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Book 8: Raindragon Guard Chapter 32: Awoken

“Little Qing, pack up the bewildering formation,” Ji Ning instructed. This bewildering formation was of no use at all against the Dragonwhale King; it would only baffle themselves.

The formation vanished. The massive, bulky body of the Dragonwhale King could now be seen, standing off in the distance. The aura of the Dragonwhale King was now clearly far more savage and explosive than it had been in the past. In his subconscious...Ning felt a sense of danger. This was a warning from his divine soul.

“I have to thank you for helping me break through to become a Primal. Thus, I helped you kill those two humans. They should be your enemies, yes?” The Dragonwhale looked at Ning disdainfully, then said, “My brothers and sisters all died in the hands of you three. And you, Ji Ning...you deserve death more than anyone else.”

“Go.” The Dragonwhale’s eyes flashed with cold light. Swoosh! A giant black sword, thirty meters long, almost the size of a warship, chopped directly towards Ji Ning, the surface of the sword covered with the swirling flames of Primal Fire.

“Hmph.” Seeing this, Ning let out a cold snort, while at the same time, his own divine sense sent out the [Soulshaker Art]. The rolling waves of divine will swept forward like a flood, viciously striking against the Dragonwhale’s Primal soul! Rumble...the Dragonwhale felt its Primal soul shudder, and the power of its magic treasures was noticeably lowered.

This caused the Dragonwhale to be secretly shocked; how did this Ji Ning have such a powerful soul? Could he be a reincarnated Immortal? But even if he was, he still had to die!

“Haaaargh!” The giant black sword, carrying Primal Fire, howled as it flew towards Ning. Ning let out an angry roar, and his body instantly expanded as he transformed into a ten meter high giant. The Darknorth swords in his hands transformed into a blur as they moved to engage.

BOOM! Sword-light and the giant black sword collided in midair. Ji Ning, after using the [Starseizing Hand], had released incredibly great power with this sword attack, and was able to forcibly knock the giant black sword backwards, while he himself took two steps back. At the same time, the Waterflame Lotus appeared around his body. The petals of this breathtakingly beautiful lotus now contained both snowy dire-ice and golden earthfire...causing its power to increase dramatically.

“Dragonwhale, you want to rely on magic treasures alone to kill me? You are looking down on me a bit too much,” Ning laughed loudly.

The Dragonwhale noticed this as well. This Ji Ning’s power was far beyond that of those other two Wanxiang Adepts, especially in close quarters combat; he was exceedingly strong.

“As you wish, then.” The Dragonwhale King let out a massive howl, and instantly, its entire body transformed into a heaven-filling fog, but then, next to that underground river, its body began to transform into its true form.

Ning hurriedly sent to the nearby Northson and Qingqing, "Junior apprentice-brother, Little Qing, once this Dragonwhale takes its true form, it'll cause the heavens to collapse and the earth to shatter; the surrounding parts of the mountain will definitely be shattered. I'll battle against him and hold him off; you two, hurry up and go break out of this sealing formation. Junior apprentice-brother, use whatever means you must in order to break through the formation and uproot the formation flags. Once the formation is gone, I'll have plenty of ways to escape."

Northson hesitated momentarily, then nodded. "Fine. Senior apprentice-brother, be careful."

"Don't worry." Ning lowered his head, glancing sideways his junior apprentice-brother and Qingqing. After having transformed into a giant due to the 'Heavenly Transformation' divine ability, it really did feel a bit odd interacting with them.

"Rumble..."

The true form of the Dragonwhale was beginning to take shape in this subterranean cavern. Its body was simply too vast, while the caverns were too small. After having used its divine ability, it was ten thousand meters in length, while its body was many hundreds of meters wide. For such an enormous body to be squeezed into a mountain cavern meant that the surrounding mountain itself would begin to split apart.

"Break apart!" The Dragonwhale felt too confined and cramped as well. When it was young, it had lived in the Darknorth Seas. After coming to this vast region, it normally battled in the wide, spacious skies. Naturally, it preferred wide spaces, and wasn't very comfortable when underground.

Its enormous, ponderous body began to shake violently and wriggle about, its tail slapping about as well. Slash! It was like an earthworm flipping over, and in the process, the mountain peak above that had taken up ten kilometers suddenly fell over and collapsed. Many stones were knocked flying into the skies as well. Even the earth itself was ripped apart, while the underground river ceased to flow. The underground passage, previously thirty meters wide, was instantly, forcibly expanded to three thousand meters wide.

"Rumble..." Even the boiling lava beneath them began to soar towards the skies, belching forth in a paroxysm of fire as the river of lava itself reversed course. The Dragonwhale's revealing of his true form had truly caused the heavens to split and the earth to shatter. As for Ning, he held his twin swords in his hands, watching this as the Waterflame Lotus bloomed about him.

"Hurry up and leave," Ning immediately transmitted and shouted to them, "If we get separated, we'll reunite at the dire-ice location."

"Senior apprentice-brother, be careful."

"Master, be careful."

Qingqing instantly transformed into a small snake, wrapping herself around Northson's arm. As for Northson, he transformed into a streak of light, breaking through the crumbling rocks and charging outside, moving as fast as lightning.

“Hahaha, fleeing? Do you really think you’ll escape?” The Dragonwhale’s massive draconic head released a wild, savage laugh. The sky was now visible from their location, and the lava around them bubbled and hissed. It was a picture of utter chaos.

“Die.” The two dragon-whiskers of the Dragonwhale descended in a sweeping movement towards Ning, surrounded by Primal Fire and moving as fast as lightning.

“Break!” Ning’s sword-light was especially dazzling. “BANG!” Ning’s twin swords clashed against them, and with the collision, Ning was knocked flying backwards.

“Its power increased by quite a bit.” Ning was sent smashing through tens of meters of the mountain rocks, and his face changed. “Ah, right. Those dragon-whiskers are its ‘intrinsic magic treasures’ which it spent many years cultivating. Now that it has become a Primal, in its true form...the power of its intrinsic magic treasures have naturally improved dramatically.”

After having reverted to its true form, the Dragonwhale’s power had increased significantly. Even despite using the [Starseizing Hand], Ning still felt as though he couldn’t be able to withstand it.

“It seems as though my power, now, is still quite a bit weaker than a Primal Daoists.” Ning faced the Dragonwhale King, not knowing how to battle him and trying to think of a way to delay. But suddenly...

The world went silent.

The river of lava, previously flowing in the opposite direction, came to a halt.

The spraying water of the underground river froze in midair.

The stones that had been blasted into the skies froze there.

Ning was still in the pose of executing the Windwing Evasion and retreating frantically...

Northson was standing in front of the grand sealing barrier, unmoving...

Even the incomparably massive Dragonwhale Diremonster that was floating in the air had come to a halt. Its dragon-whiskers that had been dancing in the air were now frozen there.

In this instant, it was as though everything in this region had gone still. But Ning, Northson, the Azure Skysnake, and the Dragonwhale King, these four living creatures, knew very well that this wasn’t the case!

“This is...” Ning could feel an incomparably powerful force instantly descend, so powerful as to completely suppress him. He felt like an ant atop of an iceberg, completely unable to move. He even felt as though he couldn’t change his facial expressions. That surge of power was simply too massive.

“What...what is going on?” Ning was completely stunned and uneasy. His soul was pulsing at him, screaming of a terrifyingly great danger. Ning had the feeling that whatever threat had appeared was capable of instantly annihilating him.

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“What...what’s this??!” Northson, who had just reached the grand sealing formation, was incomparably frantic as well. In his heart, he was also completely stunned. He felt as though he had been completely

suppressed and sealed away; he couldn't even move a single finger. He could also see that even the rocks in midair weren't moving at all, causing him to feel all the more horrified.

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The Dragonwhale was stunned as well. It was a Primal Diremonster, and a Dragonwhale at that; how incredibly great was its power? With but a single flip of its body, it could shatter the heavens and break the earth. And yet, in this instant, its massive body hung there in midair, completely unable to move.

"I've already reached the Primal stage. What power is this, which is capable of preventing me from even fighting back? Even Immortals shouldn't be this powerful. Can it be a Celestial Immortal? Or a Loose Immortal who has lived for hundreds of thousands or millions of years?" The Dragonwhale's heart was filled with many thoughts as well, and it too was both terrified and restless.

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Although Ning didn't move at all, he could still see. "Is that...?!" Ning suddenly stared in astonishment as the distant, bubbling river of lava began to part. The entire earth began to crack open, as a massive, fiery red hand, wreathed in lava, emerged from it. This hand...just staring at it, Ning became filled with despair.

This was something which occurred only when the disparity in power had reached an unbelievable level.

This palm of this titanic hand was more than three thousand meters long, and the palm lines were all clearly visible. These ancient, criss-crossing palm lines appeared to be carved or sculpted. As this titanic, fiery hand stretched out from the lava, it seized the head of the Dragonwhale in midair.

CRUNCH.

Like crushing an egg, the titanic, fiery hand easily pinched and squished the skull of the Dragonwhale. Although the Dragonwhale was a Fiendgod Body Refiner, during the instant in which its head was pinched, even its soul was crushed and dispersed. It wouldn't even have the chance to reincarnate.

An exalted Primal Diremonster had just died!

"This..." Ning's heart was filled with incomparable shock, but his facial expressions remained completely unchanged from earlier. Even his facial muscles couldn't budge.

"Rumble..."

An even more titanically massive, fiery red head suddenly emerged from the splitting lava. Right; a head! He had a single eye, a nose, and a mouth. The size of his head alone was more than three thousand meters tall. His entire, massive body slowly emerged from the deep abysses of the earth. Only after half of his body was revealed did he come to a halt. His body seemed to be formed from solidified magma, and it emanated an incomparable, scorching aura. He glanced at the corpse of the Dragonwhale, which now lay amongst the shattered rocks. His single, fiery red pupil had a cold look in them.

"A puny earthworm actually dared to destroy my residence and disturb my slumber. He deserved to die," this titan rumbled.

Ning was unable to reveal any expressions on his face. But in his heart, he was screaming in shock, "Fiendgod, this is definitely a true Fiendgod!"

In this instant, Ning could think of no other possibilities. Neither Immortals nor Diremonsters matched this creature's appearance. This incomparably ancient, terrifying presence...in terms of appearance, aura, or power, the only type of creature which matched it was a Fiendgod! Fiendgods were born from the heavens themselves, and thus most had incomparably vast bodies.

They were incredibly powerful, and they had been born unfathomable ages ago, during the Fiendgod Era!

"And two humans, along with a little snake." This ancient Fiendgod, who had been slumbering for who knows how long, swept his single eye to glance towards Ning, Northson, and the Azure Skysnake, as though he were looking at ants.

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Book 8: Raindragon Guard Chapter 33: Fiendgods and Humans

Ji Ning, Mu Northson, and the Azure Skysnake could feel the hint of killing intent wafting towards them from this ancient Fiendgod. The three of them truly were like ants before him; whether or not he killed them was truly a trifling matter. After all, he had been sleeping happily deep beneath the river of lava. After having been woken up, it was rather irritated, and so the main culprit, that Dragonwhale, was the first to die. Ning and the others were just unlucky enough to be caught up by it all.

"No." Northson, upon feeling that killing intent, couldn't help but feel despair in his heart. Was he going to die?

"I can't die. I can't die! I just entered the Black-White College. I swore an oath in front of Mother's grave...that I would make the Bluewood clan regret what they did! I haven't, I haven't done anything yet. I can't accept this, I can't!" Northson's eyes were filled with boundless panic and regret, but under that boundless pressuring power, he couldn't even change his facial expressions.

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"Am I going to die?" The Azure Skysnake was coiled around Northson's arms. She was able to see the towering, vast, ancient Fiendgod from the corner of her eyes. The feeling that ancient Fiendgod gave her was that of the vast universe itself; she couldn't even bring herself to try to resist.

"It's sad that I'm going to die along with Woody. If I have to die, I should die alongside Master," the Azure Skysnake murmured to herself. She looked towards Ning as well, but because the mountain was blocking her vision, she wasn't able to see him at all.

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Ning also felt as though death was coming towards him. He had never had a strong a feeling of impending death before; not even when he was progressing through the three trials of the underwater estate had he felt so powerless! He couldn't fight back at all...this sensation of impending death was something Ning couldn't resign himself to.

"I haven't destroyed Snowdragon Mountain yet."

“I haven’t even come close to being a major power in the Three Realms.”

“Father. Mother...I want to see if they are living good lives after their reincarnation.”

“And Autumn Leaf...she must be waiting for me still.”

Ning felt powerless. Although he still had that protective brooch in front of his chest that had been given to him by Immortal Diancai, which would release a protective sword-ki with but a thought...it would only be able to resist the power of a Loose Immortal or an Earth Immortal for a single breath’s worth of time. In the face of a Fiendgod who had killed a Primal Diremonster as easily as stepping on an ant, what could it possibly do?

“Activate.” Ning had bound the brooch long ago. With but a thought, Ning instantly attempted to activate the brooch, and the protective sword-ki within it tried to surge outside. Although it was probably useless, he had to at least give it a shot.

“Eh?” The ancient Fiendgod’s single eye turned to stare at Ning. That seemingly omnipresent power seemed to completely focus on Ning as well, also pushing down towards Ning’s brooch. The protective sword-ki within the brooch tried to charge out, but it was pressed down upon by an invisible, formless strength, preventing it from emerging.

It was pushed back inside!

Ning willed it to activate again.

But yet again, it was pushed back inside!

“How can this be?” Ning now felt truly powerless.

But a hint of surprise was in the ancient Fiendgod’s single eye. He looked at Ning, murmuring to himself, “A Sword Immortal? A Loose Immortal or an Earth Immortal? The sword-ki is both condensed and sharp; although it’s a bit different from that of Immortal Northwalker, who chased me around in the past, it’s still quite astonishing. This human brat most assuredly has a powerful Sword Immortal behind him.”

