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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 24: The Sword as the Rake, the Heavens as the Field

The eleven remaining monster kings were so angry, their teeth hurt from gnashing. The reason they were so famous was naturally in part because they had developed a 'Grand Soaring Bear Formation' which was very well-suited to the twelve of them. The Goldfur Barking was the heart of the formation, and the other eleven monster kings served to support him, transforming into a single massive flying bear. It was well-suited for both attack and defense, and in the face of it even Celestial Immortal Patriarchs would choose to flee. Once formed, even Ning fighting at full-strength would probably be forced to flee.

However...the Flamewing King was now dead. He had been responsible for the 'central wing region' of the formation; without him, there was naturally no way to execute the incomparably complicated and powerful 'Grand Soaring Bear Formation' to its full power.

"He tricked us."

"Damn him."

"How is this little human kid so powerful? I've never heard of someone like him in the Star, Cloud, or Flame continents."

The monster kings really were tricked in a rather unfair manner. Only someone with the power of a Celestial Immortal would be able to kill the Flamewing King in an extremely short period of time! Those with the power of a Celestial Immortal generally were all quite famous. In addition, Ning had just recently reached the early Void stage; naturally, his level of insight wasn't much higher than back when he was a Primal Daoist, and his elemental ki was three levels lower than that of the twelve monster kings, who were all comparable to the peak Void stage. All of the monsters had Immortal-ranked magic treasures as well!

The combination of all of these factors was what let Ning catch them off-guard with his successful sneak attack!

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"Hahaha, without the Flamewing King, I imagine you are now unable to form your formation. If you want to kill me...I'm afraid you won't be strong enough." Ning stood there in the air as he said leisurely, "I urge you to depart right away. In the future, you can at least term yourselves the Eleven Monster Kings of the Eastern Flows. However, if we truly were to fight each other...under the merciless exchange of blows between swords and sabers, you might end up the Nine Monster Kings or the Eight Monster Kings of the Eastern Flows."

"Damn it."

"Human, report your name!"

"Who in the world are you?"

The monster kings were utterly infuriated. Although they were very much on their guard now against Ning, none of them chose to leave. After all, he had just killed one of their brothers; if the remaining eleven fled without even choosing to fight, that would cause their reputations to be truly tarnished. For Loose Immortal monsters like them, given that the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations were growing increasingly powerful and that they would eventually die, their reputation was extremely important!"

Ning secretly felt resigned as well at their decision to stay. If the monster kings had chosen to leave, he would've secretly gone to their headquarters and slain them all, one by one.

"Listen up," Ning said with a laugh. "I am Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning."

"Immortal Darknorth, Ji Ning?" The eleven monster kings all quietly memorized this name. As they did so, they continuously reflected on it, but no matter what, they couldn't recollect having heard of such a monstrously powerful genius on the Star, Cloud, or Flame continents who was known as Immortal Darknorth or who was known as Ji Ning."

"I made a promise to the survivors of the imperial Qi clan. I will hold to it and protect them," Ning said with a laugh. "I urge you all to leave."

The eleven monster kings stealthily sent messages to each other, but their decision had been made long ago. Leave? What a joke. Even if this was a Celestial Immortal Patriarch, they would still attack. One of their brothers had just died; how could they possibly choose to flee without even fighting?

"Assemble the formation!" The Goldfur Barking ordered mentally.

Rumble...

Formless strands of glowing elemental ki sprang up around the bodies of the eleven monster kings. They used just a very rudimentary sort of combination technique, a technique that was similar to the [Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation] in that it allowed them to pool and share their elemental ki! The elemental ki of eleven monster kings merged together...this allowed the power of their attacks to rise to a brand new level.

"Use all abilities you have to kill him," the Goldfur Barking sent mentally.

Whoooooosh. Instantly, one Immortal-ranked magic treasure after another appeared in front of the eleven monster kings. As for the Goldfur Barking, a total of ninety-nine pearl-type magic treasures appeared around him, each one with the aura of an Immortal-ranked magic item. Clearly, this was a set of items. As the leader of the twelve monster kings and the only one truly comparable to a Celestial Immortal, someone capable of forcing even Celestial Immortals to retreat, the Goldfur Barking naturally had some truly extraordinary Immortal-ranked magic treasures.

Boom! As they joined into their formation, Ning charged forward as well.

"Kill!"

"Kill him."

"Damn him."

The eleven monster kings shared their elemental ki together, using all of their specialized techniques. After all, if they didn't have a truly supreme formation like the 'Grand Soaring Bear Formation', it was better to just share and pool their elemental ki as they used their own best techniques.

Streaks of light appeared in the skies. Enormous flaming phoenix wings that blazed for thirty thousand meters...a black deluge of water that surged towards Ning...boundless amounts of golden light that streaked and stabbed towards Ning...

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Both Ning and the eleven monster kings had a degree of insight into the Grand Dao of Qiankun. They all activated the power of the natural world, freezing the local space with the intention of binding their opponents, preventing them from teleporting away.

Of course, one could still use a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal to flee...but who would choose to flee at a time like this?

"The monster king died."

"That human is actually this terrifyingly powerful."

The vast horde of monsters that had been led here by the monster kings primarily consisted of the most talented and skilled monsters within the court of the Flamewing King! They numbered tens of Loose Immortals as well as many Primal Diremonsters and Wanxiang Diremonsters. However, even their king had been killed by this human youth in a single exchange; how would they possibly dare to charge forward?

And now, the other eleven monster kings were attacking the human youth together. A battle at this level was something which fodder like them would play no role in.

"The surrounding space has been locked. There's no way to teleport."

"It seems the monster kings aren't willing to let the human escape. They insist on killing him." As the monsters saw this, their eyes lit up. As they saw it, the eleven monster kings, when fighting in unison, would definitely have the upper hand. As to whether or not they would be able to kill this human...that was hard to say.

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The three-headed, six-armed Ning was three hundred meters tall, and his six swords were also three hundred meters long now. Whirling his six sharp swords, he sent sword-light criss-crossing across the sky, resisting the attacks of the eleven monster kings!

"Kill!" While blocking attacks, Ning continued to move closer and closer towards the monster kings. However, given that he was under heavy attack, how fast could he possibly move? The monster kings were able to easily pull away from Ning, and the pearl-type magic treasures of the Goldfur Bear King were particularly fierce. Every single pearl was like a miniature star that smashed down towards him with the weight of a massive mountain, causing Ning to feel very taxed when blocking them. Another monster king, the Mountback monster king, controlled a mountain-type magic treasure that smashed

down with even greater power than the pearls. Fortunately, however, he only possessed a single such treasure.

The sword is an agile weapon. In the face of other attacks, Ning was able to deflect with a degree of ease, but he was at a disadvantage when faced with these heavy smashing blows.

“Hahaha, big brother, although this human has the power of a Celestial Immortal, you also have the power of a Celestial Immortal. Although the rest of us are a bit weaker, when we join forces we can completely suppress him. However...he is a Fiendgod Body Refiner with extremely powerful recuperative abilities. Still...that will only allow him to delay the inevitable.”

“If this continues, he will definitely die.”

“My brothers, be careful; don’t let him use a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal to escape.”

“Don’t worry, big brother; we are using many Immortal-ranked magic treasures to attack him. How can he possibly have the time to pull one out and activate it?”

The monster kings were filled with an aura of explosive might.

Ning was being assaulted by dozens of Immortal-ranked magic treasures, and every single wielder was an expert who was at least comparable to a Loose Immortal who had lived for five hundred thousand years. The Goldfur Barking was comparable to a Loose Immortal who had lived for over a million years.

“Urgh.” Ning was repeatedly struck by one of the pearls, causing him to vomit up blood.

“Quick.”

“He’s almost finished.”

“Kill him.”

The monster kings all directed their Immortal-ranked magic treasures to attack, wanting to seize this chance to slay Ning.

But right at this moment, Ning mused to himself mentally: “This should be the right moment.”

Swish! Not too far away from Ning, another figure suddenly appeared out of nowhere. This was a black-robed Ji Ning who emanated an extremely powerful aura, the aura of a late Void-stage Earth Immortal. Behind him there was a sword sheath, and within the sword sheath were many Immortal swords that had been turned illusory and transient. The black-robed Ning pointed his finger, and instantly...swish swish swish!!! The nine seemingly-illusory black Immortal swords instantly flew out.

“Heavenraker!”

The black-robed Ning’s eyes flashed with a cold light. Instantly, the nine translucent black flying swords instantly slashed through the skies, causing massive black scar to appear in the heavens.

Why was this technique known as [Heavenraker]?

This technique used the sword as the rake, and the heavens as the field. Mortals would use rakes and plows to tear through the fields, while Ning’s sword-light was like a rake that would tear through the

firmament like a field. Nine massive black scars instantly appeared in the skies, stretching towards the monster kings and enveloping three of them.

“That’s a Primaltwin.”

“This human brat actually has a Primaltwin!”

“At the late Void-stage!”

The eleven monster kings were all shocked. As soon as Ning’s Primaltwin had emerged, it had immediately used [Heavenraker], a sword technique developed by a Daofather of the Great Firmament. In addition, he was using it with nine top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords, and ones that were specially designed to form into the [Heavenraker] sword formation at that! This technique was unquestionably Ning’s most powerful attack right now!

When Ning used the [Starseizing Hand], perhaps only the hand which wielded the Thousandbull Sword, a weapon almost comparable to Pure Yang treasures, would be able to unleash power which surpassed one of the nine swords in the [Heavenraker Sword Formation]. As for the combined attack of all nine swords? Even the Thousandbull Sword was a bit weaker.

“No!”

“Block it.”

“Hurry and block it!”

The other monster kings moved to help, and the three monster kings assaulted by the [Heavenraker] swords were completely focusing on blocking the technique, but...they were unable to!

A look of utter despair appeared in the eyes of the three monster kings.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! All three of them were instantly killed.

The [Heavenraker] formation of Ning’s Primaltwin was currently Ning’s most powerful technique. It was also incredibly fast; although the three monster kings knew that they wouldn’t be able to block it, there was no time at all for them to use Greater Teleportation Dao-seals to flee.

BOOM! Ning’s true body charged forward as well as his Primaltwin once more launched the [Heavenraker] towards the other monster kings. The remaining monster kings instantly grew both panicked and frantic!

Ning, having fought with them earlier, already knew about the techniques they had available to them. As the saying went, know thyself and know thy foe; in doing so, you shall be victorious in all your battles. When his Primaltwin executed the [Heavenraker], he had focused on the weakest ones of the eleven! Naturally, he had been completely successful.

BOOM! Ning’s true body exploded with full power as well. Previously, all six of Ning’s Immortal swords were comparable in power because Ning was hiding the full might of the Thousandbull Sword. The enemies believed all six swords to be identical in power! But now that the real attack had begun, Ning naturally would no longer hide anything at all. He exploded forth with full power!

“KILL!”

The Thousandbull Sword was three hundred meters long, and as it chopped out, the illusion of an old black bull could be vaguely seen above the sword. The old black bull was emanating an utterly astonishing sword-ki, and as the sword itself struck out, it seemed to have transformed into an enormous divine black dragon.

In terms of single-target attacks, even the [Heavenraker] swords were inferior to this blow. The Jadetoad King was immediately heavily injured, and a second blow from Ning’s Darknorth sword finished him off.

“Retreat!” The Goldfur Barking gritted his teeth and howled angrily.

“Too late!” The reason why Ning had previously hid his power was for the sake of letting it all explode forth now. Holding nothing back at all, his Primaltwin and his true body both attacked at maximum force. The astonishingly fast strikes of his Primaltwin’s [Heavenraker] swords tore jagged wounds into the skies, and the nine tears were like infinite chains that came to drag away the lives of the monster kings.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 25: The Monster Kings Flee For Their Lives

“Quick, flee!”

“How is this human so powerful?”

The monster kings were terrified and gripped by despair. Of the group, only their boss, the Goldfur Barking, was able to withstand Ji Ning’s attacks. The others were only able to buy themselves a bit of time, but Ning’s terrifying [Heavenraker] attacks and savage close-combat strikes would take their lives if they made even the slightest of mistakes.

Swoosh. A bloody streak of light flashed through the skies as the Redhate monster quickly fled.

“Time to go.” A gale arose, but six streaks of distorted sword-rifts appeared in the skies, surrounding that gale and slaughtering three of the monster kings who had been on the verge of fleeing.

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They had truly stumbled into a hornet’s nest. The Twelve Monster Kings of the Eastern Flows had never imagined that this human, this Immortal Darknorth, would have reached such a terrifying level of power. If they had been able to use the perfect, complete ‘Grand Soaring Bear Formation’, they definitely would’ve been able to suppress Ning...but Ning had plotted to kill the Flamewing King right off the start, causing them to only be able to fight individually.

Ning’s own level of power was simply too strong. Ning’s Primaltwin was at the late Void-stage and trained in the [Darknorth Sutra], a Ki Refining Technique developed by a Daofather of the Great Firmament. In terms of elemental ki, he had an amount that was comparable to the amount which Immortal Northwalker had previously possessed. In terms of sword-arts, he was comparable as well. But more importantly, Ning had a full set of nine top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords that were perfectly suited to the [Heavenraker] sword technique.

Thus, the power of Ning’s Primaltwin was on a level higher than even Immortal Northwalker!

Ning's true body was a bit weaker, but the Thousandbull Sword was exceptionally ferocious. In addition, wounds were not a problem for his Fiendgod body, and slashes and stabs were of minor import. This caused the Loose Immortal monster kings to fear fighting Ning in close combat.

