

Desolate 331

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 4: True Immortals, Bodhisattvas

After taking the talisman, Ning turned to stare at the gorge before him. He was the only person present within it.

“So I was separated from senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei and eldest apprentice-brother Sloppy, just like that. It makes sense. The Grand Xia Emperor won’t let us so easily join forces. In addition, per the rules, the more talismans you acquire, the better a chance you would have of passing this trial. If I don’t kill others, others will still try to kill me. In this trial...I will have to kill!” Ning made up his mind on what to do, but suddenly, his ears twitched.

Rumble...

A faint ripple of power swept out.

With a swoosh, Ning immediately flew to the very top of the nearby mountain, stealthily looking towards the source of the ripples. In the distant wilderness, eight men and women were separately using magic treasures and techniques against each other. It was an utter clash of attacks, causing the color of the sky to change. These were all peerless geniuses from various places of the Grand Xia Empire, all of whom had the pride innate to all geniuses. How could they easily admit defeat?

However, one of the young women quickly began to weaken slightly, and the other seven immediately began to focus their attacks on her. That woman, dressed in violet, immediately sent out her divine sense to scan the nearby 300 kilometers, then hurriedly sent mentally, “Everyone, let’s stop fighting. There are a total of 103 Wanxiang Adepts who are hidden in the surrounding area. If we keep fighting like this, we are going to get ambushed by others.”

“What?! 103?!” The other seven were badly frightened.

None of them knew exactly how large this world within the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers was; they thought that a short battle wouldn’t attract too much attention. Who would have imagined that 103 individuals would come? Although they were very self-confident, they knew that all the participants in this Conclave were formidable and could not be underestimated.

Rumble!

After the violet-robed maiden sent out her divine sense, the other Wanxiang Adepts all sent out their own divine senses to investigate in succession. Some of them were reincarnated Immortals, while others had been at the Wanxiang level for far too long, and so their soul had also reached the divine sense level. A few also has supreme visualization techniques. In short, they did a scan, and they were all shocked by what they found.

“A fur-clad youth? That’s Ji Ning! Ji Ning, up there on the mountain! He’s the one who killed a Loose Immortal.”

“Ji Ning is atop that mountain.”

“Ji Ning is ranked in the top hundred for this Conclave. Let’s join forces to wipe him out first.” The divine senses joined together as they began to converse through it.

Since they had decided to attend this Conclave, they had naturally purchased intelligence reports from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. Ever since Ning’s Primaltwin had killed Immortal Floatcloud, his fame had skyrocketed. Even the Heavenly Treasures Mountain had come to believe that Ning’s Primaltwin, despite being only at the peak Primal level, was capable of killing supreme Loose Immortals. This meant that Ning was superior to Loose Immortal Floatcloud in terms of the Dao and in terms of techniques; naturally, this caused Ning to become quite famous.

“Let’s join forces and wipe him out.”

“Let’s go.”

These Wanxiang Adepts quickly came to the same conclusion. They howled through the air, flying towards the mountain top where Ning was standing. More than a hundred figures suddenly flew out, moving at astonishing speeds like thunderbolts or swift gales.

Ning was badly startled.

“These individuals are all heroic talents in their own locales, but they don’t seem to care about their bearing at all.” Ning was helpless; he had watched those eight fight, and none of them were easy to deal with. He was confident in being able to deal with eight, but more than a hundred? That was suicide!

“Time to go.” Ning waved his arm, and a ship-type treasure appeared before him. Ning immediately jumped into it. Swoosh! The ship instantly transformed into a streak of black light, disappearing without a trace into the distance.

“Ji Ning ran quite quickly.”

“He killed Youngflame Nong, then a Loose Immortal. It is said that he is valued by King Yan as well. He really has quite a few treasures, and he really was able to run quite fast.” The hundred-plus men and women in the air felt helpless as well. Unless they had already completely encircled him, if someone like Ning who was clearly more powerful than them wished to flee, it would be hard for them to stop him.

They quickly began to stare vigilantly against each other, stealthily pulling apart.

Nobody wanted to suddenly start a giant, chaotic battle of over a hundred people. They were confident in their ability to handle a wild battle with seven or eight people, but a wild battle with over a hundred...once a person was trapped, there would be no way to escape.

“Time to go.”

“This is going to be troublesome. More than a hundred thousand people, all of whom are crafty and cautious. To be able to survive to the very end and become one of the final 96...that is going to be very difficult.”

“Power alone won’t be enough. Even the most powerful competitor, when surrounded and attacked by a hundred in a formation, will have no option but death.”

The people all quickly departed.

As for Ning...only after his ship had fled more than several thousand kilometers and entered a large mountain did Ning reappear.

“To overcome the trial of the Diagram...power is just one aspect of it. This is also a trial of the mind, a trial of intelligence.” Ning quickly understood this. Everyone was a Wanxiang Adept, after all, and everyone was a supreme talent. They had all essentially reached the limit of what was possible for a Wanxiang Adept to accomplish; to be able to improve any further would be incredibly difficult.

The average person here was at least comparable to an ordinary peak Primal Daoist! If a hundred people joined together in a formation, then they would definitely be comparable to a supreme Loose Immortal!

“I have to be careful and cautious...and also ruthless. I need to seize any opportunities and to kill at high speed. I can't let myself be surrounded.” Ning nodded to himself.

In the plaza below, the delegates from the 3600 commanderies and the four seas all raised their heads and watched, extremely nervous.

Previously, they had all felt that their own disciples were quite formidable, but as they watched...they realized that every single person was crafty and capable. There were more than ten thousand who had reached the twelfth level of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]! There were even more who had cultivated earthfire or dire-ice to the first grade. None of them were easy to deal with.

“Why is it that I suddenly feel as though senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei, and eldest apprentice-brother are all in a lot of danger?” Northson blinked.

“Right.” Adept Vastriver shook his head. “As I see it...I imagine that most likely, more than half of these individuals are reincarnated Immortals.”

The Whitewater Hound and Little Qing just stared fixedly at the skies, paying attention to Ning the entire time. Wherever Ning ran to, their gazes would turn to.

The atmosphere within the main hall of the Skylight Palace, by contrast, was much more relaxed.

The black-robed Emperor sat there. He took a sip from the wineglass he was holding, then said with a smile, “This Conclave shall initially proceed within the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers for a year. This is just the beginning; the most exciting parts will come later.”

The Celestial Immortals seated below him were all chatting and laughing as well.

“That little fellow isn't bad. He actually killed someone, then scared someone into throwing their talisman away. Who is that little fellow?”

“I don't recognize him.”

“Never seen him.”

The Celestial Immortals chatted and laughed, but as they watched, they saw that likes of the long-famous 'Xiamang Zishan', 'Cangwu Jiu', 'Adept Woodpass', and others had yet to truly put on an awe-inspiring display. Instead, they suffered repeated attacks by groups of others and were often put in quite sorry positions. To the contrary, it was the figures that they had never heard about and who were heretofore unknown who were suddenly revealing their terrifying power.

“A cataclysm of the Three Realms truly does cause heroes to gather.” The black-robed Emperor was quite satisfied. “I imagine that many formidable figures who no one had ever known about in the past are going to display their truly shocking power.”

Right at this moment...

Suddenly, a clear voice rang out. “Fellow Daoist Xiamang, I come uninvited; are you willing to welcome me, fellow Daoist?”

The black-robed Emperor’s face changed slightly, and the thousand Celestial Immortals seated below him all quieted down as well. From the mists and clouds outside, eight figures suddenly appeared, each of whom had different appearances. There was a dissolute, handsome man who was dressed in an azure Daoist robe; there was a middle-aged Buddhist who was dressed in yellow robes; there was an old man who was riding an old bull; there was a muscular, golden-eyed man who was dressed in dragon robes...

All eight of them had marvelous, unfathomable, profound auras about them.

The eight caused the thousand Celestial Immortals to secretly feel as though their hearts were trembling. As for the Grand Xia Emperor, he immediately arose from his throne and walked down.

“Fellow Daoists, why is it that you’ve decided to come to my Grand Xia?” The black-robed Emperor laughed, “Come, come, come, come and sit!” He waved a hand, and on the two sides next to his throne, eight more seats and tables appeared. Immortal fruit and nectar appeared atop the tables as well, and they were far better than the fare provided to the Celestial Immortals.

“Why we came to your Grand Xia? Fellow Daoist Xiamang, can it be that you don’t know?” The leader of the group, an azure-robed man who carried an Immortal sword on his back, laughed in a hearty manner. “The Three Realms are currently filled with dangerous hidden undercurrents. Most likely, a great cataclysm is coming. This is precisely the point in time when heroic figures will emerge into the world. Your Grand Xia is one of the most highly ranked of the three thousand major worlds in terms of karmic luck; perhaps one of the peerless figures of the future will be born here. That is why I, Lu Dongbin, have shamelessly come here. You won’t mind, will you, fellow Daoist Xiamang?” 1

Although his voice echoed loudly, none of the nearby Celestial Immortals could hear anything.

“Senior apprentice-brother Xiamang, my own major world just concluded a Conclave of Immortal Destiny, and so Eastflower paid a visit to my place, then insisted on pulling me here as well.” The muscular, golden-eyed man who was dressed in dragon robes spoke in a resigned manner.

“Sovereign Hao, since you knew how shameless this Lu Dongbin is, you truly should have stopped him.” The Xia Emperor spoke with resignation.

“As for myself, this old man is just here to watch the fun. Don’t worry, don’t worry; I’m not here to try and snatch some of the geniuses from your major world,” the old man riding the old bull laughed merrily.

“I’m just here to watch the fun as well.”

“I’m just wandering about.”

They all spoke out.

This caused the Xia Emperor to feel exceptionally resigned; the individuals in front of him were all awe-inspiringly famous and influential figures of the Three Realms. For example, there was Lu Dongbin, the leader of the Eight Immortals of the High Caves. Lu Dongbin was the reincarnation of Emperor Eastflower, and back when he had been Emperor Eastflower, he had apprenticed himself to a major power. After reincarnating and becoming Lu Dongbin, he had apprenticed himself to a second major power.

Behind him, a single person, stood two major powers. What's more, Lu Dongbin had merged the strong points from both schools, infusing them into his Dao of the Sword. He was known in the Three Realms to be frighteningly powerful...and he was a famous, awe-inspiring Sword Immortal! Even amongst Pure Yang True Immortals, he was ranked towards the very front.

However, Lu Dongbin was utterly shameless, had a weird temper, liked to play tricks on people, and cursed or giggled as he pleased...and he often liked to wander about the mortal realms, leaving behind quite a few legacies in many of the worlds he passed through.

"And you, Mahasthamaprapta? Why have you, a member of the Buddhist way, come here?" The Xia Emperor's gaze fell upon the yellow-robed Buddhist. Followers of the Daoist path felt a certain degree of disliking towards followers of the Buddhist path. 2

The male Buddhist had a smile on his face that made others feel calm. Claspng his palms together in a prayer, he said, "I'm just here to take a look."

The Xia Emperor was helpless.

Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta, the Bodhisattva of Great Strength, was someone who had an extremely high status amongst those of the Buddhist path. He was someone who had followed Lord Buddha for a long period of time, and was also someone comparable to a Pure Yang True Immortal. In addition, he had an extremely good temperament, always having a smile on his face whenever he met anyone. In the face of such a truly kind, amiable individual...there was no way the Xia Emperor could shoo him off.

"Everyone, take your seats. Why are you all standing? Others will think that the Xia clan doesn't understand how to treat guests." The Xia Emperor said, rather impolitely, "But everyone, please understand this; I'm not the only person paying attention to this Conclave of Immortal Destiny of the Grand Xia. Even my venerable Master is paying close attention to it as well. Thus, the only one who can choose a disciple must be my venerable Master."

"We naturally won't fight over with the Daofather over a disciple. Xiamang, stop worrying. After you have made your picks, if I take a fancy to one of the remaining individuals, there won't be any problems if I choose him, right?" Lu Dongbin had been the first to plop his butt down on the seat, then had picked up a bottle of Immortal nectar and started to drink. His eyes instantly lit up.

"Hey, this is good wine. Not bad! Your Xiamang clan truly lives up to its reputation as being of the lineage of the imperial Xia clan of the Primordial Era. You have so much fine wine, and it's even better than the Celestial Court's. What's the name of this wine?" As he spoke, Lu Dongbin's eyes began to spin as he turned to stare at the massive Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers, carefully inspecting each of the young men and women within it.

1. Lu Dongbin is one of the most famous Immortals in Chinese mythology, and he is reputed to lead an entire group known as the Eight Immortals, although these eight are not them. From this point on in the story, a lot of 'real' Chinese mythology is going to be incorporated. I will do my best to point it out when it occurs via footnotes.

2. Mahasthamaprapta is a bodhisattva of wisdom; his name means 'great strength'.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 5: Life in the Diagram

The other Pure Yang True Immortals all turned their gazes towards the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers as well. The Xia Emperor felt resigned. He mused to himself, "It seems it truly is the time for a cataclysm to befall the Three Realms. All the major powers are beginning to make their preparations. My Master, Daofather Crimsonbright, has previously provided some tutelage to Lu Dongbin in the past as well. In his past life, Lu Dongbin had a very close relationship with me. He's not an issue, nor are the others...but that bodhisattva, Mahasthamaprapta!"

The Xia Emperor knew very well that the supreme powers of the Three Realms were divided into many different organizations.

Fortunately, all of the eight Pure Yang True Immortals who had arrived today had major powers backing them who were on good terms with his own master, Daofather Crimsonbright. The only exception was Mahasthamaprapta, who was of the Buddhist path. It couldn't be said that he was on good terms with Daofather Crimsonbright...but they weren't enemies either.

"I have to be careful. If he takes a fancy to one of the individuals in this Conclave, Mahasthamaprapta might actually plot to abduct the person in secret," the Xia Emperor pondered to himself.

Within the Diagram.

Ning was atop a dwarf mountain, his body covered by trees and shrubs.

"Before killing Immortal Floatcloud, I was a very ordinary, unremarkable figure in the intelligence reports of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain who was casually mentioned in them. After killing him, however, my name became widespread throughout the Grand Xia Empire. Even the intelligence reports praise me tremendously, claiming that I have the power to rank in the top hundred." Ning felt helpless.

The Heavenly Treasures Mountain had to have some margin for error, and so in truth, they had only ranked thirty-two individuals as having the power to rank in the top hundred! The thirty-two the Heavenly Treasures Mountain ranked as being in the top hundred were all but guaranteed to truly have that power...and Ning was one of those thirty-two!

From this, one could imagine how within the Diagram, the top thirty-two such as Xiamang Zishan, Cangwu Jiu, Ji Ning would instantly be attacked by groups upon them being discovered! The other Immortal cultivators all believed that the likes of Ji Ning had a very high chance of winning, and so they needed to eliminate them as soon as possible. Only then would they themselves have a chance to pass this trial.

"I need to change myself slightly." Ning had just suffered an attack from more than a hundred individuals. Fortunately, his treasured ship had been able to flee fast enough.

Whoosh.

