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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 38: The Tricentennial Conclave of Immortal Destiny

The gray-robed man couldn't be said to be handsome, but he truly did have an extraordinary aura. Actually, as a reincarnated Immortal, and one who had long ago mastered a complete Dao Path, he should have awakened quite a few memories of his former life. Thus, his aura would be affected, naturally making him seem different from the crowd.

"Junior apprentice-brother Darknorth," Daoist Vastriver said, smiling towards Ning, "I heard of your reputation long ago, but because I've always been adventuring, we haven't had the chance to meet. This time, upon my return, I heard that you defeated Daoist Snowplume...you truly are impressive, quite impressive. Amongst the third generation disciples of our Black-White College, only junior apprentice-sister Yu Wei is a match for you in training speed."

"I can't compare to junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning," Yu Wei said hurriedly.

"You are being modest. Junior apprentice-sister, three years ago, you completely mastered the Dao of the Freeze; compared to the two of you, myself and Vileslayer are truly ashamed," Adept Vastwave said.

"Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei, you were able to comprehend a complete Dao Path so quickly! Only junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning is a match for you," the nearby Bloodshadow said with a laugh as well.

Ning was quite surprised. By the sound of it...quite a few people knew that Yu Wei had mastered a complete Dao Path. Vastriver and Bloodshadow, at least, knew about it.

Formidable! Yu Wei wasn't actually that old; she was only roughly ten or so years older than Ning himself! And yet, she had already completely comprehended an entire Dao Path, and the Dao of the Freeze, at that! It must be understood that when Yu Wei had defeated Ning during their initial Dao Debate, she had used techniques pertaining to fire.

"Senior apprentice-sister, aren't you the 'Rainbowflame Fairy'? Are you actually more talented in ice?" Ning was surprised.

"She's skilled in both ice and fire," Adept Vastriver sighed. "Although we are all reincarnated Immortals, there are still differences between us. Some reincarnated Immortals were ordinary Earth Immortals or Loose Immortals, while others were Loose Immortals who had trained for hundreds of thousands of years...in her past life, junior apprentice-sister Yu Wei must have been an incredible Loose Immortal."

Yu Wei said, resigned, "We've come to congratulate junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning; why do you all keep talking about me? Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, we've come to your place...are you going to just have us keep chatting here in midair? Aren't you even going to offer us a glass of wine?"

"Yes, of course," Ning immediately led the way.

The awe-inspiring group of Black-White College disciples chatted and laughed amongst themselves as they arrived at Brightheart Island. Autumn Leaf had already arranged for the servants to prepare in advance; how could they dare to be negligent in taking care of so many disciples of the Black-White College?

The entire group stayed here for time; some stayed for just two or three days, then returned on their own. Northson, Yu Wei, Vastriver, and Baiwei continued to spend some more time at the island.

On this day, the sky was completely cloudless, for as far as the eye could see.

Ning's group was aboard a large ship on Serpentwing Lake. They were seated, drinking Immortal wine, and eating spirit-fruit.

"Junior apprentice-sister Yu Wei," Adept Vastriver, seated opposite from her, spoke out, "There are three more years before the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. What do you plan to do during these three years?"

"Whatever I feel like." The black-robed maiden, Yu Wei, sat there while viewing her surroundings. "I'll stroll about and do what I please. When enough time has passed, I'll go directly to the imperial capital of the Grand Xia."

"Then let me congratulate you in advance, Rainbowflame Fairy, for spreading your name throughout the world," Baiwei said with a laugh.

Northson stared. "Wait, wait. What are you all talking about? What Conclave of Immortal Destiny? What's this about the imperial capital? And spreading one's name throughout the world? Hey, senior apprentice-brother...do you know what they are talking about?"

Puzzled, Ning shook his head as well. "What are you all talking about? Why haven't I heard of this before?"

Baiwei said, "This Conclave of Immortal Destiny is an event which the founding emperor of the Grand Xia Dynasty established. All Immortal cultivators beneath the rank of Primal Daoist are permitted to participate. This is a tournament of the truly supreme geniuses of the world. Our Grand Xia Dynasty has unified this major world, which holds 3600 commanderies and many oceanic territories...I can't even imagine how many monstrous geniuses and reincarnated Immortals will be attending this event."

"A tournament of geniuses?" Ning was astonished.

"Right. Although it is called the 'Conclave of Immortal Destiny', it should really be called the 'Tournament of Geniuses'," Baiwei said with a sigh. "This is because one must be below the Primal Daoist level...thus, almost all the participants are peak Wanxiang Adepts. The peak Wanxiang Adepts who participate are geniuses who come from the various commandery cities and oceanic territories...I can't help but shudder, just thinking about it. Generally speaking, those who dare participate are, at the very least, comparable to Primal Daoists!"

The look on Ning's face grew solemn as well. He now understood. If all the geniuses of this entire major world were to gather in one place...it must be understood that the Black-White College of Stillwater Commandery, alone, already had the likes of the Sloppy Daoist, Holyfire, Vastriver, and Yu Wei. Stillwater Commandery had other schools and sects and clans as well, some of whom had brought up their own heaven-defying geniuses.

Every commandery would have tens of such geniuses.

The Grand Xia Dynasty controlled 3600 commanderies, and oceanic territories as well!

In other words...the entire Grand Xia Dynasty most likely had more than a hundred thousand individuals on the level of Holyfire and Vastriver!

"If you don't have some true ability, going and participating is suicide," Baiwei said. "The reason you never learned about it is because you weren't strong enough, and so the Black-White College never notified you. After all, your defeat of Daoist Snowplume is a recent event."

Ning nodded.

"Can it be that you want to go?" Baiwei looked at Ning.

"I'm not in a rush to," Ning said.

"I, too, feel that you don't need to go. After all, you've only trained for thirty years. That's too short a period of time," Baiwei said. "You might as well just stop at the Wanxiang level and train for another three centuries and wait for the next Conclave of Immortal Destiny. If you go then...you will definitely shock the world. I know quite a few supreme talents who insisted on waiting for three centuries, and in the process mastered multiple complete Dao Paths!"

Ning was secretly speechless. Multiple Dao Paths?

"Given how high a level of comprehension they have, why not become Primal Daoists or Earth Immortals? Why insist on forcing themselves to remain at the Wanxiang level?" Ning asked.

The nearby Northson also said hurriedly, "Right. Why suppress themselves for so long? Is the Conclave of Immortal Destiny truly so enticing?"

"You don't understand," the nearby Adept Vastriver spoke out. Baiwei and Yu Wei looked towards Ning and Northson as well. Vastriver continued, "This Conclave of Immortal Destiny ...those who rank in the top three will acquire an Immortal-ranked magic treasure."

"Immortal-ranked?!" Northson cried out in shock.

"A single Immortal-ranked magic treasure shouldn't be enticing enough," Ning said with a frown. Anyone capable of comprehending multiple Dao Paths in three centuries would definitely be a truly monstrous genius; someone like this, upon becoming an Earth Immortal, shouldn't find it too hard to acquire an Immortal-ranked magic treasure.

"That's just the nominal prize," the black-robed Yu Wei said. "Participating in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny is a chance to skyrocket to the heavens in prominence. It's a chance to allow the entire Grand Xia Dynasty to pay attention to you. If you rank in the top ten...just for the sake of becoming friends with you, some of the major clans might give you five thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence, or even more. That might not be too much from a single clan, but if multiple clans were to do the same...your hands would go limp from receiving liquefied elemental essence."

"But all that is secondary."

"The most important part of this event lies in the words, 'Immortal Destiny'." The black-robed maiden looked at Ning. "If you rank in the top ten of this event, then you'll be able to apprentice yourself to some truly major powers. Generally speaking, if you do so, you'll have a much higher chance of becoming a Celestial Immortal."

“Major power?” Ning hurriedly asked, “Major powers of where?”

Adept Vastriver said in a low voice, “Perhaps some of the truly supreme powers of this major world who have been in seclusion...or perhaps powerful figures from outside this major world. No matter what, they will definitely be more powerful than Celestial Immortals! I’ll tell the two of you one more thing...more than 80% of Celestial Immortals we know of first came to prominence during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, where they were accepted by major powers as disciples.”

“This is a chance, a chance to show your prowess and let the major figures of the Three Realms to see how talented you are.” Adept Vastriver looked at Ji Ning and Northson. “Understand, now? Understand why so many geniuses are willing to stay at the Wanxiang level for three centuries? It’s all for the sake of being able to show their prowess and blaze brilliantly during the Conclave.”

Yu Wei sighed as well, “Reincarnated Immortals like us are nothing. Earth Immortals? Loose Immortals? We are nothing at all. Only becoming Celestial Immortals will one become truly carefree and unrestrained! But how hard is it to become a Celestial Immortal? The entire Black-White College, in all its history, has only produced a single one. But this Conclave of Immortal Destiny...this is a moment of true destiny. Naturally, one has to grasp it.”

Ning and Northson completely understood.

Becoming a Celestial Immortal was too hard!

If a major power of the Three Realms was willing to give some guidance, it would be much easier. For example, if Daoist Threelives were to personally teach and train Ning, his own Immortal path would naturally be much more quickly traversed.

The Conclave of Immortal Destiny...this was a chance for one to attract attention from major figures of the Three Realms.

“Beyond Celestial Immortals in power?” Northson couldn’t help but ask, “All I know is that Celestial Immortals have surpassed the restrictions of the Three Realms and are able to roam about, carefree. What is above a Celestial Immortal?”

Yu Wei and Vastriver exchanged a glance.

Yu Wei said slowly, “True Immortals! True Immortals of Pure Yang!”

“True Immortals?” Northson murmured these two words to himself.

“One of the prerequisites for becoming a Celestial Immortal is the comprehension of an entire Dao Path,” Yu Wei said. “Mastering an entire Grand Dao Path, however, is the prerequisite for becoming a True Immortal.”

Northson nodded gently. Ning did the same.

The two of them both knew what Grand Daos were. Ning’s Dao of the Sword was a Grand Dao...and Northson’s Dao of Constructs was also a Grand Dao! However, it was even more difficult and rare to completely master and control the Grand Dao of Constructs than it was to completely master the Grand Dao of the Sword. Some Immortals were said to be ‘skilled’ in constructing constructs, but to claim true, complete mastery over the Grand Dao of Constructs? Not even the legends mentioned such a figure.

“And that’s just a prerequisite. To surpass the Celestial Immortal level...how incredible must that be? Any such person would be considered a formidable figure of the Three Realms. Generally speaking, those who are chosen during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny will ‘only’ become honorary disciples...but even being a mere gate-guard for such a major power is more exalted than being a prince of the Grand Xia Dynasty, to say nothing of an honorary disciple,” Adept Vastriver said.

Ning and Northson both nodded in agreement.

Those figures could be considered major powers of the Three Realms.

Ning suddenly thought of the master of the underwater estate – Daoist Threelives. He was a Primordial Fiendgod, who had been born from the primordial chaos with the complete mastery of a Grand Dao. Afterwards, he had mastered many other Grand Daos, and then developed the [Starseizing Hand], ranked as one of the top ten divine abilities out of the innumerable divine abilities that had been created after Pangu had established the universe.

“Master said that only after I become an Emyrean God can I be considered his disciple. I wonder how strong Master is, compared to a True Immortal,” Ning mused to himself.

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Book 9: Ji Ning of Serpentwing Lake Chapter 39: Meeting

“Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei...” After realizing how brutal this Immortal Conclave could be, Ning couldn’t help but look towards Yu Wei. “You’ve only trained for ten more years than me, and in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny, there are monsters who have trained for more than three centuries. Isn’t it going to be very dangerous for you? If you truly are going to go, why don’t you wait for three more centuries?”

The black-robed maiden, Yu Wei, gently shook her head. “Three centuries is too long.”

“I tried to dissuade her as well,” Adept Vastriver said with a sigh.

“It’s true. It really is too dangerous. The most elite participants of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, although still only at the peak Wanxiang level, have insight into the Dao that is definitely at the level of Immortals, and perhaps even higher than ordinary Immortals. Some are geniuses like our junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, except they have insisted on staying at this level for three centuries, for the sake of this battle.” Similarly worried, Baiwei continued, “Rainbowflame Fairy, although you are a reincarnated Immortal, you’ve spent too little time in training. Unless you’ve completely awakened your former memories...”

If that was to happen, then one would immediately gain all of the insights one had from one’s previous life. In that case, she might have a shot!

“The Conclave of Immortal Destiny...most of the people there will have mastered a complete Dao Path.” Yu Wei shook her head. “Very, very few will have mastered even two Dao Paths, and if one has mastered three, I imagine that one would be able to rank in the top ten. In comprehending the Dao, one might quickly gain insights into the Daos that one is suited for, but for the others...comprehending them will only become slower and slower.”

Ning nodded.

Aside from the Grand Dao of the Sword, Ning had aptitude for the Dao of the Inferno, the Dao of Rainwater, and the Dao of the Gale. If he had an additional century, he had a chance of completely mastering these three Dao Paths, but if he had to go and comprehend a fourth or fifth...even if he had three hundred more years, he might not be able to do it. This is because he didn't even have the most rudimentary of insights into other Daos.

"Although I've only mastered a single Dao Path," Yu Wei said with a laugh, "I am still gaining some fragmented memories from my previous life, which have taught me some secret arts. I'm considerably stronger than those people who have just recently mastered a Dao Path."

"To try and hit the top ten? I have no chance." Yu Wei shook her head. "But, I should be able to keep myself alive."

Ning, Baiwei, and the others exchanged glances. Since Yu Wei had made her stance clear, they found it difficult to continue to try and dissuade her. In addition, reincarnated Immortals were quite special to begin with; perhaps they might suddenly gain all of their former memories.

"In my past life, I failed my tribulation; in this life, I naturally must be courageous and valiant in moving forward." Yu Wei's eyes were shining. "This Conclave of Immortal Destiny will be a chance to fight against many truly top-tier geniuses. This is a chance to test and temper myself, a chance that truly comes once in a lifetime."

Ning was suddenly swayed as well.

Right.

To be able to fight against so many geniuses...and all of whom were below the Primal Daoist level. After breaking through to the Primal Daoist level, one would no longer have a chance.