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Two Nings. One had incomparably powerful long range attacks that surpassed each of the monster kings in might. The other had a Fiendgod body that excelled in close combat.

Combined, the two utterly dominated these eleven monster kings that were unable to assemble into their standout formation, causing one after another to perish as they tried to flee.

"Immortal Darknorth." The Goldfur Barking stood there in midair, his voice booming. "What sort of a grudge did you have against the twelve of us, for you to repeatedly plot against us in such a manner?"

By now, the Goldfur Barking could tell that Ning had been scheming against them this entire time. Ning had first feigned weakness and had even lowered the power of the Thousandbull Sword, only to suddenly unleash it later on and kill three of the monster kings. The monster kings had immediately been thrown into a state of utter chaos. Each and every action of this Immortal Darknorth was clearly meant to result in the deaths of the twelve of them!

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Three figures disappeared into the horizons. Ning shook his head and sighed softly. "I was so careful, but I only killed eight of them." He only had a single main body and his Primaltwin, while his opponents were far more numerous. When they all moved to flee, they all began to use formidable agility techniques; naturally, Ning was unable to kill them all.

The Goldfur Barking was so angry, he almost vomited blood. 'Only' killed eight of them?

"CHOP!" Ning's gaze turned towards the distant Goldfur Barking.

Whooooosh. Nine streaks of distorted sword-tears ripped through the skies, wrapping around the body of the massive Goldfur Barking. The ninety-nine pearl-type magic treasures around the Goldfur Barking, however, moved about in extremely profound ways as they joined together in three layers of defense. The defense was extremely tight and blocked off Ning's sword-light attack.

"Don't waste your energy. I've fought against more than ten Celestial Immortals, and none of them were able to do anything to me." The Goldfur Barking's voice boomed out as he growled, "Tell me, why did you kill my brothers?"

"Brothers?" Ning shook his head. "Goldfur Barking, all of the other monster kings were wreathed in enormous amounts of sin, and each of them were covered by more than three hundred meters of bloody sin light. You, however, have an extremely low amount of sin; you just have a bit of a corrosive black aura around you. You are completely different from them."

The Goldfur Barking nodded slowly. "Truth. You speak truth. They are too blind, too foolish, too insane. I am more clear-headed than them. In the face of the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations, they were all gripped by despair and so no longer cared about incurring sin at all. But I know that the more sins one

commits, the more powerful the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations are. I want to live longer; naturally, I won't let large amounts of sin wrap around me."

"But they were my subordinates, the subordinates I used to unify the Eastern flows region. You've destroyed everything." The Goldfur Barking growled, "I don't wish to be enemies with you, but I want to understand things clearly. Why did you have to kill them?"

"Because of..." Ning said with a laugh, "Sin!"

The Goldfur Barking suddenly understood. "Ah, I see. You wish to kill great sinners so as to accumulate more karmic merit. The more karmic merit you accrue, the easier it will be and the more help you will have during your tribulation."

"No." Ning chuckled. "It is because of a test my master gave me."

"Oh?" The Goldfur Barking was puzzled.

"I must kill ten great sinners. This is my trial," Ning said.

The Goldfur Barking was speechless. "What...what school are you from? Why would you be given a trial like this? And...you are already so powerful. Who would dare give you a trial? Can it be that your master is a True Immortal or an Empyrean God?"

"You don't need to worry about that. Let me ask you a question; compared to Celestial Immortals, how strong am I?" Ning asked. Since this Goldfur Barking had fought with more than ten Celestial Immortals, he should be able to give an accurate assessment.

The Goldfur Barking nodded. "You are a Sword Immortal. Your attacks are extremely powerful, especially those of your Primaltwin, which has reached the level of an average Celestial Immortal."

"As for your true body, it is a bit weaker; it should be at the level of a weak Celestial Immortal. Still...your true body should have an extremely powerful Immortal-ranked flying sword which is clearly more formidable than the other five. Although you are 'only' at the level of a weak Celestial Immortal, you have the advantage of being a Fiendgod Body Refiner."

"If the twelve of us had been able to form into the 'Grand Soaring Bear Formation', we would've been able to suppress you. Without it, however, you were able to break us down one by one and defeat us. The other eleven were comparatively weak and were not quite comparable to Celestial Immortals yet," the Goldfur Barking evaluated.

Loose Immortals were capable of living for a hundred thousand years, three hundred thousand years, five hundred thousand years, seven hundred thousand years, nine hundred thousand years, a million years...

The longer they survived, the greater their power became.

Back in the world of the Grand Xia, Immortal Floatcloud was merely a Loose Immortal at the hundred thousand year tier. These monster kings, however, were all at least at the five hundred thousand year tier. The Goldfur Barking had surpassed the million-year tier, which was the level of Immortal Northwalker. As for Immortal Juhua, he had lived for millions of years.

“Oh.” Ning nodded, now having a rough estimation of his level of power.

“Immortal Darknorth, if there’s anything you need, you can come visit me at Goldtop Mountain.” After speaking, the Goldfur Barking transformed into a streak of golden light and disappeared.

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Ning watched as the Goldfur Barking left. He mused softly to himself, “The defense of that Goldfur Barking was quite formidable. Those ninety-nine pearl-type treasures...the value of that entire set is definitely incalculable. Unfortunately, I wasn’t able to acquire it.”

“Eh?” Having suddenly thought of something, Ning took a step back and returned to the cliff. The mountain was now a full level shorter than it had been in the past.

Ning waved his hand and an Immortal estate appeared. Bluecliff Xiaoyu and the imperial Qi clansmen emerged from the Immortal estate.

“What’s going on?” The imperial Qi clansmen stared around in terror.

“Did that Immortal Darknorth die, resulting in the Twelve Monster Kings of the Eastern Flows acquiring his Immortal estate? Are we now in the hands of monsters?” The black-robed princess was terrified as well. Xiaoyu stared around with worry as well, searching for her master’s figure.

Suddenly...they were all transfixed by what they saw.

This was because they saw Ning seated next to the cliff, a gourd of wine in his hands. He was sipping it and staring towards the endless sea of clouds in the sky.

“Where are the monsters?” Qi Rufeng was awestruck.

“But, but...” The black-robed princess was stunned as well.

“Master, Master.” Xiaoyu ran over to Ning’s side. Amongst Immortal cultivators, masters and disciples had extremely close relationships. As the saying went, ‘one who is your master for a day should be revered as a parent for a lifetime’; this saying was no joke. After all, the benevolence shown by a master in transmitting the Dao was extremely great. Xiaoyu was very excited to discover that the seemingly young-looking youth was still alive and perfectly fine.

“Senior Darknorth, where are the Twelve Monster Kings of the Eastern Flows?” Qi Rufeng didn’t dare believe that Ning had the power to defeat the twelve of them, and he couldn’t help but ask this question.

“Unfortunately, I only killed eight of them.” Ning shook his head and sighed.

“What?” Qi Rufeng’s eyes bulged out.

Ning paid him no attention. He continued to drink his wine and stare at the scenery. Although he was in quite a good mood, he still felt rather regretful. His trial for acquiring the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] was to kill ten great sinners, but he had only killed eight! He was still missing two! If he had just killed two more of them, he would be able to go back to Mount Innerheart and learn the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] right

away. Now, however, he would need to remain here for at least another short period of time and find two more great sinners to kill.

“Senior Darknorth...senior Dark...?” Qi Rufeng couldn’t help but call out repeatedly.

“Master.” Xiaoyu called out softly as well. At the same time, she couldn’t help but use her dainty little hand to gently touch Ning.

Ning turned to look at her. Xiaoyu’s face was full of questions. She whispered, “Master, you said you killed eight of them? But this...this...” She was a mere Zifu Disciple; the twelve monster kings were incomparably exalted figures in her eyes. The entirety of the Eastern Flows were ruled by them. Her master had claimed to kill eight of them? He must’ve actually just killed eight ordinary Loose Immortal monsters, right?

“Look.” Ning disdainfully waved his hand, and one Immortal-ranked magic treasure after another appeared in midair. These items had been left behind by the eight slain monster kings, and each of them emanated powerful ripples.

The eyes of Crown Prince Qi Rufeng, who had the most experience of the lot, instantly bulged out. He had seen Immortal-ranked magic treasures back in the imperial palace, which was why his eyes were bulging out right now. “These...these...these are all Immortal-ranked magic treasures? So many...how...what...”

“This set of Immortal-ranked treasures!” Qi Rufeng suddenly stared at six scimitars that hung in the skies. The six scimitars were the very same Immortal-ranked magic treasures which the Flamewing King had used long ago to slaughter a path through the Qi Empire. Qi Rufeng would never forget the scene of how one Loose Immortal after another fell in the face of those scimitars’ wanton slaughter.

“This set belonged to the Flamewing King. He’s dead now,” Ning said calmly. “He was one of the eight I killed. I promised to protect you for a year, or until I killed the Flamewing King. I’ve accomplished my promise and I’ve done enough. You can go now.”

Ning began to walk towards his Immortal estate, then instructed to Xiaoyu, “Xiaoyu, come with me.”

“Y...yes master.” Bluecliff Xiaoyu immediately followed Ning into the estate obediently.

As the two entered the Immortal estate, the Crown Prince and the princess simply stood there and stared at the estate for a long, long moment.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 26: Success

The crown prince and the princess were indeed rather dazed. They could clearly see that the person before them was merely a Primal Daoist. For him to kill hundreds of Flamewing Guards was one thing, but how was it that he had killed eight of the Twelve Monster Kings of the Eastern Flows?

Although they hadn’t personally witnessed it, the tens of Immortal-ranked magic treasures before them were real. They didn’t believe that the Flamewing King and the other monster kings who had used these Immortal-ranked magic treasures to dominate the region would just voluntarily give them to senior Darknorth.

“Big brother, we must take on this senior Darknorth as our master. Once we miss this opportunity, we might never encounter someone like him again for the rest of our lives,” the black-robed princess suddenly said.

“Right.” The crown prince’s eyes lit up as he nodded repeatedly. “Senior Darknorth is even more formidable than the twelve monster kings! He is far more powerful than our Qi Empire ever was.”

The black-robed princess said solemnly, “The Flamewing King is now dead; the Flamewing Guards under his command were sent fleeing in panic. They know that we are under senior Darknorth’s protection, and so the surviving ones definitely will not pursue us any longer. In the future, we will no longer need to flee.”

The crown prince was startled for a moment, but then he nodded repeatedly with excitement. He hadn’t seen the situation as clearly as his little sister.

“But the only two survivors of the imperial Qi clan are the two of us. How are supposed to grow stronger?” The black-robed princess said in a low voice, “The two of us, relying on our own efforts...we will probably never see the Qi Empire returned to its former glory again in our lifetimes. But by borrowing the strength of senior Darknorth, we would still have hope.”

“Right.” Qi Rufeng nodded solemnly. “Let’s go take him on as our master.”

“We have to do so with sincerity. For someone as formidable as senior Darknorth...if he detects even a hint of insincerity, he will probably refuse,” the black-robed princess warned.

The two siblings thus entered the Immortal estate as well.

Within a hall in the Immortal estate. Bluecliff Xiaoyu was seated there, watching as the two imperial siblings entered the estate.

“We wish to see senior Darknorth,” Qi Rufeng said.

“Master is in seclusion right now. Wait a bit.” Xiaoyu didn’t shoo them away, because she knew that the only reason why the two were able to enter the Immortal estate was because Ning had permitted it. Ning was the master of this estate, after all; if he didn’t wish to permit it, there was no way they would’ve been able to enter at all.

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The reason why Ning had let them enter was because he had discovered some interesting things.

“Eh?”

“A treasure trove?” Ning flipped through the maps in front of him. There were eight maps, all identical, and all pointing towards a treasure trove!

Although the eight slain monster kings were formidable, their storage-type magic treasures were all merely Heaven-ranked items. It was naturally quite easy for Ning to bind them. As he sorted through their items, he discovered to his surprise...that every single storage item contained a map of a treasure trove. All the maps were completely identical.

The treasure maps only had some simple markings atop them, such as 'Qi Empire', 'Riverfang Mountains', etc. This made it so that Ning knew that the treasure map was originally created by the imperial Qi clan! This was the reason why Ning permitted the two imperial Qi clansmen to enter his estate.

"Each of the eight monster kings had a copy of this map, with the Flamewing King's copy being much older. The other seven should've been made through an ink-duplication technique." Ning frowned. "Right...I merely killed a few hundred of Flamewing Guards, but all twelve of the monster kings immediately attacked just a short while later. Logically speaking, the twelve of them should be scattered throughout the Eastern Flows; it would take them quite a bit of time just to spread the word to gather here. There can only be one explanation...when word of my slaughter of hundreds of Flamewing Guards made its way to the Flamewing King, the other monster kings were already present!"

"What sort of a situation would cause all twelve monster kings to gather together?"

Given that every single one of them had a copy of this treasure map...Ning had his answer. "They were most likely gathering for the sake of this treasure trove!"

Ning immediately began to search through the other items, paying especially close attention to the storage treasure of the Flamewing King. And indeed...although he didn't find anything in the other storage treasures, within the Flamewing King's items, Ning found an ancient book with golden parchment; clearly, it was designed to be able to withstand the passage of ages.

"The first time I ventured to the Riverfang Mountains, I was merely adventuring and entered by accident..."