Ning's magic robes transformed into ordinary black robes, no longer appearing like furs.

"There should be quite a few black-robed youths," Ning mused to himself. "I won't be recognized on sight, at least."

"Time go to."

From a fur-clad youth to a black-robed youth. Ning quietly began to wander the world of the Diagram. Every so often, he would spread out his divine sense to scan the ten surrounding kilometers.

Within this short distance, Ning could instantly move to a location...and that way, he wouldn't startle too many with his divine sense.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! He spread out his divine sense repeatedly. On the eighteenth time, Ning immediately discovered a white-robed maiden who suddenly turned her head towards him, having noticed him.

Swoosh! Ning seemed to have transformed into a giant Roc, howling through the air as he moved at lightning speed and charged down from his mountain peak. In a flash, he appeared in front of the white-robed maiden.

"Do you want to die?" The white-robed maiden's face turned cold, and a pair of short sticks appeared in her hands, flashing with electric light.

As Ning attacked, the first thing he did was will an enormous Waterflame Lotus to appear. After developing the Lotusflower Swordland, he had gained insights into both this technique and his Waterflame Lotus due to their commonalities. During the past year at the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, Ning had carefully worked to further refine his technique, making the Waterflame Lotus technique even more perfect!

In addition, after a full year of cultivation, the earthfire and dire-ice in Ning's body had already risen to the first grade as well!

The earthfire and dire-ice of the first grade served as the foundation, and the True Lunar Tattoo and the True Solar Tattoo within his divine body activated fire and water of the natural world in support. The Dao of the Sword, the Dao of Rainwater, the Dao of the Inferno, the Dao of the Gale, and the Dao of Space were all joined together as well...to finally form into this Waterflame Lotus, which now had reached a ridiculous level of power.

"Eh?" The white-robed maiden was completely shocked. This enormous Waterflame Lotus was at least three thousand meters, completely surrounding her.

"A technique?" The white-robed maiden laughed coldly. Her body suddenly expanded dramatically in size as she transformed into a thirty-six meter tall giant. The giant white-robed maiden also activated the [Three Heads, Six Arms] divine ability. In her hands, she now wielded six of the short sticks, each of which flashed with electric light. The sticks in her hand howled through the air as she smashed downwards towards the layers of Waterflame Lotus petals binding her.

BANG!

BANG!

It was as though two mountains had collided. The six short sticks carried the majestic, divine power of lightning. Given the power of this woman, a Fiendgod Body Refiner, when she smashed down upon the flower, a layer of leaves cracked...but new leaves were then born from the Waterflame Lotus.

“What?!” The white-robed maiden was shocked. Per her predictions, she should’ve been able to smash through this technique like rotting wood, but in reality, the breaking process was very slow. The enemy’s technique could continue to be maintained indefinitely.

“What a fellow. This white-robed maiden is probably even a bit more powerful than Daoist Snowplume was.” Ning was shocked as well. “Fortunately, my earthfire and dire-ice have both reached the first grade, and I’ve further perfected this technique. If this was a year ago...she probably would’ve broken through it. However...since you can’t break through my Waterflame Lotus, then you have lost.”

Whoosh!

More than seven hundred flying swords immediately appeared in the air around Ning, with the Nethercold swords serving as the core. All of them were Earth-ranked flying swords.

“Go!” Ning pointed, and instantly, a golden flying sword that had formed in front of his chest howled forth as it flew out, striking towards the white-robed maiden. The golden flying sword carried a terrifying sword-intent that struck directly at the opponent’s soul. This was the terrifying sword-intent which only Sword Immortals possessed.

“You are Adept Darknorth...Ji Ning!” The white-robed maiden called out in shock. Lotus-type techniques were fairly common, but upon seeing those seven hundred-plus flying swords? If she wasn’t able to put two and two together and recognize Ning from this, it would have been bizarre.

Clang! In the face of the attack of the sword light from Ning’s [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], the white-robed maiden hurriedly used all six short sticks to block.

BOOM!

The power of Ning’s [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] was far greater than the Waterflame Lotus; the Waterflame Lotus was primarily meant to bind and grind an opponent, whereas the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] was a purely offensive technique. Ning was using nearly ninety percent of his spiritual energy on maintaining the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. The white-robed maiden was knocked flying backwards, and two of the short sticks flew out of her hands. She was, however, blocked from behind by the Waterflame Lotus once more.

Whoosh.

The killing, grinding power of the Waterflame Lotus was constantly pressing down on the white-robed maiden’s body.

“Damn you.” The white-robed maiden gritted her teeth, staring viciously at Ning. “Ji Ning, you are a piece of work.”

She tossed out her talisman.

Rumble! An invisible power instantly covered her body, and then she was teleported away.

“How powerful.” Ning waved his hand, collecting the talisman. “A random person I encountered was already this powerful...fortunately, I was able to use the Waterflame Lotus to bind her. Otherwise, she would’ve fled upon realizing she couldn’t beat me.”

The intelligence reports of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain stated quite clearly that Ji Ning’s true body was skilled in close combat. Next was his flying swords formation, which was significantly weaker than Ji Ning’s close combat ability.

The white-robed woman had realized that Ning was capable of using just his sword formation to completely suppress her, and would most likely be able to kill her in just ten exchanges or so! If he closed to engage in close quarters combat...he might be able to kill her in just one or two exchanges. With the Waterflame Lotus binding her and preventing her from fleeing, she had no choice but to admit defeat. That way, she would at least stay alive.

.....

Ning carefully advanced, continuing to be very cautious for fear of suffering another group attack. There was a reason why his power was such that the Heavenly Treasures Mountain ranked him as being within the top hundred.

After all, Ning’s true body relied on his divine abilities to do battle, and had been able to stay alive against the assault of a Whitebone Immortal Slaying Needle! This was enough to ensure that the Heavenly Treasures Mountain viewed Ning’s true body as definitely being extremely formidable in close combat.

One against one...

It was true that within the Diagram, Ning was indeed one of the supreme fighters.

Against ordinary foes, the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] and the Waterflame Lotus was already enough to suppress them.

Against powerful foes, he would have to use both the Waterflame Lotus and close quarters combat.

But of course...that was in one-on-one fights.

“All of the fairly famous individuals are beginning to slowly display their might.” The Xia Emperor accompanied the eight Pure Yang True Immortals in drinking as he watched.

Previously, Xiamang Zishan, Cangwu Jiu, and the others had all suffered quite a bit. However, they quickly hid their tracks and began to act with great caution. Whether through killing their foes or forcing them to voluntarily give up, they began to slowly accumulate more and more talismans. Still...things were quite early. Thus, with each kill, they only acquired one or two talismans.

“That dirty-looking maiden, she’s quite formidable.” The Xia Emperor’s eyes lit up.

The Xia Emperor suddenly looked towards the nearby Lu Dongbin. Lu Dongbin had left behind many legacies throughout the Three Realms, and liked to take on new disciples. Amongst Pure Yang True Immortals, he was one of the most powerful; naturally, he had quite an astute gaze. The Xia Emperor

couldn't help but laugh and say, "Lu Dongbin, which of these youths do you view as having the most luck surrounding them?"

"The most luck?" Lu Dongbin half-lay there, sipping his wine. He glanced out of the corner of his eyes at the Diagram, then shook his head and said, "How can you tell just by looking? Luck is unfathomable and ever-changing to begin with...even someone with tremendous luck can still be killed."

The Xia Emperor felt resigned. Of course he knew that lucky individuals could be killed as well. Those blessed by luck would just have more lucky encounters and have the assistance of the heavens. They could still, however, be killed! In fact, the person who killed them might even be able to steal their luck...but it was also possible that their own luck would lessen as a result.

For example, let's say an individual was the only child of a major power. Killing this person would cause the major power to feel great hatred, and perhaps even personally intervene; in this case, one's luck would naturally lessen.

For another example, if one person had a tremendous stroke of fortune and acquired a huge treasure repository, this person could be said to have had great luck. But if he were to be killed by another and his treasure repository stolen, then his luck would now be the killer's.

Thus...

Luck was something which could neither be seen or felt; it could only be hypothesized based on numerous factors. This required astute judgment. Clearly, Lu Dongbin was a person with incredibly astute judgment.

"You alcoholic! I asked you to tell me, but you refused to." The Xia Emperor felt resigned. "Of course I know that lucky individuals can be killed, but lucky individuals will still have a higher chance of becoming powerful figures of the Three Realms, right?"

"But what if I told you, then you picked that person?" Lu Dongbin glanced sideways at him. "Pick your own. I told you that I'll definitely let you and your Daofather pick first. I'll pick from whoever is left."

The Xia Emperor felt resigned. What could he do against such a shameless person?

.....

Within the Diagram. More than five days had passed. Ning was currently resting within a cavern estate. There was a cold pool of water here. When washing his face in it, Ning felt incomparably refreshed.

"Five days. I've acquired a total of fifty talismans," Ning mused to himself. "However...at the beginning, there will be many Wanxiang Adepts within the Diagram, and I would often encounter them. Later on, however, the number will begin to drop and it will be more rare to run into someone. In addition, those who survive until the end will be extremely powerful and hard to deal with."

"Still, there's a benefit to that as well; those who survive for longer will also have more talismans on them." Ning's eyes suddenly flickered.

Rumble...

A vague, trembling ripple was sweeping towards him from far away.

“A battle? And it seems it’s quite a big one.” Ning immediately transformed into a streak of light, leaving the cavern and carefully moving closer.

The Desolate Era

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 6: Junior Apprentice-Brother Ji Ning

The Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers was perpetually cast in the glow of moonlight.

Ji Ning passed through a mountain forest, silently and soundlessly arriving at the mountain’s peak. He hid there within the grass, staring into the distance.

Off in the distance, within a gorge, there was a mirror-like lake. A massive battle was underway at the lake; three individuals were attacking a single woman.

The three individuals included a black-robed man who hovered in midair, an enormous black Flood Dragon coming into being in front of him. The black Flood Dragon appeared to be real, and its aura was powerful. It was savagely attacking the woman.

The second of the three attackers was a silver-haired woman. The silver-haired woman, every so often, would open her mouth, and with a whoooooosh, an incomparably terrifying gust of balewind would be unleashed. It was as though countless sharp swords were flying out, slicing away at even the ground itself. The balewind, carrying a glowing azure light, was savagely attacking the woman as well.

The last attacker was a silver-robed youth with a cold, arrogant face. He pointed from far away into the air, and as he did, an enormous greatsword that was three hundred meters long would appear, chopping down repeatedly as its tip pierced towards the woman!

The person the three were attacking...

Was an absolutely peerless black-robed beauty. Around her, there was a pair of enormous phoenixes, one of fire and one of ice, which swirled around her, struggling to defend. However, under the triple attack, the woman was clearly finding it quite hard to endure. In addition, the coiling black dragon continually attacked her as well, giving her no way to flee or escape.

“Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei!” Ning stared. The woman being attacked was, amazingly, Yu Wei. The black-robed man’s eyes had grown bloodshot, and it seemed as though the black Flood Dragon was about to change...

“HOLD!” A sudden, explosive roar exploded from Ning’s lips.

Swoosh!

Ning immediately utilized the [Windwing Evasion], seeming to have transformed into a giant Roc as he howled through the air towards them.

.....

Yu Wei had felt that she had become trapped in a dire situation. The three in front of her were all extraordinarily strong, especially the one with the giant black dragon. The black Flood Dragon was the personification of a magic treasure formation that was absolutely massive. Its coiling body completely surrounded her.

As for the silver-haired woman, her balewind technique was extremely amazing as well. When the gust of balewind blew out, when one tried to dodge, it felt as though one was moving against the wind. The technique lowered her speed ridiculously.

"It's only the sixth day, but I'm already in grave danger." Yu Wei gritted her teeth.

Rumble...

Thirty-six Rahu Godneedles formed into an enormous phoenix of ice, whose entire body seemed to be produced from arcane ice that was incomparably hard. It blocked the balewind repeatedly, as well as the strikes from the Flood Dragon and the massive sword. This was the absolute best defensive technique Yu Wei had available to her.

As for the other thirty-six Rahu Godneedles, they were formed into the enormous phoenix of fire. Its flames blazed ferociously, and it clashed repeatedly against the balewind, causing even the balewind to crumble, while at other times forcing the Flood Dragon or the massive sword back. But it could only knock back one thing at a time.

"Senior apprentice-brother, senior apprentice-sister, this woman's power is formidable; she certainly must have many talismans on her. She might have over a hundred! I'll tie her down; you two, kill her at one blow." The black-haired man sent a mental message to the other two. They were from the same school, and although he seemed old, he was actually the junior disciple.

"Alright.

"It'll be up to you, junior apprentice-brother." The silver-haired woman and the silver-robed youth both responded.

The black-robed man immediately gritted his teeth as his eyes began to turn bloodshot. His elemental ki wildly exploded forth, and the enormous black Flood Dragon let out a furious howl as its head actually split into two enormous heads. The two-headed black Flood Dragon's aura instantly expanded greatly, and it threw itself towards the phoenix of ice. So long as it was able to break through the phoenix of ice, Yu Wei wouldn't have anything to rely on and would be finished.

"Damn." Yu Wei gritted her white teeth, revealing a look of savagery as well.

But right at this moment...

"HOLD!" A furious roar, filled without elemental ki, instantly exploded forth into the area.

The silver-haired woman, the silver-robed man, and the black-robed man all turned to look. They saw a black-robed youth who was howling through the air as he flew towards them like a giant Roc.

Yu Wei turned her head and saw the black-robed youth flying towards them from afar. Upon seeing his face...her heart suddenly shook.

"Ji Ning!" Yu Wei couldn't believe it. In the moment that she had been trapped in a dire situation, her junior apprentice-brother had actually arrived as well.

"Can this be fate?" Yu Wei's heart instantly was thrown into a rather chaotic state.

Actually, a long time ago, shortly after Ning had joined the Black-White College, Yu Wei had investigated Ning's background and learned of his past...she, too, had a tragic past, and her parents had both passed away as well.

This was why Yu Wei had, from the very beginning, felt well-disposed towards Ning. When Ning had instantly shocked everyone in such a splendid manner during the Dao Debates, she liked him even more. In the end, after she personally intervened and defeated Ning, she even teased him a little bit.

Given her normal, icy disposition, why would she so casually tease one of her junior apprentice-brothers like that?

She had always been quietly watching Ning...

However, Ning ended up being together with Ninelotus. This tied Yu Wei's heart up in knots, but all she could do was silently bless them and hide everything she felt in her heart.

Afterwards, when she learned that Ning had defeated Daoist Snowplume, she had an excuse to go seek him out alongside Mu Northson and Adept Vastriver. In fact, she had even been preparing to stay for the next two or three years at Serpentwing Lake, but who would've thought that Youngflame Nong would invite them to the Witchriver Immortal Estate?

That journey to the Witchriver Immortal Estate! In the end, it caused Ninelotus and Ning to part ways for good.