“That Sword Immortal...most likely has other colleagues and seniors who stand behind him as well.” The ancient Fiendgod mused to himself, “I had best leave. I suffered miserably enough, the last time I was chased around.”

As someone who had existed from the Fiendgod Era to the present era, he knew exactly how terrifying the humans were.

You kill a puny one, a strong one comes. You kill the strong one, an entire host of strong ones would come!

Humans simply had far too many experts, and they could send out entire groups of Immortals to attack him, a single person. The countless times he had suffered in this manner had caused him to become incomparably cautious. It was precisely this caution which had allowed him to survive to the present day. Otherwise, he would’ve been killed or sealed away by the humans long ago!

And, most importantly of all, humans trained far too quickly! Fiendgods were the favored children of the heavens. They were born with tremendous power, and didn’t even suffer from the Three Calamities and

Nine Tribulations as they naturally increased in power. Only human cultivators had to deal with the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations! However, in turn, Fiendgods were far slower in learning and comprehending. They generally would spend tens or hundreds of thousands of years in training, or even millions of years. Training, to them, took an incomparably long period of time.

But humans? A single human could become an Immortal in just a few centuries! A few centuries? This was an extremely short period of time for Fiendgods.

They had terrifying reproductive abilities, powerful learning abilities, and a rapid rate of advancement...this was why humans became the true leader of the countless races of this world, and indeed, of the entirety of the Three Realms. They were the true overlords! Even Fiendgods had to avoid them.

“Eh? And a Loose Immortal has come.”

The ancient Fiendgod glanced towards the distant skies. It would be extremely easy for him to kill this Loose Immortal, but did he dare? He did not, because he knew that this Loose Immortal should be a member of the Raindragon Guard. If he killed one of them, very soon, the Guard would send tens or even hundreds of Loose Immortals...and perhaps even the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty would send some of its ancient, nigh-unkillable figures.

“Time to leave.” The ancient Fiendgod’s entire body instantly emerged from the ground. With but a single step...whoosh. Space itself twisted, and the ancient Fiendgod entered the twisting void, disappearing without a trace.

The spraying water and flying rocks that had previously been locked in midair finally collapsed. For a moment, there was utter chaos.

“He left?” Ning gawked in astonishment. And then, from the corner of his eyes, he stared at the massive corpse of the Dragonwhale. He immediately waved his hand, collecting the entire, massive, three thousand meter long corpse of the Dragonwhale into his storage-type magic treasure.

After having reached the early Wanxiang level, Ning had switched to using an Earth-ranked storage belt. This was a spoil of war he had acquired from killing the Wanxiang Diremonsters earlier. This belt had an enormous space within it; however, the massive body of the Dragonwhale still took up more than half of the space within.

“Senior apprentice-brother.” Northson ran over, excited.

“Master.” The Azure Skysnake transformed into an azure shadow, moving forward and coiling herself around Ning’s arm.

After having just escaped from certain death, they all had somewhat changed feelings in their hearts.

“Senior apprentice-brother, why did that Fiendgod leave?” Northson hurriedly asked, “And why didn’t he kill us?”

“I don’t know either.” Ning shook his head. Although the Fiendgod had been mumbling to himself, the surrounding space had been completely locked; not even sound waves were able to move. Naturally, Ning hadn’t heard anything. But right at this moment...

A blood-robed elder suddenly appeared in the skies. This blood-robed elder had a crown on his head, and the blood-red robes were incomparably beautiful. However, a hint of resentment was within his gaze. "I actually let it escape. It ran quite quickly. It can consider itself lucky." As soon as he had sensed the local ripples, he had immediately hurried over here, but on the way, he had noticed that the Fiendgod had begun to flee. He had wanted to pursue it, but unfortunately, he hadn't been able to.

"You three." The blood-robed elder, after appearing in midair, stared downwards towards Ning, Northson, and the Azure Skysnake. As he did, the three of them felt their hearts grow numb.

"You should've seen that Fiendgod emerge, just now." The blood-robed elder's voice was icy cold, and slowly, the world itself around them seemed to begin to freeze. Ning, Northson, and the Azure Skysnake all felt an invisible pressure crush down towards them, quite similar to the technique which the Fiendgod had previously used. However, this pressure was far weaker than that of the Fiendgod's. Despite that, however, Ning's group knew that this Immortal in front of them was still invincible, as far as they were concerned.

"Tell me, what did it look like?" The blood-robed elder pointed towards the Azure Skysnake. "You, monster. You speak first." A look of terror appeared on the Azure Skysnake's face, and she immediately said, "It was an extremely massive Fiendgod, with a palm of more than three thousand meters long. As for its body, it was thirty thousand meters tall! Its body appeared to be formed from lava stones. It had a single eye, a single nose, and a single mouth. It didn't have hair, and lava seemed to be flowing from its head as well."

A look of shock appeared in the eyes of the blood-robed elder. Him? Only now did the elder know which Fiendgod it was, and cold sweat trickled down his back. That was too close; fortunately, he hadn't caught the Fiendgod, as if he had, he probably would've died.

Next, he pointed towards Northson. "You. Speak." As soon as his words came out, Northson felt an invisible power command his soul. Although he remained conscious, his mouth began to speak by itself. "He emerged from the lava beneath us. His entire body was fiery red, he bound us with an invisible pressure that we weren't able to resist at all. He had a single eye, a single nose, a single mouth..."

"You. Speak." The blood-robed elder pointed at Ning. Ning, too, sensed an invisible divine will instantly invade his sea of consciousness. However, Ning's powerful divine will pushed back against it.

BOOM! A soundless, invisible collision of divine wills. Although the blood-robed elder held an absolute advantage, he was unable to control Ning like a puppet.

"Eh? Your divine soul is this powerful?" The blood-robed elder looked towards Ji Ning. "Which school are you from?"

"This junior is Ji Ning, disciple of the Black-White College. My master is Immortal Diancai." Ning continued respectfully, "Next to me is my junior apprentice-brother, Mu Northson. This Azure Skysnake is a spirit-beast I have recently tamed while wandering the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains."

"Immortal Diancai? The Black-White College?" The blood-robed elder nodded calmly, then said in a still-cold voice, "I ask you this; when the Fiendgod appeared...why didn't he kill the three of you?"

"I don't know." Ning shook his head.

I don't know.." Northson said the same thing.

Qingqing just shook her head, not even daring to speak.

The blood-robed elder knew very well that this particular, ancient Fiendgod had a strange temper. When angered, it would occasionally kill humans. However, because that ancient Fiendgod had always been cautious and low-key, and had never acted to kill human Loose Immortals with powerful backgrounds, the Grand Xia Dynasty had never put too much effort into chasing after and capturing him.

If he had engaged in wanton massacres and killed many influential figures, the Grand Xia Dynasty, in its rage, might send its full might against him. In that situation, it probably would be caught alive after just a few days!

"The three of you can consider yourself lucky to have survived a meeting with a Fiendgod," the blood-robed elder barked. "However, you absolutely must not reveal the details of this meeting. If I find out that you have, then the Raindragon Guard will hold you accountable for it!"

"Yes." Ning, Northson, and the Azure Skysnake all acknowledged this order. The blood-robed elder calmly waved his hand. "Then hurry up and leave."

Ning's group didn't dare to tarry; they immediately boarded the dragon-headed warship, transforming into a streak of light and leaving at high speed.

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Whoosh!

Shortly after they left, yet another person appeared. This was a silver-haired youth with loose, unbound hair, and who also had a crown on his head. Immediately afterwards, a muscular, armored old man appeared as well.

"A Fiendgod emerged?" The silver-haired youth laughed calmly.

"Which Fiendgod was it?"

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Ning had guessed that the emergence of this ancient Fiendgod would cause quite a stir. Still, for now, these were problems for Immortals to deal with; they were far from being something he could intervene in.

"Senior apprentice-brother, this time, that was far too close. We nearly died there." Northson let out a sigh, staring towards the clouds nearby, then down towards the vast wilderness. "It's so good to be alive."

"It's so good to be alive." Ning nodded as well.

If he had truly died like this, then that would be far too unfair. There were many things he had yet to do!

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Book 8: Raindragon Guard Chapter 34: Entering the Raindragon Guard

The dragon-headed warship was flying through the clouds. Ji Ning and Mu Northson, faces full of joy, were going through and binding the assorted magic treasures.

“Senior apprentice-brother, this Dragonwhale’s wealth was far greater than the wealth of those four Wanxiang Adepts we killed,” Northson said, incomparably excited. “Previously, we killed more than ten Wanxiang Diremonsters, but all their wealth combined...can’t match up to this single Dragonwhale.”

“Of course. The Dragonwhale King had roamed the world for ten millennia, and had even escaped from Primal Daoists on numerous occasions, then had advanced to the Primal stage itself,” Ning said. “And it just broke through to the Primal level. If it had spent a thousand years training at the Primal level, its wealth would be even more astonishing. However, a Primal Diremonster who had been training at the Primal level for a thousand years...I probably wouldn’t be able to block it at all.”

Northson immediately shook his head. “Even a Primal who had trained for a thousand years would perish upon encountering that ancient Fiendgod! And you were quite fast with your hands, senior apprentice-brother; as soon as the Fiendgod left, you immediately collected this massive corpse of the Dragonwhale. The Loose Immortal who came afterwards didn’t notice anything; if he had, he probably would’ve taken it with him.”

Ning laughed as well. He, too, felt that he had been quite clever. Still...this Dragonwhale King truly did possess an astonishing amount of wealth. There had been eight magic treasures stored in its Zifu region, and upon the Dragonwhale’s death, they had fallen to the ground alongside its corpse. Two were Earth-ranked storage treasures, four were Earth-ranked magic treasures, while two were Heaven-ranked magic treasures. Those two Heaven-ranked magic treasures alone were worth thousands of kilograms of liquefied elemental essence! Ning and Northson were currently binding the storage-type treasures.

“So many magic treasures.”

“What treasure is this?”

“And here are other storage-type treasures. These should have belonged to Adept Dong One and Adept Redleaf. Keep searching!”

“Here’s a bottle of liquefied elemental essence. Wow, three hundred kilograms.”

“I imagine this one must be quite excellent. It should be the protective magic treasure of Adept Dong One. He previously relied on it to escape from my attacks; I didn’t expect that he would end up dying in the hands of this Dragonwhale, and his treasure would fall into my hands...”

Ning and Northson sorted through one magic treasure after another, appraising their value. The nearby Qingqing, in turn, picked up a few in curiosity. She was a Diremonster, after all...and one who hadn’t been training for too long. She naturally wasn’t able to assess the value of many unique, peculiar magic treasures. Thus, all she could do was stand next to them and celebrate with them.

“We’ve finished searching them.” Ning let out a long sigh of relief. “That was awesome.” Northson’s eyes were glowing with delight, and he chortled, “Senior apprentice-brother, I really am beginning to admire you more and more. This Dragonwhale corpse you picked up...I admire you so much, I could prostrate myself before you.”

Ning laughed as well. "Anything you need?" Northson took a careful glance, then shook his head and said, "None of them are on the Dao of Constructs. There really isn't anything I need in particular." Ning shook his head as well. "Nothing for I need either."

Dong One's protective treasure wasn't bad, but its power was only ordinary; in the face of a Primal Daoist, it wouldn't be able to hold for too long. Ning, by relying on his own power, was already able to flee for his life in the face of a Primal Daoist's attacks; naturally, he wouldn't care too much about it. His protective sword-ki treasure was something which could block the attacks of even a Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal for a full breath's worth of time.

"Let's split the liquefied elemental essence in half," Ning said. "As for the magic treasures, let us send them to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain and sell them, then we'll split the revenue."

"But you collected them, senior apprentice-brother." Northson stared at him, but Ning just laughed and 'barked' at him, "Stop kidding around, all I did was grab it."

"What about me, what about me?" The nearby Qingqing said. Ning gave her a sideways glance. "You miser! For you, finding treasures is as easy as eating food or drinking water. Stop fighting with impoverished cultivators like us over treasure." Qingqing's hill-sized chunk of ancient glacial ice alone was worth more than five thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.

Qingqing instantly pouted. "Stingy!"

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Time flowed on. In the days after this, Ning's group returned to the dire-ice room to continue their training. That place was quite secretive and hidden. After the three months came to an end, Ning's group began their return journey to the Raindragon Guard encampment.

"Here we are." The dragon-headed warship soared there through the clouds. Ning stood atop the ship, staring towards the distant earth. Soon, he saw, off in the distance, a mountain peak. It was the Raindragon Guard's encampment.

"Hahaha, we're back. We are about to become Raindragon Guards!" Northson whooped in delight as the warship hastened downwards.

This time, no one came to block Ning's group. They flew directly towards the peak of the mountain encampment, the place next to the teleportation array. Ning instantly saw those two plainly dressed elders who stood next to the teleportation array; it was the same two Ning had seen last time, that skinny old man and the fat old man.

"Two more made it back alive," the fat elder laughed, and then his gaze fell upon the little snake wrapped around Ning's wrists. "A monster?"

"This is a spirit-beast which I tamed in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains," Ning said.

"You are quite formidable, young fellow. The wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains are incomparably dangerous...it's one thing for you to come back alive, but you actually brought a spirit-beast back as well?" The fat elder shook his head and sighed. "The two of you can go rest over there and wait a while. There are still thirty or so who haven't arrived yet."

Ning glanced towards the distance in surprise. A total of just sixteen Immortal cultivators were there, either seated or standing and chatting with each other. Including Ning's group, there were only eighteen present.

