned as he watched. “If it has already come to an end, it’s hard to say who will win.”

.....

“Senior apprentice-sister, will junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning be able to win?” Ninelotus asked. The black-robed maiden, the Rainbowflame Fairy, just watched silently without saying a word.

.....

“Win, win, win.” Northson and Winterain were standing together in a corner. Northson’s fists were tightly clenched, and his eyes were round.

.....

Within the grand sealing formation. Although Ning, seated in the lotus position atop the stone pillar, was at a definite disadvantage, those nine [Tripartite Lotus Swords] were continuing to struggle and

resist the enormous 'Five Energies Grand Grappling Hand'. However, by the looks of things, if they exchanged a few more blows, the [Tripartite Lotus Swords] were going to collapse.

Ning was very calm. He didn't panic in the slightest, which caused Blackcurrent to laugh coldly in his heart. "It's about time for you to lose."

What he didn't know was that Ning was currently storing up his power. In his heart, the various insights that he had gained into the sword were surging out in waves.

"To be carefree! To do as I please!"

"To force even fate to beat a retreat!"

Ning's eyes suddenly exploded with a terrifying sword-intent, and an astonishing sword-intent radiated from his entire body.

"The first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] – Lustrous Sword-Heart!" Ning's gaze solidified, and instantly, a rumbling sound could be heard. Every single flying sword on the back of the Thousandwords Golem flew out, including the flying swords he had used before. There were a thousand flying swords, clustered there in the air, and they caused all of the spectators to be completely shocked. So many flying swords?! What were they going to do?

Every single one of the thousand flying swords was pointing directly to the 'Five Energies Grand Grappling Hand' ahead of them.

"CHOP!" Ning bellowed forth this single word! The thousand flying swords instantly blossomed into lotus flowers, and at the same time, they all chopped forward. The thousand flying swords had instantly transformed into a single, enormous sword-light. Carrying irresistible power and majesty, they chopped forward!

This single chop! It contained the invincible will of Ning's sword-heart!

In his past life, Ning had experienced the information explosion era. As the saying goes, one who enters the red dust of the mortal world will depart while covered in it. The distracting thoughts generated by the information explosion era were even more astonishing than the distracting thoughts generated during the era of wandering barbarians.

The experiences he had in this life, the lives and deaths of those he loved, the warmth of family; it was these things that allowed Ning's heart to slowly grow lustrous and be purified of those distracting thoughts.

If a person were to live in a perfect utopia, a peach garden beyond all worldly matters, then perhaps that person would be able to maintain a pure, lustrous heart. But this sort of pure, lustrous heart would be a very weak one. Upon encountering any setbacks or seductions, it might easily crumble.

But Ning had seen far too many things in his past life, in the information explosion era. Tormented and wracked by pain, he had watched as others freely ran about, read books, had lovers, and more. How painful and tortured that had been!

His heart had long ago been stained by the red dust of the mortal world. In this life, the love and warmth of family had slowly polished it bright, and now, his heart was all the stronger and all the more unbreakable!

It was admittedly praiseworthy for someone who stood at the peak of a mountain to maintain perfect purity, but for someone to be born from the sludge to remain unsullied was even harder to do!

“This is my first stance of my [Three-Foot Sword]!”

“Chop!”

“Chop!!!”

“CHOP!!!”

Ning roared the word ‘chop’ three times, and the sword-light in his eyes was visible to the naked eye. That powerful sword-intent, that mighty, irresistible will; it caused even those two Immortals watching from afar to be moved.

BOOM!!!!!!

The thousand flying swords, linked into a single, massive burst of sword-light, were all chopping in unison towards a single direction!

Although that mighty, heaven-defying ‘Five Energies Grand Grappling Hand’ was able to resist for just a brief moment, with a mighty boom, it shattered apart like glass.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 7: Stillwater City Chapter 41: Yu Wei and Ji Ning

Some of the extremely high-ranking disciples who had been seated, such as senior apprentice-brother Holyfire, the fat, sloppy-looking youth, and the black-robed maiden had all risen to their feet. Looks of shock were on their faces, and they stared, stunned, at the fur-clad youth atop the stone pillar in the distance.

