

Desolate 341

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 14: The Final Month

Yu Wei said with envy, "They are the true favored children of the heavens. Ki Refiners revere Golden Immortal Daofathers of the Great Firmament, whereas Fiendgod Refiners revere True Gods of Primordial Chaos. Daofathers or True Gods; ever since Pangu established the heavens, they have been the most supreme of existences in the Three Realms. They are the ones who truly determine the destiny of the Three Realms. Even the Celestial Emperor is chosen by these major powers."

Ning suddenly felt many thoughts flood his mind.

Daoist Threelives was born in primordial chaos and had mastered a Grand Dao. Clearly, Daoist Threelives was a True God of Primordial Chaos!

However, according to what the giant yellow bear had said, Daoist Threelives had once suffered a catastrophic defeat, losing an arm in it. The proud Daoist Threelives elected not to regrow his arm, continuing to only have one arm. Thanks to his constant research and meditation, he had developed one of the ten most terrifying divine abilities of the Three Realms...the [Starseizing Hand]!

"Ji Ning." The giant yellow bear's voice suddenly echoed in Ning's mind.

"Senior," Ning immediately said.

"Amongst Empyrean Gods, there are those with powerful divine abilities and those with weak ones. Amongst True Gods, there are those with formidable divine abilities and ordinary ones. How can they all possibly be on par?" The giant yellow bear clearly felt displeased on behalf of his master. "In addition...if Master was still alive, I imagine that he would have long ago mastered a Heavenly Dao. Only...despite the passage of ages, Master has never come to seek me out..."

The giant yellow bear's voice suddenly faded away. He didn't know if Daoist Threelives was still alive or not either.

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After this conversation with Yu Wei, Ning's vision had been greatly broadened.

At the most exalted, venerable positions were the Daofathers of the Great Firmament and the True Gods of Primordial Chaos. The Three Realms were their chessboard, and they controlled everything in it.

The Celestial Emperor and the Yama-Kings of Hell were jointly decided upon and appointed by them.

"However...I wonder what Daoist Threelives encountered in the past, which caused even him to feel that he had no confidence in being able to survive," Ning pondered to himself. When Daoist Threelives had left behind the underwater estate, he had gone to deal with a so-called 'tremendous calamity'. Afterwards, all word of him had been lost, and he had never returned to the underwater estate.

Daoist Threelives was a major power. Something that could cause even him to feel uncertain regarding his chances of survival...what sort of calamity was that?!

“The Three Realms...”

“I imagine that senior apprentice-sister Yu Wei doesn’t know the true face of the Three Realms either.” Ning continued to feel as though a layer of gauze was preventing him from understanding the truth of things. For example, in the Netherworld Kingdom, he had encountered a terrifyingly strong power which had assaulted the Six Paths of Reincarnation. Fortunately, Ning had leapt into the Six Paths and been reincarnated; otherwise, he would’ve died permanently on the spot.

“Who attacked the Six Paths of Reincarnation?” The more Ning’s horizons were broadened, the more he was amazed...because the Six Paths of Reincarnation were the most important, central region for the functioning of the Three Realms. Most likely, even major powers wouldn’t dare to act rashly there. Otherwise, the other major powers would be enraged and join forces to deal with them.

“I’m nothing but an ant; this matter isn’t for me to worry about. If the heavens fall, the tall fellows will hold it up.” Ning quickly discarded these thoughts for now.

Time passed in the blink of an eye. It was already the twelfth month within the trial of the Diagram. This was the final month!

A dirty-looking maiden and a violet-robed youth were walking forward, shoulder-to-shoulder.

“Where the hell did this Adept Ninedeaths come from?” The violet-robed youth glanced sideways at the maiden, secretly muttering to himself. He, Xiamang Qi, was one of the most outstanding young members of the imperial Xiamang clan, second only to Xiamang Zishan! In addition, he had never been convinced of his inferiority; he always wanted to be able to overcome Zishan with his power.

During this Conclave, Xiamang Qi had revealed his magnificence as well. His strength was formidable...but upon encounter this girl, this so-called ‘Adept Ninedeaths’, he had felt deflated.

“This girl is too powerful. No matter how I hit her, I couldn’t injure her. Her body is just like a magic treasure.” The violet-robed youth was very resigned. “Adept Ninedeaths? More like Adept Nodeath!”

The dirty maiden had said to him back then, “I have enough talismans already. The more time passes in the Diagram, the more powerful the survivors are. Many of them have already formed into small teams. Kid, you seem pretty powerful; shall we join into a team of our own? That will make the final two months easier.”

“If we encounter any enemies and kill them, can I have the talismans?” Xiamang Qi listed his requirement.

“Fine.” The dirty maiden nodded, and so Xiamang Qi and Adept Ninedeaths joined forces.

“Eh?” The two suddenly came to a halt. They stared into the distance, where four figures had appeared, some male and some female.

There was a wild, black-haired youth who was very skinny, a silver-haired maiden, a woman who was so beautiful she looked like a fairy from the legendary Moon Palace, and a bald, black-skinned youth. The black-skinned youth was actually barefoot, and he wielded a gnarled black staff in his hands.

“Kindwater Qi? Second brother, why is it that you are travelling alongside Adept Danzhu?” Xiamang Qi laughed.

“Big brother?!” The skinny, black-haired youth called out in surprise.

These two were known as the ‘Two Qis’ of the imperial capital. This was because both of them had strange, rather wicked personalities. However, the two just so happened to take a liking to each other, and they had become sworn brothers. Xiamang Qi was the elder brother, while Kindwater Qi was the younger brother. 1

“The more time passes, the more dangerous it gets; I no longer dare to travel alone.” Kindwater Qi said with resignation, “I feel confident in my power, but even Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu have formed an alliance long ago. We have to do the same! The four of us even fought against those two. Fortunately, thanks to Blackstone’s presence, the two were frightened into immediately fleeing.”

“Oh?” Xiamang Qi was surprised, and the dirty maiden by his side, Adept Ninedeaths, revealed a look of surprise as well.

Someone had caused Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu to flee?

“Introduce us,” Xiamang Qi said with a laugh.

“You already know Adept Danzhu of the East Seas.” The black-haired Kindwater Qi pointed at the beautiful maiden who looked like a fairy from the Moon Palace. Adept Danzhu smiled and nodded at them.

Kindwater Qi then pointed at the silver-haired maiden. “This is Adept Snowfly; her magic arts are extremely powerful.”

He then pointed at the barefoot, black-skinned youth with a gnarled black staff. “This is Adept Blackstone. Adept Blackstone is exceptionally skilled in the Fuxi Formation Staffs, and a true grandmaster of the art of formations...with him present, we can flee when we wish and attack when we wish. Adept Blackstone is also extremely powerful in close combat. With a single blow, he was able to block an attack from Xiamang Zishan...as I see it, Adept Blackstone absolutely has a chance to become number one in this Conclave.”

Xiamang Qi and Adept Ninedeaths both looked towards the bald, staff-wielding, black-skinned youth.

It was quite curious. When they faced this bald, black-skinned youth, they felt as though they were facing the vast heavens themselves...

“A grandmaster of formations? Capable of withstanding Xiamang Zishan in close combat?” Xiamang Qi was secretly shocked.

“Hm...” The dirty maiden looked towards the bald, black-skinned youth with curiosity as well. He, in turn, was looking back at her. The two of them both had an indescribable feeling...that the other was quite terrifying!

“How about it? Shall we travel together?” Xiamang Qi asked.

Kindwater Qi looked towards the black-skinned youth.

The black-skinned youth gave the dirty maiden a glance, then revealed an extremely thin smile. “Fine.”

“Fine.” The dirty maiden spoke out as well.

And so...

The six of them joined into a squad.

In this squad, Adepts Blackstone, Ninedeaths, and Danzhu had already acquired more than 1400 talismans. As for the other three, Xiamang Qi, Kindwater Qi, and Adept Snowfly still needed a bit more.

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Ji Ning and Yu Wei were wandering the mountains as well. They moved as fast as the wind, instantly moving across the peaks. As they walked, they released their divine sense to scan up to a thousand kilometers away.

Although it was the twelfth month already, nothing had changed between the two. Ji Ning and Yu Wei acted like a pair of normal fellow disciples.

“Senior apprentice-sister, how many talismans do you have? How many more do you need?” Ning asked.

“Do you have enough?” Yu Wei asked.

“I have 1200 or so,” Ning said. “Actually, since everyone is going to have different amounts of talismans, I should have a 99% chance of ranking in the top eighty.”

“Better to be safe. Only if you have 1370 will you be absolutely certain to be qualified of passing the trial,” Yu Wei said. “I have slightly fewer talismans than you; I have nearly eight hundred.”

Ning nodded. The two had continued to split talismans based on who had killed the foe. Although Ning had been trying to hold back for her sake, ever since he had reached the twelfth level of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], his power had simply grown too great. Upon encountering some powerful foes, Ning had to explode forth with full power. Naturally, he would thus be the one to kill them, and so the talismans would go to him.

“In the final month, I imagine that all of the remaining survivors have hundreds of talismans on them. As long as we just kill two or three, we’ll have enough,” Ning said.

“But killing those final two or three will be very hard.” Yu Wei spoke with great solemnity as well.

There were now fewer and fewer people present. It was quite hard to run into someone, and in each battle, if the enemy felt that the situation was bad, they would immediately flee! To kill them or force them to give up their talismans...it was far too difficult!

“We still have plenty of time. We have more than half a month,” Ning said.

The two continued to advance, and in the blink of an eye, they had passed more than a thousand kilometers. Their divine sense continued to sweep out to a thousand kilometers as well.

“Eh?” Ning and Yu Wei suddenly raised their heads, staring towards the sky. A ship was charging downwards at high speed towards them.

“That ship is covered with restrictive spells, making it unable to be scanned by divine sense. They come with ill intentions. Be careful.” Yu Wei mentally messaged Ning, but the two were bold due to their power; they wouldn’t easily retreat or flee.

Swoosh!

A thousand kilometers was passed in an instant. The ship vanished, and six figures appeared on the grassy ground.

Ning and Yu Wei’s pupils contracted.

“Xiamang Qi, a genius of the imperial Xiamang clan. Kindwater Qi, a genius of the Kindwater clan. And Adept Danzhu!” Ning and Yu Wei’s glances fell upon the figure of the beautiful Adept Danzhu, who looked like a fairy maiden from the Moon Palace. Of the six before them, the most famous one was Adept Danzhu.

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The main hall of the Skylight Palace.

“For the Ji Ning – Yu Wei pair, their earlier encounter with Xiamang Zishan and Cangwu Jiu was a tribulation.” Lu Dongbin said with a sigh, “That time, they only escaped because Yu Wei awakened her former memories. This time...these six are even more powerful. That dirty maiden has mastered five complete Daos! That bald, bare-foot, black-skinned youth is an expert in formations. Both of these two are capable of fighting to be the number one competitor in this Conclave. Upon encounter this six-person squad...Ji Ning’s duo is in huge trouble.”

“Within the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers, how many have died in the past year? Each battle was a life-and-death trial for them. For your precious little pair of Dao-companions...this is nothing more than a slightly tougher trial,” Truelord Chiji said calmly. 2

“This battle is going to be interesting,” the Xia Emperor laughed.

There were roughly twenty or so that had a chance at the top spot in this Conclave.

Adept Ninedeaths, Adept Blackstone, and Ji Ning, after his recent breakthrough...they all had a chance at becoming number one in this Conclave.

1. Qi can mean bizarre/strange/wondrous.

2. Chiji literally means crimson taiji; this is most likely the person with the blood-taiji robes mentioned earlier.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 15: Dire Circumstances

Although Ji Ning and Yu Wei were wary, they weren’t afraid. As they saw it, the only one of the six who they needed to be careful of was Adept Danzhu. Ning had broken through to the twelfth level of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], and he was completely confident in being able to defeat Adept Danzhu. What he didn’t realize was that although Adept Danzhu was formidable, in this six-person squad, Adept Blackstone and Adept Ninedeaths were even more frightening.

Whoosh! The bald, barefoot, black-skinned youth suddenly smirked, and instantly, streaks of light shot out everywhere like bolts of lightning. They were ancient, plain-looking Fuxi Staffs.

“Fuxi Staffs! A formation!” Ning was startled. There were very few supreme geniuses who also trained in formations.

Rumble...

Streaks of light intersected and runes formed and flowed. The formation appeared, locking down the nearby region of space for ten kilometers, completely capturing Ning and Yu Wei within it.

“Done.” The black-skinned youth said calmly, “I’ve already sealed this area off. There’s no place these two can run to. Whether you decide to kill them or release them is up to you.” He actually sat down in the lotus position towards the edges of the sealing barrier, planting his gnarled staff next to him. He just sat there, clearly not wanting to intervene.

He already had enough talismans; for him to set up this grand sealing formation against the enemies was enough of a show of kindness for his teammates. Have him do battle as well? He couldn’t be bothered to...and in his bones, he wasn’t the type of person who enjoyed battle.

“Ji Ning.” Xiamang Qi said coldly, “Obediently hand over all of your talismans, and the two of you can live. Otherwise...death is your only escape!”

“Hand over your talismans!” Kindwater Qi barked as well.

“Hand them over.” The silver-haired maiden, Adept Snowfly, barked at them as well.

These three didn’t have enough talismans yet. Naturally, they felt the most urgent.

Adept Danzhu smiled. “Fellow Daoist Ji Ning, to tell you the truth, there are people in this squad who are more powerful than me. I urge you to cease any attempts at struggling and hand over the talismans. That way, you will stay alive. You’ve only trained for a very short period of time; your potential is limitless. There’s no need for you to push yourself too far in this Conclave.”

Ning stood there in the distance. “Come and take them, if you can.” He replied coldly, “You want me to just give them up to you? Keep dreaming.”

Alongside Ning’s voice, an enormous Waterflame Lotus suddenly appeared and bloomed. The layers of fiery lotus petals and watery lotus petals were incomparably beautiful as they continuously swiveled. Ning and Yu Wei were in the center, protected by the enormous Waterflame Lotus.

“Don’t waste words with them,” the silver-haired maiden said coldly. “Attack.” As she spoke, a horsetail whisk suddenly appeared in her hand. She flicked it outwards, and thousands of white strands flew towards the air, then formed into a bizarre beast’s head. This snowy white beast’s head appeared incomparably savage. Its mouth was filled with rows on rows of jagged teeth that gnashed against each other.

The snowy white beast head opened its mouth, then bit downwards towards Ning and Yu Wei.

The Waterflame Lotus, however, continued to protect the two of them.

Crunch. The snowy white head bit down against the Waterflame Lotus, and its countless teeth ground against each other, easily biting through a layer of leaves.

“Oh?” Ning was secretly startled. Still, as he had expected, no one who was able to survive to this stage would be easy to handle.

“Kill.” Kindwater Qi’s hands formed together into a hand-seal. Instantly, layers of black light flew out from his body, forming giant serpents that appeared in midair. A total of six giant black serpents appeared, wildly assaulting Ning and Yu Wei and also breaking through a layer of leaves.

“Too stubborn.” Adept Danzhu let out a soft sigh, but then her eyes suddenly lit up. An invisible divine will attack instantly swept towards Ning and Yu Wei.