"I am already a Void-level Earth Immortal; before my tribulation comes, I've decided to venture there once more, even though I know this place is very dangerous. I've only investigated a very small portion of this treasure trove; I trust that if I can acquire some more treasures, I will have a good chance of overcoming my Celestial Tribulation and becoming a Celestial Immortal."

"....."

"Six Loose Immortals once more ventured to the Riverfang Mountains..."

"This time, we prepared many Dao-seals and treasures before venturing forth to the Riverfang Mountains..."

Ning flipped through the pages of the book. This was a legacy record passed down by the imperial Qi clan; it described the secrets of the Qi Empire's sudden rise to power. The founding emperor of the Qi Empire had acquired a portion of the benefits of the treasure trove and thus founded his empire. In just a few tens of thousands of years, the Qi Empire had grown to encompass an enormous territory and have quite a few Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals. Thus, the imperial Qi clan had naturally tried repeatedly to enter and investigate further. As they did, they had noted down the various dangers within the treasure trove.

They wanted to accumulate more experience and penetrate deeper within!

"A treasure trove?" Ning said softly in surprise, "Based on what this book describes, this treasure trove has Ki Refining Techniques, divine abilities, and secret arts...and is the reason why the Qi Empire was

able to give birth to dozens of Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals within a short span of just a few tens of thousands of years. This is far more formidable than the Black-White College; I imagine that these techniques also vastly surpass the Black-White College's."

"Mm. I need to go take a look."

While at Mount Innerheart, Ning would often chat with his fellow disciples, and so he naturally knew quite a few things about this Crescent world. For example...he knew about the secrets of Viledragon River. He also knew the secrets of many other places.

Although Patriarch Subhuti had created the Crescent world, in truth, when Pangu's World had shattered, Patriarch Subhuti had used a powerful divine ability to teleport some of the shattered portions of the Primordial World to his own Crescent world. In addition, when Patriarch Subhuti wanted to test something or create something a new, his experiments would be carried out here on the Crescent world! This was because this world was his territory; the secrets here would never be released to outsiders.

"From what my senior fellow disciples told me...within this Crescent world are some remnant parts of the ancient Pangu's World, as well as some of the treasures left behind by that cataclysmic war." Ning instantly felt a hot eagerness rise in his heart. Very few knew this secret, and almost all who did were the personal disciples of the Old Patriarch. Thus, they would often go roving and exploring within the Crescent world.

"But after the Old Patriarch sealed off these places with vestigial powers left behind by the cataclysmic war that ended Pangu's World...if one doesn't visit the places in person, it would be very hard to locate the places from afar."

"Now, it seems...this treasure trove is one of those special places."

Ning felt quite certain. This was because the book stated that the deepest ripples within the treasure trove caused the Loose Immortals of the Qi Empire to tremble with terror. It must be understood that Loose Immortals were capable of suppressing and binding Immortal-ranked magic treasures, and sometimes even capable of suppressing Pure Yang treasures. A treasure that could cause them to feel terror? Could it be the corpse of a major power from the Primordial Era? A weapon? A grand formation? Or was it some other oddity?

"I need to go take a look." Ning immediately made up his mind to go take a look. Since destiny had come knocking, why hesitate?

The crown prince and the princess waited for Ning for a long time. Finally, Ning came out.

Ning asked questions them regarding the treasure trove. The second princess knew nothing of this matter, while Crown Prince Qi Rufeng hemmed and hawed, not wanting to reveal the biggest secret of their imperial Qi clan. However, by the time Ning spoke of the Riverfang Mountains...the crown prince felt regret for his hesitation. Only now did he hurriedly reveal everything.

"You can leave now." This was the last thing Ning said to them.

The crown prince and the princess both fell to their knees, wanting to beg Ning to take them on as disciples. But Ning's response was very simple; he teleported them outside the Immortal estate, and then caused the entire Immortal estate to vanish into thin air.

The crown prince, the princess, and their servants stood there in a daze, atop the half-shattered mountain peak. The mountain wind blew through their hair, causing them to feel despair.

"The opportunity was right there in front of me. Why didn't I tell him? It's just a treasure trove! Senior Darknorth already knew about it; he must've been considering taking us on as disciples, and just wanted to give us a test. But I didn't tell him! Damn me!" Crown Prince Qi Rufeng was utterly tormented by regret.

But he had no idea that even if he had been honest, Ning still wouldn't have taken him on as a disciple.

How could one accept disciples in such a casual manner?

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Ning didn't immediately hurry to the treasure trove area in the Riverfang Mountains. Instead, he went to search for those two other great sinners.

He first went to search for the three surviving monster kings of the Twelve Monster Kings of the Eastern Flows who had fled. Unfortunately...the only one Ning found was the fourth, the 'Venomspike King'. The Venomspike King was drinking unhappily in his palace with a belly full of anger and unhappiness. He was toying with a beautiful, fox-like maiden in his arms as he drank.

When Ning appeared, the Venomspike King was so terrified that he wanted to immediately flee...but how could Ning give him the opportunity to do so?

"How the hell did I piss you off?!" The Venomspike King was only able to let out one final enraged bellow before being killed by Ning.

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Ning then spent more than half a month before finally finding a Loose Immortal within a school whose evil reputation was widespread. This was a human Loose Immortal, and the most powerful expert of his school! This was an old fellow who had lived for six hundred thousand years. His school was an evil one, and so Ning immediately went to uproot this vile base!

He first slaughtered three Loose Immortals who charged towards him, causing the old fellow to appear at last. As the many disciples of the school watched with anticipation...their 'infinitely powerful' and savage Patriarch battled against Ning for a period of time, then was pincered and slain by Ning's true body and Primaltwin!

"What a fellow. His power was close to the Goldfur Bearing's; only, his defense was a bit weaker." Ning had enjoyed this battle quite a bit. He had also acquired two more Immortal-ranked magic treasures from the old fellow, one a high-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure, one a top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure.

This was the most powerful person Ning had slain.

“Wonderful, wonderful.”

“I’ve killed so many formidable Loose Immortals, all of whom were surrounded by vicious, baleful auras. My three Darknorth swords are now comparable to high-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords now.” Ning felt quite delighted; killing ordinary Loose Immortals didn’t do much, but the nine monster kings and that wicked Patriarch released an absolutely astonishing amount of baleful energy when slain. The wicked Patriarch in particular; his baleful aura was comparable to four or five of the monster kings combined!

“If I kill ten more figures like that wicked Patriarch, I imagine that my Darknorth swords will be comparable to top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords.” This was Ning’s estimation.

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He had successfully taken on a disciple. He had also killed ten great sinners. Now, Ning led his disciple, Bluecliff Xiaoyu, to the Riverfang Mountains.

“So these are the Riverfang Mountains?” Ning stared towards the distance. The mountains here stretched out past the horizon and were perpetually shrouded by fog and clouds. From Ning’s vantage point, these mountains did indeed look like a series of sharp fangs that were jutting towards the skies.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 27: Riverfang Mountains

As Ji Ning stared at the distant Riverfang Mountains, he couldn’t help but feel his heart skip a beat. He could vaguely sense an incomparably terrifying threat that lay coiled deep within the mountains.

“At my current level of power...there are very few people in the entire Crescent world who can pose a threat to me. The ones who are more powerful than me have almost all been recruited into Mount Innerheart; when they see me, they might even have to address me as ‘uncle-master’. Even the True Immortals and Empyrean Gods would be my fellow disciples,” Ning mused to himself.

Roaming within the Crescent world should be like roaming within his own family garden. This was the very first time he felt a thrill of fear!

“It seems there really is some danger here, enough danger to threaten me.” Ning nodded lightly. “Mm. If the situation looks bad, I’ll immediately hide in the underwater estate. Later, I’ll ask Master to help me escape back to Mount Innerheart.”

When trapped in dire circumstances, ask for Master’s aid. Although this was a bit shameless, Ning was within the Crescent world, after all; his master couldn’t be too strict with him. In addition, after he truly left the Crescent world, Ning wouldn’t even be able to mention his master’s name; he’d have to rely on himself for everything.

“Master?” The nearby Bluecliff Xiaoyu called out softly.

Ning glanced sideways at his disciple, then said with a laugh, “Xiaoyu, I am going into the mountains to take a look. These mountains are very dangerous; go into the Immortal estate first.”

“Yes, Master,” Xiaoyu said obediently.

Ning waved his arm, immediately drawing Xiaoyu into his Immortal estate. And then, by himself, Ning transformed into a streak of light that flew straight into the Riverfang Mountains.

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Ning had acquired the detailed records produced by successive generations of Qi Empire experts. He soon reached the outer perimeter of the treasure trove.

“Eh?” As he strode through the mountains, Ning felt a strange sensation coming to him through the earth.

“Kill...kill...kill...”

He could vaguely sense as though an invisible howl was being transmitted from far away through the dirt, as though an unfathomably long period of time ago, an enormous battle had occurred in this place. Even now, after so many years had passed, the murderous intent from that battle remained unabated.

“The earth here is different from the ordinary earth found elsewhere in the Crescent world. It’s clearly much heavier, and the earth’s aura in this region is significantly denser as well.” Ning nodded lightly. “This might truly be a tiny remnant of Pangu’s shattered Primordial World which was teleported here.”

With the aid of the tests the imperial Qi clan had carried out, Ning quickly found a mountain valley and began to walk through it. The clouds and the mists coiled about here, making it so that even Ning was only able to see to one or two kilometers. As for divine sense? What his divine sense found was completely different from what his physical eyes could see. This was because....

“My divine sense has been completely fooled. Everything my divine sense is showing me is false.” Ning even stretched his hand out to touch a place, ascertaining that his eyes weren’t being deceived as well!

He carefully advanced.

Far away, up ahead, he saw an enormous ravine. Ning could sense a terrifyingly sharp saber-intent radiating from that ravine.

“Apparently, although this ravine looks as though it was naturally formed, it was actually carved out through saber-ki.” Ning walked forward for the amount of time needed to boil a kettle of tea. Suddenly, he felt an invisible pressure envelop him.

“This is the same as what was recorded within the Qi Empire’s book. According to the book, the deeper one goes in, the greater the pressure shall become. The experts of the various generations of the Qi Empire were all ultimately forced to give up by this pressure and return. The pathway I’m walking through right now should be the pathway with the least amount of pressure.” Ning quickly advanced. As he did, the strength of the pressure rose dramatically.

When Ning had first entered this region, five thousand kilograms of pressure was evenly being applied to his body. But now, it had already reached five hundred thousand kilograms...fifty million kilograms...

Rumble...

A powerful repulsive force collided against Ning's body, causing a series of rumbling sounds. The amount of pressure pushing down against Ning was now comparable to a series of massive mountains that were smashing down repeatedly towards him!

"Even most Loose Immortals wouldn't be able to withstand this amount of pressure." Ning waved his hand, and the Thousandbull Sword appeared within it. Brandishing the Thousandbull Sword, Ning caused a divine black dragon to suddenly howl forth, striking against the pressure that was crushing down against Ning and lessening it.

"Pretty easy." Ning continued to advance forward while using the Thousandbull Sword to chop apart the invisible pressure.

Clearly, this sort of invisible pressure was born from some sort of ancient, powerful restrictive formation; it sent pulses of pressure out to attack. Loose Immortals were generally Ki Refiners with very weak bodies; thus, if they wanted to advance, they would have to rely on their magic treasures to break apart the pulses of pressure. Previously, Ning had been relying on his Fiendgod Body and so didn't need to use any magic treasures to make it to this point.

Whoosh. Yet another divine black dragon howled forth, leaving behind a dazzling arc in the mist and blasting apart yet another pulse of pressure.

After walking for another period of time.

"Change!" Ning suddenly transformed into his three-headed, six-armed form. Five more Immortal swords appeared in his hands, all of them the illusory black Heavenraker swords. In such a dangerous region, Ning was unwilling to let his Primaltwin appear. Thus, his true body would temporarily use the Heavenraker swords; after all, the power of top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords was very great.

With six top-grade Immortal-ranked swords in his hands, as well as the [Three Heads, Six Arms] divine ability, Ning once more found it easy to advance through the region.

The amount of divine power [Three Heads, Six Arms] used up was more than ten times less than the amount the [Starseizing Hand] used up.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh...

Six divine black dragons howled forth, blasting apart one pulse of pressure after another. However, some remnant pulses still made their way through and struck Ning, causing explosive sounds when they did! Ning, however, was a Fiendgod Body Refiner; so long as the remnant pressures didn't contain too much power, he would be fine.

"This place is a place the imperial Qi clansmen have never reached."

After walking for another period of time, Ning realized that even with six Immortal swords, he was beginning to feel a bit taxed. Right at this moment, Ning saw a figure off in the distance. The figure saw Ning as well.

"Immortal Darknorth." A booming voice rang out.

“Goldfur Barking.” Ning spoke out. The man before him was the tall, muscular Goldfur Barking. Around him were those ninety-nine pearls that were circling and swirling as they broke apart the pulses of pressure.

“Immortal Darknorth, you acquired a treasure map and discovered this place?” The Goldfur Barking said.

“Just so.” Ning didn’t deny it.

“Originally, the twelve of us were planning to enter these Riverfang Mountains. We were discussing this matter with our third brother, but when we received word that hundreds of his Flamewing Guards had been slain, all of us immediately followed him to your place to provide support...but who would’ve thought that most of the others would die, and that today I would be the only person to come to this treasure trove? Oh, and you, Immortal Darknorth, the slayer of so many monster kings...you came as well. Truly, anything can happen in this world!” The Goldfur Barking sighed.