As for Northmont Blackcurrent, located on the other stone pillar within the grand sealing formation, his face had instantly turned ashen.

“I, I lost?”

“I, how could I have lost? How could I have lost?” Blackcurrent’s eyes were filled with disbelief. He was an incomparably prideful figure. He didn’t even hold high-level members of the Northmont clan, such as main lineage members like Northmont Baiwei, with any regard. This was precisely because he was absolutely confident in his own abilities. But a new disciple who had just entered the school, and one who was extremely friendly terms with Baiwei to boot...had actually defeated him in a ‘Dao Debate’, an arena he had been extremely self-confident in.

“It was that sword...that sword...” Blackcurrent’s mind still clearly remembered that terrifying sword, that chop that was launched simultaneously by a thousand flying swords. It felt as though that chop had cut a scar straight into his Dao-heart.

“What a terrifying sword. Only when facing that sword head-on can a person truly understand how terrifying it is. A sword with no regrets and nothing held back; a sword which nothing can block.” Blackcurrent’s heart was filled with panic and disbelief that he had lost, but when he thought back to that sword, he felt completely powerless.

“Ji Ning wins!” The white-haired elder shouted loudly, and the entire grand sealing formation vanished.

“Senior apprentice-brother Blackcurrent, thank you for taking it easy on me.” Ning’s voice rang out, echoing throughout the entire Dao Debate Palace. Only now did Blackcurrent come to his senses. He forcibly clamped down on the wild thoughts running through his mind, then clasped his hands and said, “Junior apprentice-brother, you truly are formidable. I sigh that I am inferior to you.” After speaking, he released the bond with the golem, then transformed into a streak of light and left the arena. He handed the two jade bottles to the white-haired elder, and then, silently and wordlessly, entered the crowd of spectating fellow disciples.

.....

“What a powerful sword,” the fat, sloppy-looking youth mused to himself.

.....

“In a few decades, our Black-White College will have produced yet another formidable figure.” Holyfire had a hint of a smile on his face as he looked at Ning.

.....

In the entire Dao Debate Palace, only the two Immortals truly understood that sword technique of Ning’s! “Lustrous Sword-Heart! What a fine Lustrous Sword-Heart!” The short elder’s eyes were shining as he stared at Ning. “Such a powerful sword-heart, such a resolute sword-heart...our Black-White College has truly taken in a treasure this time.”

“We have indeed.” Immortal Diancai was staring towards the distant Ning as well, and his eyes were blazing. “I wonder, how in the world did this disciple of mine manage to generate a sword-heart such as this in ten or so short years. The experiences he had did involve life and death, but for them to produce such a powerful sword-heart...this is truly inconceivable.”

“Hahaha, just you watch and see. Those other fellows are probably going to arrive soon,” the short elder chortled. Immortal Diancai laughed as well. The short elder let out a weird laugh and said, “They are definitely feeling regret as well. Regret for not having come to the Dao Debate Palace to watch in person..”

.....

The headmaster of the Black-White College, Daoist Jadesea, was currently seated in the lotus position on his bed. Above him, there was a watery scrying mirror which clearly displayed the discourses on the Dao that were going on within the Dao Debate Palace.

“That sword!” A look of shock appeared on the face of Daoist Jadesea, who was so handsome that women would be infatuated with him. “Can it be that he has embarked on the path of the Sword Immortal?”

“Ugh!” Daoist Jadesea let out a regretful sigh. He could only see the images through water-scrying, but the auras, the presences, the ripples of the world...all of the intricate details were lost.

“I’m going.” Daoist Jadesea didn’t hesitate at all. Waving his hand, he made the water-scrying mirror disappear, and then his body flickered and disappeared.

.....

Quite a few of the Primal Daoists of the Black-White College were watching this battle through the water-scrying technique. When they saw that sword emerge, all of them were awestruck. However, because none of them had personally seen and sensed the sword in the Dao Debate Palace, they weren’t completely certain of what it was either. Thus, all of them hurried towards the Dao Debate Palace...and even two of the Immortals headed there as well.

.....