"Should I go or not?" Ning began to ponder. "Yu Wei spoke of three Dao Paths allowing one to enter the top ten. Each additional Dao Path gained represents a major increase in power...I'm still quite far away from comprehending three Dao Paths."

"I have three more years. I'll wait and see. Let's see how much more powerful I become in these next three years," Ning mused to himself.

In this moment, Ning made up his mind that in the next three years, he would whole-heartedly devote himself to increasing his power as much as possible.

"Senior apprentice-sister Yuwei, senior apprentice-brother Vastriver." Ning looked towards his two senior fellow disciples. Yu Wei and Vastriver looked towards Ning.

"I wonder if the two of you would be willing to stay at my Serpentwing Lake for an extended period of time. As your junior apprentice-brother, I'd love the chance to ask the two of you for some pointers," Ning said. "During the past few years, only Daoist Snowplume has been a true match for me; the other few times, when I went chasing after those criminals, I've never really enjoyed a good fight."

"Hahaha!" Daoist Vastriver laughed as well. "It is indeed hard to find a good match. Junior apprentice-brother, you walk the path of the Sword Immortal; I hear that they are very skilled at battle. I want to compete with you as well, junior apprentice-brother."

Yu Wei nodded and laughed as well. "I have nowhere to go before attending the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. Before I go out and fight against the countless geniuses of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty, I might as well stay here and spar with you...perhaps this will allow my power to increase once again. However, junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you need to prepare fine wine and delicacies; senior apprentice-brother Vastriver and I are quite picky."

"Leave that part to me," Baiwei said with a laugh. "I'll definitely make sure you three are satisfied."

These three were amongst the most elite of Wanxiang Adepts. Yu Wei and Vastriver were reincarnated Immortals, while Ji Ning was actually viewed by many as a reincarnated Immortal as well; otherwise, how could his soul be so strong? Many believed that in the past, he must have been an extremely, extremely powerful Immortal. Precisely because of how powerful he must have been in the past, it was now very hard to reawaken his memories.

The more powerful one was in a past life, the harder it would be to reawaken one's memories. For people like Immortal Juhua or Immortal Northwalker, who were Loose Immortals but comparable to Celestial Immortals in power, if they were to reincarnate, even after becoming Earth Immortals, they still might not be able to reawaken their memories.

"Are the three of you ignoring me?!?" Northson stared. Ning, Yu Wei, and Vastriver all looked towards Northson.

Northson said angrily, "Perhaps I'm not a match for you three in controlling magic treasures, but my truly supreme, trump card constructs, were built by myself and Master together. Although it uses up an enormous amount of liquefied elemental essence, it is definitely comparable to a Primal Daoist. In addition, the construct is a magic treasure, and so its body is even more indestructible than a Fiendgod's!"

"We'll count you amongst our sparring ranks," Yu Wei said with a laugh.

"The Dao of Constructs...some powerful constructs truly are mighty," Adept Vastriver nodded.

"Unfortunately, the Conclave of Immortal Destiny forbids those who train in the Dao of Constructs from participating."

"Why aren't practitioners of the Dao of Constructs permitted to attend?" Northson said angrily, "That's completely unfair!"

Ning laughed. "I know the reason. It's because I've never heard of a major power who has completely mastered the Grand Dao of Constructs. Since there are no major powers who have mastered this Dao, how can they possibly guide you into becoming a Celestial Immortal?"

Northson was speechless. Right. The point of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny was to allow some major powers to discover monstrously talented geniuses and take them as disciples. If there were no major powers who specialized in the Dao of Constructs, they naturally wouldn't choose cultivators of this Dao.

The Dao of Constructs involved the pursuit of unleashing the physical power of material items...to reach the utmost limit of the natural world! However, the world was filled with countless materials and objects; to simply review all of them would take an unfathomably long period of time. To truly master and comprehend the Grand Dao of Constructs? Not even in legends had anyone ever done this! Every

single practitioner of the Dao of Constructs understood this...and at the same time, they all believed that this Grand Dao was limitless, and so they too would become even more powerful.

Yu Wei, Vastriver, and Northson settled down at Serpentwing Lake, while Baiwei returned. Ning would often compete against these three or engage in discourses on the Dao with them. This caused all of them to improve, sometimes by a little, sometimes by a lot.

One day, a large boat was floating on Serpentwing Lake. Ning and the other three were chatting on it.

“Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei, what is it?” Ning noticed that Yu Wei’s eyes were filled with unshed tears. He couldn’t help but ask her what was wrong. Previously, when they were chatting, he had discussed how his parents had already passed away...and somehow, this had caused Yu Wei to appear utterly heartbroken.

Vastriver said softly, “Much like you, junior apprentice-sister Yu Wei’s parents are also deceased. They died when she was young.”

“They died young?” Ning was stunned.

Tears were in Yu Wei’s eyes...and then they began to fall. Her gaze was long and distant. She said tonelessly, “In the past, when I was young and before I had started to train, and before I gained any of my former memories...my tribe suffered an attack. The tribesmen began to flee...and during the flight, my parents died in order to protect me. I suffered a severe shock from this, and my innately powerful soul burst forth with power, killing all of my enemies.”

Ning could imagine the scene of a stimulated and shocked child, seeing her parents be killed, and then exploding forth with spiritual power. Given how powerful the divine will of a reincarnated Immortal was...even Zifu Disciples would be easily slaughtered.

“But it was too late.” Yu Wei shook her head. “My parents were gone, never to return. Although we had only known each other for three years, I’ll never forget them.”

Three years?

So Yu Wei had only been three years old.

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A long vessel was streaking through the air, moving from the distant Highwater Commandery to Stillwater Commandery’s Swallow Mountain.

Because Ninelotus wasn’t a member of the Raindragon Guard, she was unable to use teleportation arrays. Thus, she had to fly in a straight line.

“Finally, I’m here!” The long vessel came to a halt. A snowy-robed Ninelotus flew out. With a wave of her hand, she collected the vessel, then stared towards the distance. She immediately saw the boat on the surface of Serpentwing Lake, as well as Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Rainbowflame Fairy Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver, all of whom were drinking and chatting.

“Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei and senior apprentice-brother Vastriver?” Ninelotus was surprised.

Ning and the other three, on the boat below, could sense the ripples in the air. They all raised their heads to look up.

Upon seeing Ninelotus in midair, Ning revealed a look of surprise and delight. He immediately rose to his feet.

Yu Wei and the others rose up as well. Yu Wei and Ninelotus were extremely close to each other, and she immediately called out in a high voice, "Little Sister Ninelotus."

Swoosh!

Ninelotus descended from the skies, landing on the ship. First, she exchanged a glance with Ning. A hint of emotion could be seen in both their eyes. And then, Ninelotus turned to look at Yu Wei. She said happily, "Senior apprentice-sister, I didn't expect to see you here as well. It's been so long since we've met. Oh, and senior apprentice-brother Vastriver and junior apprentice-brother Northson."

"It's been a long time since I've seen you as well. It's been ten years, right?" Yu Wei felt very happy. "Why did you disappear for ten years?"

"I don't even want to talk about it." Ninelotus shook her head helplessly. "I was held by the tribe in the Myriad Lotus Cave and wasn't able to leave, up until a few days ago, when I managed to break through the formation around it. I flew all the way from Highwater Commandery to Stillwater Commandery. It took me forever."

"Given your status, why would the clan hold you in the Myriad Lotus Cavern?" Yu Wei was surprised. It could be said that she was Ninelotus' closest friend in the Black-White College; although Luo Qing was someone who had grown up with Ninelotus, Yu Wei and Ninelotus truly shared the same temperament and opinions. Thus, Yu Wei knew a few things about Ninelotus' background.

Ninelotus gave Ning a resigned glance. "It's all because of him."

"Him?" Yu Wei felt as though Ninelotus' glance was a bit...strange. It didn't seem like a glance between fellow disciples; rather, it seemed like a glance between Dao-Companions, whose emotions and feelings were linked together.

Ning walked over, taking Ninelotus by the hand. He didn't know what to say. After hesitating for a while, he only said three words: "Are you alright?"

"I'm fine...it was just a bit stuffy there. Still, now that I'm out, in the future, the Dongyan clan won't interfere in our matters again." Ninelotus looked at Ning, her eyes filled with delight.

"Won't interfere?" Ning couldn't help but reveal a look of delight as well. The Dongyan clan's interference had always been a source of worry for Ning. Now, everything was fine, and his worries dissipated like smoke in the wind.

"The two of them...?"

Yu Wei looked at Ning and Ninelotus. She couldn't help but feel stunned.

"I had no idea...that the two of them became Dao-Companions!" Adept Vastriver began to roar with laughter.

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you actually formed Dao-Companions without telling me?!” Northson roared as well.

As for Yu Wei, she just stood there quietly, keeping that calm, faint smile on her face.

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Book 10: Entering the Immortal Estate Chapter 1: Youngflame Clan

Just shortly after Ninelotus reached Serpentwing Lake, in the distant Crimson Dragon Mountains of Stillwater Commandery, a large group of people were gathered around the tall, large teleportation array.

All of them had powerful auras. Clearly, none of them were ordinary.

Northmont Fox was standing behind a tall, skinny man. He sent to him, “Father, who did you pull me over here to meet? You didn’t even permit me to ask about this while we were in Stillwater City; you insisted on bringing me to the Raindragon Guard branch before telling me.”

The tall, skinny man was dressed in a black uniform. He wore a crown on his forehead, and his eyes were sunken and deep. However, his pupils seemed to carry a cold light that would bring fear to many.

This man was Northmont Fox’s father...Northmont Yin!

The two most likely candidates to become the next Marquis of Stillwater were Northmont Blacktiger and Northmont Yin. They had completely different temperaments. Northmont Blacktiger was like an enormous, primordial beast who was born with a dominating aura; anyone who looked at him would feel terror. In acting, he was incomparably dominating as well, and so he had many followers.

As for Northmont Yin, he was a truly ambitious and ruthless figure who was particularly skilled at biding his time. Nobody could see through Yin’s thoughts; he was a mystery to all.

“If I told you in Stillwater City, given your temperament, you might have leaked this information, which would be disastrous.” Yin shook his head. “This matter is extremely important, and very few know of it. Look at Immortal Eastrock of the local Raindragon Guard branch; he’s waiting, just like us. Although he’s brought a group of subordinates, I imagine that only he himself knows exactly who it is that we are waiting for.”

Fox instantly felt an itchy feeling in his heart. Someone capable of making even Immortal Eastrock and Yin come in person to wait for him, and to act so secretively as for Yin to not even tell Fox, his own son, who it was?

“Who is it?” Fox was extremely anxious to know.

“This person is Youngflame Nong, of the Youngflame lineage,” Yin sent mentally.

Fox’s face instantly changed. He revealed a look of shock and amazement as he yelped back mentally, “Young master Youngflame Nong? One of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital? Why has he come to Stillwater Commandery? This, this...how can this be?”

“Now do you understand why I didn’t tell you?” Northmont Yin cast his son a glance.

Northmont Fox hurriedly nodded. He understood. Of course he understood.

Although the Northmont clan of Stillwater held a marquisdom and was incomparably ancient and large, if they were compared to the rest of the Grand Xia Dynasty...there were still powers that were even mightier than the Northmont clan. For example, the almighty imperial clan of the Grand Xia Dynasty, the Xiamang clan, or some of the most powerful clans that had helped the Xiamang clan unify the world.

The Youngflame clan was one of the faithful ministers that served the imperial clan of the Grand Xia Dynasty!

Supposedly, during the Fiendgod era, the Youngflame clan was a clan that was as old and as powerful as the Xiamang clan. In fact, their history stretched to the most ancient of eras of this major world.

In the end, the Youngflame clan had submitted to the Xiamang lineage! They had followed the Xiamang clan in conquering the world, and had been one of the most powerful clans under the Xiamang clan's control. As for the the Northmont clan and the other clans, they had all slowly begun to join the Xiamang clan later on, and in terms of power, they were vastly inferior to the Youngflame clan.

And nowadays...

The Youngflame clan's leader had the revered title of the 'Godplume Duke', and the clan itself held three marquisdoms! The three commanderies it ruled over were all extremely vast ones, far larger than Stillwater Commandery. After all, the 3600 commanderies of the Grand Xia Dynasty were all different in size; Stillwater Commandery could only be described as an ordinary one. Some extremely large commanderies were comparable in size to dozens of Stillwater Commanderies.

As for this Youngflame Nong who was about to arrive, he was one of the leaders of the younger generation of Youngflame nobles. Unless something went amiss, the next clan leader of the Youngflame clan, the 'Godplume Duke', would be this Youngflame Nong!

But of course, the Youngflame clan's next leader had not been 100% set in stone; the selectees would still be tested and tried. Generally, however, the trials would be easily passed. It could be said that Youngflame Nong's status in the Youngflame clan was comparable to Ji Ning's status, when he had been a child, in the West Prefecture City of the Ji clan!

Internally, it had all but been decided that he would be the next Godplume Duke.

He would be a powerful figure, capable of influencing the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. The arrival of someone like him...it now made perfect sense as to why Northmont Yin and Immortal Eastrock had come in person and been so secretive about it, not letting anyone else know what was happening.

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"Coming."

"He's coming."

Their eyes all lit up. The teleportation array once more began to glow, and then a group of people appeared within it.

The leader was dressed in azure robes. He seemed quite plainly dressed, but upon a close examination...one would discover that the threads of this azure robe were actually the draconic whiskers of the 'divine dragons of the East Sea'. The man's face had a calm smile on it, but the welcomers could all sense the natural, noble aura emanating from him!

It was a true, noble aura which only someone like him, who an ancient clan like the Youngflame clan had trained to be their next leader, would possess!

Youngflame Nong's status was such that even in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty, he was called one of the 'Four Dukelings'. Even imperial scions of the Xiamang clan had to have enough status within their clan to be able to treat with them on an equal footing. There were some members of the clan who borrowed the Xiamang clan's prestige but had no real status within it; these people weren't even qualified to become friends with Youngflame Nong.

"Young master Youngflame," Northmont Yin laughed and saluted with clasped hands.

"Young master Youngflame." Immortal Eastrock also clasped his hands.

Youngflame Nong looked at the two of them, then nodded. "Northmont Yin, Eastrock. I saw the two of you last time at the imperial capital. So much time has passed, as though in the blink of an eye. I have to trouble the two of you on this trip of mine to Stillwater City; I truly am guilty for doing so."