Yu Wei’s face turned white. As for Ning, he felt as though his soul was being stabbed at by a needle-like divine will. However, his soul and his divine body had now completely fused together, and it was far more durable against this sort of attack. He was able to completely withstand it.

“Ninedeaths, kill them!” Xiamang Qi howled as he transformed into a 54-meter tall giant. His entire body glowed with a golden light, and he radiated an aura that filled the heavens. He was wielding a giant warblade in his hands, and he trampled past the already-shattered lotus leaves as he charged towards Ning and Yu Wei.

“Ji Ning? Seems pretty powerful.” The dirty-looking maiden chortled. With a flicker, she transformed to a size of sixty meters, but her body didn’t give off a hint of any aura at all. She seemed quite ordinary, just enormous, and she charged forward with completely empty hands.

The five of them had instantly attacked in unison.

“F*ck off!”

Ning suddenly exploded with power, becoming a 54-meter tall giant with an aura that similarly filled the heavens. Letting out an enraged roar, his divine will formed into countless invisible swords, warblades, and longswords that immediately struck towards Adept Danzhu, Adept Snowfly, Adept Ninedeaths, Kindwater Qi, and Xiamang Qi.

When a Ki cultivator broke through to the Primal Daoist level, it was his soul that benefited the most. Similarly, once a Fiendgod Body Refiner broke through to the Primal level, his soul would be tremendously benefited as well. Ning had reached the twelfth stage, and his soul had been nourished by his divine body, resulting it in explosively increasing in strength. In fact, it was already almost comparable to his Primaltwin’s soul.

In this clash, the faces of all five immediately changed.

“BREAK!” Ning, his aura filling the heavens, wielded two enormous Immortal swords in his hands as he charged forward, sending the swords howling forth as his sword-light chopped directly against that enormous snowy white beast’s head.

BOOM!

The snowy white beast's head was immediately chopped apart and collapsed, transforming back into countless white strands that flew black to the silver-haired maiden with the flywhisk. She had a look of shock on her face.

"Go!" After breaking through the snowy white hound with one sword chop, Ning sent his dominating sword-light forward once more, charging straight against the six giant black snakes, knocking all of them flying backwards.

"Kill!" With the next step, Ning arrived in front of Xiamang Qi, and his sword-light chopped directly towards him.

"Block!" Xiamang Qi was frightened by Ning's ferocious, savage aura. He didn't dare to be overconfident, and he focused on defense. CLANG! With a loud sound, Xiamang Qi's enormous, 54-meter tall giant body was knocked backwards like a meteor, slamming directly against the walls of the distant sealing barrier.

"He's this powerful?!" Xiamang Qi, Kindwater Qi, and Adept Snowfly were both awestruck. Against the three of them, Ning had absolutely suppressed and crushed them; if they were fighting one-on-one, he probably would've taken their lives in just two or three exchanges of blows.

Swoosh. Right at this moment, the dirty-looking youth charged straight forward towards Ning. She struck out with her palm, and it hacked downwards like a knife towards Ning. This palm-blow...it was simply perfectly exquisite. Ning could sense the unfathomable profoundness of it, a profoundness which absolutely surpassed his own sword technique.

Ning raised his own sword as well to meet the palm.

BANG!

The sword-light and the palm collided against each other; the dirty-looking maiden was knocked backwards and forced to take three steps back, while Ning only took a single step back.

"What?!" Ning was shocked. During the final few months in the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers, he had always immediately used the [Starseizing Hand] when he attacked; he didn't dare to hold anything back at this point. After all, none of the survivors were easy to deal with. For example, against Xiamang Qi, even though he had immediately used the [Starseizing Hand], he still hadn't been able to kill him with a single blow. Clearly, all of the survivors were extremely powerful! But this maiden actually dared to block his sharp sword with her hands, and did so successfully?! This was insane!

"The rest of you, go handle that woman. Leave this Ji Ning to me." The dirty-looking maiden was clearly quite excited.

Ning's body blurred momentarily, and he instantly transformed into a three heads and six arms form. With six swords in his hands, he charged straight towards the dirty-looking maiden. "If you don't want to die, then hurry up and leave!"

"It's so rare for me to encounter a good opponent." Instead of leaving, the dirty-looking maiden went to welcome his attacks.

“Kill, kill, kill!” Ning showed no mercy at all. After using [Three Heads, Six Arms], his sword-light rained down like a curtain of lightning. This dirty-looking maiden, however, relied on her pair of palms. They danced in front of her and were actually able to block the majority of the sword-light. Although the remaining sword-light blows were able to pierce onto her body...they were only able to leave some minor wounds on her.

“How can her body be as tough as magic treasures?! My full-force blows can cause even Earth-ranked magic treasures to be torn asunder...but are only able to leave small wounds on her skin?” Ning was completely awestruck. “I can’t waste time with her.”

With a flash, Ning moved to charge towards Adept Snowfly and Kindwater Qi.

“You are mine!” The dirty-looking maiden’s body flashed as well. She, too, transformed with the [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique. She moved alongside Ning as though she were flying water, and her six palms continuously smashed and hacked towards Ning.

“What the hell?!” Ning was frantic. The maiden in front of him was completely insistent on continuing to fight against him. Although Ning’s swordplay was ferocious, against a person whose entire body was comparable to an unbreakable magic treasure, there was nothing he could do.

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Adept Snowfly, Kindwater Qi, Xiamang Qi, and Adept Danzhu, seeing the situation, all began to focus against Yu Wei.

“Black and white.”

“Taiji.”

Yu Wei stood there, the black phoenix and the white phoenix twirling around her. She was like an unbreakable steel wall, simultaneously dealing with the attacks of all four. The giant snowy white beast head, the six giant black serpents, and an enormous semi-translucent grand seal in the skies created by Adept Danzhu through a secret art...they came smashing down towards her two phoenixes repeatedly.

“Junior apprentice-brother.” Yu Wei sent a frantic mental call.

“Senior apprentice-sister.” Ning understood that she wasn’t going to be able to hold much longer. Although her power had increased tremendously, and although she was an expert at defense...she still wasn’t going to be able to defend against four at once.

The three-headed, six-armed Ji Ning roared furiously, “Get the f*ck away!”

“You aren’t strong enough to make me.” The dirty-looking maiden, also with three heads and six arms, had completely tied him down.

Ning hadn’t even felt this stifled when fighting against Xiamang Zishan. Not only did this maiden have a body like a magic treasure, she also had an extremely, extremely high level of comprehension regarding the Dao. Each of her techniques were unfathomably miraculous, and she was able to completely tie him down, giving him no chance to run away from her at all.

“Junior apprentice-brother.” Yu Wei’s voice rang out in Ning’s mind, and as it did, Ning saw what was happening from afar.

Boom!

The white phoenix finally collapsed, and the 54-meter tall Xiamang Qi charged towards Yu Wei, warblade at the ready.

“Go.” Ning frantically summoned the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. Instantly, more than seven hundred swords appeared, floating in midair and condensing their power to form a streak of sword-light that shot out towards Xiamang Qi. Although Ning’s close combat power had increased tremendously, the power of his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] hadn’t improve that much.

Clang! Xiamang Qi was able to block the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] with one saber blow. Although his body trembled from the collision, he continued to charged towards Yu Wei.

A single black phoenix was left, and it was struggling to defend against the grand seal, the giant black snake, and the snowy white beast head.

Xiamang Qi was charging into close combat...Yu Wei hurriedly moved to retreat, but given that they were trapped within this grand sealing formation and being attacked from all sides, where could she retreat to?!

Clang! After Xiamang Qi’s warblade blocked the attack from the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], his right arm suddenly began to emanate hundreds of bizarre colors and even a strange black ki that caused one’s heart to tremble as he grabbed towards Yu Wei.

“The [Myriad Hibernating Venoms]!” Yu Wei’s face immediately changed.

BOOM!

Although she struggled to block, how could she compare in close combat to a Fiendgod Refiner like Xiamang Qi? Instantly, his right arm, still emanating that terrifying black aura, pierced directly through her flank, and the terrifying venoms instantly invaded her entire body, causing her face to instantly turn a deathly dark gray color.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 16: The Seventh Stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]

Yu Wei understood that she was at a true life-and-death juncture. Her body suddenly flashed with a bloody light, forming into a blood-colored taiji symbol.

Swish!

Yu Wei transformed into a streak of blood light, retreating more than three hundred meters before collapsing to the ground. She spat out a mouthful of black-colored blood, a savage, jagged wound in her flank that was filled with black blood.

Ji Ning watched this all happen. His senior apprentice-sister had been stabbed through the flank by Xiamang Qi’s palm. She had spat out blood, then collapsed to the ground. This caused Ning’s eyes to instantly turn red.

A surge of uncontrollable rage and terror instantly filled his entire soul.

“AAAAHHHHH!!!!” Ning let out a massive howl, and a limitless bloodlust instantly filled every part of his spirit.

Kill! Kill! Kill!

Kill them all!

Kill all who oppose him!

“Angry, eh? Won’t do you any good.” The dirty-looking maiden continued to tie down Ning, seeming quite entertained.

“CHOP!” Ning let out an enraged howl. This howl emerged from the deepest parts of his soul, from the innermost depths of his spirit.

The three-headed, six-armed Ji Ning simultaneously struck out with all six swords, and six enormous streaks of sword-light immediately shone with incomparable brilliance. They transformed into six strings of line...the sword-light had been compressed into lines! There was nothing capable of stopping Ning...he was going to chop through all which stood in front of him!

He had never felt such a desire to kill. He had never before felt so determined.

The more than ten thousand life-and-death battles he had engaged in over the past year had been even more effective for improving his insights than the past ten years. The [Three-Foot Sword], which Immortal Northwalker had imprinted deep into Ning’s soul many years ago, once more arose. A limitless, terrifying killing intent...determination which no one would withstand at all...an sword-heart that was completely enlightened...many former insights...they all combined together, allowing Ning to immediately execute the seventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword].

The seventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] – Horizontal Sword Execution! 1

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whosh!

Six rays of silken lines of sword light sliced through the body of the dirty-looking maiden. When the first sword descended, her face began to change...because the first sword actually chopped straight through her hand, cutting it off. Her body, as tough as a magic treasure, was completely unable to block this fierce, sharp sword-light.

“RETREAT!” The dirty-looking maiden no longer appeared as relaxed as she had earlier; in fact, she even seemed slightly frightened as she frantically retreated.

Whoosh! As her hand was chopped off, a massive wound appeared on her chest as well.

However, she did managed to actually retreat. Her Fiendgod-like body frantically healed as she stared towards Ning in both terror and rage. “Sword-light compressed into silken lines! He’s actually reached this level!”

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“Sword-light like silk!”

“He’s only trained for thirty years, right? He’s actually reached the level of sword-light like silk...he truly is a rare genius of the Dao of the Sword!”

“He truly does have a chance to make it all the way to the top position of this Conclave. I imagine that even Xiamang Zishan is inferior to him.”

Within the Skylight Palace, the nine Pure Yang True Immortals and the thousand Celestial Immortals were all stunned by this. They all began to let out sighs of amazement and chatter amongst each other.

Sword-light like silk...

This meant that a person had already treached a truly, incomparably high level of attainment in the Dao of the Sword. The seventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword], ‘Horizontal Sword Execution’, was at the level of ‘sword-light like silk’.

Actually, each of the final three stances of the [Three-Foot Sword] were more terrifying than the last. The seventh, the eighth, the ninth...they were so formidable that not even Immortal Northwalker was able to record them down in books.

For the first six stances of the [Three-Foot Sword], it could be said that one would advance through them in an ordinary fashion, all the way until one reached the Grand Dao Domain level. The increase in power between each stance wouldn’t be too great, because these six stances focused on an orderly sort of improvement; they were primarily meant for guiding and teaching, which was why they could be compiled into books. Naturally, the level of improvement between each stance would be a bit smaller, which would make it easier to train.

But those final three stances which could not be recorded down in any books...there was a truly explosive increase in power between each of the three stances.

The seventh stance represented that a person had reached a level that was comparable to the techniques of a Loose Immortal who had trained for three hundred thousand years.

The eighth stance was comparable to the technique of an ordinary Celestial Immortal.

The ninth stance was comparable to the techniques of an absolutely supreme Celestial Immortal!

It was because of the ninth stance that Immortal Northwalker, despite being a Loose Immortal, was comparable to a true Celestial Immortal!

These three stances...there was a huge gap in power between each of them, but each of them were tremendously powerful.

Yu Wei lay there, struggling to control her magic treasures to form into the white phoenix and black phoenix. At the same time, she produced a jade bottle, shattered it with her elemental ki, then swallowed a pill into her mouth.

Rumble...the wound in her flank began to rapidly heal.

“Myriad Hibernating Venoms.” Yu Wei knew that this was going to be trouble.

The Myriad Hibernating Venoms was a divine ability which the Black-White College had as well. However, the imperial Xiamang clan had countless divine abilities in its Dao Repository, amongst which was the Myriad Hibernating Venoms. Xiamang Qi trained in this technique!

The Myriad Hibernating Venoms was an extremely deadly, poisonous art; it required one to fuse a large amount of strange poisons into one's own body. Xiamang Qi, as a genius of the imperial clan, naturally was able to easily procure many hard-to-find poisons. Thus, his Myriad Hibernating Venoms was exceptionally vicious. Anything he touched would be instantly poisoned.

A Fiendgod Body Refiner might not fear him too much, but Yu Wei was a Ki Refiner; her body's defensive and recuperative power was insufficient, and she had to rely on pills. But pills that could suppress the dire venom of the Myriad Hibernating Venoms...Yu Wei had none of those precious pills at all.

"Die!" The distant Xiamang Qi howled with laughter, but as he did, a golden sword-light suddenly flew towards him; it was the light of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

"Although the power of this sword-light is significant, it's not enough to do anything to me." Xiamang Qi had already withstood it several times; this time, he once more swung his arms out as he chopped out with his warblade towards it.

Swish!

The sword-light was as fine as silk, but it carried an incomparably powerful force. Xiamang Qi was caught completely off-guard, and his warblade was instantly knocked flying away. The skin between his thumb and forefinger was split apart, and he himself was knocked backwards. However, Ning suddenly charged towards him at an utterly astonishing speed, and so Xiamang Qi hurriedly produced yet another warblade in his hands.

"Die." The three-headed, six-armed Ning appeared incomparably savage. Six rays of sword-light struck out like a giant windmill of light. Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!!!!!! Six consecutive rays of sword-light came howling down.

Xiamang Qi stared, eyes bulging. He was instantly chopped apart into small chunks of meat.

A Waterflame Lotus suddenly bloomed, surrounding the chunks of meat and grinding down at them.

"No..." Xiamang Qi's soul was howling. Bu unfortunately...he was ground to death, until nothing remained.

"What?!" Adept Danzhu, Adept Snowfly, and Kindwater Qi were all shocked. Xiamang Qi had been killed in a single exchange!? This level of power was too great! How could Ji Ning's power have increased so explosively in just an instant?!

"All of you should die." Ning immediately turned and threw himself at Adept Snowfly, who was the closest to him.