Ning laughed. “I do indeed need to thank the Flamewing King. Otherwise, how could I have learned about this treasure trove? Still...why have you come to a halt here? Are you unable to move any further?”

There was something quite strange about this region. If one advanced, no matter towards which direction, one would feel tremendous amounts of pressure crashing down upon one’s body. However, if one didn’t move at all, one wouldn’t suffer the pressure.

“Right, I can’t move any further! You have a Fiendgod body, and so you can endure the remnant repulsive force when it strikes you. Loose Immortals Ki Refiners like myself, however, don’t dare to fight head on in such a manner. We need to completely dissipate all of the terrifying pressure, which requires an enormous amount of elemental ki to be used up. I need to first restore more of my elemental ki before I go in any further,” the Goldfur Barking said.

“Then I’ll take my leave for now,” Ning said with a chuckle. Six top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords in his hands, Ning once more began to force his way forward, quickly disappearing from the Goldfur Barking’s field of vision.

“The preparations we made all ended up benefiting this Immortal Darknorth.” 1 The Goldfur Barking gritted his teeth, but he felt quite helpless. He knew that Ning was more powerful than he was, and as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, Ning had a better chance of survival in a place like this.

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“[Starseizing Hand]!”

Ning was finally forced by the pressure to use his [Starseizing Hand].

Instantly, the power of the divine black dragons of sword-light increased dramatically. In fact, Ning even temporarily cancelled his [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique. Just by relying on the Thousandbull Sword and the [Starseizing Hand], he carved a path forward!

Charge! Charge! Charge!

But gradually, Ning was once again pressured to the point of being forced to use [Three Heads, Six Arms]. All six arms were now using the [Starseizing Hand]. After a long period of time, Ning was even forced to take a break, so as to recover his largely depleted divine power.

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Occasional breaks, followed by occasional advances. Towards the end, Ning would have to use six strikes of the [Starseizing Hand] for every thirty meters he travelled. One could imagine how quickly his divine power was being used up!

Rumble...

As Ning took one more step forward...he actually broke through and out of the pressure region.

“Hahahaha.”

“I finally escaped that damn place.”

Ning laughed loudly. There were no more ripples of pressure in this location. For the first time in his life...Ning felt as though walking forward normally was actually quite an enjoyable thing.

“I spent nearly a full day walking a mere several thousand kilometers, and I used up all of my divine power several times.” Ning shook his head and sighed. Still, he continued to advance with all six Immortal swords at the ready. He tried to use his divine sense to scout ahead, but unfortunately, his divine sense remained deceived, as everything it was telling him was clearly false.

Ning walked forward, following a winding creek. Fog and mist continued to swirl around the region, causing him to only be able to see to a distance of one or two kilometers, where he could vaguely make out a gorge.

CRA-KOW! Just as Ning took a step forward, a bolt of lightning suddenly descended out of nowhere.

“Beat it!” Ning didn’t hesitate at all as he immediately swung out all six swords with full force. Six divine black dragons of sword-light hwoled forward, shattering that bolt of lightning.

Crackle crackle crackle...a large amount of lightning and thunder began to swell forward towards him.

“Previously it was invisible pressure...but at least that wasn’t lethal. But this lightning is.” Ning hurriedly used his swordplay to defend. He noticed that so long as he retreated, the number of attacking thunderbolts would lessen. When he advanced, however, the attacking thunderbolts would increase at an astonishing rate, growing increasingly savage and increasingly powerful.

Ning was only able to advance three hundred meters before being forced to come to a halt, unable to advance any further.

Rumble....

The bolts of lightning were now as thick as a water barrel. They wildly flooded towards and hammered down upon Ning, who struggled to block them. He tried to take a single step forward, but the increasingly frenetic thunderbolts instantly pushed him backwards.

“What should I do? I can’t advance at all.” Ning was worried now. The attacks were simply too powerful.

Ning had tested letting a small amount of the lightning strike him, and his divine body had easily deflected it. However, as he continued to test it, he realized that there was a limit to how many thunderbolts his divine body could endure. He had to use his sword-light to break apart the rest!

The only reason he had made it as far as he did was because of his Fiendgod-like body.

“Am I going to have to go back? Going back is easy, as the number of lightning bolts will lessen as I retreat. As for the pressure zone, I’ll only need around half a day or so to move through it and slowly escape.” Ning didn’t have any problems with leaving, unlike some; according to the imperial Qi records, there had been Loose Immortals who had used special methods to force a path forward, but after making it too far in, they were unable to escape. This was because when leaving, they still had to go through the pressure zone once more. They eventually had to spend countless years retreating, one step at a time.

What Ning didn’t realize was that the Flamewing King had been trapped within the pressure zone for tens of years!

Rumble...

Countless bolts of lightning continued to slam down frantically.

Ning truly didn’t want to give up.

“Kiddo, you came in at such a low level of power? I urge you to hurry up and leave. Don’t lose your life here!” A shrill voice suddenly rang out within Ning’s ears.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 28: Returning to Mount Innerheart

There was someone else here?

Ji Ning was startled. He hurriedly retreated several meters, causing the striking lightning bolts to weaken slightly. Only now did he dare divide his attention to look around carefully.

“Eh?” Ning frowned. From the crevices between the bolts of lightning that continued to hammer towards him, Ning saw a black-robed youth was standing far away at the entrance to the distant gorge.

Swoosh! Ning hurriedly retreated, leaving from the thunder field region. All of the lightning bolts vanished, allowing Ning to clearly see the figure at the entrance to the gorge. The black-robed youth was similar to Mu Northson in height, and even skinnier than Ning himself. However, Ning could sense that this black-robed youth had been alive for a long, long time.

The black-robed youth’s gaze was both sharp and terrifying. His face was expressionless; he was most likely the type that was born arrogant and aloof.

“Who are you?” Ning asked.

“Me?” The black-robed youth’s voice was shrill. He looked thoughtfully towards Ning. “Even if I told you my name, kid, you wouldn’t recognize it. You should be at the early Void stage, but you actually broke through the first forbidden zone, and were even able to advance three hundred meters in the second zone, the lightning zone. You just barely qualify as having the power of a Celestial Immortal. For

someone to have such power at the early Void stage...which school do you belong to? Who is your master?"

Ning was secretly surprised. Celestial Immortal?

Since the black-robed youth had already arrived at the entrance to the gorge, he clearly should've already made it past the lightning zone. This meant he was far more powerful than Ning. Ning's Primaltwin at full power would be just barely at the average Celestial Immortal level; some particularly formidable and monstrously talented Celestial Immortals were far more powerful than him.

"My master's name is not for the likes of you to learn," Ning said.

"Oh, is he a True Immortal or Empyrean God?" The black-robed youth chuckled softly as he carefully scrutinized Ning's face. Ning, however, remained calm.

The black-robed youth shook his head. "Leave, hurry up and leave. Even I am unable to acquire the treasure within. Even if you were a hundred times stronger than you are now, it wouldn't suffice."

"A hundred times?" Ning frowned, not believing it.

"You don't believe it? Then listen to this; this treasure trove is divided into three forbidden zones. The first zone simply uses pressure and repulsive force! It is quite safe. The second zone is the lightning zone, and it is 540 meters long in total. As for the third forbidden zone, it forbids the usage of all magic treasures. Even I am unable to break through it."

The black-robed youth looked disdainfully at Ning. "And you? You haven't even overcome a Celestial Tribulation. You might be a peerless genius, but you are unable to advance past three hundred meters of the lightning zone. You must know by now that with each step forward, the power in the lightning zone increases dramatically. Only if your power increases tenfold will you be able to break through the second zone...but the third zone is even more terrifying. I imagine not even many Celestial Immortals are capable of breaking through it."

"What is in the third forbidden zone?" Ning couldn't help but ask.

"That's not for you to worry about," the black-robed youth said.

"Why haven't you left?" Ning asked.

"I'm a Celestial Immortal with an infinite lifespan. Since the treasure is here, I will slowly train here. Perhaps a chance will present itself and I'll be able to acquire it," the black-robed youth said.

Hearing this, Ning instantly felt irritated. He could sense the faint ripples of power coming from within the valley; the ripples were extremely old yet very powerful. "The Thousandbull Sword is almost at the level of Pure Yang treasures in power, but its ripples are vastly inferior. The treasure within must have been an extremely powerful one that was left behind from Pangu's World."

"However...I can't even make it through the second forbidden zone. How am I suppose to pass all three?"

Ning stood there by the creek outside the lightning zone. He pondered quietly for a moment, then gritted his teeth, turned, and left.

Whoosh.

Ning quickly re-entered the invisible pressure zone, slowly forcing his way outwards.

“He’s gone?” The black-robed youth shook his head. “A young kid who was far too weak. Given his talent, though, he might have a shot at becoming a Celestial Immortal.” And then, the black-robed youth once more walked into the gorge.

“Immortal Darknorth, you returned?” On the way back, Ning once more encountered the Goldfur Barking. The Goldfur Barking was advancing again, but he had only traversed a kilometer beyond his earlier point.

“I’m not strong enough. Naturally, I have to return.”

Ning, in his three-headed, six-armed form, wielded six Immortal swords and chopped a path through the pressure pulses as he left.

“Not strong enough?” The Goldfur Barking muttered to himself, “Is it possible that this Darknorth has already acquired the treasures? Still, from the look on his face, I’d say he isn’t lying.” Although he secretly mumbled and muttered to himself, the Goldfur Barking wasn’t confident in being able to wrest any treasures from Ning’s grasp.

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Ning exited the Riverfang Mountains.

Turning his head, he gave the mountain ranges, perpetually shrouded by fog and clouds, a glance. He murmured softly, “Wait for me to train in the arcane art...I’ll give you another try then.”

Whoosh. A spatial ripple appeared, and Ning disappeared into it. He reappeared in the sky above the mountain peak of Mount Innerheart, a cloud beneath his feet.

“Come out.” Ning willed it, and instantly a white-robed maiden appeared by his side. This was Ning’s disciple, Bluecliff Xiaoyu.

“Master.” Xiaoyu stood atop the cloud, staring at her surroundings. “Where are we now?”

Ning looked at his disciple, then turned to stare at the levitating Mount Innerheart. It had only been a month, but he had already accepted a disciple and killed ten great sinners. Bluecliff Xiaoyu’s golden glow of karmic virtue stretched to more than nine hundred meters...and now, Ning’s own clean aura of holiness had also transformed into the golden glow of karmic virtue!

However, his divine sense told him that his own golden light of karmic virtue merely stretched to be three feet long.

Actually, the process of accepting a disciple and killing the monster kings had already caused his clean aura of holiness to become quite dense; after he killed the wicked Patriarch, it suddenly transformed into the golden light of karmic virtue.

“Three feet of golden karmic light, compared to nine hundred meters for my disciple.” Ning laughed, then pulled Xiaoyu by the hand as he flew upwards.

“Xiaoyu, the mountain up ahead is Mount Innerheart. This is the place where Master’s school is located,” Ning said with a laugh.

Xiaoyu stared at the massive levitating mountain, then lowered her head to look at the endless world beneath them. “Master’s school?” She felt rather stunned.

They flew into Mount Innerheart, went up the mountain road, and soon arrived at the gates. Xiaoyu was only Ning’s disciple, and so Ning didn’t take her to see the eldest apprentice-brother.

At the gates were those two azure-robed Dao-novitiates. When they saw Ning, they immediately bowed and said with great respect, “Patriarch.”

“Mm.” Ning nodded.

Still stunned, Xiaoyu let Ning tug her forward by the arm. After passing through the gates, Xiaoyu came back to her senses. She whispered, “Master, it seems as though those two novitiates at the gates were very powerful?”

“Both were Void-level Earth Immortals,” Ning said casually.

Just as Ning’s words came out, two extremely ancient and powerful Void-level Fiendgods walked over. Both of them called out with tremendous courtesy, “Patriarch?”

The feeling these two ancient Fiendgods gave Xiaoyu...was that they were even more terrifying than the monster kings. They caused her to quiver and shake! And yet, they referred to her master as ‘Patriarch’?!

They continued walking up the mountain path of the Tristar Crescent Abode. As they did so, they encountered humans, monsters, and even Fiendgods, all of whom had powerful auras and many of whom were even more terrifying than the monster kings. And yet, upon seeing Ning, they all showed extreme respect, addressing him as either ‘Patriarch’ or ‘Uncle-Master’.

“It seems as though my master has a very high status in his school. On our way over...it seems everyone we ran into had a lower status than him. I haven’t even met a single person on his level,” Xiaoyu murmured to herself.

“The Divinities Palace is up ahead,” Ning said.

“Divinities Palace?” Xiaoyu looked curiously at the nine-storied Divinities Palace. Many disciples of Mount Innerheart were congregating outside of it, and they all respectfully bowed towards Ning and addressed him as uncle-master or as Patriarch. Little Qing and Uncle White ran straight towards him; they were spiritually connected to Ning and knew exactly where he was.

“Master.”

“Ning, child.”

Both Little Qing and Uncle White ran over.

Right at this moment, a handsome, white-robed man walked over from the entrance to the Divinities Palace. This was naturally the controller of the Divinities Palace, Silvermoon. Silvermoon smiled as he

walked over. "I heard, junior apprentice-brother, that you accepted a disciple and subdued viledoers in the world below us. This would be the apprentice you took on, yes? What a pretty little lass."