The third generation disciples who were in the Dao Debate Palace, in turn, had no idea about what was going on in the outside world. They were all chatting amongst themselves. Even Blackcurrent had lost? Then who would be the next to stand forward? Blackcurrent could be considered one of the top ten figures amongst those who had multiple Dao Domains.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, don’t be so sentimental. It’s just a set of flying swords.” Senior apprentice-brother Bloodshadow was currently chatting with Ning, and offering to him that set of [Heavenly Spirits, Earthly Fiends] sword formation. Ning laughed. “Fine. Then your junior apprentice-brother will accept it.”

The simple interactions Ning had had with Bloodshadow made him feel quite well-disposed towards him. He accepted the set of flying swords, and by doing so, he was clearly acknowledging Bloodshadow as a friend.

“That’s more like it.” Bloodshadow nodded. “Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, your talent is astonishing. However, the path of Immortals is not one in which you can simply bury yourself in training. You also need to wander the world and experience many things for yourself. I imagine that in a few years at most, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you will go out and adventure through the world. Most likely, you will also join the Raindragon Guard and whatnot. If there’s anything you need, feel free to come find me. I’m quite familiar regarding the Raindragon Guard.”

“When the time comes, I will definitely go and trouble you, senior apprentice-brother,” Ning said with a laugh.

“Eh?” Bloodshadow suddenly turned his head to look, and Ning did so as well. A figure had emerged from the third generation disciples.

“Her?” Ning’s pupils contracted. The person who had walked out was a black-robed maiden. Previously, she had sat there, surrounded by others; even Ninelotus had been by her side. Clearly, her status was extremely high.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” The black-robed maiden walked over, then said in a cool, calm voice, “I should be the most powerful of the disciples who have comprehended multiple Dao Domains. If

you defeat me, then it will naturally be up to senior apprentice-brother Holyfire and the others will come out to fight you.” After finishing, she turned and moved towards the side room to select a golem.

“You are doomed.” Bloodshadow sucked a cold breath. “Who is she?” Although Ning had a guess, he still asked the question.

“The Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei!” Bladeshadow spoke in a very soft voice. “She is a reincarnated Immortal, and her talent is terrifyingly great. When she had first entered the school, none of the old disciples chose to have a Dao Debate with her! Her training speed is astonishing as well; she is currently just over twenty years old, but her power has already reached a frightening level.”

Ning was inwardly shocked. A reincarnated Immortal? His master had also told him that there were only a total of three reincarnated Immortals amongst the third generation disciples. Two had trained for over eighty years, while one had been training for over twenty years. The one who had been training for over twenty years was most likely this black-robed woman, Yu Wei.

“No wonder she said that she is the most powerful out of those who have comprehended multiple Dao Domains,” Ning mused to himself in shock.

“Junior apprentice-brother, I’d like to help you, but I’m unable to.” Bloodshadow immediately departed.

“So what if she is a reincarnated Immortal? She’s just trained for ten or so more years than I have, that’s all.” Although Ning was on high alert, he didn’t feel the slightest bit of dread.

.....

Just a few moments later. Ning was atop the stone pillar in the arena, under the grand sealing barrier, and he was staring in astonishment at the scene before him.

He had released a thousand flying swords, which had combined to form the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], and the power of this attack was truly astonishing. But this Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei, had actually also chosen the Thousandwords Golem, and had also released a thousand flying swords, all of which had transformed into a sea of fiery sword light.

A scorching sea of fiery sword-light. A sharp, fierce sea of fiery sword-light. An irresistible sea of fiery sword light!

A head-on clash! A frontal clash!

Although Ning’s sword-light was extremely sharp and extremely strong, that all-devouring flame was even more berserk. It smashed apart Ning’s sword-light, piercing past the protective armor of Ning’s Thousandwords Golem.

“Yu Wei wins!” The white-haired elder called out. It was a clean, straightforward win.

“I lost!” Ning rose to his feet and laughed. “Senior apprentice-sister, you are formidable. I wholeheartedly acknowledge my loss.”

“When I was sixteen, I wasn’t as strong as you are.” The Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei, gave Ning a glance. “Right. Don’t forget to give me those hundred black-white pellets and those five kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.”