"Quick, flee!" Adept Danzhu, Adept Snowfly, and Kindwater Qi, upon seeing how savage and ferocious Ning was, didn't dare to take him on at all. They immediately fled at high speed.

"Open." The bald, black-skinned Adept Blackstone, who had been controlling the grand sealing formation this entire time, quickly withdrew the formation.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Adept Danzhu, Adept Snowfly, and Kindwater Qi all immediately charged out of the formation. As soon as they did, Adept Blackstone, with a single thought, once more activated the formation. The barrier of light arose once more.

“Open up!” Ning howled. His sword-light was like silk, and six streams of silken light chopped towards the grand sealing formation.

BOOM!

The grand formation was immediately torn apart, and the three-headed, six-armed Ji Ning charged out from within it.

“What?!” Adept Snowfly, who had just let out a sigh of relief after leaving the formation, was completely shocked. She immediately turned to flee...but how could her speed be comparable to that of Ning, a Fiendgod Body Refiner? Although she hurriedly brandished her flywhisk to defend, transforming it into tens of thousands of tightly clustered strings that formed into a strange white fox to defend her, she also threw out a large number of talismans. She frantically sent to Ning, “Take my talismans, spare my life!”

Whoosh whoosh whoosh...six more streams of sword-light came. They chopped straight through the white fox, chopping Adept Snowfly to death.

It was too fast.

The three-headed, six-armed Ning’s sword-light was so fast that there wasn’t even enough time for Adept Snowfly to be teleported away after throwing out her talismans. She was immediately killed by Ning.

Kindwater Qi and Adept Danzhu were both terrified by Ning’s savagery. Adept Danzhu was formidable, but she was a Ki Refiner...how could she possibly summon the courage to fight Ning to the death?

Swish! Swish!

Kindwater Qi and Adept Danzhu both flew far away, fleeing into the distance.

As for the bald, black-skinned Adept Blackstone, he collected his grand sealing formation. The dirty-looking maiden, Adept Ninedeaths, was standing by his side. She was now wearing a pair of silver gloves on her hands.

“Let’s go. This isn’t the time for us to be fighting with him to the death,” Adept Blackstone sent mentally.

Adept Ninedeaths gritted her teeth, giving Ning a glare.

“Let’s go.”

The two were quite decisive in their actions; they realized that Ning’s power had already reached a level where it posed a threat to them. They were not confident in actually beating him in a fight to the death, and they already had enough talismans; it wasn’t worth it for them to risk it.

Swoosh! Swoosh! The two quickly departed.

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The enraged Ning had slaughtered Xiamang Qi and Adept Snowfly, then scared off Kindwater Qi and Adept Danzhu as well as caused Adept Ninedeaths and Adept Blackstone to choose to temporarily retreat as well.

“Hmph.” Ning, still filled with a boundless killing intent, swept the area with his gaze. He collected the treasures which Adept Snowfly had left behind, then quickly ran towards his senior apprentice-sister. Upon reaching her side, he immediately returned to his normal form.

“Senior apprentice-sister.” Ning saw that Yu Wei’s face was so dark, it was almost black. She had been very badly poisoned. He couldn’t help but begin to grow frantic. As for Yu Wei, she forced herself to sit up, then smiled as she looked at Ning.

Ning had seen everything; it had been Xiamang Qi who had used the divine ability, ‘Myriad Hibernating Venoms’. This divine ability was one which the giant yellow bear of the underwater estate had forbidden him from training in; although it was quite formidable when the practitioner was weak, once the practitioner grew strong, he’d probably actually have to spend some effort in purging the poisons from his body.

But...it had to be said that this was an extremely terrifying divine ability at this level. Anyone who was touched would immediately be poisoned and see their power drastically lowered!

“I have antivenoms here. They might be able to suppress...” Ning was extremely frantic.

“It’s fine. I’m fine.” Yu Wei sat there, looking at Ning. She smiled, then shook her head gently. When she saw how crazed Ning had become, she actually felt a blissful feeling in her heart.

Ning, seeing the shape his senior apprentice-sister was in, couldn’t help but feel pained for her as well as feel frightened.

Forgetting everything else, he immediately took her into her arms.

Yu Wei allowed Ning to hold her. She rested her head against his neck. She could sense the warmth surging from Ning’s body, an almost boiling heat that actually startled her.

“I don’t want to hesitate any longer.” Ning gently murmured into her ears, “I don’t want to feel any regrets. No regrets. I was truly afraid...afraid that you were dead. If you were dead...would I keep hesitating?”

Yu Wei reached out as well, tightly clinging to Ning as she revealed a smile on her face. Her tears began to fall down.

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The main hall of the Skylight Palace.

Lu Dongbin suddenly slapped his table, the force of the blow causing the Immortal wine in front of him to be knocked flying. He jumped to his feet, then pointed towards the portion of the enormous Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers where Ning was holding Yu Wei. He roared with laughter, “That’s how it should be! That’s exactly how it should be! What’s the point of being so

squeamish and indecisive? If they missed this opportunity, they would never have a chance to be together again for the rest of their lives. They had to seize this opportunity! If you have the right feelings, then you should act on them! You've been fighting in so many life-and-death battles together; how could you not have understood your own hearts? How could you have even hesitated for so long? Bahahaha, but now it's all better. In the final month, they are finally embracing."

1. In Chinese, the original is literally 'one-character sword execution' – the character for the letter 1 in Chinese is just a horizontal line: —

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 17: I Will Never Hurt You

The Xia Emperor, Sovereign Hao, and the others all stared as Lu Dongbin slapped his table so hard, he sent the Immortal wine flying everywhere. They couldn't help but feel speechless.

Lu Dongbin, you are one of the most awe-inspiringly famous figures of the Three Realms. Countless schools located throughout the three thousand major worlds and the trillion minor worlds all venerate you as 'Patriarch Lu'. Is it really appropriate for you to get so excited over a bit of romance between a pair of young Wanxiang-level fellows? This is at most a spot of entertainment; why must you be so excited?

Still...they all understood that this was precisely Lu Dongbin's temperament. He loved to wander the mortal realms, and absolutely delighted in paying attention to the love stories of minor figures as well as playing the role of the Moon Elder as a matchmaker.

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The imperial citadel plaza. The disciples of the Black-White College were staring at the massive Diagram in midair, feeling incomparably nervous.

"Senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning, quick, QUICK! YES! Kill them! KILL THEM ALL!" Mu Northson was incomparably agitated as he stared at the explosively savage Ji Ning within the Diagram.

"Quick, quick!" Immortal Fivecraze watched anxiously as well...and in the end, he finally let out a sigh of relief. "Fortunately, Xiamang Qi was only a Wanxiang Adept as well; although his Myriad Hibernating Venoms is powerful, by relying on some pills, its effects can be suppressed for a short while, at least."

"Whaaaaat?!"

Northson, Little Qing, the Whitewater Hound, Immortal Fivecraze, Adept Vastriver, Northmont Baiwei, and the others all suddenly stared with bulging eyes.

Because...

Ji Ning and Yu Wei were actually embracing!

"But but but..." Northson actually began to stammer.

"Master...and Miss Yu Wei..." Little Qing was completely flabbergasted as well.

Northmont Baiwei was the first to recover. Roaring with laughter, he slapped his thigh. "My brother Ji Ning truly is formidable. In the Conclave of Immortal Destiny's trial within the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers...he actually is going to be returning with a beauty in his arms."

"Right!" Immortal Fivecraze shook his head a few times, feeling extremely delighted. "The Black-White College is going to be the talk of the world for some time now!"

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Ninelotus watched this silently. She felt as though the entire world had turned still.

"He ended up with senior apprentice-sister after all."

"It's for the best."

"I am myself. He is himself! Only...should I hope that the two will forever be together and forever be blissful...or should I hope that they will separate as well?" Ninelotus wanted to offer them her prayers, but while searching in her own heart...she found that deep inside her heart, for some reason she couldn't explain, she still felt a strange sort of hope. Hope that Ning and Yu Wei would separate as well.

Ninelotus was an Immortal cultivator who understood her own heart; she immediately analyzed and realized what she was feeling. She quietly said to herself, "It is said that the trial of emotions is the most difficult trial to overcome...although I have already comprehended my own heart, whenever I see Ji Ning, waves always once more appear upon the lake of my heart. If I wish to be able to walk further on the path of Immortal cultivation, then I should never meet him again."

"It will be better for him. It will be better for me as well." Ninelotus made up her mind. After this Conclave of Immortal Destiny concluded, she would return to the Dongyan clan. Unless there was an absolutely pressing need, she would absolutely never meet Ning again.

The nearby Dongyan Forefather glanced sideways at Ninelotus, seated by his side. He saw the look in her eyes.

A look of determination!

The Dongyan Forefather shook his head gently. He had not desired for things between Ning and Ninelotus to end up like this. However...this was Ninelotus' decision, born from her heart. He would not interfere.

Within the Diagram.

Yu Wei was tightly embracing Ning. She could feel the warmth from his body, and she could feel a sense of bliss that came with it. It had been a long, long time since she had felt this sort of bliss. Far too long. Even in her past life, as a child, she had known this bliss for just a brief period of time. Now, she once more felt this sense of bliss and contentment. This caused uncontrollable tears to streak down her face.

She moved slightly, clutching Ning even more tightly to her. In her mind, she couldn't help but think back to that terrifying figure from her memories of her past life, that figure which caused her heart to tremble with fear. Yu Wei bit her lips, bit them so hard that blood appeared. In her heart, she quietly said to herself, "I swear that even if it means that I, Yu Wei, will have my soul be shattered...I will never hurt you. Never!"

After making up her decision, Yu Wei actually relaxed. Now that she was mentally prepared for her soul to be destroyed, the knot in her heart had been resolved.

“My man.” Yu Wei revealed a smile on her face.

Ning held Yu Wei in his arms, smelling the fragrance that came from her body. The feathery down on her clothings around her neck rubbed against his face. Ning felt calmer than he ever had before. It had been a long time since he had felt so calm. He could feel that the heart of this woman before him was extremely close to his own. It was as though the two of them were one.

“From today onwards,” Ning whispered words gently into Yu Wei’s ears, words that sounded like a sort of promise, “Yu Wei, you shall be my woman.”

“And you’ll be mine as well,” Yu Wei replied softly.

The two could both sense each other’s hearts.

You are willing to die for me.

I am willing to die for you.

In the future, we shall walk the Immortal path together, never leaving or separating.

“Yu Wei.” Ning released Yu Wei, looking at the deathly dark pallor to her face. He said with concern, “You’ve been badly poisoned?”

“The poisons of the Myriad Hibernating Venoms are very unique.” Yu Wei gently shook her head. “The pills I have on me only suffice to temporarily suppress them for two to four hours. To actually cure the poison, I would either need an incomparably precious Immortal pill that could resolve countless poisons, or a spirit-pill that was specially designed to dissolve the poisons of this divine ability. There’s no way I can do this from within the world of the Diagram. I have to leave.”

Ning gritted his teeth. He and Yu Wei had been on the verge of passing the trial, but she now had to depart. If the poison wasn’t cured, then once it was no longer suppressed, she would die.

“Enough. Don’t be unhappy.” Yu Wei smiled as she looked at Ning, contentment in her eyes. “To ‘win’ you here is better than winning any other award in the Conclave.”

“Right.” Although Ning wanted to continue to be together with Yu Wei, he immediately said, “Hurry up and cure your poison. It won’t be so easily cured, so don’t dawdle.”

“This is the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, and there are countless experts gathered outside. It won’t be too hard.” Yu Wei nodded. “Take my talismans.”

Whoosh. Instantly, a large number of talismans appeared on the ground.

Yu Wei looked at Ning.

Rumble...

An invisible ripple of power descended, teleporting Yu Wei away.

Ning collected the talismans. Actually, the number of talismans he had acquired after killing Xiamang Qi and Adept Snowfly was more than enough to allow himself and Yu Wei to pass the trial. But she had been poisoned by the Myriad Hibernating Venoms...she had to leave and have it cured.

Swoosh!

Ning took a single step forward, then disappeared as a streak of light.

Within the main hall of the Skylight Palace.

The nine Pure Yang True Immortals were all staring at the Diagram.

“This Yu Wei girl is coming out. Xiamang, have her be teleported over here,” Lu Dongbin immediately said.

The Xia Emperor, seated on his imperial throne, simply smiled.

Whoosh!

A black-robed woman whose skin was as lustrous as white jade and who was roughly 1.7 meters tall by Earth measurements suddenly appeared within the main hall of the Skylight Palace, right next to the nine Pure Yang True Immortals.

“Eh?!” Yu Wei stared at her surroundings, immediately poleaxed.

The Xia Emperor was seated on high atop his throne. The other Pure Yang True Immortals who were seated with him hadn’t suppressed their auras, and so naturally their auras rippled out...causing absolute terror in Yu Wei. She had seen Celestial Immortals in her past life, and not just one; these figures before her gave her the sense of tremendous power. They absolutely were not Celestial Immortals.

Yu Wei looked backwards and saw nearly a thousand Celestial Immortals. Their auras were similarly shocking.

“Yu Wei, disciple of the Black-White College, prostrates before you, your Imperial Majesty.” Yu Wei immediately fell to her knees with tremendous respect.

“Quite clever.” The Xia Emperor laughed and praised her. “Arise.”

Lu Dongbin was staring at Yu Wei with interest. Actually, the other eight Pure Yang True Immortals present rather looked down on Yu Wei; she was nothing more than a reincarnated female Immortal. The only one intrigued by her was Lu Dongbin.

“Little girl.” Lu Dongbin tossed her a gourd of wine, sending it flying towards Yu Wei. Yu Wei immediately caught it, her eyes filled with puzzlement.

“Drink it,” Lu Dongbin instructed. Yu Wei stared at the gourd of wine in her hands. Although she was restless and nervous, she knew that there was no way she could refuse. She immediately lifted up the gourd of wine and gulped it all down. The sight of her lifting up her neck and drinking the wine was extremely pretty; however, her neck and her face were a bit black. Slowly, however, the color of her

neck and face began to change, beginning to turn pale. Moments later, Yu Wei had transformed from a gray-skinned girl to a white-skinned girl.

“My poison...?” Yu Wei was extremely startled. The poison in her body was no ordinary poison...but just by drinking some wine, it had been dissolved?

“Little girl, this Immortal nectar which you just drank was no ordinary wine. It came from the Xia Emperor’s private stash, and he rarely brings it out. Usually, not even Celestial Immortals will have a chance to drink it. This was specially prepared by the Xia Emperor for Lu Dongbin.” The Immortal Elder of the Northlands chortled as he spoke.

Yu Wei immediately knelt down in gratitude.

“No need. It was just a gourd of wine.” Lu Dongbin seemed quite indifferent. “Alright, you can go now.”

“Go?” Yu Wei stared at the vast Skylight Palace. Behind here were nearly a thousand Celestial Immortals who were split into two lines that stretched far off into the distance!

Yu Wei actually didn’t know where to go for now.

“Go sit down next to King Yan,” the Xia Emperor instructed.

“Yes.” Only now did Yu Wei feel a bit relaxed. When she had scanned the room earlier, she saw Yuchi Xiyue seated behind King Yan.