"It is our honor to be able to assist you, young master Youngflame," Immortal Eastrock and Northmont Yin both spoke out together.

The two of them couldn't help but glance at the person slightly behind Youngflame Nong. There was a tall, skinny, narrow-eyed, middle-aged man standing there, his skin pitch-black. The aura this man was emanating caused even Northmont Yin and Immortal Eastrock to feel secretly astonished.

"Fiendgod."

"A Fiendgod."

Both of them quickly came to this realization.

However, for an ancient clan like the Youngflame clan, raising Fiendgods wasn't too difficult. After all, these ancient clans had been flourishing since shortly after the major world was created. They had long ago captured countless Fiendgods. Although Fiendgods were arrogant, in the face of certain death, many would still be willing to submit.

"Young master Youngflame." Immortal Eastrock pointed at the group of people behind him. "I've already given them their instructions. They are absolutely reliable. There are two peak Wanxiang Adepts and a hundred Zifu Disciples. Young master Youngflame, if there is anything you need, just give them their instructions. Oh, and both of the Wanxiang Adepts are two-clawed Raindragon Guards."

"Two-clawed Raindragon Guards?" Youngflame Nong nodded after hearing this. Someone capable of becoming a two-clawed Raindragon Guard had to at least be comparable to Primal Daoists; they could be considered useful. As for the hundred Zifu Disciples? They'd be nothing more than cannon fodder.

"Bu You pays his respects to you, young master Youngflame," a messy-haired youth said respectfully.

“Xue Hongyi pays his respects to you, young master Youngflame,” a red-robed youth saluted respectfully.

Youngflame Nong nodded lightly. “I’ll have to trouble the two of you this time.”

“It is our honor to be able to toil in your service, young master Youngflame,” Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You both responded with modesty.

Northmont Yin, on the other side, spoke out as well. “I’ve also arranged for ten Wanxiang Adepts and a hundred Zifu Disciples. They are all Deathsworn and completely loyal. Perhaps the ten Wanxiang Adepts are not comparable to Xue Hongyi and Bu You, but if they join forces...generally speaking, even Primal Daoists would have to give them a wide berth.”

“Deathsworn?” Youngflame Nong’s eyes instantly lit up and he revealed a smile. Generally speaking, it was extremely hard to make an Immortal cultivator become a suicide soldier, a Deathsworn; generally speaking, one would first train a normal person into becoming a Deathsworn, and then teach them cultivation! However, given the mindset of a Deathsworn, it would be very hard for them to advance very far on the path of Immortal cultivation...and thus, for Northmont Yin to be able to deliver ten Wanxiang-level Deathsworn was a major gift.

After all, although Immortal Eastrock had arranged for Xue Hongyi and Bu You to assist, they were clearly there to assist him, not to be suicide soldiers.

“This is my son, Northmont Fox. He’s never met you, young master Youngflame, but he’s long heard of your great fame. This time, he repeatedly begged me to let him come and let him see you in person, young master Youngflame,” Northmont Yin said with a smile.

“My respects to you, young master Youngflame.” Northmont Fox was incomparably excited and he quickly spoke his respects.

Youngflame Nong nodded gently. “Northmont Fox. Mm. I’ll remember your name.”

A simple phrase, but it caused Fox to feel incomparably excited.

“This trip of mine to Stillwater Commandery is part of a small test the clan has arranged for me.” Youngflame Nong looked towards Immortal Eastrock and Northmont Yin. “Thus, it isn’t appropriate for me to cause too much of a stir here. With these helpers you two have given me, my chances of success are now increased. I can’t be too slack in addressing this trial; thus, I won’t stay here any longer. There’s no need for the rest of you to send me off.”

“Then we will wait to congratulate you on your triumphant return, young master Youngflame, and then celebrate with you.” Northmont Yin and Immortal Eastrock both watched as Youngflame Nong’s group departed.

Only Northmont Yin, Northmont Fox, and Immortal Eastrock were left by this teleportation array.

Of course, those old servants who were in charge of maintaining the teleport array were present as well. However, when they were chatting, Immortal Eastrock had naturally used elemental energy to block out all sound, and so the old servants had no idea who had arrived.

“Father, we gifted him with Deathsworn...he’s just going to leave like that?” Fox gave his father a glance.

Yin glanced back at his son. "Consider yourself lucky that he accepted them. He is currently in the middle of his trials and just so happens to need helpers, and so he'll accept them. In the future, when he becomes the next Godplume Duke, he'll become a person capable of easily impacting the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. By then, he'd view our gift with contempt. Gifting him with a group of Deathsworn now is worth more than sending a hundred groups or a thousand groups in the future!

Fox seemed to understand.

"Let's go back," Yin instructed.

An enormous, completely dark-red warship. It seemed ancient and plain, and it soared through the skies.

Within the warship, there were a total of six hundred Zifu Disciples and ten-plus Wanxiang Adepts. Youngflame Nong and the skinny, black-skinned man next to him both stood at the railing of the warship, staring at the vast world before them.

"Xue Hongyi, Bu You," Youngflame Nong asked, "Who are some of the formidable figures in Stillwater Commandery? Aside from Primal Daoists and Immortals."

"Aside from Immortals and Primal Daoists..." Xue Hongyi said, "In our Stillwater Commandery, the most powerful of the Wanxiang Adepts would definitely include the most powerful geniuses that are gathered at the Black-White College. Of course the Skysplitter Sword Sect, the Bluewood tribe, and the Dragonhunter clan also have their own elites. I am afraid that being able to convince these true core members of these forces to risk their lives would be quite hard."

Youngflame Nong nodded lightly.

Xue Hongyi was one of the most talented younger members of Snowdragon Mountain. However, because Snowdragon Mountain, in the grand scheme of things, was a small sect, Xue Hongyi was willing to serve as a servant in front of noble carriage.

Those even more talented geniuses, however, wouldn't necessarily be able to do so.

"Oh?" The nearby Adept Bu You's eyes lit up. "It seems we've reached Swallow Mountain. There is a peerless genius in Swallow Mountain, one of the truly top-tier Wanxiang members of the Black-White College. He is Adept Darknorth, Ji Ning."

Hearing Ji Ning's name, Xue Hongyi frowned.

"Ji Ning?" Youngflame Nong revealed a look of curiosity as well.

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Book 10: Entering the Immortal Estate Chapter 2: Power Makes Major Powers!

"I've never heard of him. Bu You, you tell me; what is so special about this person?" Youngflame Nong asked with curiosity.

Xue Hongyi stood to one side. Although he wasn't happy, he could only hide his resentment in his heart.

“This person is a genius of the art of the sword. When he first entered the Black-White College, he defeated several of his senior fellow disciples in Dao Debates. In the end, it was a reincarnated Immortal, the Rainbowflame Fairy Yu Wei who defeated him. And now, he has only grown even more formidable! Not too long ago, he even defeated one of the three Primal Daoists of Snowdragon Mountain, Daoist Snowplume!” Adept Bu You said.

“Snowdragon Mountain?” Youngflame Nong looked at the nearby Xue Hongyi. “Hongyi, you are of Snowdragon Mountain, yes? Did this happen?”

Xue Hongyi felt extremely stifled, but in the end, he said in a low voice, “It did.”

“What level is Daoist Snowplume at?” Youngflame Nong asked. He lived in the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty; how could he possibly know about the Primal Daoists of a small sect in Stillwater, such as Snowdragon Mountain?

Xue Hongyi said in a low voice, “Peak Primal.”

“Hahaha...this Ji Ning is worth paying a visit to.” Youngflame Nong laughed and nodded. This trip was an important trial the clan had assigned him, and in fact, they wouldn’t even provide him with much support. The only person he brought out from the clan was the old servant, Xiangliu Fang, who had protected him since he was a child. As for any other subordinates, he had to have others ‘volunteer’ them to him.

This trial was actually quite a difficult one.

The old servant had to stay next to him and protect him, and so he still needed formidable subordinates. To invite a Primal Daoist or an Immortal? Youngflame Nong didn’t feel safe doing so, because some powerful Primal Daoists and Immortals, given their combat ability, could instantly kill him! He absolutely would not permit this sort of a threat to exist.

Thus, he would only ask Wanxiang Adepts. No matter how powerful a Wanxiang Adept was...their power was within the realm of what he could handle.

However, some extremely powerful Primal Daoists were outside of that realm.

It is impossible to tell how powerful a person is just by looking at them. Even if a Primal Daoist might be little-known, no one could know how many secret arts he might be actually hiding. It was best to invite Wanxiang Adepts! It was safer, and within his realm of control. However, the more powerful a Wanxiang Adept, the harder it would be to invite them to come.

“Young master Youngflame, this Ji Ning has trained for less than thirty years. I imagine he might be quite hard to invite,” Xue Hongyi said hurriedly. “In addition, he’s also very arrogant. He didn’t even show my Snowdragon Mountain any face at all. If we just go and ask him, he might be discourteous...”

“Hahaha, he wouldn’t give your Snowdragon Mountain face, so you think he won’t give me face?” Youngflame Nong gave him a glance. “Hongyi, I can tell that there are some grudges between your clan and him. However, since you’ve come to assist me, then you don’t need to think about those things for now.”

Xue Hongyi had no choice but to lower his head and say, “Understood.”

“Come, let’s take a look at this Ji Ning.” Youngflame Nong smiled, filled with anticipation.

Serpentwing Lake. Brightheart Island. Within a study.

Ning was currently writing calligraphy, one character at a time. Autumn Leaf was by his side, accompanying him and grinding hink for him. Ninelotus stood to one side, watching.

“Whew.”

Ning put down his brush, revealing a hint of a smile. Writing calligraphy truly was a form of enjoyment for him, especially when he incorporated his insights into the sword into them. This sort of feeling was truly pleasurable.

“Autumn Leaf, take it and burn it,” Ning said.

“Yes, young master.” Autumn Leaf immediately began to roll up the scroll.

“Autumn Leaf,” Ninelotus said, “Take it and burn it in a nearby room. I have some things to discuss with Ji Ning.”

Autumn Leaf nodded, then obediently left. In the room, only Ji Ning and Ninelotus were left.

“What secrets do you wish to discuss, that you need to avoid Autumn Leaf?” Ning hung the brush in its holder, then glanced at Ninelotus.

Ninelotus looked at Ning. “Ji Ning, don’t you feel as though...you are a bit too friendly and intimate with Autumn Leaf?”

Ning was stunned.

“As I see it, there’s not much of a difference between the way you treat Autumn Leaf and the way you treat me.” Ninelotus looked at Ji Ning. “I’m your Dao-Companion. She’s just your maid.”

“Hahaha...” Ning began to laugh. “You are over-thinking things.”

“I’m not,” Ninelotus said quickly. “I’m not as jealous and small-minded as you are thinking. However, in the future, it is guaranteed that you will become more and more powerful, and your status will become higher and higher. More and more people will follow you as well. With so many subordinates...how are you going to properly manage them? With rules, that’s how. How can you go without rules? There must be a clear distinction between those with high status and those with low status. Autumn Leaf is a maid? Then she’s a maid! If you don’t distinguish between those of high and low status, then everything will be a mess!”

Everything she had learned within the Dongyan clan caused Ninelotus to believe that one had to clearly distinguish between exalted and humble statuses.

Servants were servants!

Even if you doted on a particular servant, a servant still had to act the part of a servant!

“What are you trying to say?” Ning began to frown.

"I just want to tell you that in the future, as you grow increasingly powerful, the Ji clan will also slowly grow powerful. A major clan needs to look like and operate like a major clan. As the supreme power behind this major power...you need to be even more careful in distinguishing between the statuses of those by your side!" Ninelotus said. "And you? Enough about Autumn Leaf for now; you even converse with those ordinary servants? You chit-chat with them? Those are just ordinary mortal servants. Why pay them any attention at all?"

Ning suddenly snapped, "Enough!"

Ninelotus was stunned.

"Everyone has their own way of handling their affairs. As for Autumn Leaf, although she is a maid, in my heart, she's my older sister!" Ning looked at Ninelotus.

Ninelotus gritted her teeth.

The two had lived in different environments, and Ning, in his previous life, had come from Earth. Naturally, there would be major differences in the ways they viewed and handled things.

"In the future, people are going to laugh at you if you act this way!" Ninelotus said with a frown.

"Laugh at me? Who will laugh at me?" Ning looked at Ninelotus. "In fact, why should I even care about if others laugh at me? I'm me. When my fame truly reaches the point of shaking the entire Grand Xia Dynasty, others will most likely revere every single word I say and thing I do. Ninelotus, can it be that you still haven't seen through these things? A True Immortal, even one of low and despicable moral character...in the end, the various tribes will all lower their heads to lap at his feet. If, however, he was nothing but an ordinary mortal, even if his every word and action was keeping in accord with the rules of your so-called 'major clans', in the end, he'll be nothing more than a joke."

"Expand your horizons to include the entire Three Realms!"

"Personal power is the most important fundament! Only when you have power, will you become a major power!" Ning stared at Ninelotus.

Ninelotus could sense the powerful determination and the wild ambition in Ning's eyes. She lowered her head.

"Alright. I won't speak of this anymore. In the future, you'll understand." Ninelotus turned her head, moving to walk outside. But right at this moment...

A powerful ripple spread out from far away.

"Eh?" Ning and Ninelotus both turned their heads, staring towards the distant skies. They could both sense the ripple. Although they had just had an argument, they still flew together towards the skies.

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In midair. Ning, Ninelotus, Northson, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver had all flown here.

"Who is it?" Ning saw the ancient, plain-looking warship hanging in the skies far away. Atop the warship, a flag was fluttering with two characters on it – 'Young' 'Flame'.

“Youngflame Nong!” Ninelotus was shocked.

“The Youngflame clan?” Adept Vastriver was similarly shocked.

As for Ning, Northson, and Yu Wei, they hadn’t even heard of this clan before. Clearly, they were befuddled.

Adept Vastriver hurriedly sent to them, “Be careful, fellow disciples. This Youngflame clan ranks amongst the top ten powerful clans in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. Many of their clansmen are officials serving the Grand Xia Dynasty, and they are extremely influential in this major world. Within their clan, there are three Marquisates, and these three marquisdoms vastly outstrip Stillwater Commandery in size.