"Senior, how do you know that there are thirty who have yet to arrive?" Ning asked curiously. Northson was puzzled as well. "Right. A hundred of us headed out; how do you know how many have died?"

Both the fat elder and the skinny elder laughed. "Have you forgotten the talisman which each of you bound upon entering the Crimson Dragon Mountains?" The fat elder asked.

Ning and Northson instantly remembered; only after binding the talismans had they been permitted to enter the Crimson Dragon Mountains, as otherwise, they wouldn't have been allowed in.

"When one of you dies, the talisman becomes an ownerless object. Thus, we Raindragon Guards would immediately become aware of it," the fat elder said. "Right now, fifty two of the talismans are in good shape, while the others are ownerless."

Ning and Northson now both understood. So that tiny little talisman they had received...actually had this secret hidden with it. The Raindragon Guard's methods really were unpredictable.

"Senior," Northson asked, "A while ago, my senior apprentice-brother and I came back to send some ordinary mortals here. Those ordinary mortals who had been corralled and raised as livestock by the monsters...how are they doing?"

"Yes, are they doing alright?" Ning asked.

The fat elder said, somewhat surprised, "Oh, it was you two who sent them over? Don't worry; of course they are doing alright. We Raindragon Guards will naturally take care of those pitiable tribesmen; however, they were teleported away long ago and left the Gaol Mountains long ago. We Raindragon Guards will take good care of them."

Ning nodded slightly. That was good. Only, he didn't know...what that little kid called 'Ironboy' would end up like.

"Let's go." Ning immediately moved with Northson to one side. With but a flick of their fingers, they each pointed towards a boulder that had been chopped flat. Crackle...frost appeared, instantly covering the stones with a layer of ice. These boulders were used for the Raindragon Guards who had come here to rest on, but with so much wind and dust swirling about, they had naturally been quite dirty. After Ning and Northson revealed this ability, quite a few nearby cultivators looked towards them.

Dire-ice?

Soon, cultivators came over to chat with the two of them. Ning and Northson chatted with them, making quite a few friends amongst them.

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One surviving cultivator after another hurried back from locations throughout the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains. Eastriver Cloudsoar, who both Ning and Northson recognized, returned as well. However, Cloudsoar returned with only one arm, and the baleful aura around him was much stronger than it had been in the past. This caused quite a bit of silent discussion amongst the various cultivators.

“What happened?” Northson sent mentally, “In the past, Eastriver Cloudsoar was quite the talker; why is it that he’s grown so much colder? And he’s lost an arm...but it’s just an arm. All he needs to do is eat a spirit-pill that allows the regeneration of limbs. In addition, Wanxiang Adepts can also slowly regrow their arms by using their elemental ki. Why hasn’t he done so at all?”

Ning shook his head. He, too, had noticed...that after this tempering experience, Cloudsoar seemed to have changed dramatically.

In the blink of an eye, half a day passed. More cultivators returned. “Look, Meng Liuqing!” Northson sent mentally to Ning, “She’s the only survivor of those six Immortal cultivators who tried to gang up on us.”

“Meng Liuqing?” Ning saw this female cultivator of the Meng clan arrive as well. She descended from the skies. Upon seeing Ning and Northson, her face changed slightly. She immediately turned and was about to walk to one side, when...

“Meng Liuqing!”

A fierce voice rang out.

Meng Liuqing turned her head, only to see a one-armed, white-robed youth, filled with a baleful aura that reached the heavens, and whose eyes were filled with an icy light. “I, Eastriver Cloudsoar, will definitely avenge my slain younger sister. Meng Liuqing...prepare for your death! And the other five...I won’t spare any of you!” As the disciple of the Eastriver clan, he dared to say these words openly and directly!

“The other five?” Meng Liuqing shook her head. “I don’t know about Dong One, but the other four...Northriver Zhou, Xu Manquan, Nongsan, and Jihe...are already dead.”

Cloudsoar was stunned. “Dead?”

All the surrounding cultivators looked towards them as well. Dead? Four Wanxiang Adepts had died? These cultivators all grew curious...what exactly had happened?

“They died in the hands of the two disciples of the Black-White College.” Meng Liuqing glanced sideways towards Ning and Northson. Enmity had been created between her and the two of them; naturally, she didn’t mind giving the two of them a bit of extra trouble. Earlier, she had intentionally reported the names of those four, so that the friends and family members of the four would know who had done the deed.

“You b*tch!” Northson instantly rose to his feet and roared with fury, “Previously, the six of you tried to ambush and sneak attack the two of us. Four of you died, and now, you are still trying to plot against us? Listen up, you b*tch! In the future, you’d best never run into me. If I do, I’ll take your life!”

“Right.” Ning stared coldly towards her as well. Unfortunately, this was the encampment of the Raindragon Guards; no one dared to fight here. As for Meng Liuqing, she just gave Ning and Northson a cold glance; since there was already enmity between them, why fear this additional threat?

“Fellow Daoists Ji Ning and Mu Northson.” Eastriver Cloudsoar turned to look towards Ning and Northson, then bowed deeply. “Those six didn’t go kill Diremonsters; instead, they came to ambush and

kill us, fellow cultivators. They deserved to die in your hands, fellow Daoists. In the future, if either of you need anything, fellow Daoists, just let me know; I, Eastriver Cloudsoar, will definitely comply, even if I have to go through water or climb past fire.”

“You are too courteous. We, too, were ambushed and attacked, so we simply dealt with them.” Ning and Northson hurriedly went over to raise Cloudsoar from his bow.

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Soon, all of the remaining, surviving cultivators had returned. Adept Redleaf returned as well! Only, Adept Redleaf had no idea that it had been Ji Ning and Mu Northson within that formation! Still, he had heard the Dragonwhale King say something about ‘blame Ji Ning’, and so he naturally gave Ning a deep look.

“You fifty two survived. If you have brought back the corpse or the head of a Wanxiang Diremonster, then you will naturally become Raindragon Guards,” the skinny elder said. “Go. Go into the teleportation array and return to the Crimson Dragon Mountains.”

The fifty two cultivators all entered the teleportation array. Soon, the array lit up, and Ning’s group of fifty two were once more teleported back to the Crimson Dragon Mountains, more than two million kilometers away.

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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 1: New Raindragon Guards

The winding Crimson Dragon Mountains stretched off into the endless horizons. Even Immortal cultivators couldn’t see to the end of them.

Atop one of its peaks, an enormous teleportation array began to glow with light. Whooooosh! Ji Ning and the rest of the fifty two suddenly appeared within the formation.

“That was fast.” Ning glanced at his surroundings. Although he had already used the array once, the speed at which it transported a person still caused him to sigh in amazement.

“Wait here. Soon, the Raindragon Guards will send people to welcome you,” said a red-faced old man in a high voice. He was one of the ten plainly dressed elders who were located around the array and guarded it.

Ning’s group thus obediently walked out of the array, waiting next to it quietly. Very soon, a large, wide ship swooped down from the distant clouds, causing waves of air to emanate from around it as it landed atop the peak.

An incomparably ravishing pink-dressed maiden flew down from this large ship. Behind her was a group of similarly alluring women. For a moment, it was as though a host of fairies had descended into the mortal world. And then, the spirit-beasts flew down as well, each of which immediately moved towards the cultivators.

“Uncle White!” Ning instantly recognized the Whitewater Hound, who was also amidst the group of spirit-beasts. The Whitewater Hound had a look of surprise and delight his eyes. Over the past three months, he had grown increasingly concerned. When the master of a spirit-beast died, the spirit-beast

would regain its freedom, and they would sense when that occurred. Over the past period of time, spirit-beasts would often depart and fly away, and as one after another left, the spirit-beasts who remained began to understand that quite a few cultivators had died!

“Ning, son.” Uncle White looked towards Ning. Suddenly, he saw the head of the little azure snake, wrapped around Ning’s wrist. He couldn’t help but say in surprise, “Ning, son, this snake is...?”

“This is an Azure Skysnake,” Ning sent mentally to him. “She’s that Azure Skysnake who I battled in the past, when I adventured through Eastmount Marsh. This time, we were lucky enough to meet yet again in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains, and it can be said that we experienced a life-and-death event together. Perhaps because I saved her, she voluntarily offered to become my spirit-beast. And so...that’s how it happened.”

The Whitewater Hound nodded gently. He looked towards the Azure Skysnake with friendliness in his eyes while mentally saying to Ning, “Azure Skysnakes will often discover some treasure sites, and they have astonishing potential for growth. They are indeed quite suited for you, Ning.”

“So you are ‘Uncle White’?” Qingqing sent to him. The Whitewater Hound looked at her, amusement in his eyes. “You were good brothers with Ji Ning’s father, right? I heard that you are from Swallow Mountain as well. So am I. It can be said that we share the same hometown. Myself, Master, and you, Uncle White...we can be described as the Three Heroes of Swallow Mountain!”

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While Ning and the other cultivators were chatting with their spirit-beasts, the group of beautiful, alluring women stared with curiosity towards them. Their leader, the pink-robed woman, waited for a short while, then finally said, “Everyone...” The fifty two all looked towards her.

“First, let me congratulate you all for having survived. You may address me as ‘Daoist Yulan’.” Her flesh beneath the pink robe seemed both visible and hidden, and her voice was even more irresistibly charismatic. Ning’s retainer, Cloudjade, could be described as possessing innate beauty and seductiveness, but the charisma of this woman clearly came from some technique or some secret art which she had trained in. But her allure was even more powerful! In addition, she was a Primal Daoist; this made it so that even Wanxiang Adepts were susceptible to their Dao-hearts being affected by her charm.

“Each of you, please produce your corpses of Wanxiang Diremonsters for my inspection. I’ll review them, one by one.” Daoist Yulan looked at each of them, her eyes filled with a seductive, alluring look. “For those who have not acquired Wanxiang Diremonster corpses, you should stand forward now, so as to help save me some time.”

Immediately, seven figures walked out. As for Ning and the rest, they produced Wanxiang Diremonster corpses for inspection.

Diremonster bodies were innately different from human bodies. Humans bodies were, by nature, weak; unless they trained as Fiendgods, their bodies would be incredibly fragile. Diremonsters, however, were different; many of them possessed certain innate abilities that granted them mighty physical strength. Although they were far from being a match for Fiendgods, they could be considered as standing somewhere between humans and Fiendgods. Many monstrous races would even transform some of the

deadlier parts of their bodies into intrinsic magic treasures; from this, one could see how extraordinary their bodies were. This was why it was quite easy to tell, from a corpse, if a monster had been of the Wanxiang level or not.

“Mm.” Daoist Yulan spread out her divine sense, instantly sending it into the heads of each Diremonster corpse. After but a single breath, Daoist Yulan nodded gently. “Very good. They’ve all reached the Wanxiang Diremonster level.”

“The seven of you, stay over here. Later, someone will come to arrange for you to leave.” Daoist Yulan looked at the seven rather haggard-looking figures, then turned her gaze to Ning’s group. “As for the forty five of you, take your spirit-beasts and bring them aboard my ship.”

Moments later, the incomparably alluring Daoist Yulan led Ning’s group aboard her ship.

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“This Daoist Yulan...jeeze...” Ning’s forehead had a faint sheen of sweat, and he even felt a faint fire begin to stir in his loins. In the past, Ning hadn’t been moved by even bewitching figures like Cloudjade or Ninelotus. However, the allure of this Daoist Yulan clearly stemmed from some technique or art which she had trained in. How could the mesmerizing technique of a Primal Daoist be so easily shrugged off?

The nearby Mu Northson’s face was completely flushed. In fact, some of the Wanxiang Adepts even had bloodshot eyes by now. However, their tempered Dao-hearts allowed them to maintain their calm, in the end.

As for Daoist Yulan? She swept them with a gaze, then let out a soft laugh. This gaze...this laugh...instantly, quite a few Wanxiang Adepts closed their eyes.

“Doombringer, what a doombringer,” Ning murmured silently to himself. “No wonder, in my previous life on Earth, there were so many historical records of cases where beautiful women brought doom and destruction to entire nations. These Wanxiang Adepts all have sturdy Dao-hearts, and yet they are all so drawn to her...if she were to go charm a mortal Emperor, she would easily be able to cause that Emperor to no longer care for his empire, and only care for her.”

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The ship continued to fly through the clouds. Daoist Yulan waved her hands, and one book after another began to fly towards Ning and the rest of the forty five.

“Congratulations to you forty five for having become new Raindragon Guards!” Daoist Yulan continued, “Now that you have become Raindragon Guards, you have gained some of the special privileges belonging to the Raindragon Guard. At the same time, you also have some duties and responsibilities to the Raindragon Guard. Take a close look.”

Ning and the others began to flip through the books. As he did, Ning secretly sighed in amazement. “The Raindragon Guard truly lives up to its reputation. This book’s description of the special powers they possess...the Raindragon Guard truly is incomparably overbearing and dominating! Its Immortal cultivators cloak themselves in imperial authority, and can all but act with impunity.”

The Northmont clan of Stillwater could only act as they pleased in Stillwater Commandery, but Raindragon Guards could do the same in virtually any commandery in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty!

“Responsibilities?” Ning gave them a quick glance. They were fairly simple.

One-clawed Raindragon Guards – Every ten years, they had to complete a mission worth a single karmic point (these were the most ordinary of missions).

Two-clawed Raindragon Guards – Every hundred years, they had to complete missions worth a total of a hundred karmic points (the value of a normal two-clawed mission).

Three-clawed Raindragon Guards – Every thousand years, they had to complete missions worth a total of ten thousand karmic points (the value of a normal three-clawed mission).

Four-clawed Raindragon Guards – Every ten thousand years, they had to complete missions worth a total of a million karmic points (the value of a normal four-clawed mission).