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Yu Wei, her thoughts in a confused jumble, walked before King Yan, then sat down behind next, close to Yuchi Xiyue. All of the Celestial Immortals present stared at the black-robed maiden. They had all personally witnessed Lu Dongbin bestow a gourd of wine upon her. All of the Celestial Immortals present knew of the legendary Lu Dongbin, but almost none of them had ever spoken with him before.

“Who is this little girl? She was actually able to chat with Patriarch Lu.”

“No clue.”

“She should be from the Black-White College; that Ji Ning is from the Black-White College.”

The Celestial Immortals were all chatting amongst themselves regarding this.

Yu Wei was now seated behind King Yan, next to Yuchi Xiyue.

“Yu Wei, you are so amazing.” Xiyue sent an excited mental message to her. “You were actually able to chat with Patriarch Lu. Not even my grandfather has ever spoken to Patriarch Lu before.”

“Yeah...” Yu Wei was still in a dazed state. She had heard of Lu Dongbin even in her past life. He was one of the most famous experts of the Three Realms.

“Right. You and Ji Ning have chosen each other to be life partners?” Princess Xiyue’s eyes were shining brightly. As Ning’s cousin, she naturally paid tremendous attention to this.

Yu Wei’s face instantly became slightly red and bashful, but she still nodded and sent back, “Right.” However, in her heart, Yu Wei felt a bit nervous. This was because the outside world had long buzzed

with rumors that Princess Xiyue liked Ji Ning very much. It was said that it was Princess Xiyue who had led Ji Ning into King Yan's Estate when he had just arrived at the imperial capital, and that it was because of her that King Yan treated him so kindly!

He was nothing more than a genius. Think about who King Yan was! If it wasn't for Princess Xiyue, how could he have sent his Golden Imperials out to protect Ji Ning?

Everyone believed that Princess Xiyue must have fallen for Ji Ning! Even many members of the Black-White College believed this, and this was Yu Wei's guess as well.

"Has Princess Xiyue truly fallen for Ji Ning as well? Is she going to be angry at me?" Yu Wei was feeling worried.

"WONDERFUL!" Princess Xiyue was absolutely delighted and excited. "Yu Wei, you need to take good care of Ji Ning. Ideally, you would immediately have his babies!"

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 18: The Year Ends

Within the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers.

The hazy glow of the moon shone down upon the land. By the side of a river, Ning was seated in the lotus position, a simple bewildering formation having been laid down long ago.

Slash...

Streaks of silken sword-light howled about the region. Sword-light criss-crossed everywhere with astonishing power.

Ning had comprehended the seventh stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] – 'Horizontal Sword Execution'. As a result, he had reached the level of silken sword-light. He had also finally gotten together with Yu Wei, and as a result was in extremely high spirits. His Dao-heart was incomparably pure and comprehended, and his heart was currently calm and peaceful, without a hint of rage or hate poisoning his soul at all.

Generally speaking, after making a breakthrough, one would need to stabilize one's foundations. Ning was doing this right now, focusing his heart on the Dao of the Sword. Naturally, one thread of enlightenment after another was filling his heart.

"Within the heart, each person has their own desires, their own obsessions."

"The stronger the obsession, the sharper the sword."

"What I ask for..."

"Is to be carefree and unrestrained!"

Ning spoke these words silently to himself.

What did it mean to be carefree and unrestrained? It meant to be able to protect those that you loved. It meant being free from the threats of others. It meant having your destiny in your own hands!

“This...is my Dao of the Sword.”

“All those who oppose my Dao shall be slaughtered!”

Ning’s eyes flashed like lightning.

Whoosh!

Sword-light flew everywhere in an invincible, dominating fashion. The sword-intent contained within it was so powerful, it had reached a height which Ning had never before reached! Every single Sword Immortal had their own sword-heart. There were evil Sword Immortals, arrogant and solitary Sword Immortals, carefree and unrestrained sword...and they all continued to advance in accordance with their own sword-hearts. If they were to hesitate, to be puzzled, to be confused...then their sword-intents would grow weak. Their sword-intents would no longer be pure, and the power of their sword would constantly drop.

“The [Three-Foot Sword] of Immortal Northwalker...it desires to be ‘joyful’. Better to live joyfully for a day, than to live a century while stifled.”

“My [Three-Foot Sword], however, desires to be carefree and unrestrained! To be joyful is only one part of being carefree and unrestrained; to be carefree and unrestrained is to surpass, to surpass the bounds of the Three Realms, to possess invincible power. Only then can one truly do as one pleases.”

Ning understood the difference between himself and Immortal Northwalker.

Immortal Northwalker was a Loose Immortal; it was guaranteed that he would eventually perish under the increasingly powerful Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations. Thus, the sword art of Immortal Northwalker was a sort of savagery that came after a person knew that he was going to die. No matter who opposed him, he would kill, kill, kill! He would exterminate all injustices, exterminate all those who deserve killing. All he asked for was to be joyful. He didn’t give a damn how powerful one’s backer was; he would still slaughter you!

But in reality...precisely because he knew that he was going to die, Immortal Northwalker’s [Three-Foot Sword] was excessively savage. When one went too far into an extreme, one’s sword art would actually lessen in power.

Ning had comprehended profound mysteries of the Dao of the Sword through the [Three-Foot Sword], but his sword-intent was his alone. It formed into a [Three-Foot Sword] that belonged to himself and only himself.

In truth, Immortal Northwalker understood this issue as well. This was why when each time the [Three-Foot Sword] was transmitted to an heir, the heir would form a [Three-Foot Sword] of their own.

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Ning wielded the Darknorth swords in his hands. He had the feeling of being one with the sword as he strode forth through the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers.

“Someone travelling by himself? Let’s go. Surround him.”

Instantly, three figures came howling through the air. One of them executed a secret art, and a dense cluster of crows flew out, quickly and completely surrounding Ning.

Ning...actually just smiled.

Swish! Ning suddenly moved. His entire body crackled with lightning, and he moved forward with the speed of a Roc and the unpredictability of a ghost, constantly darting and flashing about. His sword-light flew through the air, like thin silken strands. Countless crows were instantly sliced apart, transforming into one spike-type magic treasure after another. And then, like a completely unpredictable ghost, he moved to attack those three.

“Who is this?! He’s too fast!”

“Careful!”

“Argh!”

Although Ning hadn’t used the [Starseizing Hand], [Heavenly Transformation], or [Three Heads, Six Arms], having only executed the [Pentabolt Vajra] and the [Windwing Evasion], just by relying on these two divine abilities he was still able to explode forth with enough speed and power to deal with them. He wasn’t trying to completely crush these people; he was using them to train and refine his sword art.

Sword-light flashed everywhere, beating the three into utterly sorry sights. All they could do was use all their power to try and stay alive as they started to flee.

“He’s too fast, and his sword arts are too formidable.”

“And he’s a Fiendgod Body Refiner, but hasn’t even used the [Heavenly Transformation]. I refuse to believe he doesn’t even know that divine ability!”

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Ning continued to stroll forward.

In this final month within the Diagram, he spread out his divine sense with abandon as he searched for opponents, engaging in one battle after another.

Against weaker Ki Refiners, he wouldn’t use the [Heavenly Transformation].

Against tougher foes, he would rely on [Heavenly Transformation].

Against a group of tougher foes...he would use his full power, as well as the [Starseizing Hand]!

In short, Ning was fast, had a savage sword, and was tremendously strong...he wandered the Diagram as he pleased. He didn’t care about how many people joined forces against him; he would kill, kill, kill them all as he continued to roam forward! After all, by now, everyone was in a small squad. If things were like they had been back at the very start, with the possibility of hundreds of people joining forces against him, Ning wouldn’t have dared to be so bold.

But right now...

There were very few still alive!

That being said, the survivors were all true monsters. Ning used them to temper his sword arts; the sword was a weapon of battle, and in battle his sword arts rose in power with great speed. Ning fused both the Dao-Path of Rainwater and his Dao-Path of the Inferno into his Dao of the Sword; it was hard when it needed to be hard and soft when it should be soft. He was now significantly more powerful than back when he had killed Xiamang Qi and Adept Snowfly.

The people in the imperial citadel's plaza all sighed repeatedly with incomparable amazement. Only two hundred or so individuals were left in the Diagram, and each of them were peerless monsters...but there were still a few that shone with particular splendor.

One of them was Ji Ning!

"Ji Ning's sword arts are improving at a simply astonishing pace. He's far more powerful than he was when he first entered the Diagram. Now, in the entire world of the Diagram...he should be one of the most powerful."

"As I see it, Ji Ning can become number one in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny!"

"He's only trained for thirty years; how can he be so powerful?!"

"Monster, what a monster!"

"This Ji Ning was born to be a Sword Immortal! After only thirty years, he has already reached such a level; I've trained for thirty thousand years, but am inferior to him. What a damn waste of my life!"

"In the entire Conclave, as far as sword arts go....Ji Ning is definitely number one!"

The individuals who had come from the 3600 commanderies and four seas were all chatting amongst themselves.

There was no question whatsoever that of the hundred thousand-plus who had entered this Conclave, Ning was the number one Sword Immortal! After all, those few who were on his level, such as Xiamang Zishan, Adept Ninedeaths, Adept Blackstone, and the Sloppy Daoist were not Sword Immortals. Sword Immortals were extremely skilled in attacking, and so naturally there were many who believed that Ning would become number one in this tournament.

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The main hall of the Skylight Palace.

Patriarch Arcanum seemed to have quite an unpleasant taste in his mouth. Although it was true that the Youngflame clan had the extremely powerful Youngflame Zhan, who was comparable to Xiamang Zishan...in the world of the Diagram, Youngflame Zhan wasn't as brilliant or as eye-catching as Ji Ning was.

"This Ji Ning..." Patriarch Arcanum ground his teeth.

"The more of a talented monster he is, the more he needs to be eradicated!"

"Hmph. I'll let you act smugly for now. You are nothing more than a genius in a Conclave. There's a Conclave every three centuries. I can't even count how many times a Conclave has gone on...but how

many of the winners end up being Celestial Immortals?" Patriarch Arcanum mused silently to himself, "If you can't become a Celestial Immortal, in the end you'll never be able to step out onto the grand stage."

"The Xia Emperor cares deeply about this Conclave, and quite a few Pure Yang True Immortals are watching as well. However, they are doing nothing more than just watching; after all, consider how exalted a status True Immortals have! They are experts of the Three Realms who definitely will not choose apprentices casually. They shouldn't decide to accept Ji Ning as a disciple, right? So long as the True Immortals don't take him as apprentice...once the chance comes, I'll definitely exterminate him."

Patriarch Arcanum felt an extremely intense desire to kill.

He had truly felt love for Youngflame Nong, and he truly wanted to avenge him! In addition, the feud between the Youngflame clan and Ning was by now an enormous one; after all, the Youngflame clan had even sent Deathsworn to assassinate him. If Ji Ning truly did spread his wings one day...how could he not desire to take revenge?

Given how much monstrous talent he had displayed in this Conclave...how could Ji Ning be permitted to continue to grow like this?

He had to be eradicated!

But of course...if a Pure Yang True Immortal really did accept Ji Ning as his disciple, then Patriarch Arcanum would have no choice but to swallow this bitter fruit.

"Generally speaking, the number of disciples a Pure Yang True Immortal accepts can be counted on one hand. They definitely will not casually accept new apprentices." Patriarch Arcanum quietly hoped that none of the True Immortals would suddenly reach out and take on Ji Ning as a disciple. If that happened...he would truly be stupefied.

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Ning sat in the lotus position atop the mountain peak.

Suddenly...

"The year has ended. The eighty contestants with the most talismans have successfully passed the trial of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers." The voice of the Emperor of the Grand Xia suddenly rang out in the minds of every single person present within the Diagram.

With it, a rumbling sound could be heard...

Rays of golden light shot out to surround Ji Ning, Xiamang Zishan, Adept Ninedeaths, the Sloppy Daoist, and the rest of the eighty. Some were seated in the lotus position, others were walking around, and still others were sleeping. In short, all of their bodies were surrounded by golden light; clearly, the light was meant to let the people in the outside world be able to clearly see who the eighty were.

Swish, swish, swish!

The eighty were all immediately teleported out of the world of the Diagram.

“The 159 of you who remain must engage in the final battle. Only sixteen of you are permitted to remain alive within the world of the Diagram.” The voice of the Emperor of the Grand Xia reverberated in each of their minds...and then all 159 of them were teleported to a vast, spacious grassland.

A grand sealing formation appeared on the grassland, spanning a hundred kilometers.

All 159 of them were locked within the sealing formation.

They all looked towards their fellow contestants.

“Start killing,” boomed the voice of the Emperor of the Grand Xia.

Instantly, the 159 competitors within the grand sealing formation began a berserk, final struggle against each other. This was a very small region of just a hundred kilometers; to people like them, who could move a hundred kilometers with a single movement...and with so many of them present...the battle here was exceptionally fierce and miserable. Many people were forced to voluntarily throw out their talismans and give up.

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The clouds in front of the main hall of the Skylight Palace.

Ji Ning and the rest of the eighty all appeared atop the cloud. They looked at each other.

“Eh?” Ning quickly saw quite a few familiar faces; Xiamang Zishan, Cangwu Jiu, Adept Blackstone...

“Senior apprentice-brother.” Ning saw the Sloppy Daoist as well.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning.” The Sloppy Daoist beamed as well.

“The eighty of you, all stand up!” An attendant wearing a crown spoke out to them coldly: “The other sixteen will appear shortly, at which point the ninety-six of you will jointly follow me to go pay your respects to his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor. This time, some Pure Yang True Immortals of the Three Realms have also arrived to watch. All of you need to know what the rules are; no matter what, you cannot offend or disturb one of the True Immortals.”

The crowned attendant had a pale, beardless face. He had an insidiously cold aura, and Ning and the others could tell from the invisible ripples of power that radiated from the man that this person...was most likely a Celestial Immortal.

This caused Ning and the others to all secretly sigh in amazement.

It was possible that not one of the hundred thousand-plus competitors would become a Celestial Immortal...but this attendant was one. This instantly caused Ning and the others to feel an invisible pressure push down upon them.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 19: The Conclave of Immortal Destiny's Awards

After a long period of time passed, another sixteen figures appeared atop the clouds. Most of these sixteen appeared to be in quite the sorry shape, and most of them were heavily wounded.

“Everyone is present.” The crowned attendant wave his arm, and instantly a rainbow-colored drizzle descended from the heavens onto Ning and the rest of the ninety-six. The rainbow raindrops quickly merged into their bodies, and the heavily wounded all saw their injuries immediately repaired, leaving them in perfect condition. Even those who had exhausted much of their divine power and elemental ki due to having battled for a long period of time saw their energy replenished. This caused Ning and the others to all feel stunned.

“Remember. The main hall of the Skylight Palace currently has nearly a thousand Celestial Immortals, his Imperial Majesty the Emperor, and Pure Yang True Immortals who have gathered from various places throughout the Three Realms. You absolutely must not be careless. If you anger a true True Immortal who takes your life on the spot, don’t say I didn’t warn you!” The crowned attendant swept his gaze past the ninety-six, pausing very slightly as he glanced at the Sloppy Daoist, whom he actually revealed a hint of a smile towards.