Ninelotus hurriedly sent as well, “The Youngflame clan’s territory, in terms of size, is nearly a hundred times that of Stillwater Commandery! Their roots are incredibly deep; supposedly, shortly after this major world was created, the Youngflame clan had already begun to grow and prosper. In the incomparably distant Fiendgod Era, the Youngflame clan was an incomparably mighty force.

Ning, Northson, and Yu Wei were stunned upon hearing this.

“That’s too badass...” Northson blinked.

“Three marquisdoms in a single tribe?” Ning had reviewed a map of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty; amongst them, there were indeed three marquisdoms that were marked with ‘Youngflame clan’. These three marquisdoms were spread out in different areas, but each of them were vast; they were all extremely large marquisdoms.

“Why has the warship of such a powerful clan appeared at my Serpentwing Lake?” Ning was completely puzzled.

At this moment, a long corridor suddenly opened up from within that ancient, plain warship. An azure-robed man emerged, followed by a swarthy, tall, slender-eyed middle-aged man. Behind them was Xue Hongyi, Bu You, and a group of Wanxiang Adepts and Zifu Disciples.

“Xue Hongyi?” Ning immediately recognized him. Xue Hongyi gave Ning a glance as well.

“Everyone, be careful,” Ninelotus hurriedly sent. “This azure-robed youth...he’s one of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital of the Grand Xia Dynasty, ‘Youngflame Nong’. Youngflame Nong’s status is extraordinary; unless something unexpected happens, he’ll be the next leader of the Youngflame clan, the next Godplume Duke.”

Ning, Northson, Adept Vastriver, and Yu Wei were all secretly tongue-tied. The next leader of the Youngflame clan? He was this incredible?

“Dongyan Yun greets you, young master Youngflame,” Ninelotus said with a smile.

“You know me?” Youngflame Nong said, surprised, “Dongyan Yun? Can it be that you are ‘Ninelotus’ of the Dongyan clan?”

“Precisely so.” Ninelotus nodded.

Youngflame Nong smiled and nodded. He had been carefully reared since young, and was quite familiar with some of the most important figures of the supreme powers of this the Grand Xia Dynasty's world. Ninelotus was the next leader of the Dongyan clan ; naturally, he was familiar with her. Although he had learned of her long ago, after reflecting slightly, he remembered everything about her.

"Ninelotus, you are far more beautiful than the painting I saw. In the painting, you were far more youthful," Youngflame Nong said with a laugh.

Ninelotus laughed, then said, "Let me make the introductions for you, young master Youngflame. This is my Dao-Companion, Ji Ning."

"Dao-Companion?" Youngflame Nong was startled, and then he nodded. "A perfect pairing, to be sure."

"This is my senior apprentice-sister, the Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei. She is also a reincarnated Immortal." Ninelotus next pointed to the black-robed Yu Wei.

Youngflame Nong's eyes immediately lit up. Ninelotus could be said to be an extremely beautiful and graceful woman, but the Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei, was even superior to her. She caused even the eyes of Youngflame Nong, who usually stayed in the imperial capital, to light up.

"This is my senior apprentice-brother, Adept Vastriver, also a reincarnated Immortal. And this is my junior apprentice-brother, Mu Northson," Ninelotus said.

As soon as Ninelotus finished her words...

"Greetings to you, young master Youngflame," Ning, Northson, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver said in unison.

Youngflame Nong nodded as well. He could tell that this group was an extraordinary one. Next to him, Adept Bu You secretly sent him a mental message. "Congratulations, young master Youngflame. The Rainbowflame Fairy and Adept Vastriver are amongst the most supreme geniuses of the Black-White College; they are easily comparable to Ji Ning."

Youngflame Nong looked towards their group, then said with a smile, "Come to think of it, I actually do have something to ask you to help out with."

Ning's group exchanged glances.

"Young master Youngflame, please speak," Ning said.

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Book 10: Entering the Immortal Estate Chapter 3: Witchriver Immortal Estate!

Youngflame Nong said, "This is a small test my clan has given me. They've charged me with investigating an ancient Immortal estate. As for whether or not I'm able to acquire the aid of others, the clan won't care! I won't lie to you; this Immortal estate belonged to a Celestial Immortal. Although he died countless years ago, his estate is filled with many dangers, and the Diremonsters who were trapped within have constantly propagated. I imagine that there are quite a few monsters living there now...and there are some unknown dangers as well. Thus, I need some helpers. If you are willing to help me, then I will remember this favor."

These words caused the faces of Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Ninelotus, Yu Wei, and Adept Vastriver to change.

The estate of a Celestial Immortal?

Although the vast world was covered with countless Immortal estates, those generally belonged to Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals. Estates of Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals might be quite alluring to ordinary Zifu Disciples, but they were much less intriguing to the likes of Ning's group; after all, Ning's group had constant access to many living Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals. For example, Ning's master was Immortal Diancai!

But a Celestial Immortal's estate? That was completely different!

"Everyone, what do you think?" Adept Vastriver sent.

Ninelotus sent, "Youngflame Nong is one of the Four Dukelings of the imperial capital; given his status, if he says he will remember this favor, he definitely will. For the sake of this favor along...I feel that we can help him. Once he becomes the next Godplume Duke, if he is willing to help us out even slightly, we will benefit tremendously."

"Let's not rush into it. I feel that the servant next to him is extremely dangerous," Ning sent. His subconscious had begun to warn of him a tremendous threat long ago, and the threat came from that servant. "If he has such a formidable helper already, why does he need our help? Let's not rush into it and ask a bit more."

"Mm, makes sense," Adept Vastriver concurred.

"I'll follow you, senior apprentice-brother," Northson said simply.

"Let's wait and see first," Yu Wei agreed.

Although Ninelotus was more inclined towards accepting, clearly, Ning's influence was a bit stronger within this group. The main reason was because, when a group of geniuses were together, they would value ability the most. The most powerful of their group was Ji Ning, Yu Wei, and Vastriver.

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Youngflame Nong could tell from the looks on the faces of Ning and the rest that they hadn't yet been convinced. He thus continued, "This Celestial Immortal was known as Immortal Witchriver! He was an aquatic Diremonster who gained insight into the Dao and became a Celestial Immortal. In the past, his fame was widespread. Afterwards, he fought with other Immortals of the Three Realms and perished. The key to his Immortal estate was acquired by my Youngflame clan. However, my clan was in no rush to investigate. That's why I'm certain that after Immortal Witchriver died, nobody has entered."

"In addition, this Immortal estate is the lair of a Celestial Immortal; it definitely has many precious items inside, such as spirit-herbs, precious magic treasures, spirit-pills, unique refining materials, and more. There might even be Immortal-ranked magic treasures within!"

By now, Yu Wei and Adept Vastriver's eyes were shining. Ning and Northson couldn't help but feel stirred as well. An Immortal-ranked magic treasure? Right...the vast majority of Loose Immortals and

Earth Immortals didn't have Immortal-ranked magic treasures, but Celestial Immortals definitely would, and not just one! It was very possible that they might leave one behind in their homes.

"My goal is to achieve mastery of this Immortal estate; as for the treasures within, so long as you can acquire them, they will be yours. I definitely won't fight with you for them. Even if I truly want them, I'll give you a satisfactory offer for them and won't force you." Youngflame Nong looked towards Ning's group. "This is my promise, and the promise of the Youngflame clan."

Ning's group exchanged glances with each other while secretly sending mental messages.

"We can go take a look," Adept Vastriver sent. "Entering a Celestial Immortal's estate is a rare opportunity to begin with. It is just as young master Youngflame said...without the key to the estate, there's no way to enter at all. It's a rare opportunity for us to enter alongside him."

"He's the young master of the Youngflame clan...the Youngflame clan's promises are worth trusting," Yu Wei sent.

"I'll follow you, senior apprentice-brother." Northson's words were the same as before.

"Ji Ning?" Ninelotus looked towards Ji Ning.

Ning was intrigued as well now.

Youngflame Nong look at them, then added, "Based on what I know, although Immortal Witchriver was a Diremonster, he was a Diremonster Sword Immortal, and had an extremely high level of insight into the Dao of the Sword. I imagine that his sword technique must be recorded down within his home."

Ning's eyes lit up.

"It seems as though junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning has been moved," Adept Vastriver sent with a laugh. "Everyone, let's decide...should we go?"

"We can make the trip," Yu Wei said. "Although it will be dangerous...if the Youngflame clan is willing to allow their young master to go, the danger level shouldn't be too ridiculous."

"Go," Ninelotus sent.

Northson looked at Ning.

"Let's go take a look," Ning nodded.

"Fine, I'll go as well." Northson revealed a smile.

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Adept Vastriver was the oldest of the group, and so he was the one to speak out. "Young master Youngflame, the five of us are willing to accompany you to the Witchriver Immortal Estate."

"Haha, excellent!" Youngflame Nong's eyes were shining. He clapped his hands, then said happily, "With the help of the five of you, I will definitely succeed!"

"Everyone, if there are any preparations you need to make, make them quickly," Youngflame Nong said hurriedly. "We need to head to the Witchriver Immortal Estate as soon as possible."

“We’re all free,” Adept Vastriver said with a laugh. “I’m afraid that junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning might need to make some minor arrangements, however.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, you go make your arrangements. We’ll wait for you here,” Northson laughed as well.

They were guests; naturally, they could leave at any time. Ning, however, had to make some arrangements for his clan.

“Everyone, please wait a few moments.” Ning immediately transformed into a streak of light, flying towards Brightheart Island.

Brightheart Island. Autumn Leaf, Little Qing, and the Whitewater Hound had been waiting here the entire time.

“What’s going on? Who is that person?” Little Qing asked.

Ning looked towards Autumn Leaf. “Autumn Leaf, the person who came on that warship is a young master of an ancient, powerful clan known as the Youngflame clan. He’s asked us to help him carry out some matters...I need to temporarily leave for a period of time. I’ll hand everything on Brightheart Island over to you to handle. As for the Ji clan, help me send word that I’ll return soon.”

“Alright.” Autumn Leaf nodded obediently. Whatever Ning wanted to do, Autumn Leaf would quietly support.

“Let’s go, Little Qing, Uncle White,” Ning laughed.

“We’re off!” Little Qing instantly transformed into a streak of mist, then reformed and wrapped herself around Ning’s arm as a little snake. As for the Whitewater Hound, he just quietly padded along besides Ning.

In going out and adventuring, one would naturally bring one’s spirit-beasts along.

“I want to see how incredible this Celestial Immortal’s estate is.” Ning felt a bit eager. Suddenly, he had a thought; “It’s best to be cautious. I should bring that treasure along and carry it on me. Supposedly, there are some places where magic treasures cannot be taken out of storage-type magic treasures.” A black armband appeared around, then wrapped itself around Ning’s arm. His magic clothing, in the appearance of furs, quickly covered it, making it disappear.

This black armband was one of the two major unique items which Ning had acquired from the underwater estate.

Ning still felt quite confident of his chances in this trip to the Celestial Immortal’s estate. He had overcome the fourth level of the Wargod Hall and had reached the Wanxiang level as a Fiendgod Refiner...the two treasure selection chances he had gained, Ning had used to choose protective items, not Earth-ranked magic treasures!

This was what the giant yellow bear had said: “It’s best to be careful. In the past, Rampart died at the Wanxiang Adept level. The Wanxiang level...it’s neither high nor low; you aren’t a weakling, but you also aren’t a true power yet either. It’s the level with the highest chance of death. Although this protective item can only be used once, its power is extraordinary. You can view it as a second life for yourself.”

The third time Ning had chosen a treasure, the giant yellow bear had said something similar: “This unique protective is the most suited for you; in the past, Daoist Threelives felt a sudden moment of interest and personally fashioned it.”

Aside from the Nethercold Swords which Ning had chosen the first time, Ning had used his other chances to choose protective treasures!

It must be understood that the set of Nethercold Swords, in and of itself, was already an extremely valuable treasure. It vastly surpassed the protective treasure which Immortal Diancai had previously given Ning; that protective treasure, for the current Ning, was a bit lacking. The two protective treasures which Ning chose this time, however...were no lower in value than the Nethercold Swords. Given that they were assessed by the underwater estate as top-grade, they were naturally extraordinary.

“With these two protective treasures, I should have enough resources to deal with any sudden, unexpected dangers,” Ning mused to himself. “Time to go.”

Ning had a little azure serpent around his arm, and a Whitewater Hound by his side. He immediately flew into the air.

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“Ji Ning, you also have spirit-beasts?” Youngflame Nong, who was waiting for him on the warship, immediately laughed upon seeing the little azure snake on Ning’s arm. “I have one as well. Come on out, Crimsonfire.”

Instantly, a crimson-headed serpent reared its head, emerging from the skin on Nong’s arm. This crimson serpent had a single horn on its head, and its eyes were gold.

“A Redscale Salamander?” Ning and the others were all secretly shocked. Godbeasts had the blood of Fiendgods, but there were differences amongst Godbeasts; normal Godbeasts were capable of transforming at the Zifu level, such as the Whitewater Hound and the Azure Skysnake! However, according to legend, some truly powerful Godbeasts would only be able to transform into human form after becoming Celestial Immortals. Those Godbeasts were truly fearsome.

Redscale Salamanders were extremely famous; they had to at least reach the Primal level before being able to transform! They were far more exalted than Azure Skysnakes and Whitewater Hounds.

“Hisssss.” The Redscale Salamander gave the Azure Skysnake and the Whitewater Hound a glance, then buried its head once more into Nong’s skin.

“Hahaha, Crimsonfire still isn’t able to take human form, so he’s quite depressed.” Youngflame Nong sat at the highest, principal seat of the warship, with Ning and the others seated below him. “Come, come, come. Let’s drink together. After we enter the Witchriver Immortal Estate, we won’t be as relaxed as we are now.”

“A toast to you, young master Youngflame.”

Adept Vastriver, Ning, Northson, Yu Wei, and Ninelotus all raised their cups. As for Xue Hongyi and Bu You, who were seated at the very bottom, they also raised their cups.