Ninelotus had chosen to leave. As she had, in that moment, Yu Wei had a sudden impulse...she wanted to say to Ning, 'I will go with you!' But she wasn't in a position to say such a thing; she was not Ning's Dao-companion. In addition, her power was truly not enough to help Ning at all in facing the disaster that was unfolding for him. The only thing she could do was wrack her brains to come up with strategies for him!

After she and Ning separated, she watched as he wandered by himself. She could only repress all her feelings once more, and once more silently bless him.

Who would have imagined...

Ning was even more brilliant than she had thought he would be. His Primaltwin had actually slain Immortal Floatcloud, causing the Youngflame clan to be unable to do anything to him. In addition, Ning was participating in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny as well! This caused a surge of delight in Yu Wei's heart. Only...after entering the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers, they had all been separated.

"The world of the Diagram is enormous, and there are more than a hundred thousand people present. On just the sixth day, and coincidentally just as I found myself in a dire situation, Ji Ning arrived? Can this be fate? Are the hands of fate at work here?" Yu Wei was shocked, delighted, and stunned.

The distant Ning howled through the air like a streak of lightning. The silver-robed youth, the silver-haired woman, and the black-robed man were all enraged.

"Junior apprentice-sister, stop him," the silver-robed youth sent mentally.

"Right."

The silver-haired maiden immediately stared at the distant Ning. Suddenly, she opened her mouth. Whooooooosh. The balewind came out, filling the skies with its azure light. If one looked carefully, one would be able to see that in reality, this was a tempest formed from countless azure needles, and thus had even more penetrative power than ordinary wind attacks.

Whooooooosh.

A beautiful Waterflame Lotus appeared, swiveling around Ning. The enormous Waterflame Lotus was incomparably resilient, and the layers of leaves actually completely blocked the balewind. After all, Ning was using earthfire and dire-ice of the first grade to serve as his foundation of this technique, then activating the fire and water of the natural world to condense around it.

In terms of technique quality, Ning was a hair above his opponent; this was a self-created technique, after all.

In addition, he had both earthfire and dire-ice, whereas this woman only had balewind.

Although the power of her balewind was truly astonishing, it was still blocked by the Waterflame Lotus.

“F*ck off!” The approaching Ning’s body suddenly expanded as he transformed into a 54 meter tall black-robed giant. The surface of his body flowed with electricity, and Ning’s forehead suddenly split open as well, revealing a vertical eye.

Divine ability – [Divine Thunderbolt Eye]!

CRACK! A bolt of lightning thundered out from Ning’s third eye, that vertical slit in his forehead. It was astonishingly fast, and it struck directly against the round umbrella which had suddenly appeared in the hands of that distant, silver-haired woman. [Pentabolt Vajra] and [Divine Thunderbolt Eye]; these two divine abilities synergized, causing the power of his thunder to vastly surpass that of ordinary divine abilities. This caused the silver-haired woman to be knocked flying back by the thunderbolt, and she threw up a mouthful of blood. In addition, this [Divine Thunderbolt Eye] attack also contained a divine will attack as well.

“Argh!!!” The silver-haired woman let out a miserable cry.

“Protect senior apprentice-sister!” The black-haired man and the silver-robed youth were both greatly shocked. They had thought that the balewind would be enough to block the youth for a period of time, but who would’ve imagined that the enemy would not only easily block it, but also injure their senior apprentice-sister with a bolt of lightning?

“Let’s go.” The silver-robed youth couldn’t be bothered to deal with Yu Wei; the aura of this approaching black-robed youth who was protected by the Waterflame Lotus was simply too ferocious.

Rumble!

With but a thought, the silver-robed youth willed the surface of his massive, three hundred meter long greatsword to suddenly be covered with flowing runes. The power of his sword continuously rose and focused on the tip of the sword. This enormous sword pierced towards Ning, lightning-fast!

“You want to block me?” Ning surged forward like a rainbow streak of light, neither dodging nor moving away. The vertical eye in his forehead sent out two bolts of lightning in a row.

CRACK! CRACK!

One bolt of lightning struck towards the silver-robed youth, while the other struck towards the black-robed man.

The thunderbolts couldn't be casually blocked; both of them knew this very well. Thus, they all immediately used powerful techniques to block against it. Around the silver-robed youth, a chain link suddenly appeared. CRACK! The thunderbolt was blocked by the chain link, which was knocked flying back by the collision. However, the divine will attack within the thunderbolt was transmitted into the silver-robed youth's body, causing his face to change. However, he was able to withstand it.

As for the black-robed youth, he was protected by the black Flood Dragon, which withstood the lightning bolt. However, the divine will attack also penetrated invisibly into his body. His body suddenly swayed, and even the black Flood Dragon turned blurry for a moment. However, it quickly re-stabilized.

"Careful, his divine ability includes a divine will attack." Only now did the silver-haired woman, who had been knocked to the ground by the earlier attack, manage to send a frantic mental message to them.

The main reason was that the two were battling far too fast. Ning had immediately sent out three lightning bolts upon arriving, causing the heart of all three to be filled with amazement.

"[Soldiers of the Mind]!"

Immediately after having used a divine ability, Ning then revealed a true divine will attack; the [Soldiers of the Mind] he had acquired from the Witchriver Immortal Estate. This was an even more powerful technique than the Black-White College's [Soulslayer Art]! Although Ning had also spent some time on other divine will techniques, most of his time had been spent on this, [Soldiers of the Mind]!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Within Ning's sea of consciousness, his soul was seated in the lotus position, and a soldier's seal was hovering in his hand. When his divine will was summoned forth from this soldier's seal...it instantly transformed into invisible and untraceable sharp swords, warblades, and longspears. These spiritual weapons howled forth, striking towards the silver-robed youth, the black-robed man, and the silver-haired woman.

Imagine how fast divine will attacks were!

Sharp swords formed from divine will...they were incomparably sharp and stabbed right towards the soul!

Warblades formed from divine will...they carried an unstoppable might, hacking against the enemy soul with overwhelming brute force!

Longspears formed from divine will...they combined both of the advantages of the two other weapons, and were also savage in focusing their power at one point as they pierced straight towards the enemy!

Invisible, formless weapons that were created from divine will. The sharp swords, giant sabers, and longspears were savagely attacking the three!

Slash! Chop! Boom!

The souls of the three were immediately, violently assaulted by Ning's divine will technique.

The Desolate Era

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 7: It Must Be Love

Ji Ning's soul was comparable to many Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals, and [Soldiers of the Mind] was even more formidable than the [Soulslayer Art] technique. The power of his assault...it was so great that both the black-robed man and the silver-haired woman felt their souls rumble as they were sent into a dazed state. Only the silver-robed youth was dazed momentarily before immediately regaining consciousness.

"Not good." The silver-robed youth was shocked. "Even I passed out for a moment; how can junior apprentice-brother and junior apprentice-sister withstand that?"

However, at this moment, he could not do anything for the two of them, because Ning was pouncing towards him.

"Who on earth is this person? He is so powerful that just by using a divine will attack, he was able to set me back?" The silver-robed youth's heart clenched, and he didn't dare to be the least bit overconfident. He hadn't been able to recognize Ning, who had only used a single lotus technique so far.

"Your divine will attacks are formidable, but I refuse to believe that you are that formidable in actual combat as well." A cold look flashed through the eyes of the silver-robed youth. "Die!"

BAM! The power of the enormous, three hundred meter long greatsword was now completely focused on the tip, where black and white light had joined together to form a strand of golden sword-light. The silver-robed youth had already poured all of his power into this attack. A powerful soul might be stem from a person's birth; although the black-haired youth that was pouncing towards him had a powerful soul, he didn't necessarily have a high level of insight into the Dao.

"Die!" The charging Ning showed no mercy at all. The layers of the Waterflame Lotus swiveling around him blocked the massive sword, which repeatedly hacked against it but was firmly stopped.

A cold light flashed through Ning's eyes.

Divine ability – [Starseizing Hand]!

CLANK! The Darknorth sword in Ning's hand instantly lit out a brilliant flash of sword-light, and with a massive boom, it collided against and actually knocked that enormous enemy sword flying. As for Ning, after the sword in his left hand knocked the massive sword flying, he immediately used the [Windwing Evasion] technique to arrive in front of the silver-robed youth.

The silver-robed youth was tremendously shocked. He couldn't believe that his most powerful technique had been knocked away by a single sword blow. He was one of the most elite of geniuses within his school! He no longer had the courage to fight against Ning, and he immediately produced dozens of talismans and threw them all away.

He had given up his talismans and was planning to flee.

It must be understood that the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers was a Pure Yang magic treasure; naturally, it had a soul as well. There was no way that Ning and the others could deceive the

spirit of the Diagram as to how many talismans they had. They had to throw out all of their talismans in order to be teleported away.

Swish!

Ning's sword-light had already arrived in front of the silver-robed youth. Clang! The silver-robed youth used both his earthfire and his chains, striving to buy himself just a single moment of time.

BOOM!!!

Ning's sword-light was like an attack unleashed by one of those ancient, primordial Fiendgods. It possessed an utterly shocking power that shattered the earthfire and sent the chains flying. The body of the silver-robed youth, when struck, was instantly turned into pulp. Blood sprayed everywhere, along with chunks of flesh and bits of bone, but even as it sprayed everywhere, it was completely vaporized in midair by the terrifying sword-ki.

It was all too fast!

Although the silver-robed youth had already thrown away the talismans...there was an extremely short window of time between the talismans being thrown away and himself being teleported away. In a true, close quarters battle, that window of time was enough for Ning to attack ten more times with his sword!

Ning felt hatred for these three for daring to act against his senior apprentice-sister, and so he showed no mercy at all. In addition, the silver-robed youth truly was quite powerful; without using the [Starseizing Hand], Ning would only at most be able to seize an advantage; he wouldn't be able to cause the foe to completely collapse at all. He had to use his [Starseizing Hand], and use overwhelming raw power to deal with this foe!

BOOM!

BOOM!

The two enormous phoenixes of fire and ice struck against the bodies of the other two temporarily stunned Adepts. Although the stunning effect was only for a short moment, Yu Wei was a true expert as well; she naturally seized the chance to immediately change from defending to attacking as she sent her phoenix of fire and her phoenix of ice to separately attack the black-robed man and the silver-haired woman, instantly killing the two!

Yu Wei then turned her head, looking at the black-robed youth who was 54 meters tall, crackling with lightning, and who had a vertical eye-slit in his forehead. She was both excited and nervous.

"Senior apprentice-sister." Ning's third eye closed. The lightning around his body vanished. He returned to the size of a normal person.

"Junior apprentice-brother." Yu Wei spoke out as well, and her eyes glistened like jewels.

.....

The main hall of the Skylight Palace.

“Those three are disciples of my Heavenly Silkworm Sect. That black-robed woman is almost finished; yet another is going to be a slain and vanquished corpse of my Heavenly Silkworm Sect.” An extremely skinny and shriveled Celestial Immortal was laughing smugly right now. Normally, when in front of their own disciples, these individuals would maintain the majestic decorum expected of a Celestial Immortal. Here, however, in front of all of these other Celestial Immortals, they would revealed his true personality, acting with abandon. When it was time to be smug, they would be smug; when it was time to mock, they would mock.

“That black-robed maiden is quite formidable as well. Look at those two techniques of hers; one is a phoenix of fire, the other a phoenix of ice. As I see it, she has absolutely mastered two complete Dao-Paths.” Next to the first Celestial Immortal was a laughing fat man whose robe was open, revealing his chest.

“Right. She has mastered two complete Dao-Paths. That’s the only reason why she was able to hold off the attacks of three of my sect’s disciples for a period of time,” the skinny, shriveled Celestial Immortal said confidently.

“Do you know which school the black-robed maiden comes from?” The bare-chested fat Immortal asked.

“No idea.” The wizened Celestial Immortal shook his head. “Who knows what minor sect she’s from? Major sects naturally sent quite a few disciples, who would usually travel in pairs or trios.”

The fat Immortal’s eyes suddenly lit up. “Help has arrived.”

The shriveled Celestial Immortal’s eyes narrowed. He, too, saw that within the enormous Diagram, a black-robed youth had suddenly appeared to assist the black-robed maiden being attacked by those three Adepts of his.

The black-robed youth was ridiculously powerful. He instantly defeated the three, as easily though he were bursting through rotting wood, and in the end all three died.

“Hmph.” The shriveled Celestial Immortal couldn’t help but frown. He slammed his wineglass against the table, appearing to be quite vexed.

“Bahaha, didn’t you say the black-robed maiden was going to die?” The chubby Celestial Immortal began to laugh loudly.

In truth, Celestial Immortals like them didn’t care too much about the deaths of these geniuses; after all, geniuses came every three centuries. Their deaths were minor matters. However, when so many Celestial Immortals were gathered together, they naturally hoped that the disciples of their school would be outstanding and earn some face for them from their peers.

But of course...that was just a matter of face.

.....

The thousand Celestial Immortals down below were chatting amongst themselves. Up high, the Xia Emperor and the other eight Pure Yang True Immortals were chatting as well.

“Look there!” Lu Dongbin’s eyes suddenly lit up as he pointed towards a corner of the Diagram. “Look at the black-robed girl being attacked by those three. A black-robed youth appeared next to them. Look, quick! See that look in the black-robed girl’s eyes? That look in her eyes that instantly appeared when she looked at the black-robed youth...bahaha, a gaze that is extremely complicated, as though long-suppressed emotions were instantly unleashed! Although it was only for an instant, I daresay that this black-robed woman must have fallen in love!”

“Fallen in love?” The Xia Emperor, the Bodhisattva of Great Strength, Sovereign Hao, the Immortal Elder of the Northlands...they all were completely speechless.

They had followed Lu Dongbin’s pointing finger to watch, and they had been paying attention to Ning who had exploded with power. Who would’ve thought that Lu Dongbin, however, was paying attention to the look in Yu Wei’s eyes?

“That gaze...ahaha...it was really...not only has this woman fallen in love, I daresay that she’s never confessed it to this black-robed youth before.” Lu Dongbin swept his gaze across the other True Immortals, then laughed smugly, “Any of you want to bet with me on this?”

The Xia Emperor and the others exchanged glances, all feeling quite resigned.

“Senior apprentice-brother Xiamang, that black-robed youth of yours is rather formidable,” Emperor Hao congratulated.

The Xia Emperor laughed. “The black-robed youth is named Ji Ning. He numbers amongst the few dozen most famous figures participating in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny. His Primaltwin has even killed a Loose Immortal.”

“Oh?” The True Immortals present all nodded, but to them, killing a Loose Immortal was an extremely minor matter. They naturally wouldn’t pay too much attention to it. What they cared more about was if any of the many geniuses present at this Conclave would become one of the powerful experts of the Three Realms in the future. And if so...who would it be?

“One of the few dozen most famous? He lives up to the reputation.” The Bodhisattva of Great Strength smiled and praised him.

They actually didn’t feel that Ning was particularly outstanding; after all, in the past five days of the Conclave, quite a few members of the hundred thousand-plus competitors had revealed astonishing levels of power. They were all Wanxiang Adepts, but had been capable of exploding forth with power comparable to an ordinary Loose Immortal’s...and in fact, there were two Wanxiang Adept monsters who had comprehended five complete Dao-Paths.