“Obey my commands. Let’s move,” the crowned attendant ordered.

He led the way up ahead. Ning and the other ninety-six followed from behind, walking through the clouds. They quickly arrived at a wide, spacious palace hall. The main hall of the Skylight Palace had no ceiling; above it was the infinitely vast firmament.

“So many Celestial Immortals.” Ning immediately saw the two rows of Celestial Immortals. They stretched all the way to the deepest parts of the main hall; there truly were nearly a thousand.

“In Stillwater Commandery, I didn’t even see a single Celestial Immortal Patriarch, but today I’ve seen so many. I imagine that the entire Grand Xia Empire must have several thousand Celestial Immortals. No wonder it is said that the emperor of a major world is capable of sitting down and speaking with the Celestial Emperor as equals.” Ning could sense the ripples of power coming from around him. The ripples that emanated from a Celestial Immortal, even when they were not actively flaring their power, was still enough to cause a Wanxiang Adept like Ning to feel tremendous pressure.

“Hmph!” Patriarch Arcanum was seated there. Upon seeing Ning walk past him, his long, narrow eyes flashed with a hint of coldness. He let out a cold snort, not disguising his hostility towards Ning at all.

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“Halt.” The crowned attendant sent a mental message to Ning and the others, who all immediately came to a halt.

Right in front of them, not too far away, were the eight Pure Yang True Immortals and the Emperor of the Grand Xia. Ning and the others could tell that the auras emanating from those eight figures next to the Emperor of the Grand Xia were simply too terrifying. In addition, the tables and Immortal nectar placed before them were completely different from those given the Celestial Immortals. They could immediately tell who these eight were.

“They are all Pure Yang True Immortals!” Ning and the rest of the ninety-six all felt as though they were looking up at unfathomably exalted figures.

“All of you, kneel,” the crowned attendant sent mentally.

Whoosh.

Ning and the rest of the ninety-six all fell to their knees, calling out at the same time, "We prostrate ourselves before you, your Imperial Majesty."

The Emperor of the Grand Xia looked downwards towards them, and his gaze along with the gazes of the eight Pure Yang True Immortals all landed upon the Sloppy Daoist. To these nine Pure Yang True Immortals, the only person worth them paying serious attention to was the Sloppy Daoist. This was because he was the disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu.

As for the others?

The nine of them didn't hold them in too much regard. The only reason they paid even a slight bit of attention to them was because the Three Realms was entering turbulent times. During one of the 'normal' Conclaves of Immortal Destiny, they wouldn't even be bothered to come attend and watch, nor would the Emperor of the Grand Xia come to officiate. The officiator would at most record down the most exciting scenes of the battles through a scryer technique and deliver it to some of the major figures of the three realms. On occasion, someone might be lucky and end up becoming an apprentice to one of those True Immortals!

"It would be impressive if even three or four out of these ninety-six became Celestial Immortals. As for Pure Yang True Immortals? If a true expert of the Three Realms really was to emerge from this Conclave, it will probably be this disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu." This was what the Immortal Elder of the Northlands and the others were thinking. This was what even Lu Dongbin believed as well.

For two Pure Yang True Immortals to emerge from a group of ninety-six? That was bit too unrealistic.

"Arise!" The Grand Xia Emperor commanded.

Ning and the other ninety-six all arose, each acting with complete decorum.

The Grand Xia Emperor looked down upon them, then said calmly, "You have all passed the trial of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers. You have thus passed the preliminary sorting out process. From today onwards, I will arrange for the ninety-six of you to engage in duels with each other. The losers will be eliminated, while the winners will remain."

"The ninety-six of you will engage in a round of duels. After the first round, forty-eight will remain. All forty-eight of you will each receive an Immortal-ranked magic item."

The voice of the Grand Xia Emperor echoed throughout the entire main hall.

Whoosh.

Everyone below was stunned. Even the near-thousand Celestial Immortals were stunned. All forty-eight would receive an Immortal-ranked magic treasure? In the past, only the top three figures in the Conclave would receive such a treasure. This was more than ten times as extravagant as the past; it represented forty-eight Immortal-ranked treasures!

"The forty-eight will go through two rounds of elimination duels, resulting in twelve remaining. These twelve will each receive five million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence!" The Grand Xia Emperor said calmly.

Utter silence.

The Celestial Immortals were all surprised...and Ning and the rest of the ninety-six were all stunned. Their eyes turned red with desire. Even Ning, despite his tremendous wealth, felt a surge of desire. Five million kilograms...even if Ning sold off all of Youngflame Nong's treasures and everything he had acquired from the Witchriver Immortal Estate, it would still be far less than five million kilograms. Five million kilograms was a sum that would cause even many Celestial Immortals to turn red-eyed with envy. Only the Grand Xia Emperor could afford to be so generous.

"Why is his Imperial Majesty being so generous? Five million kilograms to each person? Twelve people...how many kilograms is that?!"

"His Imperial Majesty has never been so generous when bestowing even the likes of us with gifts."

The Celestial Immortals were speechless.

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The Grand Xia Emperor, still speaking in a very calm manner, continued: "The twelve will engage in another series of duels, resulting in six remaining. These six will fight until only three remain! The three final winners...will be permitted to go into the imperial treasure vault of my Grand Xia Dynasty and choose out any divine ability or secret art of their choosing."

Choosing?!

Ning and the others turned berserk with desire. The accumulated knowledge of an entire major world...it vastly surpassed the Dao Repository of the Black-White College by countless times! The techniques which the local Raindragon Guard branches possessed were already enough to cause Ning to turn red-eyed with desire, to say nothing of the main Raindragon Guard headquarters! And the imperial treasure vault of the Grand Xia Dynasty? It most assuredly had even more than the main Raindragon Guard headquarters!

"How can they be allowed to choose?! Divine abilities and secret arts are the foundation of a powerful tribe." Even King Qi, King Yan, and the other Kings were completely stunned. "That vault is the foundation of our Xiamang clan. How can they be allowed to choose from it as they see fit?! They will definitely choose the strongest techniques. How can the most powerful divine abilities and secret arts we possess be disseminated to outsiders?!"

However, the leader of the Xiamang clan, the Emperor of the Grand Xia, held unquestioned authority and power.

"In addition...per the orders of my venerable master...!" The Grand Xia Emperor spoke in an extremely solemn voice.

All of the Pure Yang True Immortals next to him, be it Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta, Lu Dongbin, or the Immortal Elder of the Northlands, all felt their hearts clench.

"Amongst the final three victors...my venerable master will choose a person to become his own honorary disciple. After said person breaks through to become a Celestial Immortal, said person shall become my venerable master's personal disciple." The Grand Xia Emperor's voice rang out clearly, echoing throughout the entire main hall. All the Celestial Immortals within the main hall fell completely silent. Even the Pure Yang True Immortals had fallen silent.

The eight Pure Yang True Immortals were all in a state of shock; they had no idea that this was going to happen.

“What boldness and spirit! Daofather Crimsonbright truly is bold and spirited; he’s actually going to accept a disciple from this Conclave!” Lu Dongbin sighed mentally to himself. “Still...it makes sense. Amongst the tens of major worlds under the command of Daofather Crimsonbright, the world of the Grand Xia is number one in terms of luck and karma. The Three Realms are in a state of upheaval and facing turbulent undercurrents. It has only been a few decades since the collapse of the Six Paths of Reincarnation...it is indeed true that one of the future heroes of the Three Realms will emerge in the first Conclave of Immortal Destiny to be held here after the collapse. It is worth him taking on a new disciple.”

“One of them will become the disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright?”

Bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta and the others all stared at Ning’s group.

“Clearly, Grand Emperor Xuanwu has taken a fancy to that sloppy-looking fatty, and has even taught him his Grand Black Tortoise divine ability. There’s no way Daofather Crimsonbright would disgrace himself by trying to steal him! Then of the other 95...which one shall become the disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright?” All of them were now guessing.

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“The disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright?”

The eyes of the near-thousand Celestial Immortals below all turned red.

They were the Celestial Immortals of the world of the Grand Xia; thus, they were all naturally under the command of Daofather Crimsonbright! Daofather Crimsonbright had an exalted status far above theirs; he was a major power of the Three Realms who commanded dozens of major worlds. The Celestial Immortals under his command were as numerous as the clouds. Almost all of these Celestial Immortals were his honorary disciples...but most of them had never even said a single word to Daofather Crimsonbright!

They dreamed about becoming a personal disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright, but alas, they had no chance. In fact...not a single one of these near-thousand Celestial Immortals was a personal disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright!

“None of us will become a personal disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright, but one of them will actually become the Daofather’s personal disciple.”

“That Sloppy Daoist is the personal disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu...as for the other six, one of them will become the personal disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright.”

“This is really too insane.”

The Celestial Immortals present found it hard to accept this.

A Daofather!

Someone who was capable of controlling a Heavenly Dao. The personal disciples they took on were innately endowed with astonishing potential and comprehension ability; after spending enough effort and paying enough of a price, they would generally all become Celestial Immortals! This was why, even though the likes of Daofather Crimsonbright and Grand Emperor Xuanwu nominally took on weak Wanxiang Disciples as mere 'honorary disciples', in the future it was all but guaranteed that they would be upgraded to 'personal disciples'.

The eight Pure Yang True Immortals were surprised...and the nearly-thousand Celestial Immortals were filled with disbelief and envy. As for Ning and the others, they were completely stunned silly. Most of them didn't even know who the master of the Emperor of the Grand Xia was! But since the Emperor of the Grand Xia was the emperor of this major world, someone capable of casually tossing out dozens of Immortal-ranked magic treasures...how formidable was his master?!

The Grand Xia Emperor was someone who could speak with the Celestial Emperor of the Celestial Court as equals. Then his master...?

The ninety-six could all guess the answer, and they were naturally both stunned and filled with wild desire.

Was this like manna from the heavens?

"The place where you shall engage in your duels shall be atop the clouds outside the palace." The Grand Xia Emperor pointed to the distant clouds outside the hall. Whoosh. Instantly, an enormous grand sealing barrier that was ten kilometers in size appeared atop the cloud. "You shall battle there, within the grand sealing formation. When one side dies or admits defeat, then the battle will conclude."

"The first battle shall be Cangwu Jiu of the Cangwu clan against Dragonmatch of the Myriad Beasts School!" The Grand Xia Emperor continued, "The others can rest off to the side."

"Ji Ning, little Sloppy, come over here." Ning immediately heard someone call out. Turning his head, he saw that it was King Yan. Behind King Yan was his cousin, Yuchi Xiyue, along with Yu Wei. Ning immediately went over. As for the Sloppy Daoist, upon seeing this he immediately followed; they were all of the Black-White College, after all.

The others who had Celestial Immortal Patriarchs of their various schools or clans present all went to the sides of those Celestial Immortals. As for those who didn't have any Celestial Immortals behind them, as long as there was even a hint of a relationship with them, a Celestial Immortal would call them over.

"Zhan, child!" Patriarch Arcanum's long, slanted eyes were filled with savagery. He sent mentally, "This is a chance that rarely comes once in even ten thousand reincarnations. You absolutely must use all your power to fight into the top three! If you can become the disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright, then you shall have done more for our Youngflame clan than anyone else in our entire history. Even the Celestial Immortal Patriarchs of our Youngflame command shall obey your command!"

Youngflame Zhan couldn't help but send mentally, "Who is Daofather Crimsonbright?"

“The teacher of his Imperial Majesty!” Patriarch Arcanum explained, “He is one of the true major powers of the Three Realms...someone who can determine whether our Youngflame clan will flourish or decay with but a single word!”

The Desolate Era

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 20: Daoist Threelives and Daofather Crimsonbright

“If you die here as a result, I guarantee that after reincarnating, you will be reborn into our Youngflame clan once more, and I will take you on as my disciple.” Patriarch Arcanum looked at Youngflame Zhan. “Zhan, child, this is a rare chance. You have to seize it!”

Zhan could sense Patriarch Arcanum’s ardent desire. He understood how important this was.

“If you succeed...then you might become an expert on the level of his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor,” Patriarch Arcanum said eagerly.

Zhan nodded heavily.

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“You have reincarnated nine times for the sake of overcome the Celestial Tribulation and becoming a Celestial Immortal. To become a Celestial Immortal is far, far too difficult...the path in front of you is almost guaranteed to be a dead end. Little girl, if you become Daofather Crimsonbright’s disciple, you need not fear that you will not be able to become a Celestial Immortal!”

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“Jiu, child, you absolutely have the power to make your way into the top three of this Conclave. Although our Cangwu clan has already reached the very pinnacle of power in the Grand Xia Empire, that’s our limit; there’s no way the imperial clan of the Grand Xia will give us any chance to increase in power any further, unless our Cangwu clan also produces a Pure Yang True Immortal. That, however, is too difficult...but you now have that chance! You have to seize this sort of a chance!”

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The various major clans, sects, and schools were all saying these words to the competitors with them.

If previously the Celestial Immortals were quite relaxed, upon learning that Daofather Crimsonbright was going to take on a disciple, all of them were frantic. They even felt hatred...self-hatred for not having personally taught these young geniuses! If they had personally taught them, then the young geniuses on their side would probably be even more powerful.

Unfortunately, they had previously held these so-called geniuses in no regard at all; after all, there were far too many geniuses in the world. It was too late for any regrets.

Ji Ning and Yu Wei were next to each other. They were even holding hands, and the dreamy looks they were giving each other were causing even the nearby Yuchi Xiyue and Sloppy Daoist to get a bit sick of it.

“Junior apprentice-brother, junior apprentice-sister, the two of you...?” The Sloppy Daoist blinked a few times.

“You just found out?” Yuchi Xiyue smirked.

Ji Ning and Yu Wei looked at each other and smiled.

After sharing life and death experiences together during the past year, their hearts had long ago become linked.

“Haha, congratulations and felicitations. The disciples of the Black-White College, in participating in this Conclave, have actually produced a pair of Dao-Companions. This shall be the talk of the world,” the Sloppy Daoist laughed.

“Sloppy Daoist, Ji Ning, don’t be too relaxed,” Yuchi Xiyue quickly warned. “Didn’t you hear? The top three have a chance to become accepted by Daofather Crimsonbright as a disciple. This is a chance to ascend to the heavens at one go! Daofather Crimsonbright is one of the true hegemony of the Three Realms, someone who has mastered a Heavenly Dao.”

“Right! We have to fight for this chance,” the Sloppy Daoist nodded.

Ning nodded as well. At the same time, he mentally asked, “Senior, if I become apprenticed to Daofather Crimsonbright, will he recognize my [Starseizing Hand] and realize the relationship between myself and Daoist Threelives? Will this be trouble?”

Suddenly, a voice rang out in his mind. “Ji Ning, don’t worry; Daofather Crimsonbright was born a True God of Primordial Chaos. Like Master, he was born from the primordial chaos itself. They even adventured and faced life and death together; the relationship between them is quite deep. Although he wasn’t one of Master’s most intimate of friends, they were still on extremely good terms. Even if he knows of the relationship between you and Master, he won’t harm you. Someone like Daofather Crimsonbright would not lower himself by acting against you.”