Five-clawed Raindragon Guards – These were the highest ranking members of the Raindragon Guard. They were able to mobilize the armies of the Raindragon Guard, and were comparable to a Marquis in power.

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The book described the basic requirements and responsibilities of Raindragon Guards!

For Wanxiang Adepts like Ji Ning, carrying out one mission every ten years was enough. For example, if you carried out a minor mission like killing Bei Zishan, upon completion, the Raindragon Guard would no longer bother you for a time.

Some Loose Immortals would spend thousands or tens of thousands of years between carrying out missions. By comparison, their lives were fairly relaxed.

“This isn’t so bad.” Northson sent to Ning, “Senior apprentice-brother, being a Raindragon Guard isn’t that hard. Based on what this says...we can just go ahead and carry out a ‘ten karma’ mission. After doing so, we can relax for a century.”

“We can relax, yes, but in doing so, we won’t be able to acquire any secret arts, divine abilities, or magic treasures,” Ning sent back.

“Uh...” Northson immediately flipped through a few more pages, then stared. “Whaaat? Divine abilities and secret arts require the exchange of karma points? And also have requirements in terms of rank?”

Many divine abilities could only be acquired by two-clawed or three-clawed Raindragon Guards. However, there was one exception; if one became a Keeper of the Raindragon Guards!

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“Done reading?” Daoist Yulan swept her gaze towards this new class of Raindragon Guards. “It can be said that we Raindragon Guards have the most plentiful number of secret arts and divine abilities in this entire world. Even the Northmont clan of Stillwater cannot compare with us in this regard, because we are the most powerful force of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty.”

“However, these many divine abilities and precious treasures cannot be casually granted to you. After all...it wouldn't be quite fair or equitable for all of you to simply have to do one mission, then relax for centuries and gain access to all these things.” Daoist Yulan continued, “Thus, you have two choices. The first is to just train slowly; after you become two-clawed or three-clawed Raindragon Guards, you'll slowly gain chances to acquire divine abilities.”

Ning and everyone else nodded. Two-clawed Raindragon Guards were comparable to ordinary Primal Daoists in power; Bloodshadow was one such example. Three-clawed Raindragon Guards, however, were probably comparable to Loose Immortals. To wait that long to train...would probably be too late.

“The second choice is to become a member of the Keepers of the Raindragon Guard, the most incomparably loyal soldiers of the Grand Xia Dynasty! If you do so, the Raindragon Guard will naturally expend quite a bit of effort in training you!” Daoist Yulan swept them with her gaze. “Think well on this. Whether now, a year from now, ten years from now, or a century from now...we will always welcome you to join us as Keepers.”

Ning and the others understand quite well that ordinary Raindragon Guards were like deputies or retainers! They were quite free, and they had some special powers...but the Keepers of the Raindragon Guard essentially made up the devoted armies of the Grand Xia Dynasty!

Actually, early on in the history of the Raindragon Guard, every single Raindragon Guard was mandated to be governed in the same manner Keepers were now governed. However, Immortal cultivators, by their very nature, pursued carefree, unbound lives! The more talented an Immortal cultivator, the less they liked to be governed. Thus, if the rules were too strict, the only result would be for many of the most peerless, powerful, talented of cultivators to end up leaving the Raindragon Guard.

Thus, the Raindragon Guard, in order to be able to draw in many elites from around the world, finally set up a stand-alone 'Keepers' organization.

As a result, many lone wanderers and solitary Loose Immortals who had been training in their own private mountains all decided to join the Raindragon Guard. The Raindragon Guard's power and reputation instantly skyrocketed, and they became the undisputed number one military force of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty! There were many major powers who were secretly members of the Raindragon Guard, and most likely, there were very few people in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty who could enumerate them all.

No one knew about all of the old freaks and talented figures who lay hidden within the Raindragon Guard. And today...Ning had become a member of the Guard as well. Although, he was of course the most ordinary type; a one-clawed Raindragon Guard.

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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 2: Torch Dragon's Eye

Two hours later.

Ji Ning and the others, after having acquired a Raindragon Guard talisman, were guided by Daoist Yulan towards a beautiful palace, filled with sculptures and paintings. The palace was roughly three hundred meters high, and it took up nearly three thousand meters in length.

“This is our Dao Repository,” Daoist Yulan said with a smile. “It holds countless techniques, secret arts, and various skills. You can take a good look; your spirit-beasts, however, cannot.”

“Uncle White, Little Qing, wait for me outside.” Ning and Northson immediately followed the others, entering this palace.

The Dao Repository of the Raindragon Guard was simply too vast. “It’s far larger than even the Dao Repository Palace of our Black-White College,” Northson said with a sigh. “Yeah.” Ning stared about himself as well as he walked forward.

“There are 360 different types of Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques? This, this is...” A shocked shout rang out from afar. Upon hearing these words, the faces of Ning and Northson changed as well. 360? Even the Black-White College only had 28!

“There actually are Ki Refining techniques that allows one to reach the ‘Pure Yang’ level? A level which is above even Immortal-level Ki Refining techniques?” Another shocked cry from afar. Upon hearing this, Ning and Northson immediately ran over.

There was an incomparably, exquisitely carved crystalline table here, and atop it were two books. The covers of the books had starry points of light drifting atop them, and next to the books was a silver-haired youth. The silver-haired youth had one of these starry books in his hands. While reading through the book, he called out in shock, “It actually requires anywhere from a thousand to fifteen hundred kilograms of liquefied elemental essence to break through to the Wanxiang level?”

“Is it that incredible?”

“Immortal-level Ki Refining techniques generally only require four hundred to eight hundred kilograms.” Quite a few people ran over, and some of them moved quite quickly. Although Ning and Northson both saw those two books on the table, they were instantly snatched up by the other new Raindragon Guards.

While reading through it, the other new guards shook their heads and sighed in shock. “If one trains in this Pure Yang-level technique, then one’s chances of reaching the Void stage and becoming an Earth Immortal is several times higher than if one uses an Immortal-level technique. The sturdier one’s foundation is, the better!”

Many of the people present had never even heard of Pure Yang techniques. They only knew of four levels of techniques; Mortal-ranked, Earth-ranked, Heaven-ranked, and Immortal-ranked; they hadn’t imagined that there was an even more powerful, Pure Yang-rank. It must be understood that not even the Black-White College, which had produced a Celestial Immortal, had such a technique.

“You don’t understand.” The smug voice of a fairly attractive green-robed woman rang out. “Ki Refining techniques can be divided into Mortal-ranked, Earth-ranked, Heaven-ranked, Immortal-ranked, and Pure Yang-ranked techniques! However, generally speaking, even the most supreme and most firmly established of organizations, such as the Northmont clan of Stillwater and the other Marquisates, will only have access to Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques. Only the likes of the Raindragon Guard, the most powerful organization of the entire, vast empire of the Grand Xia Dynasty, has a Pure Yang-ranked technique!”

“Not even the Stillwater clan of Northmont has one?” Ning mused silently to himself, “Perhaps they do, but don’t dare make it public.” After all, the many Marquisates of this vast world might possess certain special powers and techniques, but they would all have to hide them, for fear that the Grand Xia Dynasty would suspect them of desiring to rebel!

“What?!”

“Only Keepers of the Raindragon Guard can train in this? And even Keepers have to have a thousand karmic points before acquiring it?”

“Ordinary Raindragon Guards like us will never have the chance to learn it? I wanted to switch to training in a Pure Yang-level technique!”

Soon, these people flipped to the final pages regarding the Pure Yang-level techniques. Instantly, they all began to curse and moan.

Ning had a thought. Swoosh! He moved directly towards the table containing the 360 Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques, immediately beginning to flip through them. The other new Raindragon Guards also seemed to have thought of something, and they, too, came to flip through the books.

“Keepers of the Raindragon Guard need a hundred karmic points to learn this. One-clawed Raindragon Guards need ten thousand karmic points to learn this. Two-clawed Raindragon Guards need a hundred thousand karmic points to learn this...” Ning flipped through the requirements, then shook his head.

In the end, Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques were still quite precious. For ordinary Raindragon Guards to acquire ten thousand karmic points required them to risk their lives repeatedly. They would probably have to battle for dozens of years before accumulating enough.

“Cruel.”

“That’s just cruel.”

Quite a few cultivators shook their heads. Ning shook his head as well. Originally, he had wanted to switch to training in a water-attribute Pure Yang-ranked technique, but unfortunately, all of those techniques were reserved for the Keepers!

It was quite common for one to change in techniques. For example, while he was at the Swallow Mountain region, Ning had trained in the quite average [Water Element Art], while after arriving at the Black-White College, he had established his foundations with the [Flowing Watersource]. If he then switched to training in an even-better Pure Yang technique...although it wouldn’t be as good as if he had trained in it from the very beginning, it would still be superb.

Unfortunately...how could the Raindragon Guard so easily allow this technique to be learned by others?

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Soon, they arrived at the second floor of the palace.

“It’s so hard to learn divine abilities as well.”

“There are 89 divine abilities, but more than half are reserved strictly for Keepers!”

“The requirements for the Heavenly Transformation technique are the lowest...one-clawed Raindragon Guards only need ten karmic points!”

Ning and the others flipped through one divine ability manual after another.

[Heavenly Transformation], [Rainbowflame Evasion], [Moving Mountains, Overturning Seas]...these techniques all caused Ning’s eyes to go red with lust. Each of them had different requirements. [Heavenly Transformation] was naturally the easiest to learn, while the hardest was a divine ability known as the [Torch Dragon’s Eye]; it required one to be a Keeper, and also have accumulated ten million karmic points!

“Ten million?” Ning was secretly speechless. He had heard of the [Torch Dragon’s Eye] long ago; this was a divine ability that only appeared in the legends, and was a divine ability on par with the likes of [Houyi Shooting the Suns]. He hadn’t expect to encounter it here, today. Clearly, the roots of the Grand Xia Dynasty were incomparably deep, for it to be able to produce such a legendary divine ability.

“The [Torch Dragon’s Eye]...it’s just here to draw people’s attention.” Ning shook his head. “It requires one to be a Keeper; clearly, one has to be completely loyal to the Grand Xia Dynasty. And it requires ten million karmic points...this would be incomparably difficult for even an Earth Immortal. Clearly, only truly powerful Fiendgod Body Refiners could possibly fulfill these requirements! But would a major power amongst the Fiendgod Body Refiners sell his life into the service of the Grand Xia Dynasty, for the sake of a single divine ability?”

But of course, Ning also understood that this divine ability was definitely incomparably powerful. “Still, compared to my [Starseizing Hand], it’s probably still a bit weaker,” he mused to himself.

The [Starseizing Hand]...this was ranked amongst the top ten of the countless divine abilities that had been developed since Pangu had established the heavens. It wasn’t too realistic for the Grand Xia Dynasty to acquire one of the top ten divine abilities.

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360 types of Immortal-ranked Ki Refining techniques. Three Pure Yang-ranked. 89 divine abilities. 61 divine will techniques. 102 forbidden techniques.

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There were also a number of other unique treasures as well as countless precious materials. Although they were only recorded in books, the requirements for acquiring them were all noted clearly...and since they were all mentioned, given the Raindragon Guard’s resources, they would surely be able to produce them.

“Even Immortal-ranked magic treasures are available for trade. Immortal-ranked! I hear that even many Immortals lack treasures of that rank. Unfortunately, again, this requires one to be a Keeper, and one who has accumulated tremendous sums of karmic points.”

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He continued to read about what was available. Even Ji Ning and Mu Northson, disciples of the Black-White College, the third most powerful organization in Stillwater Commandery, felt moved and desirous.

One could imagine how ordinary new Raindragon Guards felt! All of them had itchy feelings in their hearts.

In terms of the Dao Repository...the Raindragon Guard truly was number one in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty!

"Everyone, what have you decided upon?" As Ning and the others walked out, Daoist Yulan, seeing the unhappy looks on their faces, said to them, "If you join the Keepers, then you will instantly soar to the heavens."

Ning and the rest were all quiet.

"I'm not in a rush."

"You can request to be admitted to join the Keepers at any time." Adept Yulan shook her head and said, "However, the later you join the Keepers of the Raindragon Guard, the more training time you waste. Perhaps, because of the time you wasted, you won't be able to ascend to the highest levels of your Immortal path."

Suddenly, a short, pudgy man strode out from the group. A fierce look in his eyes, he said in a low voice, "I will join the Keepers."

Daoist Yulan instantly laughed, her smile as beautiful as a flower's. "Excellent. You are the first of this batch!"

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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 3: Seclusion Within the Black-White College

To choose to roam the world, carefree? Or to give that up in exchange for the chance to acquire truly top-tier techniques and arts? Which was the better choice? Since ancient days, there had never been a clear answer. As for Ji Ning, since he had access to the divine abilities, secret arts, and techniques of the Black-White College, he naturally wasn't too moved.

"The Grand Xia Dynasty has really used all means available to lure the Raindragon Guards to become Keepers." Ning sighed to himself. "Most importantly of all, the Dynasty never forces anyone; it's up to everyone's own decision! If you join the Keepers, you have no one to blame but yourself. What a superb move!"

"Everyone." Daoist Yulan's voice rang out once more. "After having become Raindragon Guards, your tribes will be blessed as well. Within the territory of your tribes and clans, you can carve out a territory of ten thousand square kilometers. So long as you are alive, this territory will be protected by the Raindragon Guard! There will definitely be no one who will dare to invade it! This includes the Marquis of Stillwater!"

Ning chuckled. Years ago, when he was young and encountered Adept Mu Xiao, the Adept had said the same thing to him.

"Even if you do die, this land will still be protected for a thousand years." Daoist Yulan suddenly laughed, as beautifully as a blooming flower. "But if you become Keepers, even if you die, your territory will still be protected for ten thousand years!"