"I've finally met someone of the same generation as Master...and they seem quite friendly. He doesn't have any frightening aura at all," Xiaoyu mused silently to herself.

"Xiaoyu, hurry up and pay respects to your uncle-master," Ning instructed.

"Greetings, uncle-master," Xiaoyu said as she hurriedly bowed with respect.

"Since you've addressed me as uncle-master, I need to prepare a gift for you." Silvermoon shook his head and laughed. "It'll be hard for a little girl like you to make proper use of a good treasure. Mmm...keep this little toy with you. Even if a Celestial Immortal wants to kill you, it'll be able to protect you for the time needed to boil a kettle of tea."

As he spoke, he tossed a jade brooch towards Xiaoyu.

Xiaoyu was rather stunned. A Celestial Immortal's attacks? Able to withstand them for a short period of time? This tiny little brooch? Not even the treasure which her master had given her was this incredible.

"But...but..." Xiaoyu couldn't help but feel awkward at the 'pricelessness' of this treasure.

"Hurry up and take it," Ning chortled. "This jade brooch is nothing to your uncle-master. He kills Celestial Immortals as easily as killing chickens."

"Junior apprentice-brother, you...fine, I admit that I did indeed make this jade brooch in a rather casual manner. I'll also give you another gift then, a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal. I'm not capable of forging them; I used treasures to trade for it." Silvermoon handed over a Dao-seal to her.

Ning's smile became incandescent. His senior apprentice-brother was an Emphyrean God; although a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal was a treasure to Ning, it wasn't much to Silvermoon. It was only fair for him to seize this opportunity to milk Silvermoon for a few things.

Xiaoyu blinked repeatedly.

Two treasures? Given away so casually? Kill Celestial Immortals as easily as chickens? This...what the hell type of school had she been recruited into?!

"Little Qing, show Xiaoyu around the Tristar Crescent Abode and help her familiarize herself with this place. Chat with her a bit as well; she still doesn't know what sort of a school the Tristar Crescent Abode is," Ning said with a laugh.

"Yes, Master." Little Qing immediately responded with excitement.

Ning immediately said, "Senior apprentice-brother, I am going to go to the Three Realms Palace."

"Go, go," Silvermoon said, nodding his head and smiling. "It seems you are going to leave our master's tutelage soon."

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The Three Realms Palace.

Second apprentice-brother Crazy Ji was beaming merrily here as he waited for Ning.

“Senior apprentice-brother.” Ning bowed.

“Master told me that you passed the trial. This is the full copy of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. You can learn it now.” Crazy Ji held his fan in one hand and used the other to hand over a scrolled bamboo book.

Ning’s eyes instantly lit up. The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]? After he gained a basic level of expertise in it, his body would be like an Immortal-ranked magic treasure. He would definitely be able to give the Riverfang Mountains another try by then.

“Thank you, senior apprentice-brother.” Ning immediately accepted the bamboo book. He sent his divine sense into it, and instantly an utterly prodigious amount of information began to flow into his soul.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 29: Training in the Arcane Art

By the time Ji Ning came back to his senses, it was already dark.

He was still standing outside the small building. As for the nearby Crazy Ji, he had long since gone back to sleep and was snoring contentedly.

“Although my soul is unfathomably more powerful than it was back when I learned the [Starseizing Hand], it still took me many hours to process all that information.” A hint of a smile was on Ning’s face. This feeling of complete confidence was quite wonderful. He had fully memorized the method of training in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].

“It truly is the number one divine ability in the Three Realms for those below the True God level.”

Ning smiled as he walked into the Three Realms Palace.

“Junior apprentice-brother, you can just put the complete copy of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] back in the Three Realms Palace. If you want to choose something else, you can do so.” Crazy Ji lay there, seemingly mumbling in his sleep. He then turned and started to snore again.

Ning smiled. He turned and bowed. “Yes, senior apprentice-brother.”

.....

After returning the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], Ning unhesitatingly walked forward to pick up another abridged book. Atop this book were the characters: [Houyi’s Archery].

Ning had dreamed of learning [Houyi’s Archery] for a long time now. His own divine ability was the [Starseizing Hand], a divine ability which caused his pair of hands to possess unfathomably great power. With one hand holding the bow, and the other drawing it...and in addition, [Houyi’s Archery] was a technique-focused ability. These two divine abilities, both ranked in the top ten of the Three Realms, could be used simultaneously and would synergize very well.

The first gave Ning’s twin hands unfathomable power. The second would raise his archery skills to the limit. Combined...they would become one of Ning’s most powerful killer combinations.

“However...this trial truly is difficult. Can I accomplish it?” Ning stared at the trial, frowning. “No matter what, I have to give it a try. There’s no time limit, anyhow.”

“Senior apprentice-brother.” Ning put down the abridged book, walked to the doorway, and looked at the slumbering Crazy Ji. “I wish to learn [Houyi’s Archery].”

“Go then. Come back after you pass the trial,” Crazy Ji mumbled in his sleep.

Ning smiled, turned his head, and immediately departed.

Actually, although on the surface it seemed as though he was informing Crazy Ji, in reality his was telling his master, Patriarch Subhuti! After all, it was the Patriarch who would decide whether or not this technique could be taught to him.

Whoosh. Ning departed.

Crazy Ji suddenly sat up. Leaning against the wooden door of the hall, he frowned as he stared at the departing Ning. “He wants to train in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] and [Houyi’s Archery]? Doesn’t this little junior apprentice-brother of mine walk the path of the Sword Immortal? Why is it that I feel as though he views [Houyi’s Archery] as absolutely critical for him to acquire? No one in the entire Three Realms has ever reached a level of archery as terrifying as Houyi did.”

The [Starseizing Hand] only required sufficient amounts of Five Elements essence; with it, one could train all the way to the Sixth Cycle and master it!

The same was also true for the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. Upon gaining a basic level of skill with it, as long as one fused enough magic treasures, one could master all nine of its cycles.

But the [Starseizing Hand] and the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] both needed astonishing amounts of items. The first required shocking amounts of Five Elements essence, while the other required similarly shocking amounts of magic treasures. There were quite a few people in the Three Realms who trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], but the number who truly achieved mastery and an unbreakable, vajra-like body was very very low.

[Houyi’s Archery] was completely different! It was a skill-based, technique-based ability. It required a certain level of comprehension and enlightenment. This made it even harder to master! It also required a person to constantly ruminate on the Dao of Archery...although Houyi’s own level of archery had already surpassed the bounds of the actual Dao of Archery.

“A Sword Immortal...who is also going to split up his attention to walk the Dao of Archery?” Crazy Ji pondered. “Perhaps it is simply because this junior apprentice-brother knows that [Houyi’s Archery] is one of the top ten divine abilities of the Three Realms, and so he truly wishes to learn it. After he learns how truly difficult it is, he might just give it up.”

.....

Within the Still Room in the underwater estate. Ning was seated in the lotus position as he began to train in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. This was a divine ability, and so he had to have his true body train it!

Whoosh. Ning let out a breath of air. A blurry golden light began to slowly appear around his body. The golden light was very faint at first, but it slowly grew denser until Ning seemed to be made out of gold.

“Change!” Ji Ning, who had been seated atop the netherwater jade bed, suddenly vanished. Atop the jade bed appeared a rock. However, this rock had a living aura; any Immortal cultivators would be able to immediately tell that it was extraordinary.

“Cancel.” The rock disappeared and Ning once more reappeared.

For a Fiendgod Body Refiner at Ning’s level, the divine body could be completely transformed into divine power, and vice versa! In fact, even a single hair could be transformed into a completely separate body! Thus, to transform one’s self into a rock wasn’t difficult; what was difficult was to make it so that one’s aura would be so retracted that one would be indistinguishable from a true rock.

“Retract the aura? Change even the aura of one’s soul?” Ning murmured softly to himself, “This [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] truly is difficult to learn. However...once I gain a basic level of expertise, I can change my aura as I please and will be able to easily make it so that I am like a rock or a piece of dirt.”

.....

The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] was the [Seventy-Two Transformations]. As noted, the term ‘seventy-two’ came from the term ‘eight-nine’; in reality, the number of transformations it allowed was limitless. Rocks, trees, flowers, plants, animals...even humans, monsters, and Fiendgods! Anything that existed in the Three Realms, one could transform into. Even the aura would become absolutely identical.

Even those more powerful than the user would find it difficult to see through the transformation. Only those who specialized in extremely powerful ‘god-eye’ techniques or other special techniques, when actively using those techniques, would be able to see the truth! If they didn’t actively use the special techniques, however, even they would be unable to realize that the tree before them was actually someone else transformed.

.....

Early dawn.

Bluecliff Xiaoyu, rather bored, walked out of her room.

“It’s been half a year since Master brought me back to Mount Innerheart, but he’s only taught me twice. He instructed me to go learn everything, such as Ki Refining Techniques, divine abilities, and secret arts, from the Divinities Palace.” Xiaoyu felt rather resigned. She knew that some experts had strange temperaments, but she didn’t expect that her master would care so little about her. She normally didn’t even have a chance to meet him.

“Still...”

“Mount Innerheart truly is an incredible place.” Xiaoyu sighed in amazement. Over the course of the past half year, she was often together with Uncle White and Little Qing, as well as the other disciples of Mount Innerheart. Thus, she was beginning to learn more and more. And the more she learned, the more amazed she was!

Celestial Immortals? Their statuses was lower than her master’s!

Personal disciples? The others were all Pure Yang True Immortals or Empyrean Gods. The guard of the Divinities Palace was an Empyrean God. No wonder that day her master had told her that this uncle-master killed Celestial Immortals as easily as chickens!

Whaaaaat?! The entire Crescent world had been created by Patriarch Subhuti? He had set up his own cycle of reincarnation? The Old Patriarch had done this all by himself?

Xiaoyu now realized that the entire Crescent world was like a garden world for the members of Mount Innerheart. Supposedly, beyond the Crescent world, there was the even vaster Three Realms. Supposedly, this 'Three Realms' had many other major powers that were comparable to the Old Patriarch.

"Um." Xiaoyu saw a large rock next to her as she walked forward. Without thinking too much, she plopped her rear down on it and sat down.

"I wonder when I'll see Master again," Xiaoyu murmured to herself. And then...

"Eh?" She suddenly frowned, glancing downwards at the stone beneath her. "Weird. If memory serves...there shouldn't be a rock here. Where did this rock come from? Uh...well, this is Master's Immortal estate; everything within it is under his control. No need for me to worry about it, I suppose. Mm...right. I'm going to go find that big dumb lunk. He's at a fairly high level of enlightenment; he can provide me with some guidance."

Bluecliff Xiaoyu stood up and quickly ran off.

Whoosh.

The stone transformed into a fur-clad youth, Ji Ning.

"...I was actually sat on by my disciple." Ning took a deep breath. "Fortunately, no one saw this. Um...right. Definitely can't tell anyone about this."

"No more transforming into rocks. I'll transform into a tree. I refuse to believe anyone is going to sit on me then."

Whoosh.

In a corner of the estate, there were some trees and flowers. Another tree, a small pine tree that was a few meters tall, now joined their ranks. The branches of the tree even fluttered in the breeze.

Ning had already more than half-mastered the rudiments to the transformation aspects of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. What he was doing every day was transforming into rocks, trees, creeks, grass, and other things. To this day, no one had been able to discover him. In fact, Ning's Primaltwin had visually searched, used divine sense, and even opened the 'Celestial Eye', but was still unable to discover any flaws!

When Ning was transformed into a tree, his bark, his branches, his leaves...they were absolutely identical to real ones. Even the aura of his soul had transformed into a tree's aura! There was nothing special about it at all!

.....

Time flowed on, day by day. Ning constantly trained in his transformation techniques, testing himself repeatedly and accruing more and more experience. Finally, after spending a year and three months on the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], Ning mastered all of the 'seventy-two' transformations.

"The final transformations truly were difficult. They took so much time! Still, I've finally mastered them. Change!"

Ning had been seated in the lotus position next to a creek, but suddenly his figure changed completely. Now, seated next to the creek was a handsome, fan-wielding, white-robed man; Emyrean God Silvermoon. He was identical in both appearance and aura. That incomparably powerful aura, so great as to cause others to tremble in fear...the aura of an Emyrean God...and the unique properties of Silvermoon's own personal aura...Ning had replicated it all.

"Let me give it a try."

Ning, appearing as Silvermoon, smiled as he walked through the Tristar Crescent Abode.

"Patriarch."

"Patriarch."

"Senior uncle-master."

"Master."

As he walked through the Tristar Crescent Abode, Ning heard others address him for the first time as 'senior uncle-master'. It must be understood that amongst the other personal disciples, Ning was the newest addition, and so most people just addressed him as 'uncle-master'.

"Haha. These Void-level Fiendgods and Diremonsters...none of them suspect a thing." Ning was in an extremely good mood. He occasionally even nodded to them.

"Strange. Why isn't Patriarch Silvermoon at the Divinities Palace?"

"It's quite rare to see Patriarch Silvermoon out for a walk, isn't it?"

"It is rather odd."

After Ning walked away, the disciples of Mount Innerheart quietly speculated amongst themselves. Silvermoon was simply too famous for his ferocity; he was truly a demon-like figure. The amount of sin which swirled around him was utterly inconceivable! Silvermoon had accumulated so much sin that he was no longer covered in the bloody light of sin; rather, covering him were the legendary karmic sinflames!