“A True God of Primordial Chaos...and they adventured together?” Ning was puzzled. “Daoist Threelives was one of the major powers of the Three Realms, while Daofather Crimsonbright is one as well. Even they need to adventure together and risk their lives?”

“I don’t understand this very clearly either; all I know is that there truly are some extremely terrifying places in the Three Realms. Master and some other True Gods of Primordial Chaos have joined forces in the past to fight in those places. All of them are very close to each other, and some of them are in fact individuals who are willing to sacrifice their lives for Master, and vice versa.” The giant yellow bear sent, “Don’t worry. The True Gods of Primordial Chaos are quite a unified group.”

“In addition, it was Daofather Crimsonbright who developed the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] which you train in.” The giant yellow bear sighed, then sent, “After countless years have passed, Daofather Crimsonbright has mastered a Heavenly Dao and become a Daofather. If Master is still alive, he should have perhaps mastered a Heavenly Dao as well.”

“Daofather Crimsonbright is very good-natured, and all the other True Gods of Primordial Chaos praise him. If you can become his apprentice, you should be able to learn some information regarding Master from him.” The giant yellow bear had always wanted to learn if Daoist Threelives was still alive or not.

“Then I will force my way into the top three, or even become number one. I will do my best to make Daofather Crimsonbright choose me as his disciple,” Ning sent.

“Right.” The giant yellow bear felt eager as well.

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King Yan suddenly turned to look at the Sloppy Daoist, then asked mentally, “Little Sloppy, you also want to become the disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright?”

“I naturally have to at least give it a good shot,” the Sloppy Daoist said, puzzled. “How can I let a chance like this just slip away? If I miss it, I probably won’t have another chance like this for the rest of my life.”

“How did you learn the Grand Black Tortoise divine ability?” King Yan asked.

The sloppy, pudgy youth grinned. He knew that upon revealing it, his secrets would be eventually revealed. After all, the Grand Black Tortoise divine ability was simply too easy to recognize. He laughed then sent mentally, “Your Highness, I acquired this Grand Black Tortoise divine ability by luck. While adventuring, I entered a cavern estate and thus inherited a legacy and was taught this grand divine ability.”

“Oh.” King Yan now understood. Most likely, the Sloppy Daoist had no idea...that his master was Grand Emperor Xuanwu!

In the main hall of the Skylight Palace, the various Celestial Immortals were all chatting and laughing amongst themselves while paying attention to the duels that were going on atop the cloud.

The first round of duels was currently taking place.

In the first battle, Cangwu Jiu battled against Dragonmatch. This was an exceptionally vicious battle, as both were Fiendgod Body Refiners. Dragonmatch was unwilling to admit defeat until almost all of his divine power had been used up. However, his eyes were clearly filled with resentment. As for the Celestial Immortal Patriarchs of the Myriad Beasts School, they couldn’t help but shake their heads with resentment and sigh as they saw this. The chance had come and go, just like that.

In the second battle, Adept Woodpass battled against Kindwater Qi. Kindwater Qi immediately used a forbidden technique at the very start, going all out. However, Adept Woodpass actually showed mercy; at a critical moment in the fight, he merely gave Kindwater Qi a heavy wound, not taking his life. The helpless Kindwater Qi was forced to admit defeat.

One battle after another went on, everyone going all out.

“The allure of becoming a Daofather’s disciple...who can resist it?” Lu Dongbin shook his head and sighed. Raising his head, he took a swig of wine from his cup. “And yet, how many of them understand...that the disciple of a Daofather is still nothing more than a disciple. The master can bring you into the school, but training is a matter of personal cultivation. The major powers of the Three Realms...they all relied on their own abilities for their achievements.”

“Lu Dongbin! You hypocrite, you have two Daofathers standing behind you and even more Daofathers who have provided you guidance, and you’re going to sigh and shake your heads at them?” The Immortal Elder of the Northlands was clearly rather displeased. “This old man can’t stand your words.”

“You’re just jealous.” Lu Dongbin cast the Immortal Elder a sideways glance out of the corner of his eyes.

“Jealous my ass. This old man is also a Pure Yang True Immortal; if you have true ability, then go become a Daofather! By then, I’d definitely admire you; in fact, I’d even go to your door and obediently listen to you expound on the Dao and treat you as I would a teacher,” the Immortal Elder snorted.

“Shameless old fogey. Once I truly do become a Daofather...I might not even be willing to expound on the Dao with you. It’ll depend on my mood.” After saying these words, even Lu Dongbin himself felt that he was boasting too much; after all, it wasn’t so easy for someone to become a Daofather. He didn’t even have mastery over a Heavenly Dao yet! He immediately pointed towards the outside and said, “Look, the disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu has entered the arena.”

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In the sixth battle, the Sloppy Daoist fought against Adept Gloomcloud.

Adept Gloomcloud truly was an extraordinary figure; however, there was a quite a bit of difference in power between himself and the Sloppy Daoist. Fortunately, the Sloppy Daoist showed mercy and so Adept Gloomcloud’s life was spared. He admitted defeat, then left.

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The Grand Xia Emperor, seated atop his imperial throne, stared downwards at his subjects. He said calmly, “The 41th duel shall be between Ji Ning of the Black-White College and Zhuxiang of the Redlotus Sect.”

His voice didn’t just reverberate within the main hall; his echoing voice, filled with all of his majesty, reverberated within the imperial citadel plaza as well.

The delegates from the 3600 commanderies and four seas all stared into the skies. In the sky above them was a massive mirror, which reflected the scenes of battle between the geniuses within the grand sealing formation atop the cloud.

“Junior apprentice-brother, you have to be careful.” Within the palace, the Sloppy Daoist said with a laugh, “This Zhuxiang is a Fiendgod Body Refiner. All Fiendgod Refiners are tough to deal with. Thankfully, the Adept Gloomcloud I ran into just now was a Ki Refiner, which made it a bit easier.”

“Ji Ning, be careful.” Yu Wei looked at Ning as well.

“Don’t worry. I’m planning to go for number one.” Ning immediately turned and walked outside.

Right at this moment, a youth who had been seated in the lotus position behind a distant Celestial Immortal also rose to his feet and began to walk towards the outside. This youth seemed quite wanton and dissolute, and gave the impression of being perpetually sleepy. However, he was the number one Holy Child of an extremely large sect, the Redlotus Sect. His power was indeed formidable; previously, the outside world had known very little about him, and he had only become famous during this Conclave.

“They are coming out. Coming out!” Mu Northson stared upwards excitedly. “Quick, look, senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning is coming out.”

“Brother Ji Ning’s power is formidable; that Zhuxiang of the Redlotus Sect is no match for him at all. Brother Ji Ning is aiming to be number one.” Northmont Baiwei was watching with excitement as well;

he naturally was pleased upon seeing his good friend ascend farther and farther along this Immortal path.

“Wonderful. My Black-White College is about to suddenly become famous, utterly famous!” Immortal Fivecraze was in extremely high spirits and excited.

“Master.” Little Qing’s serpentine eyes were flashing with light as well.

The Whitewater Hound’s head was also lifted. As he watched, he felt his chest heave with emotions. “Big brother, if you were still alive...how wonderful it would be for you to be here and watch Ji Ning become such a dazzling figure in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny of the Grand Xia Dynasty.”

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Atop the cloud. Within the grand sealing formation.

Ji Ning and Zhuxiang of the Redlotus Sect were both standing within the grand sealing formation. Zhuxiang was dressed extremely casually. His Daoist robes appeared quite sloppy, and a large portion of his chest was revealed as well. He looked at Ning, appearing to be still half-asleep.

Zhuxiang sighed gently, “I didn’t expect to run into you in the very first duel. I heard that you are one of the participants in this Conclave who is the hardest to deal with. In the Diagram, I travelled alongside my fellow disciples. No one was capable of forcing me to unleash my supreme technique...but I didn’t expect that I would be forced to do so in this very first battle. You should feel lucky to lose to my supreme technique.”

“Zhuxiang.” Ning spoke out. “Do you know...what I view you as?”

“What?” Zhuxiang smiled lazily. “A pile of crap? A mere ant? A mighty dragon? Or...?”

“No, no...in my eyes...you are an Immortal-ranked magic treasure,” Ning chortled.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 21: The Top Twenty-Four

The Xia Emperor, Lu Dongbin, and the rest of the nine Pure Yang True Immortals were watching the two competitors within the grand sealing formation. Upon hearing their dialogue, all nine of them couldn’t help but laugh.

“This Zhuxiang...he is fearless due to his ignorance.” Lu Dongbin shook his head and sighed, “Actually, everyone who has been watching this Conclave already has a rough sense of who the most powerful individuals of the ninety-six are. By contrast, the ninety-six themselves actually aren’t clear about how powerful many of them are.”

Indeed.

Zhuxiang had only been warned by a Celestial Immortal Patriarch of the Redlotus Sect that Ji Ning was one of the most difficult to deal with contestants in this Conclave, and that he had to fight with full power and not be the slightest bit overconfident. But Zhuxiang himself had never fought against Ning; how could he understand how powerful Ning was?

The spectators on the outside had seen all the battles within the Diagram. The Wanxiang Adepts themselves, however, were ignorant despite having been actually within the Diagram itself. Even Ning himself had only fought against ten or so members of the other 95.

“The first round of duels doesn’t matter that much.” The Xia Emperor nodded. “The purpose of this first round is to separate the most powerful experts; I’m not actually having the most powerful ones fight against each other yet. Ji Ning truly is far more powerful than Zhuxiang.”

“Senior apprentice-brother, you had best hurry up and prepare those Immortal-ranked magic treasures. All forty-eight of the winners are going to need one.” Sovereign Hao let out a loud laugh. “Right; are the forty-eight Immortal-ranked magic treasures going to be low-grade or middle-grade?”

“Low grade, of course!” The Xia Emperor laughed.

“I knew it!” Sovereign Hao nodded as well.

“You aren’t ashamed to take out low-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures? The Immortal-ranked magic treasures I carry with me and which I hand out on a whim are all at least high-grade!” Lu Dongbin glanced sideways at the Xia Emperor, who instantly felt resigned. “I have many subordinates under my command, and I also need to keep control over an entire major world. It isn’t easy, you know! I can’t just randomly throw out Immortal-ranked magic treasures like you, Lu Dongbin. You are free to do what you please.”

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Ning exploded forth with his full power. His six Immortal swords simultaneously chopped downwards towards Zhuxiang of the Redlotus Sect like a series of catastrophes, giving him no chance to fight back at all.

“I admit defeat,” Zhuxiang called out loudly. He then gave Ning a hard look, as though memorizing Ning’s appearance. This defeat had been simply too disastrous...

“Mm. One Immortal-ranked magic treasure down.” Ning quickly returned to normal, then lazily left the grand sealing formation and returned to King Yan’s side within the palace, moving to stand together with his cousin and Yu Wei.

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Soon, all forty-eight battles came to an end. The battles in this first round were all fairly simple; after all, the Xia Emperor had arranged a strong competitor to fight a weak competitor in each duel, with the goal of selecting out the strongest competitors.

“The forty-eight of you have each won a duel in the first round. Each of you shall receive an Immortal-ranked magic treasure. Now, I shall bestow them unto you.” The Grand Xia Emperor, seated high up above them on his throne, waved his hand. Instantly, magic treasures that emanated massive ripples of power came flying out. There were ropes, flying swords, clocks, millstones, needles, shuttles, spikes, warhammers, grand sealings, longstaves, silk ribbons, flywhisks...

The forty-eight Immortal-ranked magic treasures all flew outwards to the forty-eight winners.

It was an Immortal-ranked sword that flew towards Ning. The sword-ki revolving around the Immortal sword transformed into the appearance of an old man that looked towards Ning with curiosity.

“This is...” Ning stretched his hand out, catching the Immortal sword and sending his senses into it briefly.

He was someone who had seen the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp and the Thousandbull Sword, after all; Ning had the feeling that this was comparable to the ripples given off by the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp.

“It should be a low-grade Immortal-ranked item.” Ning mused secretly to himself, “But it is still a flying sword, extremely suited to attacks. The Grand Xia Emperor saw that I am a Sword Immortal and so bestowed an Immortal sword upon me? Mmm...it’s probably worth around 1.75 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.”

He had expected this Immortal-ranked magic treasure to be low-grade. After all, the top twelve would receive five million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. It was reasonable for the top forty-eight to be bestowed with a low-graded Immortal-ranked magic treasure.

“Thank you, your Imperial Majesty!”

Ning and the rest of the forty-eight all kowtowed as their voices rang out in unison. Some of them had looks of uncontrollable excitement on their faces.

Low-grade Immortal-ranked?

Not all of these Wanxiang Adepts were as lucky as Ji Ning! Many Loose Immortals were not in possession of Immortal-ranked magic treasures; for them to possess one was already quite incredible.

Whoosh. The Xia Emperor smiled and nodded. Instantly, rainbow-colored raindrops appeared above Ning and the others. As they landed upon the bodies of the Ning and the others, Ning could feel his divine power and elemental ki be quickly restored. Those who were wounded were all quickly healed as well. Although most of them had spirit-pills that could have accomplished this, Ning and the others couldn’t help but feel excited that the Xia Emperor had personally healed them.

“Arise. All of you can go back and get some rest. Prepare for the next competition,” the Xia Emperor said.

Ning and the others all returned to their respective locations. Ning and the Sloppy Daoist returned to King Yan’s side.

Soon, the Xia Emperor ordered for the second round of duels to begin.

“The second round of duels shall begin now,” the Xia Emperor said calmly. “In the first battle, Xiangtian Xiao of the Xiangtian clan shall face Kindwater Gan of the Kindwater clan.” 1.

Xiangtian Xiao...he was the final remaining competitor of the Xiantian clan within this Conclave. Kindwater Gan, in the same way, was the final disciple the Kindwater clan had within this Conclave.

Both of these ancient clans hoped for their own disciples to win.

However, victory was determined after a few short exchanges in this duel. Xiangtian Xiao, with clear superiority, defeated Kindwater Gan.

“Xiangtian Xiao is quite powerful.” The Sloppy Daoist watched the battle outside the palace and spoke out in praise.

“Yes.” Ning nodded. “His Dao is the Grand Dao of the Sabre; the Dao of the Sabre is a Grand Dao that is comparable to the Dao of the Sword...and it is even more dominating and overbearing. Xiangtian Xiao himself is quite a heroic and straightforward figure, and his sabre arts are like him...he is indeed a formidable foe.”

“He can indeed be described as a formidable foe,” the Sloppy Daoist nodded.

“The second battle shall be between the unaffiliated Adept Blackstone and Adept Danzhu of the East Seas,” the Xia Emperor proclaimed.

Upon hearing this, Adept Danzhu, as beautiful as a fairy from the Moon Palace, couldn't help but frown. Still, she still walked into the grand sealing formation outside of the main palace. As for Adept Blackstone, he appeared as he always did; barefoot, bald, and pitch-black. He leaned on a gnarled staff as he walked forward with a calm smile.