“Hahaha...” Youngflame Nong’s laughter rang out. Clearly, he was in an exceedingly good mood. And why wouldn’t he be? Although Xue Hongyi and Bu You were both two-clawed Raindragon Guards, compared to Ji Ning, the most brilliant genius of the Black-White College, and compared to the two reincarnated Immortals, Yu Wei and Adept Vastriver, Bu You and Hongyi were on a lower level.

His casual detour to Swallow Mountain’s Serpentwing Lake had resulted in five more helpers, each of whom were extraordinary! Even the slightly weaker Mu Northson was a genius of the Dao of Constructs. Those who walked the Dao of Constructs were innately skilled at fighting those who were of a higher level. In turn, Ninelotus was the next leader of the Dongyan clan; how could she not be in possession of some powerful protective items?

.....

They drank and made merry with each other. After just two days, they arrived at the place where the Witchriver Immortal Estate was hidden.

“The Witchriver Immortal Estate is in the distant Skyrove Mountains.” Youngflame Nong, standing at the front of the ship, pointed towards a distant, towering mountain range. He seemed quite resplendent and valiant.

Ning and the others followed his gaze, filled with anticipation as well.

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Book 10: Entering the Immortal Estate Chapter 4: Seize It!

The Skyrove Mountains were vast and endless, covering an expanse of more than a hundred thousand kilometers.

“The Witchriver Immortal Estate is hidden within these mountains. Even if one was to rely on divine sense to search for it, it would take weeks.” Youngflame Nong had a hint of anticipation in his eyes.

“However, I have the key to the estate; so long as we draw close to it, I’ll be able to sense it. Everyone, make your preparations; after we enter the Immortal estate, things will truly grow dangerous.”

The nearby Immortal cultivators all nodded.

“We are finally going to go in.” Mu Northson’s eyes were shining.

“Right. The abode of a Celestial Immortal.” Ning felt quite eager as well.

“Ji Ning.” The nearby Ninelotus stealthily sent him a message.

Ning turned to look at Ninelotus, revealing a smile. He sent back, “Senior apprentice-sister, what’s this about? Why are you sending me a mental message?”

“After entering the Immortal estate, you need to reveal your prowess, and also actively move to be more friendly to young master Youngflame. To be able to meet him is a rare opportunity; if you let it slip, it’ll be hard to gain it again in the future,” Ninelotus instructed. “You wasted both of the past two days. After entering the Immortal estate, you can’t continue to be so remiss.”

Ning frowned. “Senior apprentice-sister!”

“Don’t be angry,” Ninelotus said. “I know your temper; you don’t like to flatter others, but I’m not asking you to do that. I’m just asking you to be a bit more friendly...Ji Ning, you should know that you are far more powerful than Xue Hongyi, but during the past two days on the warship, Xue Hongyi often engaged young master Youngflame in conversation, and he has a much closer relationship to him than you do, as of right now. You always just stand there, not saying a thing...this is really...”

“Senior apprentice-sister, I...” Ning wanted to explain.

“Let me finish.” Ninelotus looked at Ji Ning. “Relationship-building...the reason why it is called relationship-building is because you need to build up a relationship between the two of you, which is accomplished through interacting with each other. That’s the only way you can build up a relationship with him. Don’t think that just because you helped him out that you’ll have much of a relationship; that’s just a favor, nothing more.”

“When a favor is used up, it’s gone. But a relationship is long-lasting!”

“You are arrogant and aloof by nature; you don’t like to flatter others. But young master Youngflame is even more arrogant than you! As a result, the two of you barely interact with each other. Let me ask you this; if you were young master Youngflame...how much of a relationship would you feel that you have with a person who won’t even talk to you? Even if this person helped you, I imagine that you wouldn’t care too much about him.”

Ning was stunned. Ninelotus’ words did indeed have merit to them.

“Human relationships can be divided into several categories; strangers, familiar faces, friends, close friends, and lifelong friends,” Ninelotus said. “You’ve only said one or two things to each other; to be honest, you and young master Youngflame can’t even be considered ‘familiar faces’; you continue to be strangers to each other. As for Xue Hongyi, he often chats with young master Youngflame. Afterwards, he is going to risk his life for him. Perhaps they might end up becoming friends.”

“After you enter the Immortal estate, perhaps you might end up rendering more merits..”

“But in young master Youngflame’s heart, he’ll feel closer to Xue Hongyi, not you. Right now, because young master Youngflame needs your help for this trial, he’s fairly courteous to you. But after he completes it, and especially after he becomes the next Godplume Duke...I imagine that he wouldn’t even be bothered to cast you a single glance. If you ask him to help out, if it’s a small matter, he might nod and return the favor, but if what you ask is too troublesome, he might not even receive you. Even an Immortal might find it hard to meet with the new Godplume Duke.” Ninelotus looked at Ning.

“Senior apprentice-sister, I admit that your words have merit,” Ning sent back. “Favors, once repaid, are gone. Relationships are indeed long-lasting.”

“However...you are you, and I am me.”

“I don’t like to go and intentionally try to befriend someone. Let everything happen naturally,” Ning sent. “If I can become friends with young master Youngflame, that will naturally be a good thing. But if we cannot be friends, that’s fine as well.”

“A fortuitous encounter! That’s what this is, and you have to seize it!” Ninelotus sent urgently, “How many major figures will you run into in your life? If you miss this chance, it’ll be gone.”

“In taking the Immortal path, one will have to rely on one’s self.” Ning shook his head.

“But if someone helps you out at a critical moment, you’ll be able to move farther on your Immortal path,” Ninelotus sent.

“Senior apprentice-sister, if I were to intentionally go and befriend or ingratiate myself to someone, it will only impact my Dao-heart...in the end, it would be a loss,” Ning said.

“You...” Ninelotus was furious.

“Everyone has their own Dao. Senior apprentice-sister, there’s no need for you to try and force things,” Ning said. “Senior apprentice-sister...I’ve never tried to force you to do anything. I hope you won’t try to force me to do anything either. This is the second time now!”

Ninelotus was stunned. Right. Not too long ago, the two of you had squabbled at Brightheart Island over the matter of differentiation of statuses. That was the very first squabble the two had ever had.

“I’m just trying to help you accomplish greater things in the future.” Ninelotus’ eyes were turning slightly red.

“Alright, alright.” Ning took Ninelotus by the hand, smiling towards her.

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The nearby Yu Wei, noticing that Ji Ning and Ninelotus were holding hands, frowned very slightly. And then, she turned her head, staring towards the distant, vast mountains outside the ship.

“How is Ji Ning so lucky?” Xue Hongyi glanced from the corner of his eyes at the hand-holding Ji Ning and Ninelotus, then cursed to himself, “This trip of young master Youngflame to the Immortal estate clearly didn’t have anything to do with Ji Ning, but now he’s been invited to participate as well. In addition, he actually ended up becoming Dao-Companions with Dongyan Yun.”

Xue Hongyi, at first, had no idea about Ninelotus’ background. However, over the course of the past two days on the ship together, Youngflame Nong had chatted with Ninelotus, and from their conversations, Xue Hongyi had learned...that Ninelotus was actually the next leader of the Dongyan clan. Instantly, Xue Hongyi felt incomparably jealous!

“That brat from the Ji clan ended up reaching such a level...” Xue Hongyi couldn’t help but feel envy in his heart.

When news had spread of Ning defeating Daoist Snowplume, Xue Hongyi could scarcely believe it. He couldn’t believe that the little punk who he could’ve obliterated with ease a few years ago had become even more powerful than him.

And now, Ji Ning had also gotten to know Youngflame Nong, and had become Dao-Companions with Ninelotus...

“I really hope this Ji Ning will die in the Witchriver Immortal Estate!” Xue Hongyi mused secretly to himself.

The ship flew through the air above the Skyrove Mountains for the amount of time needed to boil a kettle of tea. Suddenly, the azure-robed Youngflame Nong's eyes lit up as he stared downwards. "The Immortal estate is directly below us. Everyone, follow me inside."

"We've found the Immortal estate?"

"Right below us?"

The experts, previously still chatting casually, all focused their attention below.

BOOM!

The warship shot downwards, quickly gliding past the mountain peaks and flying into an extremely deep gorge.

"Halt."

The ancient warship came to a halt in the air before one of the cliff walls.

"Wait for me to unlock the Immortal estate first." Youngflame Nong produced a golden talisman in his hand. He pointed it towards the distant cliff, then used his elemental ki to activate the talisman. Rumble...the golden talisman instantly emitted a hazy golden pillar of light which illuminated the stone wall. The surface of the stone wall immediately began to twist and change, soon revealing an enormous, rippling, watery surface.

"Go in." Youngflame Nong revealed a look of delight.

Swoosh!

The warship flew directly in, passing through the watery, rippling surface, then disappearing within it. Immediately afterwards, the rippling surface disappeared as well. The stone wall remained a stone wall, with nothing special about it at all.

.....

Ning's group, aboard the warship, flew through the watery surface, then saw the scene in front of them rapidly change.

"This is...?" Ji Ning and the others aboard the warship saw the area around them be filled with a connected range of mountains. The mountain peaks were dreary and cold, as though nothing could thrive on them. As for the ground, it was a lifeless desert.

The Skyrove Mountains was a living, thriving mountain range. But upon entering this Immortal estate...what they saw was this desolate desert and the mountains above it.

Boom!

Rumble!

Boom!

Rumble!

From far away, a series of loud, earthshaking sounds rang out. The sounds rang out from a distant mountain peak, the most towering of the mountains present. The top of the mountain was completely covered by white patches. These white objects were Diremonsters, dressed in snowy white armor, which were clustered together, forming the various white patches.

These snowy white armored Diremonsters all had enormous fish-like tails and human bodies; their faces were covered with scales.

“Eh?”

“There?”

The countless Diremonsters all turned their heads in unison towards Ji Ning’s group, because the ripple caused by the warship passing through the watery surface had been detected by them.

“Humans!”

“They are humans!”

The thousand-plus merfolk, who were in the midst of training, all called out in shock. How many years had it been? Ever since their ancestors had been trapped within here, unable to escape, they had bred countless generations of descendants. The entirety of this Immortal estate world was filled with monsters; there wasn’t even a single human present. In fact, the late Immortal Witchriver himself was born a monster!

“Eh?” The leader of the training Diremonsters, an alluring-looking female merfolk with a naked upper body, was stunned...but then, her shrill voice bellowed out, “Humans! Humans have entered the Immortal estate! They definitely have the key to the estate...quick, quick, seize it from them, seize the key of the estate!”

“Seize it!”

“Seize it!”

“Follow me and kill them!” The female merfolk immediately manifested a set of golden armor over her.

As she charged towards the sky, the thousand snowy-white armored merfolk Diremonsters all followed from behind. The runes on the Dao-armors they were wearing all began to glow as well.

Rumble...these thousand Diremonsters suddenly formed into an enormously massive, sky-filling wave. This vast, endless wave rolled forward, smashing towards Youngflame Nong and his group, aboard the distant warship.

“Once we seize the key to the estate, we’ll be able to escape. Take it!” The female merfolk bellowed mentally, causing the other merfolk Diremonsters behind her to bellow with fury as well.

The mountain peak was only a few dozen kilometers away from Ning’s group. Precisely because of how close it was, these merfolk Diremonsters were able to immediately ascertain that they were humans! This was the very first time this unfathomably ancient Immortal estate had humans appear within it..

A few dozen kilometers...it only took a few breaths to traverse this!

Aboard the warship, Youngflame Nong, Ji Ning, Xue Hongyi, and the others were all stunned.

“Dao-soldiers!”

“Monstrous Dao-soldiers!” They were all shocked. They had all seen, from far away, that there were quite a few Wanxiang Diremonsters amongst the crowd of beasts, and that female merfolk leader was very possibly a Primal Diremonster! Even the weakest monster in the group was at the Zifu level. And with all of them also being Dao-soldiers...

“These Dao-armors must have been left behind by Immortal Witchriver for building up an army of Dao-soldiers.” Ning and the others all realized that they were in for quite a bit of trouble now.

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Book 10: Entering the Immortal Estate Chapter 5: Unblockable

This Immortal estate was the home of Immortal Witchriver; naturally, he had set up layers of defenses. Although he himself had perished, some of the defenses he had left behind remained usable; for example, his Dao-soldiers!

Immortal Witchriver had used up countless treasures in order to cultivate a powerful army of Dao-soldiers. In their most powerful prime, they were capable of easily killing a Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal! However, the Immortal estate had suffered through countless years of decay. Those oldest monstrous Dao-soldiers had died long ago, leaving behind a large amount of Dao-soldier armors.

Prior to this, Ji Ning and the others had guessed that as Immortal Witchriver was a monster Immortal, it was only logical to expect that he had stationed some of his race within his Immortal estate. This Immortal estate world...although it wasn't as infinitely vast as the Grand Xia Empire, it still spanned tens of thousands of kilometers, and was comparable in size to Earth. Thus, the monsters had continuously propagated.

The monsters had left behind their training methods to their descendants, while the Immortal estate itself had incomparably dense, nourishing levels of elemental energy. It was only normal for more Diremonsters to be created.

An host of Diremonsters...and a host of monstrous Dao-soldiers...these were two completely different concepts! With precious Dao-armors equipped, their power would explode tenfold or even a hundredfold!

Clans like the Ji clan also had Dao-armor suitable for mortals to use.

Dao-armor usable by Xiantian lifeforms and Zifu Disciples, however, were much more rare. Generally speaking, schools on the level of Snowdragon Mountain would have them.

As for Dao-armor which Wanxiang Adepts and Primal Daoists could use? Even sects like the Skysplitter Sword Sect would have to use all their ability and spend enormous amounts of precious resources to procure such Dao-armors.

And so, right now...Ji Ning's group was in serious trouble!

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“Rumble....” A thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers swept forward, having transformed into a vast wave.

“Block them!”

Youngflame Nong, aboard the warship, let out a furious roar. Faced with a thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers, even he had an ugly look on his face now. A watery, rippling layer of black light appeared on the surface of the warship, completely protecting it.

BOOM!!!!

The edges of that vast, surging wave slashed against the warship like blades, causing the entire warship to be flipped over and sent flying backwards, smashing viciously against a nearby mountain peak. The entire mountain rang out from the sound of the collision, while the warship itself plunged deep into it. The black, watery curtain of protective light had completely dispersed.

“Uncle Fang, what should we do?” Youngflame Nong sent mentally.