“Ten thousand years?” Ning was surprised. “Ten thousand years is enough time for the clan to produce some truly powerful figures, if it focuses on doing so. Ten thousand years of peace?” This hadn’t been recorded in any of the books. Aside from a few people who already knew about this, most of the new Raindragon Guards were still incomparably stunned.

“If you wish to join the Keepers, you may do so at any time.” Daoist Yulan turned and walked away. While doing so, she said, “Let’s go. Let’s go mark out the territory of your clans.” They walked to an ancient hall, where each of the new Raindragon Guards marked out their territories.

“Ji clan. City of Ten Thousand Swords.” Pen in hand, Ning lightly circled around an area on the map, encompassing an area of ten thousand square kilometers around the City of Ten Thousand Swords, with all of the four prefecture cities just barely included within as well.

The old man in front of the table nodded. Accepting the leather map from Ning, he rolled it back up, then gave Ning a talisman. He said, “Take this and have someone who is at least at the Zifu level bind it, then hang it at the gates of the City of Ten Thousand Swords.” Ning accepted it, then immediately left.

One person after another entered, mapping out their chosen territory. Some lone practitioners belonged to no clans, and so for now, they chose not to draw.

“If you wish to join the Keepers, you can do so at any time.” A lotus flower leaf appeared beneath her feet, then lifted her up into the air. Her voice resonated through the skies as she said, “Now, you can each go do whatever you please. However, remember one thing; you are now one-clawed Raindragon Guards. Every ten years, you must complete a mission for at least one karmic point. This is your responsibility as Raindragon Guards. If you aren’t able to complete this...you’ll be apprehended and forced to carry out a mission. If you aren’t able to carry it out, then you’ll be expelled.”

Her voice echoed in the air. As for Daoist Yulan herself, standing atop that lotus leaf, she gracefully soared into the clouds, disappearing into the mountains.

“Senior apprentice-brother, what should we do now?” Northson asked. Ning replied, “What can we do?” He shook his head. “Although this division of the Raindragon Guard has a plentiful Dao Repository, one has to use karmic points to trade for them. We don’t have any karmic points at all...we need to hurry up and go accept some missions. After doing so, the Raindragon Guard won’t bother us. Let’s go accept the mission, then go back to Stillwater City and sell off the items we acquired in the wild marshes.”

Northson laughed. “Alright.”

“Let’s go.” The little azure serpent was wrapped around Ning’s wrist, and the large white dog was behind his back. By his side was his junior apprentice-brother, Northson. The two of them went off to accept missions, and then...

“Back to Stillwater City!”

Ning, Northson, the Whitewater Hound, and Qingqing were seated atop the dragon-headed warship. They quickly soared into the skies and into the clouds. “Senior apprentice-brother, this mission isn’t so hard,” Northson said. “Honestly, we should’ve taken on twenty or thirty karmic point missions. When the two of us join forces...it really will be hard to find a Wanxiang Adept who is a match for us!”

“Be a bit humbler,” Ning said with a smirk. “If we encounter the likes of senior apprentice-brothers Bloodshadow, Holyfire, or Sloppy...will we be able to overcome them?”

“They, uh, they...” Northson mouth opened and closed a few times. Honestly; they really wouldn’t be able to. These were figures who had comprehended a complete Dao Path and who were definitely comparable to Primal Daoists.

Ning said, “Don’t think that just because we killed a few Wanxiang Adepts and Wanxiang Diremonsters that we are invincible. In addition, we’ve already taken on two ‘ten karmic point’ missions. As long as we can accomplish them, for the next century, we’ll be completely free.”

“True. A hundred years of freedom is good enough.” Northson nodded, then gritted his teeth. “Before going to the military missions headquarters, I really had no idea that this region had so many vile figures present. There really are all sorts of vile men here.”

“Right.” A hint of a killing intent appeared in Ning’s eyes as well. The military missions headquarters had many missions, the vast majority of which entailed killing some individuals who had committed extremely grave sins. These sins had reached the point of causing the Dao of the Heavens to cause sins to swirl about these sinners. By killing them, the entire Grand Xia Dynasty’s fortunes would improve. Naturally, the Dynasty would set up long-lasting mechanisms for ensuring this happened.

“These two...one massacred countless mortals in order to train his ‘Demonic Bloodhell Eye’. The other was actually able to cultivate a ‘Ghostfetus King’...I really don’t know how many infants he killed.” Northson shook his head. “In addition, these are just missions of ten karmic points. Those missions for tens or hundreds of thousands of karmic points...they require that one go kill some truly evil, terrifying, demonic figures which cause headaches to even the Grand Xia Dynasty itself. Despite being surrounded by countless sins, they are still capable of withstanding the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations.”

When one embarked on the proper path, one had to be able to comprehend the Dao, had to refine one’s Dao-heart, and move one step at a time. On the deviant paths, however, things moved much faster. Although they caused sins to swirl around a person, making the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations to grow even more powerful...these deviant, evil paths could also allow for one’s power to skyrocket, which would actually make resisting the calamities and tribulations much easier.

However, in the end, although the evil paths could allow you to grow temporarily more powerful, they were never long-lasting! When the time came for the Celestial Tribulation, those who walked the righteous, orthodox path had a chance to become Celestial Immortals; even if they failed, they would become Loose Immortals. However, it was virtually impossible for those on the vile, deviant paths to become Celestial Immortals, and extremely few of them would even be able to become Loose Immortals. This was because the Celestial Tribulation for practitioners of the vile arts was simply too terrifying!

“We reached Stillwater City.” Northson glanced downwards.

“Little Qing.” Ning glanced at the little azure snake on his wrist. “Your ancient glacial ice...give me half of it.”

Whoosh.

The little azure snake instantly transformed into mist, then reformed into an azure-robed maiden. Her eyes were completely round, and she said furiously, "That's mine, Master! I worked extremely hard to acquire it! You...you...you damn bandit, I completely misjudged you! That pure, innocent youth of the past has actually become so vicious. You truly have no..."

"Shut your mouth," Ning hurriedly barked. He took a deep breath, then said, "You damn miser, you can't possibly use up such an enormous piece of ancient glacial ice. I'm going to help you sell it at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain in exchange for liquefied elemental essence, so as to help you increase in power. Understood?"

Qingqing blinked, then mumbled, "You better not skim any of it."

"...come with me and watch as I trade it for liquefied elemental essence. Is that acceptable?" Ning was truly speechless. Little Qing was simply too miserly.

"Fine. Here you go." Qingqing stretched her hand out. Whoosh. A chunk of ancient glacial ice the size of a small mountain instantly appeared in front of her hand.

The nearby Northson's mouth immediately hung open. He howled, "You little green snake, you had so much ancient glacial ice, but you only gave me such a tiny piece?! And to think I was so grateful towards you!!!"

Qingqing didn't even give the bellowing Northson a single glance. With a wave of her hand, she sent her elemental ki out, slicing through the iceberg of ancient glacial ice, dividing it in two. She then stored half of it, giving the other half to Ning.

"Let's go to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain."

The dragon-headed warship charged downwards, towards that enormous, ancient city of Stillwater.

After returning to Stillwater City, Ning and Northson felt an instant sense of familiarity and nostalgia; they had lived here for more than three years, after all. After being inside the Heavenly Treasures Mountain for an hour, Ning's group re-emerged.

"Yours." Ning handed a jade bottle to the nearby Qingqing. Qingqing accepted the bottle, carefully inspecting its contents. There was exactly 2650 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence within; this was the exact amount which Ning had acquired when selling off the ancient glacial ice. Only now did she nod, satisfied.

Ning shook his head and laughed. Then he turned to Uncle White. "Uncle White, this is for you." When Ning looked at the human-formed white-robed, white-haired Uncle White, who looked so similar to Ning's own father, he felt all the more warm and loving towards him.

The Whitewater Hound walked over. After doing an inspection, he was shocked; there was 4000 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence within this bottle. He shook his head and sent mentally, "Ning, son, this amount of liquefied elemental essence would raise your power dramatically. There's no need to waste it on me."

"I have another 3000 kilograms here," Ning sent back to him. "To me, an extra four thousand kilograms won't have much of an impact. I'll probably need tens of thousands of kilograms to reach the Primal

Daoist stage. In addition, according to the traditions of the Black-White College, I must completely comprehend an entire Dao Path before I am permitted to enter the Primal Daoist stage. I'm still quite far away from being able to comprehend an entire Dao Path."

"This isn't of great use to me, but to you, Uncle White, it will be very helpful. Right now, Little Qing is a Wanxiang Diremonster. When you increase your power, Uncle White, you'll be able to better assist me," Ning sent mentally. The Whitewater Hound hesitated, but in the end, he nodded.

During this trip to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, Ning sold off almost all of the treasures he had acquired in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains, including Dong One's protective treasure, as well as the treasures of the Dragonwhale King. He even sold off the Dragonwhale King's intrinsic magic treasures for a high price; the intrinsic magic treasures of a Primal Dragonwhale Diremonster, those two dragon-whiskers, were far more valuable than ordinary Heaven-ranked magic treasures.

Ning and Northson had each acquired five thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. Northson purchased quite a few construct ingredients, while Ning only had a bottle of 'firelotus pith', which was necessary for nourishing his goldflame earthfire.

"Let's go back to the Black-White College. Training back in the College will be very safe; we won't have to worry about being disturbed," Ning said.

"Right. What we need to do is go into secluded meditation and get it all done at one go. I should be able to train directly to the peak of the Wanxiang level," Northson said excitedly. "Senior apprentice-brother, you should be able to reach the peak of the Wanxiang level as well, right?" He had no idea that Ning had given four thousand kilograms to his Uncle White; he thought that Ning still had five thousand kilograms.

Ning laughed, then said, "Let's go. Let's go back and do some training."

Immediately, the two men and the two spirit-beasts began to walk towards the Black-White College.

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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 4: Disappointed and Confused

The black-robed, black-haired Immortal Diancai was seated in the lotus position atop his jade bed. Suddenly, a hint of amusement appeared at the corner of his lips. "Seems as though this kid was successful in joining the Raindragon Guard. He came back quite quickly."

At this moment, Ji Ning and Mu Northson had just re-entered the Black-White College, flying through the air.

"Senior apprentice-brother, I'll go find you tomorrow," Northson said. "Go back and focus on your training," Ning said. "After you finish, we'll go take on more missions." The two of them had prepared well in advance; after absorbing enough liquefied elemental essence and rising in power sufficiently, they would immediately go and execute those vile, sin-laden cultivators.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Ning moved forward on a small boat, while Northson rode his dragon-headed warship. Each flew to their own little mountains.

In midair.

“Ah, senior apprentice-brother Darknorth.”

“Junior apprentice-brother Darknorth returned? Last time, when I went to visit you, I discovered that you had gone out to go adventuring.”

On the way back to Darknorth Peak, Ning ran into six ordinary retainer-disciples and a single formal disciple.

“There’s Darknorth Peak.” Atop his flying ship, Ning stared downwards towards a mountain peak. It was already sundown, and beneath the glow of the setting sun, Darknorth Peak seemed so dreamlike and illusory. “Little Qing, you are my spirit-beast, but in the Black-White College, there are many forbidden areas which you cannot enter without permission. Today, just be good and quietly train in a secluded room. Don’t go anywhere else and don’t make trouble for me, understood?”

“Don’t worry, Master.” After entering the Black-White College, Qingqing was extraordinarily excited. Ning couldn’t help but laugh, and then he immediately sent his ship flying downwards.

One figure after another emerged from the Darknorth Peak’s estate; it was the six retainers Ning had left behind. Meng Roch, Cloudship, Cloudjade, Forgard, Weifang, and Nethersun.

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning,” the six called out, welcoming him in unison.

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you came back already? Were you successful in joining the Raindragon Guard?” Cloudjade looked at Ning, her eyes shining brightly. As a naturally beautiful, alluring maiden, she naturally attracted admirers like moths to the flame. She had many pursuers, and even amongst Ning’s retainers, aside from Meng Roch and her elder brother Cloudship, the other three were all trying to woo her. Naturally, there were other retainers on other mountains who were chasing after as well.

Unfortunately...

After having grown accustomed to the retainers, when she saw Ning, she instantly mused to herself, “Compared to senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, all of them are like clay pigeons or earthen dogs! Hmph...even if the Dao-Companion of myself, Cloudjade, isn’t as good as senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, he should be at least half as good as him. These people aren’t even close to being comparable to him.”

“Right. I joined the Raindragon Guard,” Ning said with a smile. The six all said in unison, “Congratulations, senior apprentice-brother!”

Ning nodded, then pointed towards the azure-robed maiden by his side. “This is my spirit-beast, Qingqing. You should get to know each other.”

“Senior apprentice-sister Qingqing.” Everyone, Cloudjade included, spoke with great respect, because they could sense the powerful, monstrous aura emanating from her. She was definitely a Wanxiang-level Diremonster, while the six of them were all merely Zifu Disciples. In truth, Qingqing had released her aura intentionally, wanting to overawe them.

“Alright, all of you can leave now. Uncle White, arrange a private training room for Qingqing,” Ning said, then went by himself to his own training room.

“As soon as he comes back, he goes into training. No wonder he’s so talented.” Cloudjade looked at Ning, then nodded. “The Dao-Companion I find in the future must be as hard-working as senior apprentice-brother.”

Within the private training room. The ceilings glowed with light from the star-like jewels, which bathed the entire room in their glow. Ning sat there quietly in the lotus position, atop the carved jade bed in the center of the room.

“Let’s begin.” Ning waved his hand, and a jade bottle appeared. He placed it in front of himself, then opened the stopper. This jade flask had three thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence within, and as soon as he opened the stopper, a thick, nourishing elemental aura drifted out from within it. Just breathing in the air in this room made one feel extremely comfortable.