However, given how unearthly powerful Silvermoon was, he didn't fear the karmic sinflames at all!

Ning quickly arrived at the Divinities Palace. In front of it, as always, were congregated many of the disciples of Mount Innerheart.

"Patriarch."

"Senior uncle-master."

They all called out with respect, and even Bluecliff Xiaoyu, who had been chatting with the other disciples, hurriedly rose to her feet and called out respectfully, "Senior uncle-master."

But Little Qing and Uncle White stared in amazement at Ning.

"Who are you?!" Because of their spiritual connection to Ning, both Little Qing and Uncle White knew that it was him. However, they couldn't help but feel completely amazed and confused. The terrifying aura of the white-robed man before them...his appearance...clearly, this should be Empyrean God Silvermoon! But their spiritual sense was telling them that this man before them was actually Ji Ning.

This caused both of them to feel very strange. Previously, Ning had only displayed the ability to transform into a tree in front of them; he had never transformed into a person before.

"Mm." Ning nodded, then smiled as he walked into the Divinities Palace.

Within the Divinities Palace there was another white-robed man, also holding a fan. Their gazes met. Their appearances and their auras were identical.

"Someone who dares transform into my appearance? Second senior apprentice-brother has better things to do, and Lord Jiang doesn't have this sort of personality...junior apprentice-brother, it seems you've successfully trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]?" Silvermoon immediately guessed that it was Ji Ning.

"Formidable, senior apprentice-brother." The figure of one of the white-robed men turned blurry, then transformed back into the figure of a fur-clad youth, Ji Ning.

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 30: The Power To Roam the Three Realms

Silvermoon shook his head and laughed. "It's not that I'm formidable; it's that there are only a few people at Mount Innerherat who have trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. By process of elimination, I was able to guess that it was you, junior apprentice-brother."

Ning nodded. The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] was located in the Three Realms Palace; only personal disciples and those who had received special permission from the Old Patriarch could learn it.

"If you transformed into someone else, I might not have been able to tell that it was you," Silvermoon said with a laugh. "These 'seventy-two transformations' cause a person's aura to completely change; even the appearance of sin or karmic merit surrounding you changes. This truly is an incredible transformation divine ability."

Ning nodded. Indeed. For example, when Ning transformed into a rock, he could use the technique to completely retract his three-foot aura of golden karmic light. If he transformed into a viledoer, he could transform to display the bloody light of sin.

"Back in the era of Pangu's World, there was an ancient Diremonster who relied on these seventy-two transformations to transform into the appearance of a Buddha. He used it to trick people for thousands of years before being discovered," [1. This is a reference to a story in Journey to the West, where a monster was transformed into the appearance of Buddha in order to trick travelers going on a pilgrimage to visit the real Buddha. He would eventually eat them.] Silvermoon said with a laugh. "You

have now gained a basic level of expertise into the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]; your foundation is set. These seventy-two transformations alone will serve as a top-notch escape method or hiding method.”

“However...at this level, it merely remains a deceptive tool, a hiding method. When you are truly in a dire situation, what matters the most is your combat ability,” Silvermoon said. “Junior apprentice-brother, although you’ve reached the early Void stage and are comparable to ordinary Celestial Immortals...I’m afraid that slightly more powerful Celestial Immortals would be able to deal with you or even kill you.”

“I understand.” Ning truly did. Unless he was so lucky as to only encounter extremely weak Celestial Immortals, the amount of power he currently had was only enough to allow him to swagger around in front of those who had yet to overcome their Celestial Tribulation.

“That’s why I’ve come to find you, senior apprentice-brother. I’ve come to ask you for help,” Ning said with a laugh.

“Help?” Silvermoon waved his fan, then said in a leisurely manner, “Speak. What do you need?”

“I’m currently quite weak; forgot about the Three Realms, even in this Crescent world, any random Celestial Immortal might be able to kill me. Thus, I wish to reach the Third Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] as soon as I can,” Ning said.

Silvermoon stared at him. “The amount of treasures consumed by the training of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] is utterly astonishing; even I had to spend countless ages to be able to train to my current Sixth Cycle! Can it be that you, you little brat, want me to give you my treasures for free to help you train? No way!”

The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] used up far too many treasures. To reach the Ninth Cycle? Even Daofathers would feel pain at the cost!

Even a mighty demon like Empyrean God Silvermoon had only trained to the Sixth Cycle; logically speaking, Empyrean Gods should be able to reach the Ninth Cycle, but he simply didn’t have enough treasures.

“Of course I wouldn’t ask you to give them to me for free,” Ning said hurriedly. “During this trip of mine to the outside world, I acquired some Immortal-ranked magic treasures. I wanted to trade them to you for Immortal pills, senior apprentice-brother!”

“Trade for Immortal pills?” Silvermoon nodded lightly. Immortal pills referred to Immortal-ranked spirit-pills, Pure Yang spirit-pills, and Great Firmament spirit-pills.

“That’s acceptable.” Only now did Silvermoon agree. “Bring out your Immortal-ranked magic treasures. I definitely won’t make you suffer a loss, and I won’t profit from this trade with you.”

Ning smiled, then waved his hand. Whoosh. Instantly, one Immortal-ranked magic treasure after another appeared, hovering in the air. These were the spoils he had gained from killing the monster kings and the evil Patriarch on the last journey. In fact, he even took out the low-grade Immortal-ranked flying sword the Grand Xia Emperor had given him.

“Let me take a look.” Silvermoon quickly spread out his divine power to bind each of the magic treasures.

There was no way to use divine power to actually control magic treasures, but upon overcoming the Celestial Tribulation and becoming an Empyrean God, things would change. Empyrean Gods were unfathomable in their power, and their divine power could be applied to all sorts of magic treasures. The Empyrean Gods and True Gods who were birthed from the primordial chaos were born with the ability to easily use magic treasures. Only the weaker Fiendgods, such as those that were born at the Xiantian level, were only able to use Bloodforged weapons.

“Mm.” Silvermoon looked through the weapons, then said, “Three top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures, nineteen high-grade, twenty one middle-grade, and sixteen low-grade.”

Silvermoon kept his calculations simple and by grade. For example, he counted the six scimitars which the Flamewing King had used as six separate items! That was why the number was so high.

“Junior apprentice-brother...the difference is pretty huge.” Silvermoon looked at Ning, then said helplessly, “The amount of Immortal pills you can trade for with such a small amount of Immortal-ranked magic treasures...there’s no way you can train to the Third Cycle.”

Ning immediately asked, “How far off am I?”

“Even if I’m generous to the point of suffering a loss...I could at most give you sixty of my top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pills! But to train to the Third Cycle, if you completely rely on such pills, you would need at least a hundred of them,” Silvermoon said helplessly.

Ning felt resigned as well. He had kept behind a single low-grade Immortal-ranked flying sword for Little Qing, and had kept the Immortal-ranked magic item he had acquired in the underwater estate for Uncle White! He needed to use both the Thousandbull Sword and the Heavenraker swords. He had taken out every other magic treasure he had left. In fact, aside from the Heavenraker swords, he no longer even had three spare Immortal-ranked flying swords for his [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique!

“How about this?” Silvermoon waved his hand, and a piece of parchment appeared. “Write on top of this paper that today, you are borrowing a total of forty top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pills from me. You have to repay me a hundred such pills within ten thousand years. If you are unable to do so within ten thousand years, then you’ll have to pay me back with the most valuable treasure you carry!”

Silvermoon waved his fan as he beamed merrily towards Ning.

Ning felt resigned. He had heard from others long ago as to what sort of a person this Silvermoon was; the reason why all of the disciples of Mount Innerheart secretly referred to him as ‘that demon Silvermoon’ was because he, an exalted Empyrean God, would seek opportunities to squeeze and extort even the ordinary disciples.

“Fine.” Ning lowered his head.

“Hurry up and write,” Silvermoon chortled merrily. “Junior apprentice-brother, the sword you used to display your swordplay last time was pretty good; it nearly has the power of a Pure Yang treasure. That sword alone is worth nearly a hundred top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pills. I’m sure that within ten thousand years, you’ll have acquired even better treasures.”

Ning immediately began to furiously scribbling on the parchment.

Between fellow disciples, a written acknowledgment of debt was enough; everyone would give each other face.

“Here you go!” Silvermoon waved his hand and a white jade bottle flew towards Ning. “These are top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pills that were forged in Doushuai Palace. They contain extremely pure elemental essence and are very well suited for training in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].” [1. Doushuai Palace, in Chinese legends, is the place where Laozi, the founder of philosophical Daoism, resides. In Journey to the West, this is also the place where Laozi concocts pills for heaven, and the place where Sun Wukong stole and ate countless pills of Immortality when he was drunk.]

Ning had been instantly impoverished...and now owed a hundred top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pills to Silvermoon. Still...Ning accepted this. He wasn't strong enough to leave his master's tutelage yet; any powerful Celestial Immortal was capable of annihilating him.

“The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].”

Ning sat on the netherwater jade bed within the Still Room. Hefting the jade bottle, he poured out a spirit-pill. The spirit-pill was a white-jade color, and it emanated a faint aroma of mouth-watering fragrance.

If an ordinary Zifu Disciple or Wanxiang Adept were to eat this top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pill, they probably wouldn't even be able to refine it; their Zifus would explode! After all, the purity of the elemental ki within these pills was comparable to that used by Celestial Immortal. These sorts of pills were usually given to reincarnated Immortals, so as to allow them to reach an extremely high level of power in a short period of time.

Alternately, Celestial Immortals who had fought for a long period of time, or who had used up a great deal of energy in binding a Protocosmic spirit-treasure, would use them to instantly replenish their elemental ki.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh...

One pill after another came pouring out, each comparable to a high-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure in value.

Ning swallowed them all in one gulp. He then immediately began to activate the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] technique. The purpose of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] was to train his body to the point of making it as indestructible as a magic treasure! This required an enormous amount of energy...and top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pills were purposefully designed for replenishing energy. As for ordinary liquefied elemental essence? Absorbing them took too much time; there was no way one could use them to activate the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].

Rumble...

Ning's entire body immediately began to transform. His bones, his marrow, his sinews, his flesh, his skin, his hair...every part of his body was now changing. If previously Ning's flesh and bones could be described as tofu, then after using up the very first spirit-pill, they had reached the consistency of stone.

But of course, in reality, Ning's divine body had already been extremely powerful. From this, one could imagine how huge the improvement brought by the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] was!

"The First Cycle is complete!"

Ning could sense how powerful his divine body had become. A single top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pill had allowed him to complete the First Cycle and allowed his body to become incomparably mighty.

Clang! Ning formed his finger into a sword and slashed at his other arm. Sword-light flashed past, but the only thing it left behind was a white smudge.

"My body is already comparable to a Heaven-ranked magic artifact. I can just stand there without doing anything and Loose Immortals will be unable to damage me at all. And this is just the First Cycle!"

"This [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] is far more powerful than whatever divine ability Adept Ninedeaths used back during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny. Her body was like a magic treasure, but by comparison...her technique could not compare to the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]." Ning didn't spend too much time thinking about it; after all, only a Primal-level Fiendgod could even begin to train in the basics of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].

Adept Ninedeaths had only been a Wanxiang Adept; there was no way she could've trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], even if someone had given it to her.

"The second pill." Showing no hesitating at all, Ning began to digest additional pills. The incomparably pure elemental ki of the top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pills flowed through Ning's entire body, being drawn into every part of it. Ning's body was like a sponge, ravenously drawing in the power of these pills...and then his body began to repeatedly transform, like a sword being reforged time and time again.

"The eleventh pill." As Ning was digesting and refining the eleventh pill, the Second Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] was mastered.

.....

One spirit-pill after another was rapidly consumed. Ning's body was continuously rising in power as well, increasing in both endurance and resilience. Clang, clang clang! As Ning continued to train, rumbling and clanking sounds could be heard coming from within his body as his muscles and flesh clashed against each other. It sounded like two mighty mountains were colliding, and as Ning's heart beat, it sounded like a sea was trembling.

Ning knew that this was a form of tempering! Magic treasures would be tempered through magic fire and other sources of power, while the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] tempered the body. Every single organ, including even the skins and the hair, would be tempered nonstop by this technique. By now...a single strand of Ning's hair was so tough that even if a Loose Immortal were to wildly hack at it with full power, he wouldn't be able to damage it in the slightest.

Rumble...

Another booming sound could be heard from Ning's body. His muscles rumbled, his bones rumbled, his organs rumbled...the rumbling almost seemed to form into a wondrous sort of music.

Ning's skin was beginning to shine with a dark light. He seemed to have transformed into a terrifyingly powerful magic-treasure. Only when the dark light faded away did he seem like an ordinary person once more. His skin was very soft and white, seemingly quite tender; one could not tell just by looking at him as to how powerful he had become.

"Hahaha...I've finally completed the Third Cycle." Ning was overjoyed. Waving his hand, he immediately produced the Thousandbull Sword. "Time to test my power."

WHOOSH! The Thousandbull Sword transformed into a black dragon of sword-light, carrying unearthly power with it as it chopped down against Ning's left arm...but it didn't even leave a white smudge behind.

"[Starseizing Hand]." Ning used his full power, launching an even more powerful blow!

BANG!!!!

A thunderous banging sound could be heard within the Still Room...but Ning's left arm still didn't have even the slightest hint of a mark at all on it.