Comprehended five Dao-Paths? Even this wasn’t enough to shock the Pure Yang True Immortals present.

This was because they felt that it wasn’t too shocking for some peerless geniuses to have mastered five complete Dao-Paths after having spent three hundred years at the Wanxiang level, all for the purpose of surprising everyone at this Conclave.

Pure Yang True Immortals like them...they were major figures of the Three Realms, and so naturally their vision was quite broad. If one looked at the Three Realms as a whole, it was indeed not rare for competitors with five mastered Dao-Paths to appear at the Conclave.

“That little lass is quite interesting, quite interesting.” Lu Dongbin was rather intrigued now, and he laughed in a self-congratulating manner, “Yep...that black-robed maiden’s been hiding her feelings all along. I wonder when she will voice them?”

The nearby Xia Emperor and the others just pretended not to hear anything.

Everyone knew that what Lu Dongbin loved to do was play matchmaker. This was one of his favorite hobbies, and in fact, stories about him playing matchmaker were extremely common throughout the Three Realms. They could tell that Lu Dongbin was feeling the impulse to do so once more. He might add a bit of ‘spice’ into the relationship between the black-robed maiden and the black-robed youth.

.....

Ninelotus sat in the lotus position behind the Dongyan Forefather. Her head had been raised this entire time as she stared at the Diagram. She was mainly paying attention to the six disciples sent by the Dongyan clan and the three from the Black-White College...but of course, she paid the most attention to Ji Ning!

“Not good. Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei is in danger.” A look of worry appeared on Ninelotus’ face as her hands clenched around her robes.

“Ji Ning. Ji Ning is nearby.. Ji Ning, hurry up and notice it, hurry!” Ninelotus hoped it would happen.

And indeed, just as she had hoped, Ning had sensed the ripples from the battle. He had immediately moved in that direction, and had even displayed an astonishing amount of power. All three died, and Ning and Yu Wei were reunited.

“Whew. The danger is past. Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei is safe.” Ninelotus let out a sigh. “Now, senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei and Ji Ning can move together and support each other. It will be much safer for them.”

Suddenly, Ninelotus’ heart trembled.

It was only natural and normal for Ji Ning and Yu Wei to travel together; they were fellow disciples, after all. It was normal for them to support each other. But Ninelotus suddenly realized...Ji Ning and Yu Wei, a single man and an unmarried woman, would be together for most likely an entire year.

“A single man and an unmarried woman...experiencing life and death together...for nearly a year...” Ninelotus suddenly shook her head gently. “But I no longer have any right to think about such matters.”

Love was a strange thing.

They had clearly already separated, but upon seeing Ji Ning with Yu Wei, she felt as though a stone had just hammered against her heart, causing ripples that would be difficult to calm down.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 8: The Grand Black Tortoise Divine Ability

Within the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers.

“Junior apprentice-brother.” Yu Wei’s emotions and her excitement were all difficult to control right now.

“Senior apprentice-sister, your earlier battle caused quite a stir, and you fought for a long while. Others are definitely lying in wait in this area, and even more are probably on the way.” Ning had no time to talk; with a wave of his hand, he collected the magic treasures and storage treasures of the silver-haired woman and the black-robed man. The talismans were located in the storage treasures; how could he not take them away?

Whoosh.

A ship appeared in front of Ning and Yu Wei. “Senior apprentice-sister, let’s go.” Ning pulled Yu Wei by the hand as he leaped into the ship. The two immediately entered it, and the ship transformed into a streak of light, quickly fleeing. As it fled, Ning spread out his divine sense to sweep the area...and, just as he had expected, quite a few people were present.

“Who was that black-robed youth? How could he be so powerful?”

“Given his power, he should be one of those who was ranked as one of the top hundred prior to the Conclave beginning. He seems rather similar to that Ji Ning, mentioned in the reports of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain. He uses twin swords, is very powerful in close combat, and is skilled in lotus techniques. Given the level of his power...it should probably be Ji Ning. However, Ji Ning is usually dressed in furs, whereas that youth was dressed in black robes. It seems that even Ji Ning doesn’t dare to be too bold and brash.”

“Right. Anyone would recognize him in furs. In black robes...one would have to carefully inspect him.”

“The top hundred experts of the Conclave truly are formidable. In single combat in close quarters against this Ji Ning, when he activates all his divine abilities...he can probably kill me in just one exchange of blows.”

“Gotta be careful.”

All of them quickly and secretly departed. Ning had fled quite fast. In addition, without enough people joining forces, they didn’t dare to try and antagonize Ning.

.....

Whoosh.

The ship flew thousands of kilometers, then hide within a large mountain. Ning put away the flying treasure, then let out a sigh of relief alongside Yu Wei.

Ning said with a laugh, “Senior apprentice-sister, earlier when we were fighting, there were eight figures within ten kilometers who were watching us, and nearly two hundred people within a thousand kilometers were pressing near. In this Diagram, even if you get into a fight, you can’t continue to fight for too long. Otherwise, the disturbance will definitely attract attention from others. You have to resolve any fights quickly.”

“Of course I know that, but I was trapped by them and wasn’t able to even flee,” Yu Wei said helplessly. “I was just about to throw out my talismans and prepare to escape.”

His senior apprentice-sister definitely was a supremely beautiful woman in terms of appearances. This look of helplessness on her face couldn’t help but cause Ning’s heart to tremble slightly, but then he quickly calmed himself.

“Senior apprentice-sister, earlier you used phoenixes of ice and fire,” Ning said with a sighing laugh. “I have yet to congratulate you on mastering yet another complete Dao-Path.”

Three years ago, she had already mastered the Dao of the Freeze, but that was but a single Dao-Path.

“You all call me the Rainbowflame Fairy, right?” Yu Wei laughed softly. “I was more talented in fire to begin with. Thanks to a stroke of luck, I first mastered the Dao of the Freeze. My Dao of the Inferno was just a small step behind that.”

Ning nodded. He, too, felt as though he was about to make a breakthrough in the Dao of the Inferno...but he continued to be just a hair away from actually accomplishing it.

“Later on, I’ll need to ask you to help guide me on the Dao of the Inferno, senior apprentice-sister,” Ning said.

“A minor matter.” Yu Wei naturally was happy to help teach him.

“Right, senior apprentice-sister. This is the storage treasure of the silver-haired woman. Help me bind it. I’ll bind the other one’s storage treasure. The talismans are all inside.” Ning handed a bracelet to Yu Wei.

“You go ahead and slowly bind it yourself,” Yu Wei said, looking at Ning. “If I bound it, you definitely wouldn’t accept the talismans inside. Don’t try to trick me.”

Ning was flabbergasted. Yu Wei was truly quite meticulous and intelligent. Ning felt that he was a smart man, but compared to her, he was still a bit inferior. For example, just now; all he had done was ask her to help bind the storage-type bracelet, and she had immediately been able to infer that in reality, he was giving the talismans within to her.

“You killed both of those two. The talismans belong to you. How about we split them?” Ning said.

“You saved my life, and when I killed them, they were in a dazed state because of you.” Yu Wei shook her head. “Enough. In the future, we are going to continue to adventure in this Diagram. In the future, whoever makes the kill will get the items, but this time, since you saved my life, the talismans should be yours.”

Ning had no choice but to nod.

Seeing how Ning was behaving, Yu Wei felt quite happy, and the corner of her lips couldn’t help but curve upwards.

“Let’s go. Senior apprentice-sister, you battled for a long time earlier; you need to first restore your elemental ki and also calm your mind.” Ning immediately led Yu Wei to quickly find a cave to hide in.

Time flowed on. The days passed, one by one.

Together, Ji Ning and Yu Wei truly were much more formidable.

Yu Wei had mastered two complete Dao-Paths, and was able to combine fire and water together. Her phoenixes of ice and fire were indeed incredibly powerful, and in terms of defense alone, the ice phoenix was comparable to Ning's Waterflame Lotus! This was the reason why Yu Wei had been able to hold on for so long against the attacks of those three. In terms of offense, the fire phoenix was quite astonishing as well.

With each other's support, even if ten or so people attacked them at once, they would still have a chance at winning.

.....

"Yu Wei truly is extraordinary; she has comprehended two entire Dao-Paths." Immortal Fivecraze was quite delighted with the performance of these two disciples of the Black-White College. He often bragged about them to the nearby members of other major powers of Stillwater Commandery. "Ji Ning is even more formidable! One of the 96 positions will definitely go to our Black-White College. And the eldest disciple of the third generation; little Sloppy has yet to show his power."

"Ji Ning is formidable, but I really don't see anything remarkable about that the Sloppy Daoist of your Black-White College." A white-haired Loose Immortal of the Skysplitter Sword Sect shook his head and sneered, clearly unhappy at how smug Immortal Fivecraze was acting.

"You are just jealous!" Immortal Fivecraze stared at him.

.....

The Conclave had been going on for more than a month. The Sloppy Daoist was reclining lazily within a cave. Next to him was a pool of water that was both clear and refreshing.

"The first three months will be the craziest. I'll relax for three months. Those who survive to the end will all be formidable, and will definitely have many talismans on them. Fighting will only be fun by that point." The Sloppy Daoist just lay there, producing a large cooked rib and beginning to gnaw on it, covering his mouth in oil.

Suddenly...

Whoosh!

A wind blew past, and eight figures suddenly appeared at the entrance to the cave. One of the eight, a muscular man, said with a laugh, "Eldest apprentice-brother, let's take a break at this cave and bind the storage treasures we just acquired. I hope there are talismans inside—" But suddenly, the muscular man stared.

The other seven also stared, flabbergasted, at the sloppy, chubby man lying down in the cave and gnawing on a roast rib.

The world of the Diagram was clearly quite large; the chances of encountering someone in a cave they randomly selected was very low. For the Sloppy Daoist, despite having often hidden in this cave during the past month, this was his first time encountering someone at the entrance.

“If you always walk by the side of the river, eventually your shoes will get wet.” The Sloppy Daoist resignedly stood up and muttered to himself, then said with a chortle, “Everyone, I’m resting here. Why don’t you leave? Or perhaps I shall leave?”

“Little sloppy kid, are you playing dumb or actually dumb?” A youth with triangle pupils said coldly, “Be good and hand your talisman over and we can spare your life. Otherwise, don’t blame me for showing no mercy.”

“Nope.” The Sloppy Daoist shook his head.

“Don’t waste words with him. Attack!” the leader, a youth holding a feather fan, let out a cold laugh and then immediately waved his hand. Feathers instantly began to shoot out from the feather fan in his hands, and hundreds of feathers instantly formed into an enormous Immortal crane. The Immortal crane screeched as it sent its claws tearing towards the Sloppy Daoist, and the surrounding rocky walls of the cave were beginning to shatter from the force of the attack.

“Die.” The muscular man let out an angry roar, then immediately expanded in size to thirty-six meters. Because they were in a cave, he had to squat down and lower his head. He also suddenly activated the [Three Heads, Six Arms] divine ability, and in each hand he wielded an enormous greataxe.

He transformed into a streak of lightning, charging forward.

Each of the eight released their own techniques.

Three were Fiendgod Body Refiners, while the others were Ki Refiners. Each had secret arts of their own, and the ‘Immortal Crane of the Nine Heavens’ technique of their leader, the fan-wielding youth, wasn’t that much weaker than even the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. However, although the technique was fine, the power a technique could actually unleash depended on the user. For example, when Ning used the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], it was even more powerful and dazzling than when the Thousand Swords Immortal had used it back when he himself had been at the peak Wanxiang level.

These eight all came from an extremely large clan from the Eastern Seas known as the ‘Myriad Beasts School’. This was ranked as one of the most supreme of schools in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty, and it was ranked several tiers higher than the Black-White College. It had hundreds of Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals! Naturally, all eight were extremely powerful.

Rumble...

The battle began. Rocks began to fly everywhere, and the mountain peak itself began to crumble.

BOOM!

Within the crumbling mountain peak, the illusion of an enormous Turtle-Snake suddenly appeared. A powerful aura that filled the heavens swept out from it. A chubby youth with the eyes of a snake and whose skin was covered with tattoos that looked like the shell of a turtle was there...and with his bare

hands, he smashed aside a giant, blood-red seal, then slapped a terrified white-robed youth into dust with a single palm blow. Next, his hand formed into a claw, striking forward like the beak of a crow and piercing directly through the head of one of the Fiendgod Refiner men. Then, with a swiping movement, he completely tore the Fiendgod Refiner's body apart.

Whoooooosh. The enormous illusion of the Turtle-Snake quickly ground apart the body of the Fiendgod Refiner, quickly transforming it into ash.

"Quick, run!"

"My lord..."

"How can he be this powerful?! The records of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain regarding the most powerful participants made no mention at all of this sloppy-looking fatty!"

The geniuses of the Myriad Beasts School had completely collapsed. They all threw out their talismans, but in total six of them still ended up being killed by the sloppy-looking fatty. Only two of them just barely managed to escape with their lives.

"Whew." The Sloppy Daoist stood there atop the destroyed mountain. Waving his hand, he collected up all the talismans and storage treasures. He was completely back to normal, and no longer seemed as terrifying as he had before.

"I didn't want to fight in the first three months, but they actually forced me to unleash my grand divine ability." The Sloppy Daoist shook his head. "The participants of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny truly are extraordinary. The attacks of just eight of them were enough to force me to use my grand divine ability. I imagine that many others are going to quickly arrive. I'd best leave."

Whoosh.

With a single step, the Sloppy Daoist transformed into a gust of wind and disappeared.

.....

The main hall of the Skylight Palace.

The faces of the Xia Emperor, Lu Dongbin, the Immortal Elder of the Northlands, and the rest of the nine had all changed. Although it didn't appear as though they were paying much attention to the Diagram, since they were Pure Yang True Immortals, they actually saw everything which was going on within it.

"The Grand Black Tortoise divine ability."

"Grand Emperor Xuanwu!" 1

"He's actually a successor for Grand Emperor Xuanwu. I wonder if he is a personal apprentice or just an honorary apprentice."

They all had solemn looks on their faces now. Grand Emperor Xuanwu...he was one of the major powers of the Three Realms, and an extremely terrifying figure.

"The Grand Black Tortoise divine ability...it is definitely ranked as one of the top hundred divine abilities of the countless divine abilities created since the universe was established." Lu Dongbin spoke with a

serious look on his face. "I didn't imagine that here, at the Conclave of Immortal Destiny of your Grand Xia Empire, I'd be able to see one of the most supreme divine abilities of the Three Realms!"

1. As noted previously, Xuanwu, literally 'dark warrior', is both the name of an Immortal as well as the Black Tortoise of the Four Beasts. There are many legends regarding the both, and often the legends are linked, such as the Black Tortoise/Turtle-Snake originally being the guts and intestines of Xuanwu.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 9: Repeated Breakthroughs

The Xia Emperor, Sovereign Hao, and the rest of the nine Pure Yang True Immortals were all staring at the distant, massive Diagram which hung in the skies. They stared at that sloppy-looking, chubby youth. Without question, this divine technique, the Grand Black Tortoise divine ability, absolutely was not something that could be recorded down in a book. It had to be transmitted through very special methods, and it had to be Grand Emperor Xuanwu himself who did the transmitting!