“Young master, the combined, full-strength attack from those thousand Dao-soldiers was comparable to a Loose Immortal’s might.” The black, middle-aged man next to Youngflame Nong sent mentally, “That merwoman leader...she is definitely a Primal Diremonsters. My priority is definitely going to be staying close to you and protecting you. After all, I’m only skilled at close combat; if I were to charge out, then I would no longer be able to protect you. Let the others go face them. I’ll wait for a good opportunity; once I seize it and kill that leading Primal merwoman...then the other Dao-soldiers will be much less of a threat.”

“Kill!”

“Everyone, it’s up to you.” Youngflame Nong sent a mental message to Ning, Xue Hongyi, Adept Vastriver, and the others.

Ning’s group were all secretly cursing; clearly, this Youngflame Nong wouldn’t willingly risk himself. He was having them face the danger.

“Kill!” Xue Hongyi was the first to attack. With a sweep of his hand, he transformed into a streak of snowy white large, charging towards the thousand invading Dao-soldiers.

“Sword formation!” More than seven hundred flying swords appeared around Ji Ning. His peak Wanxiang-level elemental ki, using the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], formed a sword of light before him. This sword of light immediately executed the fifth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] – Moonlight Hiding the Sword. Instantly, a seemingly soft, gentle beam of moonlight seemed to caress the wave of monstrous Dao-soldiers.

“Seal!” Yu Wei pointed into the distance. Whoosh! An enormous ice phoenix appeared in midair. This giant phoenix, completely formed from frozen ice, spread its wings and flew forward, carrying a heart-shaking, majestic aura.

“Vastwave Breaker!” Adept Vastriver let out a loud cry, but maintained his elegant and graceful poise. An enormous black sword appeared in midair, covered with runes. This giant black sword slashed through the skies, chopping towards the Dao-soldiers.

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Ning's group, including the Zifu Disciples and the Wanxiang-level Deathsworn, all released powerful techniques. Ning and the others on his level were all capable of giving that female Primal Diremonster a good fight! However, she was linked to the thousand Dao-soldiers, and thus was now able to unleash astonishing levels of power, vastly surpassing any single person in Ning's group.

Rumble...

With an enormous rumbling sound, their sword-light and magic techniques either crumbled, vanished, or were knocked flying back.

The Zifu Disciples all formed into formations, preparing to resist together.

"We have to move fast. Fast, fast, fast! We need to take that key as soon as possible; if we are too slow, then the key will be taken by those old bastards," the leading merwoman Diremonster sent mentally.

"Children, annihilate these humans."

"Kill."

"Kill."

The thousand-plus Dao-soldiers, when joining forces, were capable of unleashing power which no one in Ning's group was capable of resisting.

That enormous wave once more smashed directly towards them. Ning's group was quickly forced to retreat, but the weaker Zifu Disciples began to perish. Although they had formed formations...their formations, in the face of the formation of monstrous Dao-soldiers, simply wasn't able to hold on at all.

Crunch.

Some of the human Zifu Disciples spat up mouthfuls of blood. Some of their bodies crumbled. One after another, they died.

Fortunately, Ning and the others were working to block as well. Otherwise, most likely, in a single breath's worth of time, all of the Zifu Disciples would have perished.

"Too vicious," Northson sent mentally. "Senior apprentice-brother, that Youngflame Nong definitely has many treasures on him, but he's not even willing to use a single one of them. He just watched as those Zifu Disciples perished."

"We just entered the Immortal estate moments ago. It's only natural that he wouldn't be willing to use his treasures right away," Ning responded.

Ji Ning, Yu Wei, Ninelotus, and the others all had their own life-saving techniques. But nobody would choose to use them this early. After all...they had only just entered the Immortal estate.

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Youngflame Nong stood there watching, with the swarthy, black-skinned man standing by his side, protecting him. The black-skinned, middle-aged man just watched quietly. His facial expressions didn't change at all when their Zifu Disciples started to die; his gaze was firmly focused on the distant,

ferocious wave of elemental power, formed by the monstrous Dao-soldiers. The way in which the elemental ki circulated through their formation was extremely subtle and profound.

Right at this moment...

The black-skinned man, still by Youngflame Nong, suddenly revealed a cold light in his eyes. A pair of sharp awls appeared in his right and left hands. He took a sudden step forward, and his left arm began to elongate. In fact, one long serpent after another began to appear and coil around his arm. His left arm struck out with massive, savage power, sending the awl flying towards the front!

Whoosh!

The long black awl instantly pierced through the skies, leaving behind a brilliant, eye-catching scar in the sky as it pierced directly towards the giant wave formed from monstrous Dao-soldiers.

BOOM!!!

An explosive sound. The massive, ferocious wave actually was blown apart! The giant wave vanished, revealing that more than ten of the Diremonster Dao-soldiers had been completely blasted into chunks of meat. The other monstrous Dao-soldiers were all completely stunned, and they all stared at the black, middle-aged man who had thrown out the long awl.

“What?! He actually discovered the core of our Dao-soldier formation, then shattered it and destroyed the formation?” The merwoman Diremonster was shocked. If the attack hadn’t struck the core, it would’ve passed through the massive wave, not cause it to completely collapse.

The merwoman Diremonster turned her head, staring at the black, middle-aged man who had thrown out the awl. But...

Whoosh!

The long awl in the middle-aged man’s right hand suddenly flashed out as well; his right arm also became covered with long, coiling serpents, and it became incomparably strong and muscular, emanating a terrifying, heart-shaking aura. Once more, that dazzling, eye-catchingly brilliant scar in the skies appeared...as the awl pierced directly through the body of the merwoman Diremonster, who had wanted to dodge, but was completely unable to!

“This, this...” A look of shock and despair appeared on her face. “How can he be so powerful? I was completely unable to dodge. He, he...he’s a human Immortal?” And then, her consciousness faded away. She fell down from the skies, her body pierced through. She was dead!

“The Queen is dead!”

“The Queen died! Quick, flee, flee!”

“Quick, flee!”

Seeing that their leader had been so easily killed, the other merfolk Diremonsters no longer had any appetite for battle. All of them began to flee.

“Swish!”

“Whoosh!”

“Bang!”

Ji Ning, Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, and the others naturally wouldn't show mercy at a time like this. It be must understood that these monsters were all wearing Dao-armor, most of which was meant for Zifu Disciples, and some of which were even usable by Wanxiang Adepts. A single set of Dao-armor usable by Wanxiang Diremonsters was far more valuable than an ordinary Earth-ranked magic treasure.

“Two sets. Three sets.” Northson didn't hold back at all, killing one after another and seizing as many as he could.

Moments later.

The remaining monstrous Dao-soldiers had all fled far away, leaving behind a pile of corpses and a heap of Dao-armors in the hands of Ning's group.

“We killed more than two hundred monsters, while more than a hundred of our Zifu Disciples died.” Youngflame Nong didn't reveal a look of happiness on his face at all. Although he knew all along that there would be some danger in this trial, he hadn't expected that his team would've suffered such a thwack as soon as they entered.

“Young master Youngflame.” The black-skinned, middle-aged man retrieved his awls, then said in a low voice, “Let's hurry and leave. Perhaps even more powerful Diremonsters will come over soon.”

“Right.” Youngflame Nong nodded. “Let's go.” He looked towards Ning and the others.

Right at this moment...

A deep, powerful surge of divine sense instantly encapsulated this region.

“Humans, now that you have entered the Immortal estate...are you still dreaming of leaving alive?” A deep, sonorous voice rang out.

“What a powerful divine sense.” As soon as Ning's own divine sense collided against this person's, he could sense how powerful it was. Although he viewed his divine sense as his strongest attribute, he could tell that this person vastly surpassed him.

“Senior apprentice-brother, look.” Northson stared, wide-eyed, towards the distance.

“This...is big trouble.” Adept Vastriver was staring towards the distance as well.

Ning turned to looked as well.

There, in the distant skies, an enormous, massive wave of water was soaring this way, like a titanic flood that covered the heavens themselves. The size of this massive wave was more than ten times greater than the previous one...and the aura emanating from this massive wave was vastly more powerful than the wave created by the merfolk.

“More than ten thousand monstrous Dao-soldiers!” The black-skinned, awl-wielding man by Youngflame Nong's side growled out in a low voice.

The hearts of everyone in Ning's group sank. More than thousand? This was comparable to the entire Snowdragon Mountain sect. The worst thing was, each and every one of these ten thousand Diremonsters were Dao-soldiers! There was no way a school like Snowdragon Mountain could possibly acquire so many Dao-armors, especially the ones which even Primal Diremonsters could use. This level of power...it was enough to cause even an Immortal to feel fear.

"Young master, I won't be able to block them," the black-skinned man sent.

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Book 10: Entering the Immortal Estate Chapter 6: Fiendgod, Hydraga

"Young master Youngflame, there's no way we can deal with so many monstrous Dao-soldiers," Adept Vastriver sent hurriedly.

Ning, staring at the titanic, sky-filling wave that had been formed by countless monstrous Dao-soldiers, felt powerless as well. He sent, "Young master Youngflame, what now?"

"Young master Youngflame."

"Young master Youngflame."

All of them looked towards Youngflame Nong. Even the black-skinned man, Xiangliu Fang, looked towards his young master.

"Uncle Fang, don't worry about me. Go all out and massacre them." Youngflame Nong ground his teeth. Waving his hand, he produced a marvelous golden globe of light which flew into the air, quickly growing in size until it reached a diameter of thirty meters.

"All of you, get in," Youngflame Nong ordered. At the same time, he produced a white sack in his other hand, which opened up. "Don't resist."

Whooooooooosh.

The surrounding Zifu Disciples were all sucked into the sack, and then the sack itself was carried by Youngflame Nong as he stepped into the golden globe of light.

Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Ninelotus, Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, Xue Hongyi, Adept Bu You, and the other Wanxiang adepts all flew into the golden globe of light as well.

"Uncle Fang, I'll leave this in your hands. Let's reunite later," Youngflame Nong said.

"Alright. It's been quite a while since I've truly gone all out in a fight." A hint of excitement had appeared in Xiangliu Fang's eyes. Even he found it quite taxing to help protect Youngflame Nong from so many combined Dao-soldier attacks, as he had to block them all. Now that he no longer needed to do so, he was suddenly much more free to utilize his speed and agility, fighting to his heart's content.

"Let's go." With but a thought, Youngflame Nong instantly caused the golden globe of light to begin flying at high speed. With a swoosh, it quickly flew towards the distance.

Ning and the others within the golden globe of light, curious, reached out to touch the light. Previously, they had been able to easily pass through it, but now, they realized that this golden globe of light felt extremely tough and resilient.

“This is my ‘Goldspirit Halo’,” Youngflame Nong said confidently. “Once I’ve activated the divine light within it, we are no longer able to exit it, but outside attacks are similarly unable to reach us...forget about these Dao-soldiers, even if three or five Loose Immortals came and attacked, they wouldn’t be able to do anything to us until after the energy of the divine light is used up.”

Ning secretly sighed in amazement. Unless something unexpected occurred, Youngflame Nong would be the next Godplume Duke...and he really lived up to that reputation. A casual treasure he pulled out was already comparable to the two life-saving items which Ning had acquired from the underwater estate.

Of the two life-saving items Ning had acquired in the underwater estate, one was offensive while the other was defensive. The defensive one, he had acquired from the Treasure Pavilion when he had reached the Wanxiang level as a Fiendgod. The offensive one, he had acquired after passing the fourth level of the Wargod Hall. This offensive treasure had been personally forged by Daoist Threelives in a moment of amusement, and its power was extraordinary.

“Five Skypillars!”

“Look! Five Skypillars!”

The Goldspirit Halo had just flown a few hundred kilometers away, high into the skies. As the saying went, when standing at a high vantage point, one would be able to see to a greater distance. This Immortal estate was tens of thousands of kilometers in size. Now that they were in the skies, they could immediately see that at the ends of the world in each direction, there was a pillar of golden light, soaring through the clouds and into the heavens. There were five in total, and each was unfathomably tall.

These five golden Skypillars of light seemed to be holding up the entire Immortal estate world.

“Five directions...the Five Elements,” Ning murmured to himself. “It seems this Immortal estate is divided up into five branching halls, each of which help to stabilize this world.”

“Skypillars.” Adept Vastriver and the others all revealed looks of delight.

“Hahaha...” Youngflame Nong began to laugh loudly. “So this Witchriver Immortal Estate is divided up into five halls. Those five distant Skypillars represent the locations of the five halls. Let’s immediately go over there. I have the key to the estate, and we can enter the halls. Those monstrous Dao-soldiers, however, cannot. Let’s go!”

Swoosh!

The golden globe of light quickly flew towards one of the closest Skypillars.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The thundering roars of battle seemed to shake the world. That vast, heaven-covering wave came crashing towards them, but in front of that Goldspirit Halo, a single, seemingly ordinary figure stood there protectively. It was that servant...Xiangliu Fang.

"Young master, the rest of you can head over. I'll be there soon," Xiangliu Fang said.

Within the Goldspirit Halo, Ji Ning and the others were naturally staring towards the distant figure of Xiangliu Fang, as well as that heaven-covering wave.

And then...

Xiangliu Fang's body suddenly increased explosively in size. An unearthly, savage aura blasted out from him, and his figure quickly transformed into an incomparably massive, terrifying, and towering shape that was more than three thousand meters tall. His lower body was that of an enormous serpent, while his upper body appeared to be human. From his head, however, eight additional, massive serpentine heads emerged as well.

Nine heads, and the body of a serpent. An ancient, primal, savage aura emanated from him, filling the skies.

"Fiendgod!" Ning held his breath.

"A Fiendgod."

"Good heavens...a Fiendgod."

All of them were completely overwhelmed. They could all tell that this was definitely a Fiendgod! Someone with a strange appearance like this, with nine heads and the body of a serpent, clearly was not a human...and yet, he didn't have the slightest hint of a monstrous aura either. What he emanated was the aura of a primordial Fiendgod, which caused all of their hearts to quiver. Given his massive body and ancient aura...he could only be a Fiendgod.

The likes of Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You had never before seen a true Fiendgod.

"What an enormous body...is that a divine ability, or is his body naturally that large?" Adept Bu You couldn't help but ask.