"I've mastered the Third Cycle. My body is comparable to an Immortal-ranked magic treasure now. When striking myself with full force, I can't even leave behind a tiny white mark. I imagine that even Celestial Immortals would only be able to stare at me, stupefied, without knowing what to do. This truly is the number one divine ability in the Three Realms for those below the True God level. Primaltwin, Heavenraker Sword Formation – Attack!"

Ning was utterly delighted. In front of him suddenly appeared the black-robed Ning, who immediately controlled the power of the Heavenraker swords, transforming them into nine streaks of sword-light and sending them howling forth as they stabbed towards Ning's bared upper chest!

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Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 31: Returning to the Riverfang Mountains

Rumble...

Ji Ning's bare chest was stabbed into repeatedly by the top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords, but they were still unable to leave behind any mark at all. Although he was knocked backwards with each collision, he was still able to walk back to his original spot.

"Heavenraker – Blackwater Line!"

The black-robed Ning exploded with maximum power, unleashing the most devastatingly powerful stance of the [Heavenraker]. Whoosh whoosh whoosh! One sword-tear after another slashed through the air in wavy lines so thick that they each seemed to be like a river. The illusory rivers flooded into one location like all the rivers flowing into the sea as they merged into a single torrential black flow!

This torrential black flow represented all nine Heavenraker swords as they stabbed simultaneously towards Ning's chest.

BANG!

This time, Ning's true body wasn't able to stay standing; he was knocked flying away as he slammed into the wall behind him with a banging sound. However, Ning used his palms to push off from the wall, stabilizing himself and landing on the ground.

Ning lowered his head. He still couldn't see any hint of damage at all on his chest or his skin.

"What a divine ability. What a divine ability!" Ning felt utterly overjoyed. The whole point of leaving the Grand Xia for thirty years was to learn some formidable abilities before returning. And now...he had!

The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] truly was the number one divine ability of the Three Realms for those below the True God level. The most powerful leaders of the Three Realms had joined forces in an attempt to develop a divine ability that would result in a body as mighty as that of Pangu's. Although they hadn't been able to develop the Twelfth Cycle...the first Nine Cycles were already incredible.

Ning was extremely weak right now, after all; he was still far from becoming an Empyrean God. As for becoming a True God? That was an even greater distance away. Even if this divine ability truly did have a tenth, eleventh, or twelfth cycle, there was no way he would be able to train in it for the foreseeable future.

"I've gained expertise in this divine ability. I can now go to the Riverfang Mountains again!" Ning immediately rose to his feet, the furs once more reappearing around him.

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As Ning walked out of the Immortal estate, he collected it with a wave of his hand.

"Master, where are you going?" Bluecliff Xiaoyu was just about to enter the Immortal estate.

"I'm going down into the world. I should be back in a few days." Ning instructed, "If your Aunt Qing or Grandpa White ask, that's what you should tell them."

"Alright." Xiaoyu nodded obediently.

Ning left by himself. As he walked past the Divinities Palace...

"Junior apprentice-brother, junior apprentice-brother." Silvermoon beamed merrily as he walked over, fanning himself with his fan. "Judging from your high spirits, you must've just finished the Third Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], right?"

"Precisely so." Ning nodded.

There were two tough parts to training the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]; the first was the initial mastery of the concept of the 'seventy-two transformations', which was a bit difficult, and the second was acquiring enough treasures to temper one's body! Ning had gained a basic level of expertise already; naturally, he had been able to train to the Third Cycle at one go after acquiring enough top-grade Immortal-ranked spirit-pills.

"How many pills did you use up?" Silvermoon asked with curiosity.

"Ninety-nine," Ning said with a laugh.

“Wow, it was just barely enough.” Silvermoon nodded. “Work hard, junior apprentice-brother, and earn back enough treasures to pay me back.”

“Definitely.” Ning nodded. “I have business to attend to; I’m leaving now.”

“Go, go.” Silvermoon beamed as he watched Ning leave.

After Ning left, Silvermoon shook his head, utterly tickled with himself. “I, Silvermoon, am quite the clever fellow. I gave this junior apprentice-brother of mine a hundred Immortal pills, and in ten thousand short lazy years, he’ll have to pay them back to me! I won’t end up losing a single pill, and I’ll have acquired dozens of Immortal-ranked magic treasures as well, as well as have him owe me a favor.”

Actually, these treasures really meant very little to an exalted Empyrean God like him. However, Silvermoon loved to feel like he had made a clever bargain.

The Crescent world. The Star continent.

Deep within the Riverfang Mountains. Within the lightning zone, there were two figures that were seated on the ground. One of them was the Goldfur Barking, while the other was a youth dressed in loose Daoist robes and whose eyes were like the stars.

“Elder brother,” the Goldfur Barking said hurriedly, “The lightning here is too hard to overcome. Even a Celestial Immortal like you has tried eight times without success. Just now, the two of us joined forces but we were still stopped at the 540 meter mark by the lightning bolts, giving us no chance to advance at all. This is our utmost limit. As I see it...we should invite another Celestial Immortal to come.”

“You fool!” The robed youth frowned as he glanced sideways at the Goldfur Barking. “How can we let word of such a treasure trove spread to others?”

“But...all we can do is sit here and stare. Elder brother, you know as well as I do that the black-robed youth has already passed through the lightning zone into the gorge. The more we delay, the greater the chances that he might acquire the treasures,” the Goldfur Barking said.

Ning had previously chatted with the black-robed youth, then gritted his teeth and departed. After Ning’s departure, the Goldfur Barking had mustered all of his power to finally break through the first forbidden zone, but upon encountering the lightning zone...although he was skilled at defense, he was unable to advance a single meter further after reaching the 360 meter mark. The black-robed youth had mocked him as well, and the Goldfur Barking, worried that the youth might end up taking the treasures, had hurried out of the Riverfang Mountains and invited a good friend of his, Patriarch Limitless.

The two had immediately sworn an oath to the Dao of the Heavens. Upon acquiring the treasures, they would split them evenly! Patriarch Limitless was a Celestial Immortal and thus a bit stronger, but the Goldfur Barking was the one who had acquired the information regarding the treasure trove. Thus, they would split things evenly.

“There are already quite a few who know about this treasure trove. If word spreads further...the treasure probably won’t end up in our hands at all.” Patriarch Limitless shook his head. “You big dumb bear. Don’t worry too much. When that black-robed youth said that there is a third forbidden zone here, he should’ve been telling the truth. If there wasn’t, he would’ve left with the treasures long ago. Since

he hasn't...that means that the third zone is very hard to overcome. If that's the case, then even if we do invite another Celestial Immortal, our chances of success will still remain low...but word will have spread to even more people. It's better for us to take things slowly."

"Fine." The Goldfur Barking nodded.

"Let us both meditate on how to use a more appropriate formation for overcoming the lightning zone," Patriarch Limitless said.

"Alright." The Goldfur Barking nodded again.

Just two hours after they had begun meditating, a series of rumbling sounds could be heard coming from the invisible pressure region behind them.

"An expert has arrived!" Patriarch Limitless frowned as he heard the rumbles. "The rate of advancement is very fast. Can it be that news has leaked to someone else?"

"It shouldn't have. You and I have already warned the other two surviving monster kings of us Twelve Monster Kings of the Eastern Flows about telling others and even forced them to swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens." The Goldfur Barking frowned. "As for that Immortal Darknorth, he gave up more than a year ago without coming back.. Can it be...can it be the imperial Qi clan? But they are so puny..."

Right as they were chatting...

Boom! A figure charged forward and landed on the ground. It was a fur-clad youth who was wielding an Immortal sword with an incomparably enormous aura of power.

"Immortal Darknorth?" The Goldfur Barking was amazed.

"Young fellow," Patriarch Limitless said with a frown, "Who is your master?"

He had heard from the Goldfur Barking about Ning; naturally, he had immediately guessed that for this 'Darknorth' to be so powerful at the early Void level meant that he most likely had an incredible master behind him. Perhaps this person also came from Mount Innerheart, like he himself did! However...given how many disciples Mount Innerheart had, how could he, an exalted Celestial Immortal, possibly give up this sort of treasure trove to another fellow disciple?

"Goldfur Barking, this is your helper?" Ning's gaze flickered towards Patriarch Limitless. This man was an azure-robed youth with an extraordinary aura.

"He is my elder brother, someone far more powerful than me: Celestial Immortal Limitless," the Goldfur Barking said smugly.

"A Celestial Immortal?" Ning was startled.

Patriarch Limitless repeated, "Young fellow, I asked you a question. Who is your master?"

Ning chuckled but didn't respond. He just walked straight into the lightning zone.

Patriarch Limitless couldn't help but frown. Still, given how calm Ning was, he felt all the more certain that Ning's background must be incredible, and so he just said coldly, "Young fellow, this is the lightning

zone. You need to make it past 540 meters of the zone before you succeeded. Given your power...you are far from being able to do it.”

Ning continued to make his way into the lightning zone.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Instantly, one bolt of lightning after another began to hammer down. Ning remained quite calm, not resisting at all as he allowed the lightning bolts to slam onto his body.

“Even a Fiendgod Body Refiner will only be able to use his body to forcibly withstand the lightning in the lightning zone for the first thirty meters.” Patriarch Limitless shook his head.

Ning continued to walk forward.

Thirty meters. Sixty meters. Ninety meters...

The lightning grew increasingly savage, but Ning continued to stroll forward, one step at a time, allowing the lightning to hit him at will.

“But, but but...” Patriarch Limitless and the Goldfur Barking were both stupefied.

210 meters. 240 meters. 270 meters...

Ning continued to walk forward in a relaxed manner. The bolts of lightning were now as thick as water barrels, and they came crashing down with utter savagery...but Ning seemed to be simply walking through a mild rainstorm. He felt quite relaxed and content; the clashes against his skin felt like an incomparably comfortable massage.

360 meters. 390 meters. 420 meters...

Ning continued to simply walk forward.

The black-robed youth had appeared once more at the entrance to the gorge. Even he stared in amazement at this sight. “It’s only been a year since I saw this fur-clad youth...how did he suddenly become so powerful?”

480 meters. 510 meters...

“These fur robes of mine were formed from top-grade Heaven-ranked Daoist robes. They are extremely tough, resilient, and good at deflecting attacks; they are comparable to low-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords in endurance.” Flying swords were too thin and sharp, and thus broke apart more easily! In terms of ability to withstand attacks, top-grade Heaven-ranked Daoist robes were indeed comparable to low-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords.

Bathed by countless bolts of lightning, Ning stepped past the 540 meter threshold...and the lightning instantly vanished.

.....

Patriarch Limitless and the Goldfur Barking, on the other side of the lightning zone, were both completely dazed.

“He used his body to endure it all? But, but...at the 540 meter mark, the power of the lightning was comparable to full-force combination attacks from the two of us. That’s most likely equal to a high-class Celestial Immortal.” The Goldfur Barking was truly amazed. “He’s at the early Void stage, but he didn’t even use a magic treasure...he just used his body to endure it all?! This body is too...”

“His body must be comparable to an Immortal-ranked magic treasure.” Patriarch Limitless’ face suddenly changed. He was a disciple of Mount Innerheart, after all; he suddenly thought of a famous divine ability, reputed to be the number one divine ability in the Three Realms for those below the True God level – the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].

“To have a body of such toughness at this level of power...the only possibility is the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]! But only personal disciples of the Old Patriarch can learn the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], or those the Old Patriarch provides special dispensation to. Can it be that he is a disciple of the Old Patriarch?” Patriarch Limitless instantly began to panic as he thought of this possibility. He hurriedly sent a mental message to Ning, “Dare I ask, Immortal Darknorth...do you know Emyrean God Silvermoon?”

Emyrean God Silvermoon was the controller of the Divinities Palace; every single disciple of Mount Innerheart knew him.

“You know senior apprentice-brother Silvermoon?” Ning turned his head to glance at him.

“This junior, Limitless, pays his respects to you, uncle-master!” Patriarch Limitless hurriedly sent a respectful mental message to him. He didn’t suspect Ning of faking it at all, because no one from the outside world could even enter the Crescent world! In addition...there was no faking the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]!

Ning was startled. Still, it made sense; most of those in the Crescent world who overcame the Celestial Tribulation and became Celestial Immortals had been recruited into Mount Innerheart.

“Oh. If we have the chance, let’s chat more back at Mount Innerheart.” Ning turned once more to the gorge, then walked towards it. The black-robed youth at the entrance to the gorge frowned, then turned and walked into the gorge himself.

Soon, Ning entered the fog-shrouded gorge...and he could sense that the terrifying ripples coming from within the gorge were gaining in power.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 32: Fiendgod Corpse

There were some grass and flowers within the gorge, but after Ji Ning stepped into it, he felt his heart shudder for some reason.

“Die!”

An ancient, primordial howl of rage smashed against Ning’s soul.

A series of ripples of boundless, terrifying killing intent surged towards Ning. Ning hurriedly visualized the image of Maiden Nuwa, and instantly the divine image of Nuwa appeared within his soul, stabilizing it considerably. After having spent so many years at Mount Innerheart, Ning had learned that the [Nuwa Painting] was a visualization technique passed down by Nuwa’s lineage that possessed boundless life-

force. Even if the soul was to be badly wounded, through visualizing the [Nuwa Painting] one could quickly recover. This was one of the most awe-inspiringly famous visualization techniques that existed in Pangu's World.

On the ninth floor of the Divinities Palace, there was a copy of the [Nuwa Painting] visualization technique, and it was described as one of the most supreme of nurturing and defensive techniques for the soul.