"Someone who was approved of by Grand Emperor Xuanwu...he cannot be a simple figure." The Immortal Elder of the Northlands chortled. "Xiamang, who is this youth? Where is he from?"

The others all looked towards the Xia Emperor as well.

The Xia Emperor knew the details of every single one of the hundred thousand-plus attendees to this Conclave. Not trying to hide anything, he said, "This youth is a disciple of the Black-White College, which hails from the Stillwater Commandery of my Grand Xia Dynasty. His name is Zhang Qi, and his Daoist title is 'Threefat', but because he's always dressed so sloppily, there are very few people in the outside world who refer to him as Adept Threefat. The majority refer to him as the Sloppy Daoist."

"The Sloppy Daoist? His Daoist title is 'Threefat'? This young fellow is quite amusing." Lu Dongbin laughed. "He actually picked such a casual Daoist title. It seems as though this youth who Grand Emperor Xuanwu took a liking to really does have unusual points about him."

"Grand Emperor Xuanwu is so majestic, and yet he actually chose such a sloppy young fellow as his disciple."

"The Sloppy Daoist?"

They all memorized this name.

Even if this fat youth was currently nothing more than an honorary disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu, after he became a Celestial Immortal, he would most likely become a personal disciple! For him to have been taught the Grand Black Tortoise divine ability, even when he was so young and weak, was testament to how much Grand Emperor Xuanwu liked him. For a major power to care about him so much...his future would definitely be extraordinary."

Pure Yang True Immortals had incredibly good high standards. The number of Celestial Immortals that would arise from these hundred thousand-plus geniuses could be counted on one hand, and they actually didn't care about them too much. However, the Sloppy Daoist's status as the disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu was definitely enough to make them pay serious attention to him.

.....

“The Grand Black Tortoise divine ability?” The Dongyan Forefather revealed a look of astonishment.
“This, this Conclave actually has a disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu?”

“The Grand Black Tortoise divine ability!” A stunned look was on Patriarch Arcanum’s face as well. “This sloppily-dressed youth...who is he?! Our Grand Xia world actually has someone capable of becoming a disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu?!”

The thousand Celestial Immortals had often journeyed to other worlds as well, and some had even gone to the Heaven Realm. Thus, they were fairly experienced. In addition, the Grand Black Tortoise divine ability was an extremely recognizable one; upon seeing the massive illusion of the Turtle-Snake, and upon seeing the turtle shell-like tattoos that had suddenly emerged on the Sloppy Daoist’s skin, there was no question in their minds at all that this was the Grand Black Tortoise divine ability. More than 80% of the nearly one thousand Celestial Immortals present all recognized it.

And they were all amazed!

The Grand Black Tortoise divine ability...it meant that this person was the disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu! Grand Emperor Xuanwu was one of the hegemon of the entire Three Realms. He had been a hegemon ever since the Primordial Era, and was absolutely one of the most major of powers! Celestial Immortals like them dreamed about being able to become a personal disciple of such a major power...but alas, the vast majority of them would only be permitted to become honorary disciples at best.

There was a huge difference between honorary disciples and personal disciples. Personal disciples...to be one meant that the major power would use all of his effort in training you.

Honorary disciples, by contrast, were just honorary; you’d be qualified to go listen to the major power expound on the Dao, but it would be hard to even speak a single word to that major power in private!

Celestial Immortals were carefree Immortals who had escaped the restrictions of the Three Realms, and were able to dominate a local region. Major powers needed servants to take care of matters for them, which was why they give appropriate Celestial Immortals a status of being ‘honorary disciples’.

But the Sloppy Daoist was different. He had been taught the Grand Black Tortoise divine ability when he was merely a Wanxiang Adept. His treatment was absolutely on par with a personal disciple’s treatment! Even though he was currently just an honorary disciple, that was merely because he was currently too weak; after becoming a Celestial Immortal, he would be immediately promoted to personal disciple.

.....

The plaza below.

“The Patriarch has ordered us to immediately investigate who that sloppy-looking fatty is.” An azure Flood Dragon that had shrunken in size and was coiling in midair stretched out a claw, pointing towards a spot in the sky.

“We’ll investigate right away.”

.....

“The Supreme One has ordered us to investigate that sloppy-looking fatty.”

.....

Celestial Immortals were on too high of a level, and so they knew very little about the geniuses in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny. The Sloppy Daoist, at least, was someone which almost none of them recognized. They didn't dare to spread out their coresense; after all, the Xia Emperor and eight other Pure Yang True Immortals were right next to him. All they could do was just to send orders to their subordinates.

More than half of the major powers of the 3600 commanderies and four seas immediately began to investigate.

Soon, they discovered...that this person was named Zhang Qi, his Daoist title was Threefat, and that most referred to him as the Sloppy Daoist. He was a disciple of the Black-White College of Stillwater Commandery!

“Stillwater Commandery...the Black-White College?”

“Black-White College?”

“A small school like that actually produced a disciple that Grand Emperor Xuanwu cares about?”

The Celestial Immortals located in the main hall of the Skylight Palace all quickly received this information. They were all completely puzzled...but in their hearts, they already viewed the Sloppy Daoist as someone with status equal to theirs. The mere fact that he was someone whom Grand Emperor Xuanwu cared about was more than enough for him to be treated as an equal.

The leader of the Black-White College delegation, Immortal Fivecrazed, couldn't help but laugh delightedly as he saw all this. “I always did say that little Sloppy is extremely formidable. I understood his Dao-heart long ago...and I've always said that not even the Earth Immortals or Loose Immortals of the Black-White College are comparable to him in terms of his Dao-heart. He truly is formidable! But what divine ability is that? Not even I have ever seen it. It seems fairly powerful though; little Sloppy must've had a very lucky encounter.”

“Heh heh heh...given how formidable little Sloppy is, perhaps in this Conclave...he'll be accepted by one of the powerful Celestial Immortals or Pure Yang True Immortals of the Three Realms as a disciple.” Immortal Fivecraze was daydreaming beautifully right now.

.....

Time flowed on. More than a month had already passed.

The battles raging within the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers were exceptionally agonizing, because everyone understood that they were all fighting over their Immortal destiny.

However, in the eyes of the exalted Xia Emperor and the other eight True Immortals, aside from the Sloppy Daoist, who had caused them to sigh in amazement...these other geniuses could at most cause their eyes to briefly light up. In addition, it was already quite rare for a disciple of a major power to appear in the Conclave of Immortal Destiny of a major world; they didn't believe a second would emerge!

Rumble...

Within the world of the Diagram. A waterfall cascaded down like a white torrent, smashing against a pool and spraying water everywhere.

Next to the pool, there was a violet-robed, thick-browed, large-eyed, massively built youth. He was seated in the lotus position. Not too far away from him another youth, also in the lotus position; this youth had a head of tousled, unruly hair, and looked almost like a barbarian. His gaze was like that of one of the eagles in the sky, filled with a savagery that could cause the heart to quiver.

“Xiamang Zishan, are you done rest? It’s time for us to go. We don’t have enough talismans yet!” 1

“Hey, I’m talking to you!” The wild-haired barbarian youth began to get angry. But right at this moment...

Arcane ripples of power suddenly began to descend around the massively built violet-robed youth. These were the ripples of the Dao. Water and mist began to swirl around him, and in the midst of the water and mist could be seen flashes of lightning.

“...the hell? You made a breakthrough, just like that?” The barbarian youth was speechless.

The violet-robed youth slowly opened his eyes. If the barbarian youth could be described as an eagle of the heavens, then this violet-robed youth was like a primordial behemoth of the group, filled with an absolutely dominating aura. In terms of dominating auras, even the father of Northmont Baiwei, ‘Northmont Blacktiger’, was a level inferior to him.

“Cangwu Jiu.” 2 The azure-robed youth cracked a smile, revealing his white teeth. “I’ve mastered a fourth Dao-Path as well! I’ve caught up to you!”

“Before this, you and I were on par...and now, you punk, you are even more powerful than me?” Cangwu Jiu was amazed.

The two of them had run into each other shortly after entering this Diagram world. They had fought together, then realized neither could achieve victory of the other. Given that they had also grown up together in the imperial capital, and felt friendly towards each other to begin with...and that as soon as they had entered the Diagram world, they had both suffered repeated group attacks...they decided to join forces!

“You run too fast. If you focus on avoiding taking on my attacks head-on, there’s nothing I can do to you either.” A look of confidence was in Xiamang Zishan’s eyes. “But if you actually fight against me head-on...you naturally are no longer my match. With four Dao-Paths which have been infused into my Grand Dao of Lightning...I imagine that in this entire Diagram world, if I said that I was number two, no one would dare claim themselves to be number one!”

“Don’t go too crazy,” Cangwu Jiu sneered. “And don’t be smug. There are countless geniuses in the Diagram, and given how many times they are battling every day...these battles are tempering them and allowing them to improve at an astonishing rate. Quite a few people are most likely making breakthroughs!”

“Mm. That’s something I do need to be careful about.” Xiamang Zishan nodded. “I can’t be too overconfident. My goal in this Conclave is to come out number one!”

Cangwu Jiu shook his head. “Let’s hurry up and go.”

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu both flew off.

.....

The Sloppy Daoist was standing by the side of a lake. Underneath the light of the moon, it appeared illusory and dreamy. His eyes were closed. He had no idea that in the outside world, nine True Immortals and many Celestial Immortals were all focusing on him, and that he was the largest focal point for the entire Diagram right now.

“whew.”

The Sloppy Daoist’s body suddenly trembled slightly, and then a swirl of fire erupted in the surrounding area, billowing outwards. One circle of fire after another spread out, with the Sloppy Daoist at the center. The ripples of the Dao descended.

The Sloppy Daoist opened his eyes. “After training for all these years, and after fighting tens of times every day in the Diagram world...I’ve finally made a breakthrough in the fourth month and mastered my third complete Dao-Path. What I need to do now is to fuse all three of these complete Daos into my Grand Dao of Taiji.” 3

The Sloppy Daoist had also gained insight into a Grand Dao.

Ji Ning had gained insight into the Grand Dao of the Sword, while the Sloppy Daoist had embarked on the path of the Grand Dao of the Taiji.

.....

After a few months, many of those who had been present in the Diagram had given up...and many of them had perished within it! But for the surviving geniuses? It was normally incredibly rare for them to be able to encounter geniuses on their same general level and fight with them...and now that they were doing so for tens of times or a even hundred times each day, many of them began to make sudden breakthroughs.

Many of them had been trapped at bottlenecks, and now, they were all making their breakthroughs.

The sixth month of the trials within the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers.

Within a wilderness region. A black-robed youth and a black-robed woman were within the wild grass of this area.

Ning sat there in the lotus position, and not too far away was Yu Wei. Yu Wei was also seated in the lotus position, quietly looking at Ning. Earlier, Ning had said to her: “Senior apprentice-sister, I gained some insights in that previous battle. Help stand guard for me.” And then, he had set down a simple vision-obscuring formation, then closed his eyes and entered a meditative state.

Yu Wei looked at Ning, whose eyes were still closed. She carefully looked at his eyes, his nose, his lips...she looked at him very carefully and very earnestly.

1. Zishan means 'Violet Mountain', which goes with his preference for violet clothes.
2. 'Jiu' means hawk, hence the description of him as looking like an eagle.
3. This is the same Taiji as the Taiji Diagram, aka the Yin-Yang diagram, or in 'Tai Chi' martial arts. The concept of the Taiji is one of the most fundamental ones in Daoism.

The Desolate Era

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 10: The Most Powerful Two-Man Squad

Yu Wei rested her hands on her chin, just looking at Ji Ning. In fact, an unconscious smile even crept onto her face.

It was very quiet.

They were underneath the light of the moon. The only people present were herself and her junior apprentice-brother. She just gazed at her junior apprentice-brother...and everything seemed so perfect.

.....

The plaza of the imperial citadel.

"Whaaaaaat?" Mu Northson stared at the image of Ji Ning and Yu Wei within the Diagram in the skies. Yu Wei sat there, resting her hands on her chin and staring intently at Ning. "Can it be that senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei has fallen for senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning? Good heavens!"

Little Qing, wrapped around Northson's arm, was staring intently as well.

Just from the look on Yu Wei's face, anyone with the slightest bit of intelligence would be able to guess that Yu Wei harbored feelings for Ji Ning.

"That little girl Yu Wei and Ji Ning...?" Immortal Fivecraze revealed a grin. As he saw it, since both Yu Wei and Ji Ning were peerless geniuses of the Black-White College, they were quite a match for each other.

.....

"Look look, look look look, that expression on that little girl's face! I told you, I told you all! I told you that this little girl must be in love with that Ji Ning fellow." Lu Dongbin urgently pointed at a corner of the massive Diagram while saying to the nearby Xia Emperor, Sovereign Hao, and others, "I wanted to bet with you earlier, but none of you were willing."

"You are the Sage of Love, a legendary matchmaker, the Moon Elder...who would dare bet against you in such a matter?" A Pure Yang True Immortal dressed in black Daoist robes that had a blood-colored Taiji diagram embroidered onto them laughed. 1

"Truelord, I'm no sage of love; I don't even have a Dao-companion. I'm definitely not the Moon Elder either; the Celestial Court already has a designated Moon Elder," Lu Dongbin said hurriedly.

Buffoonery and jests; shamelessness and thick-skinnedness; a master of pretense.

In short, any place with Lu Dongbin in it would be a place of laughter. This was why Lu Dongbin had so many friends in the Three Realms. He was an incredibly good-natured fellow, had powerful backers supporting him, and was very strong in his own right. How could he not have countless friends?

.....

Ninelotus, seated behind the Dongyan Forefather, tightly grasped at her robes as she stared at the massive Diagram. She chewed on her lips, a complicated look in her eyes. "Senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei...towards Ji Ning, you..."

In the past, she had only been a bit worried. Although over the past few months, Ji Ning and Yu Wei had grown fairly close as they had adventured together, Ninelotus had chalked that up to being because they were fellow disciples of the same school. But upon seeing that look...she had no more doubts at all!

"I've made my choice."

"No regrets."

Ninelotus bit her lips, lecturing herself mentally.

Yu Wei just gazed at Ning, completely absorbed in her own little world. She completely forgot that there even was an outside world.

After an indeterminable period of time, tendrils of flame began to emerge around Ning, which grew and expanded into an lotus flower that began to continuously expand, from a fist-sized lotus flower to an enormous flaming lotus that was many tens of meters long. Ning sat there in the very center of the lotus amidst the pistils as the ripples of the Dao descended.

"Eh?" Yu Wei suddenly came to her senses.

"Not good!" She suddenly felt shocked. "Those in the outside world can see everything that's going on within this Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers! Someone might've noticed me!"

She had only revealed her emotions and ceased disguising them when she had seen that Ning had been completely absorbed in meditating on the Dao. She had forgotten that others outside could see her! This caused Yu Wei to feel incredibly awkward and embarrassed.