"Fiendgods are born with massive bodies," Youngflame Nong said confidently. "Uncle Fang belongs to the primordial Fiendgod race known as the Xiangliu, the Hydraga. Hydraga, even amongst Fiendgods, are extremely powerful. Even without using any divine abilities, they have Fiendgod bodies that are three thousand meters long. Although Uncle Fang is only at the Primal level, as a true Fiendgod, and a Hydraga at that, even many Loose Immortals are no match for him."

Ning and the others were all completely stunned. Although previously, Ning had seen an ancient Fiendgod attack during in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains, and that ancient, awakened Fiendgod was clearly even more powerful than Xiangliu Fang...that ancient Fiendgod had simply crushed the Dragonwhale King's with his fingers. Ning hadn't had a chance to watch him truly fight.

But this time...he finally had a chance to see a true Fiendgod fight.

Fiendgod Body Refining...the goal was for humans to approach Fiendgods in terms of body strength! However, compared to a true Fiendgod, there was still a huge difference; for example, one's body wouldn't be as large as a Fiendgod's, and one's innate talents wouldn't be as strong as a Fiendgod's...

.....

"A Fiendgod?" The monstrous Dao-soldiers that were attacking were all badly startled as well. They had been living in this Immortal estate the entire time; they had heard of Fiendgods, but this was their first time actually seeing one.

The enormous, nine-headed, serpent-bodied Fiendgod towered there in the skies, two enormous black awls appearing within his hands.

"KILL!" Xiangliu Fang bellowed loudly.

BOOM!

Xiangliu Fang's enormous serpentine tail swept out, and the air itself seemed to explode. Xiangliu Fang threw himself directly towards the giant group of monstrous Dao-soldiers.

"Just a single Fiendgod, and one that hasn't even reached the Void level. No need to fear him." That massive, sonorous voice echoed out once more, ringing in the ears of each of the monstrous Dao-soldiers. "Crush this Fiendgod to death."

"Haaaaaargh!"

"Haaaaaargh!"

"Haaaaaargh!"

Xiangliu Fang's eight serpentine heads simultaneously unleashed savage roars. Suddenly, the temperature in the surrounding area dropped precipitously, to the point where ice and frost began to form. Instantly, a world of frost and snow manifested. In addition, his roars also struck out against their souls. However, since the monstrous Dao-soldiers were joined together as one, their souls were joined together as well.

"Kill!" The massive tidal wave crushed forward.

BOOM! BOOM!

The three-thousand meter Fiendgod moved straight forward to receive the attack, and the long awls in his hands stabbed out viciously towards the massive wave, causing the air to explode and seeming to carry enough power to shatter the skies and rend the earth.

Xiang Liufang's massive serpentine tail oscillated repeatedly, causing him to be incomparably agile and crafty, allowing him to time and time again avoid the sharp 'tip' of the massive wave, and then give the massive wave a vicious counter-stab!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

There, in the skies, the Fiendgod and the massive wave collided against each other repeatedly. A true Fiendgod absolutely had the power to fight those at a higher level of power. A Primal Fiendgod...this was

something that was generally comparable to a powerful Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal. As for a Void-level Fiendgod? They were all comparable to Celestial Immortals! By comparison, Void-level human Earth Immortals, even those who trained as Fiendgods, however, were vastly inferior to Celestial Immortals. From this, one could tell how unique Fiendgods were.

However, there were simply far too many of the monstrous Dao-soldiers. Even Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals would have to stay away from them. Thus, the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, was still the weaker party in this engagement. However, given his massive, Fiendgod body, he wasn't afraid of suffering wounds. He was also incomparably nimble, and was thus able to unleash one terrifying attack after another in response.

"Uncle Fang can both advance or retreat in this battle, and he's extremely nimble. He's also able to keep fighting for a very long time...although these monstrous Dao-soldiers are capable of unleashing a shocking amount of power, there is a limit to their elemental ki; they won't be able to hold on for too long," Youngflame Nong said confidently.

"Formidable." Adept Vastriver couldn't help but sigh in amazement. "A true Fiendgod...they truly are formidable. Fiendgod Body Refiners...no matter how hard they strive to approach Fiendgods in power, a gulf still remains."

"Right." Ning nodded as well.

"The Youngflame clan truly is one of the top ten ancient clans of the Grand Xia Empire. A single young master's personal servant...is actually an ancient, Primal-level Fiendgod." Ning secretly sighed in amazement as well.

"How long will it be before my Dongyan clan is this powerful as well?" Ninelotus murmured silently to herself. Although the Dongyan clan also had Fiendgods, they wouldn't go so far as to let one of their Primal-level Fiendgods serve as personal bodyguards.

Yu Wei just watched all of this quietly. As she looked at the Hydraga, some images from her past life began to flit through her mind.

"Hydraga..." Yu Wei let out a soft sigh.

.....

As Ning's group was fleeing towards the Skypillar while watching the battle, suddenly...

"Old Poison-Dragon, hahaha...this Fiendgod is clearly only at the Primal level, but you still aren't able to do anything to him? You, a Loose Immortal? Hahaha, it seems as though in the end, it will still be left to our Witchriver clan." Accompanied by a laugh that seemed to cause the world to tremble, off in the distance, an enormous, ugly, hunchbacked giant suddenly appeared. The hunchbacked giant was tens of thousands of meters tall, and wielded a massive metal pitchfork. This giant appeared rather blurry and indistinct; clearly, it was formed from a large number of monstrous Dao-soldiers.

"Yaksha Dao-soldiers? Immortal Witchriver actually had Yaksha Dao-soldiers under his command?" Youngflame Nong was shocked. "The Witchriver clan...can these be the descendants of Immortal Witchriver?"

Immortal Witchriver was originally a monster himself. Naturally, he treated his own clansmen with more favor. Although countless years had passed, the clansmen of Immortal Witchriver remained the most powerful monstrous force within this Immortal estate world.

“Uncle Fang, quick, retreat.” Youngflame Nong didn’t dare to hesitate, staring with panic towards the distant Skypillar.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! The Goldspirit Halo continued to move closer and closer towards it.

“I can sense it.” Youngflame Nong revealed a look of delight as he stared towards the massive yet blurry illusion of a Skypillar, then loudly shouted, “OPEN!”

Instantly, an enormous entrance appeared into the illusory Skypillar. The entrance was open, and upon seeing it, Ning and the others all revealed looks of delight, knowing that this was one of the true, important locations of the Witchriver Immortal Estate.

Swoosh.

The Goldspirit Halo flew directly inside, and then the illusory entrance once more vanished.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 10: Entering the Immortal Estate Chapter 7: The Vault of Treasures

This was an enormous palace, but it was completely quiet and soundless. The stillness here had remained unbroken for countless, countless years.

Once Youngflame Nong, Ji Ning, Mu Northson, Xue Hongyi, and the others flew into the palace from within the Goldspirit Halo, all of them let out sighs of relief. They had finally managed to escape and make it inside.

“We finally made it in. That Immortal estate world is simply too terrifying. One group of monstrous Dao-soldiers after another...one feels terrified just looking at them.” Although Ning was no coward, he had felt completely powerless earlier, because the difference in power was simply too great. He would have been completely unable to fight back.

“Senior apprentice-brother.” Northson looked at Ning.

“Hm?” Ning looked back towards him.

“Do you think...we shouldn’t have come here?” Northson muttered, “Earlier, the very first group of merfolk Dao-soldiers we fought against numbered over a thousand. They were able to effortlessly crush us. And then, afterwards, an even more powerful army of more than ten thousand Dao-soldiers appeared...and then the so-called Yaksha Dao-soldier appeared, formed from the monsters of the Witchriver clan. Even that Fiendgod Hydraga was unable to stop them. I feel as though...we are completely useless here.”

Northson was muttering, not sending a mental message. Thus, everyone around him could hear his words. All of them were silent.

It was true. Just now, they had relied on Youngflame Nong’s servant, the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, to do everything. It was the Fiendgod who had killed the leader of the merfolk Dao-soldiers, and it was also

the Fiendgod who had gone to block the ten-thousand plus Dao-soldier wave. Ning and the others had only been able to watch.

“Everyone,” Youngflame Nong laughed, “Don’t feel dispirited. There was no way that we could’ve predicted in advance that this Immortal estate would actually give birth to so many powerful monsters, all of whom possessed Dao-armors. No matter what, however, in the end, we’ve managed to make it inside one of the palaces of the Witchriver Immortal Estate.”

“Only one who has the key to the estate can make it inside; thus, after Immortal Witchriver died, despite the passage of countless years, no other living creatures have ever made it inside this palace. This is an extremely safe place. But of course...some of the safeguards Immortal Witchriver had originally set up might still be functioning. Thus, let’s not rush about rashly. Wait for me to welcome Uncle Fang inside, and then we’ll slowly search through this palace.” Youngflame Nong’s words caused everyone to grow calm once more.

No matter what, given that Immortal Witchriver had died more than a hundred million years ago, there were definitely no living creatures within this palace. Thus, it was certainly safer in here than it was outside.

“Whew.” Northson immediately plopped down, seating himself cross-legged, then staring around and calling out, “Senior apprentice-brother, senior apprentice-sister, let’s all sit down and take a break.”

Ning laughed, then sat down in the lotus position as well.

“That scared me to death.” Little Qing reared her serpentine head, blinking repeatedly. The Whitewater Hound also lay down on the ground.

Yu Wei, Adept Vastriver, Xue Hongyi, Adept Bu You, and the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn all either sat down or remained standing.

With but a thought from Youngflame Nong...whoosh. In the air in front of them, a fist-sized tunnel appeared. Through the void-tunnel, one could see the outside world, where many monstrous Dao-soldiers were currently fighting against a towering Hydraga Fiendgod!

“Uncle Fang!” Youngflame Nong was somewhat worried as well as he watched.

“Master, if that Fiendgod dies outside, we are in big trouble,” Little Qing sent mentally to Ji Ning. “We’d be trapped inside this palace, unable to leave.”

“Don’t jinx us! Hydraga Fiendgods aren’t so easily killed. What’s more...how could the exalted heir to the position of Godplume Duke of the Youngflame clan just be trapped here?” Ning was still quite calm. Even if the heavens were to collapse upon them, they had a ‘big fellow’ ready to prop it back up. This was a trial which the ancient, vast Youngflame clan had prepared for Youngflame Nong. Perhaps Youngflame Nong might fail the test, but it wasn’t too likely that he would simply be trapped here forever.

.....

Ning’s group remained there, within the palace. They knew that this palace was extremely large, and that there were many places within it, but they didn’t dare to barge about wildly. Who knew which

safeguards and protective measures left behind by Immortal Witchriver were still active? If they were unlucky and ran into a particularly powerful defensive mechanism...a large number of them might die.

Better to wait. Wait to reunite with the Hydraga Fiendgod.

As Ning's group quietly waited. Deep within a corridor, in a hidden passageway within the heart of this vast palace.

This passageway was filled with countless, towering statues. At a glance, one would see eighteen grayish-black statues, each of which were in the shape of a legendary Godbeast, the Qiongqi Manticore. They coiled there within the corridor. Countless years had passed in stillness, but as Ning's group had entered the quiet, silent, ancient palace...

Something seemed to have been activated. The eighteen Qiongqi Manticore statues all began to glow with golden light, a light which constantly flooded into the statues and made them slowly appear more and more real.

"Snap." The eyes of one of the Qiongqi Manticores suddenly opened. A pair of jade-green, glowing eyes.

"Snap." "Snap." "Snap." "Snap." "Snap." "Snap."

One Qiongqi Manticore after another opened their eyes. Their eyes were filled with nothing but coldness. They all rose to their feet, and even began to spread their wings. They had a body as thick as an ox's, but were covered with bristling spikes. They also had a pair of giant wings, but the head of a tiger.

These were the most loyal, devoted guards of this palace...the eighteen Qiongqi golems.

Golems were not living creatures, and thus they were truly ageless. Immortal Witchriver's servants and subordinates had all died of old age, but these golems remained here, standing guard despite the passage of ages, continuing to obey Immortal Witchriver's order for them to guard this palace.

"Outsiders have entered the Vault of Treasures," one of the Qiongqi golems rumbled.

"Not Master."

"Not Master's heir either. These outsiders forced their way in through using the key to the estate."

Some particularly powerful golems possessed sentience and intelligence. For example, when Ning had faced the initial trials of the underwater estate, he had encountered that black-furred golem at the third challenge. That golem had actually been filled with an actual spirit, and thus it was even more intelligent.

"Neither Master, nor Master's heirs...all invaders must die." one of the Qiongqi Manticore golems said.

"Must die."

"Must die."

The eighteen Qiongqi golems spoke out in unison.

To truly master the Witchriver Immortal Estate, there were two methods. The first was to possess the key to the estate and then have Immortal Witchriver bestow a transmission incantation. Naturally, in that situation, all of the formations, restrictive spells, and golems would be obedient. The second method was to possess the key to the estate, then find and bind the five cores within the five palaces. After completely binding all five palace cores, then the entire Immortal estate would be bound; this, too, would be complete control.

Youngflame Nong's trial was to completely control this Immortal estate! But of course, right now, Youngflame Nong was not yet the master of it...which was why the Immortal estate was beginning its counterattacks!

.....

The outermost part of the palace.

Through his void-tunnel, Youngflame Nong was viewing the massive battle going on in the outside part of the Immortal estate. The Hydraga Fiendgod was roaring with rage as blood splattered everywhere; he fought while retreating.

"Faster, faster, faster." Youngflame Nong was extremely worried. Ning, Northson, Yu Wei, and the others were all standing behind him, watching the battle through the void-tunnel as well.

"Given the strength which the Hydraga Fiendgod has demonstrated, I imagine it will be quite hard for him to make it back here. That Yaksha Dao-soldier formation is simply too powerful," Yu Wei sent.

"Right. He's being attacked by two parties right now; one is the massive wave formed from more than ten thousand Dao-soldiers, while the other is the even more powerful Yaksha Dao-soldier formation. Both are more powerful than him..." Adept Vastriver was frowning as he watched as well.

Ninelotus sent mentally, "Given that this Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, was assigned to protect Youngflame Nong, he is definitely carrying some treasures. He's only using those two long awls to battle right now; he hasn't used any other treasures at all. I imagine that he isn't in any real danger yet."