Ning stared at her, instantly stupefied. He opened his mouth, but no words came out. Why would an exalted reincarnated Immortal act as though she cared about the wager that much? What, did she think that he was going to welch on their bet?

.....

By now, the various Primal Daoists had all arrived at the Dao Debate Palace. They made it just in the nick of time, and were just barely able to catch the sight of Ning battling against the Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei. All of them nodded inwardly. "He really is a Sword Immortal. And what a powerful sword-heart! In a few centuries, our Black-White College will most likely produce yet another Sword Immortal that is comparable to Uncle-Master Diancai!"

In a corner of the Dao Debate Palace. Whoosh! Whoosh! Two more Immortals had appeared next to Immortal Fivecraze and Immortal Diancai. One was a bearded old man with a crown on his head, while the other was a juvenile child who radiated an aura of infinite cold. Their arrival had not been noticed by any of the Primal Daoists or the third generation disciples within the Dao Debate Palace.

"Sword Immortal!" The crowned, bearded elder nodded as he spoke. "He has indeed embarked onto the path of a Sword Immortal. Finally, our Black-White College has yet another disciple who has begun to comprehend the Grand Dao of the Sword."

Daos were divided into levels as well. Rainwater, ice, and whatnot; these were all just some of the countless Daos of the natural world. But the Dao of the Sword, however, was on a higher level; it was a 'Grand Dao'.

Even gaining a basic understanding of it was extremely difficult; Zifu Disciples would generally find it quite easy to comprehend a hint of the True Meaning of the Rainwater, and in fact, it wasn't even that impressive for them to comprehend a Rainwater Dao Domain.

But the Dao of the Sword, as one of the Grand Daos...even getting a basic understanding of it was extremely rare.

"And what a powerful sword-heart. A sword-heart like that, talent like that, and comprehension abilities like that..." The juvenile child's voice was quite youthful, but his words rang out in a manner that seemed aged and sallow. "He is indeed a piece of unpolished jade that can be sculpted into a mighty Sword Immortal."

"Right, right, right." The short elder nodded repeatedly. "Our Black-White College currently only has a single Sword Immortal, junior apprentice-brother Diancai. Now, we have another one. A Sword Immortal! Even if he is defeated by the tribulations and ends up becoming a Loose Immortal, he will still be one with astonishing combat power, haha."

The crowned, bearded elder instantly frowned and barked, "Senior apprentice-brother Fivecraze, junior apprentice-brother Diancai is merely an Earth Immortal right now. He has a very good chance of becoming a Celestial Immortal. Don't say such negative things at a time like this!"

The short elder immediately looked towards Immortal Diancai. "Junior apprentice-brother Diancai..."

But Immortal Diancai just laughed calmly. "It's fine. It's enough so long as I act in a way which is true to my heart. It is precisely as senior Northwalker said; it is better to live passionately for a day, than to live

a century while stifled. All I need to do is continue moving forward. Whether or not I can become a Celestial Immortal...that's secondary."

"Well-spoken!" The short elder nodded. As for the juvenile youth, he looked at Immortal Diancai. "Junior apprentice-brother Diancai, Ji Ning is a second Sword Immortal for our Black-White College. You must train him well!"

Immortal Diancai turned his head, staring at the distant Ji Ning, who was handing over jade bottles to Yu Wei. An eager light appeared in his eyes, and he slowly said, "That is to be expected. He is my disciple, after all!"

.....

"Senior apprentice-sister. A hundred black-white pellets and five kilograms of liquefied elemental essences. Here it is." Ning handed the two jade bottles to the Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei.

The black-robed Yu Wei glanced at Ning, a hint of amusement on her face. Stretching her arm out, she snatched the bottles away from Ning, then turned and left.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 8: Raindragon Guard Chapter 1: Jadesea

The temperament of the black-robed maiden, Yu Wei, was something Ji Ning couldn't quite get a grasp on. However, when he thought about how many times the white-haired elder had accepted the black-white pellets and liquefied elemental essence on his behalf, Ning felt absolutely delighted. In addition, this series of Dao Debates had also served as a form of baptism. He could sense that he had evolved, somehow.

"Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning!" A voice rang out in celebration. Ning turned to look, only to see the skinny, small, white-robed Mu Northson charging over with incomparable excitement. He hurriedly howled, "Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you are way too powerful. You consecutively defeated so many Wanxiang Adepts, and even that seemingly powerful Northmont Blackcurrent was defeated by you. Just now, I asked senior apprentice-sister Winterain; that senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei who defeated you is a reincarnated Immortal, and one who has trained for ten years more than we have, and entered the school long before us."

"Don't worry, I'm not upset," Ning laughed. Northson was still incomparably excited. "In short, you are way too powerful. I heard senior apprentice-sister Winterain say that it is extremely rare to see someone like you, and that even in the Black-White College, you can be considered a supreme genius. Perhaps, in a few thousand years or a few tens of thousands of years, the entire Black-White College will have firmly memorized your name."

Ning shook his head. "You praise me over-much." Suddenly...he heard voices ring out from the side. "Uncle-Master Headmaster." "Uncle-Master Headmaster." A chorus of voices called out.

The group of Primal Daoists, who had arrived soundlessly and without announcement and who had been hiding themselves, all walked over at this point in time.

"All of you can go back now." Daoist Jadesea, who was walking at the head of the group, said calmly, "Ji Ning, stay behind!"

“Yes.” Quite a few members of the third generation still wanted to converse with Ning, and at least ensure that Ning knew their names. This was because everyone understood something: Given how powerful he had shown himself to be, so shortly after entering the school...so long as he didn’t die, he would definitely be a truly influential figure of Stillwater Commandery. However, since the headmaster had given the order, they all naturally departed.

“Ji Ning?” Senior apprentice-brother Holyfire gave Ning a deep look, memorizing him.

“Intriguing, intriguing. More and more intriguing.” The fat, sloppy-looking youth had a look of delight on his face. He lazily ambled away.

.....

Ning said to the nearby Northson, “Junior apprentice-brother Northson, you go back as well.” Northson nodded. “Alright.” He immediately departed alongside Winterain. Soon, no one was left in the entire Dao Debate Palace aside from the Primal Daoists and Ji Ning, as well as the Immortals who had hidden themselves in the corner.

“Ji Ning.” Daoist Jadesea looked at Ning, and the Primal Daoists next to him looked at Ning as well, their eyes filled with curiosity. “Uncle-Master Headmaster,” Ning acknowledged respectfully.

“Do you know what a Sword Immortal is?” Daoist Jadesea asked. Ning replied, startled, “Sword Immortals? Some Immortals who use flying swords in extremely powerful ways are addressed respectfully by others in this manner, I believe. Can it be that this term has a special meaning?” Even up till now, Ning still wasn’t quite sure as to what the term ‘Sword Immortal’ truly meant.

“Uncle-Master Diancai didn’t tell you?” Daoist Jadesea seemed to have thought of something as he spoke. Ning replied, “Master didn’t discuss Sword Immortals with me in detail. He only provided me with guidance regarding sword arts. He told me to finish mastering the [Neo-Tripartite Lotus Sword] and the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], then to seek him out again.”

Daoist Jadesea nodded. “That explains it, then. If one is capable of executing the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], then one has already become a Sword Immortal. You should know that this world is filled with many Daos, yes?”

“Yes, I do.” Ning nodded. In his heart, he added...that he also knew that the most supreme figure of the Three Realms, Maiden Nuwa, had comprehended eighty four thousand different Daos! But of course, this was according to what he had heard in the past from the Lord of Cui Palace.

“The Daos are numerous beyond counting.” Daoist Jadesea looked at Ning. “In addition, there are different levels of Dao as well.” Ning’s ears twitched. “Different levels of Dao?”

“Right.” Daoist Jadesea nodded. “The Dao is divided into the supreme ‘Heavenly Daos’, the extremely exalted ‘Grand Daos’, and the ordinary ‘Daos’.”

“The Heavenly Daos, the Grand Daos, and Dao?” Ning held his breath. Not even his master had discussed these things with him in detail.