Ning’s soul was powerful, his talent was tremendous, and his foundation was very deep and stable. His training speed was also astonishingly fast. Normally, Wanxiang Adepts might spend centuries without building up enough elemental ki to break through to the Primal Daoist level, but for Ning, even if he just trained slowly, a few decades would be enough.

Despite that, however...these three thousand kilograms would be the equivalent of Ning engaging in painstaking training for six to ten years.

“Absorb.” Ning opened his mouth, and the liquefied elemental essence entered his mouth.

Within his Zifu region. At the deepest depths of that sea of elemental ki, the Watersource began to rapidly release large amounts of incomparably pure elemental ki. The entire elemental sea began to swivel slightly, and the surface of the sea naturally began to rise. At the same time, countless grains of refined essence began to emerge within the sea of elemental ki.

Rumble...these countless grains of refined essence rose into the skies. In the skies of the Zifu Region, there were thousands of stars, a sun, and a moon. These incomparably mysterious and profound stellar bodies were beginning to slowly move as well, and as they did, the truly pure ‘Wanxiang-level elemental ki’ began to be generated.

Rumble...the countless grains of refined essence were instantly swept into the orbits of these stellar bodies as they soared into the skies. The countless stellar bodies slowly moved about, grinding the grains and breaking them apart, then absorbing the remains. Naturally, it was the sun and the moon which absorbed the most.

Not seeming tired at all, the stellar bodies moved nonstop, each one exerting their own attractive or repulsive forces. Suddenly, the gravitational forces locked, and they were now unable to move an inch! These locked-in stellar bodies continued to absorb more and more grains of refined essence. Upon reaching a certain size, they would undergo a qualitative transformation.

Bang!

The Wanxiang-level elemental ki from these stars was now clearly much more pure than before!

“The middle-stage of the Wanxiang-level,” Ning mused to himself. “After using up nearly a thousand kilograms, I’ve reached the middle of the Wanxiang-level. Let’s continue!”

A long period of time later.

This time, Ning used up more than 1500 kilograms, and the countless stars within Ning's Zifu region began to undergo yet another qualitative transformation.

"The late Wanxiang-level!" Ning opened his eyes, staring at the jade bottle before him. The jade bottle had less than five hundred kilograms left, but there was no way he could reach the peak with this amount. Based on his previous experiences, from the late Wanxiang-level to the peak Wanxiang-level would probably require 2000 to 2500 kilograms of liquefied elemental essence!

"Actually, the hardest part is still going to be going from the peak of the Wanxiang stage to the Primal Daoist stage. That step will take tens of thousands of kilograms," Ning sighed.

Could it be that Ning would go and ambush and kill other Wanxiang Daoists?

As the saying goes, if one always walks by the side of the river, eventually, one's shoes would get wet. Perhaps Ning would encounter a low-profile yet incredibly powerful Wanxiang Adept, or one with a tremendously powerful magic treasure. In that case, he truly would die! Thus, generally speaking, unless there were special circumstances, one wouldn't go waylay and kill other Immortal cultivators. If one did so repeatedly, one might be successful for a time, but sooner or later, one would be finished.

"No rush. For now, in terms of both comprehension as well as in the Dao of the Sword, I'm not good enough yet. Breaking through to the Primal stage won't be for some time to come." Ning once more began to ponder on his swordplay and began to meditate.

Time flowed past, and soon, it was light outside. It was dawn, and Northson had come.

"Senior apprentice-brother, senior apprentice-brother," Northson called out, appearing to be in uncommonly high spirits. "I went all the way to the peak of the Wanxiang stage, and still have quite a bit of liquefied elemental essence left."

"Why so smug? I'm at the peak of the Wanxiang level as well!" Qingqing stared at him. Northson was shocked. "You? With just that little bit of liquefied elemental essence? Previously, you were like me, at the middle of the Wanxiang level; I used up far more liquefied elemental essence than you."

Qingqing pursed her lips. "I spent three hundred kilograms to reach the late Wanxiang stage, then another 2250 to reach the peak of the Wanxiang stage. Clearly, previously I was already quite close to the late Wanxiang stage and was much stronger than you."

Ning sat there to the side, sipping on some wine and laughing while the two bickered.

"Senior apprentice-brother, how about you?" Northson sat down as well. "Late Wanxiang level," Ning said with a calm laugh.

"Late?" Northson was shocked. "Why only late?"

"My son Ning and I are both at the late Wanxiang stage now." A white-haired, white-robed man walked in through the gate. Northson, upon hearing this, instantly understood. Ning must have given his liquefied elemental essence to the Whitewater Hound, who had previously only been at the peak of the Zifu level. Otherwise, how could the hound have trained all the way to the late Wanxiang stage at one go?

“Uncle White had an extremely high level of comprehension with regards to the Dao of formations. Thus, with enough liquefied elemental essence, he was able to advance considerably. If one doesn’t have a sufficiently high level of comprehension and a strong enough Dao-heart, even if one has liquefied elemental essence, it won’t make a difference.” Ning looked at Northson. “Junior apprentice-brother, are you going to go visit your master? If you don’t, we’ll head out right now.”

“No,” Northson said, shaking his head. “You didn’t go visit your master either, right?” Ning nodded. They had just said their farewells last time...it had only been three months. Ning hadn’t improved that much in terms of swordplay, and so he didn’t need to be in a rush to see his master.

“Let’s eat breakfast, then head out,” Ning said. “All of you, sit down. Uncle White, Little Qing, sit.” Northson, Qingqing, Uncle White, and Ning all sat there, chatting, laughing, and eating. That very day, after the sun fully rose, Ning’s group once more left the Black-White College...and after this departure, it would be a long time before they returned.

Ning had encountered quite a few people after returning to the Black-White College, and so those who were interested in him naturally learned quite quickly that he was back.

“Whoosh.” Ninelotus waved her hand, and a watery mirror appeared in front of her. She stared at herself in front of the mirror.

“Eh?” Ninelotus frowned slightly. The style of her blue robes began to change, and even the embroidery of the robes began to change. As a set of magic robes, it naturally could change in coloration. A short time later, Ninelotus finally smiled. With a wave of her hand, she dismissed the watery mirror in front of her.

Whoosh. A snowy white lotus flower appeared. Ninelotus stepped onto the snowy white lotus flower, then flew straight into the air, leaving her estate.

A short while later. Ninelotus, aboard the snowy white lotus flower, saw the distant Darknorth Peak. After flying a bit closer, she finally spoke out: “I heard that junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning has returned. I wonder if we can meet?” Her voice echoed in the air above Darknorth Peak.

Soon, a swarthy, black-skinned man and an alluring woman appeared. It was Meng Roch and Cloudjade. Roch hurriedly bowed. “Senior apprentice-sister Ninelotus, senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning returned yesterday, but he left again this morning.” The nearby Cloudjade stared up at Ninelotus, who stood upon her snowy white lotus flower. She felt as though Ninelotus were a beautiful, Immortal fairy, and she couldn’t help but feel envious.

“He’s gone?” Ninelotus was stunned. “When will he be back?” She asked.

“We don’t know.” Roch shook his head. “Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning said that this time, he probably wouldn’t be back for a long time.”

“A long time?”

Ninelotus nodded slowly, a hint of disappointment in her eyes. And then, still atop her magic treasure, she departed, disappearing into the distant horizons.

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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 5: Never Forget

Ji Ning didn't know that Ninelotus had come to his place shortly after his departure. At this moment in time, he was on a journey with his junior apprentice-brother, Uncle White, and Qingqing to go apprehend some criminals.

Thanks to the intelligence reports provided by the Raindragon Guard, after roughly a month or so wandering through various regions, Ning's group finally arrived at the location where an evil cultivator known as Adept Blackhorn was hiding. This Adept Blackhorn relied on a 'Ghostfetus King' to do battle, and no one had ever been able to overcome him.

Unfortunately, this time, he encountered Ning's group.

First, Uncle White stealthily set down a formation, making it so that Adept Blackhorn had nowhere to run. Next, Ning's group revealed themselves. Ning didn't even fight; he let Mu Northson reveal his 'Fiendish Skyeater Serpents' and use his constructs to grind the Ghostfetus King to death. Without the protection of the Ghostfetus King, Adept Blackhorn was instantly thrown into a state of terror and was effortless killed.

"Junior apprentice-brother, your power has clearly increased," Ning praised. "You were able to kill the infamous Adept Blackhorn with such ease."

"Heh heh." Northson scratched his head. "I'm at the peak of the Wanxiang level, after all, and my Fiendish Skyeater Serpents were upgraded considerably after I acquired quite a few materials at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. Naturally, their power has increased substantially.

Ning understood. The Dao of Constructs...it required significant amounts of resources and precious items. "Let's go. Let's go take down the next criminal," Ning said.

"With us four Wanxiang Adepts working together, taking down this type of criminal is truly effortless." The nearby Qingqing was quite smug as well. As for the Whitewater Hound, he just stood there quietly, smiling.

Swoosh! The dragon-headed warship once more soared into the skies, and Ning's group once more embarked on a journey. They would go after the next criminal – Adept Qiandou!

No matter how well they had hidden themselves, they still couldn't escape the eyes and ears of the Raindragon Guard. Unless, of course, they were like Ning, who could go hiding within his underwater estate. For everyone else, so long as they were in this major world which was controlled by the Grand Xia Dnasty, it would be impossible for them to escape the assault of the Raindragon Guard.

"Adept Qiandou really did hide quite far away. This place is three million kilometers away from Stillwater City, and can be considered one of the most distant backwaters of the entire Stillwater Commandery. If he were to flee any further, he would have left the entire Commandery.

"If he left Stillwater Commandery, then it wouldn't be for our division of the Raindragon Guard to pursue him."

Ning's group was chatting amongst themselves at the Crimson Dragon Mountains' teleportation array. Whoosh! Within Dongyu City, three million kilometers away, a teleportation array that was more than three hundred meters high suddenly lit up. Ning, Northson, and the others all appeared within it.

"Greetings, milord Raindragon Guards." An old man nearby bowed respectfully. There were six Zifu Disciples and a group of Xiantian experts present as well, and they all were incomparably respectful. Ning swept them with a glance.

Dongyu City was a commandery city where the Grand Xia Dynasty had armies stationed, much like Swallow Mountain City. The only difference was that within this commandery city was a small teleportation array of the Raindragon Guard! The wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains was a major danger zone and thus it had Primal Daoists and Loose Immortals on guard, but Dongyu City was an extremely ordinary location, and so it only had Zifu Disciples present.

"Mmm." Ning nodded. "Junior apprentice-brother, let's go." Ning didn't chat with these people; he immediately boarded the dragon-headed warship and soared into the skies. Based on the latest intelligence reports from the Raindragon Guard, Adept Qiandou was within an ancient mountain range that was located a few tens of thousands of kilometers outside of Dongyu City.

Ning's group searched carefully for him. Soon, it was night. "There he is." Ning, standing atop the warship in the night sky, had been spreading his divine sense throughout the ground below, to a distance of three hundred kilometers. He suddenly found that within this mountain, there was a truly ferociously guarded city. This city was apparently protected by a vision-impairing formation; one wouldn't be able to locate it with the naked eye at all. Fortunately, Ning possessed the divine sense; otherwise, they would've spent months before being able to find it.

"What a city." Ning's eyes flashed with a killing intent. "Where is it?" Northson hurriedly asked. "Right below us," Ning growled. "Let's go. Follow me."

Ning jumped down, and as he did, a sword flashed and appeared beneath his feet, tearing through the air as it flew downwards. The Whitewater Hound and Northson followed him down as well. While charging down...

"Break." Ning pointed off into the distance, and a stream of water appeared out of nowhere. It swirled around a distant formation flag, then easily pulled it out. Instantly, the scenery for a region of around ten kilometers began to twist and change. The seemingly ordinary, wild mountains instantly disappeared, transforming into an enormous city that was filled with a large number of slaves. The slaves were all carrying out arduous manual labor, either carrying stones, building walls, or even cutting wood from the surrounding area in order to further reinforce this city.

"This is really..." Upon seeing this city appear out of nowhere, Northson stared, speechless. "Utter wasteful extravagance," Ning said coldly.

"He's a cultivator of vile arts. It's one thing for him to massacre commoners in order to complete his vile techniques, but why must he have them build this city for him? And why must he squeeze them so?" Northson was immediately able to see that these commoners were under such great duress while building the city that many were literally worked to death.

Ning didn't say a single word. Because his divine sense covered the entire city, he could easily sense the despair, agony, pain, and numbness of the countless people within it! This was a sort of numbness that came from completely and utter despair. In addition, a number of these commoners held a boundless amount of resentment in their hearts. Their hatred so was so strong that Ning's divine sense could easily sense it.

"This is hell!" Ning suddenly charged into the skies, transforming into a streak of light and moving to stand in the air directly above this city of doom. An enormous Waterflame Lotus swirled around Ning.

The light of the Waterflame Lotus was incomparably eye-catching in the night sky. Instantly, the countless commoners who were engaged in crushing physical night labor all raised their heads. They saw the enormous Waterflame Lotus in the air above them, and saw a seemingly small, frail form.

"Qiandou, you old demon, hurry up and come out to die!" Ning let out an explosive roar, which rang like thunder and echoed throughout this entire city.

"Ah?!"

Boom

BOOM!

The many, incomparably savage and bloodthirsty Xiantian experts who were in charge of overseeing this city all began to howl in agony. Blood poured from each orifice, and they died on the spot. These were the disciples and grand-disciples of Adept Qiandou, and had supported him in his evildoings.