"Senior apprentice-sister." Ning opened his eyes, then said with a laugh, "I've broken through the bottleneck. I've finally mastered the Dao of the Inferno."

Yu Wei hurriedly came back to her senses, then said happily, "That's wonderful. Junior apprentice-brother, you've already mastered the Dao of Rainwater. Now that you've mastered the Dao of the Inferno as well...with fire and water joining together and then infusing your Dao of the Sword, your power must have grown significantly."

"Yes." Ning nodded, filled with anticipation as well.

Two complete Dao-Paths. He had also reached the Grand Dao Domain in the Dao of the Sword. He now felt even more confident in his chances. Although some of the most supreme geniuses amongst these hundred thousand-plus competitors in the Conclave might have already started training in their own

Grand Daos, some had just a basic grasp while others had just gotten to understand their own hearts. Only a very few would have reached the Grand Dao Domain like Ning.

“Junior apprentice-brother, you need to seize the chance to train in your [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens],” Yu Wei immediately said. “You are only at the eleventh stage. There are many practitioners of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] in this Conclave, and most of them have reached the twelfth stage.”

“Understood.” Ning nodded. This was his weakness. In Swallow Mountain, countless years would pass before there would a genius capable of training in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], but in Stillwater Commandery, the Black-White College alone had quite a few. As for the participants in this Conclave, many of them trained in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. To be at the eleventh stage of it was indeed a bit weak.

However, he had a powerful soul and was a Sword Immortal, and also had the [Starseizing Hand]. He didn’t fear fighting against any of them.

.....

Just half a month after Ning had mastered the Dao of the Inferno.

A massively built violet-robed youth and a barbarian youth were walking shoulder-to-shoulder amidst the mountain forests, sweeping out with their divine sense to a distance of ten kilometers.

“Cangwu Jiu, how many talismans do you have?” Xiamang Zishan asked.

“Just barely over a thousand. You?” Cangwu Jiu asked.

“You have more than a thousand already? I’ve killed even more people than you, but I only have 989!” Xiaman Zishan stared at him.

“That’s because you are stupid. Will you necessarily acquire a lot of talismans just by killing a lot of people? Some people had many on them; some had less. It comes down to being a matter of judgment...and clearly, your judgment is vastly inferior to mine,” Cangwu Jiu said disdainfully.

Xiamang Zishan shook his head. “You don’t have THAT many more than me. Look at how smug you are acting! We’ve spent more than six months in the Diagram; more than half a year has passed. We need to speed it up and acquire at least 1300 each.”

The Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers had a total of 109,362 competitors within it.

After a year, the eighty contestants with the most talismans would have passed the trials. Thus, so long as they acquired at least 1370 talismans, it was guaranteed that you would have passed. And given that some would have more and others less, while some of the losers would also have talismans...1300 was probably going to be enough.

“We have to aim for 1400! Only then can I be at ease,” Cangwu Jiu said.

While chatting, the two continued to sweep their divine sense forward. Whoosh! They continued to advance rapidly forward.

“Eh?” Cangwu Jiu and Xiamang Zishan’s eyes suddenly flickered. Swoosh! Swoosh! The two transformed into streaks of light, instantly charging forward by many kilometers. Many kilometers away, halfway up a tall mountain peak, there stood a black-robed man and a woman. It was Ning and Yu Wei.

Ning and Yu Wei both had powerful souls as well; when the enemy swept them with their divine sense, they both immediately noticed it. A moment later, two figures appeared in the distance.

“Them?” Ning and Yu Wei were both shocked. They immediately recognized the two, because these two were simply far too famous. And, more importantly, the two hadn’t changed their clothes at all.

“Xiamang Zishan? Cangwu Jiu?” Ning’s heart clenched. According to the reports from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain regarding the peerless geniuses participating in this Conclave, the number one ranked figure was Xiamang Zishan, while the number two was Cangwu Jiu!

Xiamang Zishan trained in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], and also trained in my divine abilities that were used only by the imperial Xiamang clan and were not taught to outsiders! His talent was absolutely top-notch as well, and the Grand Xia Emperor was quite pleased with him. Supposedly, he had long ago been guided by the Grand Xia Emperor into the tutelage of one of the experts of the Three Realms, and his power was immeasurable.

Cangwu Jiu was one of the rare, peerless geniuses of the Cangwu clan. His age was comparable to Xiamang Zishan’s, and ever since they had been young, they had been famous geniuses of the imperial capital. They had grown up together.

Because Xiamang Zishan was of the imperial clan, he was ranked as number one while Cangwu Jiu was forced to be ranked as number two. But no matter what...without question, these two were the two most famous participants in this Conclave!

“Given how famous they are, they assuredly have the power to back it up. Why have the two most famous figures joined forces?” Ning felt nervousness in his heart. If he encountered one of them, he would dare to fight...but he had Yu Wei with him as well, and she was a Ki Refiner. Although she had mastered two complete Daos, her power was still quite a bit lower than figures like Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu.

.....

“Lu Dongbin, weren’t you paying a great deal of attention to that little girl? This time, that little girl and Ji Ning have really run into trouble,” the Immortal Elder of the Northlands called out with a chortle.

Lu Dongbin was watching. He said vexedly, “This really does seem to be trouble. Those two are named Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu, right? Their power can be considered to be in the absolute top tier of these hundred thousand-plus competitors. Even compared to the Sloppy Daoist, they would still probably be on par. You can’t say for certain who is stronger until they actually fight, but...Ji Ning and the little girl are a bit too weak.”

“Zishan is the most outstanding member in the junior generation of my Xiamang clan, and has a chance to rank in the top three this time.” The Xia Emperor laughed as he spoke. It was rare for him to care about someone from the younger generation, but Xiamang Zishan was the one he liked the most.

.....

“Senior apprentice-sister, Ji Ning.” Ninelotus watched nervously. She knew how frightening Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu were. Earlier, when she had watched as Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu had been headed in the direction of Ning and Yu Wei, she had begun to feel nervous. And in the end...they really did encounter each other.

“I hope nothing bad happens.” Ninelotus was extremely nervous.

.....

Within the world of the Diagram.

The friends and family outside were worried, but there was nothing they could do. Ning and Yu Wei were now both very cautious as well.

“You are...Ji Ning?” Cangwu Jiu’s hawk-like eyes stared at Ning, immediately recognizing him.

“He’s Ji Ning? Doesn’t Ji Ning dress in furs?” The nearby Xiamang Zishan said.

“I told you that you are an idiot, but you wouldn’t listen. Can’t you just change your damn robes?” Cangwu Jiu shook his head. “I acquired quite a few paintings of Ji Ning. I collected many paintings of all the geniuses. Just by looking at a single one, it can be hard to recognize the real person, which is why I had to view many of them.”

“I have more than a hundred paintings of Ji Ning, so I recognized him at one glance,” Cangwu Jiu said confidently.

Ning and Yu Wei exchanged a glance.

From the way the two were chatting to each other and from how calm they were, it was clear that they were very confident.

“Senior apprentice-sister, don’t fight them head on. Use your phoenixes to attack them, while I’ll tie them up for a while. You flee first, then I’ll come afterwards,” Ning sent. Yu Wei nodded as well. She knew that if it weren’t for her, it would be much easier for Ning to flee, but with her here...although their attack power was greater, fleeing became trickier.

As Ning and Yu Wei were chatting mentally...

“Hand over your talismans, and I’ll spare your lives!” Cangwu Jiu’s voice suddenly turned sharp, and his mental message echoed in Ning and Yu Wei’s minds. Cangwu Jiu charged forward, and suddenly in midair a massive black vulture that was three hundred meters long suddenly appeared. The plumes of the black vulture glowed with an oily light, and its eyes seemed almost alive as it dove forward with a screech.

1. In Chinese Daoist religions, a minor divinity known as the ‘Moon Elder’ is responsible for marriages and matchmaking, much like Cupid is in Western mythologies.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 11: Ji Ning Battles Xiamang Zishan

“That’s the Venomous Nethervulture secret art!” Ning immediately recognized the technique. Cangwu Jiu had become famous long ago, and this Venomous Nethervulture art was his signature technique. It was an enormous Venomous Nethervulture that was formed from many magic treasures in a formation. As for Cangwu Jiu himself, he was hidden within the grand Venomous Nethervulture. Once it failed, Cangwu Jiu would emerge from within the body of the Nethervulture and enter close combat!

Yu Wei pointed towards the distant. Whoosh! All 72 Rahu Godneedles instantly appeared in midair. Filled with elemental ki, they activated the natural energy of the world to form a pair of enormous phoenixes of fire and ice. The two phoenixes simultaneously howled through the air as they charged towards the giant black vulture.

“Shkreee!” The black vulture let out a venomous screech, then slashed downwards viciously with his claws.

The phoenix of fire and the phoenix of ice charged upwards, but after exchanging just two blows many cracks had already appeared on their bodies. Upon their third collision against the vulture, both phoenixes completely shattered, and the 72 Rahu Godneedles were immediately knocked flying back as well.

“Arise.” Ning stood there, and around him manifested the Waterflame Lotus. The Waterflame Lotus surrounded him, the lotus leaves swaying gently as they continuously swiveled.

Boom...

The charging black vulture smashed directly against the Waterflame Lotus. There was an enormous collision sound, but although some of the leaves of the Waterflame Lotus shattered, new ones quickly emerged. Clearly, this technique was incomparably resilient. This caused the relaxing, spectating Xiamang Zishan to feel startled; this was rather beyond his expectations.

After six months of tempering and especially after having thoroughly mastered both the Dao of Rainwater and the Dao of the Inferno, Ning had further perfected his Waterflame Lotus, as his powers were now in perfect equilibrium, allowing the technique to clearly grow more formidable. In addition, this was a technique which used earthfire and dire-ice of the first grade as its base; how could it be so easily defeated?

“Quick, leave.” Ning sent mentally.

Swoosh! Yu Wei transformed into a streak of light, immediately planning to fly away.

“Shkreee!” The venomous black vulture suddenly opened its mouth, and a person emerged from within it. It was Cangwu Jiu. Cangwu Jiu was wielding a scimitar in his hand, and as he flew out, his body suddenly exploded in size to become sixty meters tall. His right arm transformed into a golden color, and with a single flash, he caught up to the location in front of Yu Wei, frightening her into hurriedly retreating.

“Go!” Ning suddenly manifested more than seven hundred flying swords around him. A golden flying sword appeared in front of him, then shot out with a bang.

Boom! The power of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] caused even Cangwu Jiu’s body to tremble for a moment, but in the next moment, the golden right arm of Cangwu Jiu brandished that

scimitar and chopped apart the flying sword of golden light. By this time, Yu Wei had fled back to the Waterflame Lotus.

“He is too fast. I’m not able to escape,” Yu Wei sent frantically.

Ning understood as well. Forget about Yu Wei; even he himself wasn’t confident in being able to escape from the attacks of Cangwu Jiu. Cangwu Jiu’s strongest point was his speed to begin with.

“Then I’ll trap him!” Ning sent. “Senior apprentice-sister, you and I shall first block him off together!”

Swish! Swish! Swish! One golden flying sword after another, formed from the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], flew out and attacked. As for Yu Wei, the 72 Rahu Godneedles in front of her flew out once more.

The [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], the phoenix of ice, and the phoenix of fire simultaneously attacked. Cangwu Jiu, seeing everything headed his way as well as that enormous Waterflame Lotus, couldn’t help but frown. He mentally barked, “Xiamang Zishan, why aren’t you helping out yet?!”

There was no way Cangwu Jiu could dominate Ning and Yu Wei by himself, after they joined forces.

“It’s just two people. I thought you could handle it by yourself.” Xiamang Zishan laughed loudly in response. “Cangwu Jiu, remember, don’t let these two escape. You are most skilled in pursuing and trapping enemies.”

“Don’t worry about that!” Cangwu Jiu stood there in midair, pointing towards the distance.

Instantly, a fierce gale arose in the surrounding area, howling as it spun into a tornado. The spinning tornado covered the surrounding area, stretching several kilometers and completely trapping Ning and Yu Wei within it.

“I’ll use the Qian-Heaven Soulwind to trap them, the Venomous Nethervulture to support it, and I’ll personally be prepared to attack at any time,” Cangwu Jiu sent mentally. “Under these three techniques...there’s no way they’ll escape. As for fighting them head on? I’ll leave that to you.”

“Hahaha...”

Xiamang Zishan laughed loudly.

Boom!

His footsteps suddenly began to cause the mountains to tremble as he immediately transformed into a sixty meter tall giant, and his entire body began to radiate with a violet-colored lightning. The violet-colored lightning even began to appear in the surrounding area, and an enormous black metal staff appeared in his hands. Wielding the black metal staff, he charged into the heart of the giant tornado towards the Waterflame Lotus.

Bang!!! He unleashed a single sweeping smash from the black metal staff, but the power of it was so great it seemed capable of reversing the course of rivers. Many of the leaves of the Waterflame Lotus were completely smashed apart into two pieces.

“Such power.” Ning was shocked. Why was the man even more powerful than he had predicted? In the Heavenly Treasures Mountains’ reports, it didn’t seem as though Xiamang Zishan was quite this terrifying. Ning’s Waterflame Lotus wasn’t even able to withstand a single blow from this man.

“Ji Ning, right? Come!” Xiamang Zishan laughed loudly, possessing the aura of a dominating mountain that would crush and destroy anything before it.

Ji Ning suddenly took a step forward as well. Boom! He transformed into a 54 meter tall giant, and lightning crackled around his body as well. In his hands, two Darknorth swords appeared. He charged forward, and as he did a third eye appeared in the middle of his forehead. A succession of lightning bolts slammed out towards the distant Xiamang Zishan...who actually didn’t dodge at all!

The violet lightning crackling around his body was enough to easily deflect Ning’s thunderbolt strikes. As for the divine will component to the attack? He paid even less attention to that.

“[Soldiers of the Mind].”

An invisible, formless surge of divine will shot out, forming into sharp swords, warblades, and longswords. The weapons howled as they flew towards Xiamang Zishan’s sea of consciousness, frantically chopping and stabbing at it.

Xiamang Zishan paused momentarily, but he then quickly regained control over himself. The savagery in his eyes only grew stronger. “So you have some ability after all!”

“You live up to your reputation as the number one expert in the Heavenly Treasures Mountain’s intelligence report.” The enormous Ning charged forward, twin swords in his hands and absolute confidence in his eyes.

“Hahaha...” Xiamang Zishan twirled his black metal staff, his aura of power filling the heavens. Even before his breakthrough, he had been ranked by the Heavenly Treasures Mountain as the number one figure in this crowded. Now that he had made a breakthrough, Xiamang Zishan personally believed that he had no equals left. His goal in this Conclave was to become the number one champion!

The two instantly collided against each other!

A dazzling sword-light filled the skies!

A massive staff shattered apart the Waterflame Lotus with the force of a flood!

BOOM!!!!

Ning took three steps back.

Xiamang Zishan took three steps back as well. The surrounding mountain had begun to crumble, and even the mountain peak was trembling, on the verge of collapse.