“The Heavenly Daos are the most fundamental of Daos, and they are the underpinning of the functioning of the cosmos. They are incomparably supreme. For example, the Five Elements! After

Pangu established the universe, the universe was formed from the most basic of particles, the Five Elements. Normally, when we talk about 'swearing an oath by the Dao of the Heavens', or making a 'Oath of Blood to the Dao of the Heavens', we are swearing an oath to the Heavenly Daos. The Heavenly Daos uphold the functioning of the universe, and once we violate an oath sworn to them, they will naturally punish us. No one can escape the punishment of the Daos of the Heavens. This is the most supreme of Daos."

Ning was shocked and stunned.

"According to the legends, so long as one can comprehend a Heavenly Dao, then one will become one of the most incomparably exalted figures of the Three Realms." Daoist Jadesea's eyes were filled with a boundless eagerness as well, and the gazes of the Primal Daoists next to him became lost and dreamy as well. To them, the Heavenly Daos were legends and myths.

"But of course, I've never even heard of anyone who comprehended a Heavenly Dao." Daoist Jadesea laughed as he looked at Ning. "Never, not even in any of the legends or stories."

Ning sighed to himself. Right. Heavenly Daos. When Immortal practitioners swore an oath, they would do so towards the Dao of the Heavens. It was the Daos of the Heavens which upheld the functioning of the entire Three Realms. It was naturally incomparably exalted.

"One level lower than the Heavenly Daos are the Grand Daos!" Daoist Jadesea looked towards Ji Ning. "Every single Grand Dao is also extremely exalted, and it is extremely difficult to even gain an initial insight into them."

"On a level lower than the Grand Daos are the most numerous, ordinary Daos." Daoist Jadesea looked at Ji Ning. "Your Dao of Rainwater, and the Daos of Freezing Ice, Mystic Ice, and the like...these are all ordinary Daos."

Ning nodded. He now understood that Daos were divided into levels as well! Heavenly Daos were the most supreme, the fundamental Daos which underpinned the cosmos!

"The Dao of the Sword, however, is one of the Grand Daos!" Daoist Jadesea looked towards Ning. "Everyone who has embarked upon the Dao of the Sword is known as a Sword Immortal!"

"Ah?!" Ning stared. The Dao of the Sword was one of the Grand Daos? He had actually embarked onto the path of a Grand Dao?

"To gain an initial insight into the Dao of the Sword, one must clearly develop and comprehend one's sword-heart and make it lustrous." Daoist Jadesea looked towards Ji Ning. "This is also the first stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]. You need to have a heart which is supremely, sincerely devoted to the sword, and you need to make that sword-heart of yours lustrous...the difficulty of doing this is even greater than reaching the Dao Domain level of your Dao of Rainwater."

Ning nodded in acknowledgement. It was, indeed, a bit harder to reach the 'Lustrous Sword-Heart' level than to develop his Rainwater Sword Domain.

"This is the difference in Daos. It is even harder to gain an initial insight into a Grand Dao than it is to reach the Dao Domain level in an ordinary Dao." Daoist Jadesea stared at Ning, his gaze blazing.

“This is also why you were able to defeat even Northmont Blackcurrent, who has reached the level of possessing five Dao Domains. It is because the Dao you comprehended is a Grand Dao! Although he has comprehended many, they are all lesser Daos! In addition...the Dao of the Sword, even amongst the Grand Daos, is known as the Grand Dao with the greatest offensive combat potential. Sword Immortals are legendary for their combat power as well.”

“In our Black-White College...including you, we only have a total of two Sword Immortals,” Daoist Jadesea said. “One is you, with the other being your master, Uncle-Master Diancai.” Ning nodded.

“Because you have gained an insight into the Grand Dao of the Sword, our Black-White College shall bestow upon you two thousand black-white pellets.” Daoist Jadesea took out a jade bottle, handing it over to Ning.

Ning was instantly overjoyed. Two thousand black-white pellets? When his master had bestowed him with black-white pellets, he had informed Ning that he would receive a thousand black-white pellets for reaching the Dao Domain level, and just two thousand black-white pellets for his soul reaching the ‘divine sense’ level. Generally speaking, only Primal Daoists would have a soul at the ‘divine sense’ level. And yet, just gaining an initial insight into a Grand Dao merited a similar award of two thousand black-white pellets!