Ning's divine sense was able to tell that these people were surrounded by the foul aura of sin as well. Ordinary people would neither be surrounded by the clear aura of positive karma or the foul aura of sin. The fact that they were surrounded by sin represented that their vileness had already reached an extremely high level. Against these sin-covered malefactors, Ning had used his [Soulshaker Art]; because the difference in power between them was too great, all of them died right away, blood flowing from their orifices!

"What?"

"How could that old fiend have...?"

Those commoner slaves stared in astonishment. Those terrifying Xiantian lifeforms, who had always appeared to be incomparably savage, all fell over, dead. The slaves simply couldn't believe it.

Right at this moment...

"Might I ask, which fellow Daoist has come!?" A white-robed, long-bearded man suddenly appeared in midair, locking gazes with the distant Ning. Ning stared at him, not the slightest bit worried that he would flee!

This was because, when he had charged out, Uncle White had already, secretly acted the grand spacelock formation.

“Qiandou, you old fiend, you have a few young fiends with you.” Ning swept the distant palace with a glance. There were quite a few Zifu Disciples standing at the entrance to the palace; clearly, they were the disciples of this old demon.

“Dare I ask, who are you, fellow Daoist?” The old fiend, Qiandou, maintained a smile on his face. Ning, surrounded by the Waterflame Lotus, stared downwards towards the hellish landscape below, then said softly, “After you die and go to the Netherworld Kingdom, you will be tormented in the eighteenth level of the Netherworld. The torment suffered by these commoners you tortured to death will be repaid unto you thousands of times over.”

“Die?” Adept Qiandou shook his head. “So long as I can become an Earth Immortal, when the time comes, I’ll send a hint of my truesoul into the Netherworld Kingdom. Given my prowess as an Immortal, I will willingly become a Ghost Immortal. Why should I fear torment?”

“Earth Immortal?” Ning stared at him coldly. “Wait to suffer in agony in the eighteenth level of the Netherworld. Given how many sins you have committed, I imagine that you won’t be able to endure for many years before you are tormented to the point of your soul collapsing.”

The amount of sin he had committed vastly surpassed Bei Zishan’s. Adept Qiandou’s body was not surrounded by a foul aura, but by a bloody light! An eye-piercing bloody light! A bloody light that caused one’s heart to quail! This amount of sin was utterly astonishing.

As soon as Ning’s words came out, Adept Qiandou roared in fury, “I think you’ll be the one to die instead!”

Whoosh. An enormous pupil of blood suddenly appeared above his head. This enormous bloody eye, filled with boundless sin and evil, stared directly towards Ning. And as it did so....boom! An incomparably powerful, bloody, baleful light shot straight towards Ning’s soul.

“An ant who wishes to shake a tree.” Within Ning’s mind appeared the divine visage of Maiden Nuwa. Nuwa stood there in midair, radiating an endless aura of light. As soon as the bloody aura touched it, it instantly melted away like snow in the face of the sun, transforming into nothingness.

“Not good.” Adept Qiandou’s face changed, and he hurriedly turned, meaning to flee. But right at this moment, Ning let out an icy roar. “DIE!”

His powerful divine sense swept out in an incomparably savage wave, crushing down upon Adept Qiandou’s soul. Adept Qiandou instantly felt dizzy and dazed. Ning pointed towards him with a single finger, and around Adept Qiandou’s body, a Waterflame Lotus appeared out of nowhere. Adept Qiandou was completely dazed and unable to fight back; as a result, as soon as the Waterflame Lotus began to swivel...he was instantly transformed into meat paste!

“What?!”

“Flee!”

Those five Zifu Disciples before the palace were incomparably terrified. The five of them had followed Adept Qiandou in doing countless evil deeds, and the tainted aura of sin had surrounded them long ago. Ning pointed to them from far away, and one Waterflame Lotus after another began to bloom, glowing with holy light as they crushed these five into meat paste.

All of them were taken care of at one go.

As for Northson and the Whitewater Hound, they flew over as well. They displayed no joy; as they stared down at the countless oppressed commoners, they couldn't muster any joy at all. "How could he do such a thing?" Northson let out a sigh.

This opponent possessed the 'Hellblood Demon Eye', and was extremely hard to deal with. Ning had a powerful soul, and also possessed a divine will attack; he was the perfect counter to this person. Thus, they had planned all along for Ning to be the one to fight him alone.

"There is kindness in the world, but there naturally is evil as well," Ning said calmly. "Senior apprentice-brother," Northson looked at Ning, "Now that we've both completed our missions, what shall we do next?"

Ning was startled. Next? Instantly, three blood-soaked names suddenly emerged from the deepest recesses of Ning's mind. Dong Seven! Yu Dong! Shui Yi! Ning had never forgotten these three names. These three names were like blazing irons that had been imprinted onto his very soul. The most important people in his life, his mother and father, had died...because of these three!

Suddenly, a surge of emotion filled Ning's breast. Kill! Kill! Kill! When Ning unburied this matter from where it had lain deep within his heart, he became filled with hatred and a desire to kill. These three were the three he hated most in the world!

"Next..." Ning said softly, "I'll get revenge!"

"Get revenge?" Northson was puzzled. "On who?"

"Those who slew my parents!" Ning said slowly. Hearing this, Northson's face instantly changed. Qingqing lowered her serpents head, pressing it against Ning's arm, as though to console Ning. As for the nearby Whitewater Hound, he just stared quietly at Ning, his eyes also filled with the same desire. After all...he had personally witnessed that nightmarish day.

"I cannot share the same heavens with those who slew my parents!" Ning said.

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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 6: A Surging Killing Intent

Although Ji Ning spoke very softly, Mu Northson and Qingqing could both sense the boundless hatred and killing intent within those words. This enmity had sunk deep into his soul, and had embedded itself within the marrow of his bones!

Ning could never forget it. When he had left Swallow Mountain, Ning had deeply desired to take revenge! However, at that point in time, he didn't know anything about the world; it was simply too vast and too alien. That was why he had decided to join a school and to first increase his own power, temporarily burying his hatred deep within his heart. Now that he had finished his training and joined the Raindragon Guard, it was time to take revenge!

"Father, Mother, Uncle," Ning murmured to himself silently, "Those three of them...your child will not spare a single one! Not a single one!"

“Junior apprentice-brother.” Ning turned to look at the nearby Northson. “I am going to take revenge. It will be enough for me to bring along Qingqing and Uncle White. There’s no need for you to go.”

“Senior apprentice-brother, what the hell are you talking about?!” Northson said furiously, “I no longer have any kin in this world, now that my mother is dead! I have no attachments to anyone, so you don’t need to worry about causing trouble for me. As your junior apprentice-brother, I know exactly how agonizing your pain is, with your parents having been killed. In the past, I personally slaughtered those evil villains and avenged my mother. This time, I will definitely go with you!”

Ning was stunned. His mother had died? He had taken revenge on behalf of his mother? He had no kin left in the world? His junior apprentice-brother had never told him this before.

“Fine!” Ning nodded, then gave Northson a gentle clap on the shoulders. “You are a good brother.” Northson looked at Ning, who said, “Let’s go. Let’s go to Stillwater City.”

Northson immediately said, “Stillwater City? Right...didn’t you say you wanted to get revenge? As I see it, although we’ve fulfilled two assignments already, for now, there’s no need for us to go back to the Crimson Dragon Mountains to turn them in. For now, we can go act against your enemies while claiming we are on a mission to apprehend suspects on behalf of the Raindragon Guard. This gives us a good excuse.”

Ning nodded. In the past, Xue Hongyi had used the excuse of ‘suspecting that the Ji clan was harboring criminals’ to investigate Ning himself. Fortunately, Northmont Baiwei had stopped him. At that time, Baiwei had the status of ‘Emissary for the Marquisate of Stillwater’; if he hadn’t, even he would’ve found it difficult to stop this matter!

“That’s exactly what I was thinking,” Ning said. “However, we still need to go to Stillwater City to make some preparations. First, I need to get the intelligence reports on my enemies. Second, I need to buy some magic treasures.”

“Magic treasures?” Northson said, puzzled, “Can it be that your enemies are extremely powerful, senior apprentice-brother?” Ning shook his head. “No, they should only be Zifu Disciples. Even if they make a breakthrough, they’ll only be ordinary Wanxiang Adepts.”

“Then why must you buy treasures to deal with them, senior apprentice-brother?” Northson asked, puzzled. Ning said in a low, growling voice, “Because...I am going to shatter their souls!”

The cold malice in these words caused Northson, Qingqing, and the Whitewater Hound to all feel shocked. Northson thought back to how when he was a child, he had slaughtered those enemies...back then, he had been similarly crazed by hate. He could completely understand what Ning was currently feeling.

“Let’s go,” Ning said. “Alright.” The group immediately boarded the dragon-headed warship, quickly departing and going to Stillwater City.

Stillwater City. Ning first paid a visit to his good friend, Baiwei. “I already know,” Baiwei said, “That the most recent group of Raindragon Guard testees included you, Brother Ji Ning. And the name of your junior apprentice-brother, Mu Northson, as well.” Baiwei looked towards Ning, then smiled towards

Northson as well. He saw that Ning was glancing towards the maidservants, and he waved his hand towards them. "You can leave," he said, and they all left.

"Brother Baiwei, I've come to ask you for some help," Ning said solemnly. "Please, speak," Baiwei said.

"I need intelligence reports for three people," Ning said. "Snowdragon Mountain's Dong Seven, Shui Yi, and Yu Dong! However, I don't wish for the Heavenly Treasures Mountain to know that I was the one investigating them."

Baiwei nodded lightly. "Understood. I'll immediately arrange for people to go to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain and do some investigations." "Sorry for the trouble," Ning said.

Killing the three of them wouldn't be hard. What made things difficult was Snowdragon Mountain. Shui Yi and Yu Dong had less impressive backgrounds, but Dong Seven was the grandson of a Primal Daoist of Snowdragon Mountain. Once Ning acted against him, no matter how secretly he acted, Snowdragon Mountain would still investigate...and if they discovered that someone had once investigated all three of these individuals, they would definitely grow suspicious. Thus, he had to leave as few clues behind as possible.

"I'll immediately send someone to go. In less than two hours, they'll be able to have the results," Baiwei said, rising to his feet. "The two of you can rest here. I'll make the arrangements."

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Just two hours later, a servant came in, carrying three thick tomes and giving them to Northmont Baiwei. "You can leave now," Baiwei instructed, and the servant quietly departed.

Baiwei handed the three reports directly to Ning. "These are the most detailed reports the Heavenly Treasures Mountain has regarding these three individuals. Reports are divided into multiple levels, but these are the highest level reports, and are the most detailed ones, which have all of their most secret details. However, the Heavenly Treasures Mountain is just an intelligence network, not the heavens; they can't possibly know everything. For example, they have no idea that this time, it was you, Brother Ji Ning, who wanted these reports."

Ning nodded. Human resources were limited. No matter how formidable the Heavenly Treasures Mountain was, they couldn't know everything.

"Dong Seven." Ning began to flip through the book. The nearby Baiwei simply drank his wine, slowly savoring it, while Northson did the same. None of them spoke or did anything to disturb Ning.

Ning read quite quickly. This report was fairly detailed; it had records of many of the events Dong Seven had carried out since he was young. It had details on some of the problems he had caused Snowdragon Mountain, and even discussed some of the women he had raped. There were records of many events...but no records of his attack against Ning's parents and his uncle.

"The Heavenly Treasures Mountain isn't omniscient. Immortal cultivators will occasionally run into trouble while wandering the world. If they don't tell anyone, it really is quite hard to find out about it." Ning shook his head.

“This Dong Seven...he truly is a calamity.” As Ning continued to read, he began to understand that Dong Seven was a child who had been spoiled rotten. Even now, he was still a mere peak Zifu Disciple.

Dong Seven came from the major ‘Dong’ clan. Because the Dong clan had a Primal Daoist amongst their ranks, Daoist Coldsun, they naturally were an extremely powerful clan. The Dong clan had quite a few talented figures, and the earlier Dong One had been the eldest and most talented member of Dong Seven’s generation! But of course, Dong One had already been killed by the Dragonwhale King back in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains.

Daoist Coldsun previously had a single son, but his son had died while roaming the outside world. His son had left behind only one child as well; Dong Seven. Thus, Daoist Coldsun doted far too much on this sole grandson of his.

Although the likes of Dong One and the others of his generation would also be treated well, they naturally couldn’t compare to Dong Seven. Thus, in the Dong clan, there were many who would flatter and fawn over Dong Seven, causing him to grow ever more arrogant and brash. His greatest hobby was to rape beautiful women, but only those with particularly refined auras.

Thus, he had caused countless calamities. However, due to his powerful background and strong supporters, nothing had ever come of it.

“What’s this?” Ning frowned. “He actually lives on Snowdragon Mountain, along with Daoist Coldsun?” Dong Seven truly was coddled too much. Others found it quite difficult to even see a Primal Daoist in person, but he actually lived alongside his grandfather.

“If he lives on Snowdragon Mountain, there’s nothing I can do.” Ning shook his head. Although he was confident, he wasn’t so crazed as to charge straight towards an ancient school that had existed for countless years. Even Loose Immortals would probably be hesitant; after all, that was the foundation of the entire school, and the various formations as well as suicide or self-destruct mechanisms there would be enough to threaten even them.

“Next one.” Ning turned to Yu Dong’s information. Yu Dong was a cultivator with tremendous ambition, and who was incredibly calculating. For the sake of acquiring enough resources, he willingly served as Dong Seven’s henchman! After getting what he wanted for Dong Seven, he had silently slipped away.

“He’s now an early Wanxiang Adept, and he lives at Mount Mooncrescent with his master, a peak Wanxiang Adept.” Yu Dong personally hadn’t actually done too many vile deeds; the records of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, at least, included only two matters. Naturally, what he had done to Ning’s parents hadn’t been included!