“What?!” Cangwu Jiu, in midair, was astonished. “He blocked that madman Xiamang Zishan? This Ji Ning has incredibly terrifying close combat power.”

“What a fellow. You actually managed to receive the third stance of my self-created Qiankun Staff of Force! Have a test of the fourth stance I just created! This is a stance which I created by fusing four

complete Dao-Paths into my Grand Dao of Lightning!” Xiamang Zishan was clearly growing even more berserk as he charged towards Ning once more, and the staff in his hands verily surged with flows of violet lightning.

As his staff smashed down, it seemed to tear apart the world itself.

Ning stepped forward to receive the blow, the Darknorth swords in his hands transforming into dazzling streaks of sword-light as they blocked the terrifying staff.

BOOM!!!!

A heavy collision.

Xiamang Zishan didn't even take a single step back, but Ning was actually forced backwards until his back slammed into the mountain wall behind him. The mountain peak, already trembling and unstable, suddenly began to collapse.

“How can this be?!” Ning's face was completely ashen. In his very first clash against Xiamang Zishan, he had already executed the [Starseizing Hand]. In the first exchange, he had barely managed to fight the man to a standstill, but now that this man had used an even more powerful technique, Ning was now in a position of absolute inferiority.

“His staff techniques are more powerful than my sword techniques.” Ning understood the issue. The difference between the two in terms of the Dao was too great. In addition, the enemy had reached the twelfth level of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], which was more than Ning!

This opponent was of the imperial Xiamang clan. Although the divine abilities he trained in couldn't compare to Ning's [Starseizing Hand], they were still some of the better divine abilities of the Three Realms, and the difference wasn't too staggeringly great.

Rumble...

The mountain peak collapsed, sending rocks flying everywhere.

Ji Ning and Xiamang Zishan stared at each other, completely ignoring the flying rubble. The flying rubble couldn't even strike them; as soon as they came near, the divine power covering their bodies would instantly smash them apart.

“[Three Heads, Six Arms!]” Ning's body suddenly swayed as two new heads and four new arms emerged.

“Haha, me too!” Xiamang Zishan's body swayed as well, and he too used the [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique. He was now wielding a total of three giant black metal staffs.

“Come.” Ning charged forward, displaying his Windwing Evasion, moving as unpredictably as a ghost as he moved to engage Xiamang Zishan.

Hahaha...” Xiamang Zishan continued to fight him head-on, charging straight for him.

Both of them were using [Three Heads, Six Arms]! Six swords, fighting against three black metal staffs!

Sword-light flowed through the air like streams of running water, incomparably beautiful. A flood of staff-blows filled the skies like bolts of thunder. Ning no longer fought head on; in the past, when he

relied on the [Starseizing Hand], he was able to brute-force everything, but upon meeting Xiamang Zishan...he began to instead turn to using the nimbleness inherent to swords, as well as the Windwing Evasion technique. Although with each exchange of blows, Ning was knocked backwards, he wasn't sent completely flying like earlier.

"I'm going to hit! Hit! Hit hit hit you!!!" Xiamang Zishan was incomparably berserk as his three black metal staffs wildly smashed everywhere.

Ning's six swords were like an unbroken, everflowing stream of water, blocking and shunting the power of the enemy attacks to the side each time. Every so often, he would even be able to deliver a counterblow with his sword as well.

However, Ning could taste the blood in his mouth. "I can't continue like this. I have to rescue senior apprentice-sister."

"[Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!"

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Instantly, a golden sword coalesced before him, then howled through the air and shot towards Cangwu Jiu. Ning sent frantically, "Senior apprentice-sister, hurry up and leave."

BANG! With a powerful staff blow, Xiamang Zishan smashed Ning down into the shattered stones. He roared angrily, "Punk, don't get distracted. If you get distracted, you'll die!"

.....

The fight between Xiamang Zishan and Ji Ning had long ago attracted the attention of almost everyone, from the Pure Yang True Immortals and Celestial Immortals to the people on the plaza below the Skylight Palace.

"Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu. The Heavenly Treasures Mountain reported these two as number one and number two."

"Ji Ning is so formidable; he was actually able to tie down Cangwu Jiu."

"He's now fighting against Xiamang Zishan."

"Xiamang Zishan is so powerful. Ji Ning has actually been able to exchange more than a hundred rounds of attacks with him?" The various delegates from the 3600 and 4 great seas all felt their hearts clench. Many of them were Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals; naturally, they could tell how formidable and fierce Xiamang Zishan's staff technique was.

This was a staff technique that surpassed the techniques of many Loose Immortals! In addition, Xiamang Zishan's divine body and divine abilities were clearly incredibly powerful as well. He was an absolutely dominating and irresistible force.

But Ji Ning, a young fellow who had only trained for thirty or so years, was actually able to withstand the attacks. Although he was in a position of inferiority, he was able to rely on the nimbleness of his sword arts to deflect the attacks, and tie down his opponent!

But upon seeing Ji Ning be distracted as he controlled the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] to tie down Cangwu Jiu, resulting in Xiamang Zishan heavily injuring him and sending him flying into the rubble, many people instantly felt their hearts clench for Ning.

“Ji Ning is actually allowing himself to be distracted in a life-and-death battle? His opponent is Xiamang Zishan!”

“I hope he doesn’t end up losing his own life for the sake of saving his female companion.”

Many of the people in the plaza of the imperial citadel were discussing the situation amongst themselves.

Mu Northson, Little Qing, the Whitewater Hound, Immortal Fivecraze, Northmont Baiwei, and Ninelotus had begun to feel nervous and worried long ago. But there was nothing they could do; they couldn’t go inside. No one could help Ji Ning. They could just watch as the scene played out before them.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 12: The Sound of the Flute in the Mountain Cave

Yu Wei, hidden within the Waterflame Lotus while controlling her phoenixes of fire and ice, watched as the three-headed, six-armed Ji Ning battled with full force against Xiamang Zishan, then diverted part of his attention to use his sword formation against Cangwu Jiu. This caused the eyes of Yu Wei, who was only controlling her phoenixes to protect herself, to instantly turn red.

How long had it been? It had already been six months. During the past six months, she and Ning had adventured together through the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers. They had fought nearly a hundred times on every single day; sometimes, others fled, while other times, it was her and Ning who fled!

Ning was more powerful than her, and was a Fiendgod Body Refiner as well; each time they were in danger, it had always been Ning who had charged forward to block the enemy from pursuing. Although this time there were only two enemies fighting them, compared to the previous dangers they had undergone, this was the most dangerous one of them all!

“Senior apprentice-sister, hurry up and leave!” Ning’s voice echoed out in Yu Wei’s mind.

“He’s telling me to leave again. To leave again. Why am I always a burden to him?” Yu Wei ground her teeth, tears flashing through her eyes. She sent back, “Junior apprentice-brother, don’t worry about me. I’m not strong enough to continue. I’ll give up. I’m going to leave this Diagram. In the future, you’ll have to rely on yourself.”

With her slowing him down, Ji Ning would definitely find things easier. Given his power, there was no need at all for him to go fight anyone head-on if he didn’t have to.

Whoosh...

In front of Yu Wei, many talismans suddenly appeared, and they scattered out in the area around her.

She truly didn’t want to accept this.

It had only been six months.

She truly wanted to accompany Ji Ning in continuing to journey through the world of the Diagram until the year was over.

“Give up the talismans and I’ll spare your life.” Cangwu Jiu, in midair, revealed a smile. But suddenly...his smile froze.

This was because Yu Wei, who had just thrown out all her talismans...actually grabbed a handful back. Then, with a wave of her hand, she actually collected all of them once more.

“Are you looking to die?!” Cangwu Jiu, who felt as though he had just been played for a fool, was instantly enraged. He no longer waited there in midair; he immediately transformed into a streak of light and charged downwards.

Yu Wei, who had just taken back her talismans, now had a deep, dark, dangerous look in her eyes. She stared at the charging Cangwu Jiu, then gently pointed a single finger towards him. Instantly, the 72 Rahu Godneedles separated into two groups which undulated in the air.

36 of the Rahu Godneedles, summoning the power of the natural world, formed into a single, enormous black phoenix. This phoenix was completely black, and the tail-feathers of the phoenix blazed with black flames.

As for the other 36 Rahu Godneedles, they transformed into an enormous white phoenix which was completely pristine and pure, emanating an almost holy gaze. Lines of glowing white light could be seen emanating from the tail-feathers of the white phoenix as well.

“Eh?” Cangwu Jiu instantly felt his heart tremble as an inexplicable, nameless sensation of danger caused him to instantly explode forth with full power.

Whoosh! The 60 meter tall Cangwu Jiu struck out with his golden right arm, and his saber was absolutely dazzling to behold, leaving behind a beautiful, solitary, perfect arc in the skies as it chopped downwards towards that black phoenix. The black phoenix let out a bird’s call; although it was knocked backwards, it wasn’t damaged in the slightest.

“Screech!” The white phoenix began to battle against Cangwu Jiu’s black vulture...and the black vulture actually began to tremble and crack.

“How can this be? She, she...” Cangwu Jiu was incomparably shocked and angered. This woman was clearly much weaker than him! Ji Ning was one thing; he had been famous before this, and was even capable of battling with Xiamang Zishang for so long. Most likely, Cangwu Jiu himself was only on par with Ji Ning.

But how was it that this woman, who had no reputation whatsoever, was able to completely block him now?

“Not happening. Don’t believe it.” Cangwu Jiu exploded with power, also manifesting two more heads and four more arms. He now wielded three scimitars in his hands, and he transformed into a tempest as he shot forward, his scimitar-light seeming capable of splitting the skies and carrying a terrifying majesty.

But the black phoenix and the white phoenix supported each other...and were actually able to block the berserk Cangwu Jiu.

.....

Previously, Mu Northson, the Whitewater Hound, Little Qing, Immortal Fivecraze, Adept Vastriver, Northmont Baiwei, and Ninelotus were all extremely nervous. Now, they were all stunned. How had Yu Wei suddenly exploded forth with such power? Her defense was completely airtight, causing even Cangwu Jiu to be unable to do anything to her at all. This was simply inconceivable!

It was Cangwu Jiu she was facing!

“Can, can it be that senior apprentice-sister had been hiding her power all along?” Northson was puzzled. “But she hasn’t been training for much longer than senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning has.”

The main hall of the Skylight Palace.

The Xia Emperor, watching, couldn’t help but smile. “The situation has just reversed.”

“Just like in the poem; ‘the same mountains and the same rivers, with seemingly no path forward; then the shady willow tree, the brilliant flowers, and a mountain village’¹. Something pleasant and unexpected has just occurred.” Lu Dongbin sighed in surprised. “Who would’ve imagined that at this critical moment, the little girl managed to reawaken her memories from her past life? Judging from what I saw...her reawakening of memories caused her to master at least four complete Dao-Paths. Her level of insight in the Grand Dao of Taiji is quite high as well; in her past life, she must’ve been a fairly formidable Loose Immortal.”

The Grand Dao of Taiji and four complete Dao-Paths; this would make someone a supreme expert amongst Loose Immortals.

“She had already mastered two Daos before this.” The Immortal Elder of the Northlands, nursing a cup of wine, rolled his head. “When one is at a high enough level of comprehension, it does indeed become possible for the memories from a previous life to reawaken. However, it is quite hard for the memories of a past life as a Loose Immortal to completely awaken; it seems in that instant, she suffered a severe mental blow which stimulated her, causing her soul to instantly explode and activate the hidden memories.”

“Mm.”

“Right.”

The Pure Yang True Immortals present all nodded.

The Conclave of Immortal Destiny had more than a hundred thousand participants, and there were many reincarnated Immortals amongst them. It was indeed theoretically possible for them to reawaken their past memories...but it was extremely, extremely rare.

“What’s the name of this little lass?” Lu Dongbin looked towards the Xia Emperor. “I don’t know her name yet.”

“Her name is Yu Wei. Her Daoist title is Rainbowflame; because she is a reincarnated Immortal, she is referred to by others as the Rainbowflame Fairy,” the Xia Emperor said. “She, too, hails from the Black-White College of Stillwater Commandery. You already know about Ji Ning, who is next to her. This time, the Black-White College has produced three attendees, and each of them truly are formidable.”

“The Sloppy Daoist is the disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu, and his power is on par with Cangwu Jiu, Xiamang Zishan, and Ji Ning. This Yu Wei was originally weaker, but now that she’s regained her former memories, she’s on the same level as well,” Sovereign Hao said with a sigh.

“As I see it, the Sloppy Daoist has trained for more than a century, while Yu Wei had memories from a past life that she reawakened. But Ji Ning has only trained for thirty years, yet already has such incredible power...this is rather inconceivable.” Lu Dongbin stroked his jaw, murmuring to himself, “As I see it, Ji Ning has tremendous potential.”

The Xia Emperor laughed. “Lu Dongbin, can it be that you want to take on a disciple?”

“No, no, no...I actually have more of a liking for that little lass named Yu Wei.” Lu Dongbin’s eyes lit up. “She was actually stimulated to the point of having her former memories awaken; this little lass is quite, quite amusing.”

The others all immediately shook their heads. Reincarnated Immortals generally didn’t have much potential; if they weren’t able to overcome the tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal in their past life, then the chances they would succeed in this one would be very, very low.

“Ji Ning does have some potential.” The Xia Emperor murmured quietly to himself. He had already taken notice of twenty one youths in this Conclave, each of which had tremendous potential; Ji Ning was one of them.

Within the world of the Diagram.

BOOM!

Ji Ning was suppressed by Xiamang Zishan’s might; although he used his agility to counter the other’s raw power, he was still wounded by their colliding blows. Still, this sort of injury was minor; Ning was still paying full attention to his senior apprentice-sister, only to discover that under Cangwu Jiu’s attack, Yu Wei had suddenly exploded with power. She was actually able to fight him to a standstill! This caused Ning to feel both astonished and delighted.

“Junior apprentice-brother, come over here. Hurry up and collect your sword array,” Yu Wei sent frantically.

“Senior apprentice-sister!” Ning stopped wasting time with Xiamang Zishan. With a whoosh, he swept through the air to move towards Yu Wei, while at the same time mentally commanding the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] swords to return to him.

“Let’s go.” Yu Wei grabbed Ning by the arm.

The black phoenix and the white phoenix suddenly began to revolve around each other, forming into a black and white vortex. Yu Wei grabbed Ning, then charged into the vortex.

Swoosh!

A brilliant, dazzling streak of black-and-white light appeared in the skies. They had instantly moved more than a thousand kilometers away.

“What, what technique is this?!” Xiamang Zishan walked over, saying in astonishment, “How could they have escaped so quickly? Cangwu Jiu, even you were unable to catch them? Didn’t you say that you are the fastest person in the world at the Wanxiang level?”

“I can’t catch them.” Cangwu Jiu shook his head. “I can tell that this is evasive technique which uses a magic treasure...a technique that was specifically designed for escape, formed from the Grand Dao of Taiji. This woman has an extremely high level of comprehension in the Grand Dao of Taiji!”

.....

Within a mountain cave. After setting up a simple formation, Ning plopped his rear down.