“Why are there no records of this within the black-and-white book?” Ning hurriedly asked. “The black-and-white book has quite a few records regarding various rewards of black-white pellets, such as for joining the Raindragon Guard, becoming a two-clawed Raindragon Guard, a three-clawed Raindragon Guard...why aren’t there any records regarding becoming a Sword Immortal?”

“Heavenly Daos. Grand Daos. Ordinary Daos. The fact that there are these differences is not something which is to be carelessly exposed.” Daoist Jadesea looked towards Ning. “If you hadn’t comprehended them for yourself and we told you of them, it would actually harm you by affecting your Dao-heart. You would be unwilling to go comprehend an ordinary Dao, and would focus on trying to master a Grand Dao. But do you think a Grand Dao is so easily comprehended? If you aren’t already at that level, letting you know about the levels will harm you for no benefit.”

Ning now understood.

“Even us.” Daoist Jadesea looked at the crowd of Primal Daoists. “Even we only learned about this matter after we finished comprehending a complete Dao Path. Now that we have mastered a complete Dao Path, the next step for us is to comprehend a Grand Dao!”

Ning now understood.

“Grand Daos are extremely hard to understand. Even in our Black-White College, and even for the likes of senior Northwalker, there has never been anyone who has completely and thoroughly mastered a Grand Dao.” Daoist Jadesea looked towards Ning. “The path of mastering a Grand Dao is incomparably more difficult than the path of mastering an ordinary Dao; thousands of times more difficult. However, the power of a Grand Dao is also countless times greater. You must diligently train and not slacken off in the slightest.”

“Yes.” Ning nodded with solemnity.

“Alright. With regards to Sword Immortals...if you have any questions, go ask your master. In the entire Black-White College, only your master is capable of truly teaching you.” Daoist Jadesea laughed, then turned and left.

“Ji Ning, it is quite rare for me to officiate over a recruitment ceremony, and yet when I did, I ended up taking you in, hahaha.” Daoist Wu Xiu and the others all chatted for a bit with Ning as well. Every single one of them spoke with Ning for a bit. Clearly, as they saw it...in a few decades, or perhaps in a century, Ning would be on a completely equal level to them. Shortly afterwards, the Primal Daoists all departed.

Only now did Ning let out a sigh of relief. “Heavenly Daos? Grand Daos? Daos?” Ning suddenly thought of something. “The creator of the underwater estate even had many Immortal-ranked magic treasures and Pure Yang magic treasures. I also heard that he was a Fiendgod who was born during the era of primal chaos, before the creation of the universe, and that he was one of the major powers of the Three Realms. Even the [Starseizing Hand] he developed was so powerful...he most assuredly must have comprehended a Grand Dao. Only, I wonder if Daoist Threelives was able to comprehend a Heavenly Dao.”

“Well, enough of that. Two thousand black-white pellets!” Ning looked at the jade bottle in his hands. “And I earned quite a few black-white pellets during the Dao Debates as well. Should I go to the Dao Repository Vault to exchange them for techniques?” Ning began to ponder. “For divine abilities? Or for the [Soulshaker Art]?”

Right at this moment, a voice was transmitted towards him. “Ji Ning.” This voice echoed in his mind. “Master.” Ning hurriedly looked around.

“Go back and calm your mind and focus on your training. You must solidify your foundation to fully reap the gains from these Dao Debates. I trust you will make even more advancements if you do. Three days later, come and see me.” Immortal Diancai’s voice rang out in Ning’s mind. As for the four Immortals in the corner of the room, Immortal Diancai, the short elder, the juvenile child, and the crowned, bearded elder all gave Ning a final look before disappearing into thin air.

Ning stared around within the Dao Debate Palace, but saw no one else present. Still, he acknowledged respectfully, “Yes, Master.”

Ning immediately boarded his flying boat. Transforming into a streak of light, he flew out of the Dao Debate Palace and returned to his Darknorth Peak. He was going to calm his heart and solidify the gains he had recently reaped.