His master, Adept Mooncrescent, had actually done quite a few evil deeds. He was a sinister, despicable fellow who had reached the peak of the Wanxiang level more than two centuries ago, and was extremely strong!

“Although he has a master, they are at Mount Mooncrescent?” Ning felt relaxed. “This is in a wild, desolate region; dealing against him won’t be too hard. Let’s look at the last one.”

Ning flipped to Shui Yi’s materials. Shui Yi...he was originally a servant of the Dong clan, but was an extremely outstanding one who had been viewed favorably by the Dong clan. By now, he had become a

peak Wanxiang Adept as well, but because his potential was limited, he had left Snowdragon Mountain and had always lived within the Dong clan's territory.

"The Dong clan's territory?" Ning began to feel a headache coming. "This is a bit more troublesome. However...I'll still be able to kill him."

The Dong clan was the clan of Daoist Coldsun. Daoist Coldsun, however, stood guard over Snowdragon Mountain, and so there were no Primal Daoists protecting the Dong clan. It did have a group of Wanxiang Adepts, but clearly, the Dong clan wasn't guarded nearly as tightly as Snowdragon Mountain was. Ning felt confident in being able to deal with them. After all, he only needed to kill Shui Yi, not annihilate the entire Dong clan.

"First kill Yu Dong, then kill Shui Yi. In the past, it was the two of them who actually fought against my uncle and my parents; they are the actual killers," Ning mused to himself.

The nearby Baiwei could sense the hard, killing intent radiating from Ning, as well as the cold, ferocious light flashing through his eyes. Baiwei mused silently to himself, "My brother, Ji Ning, is normally an extremely amiable person, but he actually has such a fiendish side to him as well. This must be a deep enmity, and an extraordinary one at that."

"Brother Baiwei." Ning rose to his feet, and Baiwei hurriedly rose as well. "Sorry for troubling you, Brother Baiwei. You've helped me numerous times. I won't waste words thanking you; I, Ji Ning, will remember everything you've done." Ning clasped his hands. "I won't stay any longer. I'll leave now."

"If there's anything further you need, Brother Ji Ning, please feel free to tell me," Baiwei said.

"Everything is as I expected." Ning clasped his hands again, then led his junior apprentice-brother and departed.

Two hours later. After the sun had set. Ning's group boarded the dragon-headed warship and flew into the skies, departing from Stillwater City.

"With this magic treasure, I will definitely ensure that you won't even have a chance to reincarnate!" Ning gripped a magic treasure that looked like an incense burner, then raised his head. "Junior apprentice-brother, let's go south. To Mount Mooncrescent!"

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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 7: The Real Yu Dong

Mount Mooncrescent. This place was considered holy grounds by everyone within the surrounding hundred thousand acres, because there was a truly powerful Wanxiang Adept here, Adept Mooncrescent. And because of this, the nearby tribes and monsters didn't dare create any trouble!

Within a beautiful, lavish hall. An old man was seated atop a jade bed, radiating a cold, sinister aura. Above his hands, there floated a black, palm-sized scimitar.

"Master." A respectful voice rang out from outside. "Daddy." Another voice rang out as well. The sinister old man revealed a hint of a smile. "Come in."

A short, ugly looking man walked in, alongside a tall, azure-robed, beautiful woman. The ugly man appeared quite calm and collected.

“This Yu Dong...” The sinister old man looked at the ugly man, nodding mentally to himself. “When he first apprenticed himself to me, I didn’t hold him in any regard, but unexpectedly, he was the first amongst my many disciples who reached the Wanxiang level! In addition, he made his breakthrough after a few short decades, which is quite fast. He really can’t be underestimated.”

As for his appearances? Immortal cultivators didn’t care too much about appearances. If you were both weak and ugly, then others might look down on you, but if you were powerful...no matter how ugly you were, others would respect you.

“And, by the looks of it, it seems as though Wei’er has taken quite a fancy to Yu Dong as well.” The sinister old man nodded to himself. “It seems as though in the end, my lineage will pass into the hands of Yu Dong.”

“Wei, daughter, come over here,” the sinister old man said. The azure-robed woman walked over, sitting atop the jade bed as well. She hugged the old man’s arm in a very close manner. “Daddy, this time, senior apprentice-brother Yu Dong has procured a gift for you. You’ll definitely like it,” Yue Wei said.

“Oh?” The sinister old man laughed as he looked over. Yu Dong immediately said with respect, “Master, your disciple just procured a bottle of ‘Three Immortals’ wine, and so came to offer it to you.”

“Three Immortals wine?” The sinister old man’s eyes instantly lit up, and he couldn’t help but sniff the air. He had been stuck at the peak Wanxiang level for more than two centuries, and was close to the end of his lifespan; he didn’t have much longer to live. For cultivators who were close to the end of their lives, they cared deeply about being able to enjoy themselves.

Three Immortals wine was a truly top-class wine that was incredibly hard to find. Generally speaking, it was only available in places like Stillwater City, while hard to procure in backwater places like Mount Mooncrescent.

“You are quite thoughtful.” The sinister old man nodded in approval. He felt more and more satisfied with this Yu Dong. Despite having reached the Wanxiang level, Yu Dong had remained under his tutelage, and remained as respectful as ever. In addition, he served as respectfully as he would towards his own father...

“Master, you showed me great kindness by transmitting knowledge unto me. What’s a little wine?” Yu Dong produced a jade tray, atop which was a bottle of Immortal wine. That incomparably beautiful and intricately carved jade wine-bottle alone would be considered a priceless treasure in the mortal world.

“Junior apprentice-sister, if you would be so kind.” Some time later, Yu Dong and his junior apprentice-sister, Yue Wei, both left the hall.

The sinister old man watched his most capable disciple and his beloved daughter walk off into the distance. He couldn’t help but nod, especially upon seeing how respectfully Yu Dong treated his daughter.

Within another hall on Mount Mooncrescent. This was Yu Dong’s estate. This area was naturally warded by formations, preventing outsiders from entering.

"You can leave," Yu Dong instructed his servants upon entering his estate. "Yes." The servants and maids all respectfully departed, going to other halls within this estate, leaving behind only himself and his junior apprentice-sister, Yue Wei.

After seating himself in the hall, Yu Dong glanced at Yue Wei, then said calmly, "Kneel."

Yue Wei immediately laughed enticingly, her robes immediately disappearing from her body, revealing her ravishingly beautiful body. She lightly knelt down, then, like a little dog, slowly crawled forward. And then, moving close towards to Yu Dong's legs, she began to lick.

"In the past, you held me in such disregard. But now, you are kneeling between my legs." Yu Dong looked downwards towards Yue Wei as he would towards a dog.

"Senior apprentice-brother, stop teasing me," Yue Wei said with an adorable harrumph. Yu Dong stretched his hand out, grabbing her head and pushing it down hard. Instantly, Yue Wei began to cough and choke.

"Hahaha..." Yu Dong laughed wildly. "Endure it." Yue Wei had no choice but to do so.

Later the next morning...

"Mm." After having thoroughly enjoyed himself, Yu Dong sat there, pondering. As for Yue Wei, she sat on his lap. "Junior apprentice-sister, that old bastard...when will he transmit the Mooncrescent Saber Formation to me? I've served him a long, long time after I became a Wanxiang Adept, and yet he still hasn't taught it to me!"

Yue Wei said gently, "Don't worry, senior apprentice-brother. I mentioned this to father before, but at that time, my father was hesitant. By the looks of it, father is beginning to like you more and more. I'll mention it again later. I'll definitely succeed."

"I hope that old bastard doesn't die and take that saber formation to the Netherworld Kingdom with him." A cold light was in Yu Dong's eyes.

"Don't worry," Yue Wei said hurriedly, and Yu Dong nodded slightly. He continued to ponder silently, while the nearby Yue Wei didn't dare to disturb him.

"Three years. At most, I'll wait three more years for that old bastard. I can't keep wasting my time like this," Yu Dong said broodingly while looking at Yue Wei. "Half a month from now, I'll go ask the old bastard to teach me his saber formation; after that, you go help me speak to him as well."

"Alright." Yue Wei nodded obediently. Yu Dong suddenly began to laugh strangely. "Junior apprentice-sister, if your daddy saw you right now, would he die of anger? Hahaha...hahahahaha..."

His evil, wicked laughter was completely different from his normal, honest attitude. All of the servants in the estate had been instructed to leave, and the protective formations had been activated; there was no way any sound would leave the room, and there was no way to scry inside from the outside world. Thus, Yu Dong didn't need to disguise himself at all.

When he was young, he had understood quite early on that this was a world where the weak would be devoured by the strong. Thus, he had clawed up, step by step, either slaughtering or flattering until he

had grown powerful enough to fear no one. However, he had always been very good at hiding his nature. Those who knew what his true nature was like were either dead or under his complete control.

Even Ji Ning's intelligence report had been unable to see through Yu Dong's façade. After all...the Heavenly Treasures Mountain wouldn't expend too many resources on a minor figure like him.

"The Mooncrescent Saber Formation that old bastard possesses was left behind by a deceased Loose Immortal. Not even Snowdragon Mountain has such a powerful formation." In the past, Yu Dong didn't have any other options, which was why he had apprenticed himself to Adept Mooncrescent. However, based on some tools he had, as well as his many years of service, he had discovered some of Adept Mooncrescent's secrets. Thus, he worked ever more diligently.

"If I still cannot acquire it...then I'll kill him." A cold light flashed through Yu Dong's eyes. He had originally been an ordinary mortal, and had clawed his way to his current position. Naturally, he was an incredibly calculating person, and he had caused the deaths of many. In the past, he had caused the deaths of two young masters of his clan, three elders of his clan, and even two genius disciples of Snowdragon Mountain. However, to this very day, no one knew that it had been him.

That young master 'Dong Seven' of the Dong clan was nothing more than a chess piece to him.

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A dragon-headed warship was in the air above Mount Mooncrescent. Ning stared downwards. "Senior apprentice-brother, aren't you going to attack?" Northson was puzzled. He could sense that Ning was filled with a powerful killing intent, but upon reaching Mount Mooncrescent, they had actually come to a halt.

"Not just yet." Ning stared downwards. His divine sense had already been spread out, covering the entire Mount Mooncrescent. He could see everything going on within it. In front of Adept Mooncrescent, Yu Dong had acted one way, but upon returning to his own hall...he had acted in a completely different manner.

"This Yu Dong seems to be quite an extraordinary fellow," Ning mused to himself. His divine sense hadn't been able to find a single flaw in Yu Dong's façade before Adept Mooncrescent. If this person had become friends with Ning, most likely even Ning would have been fooled into trusting him; he was definitely a very steady, sure-footed person.

"He was able to start as an ordinary mortal and reach this current level..." Ning thought back to the history of Yu Dong as mentioned in the intelligence reports, then silently mused to himself, "I imagine it wasn't as simple as the reports described. The reports made it seem as though everything had been smooth sailing for Yu Dong, and that he had flattered and fawned over many as he eventually reached his current heights. I thought that he was just talented and lucky, but now, it seems that he is quite the ambitious figure."

"However! Even if you are an ambitious, ruthless, formidable figure, today you shall definitely die!" A cold light flashed through Ning's eyes. In the world of Immortal cultivators, personal power was more important than games of intrigue. For example, with his divine sense, Ning was able to clearly see each of Yu Dong's actions, and so Yu Dong's hidden, true face was instantly discovered by Ning.

“Let’s go,” Ning said, pointing towards the distant estate. “Let’s go to Yu Dong’s estate.” “Alright,” Northson immediately said.

The Whitewater Hound, now in human form, also stared towards the distant estate. His eyes were also filled with killing intent; after all, he had personally experienced the events of that year.

Swoosh! The dragon-headed warship surged downwards towards the ground.

“Uncle White. Set up the spacelock formation,” Ning sent mentally. “Alright.” The Whitewater Hound nodded, then silently slipped out of the ship, beginning to stealthily set down spacelock formation flags in the area around Mount Mooncrescent. The grand spacelock formation was able to take up a hundred kilometers of space...the entire Mount Mooncrescent was covered by it. But of course, they didn’t activate the formation yet. Once they did, Adept Mooncrescent and Yu Dong would instantly notice.

The dragon-headed warship flew towards the air above the estate. Yu Dong and his beautiful, bewitching junior apprentice-sister were openly engaging in lewd, lascivious acts within their estate. Yu Dong, despite acting in a crazed manner, had a very calm look in his eyes; only, he would occasionally let out a vile laugh.

“YU DONG!”

Suddenly, a voice rang out from on high. Yu Dong, shocked, instantly came to a halt, while his junior apprentice-sister also came to a halt and said, puzzled, “Senior apprentice-brother, who is it?”

“Hurry and get up.” Yu Dong’s body quickly became covered by his robes, and the same happened for his junior apprentice-sister, Yu Wei.

Yu Dong called back in a warm, loud voice, “Which fellow Daoist has come?” At the same time, he released the protective formation. He immediately saw the dragon-headed warship in the distant skies. Upon seeing it, Yu Dong felt a slight hint of surprise; he was an experienced person, after all, and he knew that no ordinary Immortal cultivator would be in possession of such a fine construct-warship.

“Junior apprentice-sister, hurry up and ask Master to come,” Yu Dong sent mentally. “Understood.” A leaf appeared in Yue Wei’s hands, and she lightly twisted it.

Right at this moment...

A handsome, delicate-looking youth dressed in furs flew down from the dragon-headed warship. He had an azure serpent wrapped around one wrist, while a white-haired, white-robed man and a white-robed youth were behind him. The fur-clad youth, the leader of the group, said in a calm voice, “An old friend, of course!”