“The Xia Emperor actually pitted Adept Danzhu against Adept Blackstone? Based on what we saw from the first round...the Xia Emperor generally pits a strong fighter against a weak fighter, so as to ensure that strong fighters won't clash against each other too early on.” Ning shook his head. “It seem as though in the Xia Emperor's eyes, Adept Danzhu's power should be in the bottom twenty-four of these forty-eight.”

“Right. Although Adept Danzhu is quite famous, she still isn't a Fiendgod Body Refiner,” the Sloppy Daoist agreed. “When Ki Refiners fight against Fiendgod Body Refiners, they are generally at a significant disadvantage...especially seeing as how all the competitors in this Conclave are supreme geniuses. The weaknesses of Ki Refiners are made even more apparent.”

Ning nodded. It was true. And this was before the tribulation; upon a Fiendgod Body Refiner becoming an Empyrean God, his power would immediately be on the same level as a Pure Yang True Immortal! From this, one could tell how major an advantage Fiendgod Body Refiners towards the late stages!

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The battle between Adept Blackstone and Adept Danzhu was an extremely weird battle.

Adept Blackstone only had to use his Fuxi Staff Formation to cause Adept Danzhu to be completely unable to fight back. In the end, she had to admit defeat. From start to finish, Adept Blackstone hadn't been forced to fight in close combat a single time.

“What a terrifying Adept Blackstone.” This caused Xiamang Zishan, Ji Ning, Adept Ninedeaths, Cangwu Jiu, and the other geniuses to all memorize what had just happened.

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One competition after another.

Several figures appeared who caused Ning to be secretly alarmed. There were some whom he wasn't too familiar with, such as the likes of Adept Goldcrow, Adept Primalback, or Adept Unicosmo. Actually, everyone in the top twenty four was quite frighteningly strong.

"The twenty-fourth battle. The unaffiliated Adept Saberslave shall fight against Adept Bloodfiend of the Heaven Piercing clan."

This was the final battle of the second round.

Adept Bloodfiend was a fairly dazzling figure; his berserkness and his bloodlust had caused everyone watching to firmly fix them in their minds.

But...

He was actually defeated miserably!

Just two blows of the saber! The first blow caused Adept Bloodfiend to be knocked flying backwards, but he had enough power to want to come back and try to fight again. The second blow, however...it chopped his body completely in half! The bisected Adept Bloodfiend hurriedly called out loudly, "I admit defeat!"

"What?!"

"How can this be?!"

Ji Ning, the Sloppy Daoist, Xiamang Zishan, Adept Blackstone, Adept Ninedeaths, and the others were all tremendously shocked. A serious look appeared in their eyes.

A formidable foe! Without question, a formidable foe! Nobody dared to say that they were confident in being able to defeat this mysterious 'Adept Saberslave.'

Adept Saberslave was a black-robed man that carried a warcleaver. He was cold-faced and didn't say anything at all. When he stood there silently, he was easily overlooked...but when acting against Adept Bloodfiend, he revealed his fierceness!

"This wandering cultivator...he should be the disciple of a good friend of mine. Previously, he didn't cause any stir at all, and I thought that he simply had the same Daoist title. But those two saber blows, and his status as a wandering cultivator...there should be no doubt about it." Lu Dongbin's eyes lit up, and he laughed as he praised, "This good friend of mine once mentioned this disciple of his; he said that his disciple had taken on the Daoist title 'Saberslave' and had sworn that he would offer everything he had to the Dao of the Saber. He was going to infuse everything he had into the Dao of the Saber, and that he was willing to be a slave to the Dao of the Saber!"

"Oh? Intriguing." Truelord Chiji's eyes lit up. "Eastflower, who is friend of yours?"

"Umm...nice weather we have today!" Lu Dongbin suddenly turned his head to stare into the void of the skies.

Truelord Chiji was instantly speechless.

The Xia Emperor and the others couldn't help but smile. Still, they could tell that Lu Dongbin clearly didn't want to name this friend of his; most likely, this friend of Lu Dongbin most likely belonged to an alliance that was an enemy of one of the Daofathers supporting Lu Dongbin! Lu Dongbin made friends throughout the Three Realms; he even dared to befriend some enemies and some vile demons.

"There are quite a few solitary wandering cultivators this time," the Xia Emperor said. "This Adept Saberslave is one of them. There are some truly powerful figures amongst this group; some most likely come from other worlds. No matter where they are from, however...since they have participated in this Conclave, I will naturally treat them all equally."

"However, for this Saberslave to suddenly explode with such power causes me a bit of a headache." The Xia Emperor shook his head. "Based on my previous understanding of their power levels, in the third round, I had already made plans for who would fight who...but for this Saberslave to explode with such power in the final battle of the second round makes it so that I don't know what to do."

"I have a recommendation," Lu Dongbin suddenly said.

"Oh?" The others all looked over.

"This Saberslave should be the most powerful expert of the Dao of the Saber out of these remaining twenty-four. As for that Dao-companion of the little girl I like, that Ji Ning...he's the most powerful expert of the Dao of the Sword. One is a Sword Immortal while the other is a Saber Devil; having the two of them fight each other will undoubtedly be quite interesting." 2

The Xia Emperor, hearing this, let out a laugh. "Each of the twenty-four are formidable. No matter who I put Adept Saberslave against, it will still cause me a headache. Since you've spoken out, Lu Dongbin...then let's have this Ji Ning fight against this Saberslave."

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 22: Ji Ning and Saberslave

Ji Ning, Yu Wei, the Sloppy Daoist, and Yuchi Xiyue were quietly whispering amongst each other, discussing each of the remaining twenty-four competitors.

"Adept Woodpass always defends passively, reacting to whatever the enemy throws at him...but he ended up winning, just like that." Yuchi Xiyue sighed. "I have the feeling that he hasn't shown his full power yet."

"Adept Ninedeaths, her body is like a magic treasure. Enemies aren't able to do anything to her at all."

"Adept Goldcrow is bizarre and savage."

"That Adept Saberslave is also quite terrifying."

"Ji Ning, the Xia Emperor isn't going to arrange for you to fight against the Sloppy Daoist, is he?"

"The Xia Emperor wouldn't, unless senior apprentice-brother and I both make it into the top three."

They continued to chat amongst themselves. Not a single remaining expert was easy to fight; after all, all of the twenty four were favored by the Xia Emperor. Although it seemed as though Ji Ning, Adept Ninedeaths, Adept Blackstone, Xiamang Zishan and the others were the most outstanding, the others

weren't much weaker. Perhaps they were hiding supreme techniques, or perhaps they might make a sudden breakthrough.

At a time like this, anything could happen.

"The twenty-four of you!" The Xia Emperor suddenly spoke out.

The entire main hall of the Skylight Palace fell silent. All of them listened carefully. The closer they were to the finale, the more cautious the Celestial Immortals present were; after all, a disciple of Grand Emperor Xuanwu had appeared in this Conclave, and one of the final three would definitely become the disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright.

"In the third round of duels, the twelve winners shall each receive five million kilograms as a reward," the Xia Emperor said calmly. "I hope that you will all use your full power. Don't let it all be for nothing."

Ning and the rest of the twenty-four held their breaths as they waited eagerly.

"In the first battle of the third round...Ji Ning of the Black-White College shall fight against the unaffiliated Adept Saberslave," the Xia Emperor said.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Countless gazes turned towards Ji Ning and Adept Saberslave.

The faces of Yuchi Xiyue Yu Wei both changed. They were both looking towards Ning as well. To both of them, Ji Ning was the most important person in their world. Although they had great faith in him...Adept Saberslave's earlier performance had been simply too shocking. In addition, they had the feeling that they hadn't seen the full extent of his power.

Ning and Adept Saberslave both began to walk towards the grand sealing formation outside the palace.

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"It is the two of them?"

The delegates from the 3600 commanderies and four seas who were watching from the imperial citadel plaza were all completely focused. During this past year, they had been relaxing, chatting, eating, and drinking...but these were the final battles between the ninety-six. This was going to be the most dazzling spectacle in this entire Conclave.

This was especially true now that only twenty-four remained! Each of them were incomparably amazing, supreme geniuses. In addition, this Conclave itself was far more dazzling than previous ones; the top twenty-four were each capable of being ranked in the top three of ordinary Conclaves.

The Sloppy Daoist, Saberslave, Adept Goldcrow, Adept Ninedeaths, and most of the others had originally not planned to come. It was only because their subconscious called them to come that so many peerless monsters had gathered in this place!

"This Adept Saberslave, when fighting against Adept Bloodfiend earlier, chopped through him as easily as chopping through vegetables. He's terrifyingly strong."

“Ji Ning was also one of the most dazzling figures in the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers. He is tremendously strong as well. For these two to fight...it’s truly going to be hard to say who shall win.”

Everyone present couldn’t help but hold their breaths.

As for the disciples and Loose Immortals of the Black-White College, which had skyrocketed in fame during this Conclave, all of them were extremely nervous. This was because the person who was going to enter battle was Ji Ning, of their own school!

“Master.” Little Qing watched without blinking.

“Ji Ning.” Northmont Baiwei looked towards his good friend as well. When he had first met Ning, Ning was nothing more than a youth of Swallow Mountain...but now, he had become the focal point of attention for the entire Grand Xia Dynasty.

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Within the grand sealing formation.

Ji Ning and Saberslave stood there atop the cloud, staring at each other from afar.

Ning carefully inspected Saberslave. The black-robed man who carried a warcleaver appeared to be extremely calm. He was as still as water, and his aura was completely withdrawn; it was indeed easy for others to pay no attention to him.

“For him to be able to remain so calm at a time like this...for his heart to have reached such a level...when he explodes forth with full power, it will be extremely terrifying. Even I didn’t pay any attention to him before he unleashed his full power.” Ning was quite cautious.

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Adept Saberslave was inspecting Ji Ning as well. This delicate-looking fur-clad youth before him seemed to be like a young bumpkin from the vast wilderness, quite ordinary-looking without appearing to be the slightest bit threatening. But Adept Saberslave had watched the two previous rounds of duels; he naturally knew how terrifying this seemingly-delicate youth could be when he exploded with power.

And his eyes...they were as deep as a bottomless pool of water, but within them one could faintly make out a spirit that was as sharp and fierce as the blade of a sword!

This was quite a terrifying youth.

Based on the intelligence reports he had seen earlier, this youth had trained for only thirty years or so. He truly was an incredible monster.

“I have to attack with full power,” Adept Saberslave mused to himself. He had often fought those at a higher level of power, and had even killed quite a few Primal Daoists. However, he had never encountered such a terrifying foe who was also at the Wanxiang Adept level, just like he was.

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“I have to fight with full power.” This was Ning’s private conclusion as well.

Bang! Bang!

Their bodies simultaneously flickered as they both transformed, one into a 54-meter tall giant and the other into a 60-meter tall giant. Clearly, Ji Ning had spent comparatively less time training in the [Heavenly Transformations], and so was slightly lacking in this regard.

Next, the two of them simultaneously executed [Three Heads, Six Arms]!

[Heavenly Transformations] and [Three Heads, Six Arms]...these were two extremely widespread divine abilities in the Three Realms, and were viewed as absolutely necessary for all true experts who trained as Fiendgod Body Refiners.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The two charged towards each other like a pair of true Fiendgods. Ning wielded six Immortal swords in his hands, while Adept Saberslave wielded six warcleavers.

As they moved next to each other...both of them released their most powerful divine abilities as well! Ning held nothing back, immediately executing his [Starseizing Hand].

Clang! Clang! Clang!

A consecutive, frantic flurry of sounds could be heard as the swords and sabers collided. The sounds were actually incomparably clear as they spread far away.

In total, they exchanged a total of twelve blows. The six Immortal swords and the six warcleavers clashed against each other twice.

Whoosh. Adept Saberslave suddenly retreated at high speed, transforming into a streak of black light. He retreated all the way to the edge of the grand sealing formation. His entire body seemed to be brimming with dim flames, and he stared coldly towards Ning with a dark gaze. His six hands had already split open at the juncture between his thumb and forefinger, and blood was dripping out.

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Adept Saberslave stared at Ning, his pupils contracting. "What a terrifying strength this Ji Ning possesses, and what terrifying sword arts! Sabers are single-edged weapons that are thicker at the back, allowing them chop out with even greater force. In terms of weapons...if two opponents with equal strength fight against each other, the side wielding a saber will have a greater advantage. But I was actually at a disadvantage!"

Practitioners of the Dao of the Sword were referred to as Sword Immortals; they were agile, relaxed, refined, and free-spirited.

Practitioners of the Dao of the Saber were referred to as Saber Devils; they were savage, brutal, vicious, and ferocious.

These were two diametrically opposed styles!

But in a frontal clash...Adept Saberslave had actually been at a disadvantage.

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“I’ve reached the twelfth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], and my Fiendgod-like body is incomparably mighty. I also have the [Starseizing Hand]; in terms of pure strength, I am definitely number one in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny! My sword arts are comparable to his saber arts; in a frontal clash, how can he compare to me?” Ning felt complete self-confidence.

Although he looked like a delicate youth, his physical strength was definitely number one in this Conclave! His [Starseizing Hand] allowed his hands to explode forth with truly tremendous power; after all, it was ranked as one of the top ten divine abilities to be invented ever since the universe had been created!

Ning refused to believe that in this Conclave, there would appear another divine ability that ranked in the top ten divine abilities of the Three Realms. That was simply too unlikely.

“You are the most powerful Wanxiang Adept I have ever met. However...a battle isn’t just about fighting head-on against your foes,” Adept Saberslave growled.

“In terms of agility, the Dao of the Sword has always been superior to the Dao of the Saber,” Ning replied tranquilly.

As soon as Ning’s words came out...

Swish!

Adept Saberslave, moving like a ghost, suddenly appeared in front of Ning. His six arms simultaneously chopped down with his warcleavers, all moving in an extremely strange pattern. It was as though a series of illusions had appeared, each of which was completely silent, either stabbing or hacking towards Ning.

Ning immediately used his own Windwing Evasion, and his six arms also executed his own sword arts. His sword-light was like silk, dancing and fluttering about in the surrounding area with absolute beauty.

It was quite bizarre. There were no sounds of weapons colliding at all.

Their sword-light and saber-light howled past each other repeatedly, seeming to almost clash but then separate before actually doing so.

Adept Saberslave’s warcleavers were truly unfathomably strange.

Ning’s swords were moved about in a profound, agile manner.

Ning still held the upper hand! After all, in terms of agility, the Dao of the Sword was indeed slightly superior to the Dao of the Saber.

“The saber...is my life!” Suddenly, a hoarse voice rang out.

Adept Saberslave’s eyes suddenly brimmed with a fiery light. His six hacking warcleavers suddenly began to move with incomparable speed! One chop after another...they all chopped down towards Ning. The six warcleavers seemed to have transformed into the spokes of a wheel. A limitless amount of saber-light was constantly descending towards Ning, and Adept Saberslave’s eyes, glowing with fiery light, appeared to burn with insanity.

In this moment, he had forgotten himself. Only the saber remained!

In this world of the saber...

Fast! Faster! Fastest! One blow after another!

CLANG CLANG CLANG CLANG!!!