Their group continued to watch the battle through the void-tunnel, while the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn continued to maintain a vigilant watch.

"What's that?" Ning's face suddenly changed dramatically, as the space in the surrounding area began to change.

Previously, they were in a hall, but suddenly, their group became trapped in a misty, blurry illusory world. It became extremely hard for them to tell north from south, east from west...they couldn't even tell up from down.

"Not good." Youngflame Nong's face changed as well, and the void-tunnel that had been in front of him disappeared as well.

"A restrictive formation!" Adept Vastriver hurriedly sent mentally, "This palace has a restrictive spell formation which was left behind by Immortal Witchriver. Just now, the restrictive spell formation became activated, and the spell formation covered that hall that we were in just now. Although we are still within the hall, we've already become trapped by the formation!"

“The surrounding space has been locked and distorted. Even though I have the key to the Immortal estate, I’m not able to open a tunnel to the outside world either,” Youngflame Nong sent frantically. “Rainbowflame Fairy, Adept Vastriver, Ji Ning...if I’m unable to open a corridor to the outside world, there’s no way for Uncle Fang to come in. It’s up to us now.”

Ning and the others felt their hearts sink. Right. If they were unable to open a corridor to the outside world, then there would be no way for the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, to enter. They had lost their strongest ally.

“Eh?” Ning had a sudden thought. He immediately released his divine sense...but he sensed nothing but a blur. The power of the surrounding restrictive spell had already completely smothered Ning’s divine sense. He couldn’t even sense Mu Northson and the others who were right next to him.

“I have one more bit of news to tell you all. In this formation...divine sense is of no use,” Ning sent mentally.

“What?” Adept Vastriver and the others were shocked. They gave it a try as well, and as they did, their faces changed. “Even divine sense is unable to see through this formation...then this means that this is definitely no ordinary formation.”

Ning’s group began to unconsciously move closer to each other. As for the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn, they immediately joined together into a formation.

“Is there anyone here skilled in breaking formations? Hurry up and break it,” Youngflame Nong sent.

“Uncle White?” Ning sent to the nearby Whitewater Hound. In recent years, he had spent almost all of his energy on the Dao of formations, and he was definitely superior to Ning in this regard.

“This is a very terrifying formation.” The Whitewater Hound shook his head, continuing to analyze it. But right at this moment...

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Out of nowhere, a throng of icy arrows suddenly shot out, each containing awe-inspiring power as they sprang towards Ning’s group, trapped within the formation.

They were too close, and they were too fast.

“BOOM.” A Waterflame Lotus appeared around Ning, but upon being struck by three attacking arrows, it instantly began to shatter and collapse.

“Careful.” Ning’s face completely changed. These arrows were simply far too powerful; just three arrows contained power great enough to shatter his lotus...

Ning now had a premonition. With their group of Wanxiang Adepts being trapped within this terrifying restrictive formation, most likely, a number of them would truly perish.

The Desolate Era

Book 10: Entering the Immortal Estate Chapter 8: Casualties

“A single ice shard is capable of killing an ordinary peak Wanxiang Adept.” Adept Vastriver immediately sent urgently, “Everyone, quick, assemble into formation!”

“Assemble into formation; a five-elements pentagonal formation,” Ji Ning sent.

“Right.”

“This is too terrifying,” Mu Northson said loudly.

Rumble...Ning, Northson, Yu Wei, Ninelotus, and Adept Vastriver were of the same school; naturally, they instinctively elected to use a five-elements pentagonal formation of the Black-White College. Combination formations did not need to be purchased with black-white pellets; on the contrary, the disciples of the school were required to learn them.

Their five figures began to move, and instantly, their bodies began to glow with light. Metallic light, red light, watery blue light, yellow light, and azure light.

“Whoosh.” Once their formation was joined, Ning calmed down slightly. “The power of these ice shards is too astonishing; when I fought against Daoist Snowplume, he sent out those drops of skywater against me...but although they were capable of damaging my Waterflame Lotus, they weren’t able to break through it. Those three ice shards, however, were able to break my Waterflame Lotus. This means every single shard contained power comparable to a drop of skywater.”

Daoist Snowplume had only used, in total, 108 drops of skywater...in contrast, these ice shards came in a tightly clustered, endlessly streaming series of attacks.

Most likely, even a Primal Daoist would be killed by this cluster attack!

“Ji Ning, the five of you, stand in front of me,” Youngflame Nong barked mentally. “The other ten of you, stay behind me. Xue Hongyi, Adept Bu You, stay to my sides.”

Ning’s group of five was the strongest; after all, three of them were somewhat stronger than ordinary Primal Daoists. After joining forces...they would be the most powerful force present. Naturally, they would have to block in front of Youngflame Nong and help screen him from the ambushing arrows.

As for the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn, although they were somewhat weak, there was still ten of them; when in formation, they were also quite powerful, and thus they could help Youngflame Nong block ice shards from behind.

The remaining gaps would naturally be filled and covered by Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You. The two of them both joined together into the most common of formations, the ‘Liangyi Duality Formation’. This formation was one which virtually all Immortal cultivators were capable of, but in turn, it wasn’t very effective; there was a limit to how much it could raise one’s power. Still, it was still able to increase one’s power slightly, and so the two would naturally execute it.

“This is going to be trouble,” Xue Hongyi cursed secretly.

“This is going to be very dangerous.” Adept Bu You grew frantic as well; the two of them were weaker than Ji Ning to begin with. Ning was now in a five-man formation, while they were only in a two-man formation!

It must be understood that these ice shards were capable of easily killing Primal Daoists.

Swish.

Boom.

Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You were in an extremely dangerous situation.

“Young master Youngflame, we’re almost unable to hold on,” Xue Hongyi sent frantically.

“I’m unable to hold on for much longer as well,” Adept Bu You was similarly frantic.

“How useless,” Youngflame Nong cursed mentally. He was frantic too. “In the end, it’s still those five from the Black-White College who are formidable.”

“Hold for as long as you can...the longer you can hold, the better our chances,” Youngflame Nong sent mentally.

Adept Vastriver sent hurriedly back, “Young master Youngflame, this formation must have been left behind by Immortal Witchriver. If Immortal Witchriver was present and personally controlling it, this formation would perhaps be even more powerful, capable of causing even Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals to perish. Now that he’s gone, the power of it has been lessened a bit, but we won’t be able to resist it for too long. There is a limit to how much elemental ki we have, but the formation utilizes the elemental energy of the natural world...it can persist indefinitely! It can exhaust us to death. The most important thing for us to do right now is to have a formations expert locate a flaw in this formation and break it.”

When trapped within a formation, if a true formations expert was present, he could guide the party through and out from the formation.

If a somewhat weaker formations expert was presence, he could work hard to find some flaws and weaknesses in the formation, then use their most powerful attacks against their weak points. In a situation like that, the chances of victory would naturally be greater.

But if one was too weak in terms of formations...then one would remain trapped within the formation, subject to being trampled upon and incapable of doing anything but using brute force to try and resist. This was the worst case scenario.

“Young master Youngflame, you must have brought a formations expert with you in your investigation of this Immortal estate,” Northson sent.

Youngflame Nong gritted his teeth. A formations expert? Of course he had brought one! But his formations expert was in the outside world of the Immortal estate! It was the Fiendgod – Xiangliu Fang.

Fiendgods were born from the natural world. The Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang had been born during the Fiendgod Era, and he had survived from then until now; from this, one could imagine how long a life he had lived. However, Fiendgods were different from other races; Fiendgods were truly the favored children of the heavens, the beloved scions of the universe. They were born with the innate ability to train and with innate divine abilities. In fact, some Primordial Fiendgods were even born with mastery over a Dao Path, or even an entire Grand Dao Path.

Thus, Fiendgods did not need to suffer the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations! Their lives were infinite and unlimited! However...

Their training speed, in turn, was incomparably slow. In fact, upon reaching a certain level, they would be unable to improve any further! For example, this Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang, had reached the Primal level countless hundreds of millions of years ago, but he remained at the Primal level. Most likely, his potential had been exhausted, and in the future, he would forever remain a Primal.

However, their extremely long lives led them to begin to analyze and train in other areas, such as the Dao of Constructs or formations, which required a tremendous amount of time to research. Thus, although he was a bit weaker in terms of his comprehensive abilities, due to his extremely long life, Xiangliu Fang was a true formations master!

Per their original plan, Xiangliu Fang was to stay right next to Youngflame Nong and protect him. They shouldn't have been separated at all! But earlier...when faced with attacks from so many monstrous Dao-soldiers, someone had to go delay them. Thus, Xiangliu Fang had been separated from the group.

"Uncle Fang!" Youngflame Nong was both frantic and filled with regret. "If I had known this would happen, I wouldn't have let Uncle Fang leave me. After we overcome this tribulation and once he returns, I won't let him leave me again. Absolutely not!"

"Uncle Fang is skilled in formations," Youngflame Nong sent back hurriedly, "But he's completely unable to come inside. Everyone...are any of you skilled in formations?"

"What kind of a sick joke is this?!" Northson was both angry and frantic.

"The Fiendgod is skilled in formations?" Ning and the others were all speechless. The one who was skilled in formations was trapped outside, unable to enter the palace. As for the rest of them, who amongst them was skilled in formations? Although they were all true geniuses, they had all spent all of their energy on their own Daos; even Ji Ning, who was talented in terms of formations, he still primarily spent his time and energy on the Dao of the Sword. He would only occasionally flip through formation scrolls to relieve boredom.

"Adept Vastriver, Rainbowflame Fairy, the two of you are both reincarnated Immortals. In your past lives, I imagine that you must have researched formations before. Can you remember anything about them?" Youngflame Nong sent.

"We are only at the Wanxiang level; we occasionally gain just a few fragments of our memories. The Dao of Formations is an extremely vast and broad one; only after completely awakening our former memories will we be able to master our previous insights regarding formations," Adept Vastriver sent back helplessly.

.....

Youngflame Nong, Ji Ning, and the others were chatting mentally at an extremely high speed. However, these arrows of ice that were being created and shot out by the formation were also moving at extremely high speed. The two weakest spots in the protective array, Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You, were even beginning to suffer wounds.

"Young master Youngflame, we aren't able to hold," Xue Hongyi said, left arm stained red with blood.

"Can't hold." Adept Bu You sent hurriedly as well.

“Hurry up and come in.” Youngflame Nong had no choice but to give this order. “Ji Ning, Adept Vastriver...the five of you, you’ll have to cover the locations which Xue Hongyi and Bu You were previously covering.”

Ning’s group had no choice but to grind their teeth and expand the scope of their formation to cover a wider range. But in doing so, the number of ice shard attacks they suffered increased as well!

“Whew.”

“We were almost finished.”

Upon entering the center, Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You couldn’t help but let out sighs of relief. They hurriedly swallowed spirit-pills, replenishing their power and healing.

“What should I do? What should I do?” Youngflame Nong began to ponder frantically. Although he had quite a few protective treasures on him, there was no way for him to break through this ancient, giant formation which a Celestial Immortal had set down. But of course, he could give up on this trial and use a ‘greater teleportation’ to immediately leave.

But upon doing so...that meant that he would have failed his trial. Youngflame Nong absolutely would not permit this to happen.

“I have to break this formation, but how? For now, those five disciples of the Black-White College and those ten Wanxiang Deathsworn are able to hold on, but as time goes on, their elemental ki will begin to deplete, at which point, death will be the result.” Youngflame Nong was frantic.

Right at this moment...

Within the chaotic void of the formation, an enormous, grayish-black, winged, ox-bodied, spiked, tiger-headed golem appeared. It was a Qiongqi Manticore golem! This Qiongqi Manticore suddenly appeared within the formation, and then, with a flutter of its wings, swooped out in an arc, avoiding the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn and clawing towards young master Youngflame at the center.

“Protect young master Youngflame,” Xue Hongyi immediately called out.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

One Qiongqi Manticore golem after another came howling forth. In almost a single instant, eighteen of them appeared in the surrounding area. For the moment, Ji Ning and the others were all being held down by these other Qiongqi Manticore golems, and were completely unable to protect young master Youngflame.

“Break.”

A sword struck out like a gleam of moonlight, chopping against the head of one of the Qiongqi golems. The Qiongqi golem was knocked backwards by thirty meters, came to halt, then threw itself forward once more.

Ji Ning was surrounded by seven hundred-plus flying swords. Seeing the situation, his face changed. Right now, the five of them were in a formation, and so his own elemental ki naturally had strengthened

significantly...and yet, despite using the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], he was still only able to knock the Qiongqi golem back a short distance?

“Careful.”

“These Qiongqi golems all have the combat capability of a Primal Daoist, and their bodies are nigh impenetrable, as hard as magic treasures. They are far more difficult to deal with than ordinary Primal Daoists.” Northson was a genius of the Dao of Constructs; upon seeing these Qiongqi golems, he immediately knew that they were in serious trouble.

“This place actually has golems that are as powerful as Primal Daoists...every single one of them is incomparably precious, and there are a total of eighteen of them here!” Ning struck out with one flash of sword light after another, only just barely managing to tie down two of the Qiongqi Manticore golems.

Golems with the power of Primal Daoists would generally cause even Loose Immortals headaches. However, for a Celestial Immortal...purchasing eighteen golems on this level was still fairly easily done.

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Eighteen Qiongqi golems. Ten of them were able to completely tie down Ji Ning’s group of five, as well as the ten Wanxiang Deathsworn. As for the other eight, they charged straight towards Youngflame Nong in the center of the array. These Qiongqi golems were sentient; they knew that Youngflame Nong was the ‘bandit chief’.”

“Stop them.”

“Careful.”

By Youngflame Nong’s side was Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You. They naturally were caught in the crossfire as well. When these eight Qiongqi golems attacked, both Xue Hongyi and Adept Bu You began to panic. This was because every single Qiongqi golem was at least as strong as them. In addition, their ‘bodies’ were actually magic treasures, and thus were unbreakably tough.

“Riiiiip!” A sharp claw flashed out lightning-fast, slashing past Adept Bu You’s body, tearing him apart and sending blood flying everywhere.

“No...” Adept Bu You’s eyes were completely round. He had thought that by coming, he would gain young master Youngflame’s favor...but in the end, he had lost his life.

The first Wanxiang Adept death in their group had finally occurred.