“Xiamang Zishan really was an absolute madman.” Ning felt utterly exhausted; the earlier battle had been simply too frenetic. Suddenly, from the corner of his eye he saw a pool of water located deep in the cave. He immediately ran over, then used his hands to cup some water and wash his face. “That feels great.”

Yu Wei laughed.

She was going to be able to continue to stay with her junior apprentice-brother in the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers.

She walked towards the side of the pool, then sat down. With a wave of her hand, she produced a jade flute, then began to gently blow it.

The sound of the flute was melodious and leisurely, seeming to reach deep into a person’s heart.

Ning, stunned, put down the water in his hands and sat down to listen.

The sound of the flute was drifting and soft...

...it spoke of a vast grassland, a peaceful, gentle tribe, and a female child who was the member of that small tribe...

...the peace was destroyed, and disaster descended...

...the female child embarked upon the path of slaughter, becoming a terrifying female Asura...

.....

One scene after another, starting from childhood in the past life, to death and reincarnation...they all entered Ning’s mind.

The sound of the flute seemed to possess an indescribable magic power, causing Ning to feel joy, rage, sorry, and pleasure. It was a flute song that bored straight through to the heart. Ning was completely drawn into it. He looked at the black-robed woman playing the flute. This memory was deeply engraved into Ning’s heart. Even after a tremendous period of time passed, he would still be unable to forget it.

Drip.

A single tear fell down onto the ground, staining the dirt.

Ning was startled awakened from the reverie the flute song had brought him into. Only now did he realize that Yu Wei had two tearstains on her face. He couldn't help but call out, "Senior apprentice-sister!" Yu Wei trembled...then gently put down her flute.

"Senior apprentice-sister, you..." Ning was a bit worried.

"I'm fine." Yu Wei shook her head, looking at Ning. She even smiled. "I just thought of some things in my past life. Although everything has already happened...now that the memories have truly returned, they really do make it hard to control one's emotions. Still, those are all in the past now; let the past be in the past. I've already reincarnated into a different world. In truth...I would rather not know about what happened in my past life."

"Can you talk to me about it?" Ning asked.

"I don't want to." Yu Wei shook her head.

"Then...did you have a Dao-companion in your past life?" Ning suddenly asked.

Yu Wei was startled. She gave Ning a close look, as though wanting to see something in Ning's expression. She then gently shook her head. "I did not!"

1. In the original Chinese, only a very short fragment of the poem was included, which has become an idiom. The full poem, which comes from 1166, involves a weary traveler who travelled through countless mountains that seemed identical, but then finally, as he was expecting yet another identical mountain, he saw a beautiful village with a willow tree and brilliant flowers beneath it.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 13: Immortals and Gods

"Oh." Ning said hurriedly, "I...used up a lot of divine power in the previous battle. I need to take a rest."

As he spoke, Ning hurriedly walked deeper into the cave. Waving his arm, he chopped out a neat, flat region onto the ground and then lay down. Using his arms as a pillow, he immediately closed his eyes and began to snore.

He seemed calm, but in his heart Ning felt a bit confused.

"Why the hell did I ask senior apprentice-sister if she had a Dao-companion or not?" Ning's mind was restless. He was a smart person, and an Immortal cultivator who had understood his own heart long ago. He quickly understood the issue. "Can it be that I'm..."

"Forget it...how can Dao-companions be so casually joined?"

"Am I mentally ready?"

"Not yet! I'm not yet ready..."

Ning turned in his sleep, suppressing everything in his heart.

He thought back to the experiences he had in the past half year. He thought back to the first time he had met her, and all the times he had met her up till today. Ning had to admit...from the very beginning, he had felt very friendly towards her, because she was unlike Ninelotus, who had many beliefs that were different from Ning's. He and Ninelotus were from different worlds. As for Yu Wei...many of her beliefs were the same as his, and her personality was similar as well!

Her birth...

Her experiences...

Her talent...

He and Yu Wei were very similar. She was even more intelligent than him! The past half year he had spent with her was very relaxed and comfortable. She had silently, tracelessly slipped deep into his heart with her warmth. Just now in particular, when she had played the flute, the song of the flute had thoroughly penetrated his heart. Ning could even feel the joy, the pain, and the sadness she felt in her heart...

This feeling, as though he had touched her soul, made Ning feel a certain softness towards her. He even wanted to go over and hug her. This was why his subconscious had moved him to ask her about Dao-companions.

"Dao-companions...this sort of promise cannot be casually made." Ning sighed quietly to himself in his heart.

.....

Yu Wei watched Ning lie there deep in the cave. She rose, then walked to the entrance of the cave, where she sat down. She stared at the vast, seemingly endless mountain forest. The cave was protected by a bewildering formation, and so the outside world couldn't see inside it.

Moonlight shone down into the cave.

Yu Wei picked up her flute, holding it as she sat there quietly.

"I can feel junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning's heart."

"Previously, I held back, wanting to let it all pass."

"But on the sixth day I was in the Diagram, I was in dire straits...despite how vast the Diagram was, junior apprentice-brother ran into me. Can it be that fate is telling me that I should be together with him?"

"But...can I even have a Dao-companion? Can I dare hope for a Dao-companion?"

Yu Wei stared at the moon hanging high in the skies. She quietly asked..."Heavens above...what should I do?"

Yu Wei understood that she had reached a fork in the path.

If she chose to be with Ning, then the two might have a chance. But if she didn't want to be with him, then after leaving the Diagram, she would have to separate from him and make a clean break.

.....

One month after another passed. The number of Wanxiang Adepts within the Diagram dropped continuously. Now, virtually all the remaining competitors within the Diagram were monsters capable of exploding forth with power that rivaled ordinary Loose Immortals.

Within the imperial citadel's plaza.

"Haha, only a thousand remain within the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers, but the Black-White College has taken up three of those slots!" Immortal Fivecraze was utterly delighted. There was no way any of the other powers of Stillwater Commandery, including the Northmont clan of Stillwater, could compare to the Black-White College in this regard. The three experts the Black-White College had sent out this time were simply too dazzling.

"Even the Marquis of Stillwater came over to chat with me for quite a long period of time. Even other marquises came over, as well as leaders of supreme clans and sects." Immortal Fivecraze then frowned. "But it's weird...Ji Ning is clearly very powerful as well, but why is it that those who came to chat with me discussed little Sloppy even more?"

He could sense the goodwill these major clans and sects were displaying towards the Black-White College was primarily aimed towards befriending the Sloppy Daoist. It seemed as though Ji Ning and Yu Wei were far from being comparable with the Sloppy daoist.

"Weird, weird. Ji Ning is very formidable as well, and he's trained for an even shorter period of time." Immortal Fivecraze was puzzled.

.....

"How bizarre." Lu Dongbin, who had spent a period of time napping in the main hall of the Skylight Palace, stared at the Diagram. "I took a three month nap...why is that this little girl named Yu Wei still hasn't become Dao-companions with Ji Ning yet?"

"Dao-companions represent a promise that cannot be so easily uttered!" The Pure Yang True Immortal who was dressed in black robes decorated with a blood-colored taiji diagram shook his head.

"You can't dawdle when it comes to matters of love!" Lu Dongbin shook his head. "Based on my experiences roaming the Three Realms and countless minor worlds, matters of love must be immediately seized and settled down upon at the critical moments in time! If you hesitate, the more you dawdle, the more difficult it will become to form Dao-companions. I am willing to bet on it! If this Yu Wei and Ji Ning are to become Dao-companions, they'll become Dao-companions within the Diagram. If they don't, then after they leave it...without these shared daily life-and-death experiences, the chances will drop even more!"

"Do any of you dare to bet against me?" Lu Dongbin stared at them.

"Lu Dongbin, you are a Sage of Love. You spout so much wisdom about love...why don't you have a Dao-companion of your own?" The True Immortal with the blood-colored taiji diagram robes spoke out.

"Those in the game are blinded by it. Those who are watching the game have clear eyes." Lu Dongbin gave a calm response, then stopped talking.

.....

Within a quiet mountain. A bewildering formation had been set down. Ning was seated in the lotus position atop a grassy area.

Streams of fire and water swirled around the surrounding area. Surges of power from the Solar Star and the Lunar Star were being absorbed into Ning's body. Although they were within the world of the Diagram, he was still able to train in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens].

Rumble...

A series of rumbling sounds could be heard from within Ning's body. His bones were clattering together as his muscles and skin were rapidly transforming.

At his current level, Ning's physical body was already extremely tough; he wasn't too far off from the likes of the Fiendgod, Xiangliu Fang. A casual breath from him could generate a hurricane that would sweep out for a thousand kilometers.

Slowly...everything calmed down. Ning opened his eyes, revealing a smile.

"Junior apprentice-brother?" Yu Wei, who had been standing guard for him, looked eagerly at Ning.

"Mm. I've already broken through." Ning let out a laugh. "It took me quite a few years, but I've finally managed to reach the twelfth level of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. And it really is different; the twelfth level of this technique...it's comparable to ordinary early Primal stage Fiendgod Body Refiners. My divine body and my soul have completely joined...and I can feel that my soul is rapidly strengthening."

Fiendgod Body Refiners and Ki Refiners...these were two different paths. Upon reaching the Primal level, Fiendgods could directly split off a clone! Upon reaching the Void level, they could pluck out a hair and transform it into a clone!

Now that Ning had trained to the twelfth stage, his body was actually quite similar to the Primal Turtle-Snake in that it was capable of nourishing the soul. In addition, he was able to join his soul to his body! His soul was able to enter every single part of his body. In other words...Ning's current body was no longer made of mere flesh. His flesh and blood contained his soul within it as well! This was why he was now capable of creating mobile 'clones'.

"Your soul is rapidly gaining in strength?" Yu Wei hurriedly said, "I heard that the souls of Fiendgods are generally even more powerful than that of ordinary Primal Daoists."

"It's true." Ning nodded. "The soul-nourishment provided by my divine body is even more astonishing than that provided by the Primal Turtle-Snake...based on what I sensed when I created my Primaltwin, my Fiendgod body is strengthening my soul at least five or six times faster than the Primal Turtle-Snake did."

"No wonder Fiendgod Body Refiners are so powerful. Everyone says that at higher levels, Fiendgod Body Refiners are even more powerful, especially after overcoming the Celestial Tribulation and becoming Empyrean Gods. Empyrean Gods are comparable to Pure Yang True Immortals in power," Yu Wei sighed.

“Senior apprentice-sister, you know about Empyrean Gods and Pure Yang True Immortals?” Ning was startled.

“Don’t forget that I’m a reincarnated Immortal.” Yu Wei nodded. “Based on what I know...for Immortal cultivators, the stages are Zifu Disciples, Wanxiang Adepts, Primal Daoists, Void-level Earth Immortals...and, for those who pass the Celestial Tribulation, the stages are Celestial Immortals and True Immortals! True Immortals are also known as Pure Yang True Immortals. After them are Golden Immortals of the Great Firmament, also known as Daofathers of the Great Firmament! Alternately, they can just be addressed as Daofather! Daofathers are the absolute most supreme figures of the Three Realms. They are unquestioned hegemonies who are even more exalted in status than the Celestial Emperor!”

Ning’s eyes lit up. He didn’t know any of these things. He had only trained for thirty years. Compared to someone who had memories from a past life, he did indeed know very little regarding the Three Realms.

“Golden Immortals of the Great Firmament, also known as Daofathers of the Great Firmament or as Daofathers?” Ning murmured to himself.

“Mastery of a Dao-Path is a prerequisite for becoming a Celestial Immortal. Mastery of a Grand Dao is a prerequisite for becoming a Pure Yang True Immortal. And mastery of a Heavenly Dao is the prerequisite for becoming a Daofather of the Great Firmament!” Yu Wei said.

Ning’s heart shook. Mastery of a Heavenly Dao?

When the Black-White College’s Headmaster Daoist Jadesea had discussed these things with him, he hadn’t explained in such detail. It seemed as though Yu Wei was truly extraordinary in her past life. At least, she knew much more than Daoist Jadesea!

“After Pangu established the heavens and the earth, there were ten Heavenly Daos! This is common knowledge for Celestial Immortals. It was a Celestial Immortal who told me this,” Yu Wei said.

“Ten Heavenly Daos?” Ning immediately asked, “What are the ten?”

“They are the Heavenly Dao of Metal, the Heavenly Dao of Wood, the Heavenly Dao of Water, the Heavenly Dao of Fire, the Heavenly Dao of Earth, the Heavenly Dao of Life, the Heavenly Dao of Destruction, the Heavenly Dao of Yin, the Heavenly Dao of Yang, the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos,” Yu Wei said.

Ning immediately memorized this all.

Metal, wood, water, fire, earth, Yin, Yang, life, destruction, and primordial chaos!

“All things in the world were born from primordial chaos. They are then split into Yin and Yang. The Three Realms...its foundation comes from the Five Elements,” Yu Wei said. “For example, your Dao of Rainwater actually belongs to the Grand Dao of the Waterdrop. As for the Grand Dao of the Waterdrop, it belongs to the Heavenly Dao of Water.”

Ning nodded.

Dao. Grand Dao. Heavenly Dao.

The Five Elements served as the foundation for the functioning of the Three Realms, and were all Heavenly Daos. This was as he had expected.

“Mastery of a complete Grand Dao is already incredibly difficult,” Yu Wei said. “As for the legendary Heavenly Daos...only those who master them can have the exalted title of ‘Daofather’. After all, the Heavenly Daos are the source of all things. Thus, their masters can be titled Daofathers!”

Ning now understood.

Daoist Threelives had been born with mastery of a Grand Dao. He had later mastered many Grand Daos, but never a Heavenly Dao.

“Daofathers of the Great Firmament are seated above all. They possess inconceivable power, and are the hegemony of the Three Realms,” Yu Wei said. “Pure Yang True Immortals are the experts of the Three Realms! Daofathers won’t casually engage in combat, and so the most glorious, eye-catching figures of the Three Realms are actually the True Immortals. As for Celestial Immortals, they are also free-willed, unconstrained figures with immortal life. They can dominate a region for themselves; after all, Pure Yang True Immortals are fairly rare in the Three Worlds, and so Celestial Immortals have very high statuses as well.”

Ning nodded. Only today, did he understand...some of the higher levels of the Immortal path.

“What about the path of Fiendgods?” Ning immediately asked.

“After Fiendgods pass the Heavenly Tribulation, they become Empyrean Gods! Empyrean Gods are comparable to Pure Yang True Immortals in power. Every single one of them is an expert of the Three Realms,” Yu Wei said. “Above Empyrean Gods are True Gods! True Gods are generally actual Fiendgods who have created their own divine ability. They war against the heavens and against the earth with terrifying power, and are absolutely comparable to Golden Immortal Daofathers of the Great Firmament!”

“True Gods are the highest level of Fiendgods possible. According to legends...the Fiendgods born in the primordial chaos before the heavens were established were at all least Empyrean Gods! The strongest amongst them were True Gods of Primordial Chaos! They were born into the very highest realms of power of the Three Realms. Even without training, they were incomparably frightening figures.”