Ning fought back against his foe, and their two figures began to appear in multiple places throughout the grand sealing formation. The saber-light flashed at a simply incomparably fast rate; after all, sabers were single-edged weapons that were used to hack and chop. In terms of raw speed...their attacks had an advantage over the attacks of a sword.

“Break! Break! BREAK!”

Ning, assaulted and pressured by countless saber-assaults that flashed as fast as fire, instantly exploded with power. Previously, he had been planning to use this as a chance to temper himself, but he now had no other choices. His six Immortal swords instantly became unfathomable in their movements; some were invincibly savage and ferocious, some were as nimble and dextrous as an Immortal maiden sewing clothes, while others solely focused on support.

“YOU CANNOT WITHSTAND ME!” Adept Saberslave had gone completely berserk. In the area around him, a fiery dragon suddenly appeared. The fiery dragon wrapped itself around him as it launched sneak attacks against Ning, disturbing Ning’s rhythm.

Around Ning’s own body, an enormous Waterflame Lotus suddenly appeared. The Waterflame Lotus bloomed open, the petals of the lotus swiveling against each other.

Slash! Slash!

Blood flew everywhere as the two battled with utter madness.

Adept Saberslave could only be described in a single word – fast!

Ji Ning, in turn, brought out all of the magnificent splendor of the Dao of the Sword.

CLANG! A warcleaver was suddenly knocked aside...and attached to it was a severed hand.

“I admit defeat.” A hoarse voice rang out.

The two separated with a swoosh.

Adept Saberslave’s entire body was covered in wounds. The wound on his chest was particularly bad; it had torn apart almost his entire chest. His face was covered with many savage wounds, and one of his hands had been severed, causing his warcleaver to fly away.

Ji Ning, by comparison, was a bit better off. He only had a single vicious wound on his chest, as well as several wounds that were about to completely finish healing.

“You weren’t completely defeated yet.” Ning looked at Adept Saberslave.

“With six sabers, I still lost a hand. With only five sabers...you probably would’ve taken my life.” Adept Saberslave gently shook his head. He picked up his discarded warcleaver, then walked out of the grand sealing formation. Ji Ning walked out as well.

All of the Wanxiang Adepts within the main hall had extremely solemn looks on their faces.

The battle between Ji Ning and Adept Saberslave had been too berserk, too violent. The two had pulled out almost all the stops in their battle, releasing the full power of the Grand Dao of the Sword and the Grand Dao of the Saber, the two Grand Daos that were most suited for attacking. This caused all of the spectators to feel nervousness in their hearts. Many of them would most likely have been defeated had they been the one to encounter Adept Saberslave.

Fortunately, it was Ji Ning, a Sword Immortal, who had been the one to fight. He had managed to suppress this Saber Devil!

And now...Adept Saberslave had admitted defeat, leaving behind the even more terrifying Ji Ning!

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 12: Immortal Destiny Chapter 23: Ji Ning’s Divine Ability

“Ji Ning won!”

“Ji Ning of the Black-White College of Stillwater Commandery won!”

The imperial citadel plaza was a hubbub of noise. The delegates from the 3600 commanderies and four seas were all excitedly discussing this most recent battle. It had indeed been quite spectacular! This was because the other competitors, such as Xiamang Zishan, Adept Ninedeaths, or the Sloppy Daoist all relied on their hands or on staffs.

When they fought, their techniques might be more exquisite or more violent...but in terms of murderous savagery, they were far from being a match for the Dao of the Sword or the Dao of the Saber. Sword Immortals and Saber Devils were highly suited to combat! Previously, the two had easily defeated their foes, but this time when they collided against each other...they finally, truly revealed the strengths of Sword Immortals and Saber Devils, these two major schools of combat.

The sight of their battled caused hearts to shudder and grow numb.

The sword-light, the saber-light...any casual blow was capable of slaughtering a Primal Daoist!

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Ning walked back into the main hall of the Skylight Palace, moving behind King Yan and seating himself alongside the Sloppy Daoist, Yuchi Xiyue, and Yu Wei once more.

The gazes of many individuals within the main hall all fell upon Ning.

“I absolutely can’t exchange blows head-on against this Ji Ning. I need to use my strengths to seize his weaknesses.”

“Sword Immortals truly are formidable in an all-out fight.”

“I can’t take him head-on.”

The rest of the twenty-four Wanxiang Adept competitors were all pondering. Only when knowing one's self and one's enemies could one win a hundred battles without fail. They all knew that Sword Immortals specialized in attacking, and they naturally knew where their own advantages lay as well...and so the likes of Adept Ninedeaths, Xiamang Zishan, Cangwu Jiu, Youngflame Zhan, and Adept Blackstone were all quietly pondering on their plans.

The nine Pure Yang True Immortals seated on high, by contrast, began to grow puzzled.

"I wasn't able to see it clearly previously," the Immortal Elder of the Northlands said in a suspicious manner, "But during the battle between Ji Ning and Saberslave, everything became apparent. In terms of their levels of comprehension regarding the sword and the saber, the two were on par...but when they fought head-on, Ji Ning actually held the upper hand. This Saberslave is the disciple of a good friend of Eastflower; his divine abilities shouldn't be weak. So...this Ji Ning should train in an even more powerful divine ability! Or perhaps the power of the swords he wields is greater!"

Truelord Chiji nodded as well. "Ji Ning has only trained for around thirty or so years, but has already reached such a level; he should have had a tremendous stroke of luck that allowed him to learn a powerful divine ability. However, this divine ability is a support-type divine ability that is quite low-key, making it extremely hard to detect from the surface."

"He should indeed have a formidable divine ability." Lu Dongbing laughed loudly. "But each of those who have managed to survive this Conclave thus far are the darlings of this entire major world of the Grand Xia; I'm sure that all of them have had tremendous strokes of luck. Since the universe was established, countless divine abilities have been invented. Some are for attack, others are for suppressing and sealing, others are for poison, while some are for raw strength...they are all different. Ji Ning should have trained in one meant for raw strength."

"Right.

"His speed isn't exceptionally impressive."

They all nodded.

There were, after all, far too many variables that could affect a person's combat power. Some were exceptionally talented; even if they were also just at the twelfth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], their talent made it so that they were a bit stronger! Not everyone at the same level would necessarily have the exact same level of strength! Even those who trained in the same Ki Refining technique, such as the [Flowing Watersource], would need different levels of liquefied elemental essence for a breakthrough. After all, each of them were born with unique bodies that had their differences; the only thing that could be said was that the difference between them wouldn't be too ridiculous.

Different weapons, different insights into different Daos, particularly special divine abilities, or secret arts that allowed elemental ki to explode in certain ways...

These could all cause differences in one's level of power.

Previously, they hadn't even been able to tell that Ning possessed a powerful divine ability, but in Ning's battle against Saberslave, the two had simply been too similar! One was of the Dao of the Sword, the

other was of the Dao of the Saber. Putting them side by side made the differences very easily detected, which was why the Pure Yang True Immortals were able to ascertain that Ning should be in possession of a powerful divine ability.

But that was nothing special.

There were plenty of formidable divine abilities; the imperial treasury of the Grand Xia Emperor even held the [Torch Dragon's Eye], one of the top hundred grand divine abilities of the Three Realms. However, the treasury only held the first part of the [Torch Dragon's Eye]; it was only suitable for Void-level Fiendgods to train in. They didn't have the higher-level training techniques.

In truth, a grand divine ability like this, ranked in the top hundred in the entire Three Realms, shouldn't actually have been transmitted to outsiders, even if it was just the first part. The reason the imperial treasury of the Grand Xia had it was because...the creator of the [Torch Dragon's Eye], the major power of the Three Realms known as the Torch Dragon, had died long ago during the era of the Primordial World!

"Ji Ning might have learned a unique divine ability developed by some Emyrean God or major power," the Pure Yang True Immortals believed.

The divine abilities developed by major powers weren't necessarily the most supreme abilities.

For example, Grand Emperor Xuanwu; only his 'Grand Black Tortoise' divine ability was exceptionally famous. He would occasionally develop some other unique divine abilities as well. Some were suited for fleeing, others were suited for defense, while still others were suited for attacking...these types divine abilities, which he would create in a fairly casual manner, were comparatively speaking of much lower value. Only supreme abilities which the creator poured all of their blood and sweat into would become truly precious.

For example, the 'Grand Black Tortoise' divine ability of Grand Emperor Xuanwu.

Or for example, the [Starseizing Hand] of Daoist Threelives.

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"In the second duel, the unaffiliated Adept Ninedeaths will battle against Adept Rainflower of the Soaring Immortal School."

This was a battle between two women.

Adept Ninedeaths had a body like a magic treasure; Adept Rainflower was completely unable to do anything to her. After all, her attacks weren't as powerful as that of a Sword Immortal like Ji Ning!

In this battle...Adept Ninedeaths was the victor!

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"The third duel..."

"The fourth duel..."

.....

One duel after another. The people watching from the imperial citadel plaza below were all breathless. The Celestial Immortals and Pure Yang True Immortals seated within the main hall of the Skylight Palace were all watching attentively as well. The only reason why the Pure Yang True Immortals were paying so much attention was because Daofather Crimsonbright would choose one of them as a disciple.

“The eighth duel shall see Youngflame Zhan fight against Xiangtian Xiao.”

This was a battle that many people cared about.

This was because, amongst the twenty-four competitors, only four came from the major clans of the Grand Xia Dynasty – Xiamang Zishan of the imperial Xiamang clan, Cangwu Jiu of the Cangwu clan, Youngflame Zhan of the Youngflame clan, and Xiangtian Xiao of the Xiangtian clan. Just four of them! This proved that in terms of searching for geniuses, the number of geniuses within the various clans was vastly inferior to the number of geniuses spread out within the entire world.

In this battle, Xiangtian Xiao was quite berserk. He completely displayed the legendary valor and savagery of the Xiangtian clan, famous for being willing to challenge the heavens themselves. However...he still lost. His power was indeed quite a bit lower than Youngflame Zhan's. 1

In addition, Youngflame Zhan had been entrusted with the hopes of his clan; he had also gone all out.

The victor of the eighth battle was Youngflame Zhan!

“Good, good, good. Very good!” Watching the battle, Patriarch Arcanum couldn't help but laugh so hard his mouth was about to split apart. Everyone knew how crazed and cold-blooded he was; it was rare to see him smile a single time in ten thousand years. But right now, he was laughing! And in truth, the other Celestial Immortals all understood how Patriarch Arcanum was feeling.

“Zhan, child, well done. Charge forward in just this manner. You've already made it to the top twelve.” Patriarch Arcanum watched as Youngflame Zhan walked to his side, then immediately encouraged him, “You are very, very, very close to being in the top three now.”

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Finally, the twelve competitions in the third round came to an end.

This resulted in the final twelve being determined!

Ning and the rest of the twelve all stood in a neat line in the main hall, awaiting the Grand Xia Emperor's bestowal of five million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.

“Xiamang Zishan. Cangwu Jiu. Ji Ning. Sloppy Daoist. Youngflame Zhan. Adept Woodpass. Adept Blackstone. Adept Ninedeaths. Adept Whitedragon. Adept Unicosmo. Adept Primalback. Adept Goldcrow.” The Xia Emperor stood at the front of the hall, listing out the names of all twelve before continuing. “The twelve of you have ranked in the top twelve in this Conclave of Immortal Destiny. I said previously that those who made it into the top twelve would each receive five million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence.”

The Xia Emperor waved his hand. Instantly, twelve violet-jade bottles appeared out of nowhere in the air before them. One of the twelve violet-jade bottles flew to each of the twelve victors.

This caused even the Celestial Immortals present to stare towards the bottles. Five million kilograms! This caused even them to feel envy and desire. These twelve little fellows ended up acquiring so much!

Ning and the others reached out to grab them. They then swept the bottles with their divine senses!

“Wow.” Ning secretly sighed in amazement. “This violet bottle is a wonderful treasure for storing liquefied elemental essence as well. It is actually able to hold five million kilograms of it. It’s comparable to a high-grade Heaven-ranked flying sword in value.”

“With these five million kilograms, my Primaltwin should be able to charge all the way to the peak of the Void-stage,” Ning mused to himself. “But there’s no need to rush it; my Primaltwin has spent very little time at the Primal level. I should keep it there for a period of time longer and understand it better.”

At every single level, there were different insights to be gained. Reincarnated Immortals might have already trained at a certain level, so it didn’t matter, but Ji Ning was no reincarnated Immortal. It was best for him to spend a bit of extra time at each level. But of course, after his true body broke through to become a Primal, his Primaltwin could make the breakthrough to the Void-level.

“You shall first enter the world of the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers,” the Xia Emperor suddenly said. “I will change the flow of time in the place where you reside. I shall wait for you for two hours in the outside world; within the Diagram, you will have three days to quietly train.”

Ning and the others were flabbergasted. Train for three days within the Diagram?

“Strange. Previously, when the hundred thousand-plus competitors entered the world of the Diagram, wasn’t the flow of time inside it the same as the flow of time outside it? Why is it that all of a sudden, three days in the diagram becomes equal to two hours outside of it?” Ning was puzzled.

“Ji Ning!” The giant yellow bear’s voice rang out in Ning’s mind. “It seems as though the emperor of your Grand Xia Dynasty has quite a bit of insight into the Grand Dao of Time. However, changing the flow of time will use a tremendous amount of energy; although the Grand Xia Emperor is a Pure Yang True Immortal, he still wouldn’t dare to try and change the flow of time for more than a hundred thousand people. The twelve of you represent a much lower burden to him.”

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Swoosh swoosh swoosh!!!

Ning and the rest of the twelve were teleported straight into the world of the Diagram, and then the scroll of the Diagram itself flew into the Grand Xia Emperor’s hands.

“Xiamang, you want to let them train for three days?” Truelord Chiji laughed. “It seems you truly do place tremendous importance on this Conclave.”

“It’s not that I place importance on it; it’s that I must not only be hard-working in service to Master, I also must put thought into it,” the Xia Emperor said. “There are only twelve who remain in this Conclave. The previous battles they engaged in have caused their hearts to be tempered through the invisible pressure their competitors placed upon them...and they are currently in the process of evolving. I am giving them three days. Perhaps, this will be enough to let them make a breakthrough. I naturally wish to ensure that only the three best geniuses are presented to Master for the choosing.”

“Right. When you are working for your master, you need to not only be hard-working, but also put thought into it.” Lu Dongbin nodded and smiled. “No wonder Daofather Crimsonbright likes you so much, Xiamang.”

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Ji Ning and the others appeared atop a mountain peak. The mountain peak was more than a three hundred meters in size; naturally, it was enough for twelve cultivators to train in. In addition, there were invisible barriers surrounding the mountain peak; there was no way for Ning or the others to walk out from the area of the peak.

Ning and the others immediately sat down into the lotus position, not even saying anything to each other.

They all felt as though their souls had been filled with new insights; perhaps this might be their chance to apply them and make a breakthrough. A little bit of a breakthrough might make a tremendous difference in whether or not they would be able to be selected into the top three! That meant a chance to become the disciple of Daofather Crimsonbright! Who wouldn't go all out for that chance?

Ning, too, had the ardent desire to become Daofather Crimsonbright's disciple!