"This place is...?" Ning quickly came to his senses, and he stared at the scene before him in the gorge.

Because of the mist wreathing this place, Ning was only able to see to a distance of one or two kilometers. From far away, he could see a human-shaped creature that was lying on the ground unmoving. Ning could only make out the rough contours of two legs and an abdomen...but the legs alone were like massive blocks of stone that were over three hundred meters long.

"Given how strong the aura of death is here, it should be dead. It seems as though it was many hundreds of meters tall...given its size, it must have been a Fiendgod," Ning secretly predicted.

This treasure trove region was extremely mysterious; there was no way to investigate it through divine sense, and so Ning had to make guesses for everything.

"Die..."

"Die..."

Boundless amounts of killing intent surged forth in waves from that enormous Fiendgod corpse, smashing against Ning's soul. The closer Ning moved towards the corpse, the more powerful the killing intent became, forcing Ning to constantly visualize the image of Maiden Nuwa to resist it.

"For the remnant killing intent left behind in a corpse to be capable of forcing me to use the image of Maiden Nuwa to resist it...if he was still alive, he probably would be able to kill me with ease." Ning's soul had been split in two long ago; if one counted the soul within the Primaltwin, he actually had three souls!

One soul was within his Primaltwin.

One soul was within his true body's Primal Turtle-Snake, which had advanced to the Goldlotus.

Another soul had been completely fused with his true body's very flesh and bones. Every hint of blood and flesh contained a hint of his soul. It was at this level that Fiendgod Body Refiners were capable of creating an entire body from just a bit of flesh and blood.

Anyone who trained as both a Ki Refiner and as a Fiendgod Body Refiner would have to split his soul at the Primal level. One part of the soul would fuse into the body, while the other would enter the Primal Turtle-Snake.

Ning's Ki Refiner soul was finding it rather difficult to deal with the waves of killing intent, but his Fiendgod Body didn't fear it at all, because his soul in his Fiendgod body was connected to every bit of his flesh and blood, making it incredibly stable. Now that Ning had also trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], even if the killing intent was hundreds of times more powerful, it wouldn't be able to do anything to this Fiendgod body of his.

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Ning moved forward one step at a time, purposefully taking a circular path around the enormous Fiendgod corpse as he slowly advanced.

Finally...Ning was able to see it clearly. The Fiendgod corpse had ashen gray skin that was stone-like in texture. The corpse had an ordinary, plain face. Its body was covered in wounds, and the black armor it wore had been torn apart in many places. By its side were two fiery arrows, as well as a mighty black greatbow with a shattered bowstring.

"I didn't expect that you would be able to come to this place. For a weak little early Void-stage fellow to possess such ability...admirable, admirable." The shrill voice rang out once more.

Ning turned to look towards the source of the sound. From afar, at the corner to the entrance of the gorge, he saw the black-robed youth in a seated position.

"Do you know Empyrean God Silvermoon?" Ning suddenly asked. This black-robed youth was most likely a Celestial Immortal, given that he was able to make it here. Most likely, quite a few of the Celestial Immortals of the Crescent world were disciples of Mount Innerheart. If they were fellow disciples, things would probably proceed more smoothly."

"Empyrean God Silvermoon? Heh heh, an Empyrean God? Not bad. But I've never heard of him." The black-robed youth sat there, staring at Ning. "Kid...it seems your background is significant, given that you know an Empyrean God. However...here in this treasure region, it doesn't matter who you know. If you want to acquire the treasures...it'll all be up to your own abilities."

Ning quietly came to the conclusion that this black-robed youth was most likely not a member of Mount Innerheart. When Ning had traversed the lightning zone, even the outside Patriarch Limitless had been able to guess that Ning was a member of Mount Innerheart...and yet, this black-robed youth didn't seem to react to that at all.

"There are still quite a few Celestial Immortals in the Crescent world who have not become disciples of Mount Innerheart...and some don't even know of it," Ning mused to himself.

"Kid, you've already passed through two of the forbidden zones. This is the last one, but let me warn you...the treasures on that Fiendgod's corpse aren't so easily acquired." The black-robed youth sat there lazily, seemingly waiting to mock Ning when he 'inevitably failed'.

Ning looked back at the black-robed youth. "I've come to take the treasure, but you aren't going to stop me?"

"How would I do that? Even the lightning zone wasn't able to damage you at all, you freak. Even if I attacked you, I'd be wasting my energy. If I had trap-type treasures, I might try and trap or bind you...but unfortunately, I don't." The black-robed youth spoke in a resigned manner.

Ning knew what the weakness of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] was. Training to the Third Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] resulted in an extraordinarily powerful body, but if he encountered restrictive items like magic ropes or monster-sealing pagodas, he might be wrapped up or drawn into the magic treasures. Still...Ning was no fool. He would use his sword to block; to actually trap and bind him would be an extremely difficult matter. And even if he was trapped...he wouldn't die from that, in and of itself.

“Then I’m going to go take the treasure.” As Ning spoke, he moved closer towards the Fiendgod body.

When Ning reached a distance of roughly three hundred meters from the body, suddenly...

The black greatbow next to the Fiendgod suddenly lit up. The bowstring of the black greatbow was shattered, but an utterly enormous flood of natural energy was gathering around the black greatbow. It actually created a second bowstring that was completely composed of natural energy, as well as a fiery arrow that was similarly composed of natural energy.

Swish! No one was controlling the black greatbow, but it shot the arrow straight out towards Ning.

The arrow shot through the air, moving lightning-fast and almost instantly appearing in front of Ning.

“Block!” Ning waved his arm, allowing the arrow to strike directly on his upper arm.

BOOM. The powerful collusive force sent Ning flying back hundreds of meters, smashing against the distant canyon walls. The canyon walls cracked apart with a rumbling sound as many rocks came crashing down...but with a backflip, Ning emerged from a large crater that had been created in the wall.

“What a treasure.” Ning wasn’t worried; to the contrary, he was delighted.

“You freak, you could even take that?” The distant black-robed youth was amazed.

Ning was incomparably excited. He stared at the black greatbow, surrounded by the natural energy of Heaven and Earth. “For it to be able to gather such natural energy without any elemental ki guiding it...clearly, the spirit of the treasure of this black greatbow has activated it. For it to have such power without even a person controlling it...this is inconceivable.”

Long ago, Xue Hongyi had been able to forcibly subdue the Azuresilk Godfire Lamp. At the Wanxiang level, Ning had been able to use the [Starseizing Hand] to forcibly hold the Thousandbull Sword. And now, Ning’s power was unfathomably greater than it had been before...but he had just been sent flying back by the natural energy gathered by an ownerless treasure!

“The Thousandbull Sword is top-grade amongst top-grade Immortal-ranked artifacts, close to Pure Yang treasures in power. Then this greatbow...it has to at least be a Pure Yang treasure, and if it is, it has to be either a high-grade or even a top-grade Pure Yang treasure. Or it might even be a Protocosmic spirit-treasure!” Ning instantly came to this conclusion.

The magic treasure, without anyone controlling it, already had the offensive power of a Celestial Immortal!

“It makes sense. This Fiendgod must have died countless years ago, but his remnant killing intent is still so terrifyingly strong. Given how powerful he was, how could his bow be poor?” Ning frowned.

“However...the bowstring to this black greatbow is broken, and tears have appeared on his armor. I wonder what sort of a battle he must have encountered for even magic treasures on this level to have been damaged. Even the Fiendgod himself perished...and strangest of all, the Fiendgod’s body remained, even after he himself died!”

It must be understood that a Fiendgod’s soul was completely intertwined with his blood and flesh. If so much as a single drop of flesh or blood remained, he could be reborn! Unless...

A supremely mighty power had been able to annihilate every single scrap of the soul that was within the Fiendgod's flesh and blood! Without any soul left in the body at all, the flesh would be useless.

"How massive a battle was this?" Ning thought back to the great tribulation that had resulted in the destruction of Pangu's World. That had definitely been an incomparably terrifying battle, one which even Patriarch Subhuti had been afraid to participate in. Daoist Threelives had killed multiple Fiendgod Daofathers in it before even he himself had perished.

"No matter what...although the black greatbow and the armor are both damaged, given how powerful they are without any owner, they must be incredible treasures."

Ning waved his hand, causing the Thousandbull Sword to appear. Ning then quickly advanced, once more pressing closer.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

The black greatbow shot out more fiery arrows towards Ning, both the arrows and the bowstring formed from natural energy.

Ning, however, used his swordplay to block. His sword-light flowed out like water, deflecting the arrows of natural energy to the side. Ning was using one of the sword-arts from the ninth floor of the Divinities Palace known as [Water Filling the Heavens]; this was his most defensively suited sword-art technique.

Swish swish swish...

Suddenly, a large number of arrows shot out; in fact, up to ten arrows were shot out simultaneously, causing tens of arrows to instantly fly out within a short period of time. However, despite the arrows coming faster, the power of each arrow had naturally dropped.

Ning used either the Thousandbull Sword to block or his body to take the blows head on.

"Kid, although your divine body is like a magic treasure, this is just the attacks of a divine bow without a master; it's not that impressive for you to be able to withstand it. Let me tell you this; once you reach thirty meters of the corpse, you'll have entered the third forbidden zone. Passing it has nothing to do with the strength of your body, and the fact that it is as unbreakable as a magic treasure won't help you." The black-robed youth sat there, watching Ning advance and fight forward.

Ning forced his way forward, charging through the hail of arrows. When he reached a distance of thirty meters from the Fiendgod corpse, the natural energy surrounding the black greatbow dissipated, no longer attacking Ning.

"Whew." Ning took a deep breath. At such a close distance to the Fiendgod body, the invisible aura of majesty surrounding it caused even his heart to shudder.

"The third forbidden zone?"

"No matter what I have to acquire this treasure." Ning stared at the treasures on the corpse of the Fiendgod...but what drew his attention most was still that black greatbow.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 13: Tristar Crescent Abode Chapter 33: Rahu Bow

Ji Ning's body flickered, then he transformed into his three-headed, six-armed form. He wielded the Thousandbull Sword in his hands, as well as five of the top-grade, Immortal-ranked Skyraker swords.

In the face of this third forbidden zone, Ning didn't dare to relax in the slightest. Only after fully preparing himself did he step forward towards the Fiendgod corpse, moving past the thirty-meter threshold and entering the field of the third forbidden zone.

Rumble...

"Ning, son, eat some more."

This was an incomparably familiar hall. The lit candles here were as thick as a child's arm, and the child-Ning was seated in front of a table. Atop the table there was a flagon of water as well as a plate of meat and pastries.

"This..." The child-Ning stared in front of him. In front of him was a woman, her gaze filled with benevolent love as she looked at him. "Why are you looking at me? Hurry up and eat."

Ning turned his head to look backwards. Indeed; behind him was seated a handsome young man, Ji Yichuan. However, he only gave Ning a frowning glance, then barked coldly, "What are you looking at? Focus on your food when you are eating!"

"Yes, father." Tears suddenly streamed out of the child-Ning's face, but he hurriedly lowered his head, picked up a biscuit, and began to wolf it down.

.....

Within the mountain gorge.

The black-robed youth remained seated in the lotus position at the corner of the gorge. He stared towards Ning, who had made it within thirty meters of the Fiendgod corpse, then shook his head. "The third forbidden zone isn't so easy to overcome. It tests the weakest, softest parts of your soul. It doesn't matter how powerful your body is, how mighty your divine power is, or how formidable your sword-arts are; all of those are useless."

.....

The days child-Ning spent with his parents were very happy. One day passed after another, and the child-Ning learned both agility techniques and sword techniques.

One night.

The child-Ning arrived outside his parent's room. There was a female servant yawning sleepily outside. Upon seeing the child-Ning arrive, she couldn't help but feel surprised. However, she didn't stop him as he moved to knock on the door.

Creaaaak. The door opened.

It was the fur-clad Ji Yichuan who had opened the door. Upon seeing his son, he frowned and said coldly, "It's late. Why have you come here instead of sleeping?" Ning's mother, Yuchi Snow, left her bed and walked over, smiling as she rubbed the child-Ning's head. "Hurry up and go back to sleep. It's late."

“Father. Mother.” The child-Ning suddenly said.

“Eh?” Yichuan and Snow both looked at their son.

“I want to hug you two,” the child-Ning said.

Yichuan was puzzled, but Snow just laughed. “Silly boy.” She immediately pulled Ning into her arms.

In his mother’s arms, Ning stretched one of his own arms to tightly embrace his mother, then the other towards his father.

“Father...” The child-Ning looked at his father.

“You are just...” Yichuan gently shook his head, but he still moved closer, allowing Ning to hold him.

With one arm, he held his father. With the other, he held his mother. Ning pressed against his parents, smelling their scent. He closed his eyes, tears streaming down his face. He said very softly, “I really want to continue like this, but...my memories are already beginning to grow blurry.”

“Ning? Son?” Snow looked at Ning, and Yichuan look at him as well.

Ning raised his head, his tears blurring his vision. He just stood there and stared at his parents.

“Awaken.”

“Awaken.”

“AWAKEN!”

Ning’s unwilling, angry roar suddenly filled the entire illusory world, shaking it and instantly shattering it like glass. Everything quickly vanished.

One illusory world after another appeared, each one playing on all the deepest desires in a person’s heart. Greed...love...hate...obsessions...

“How can this be?” The black-robed youth, still seated in the corner of the gorge, stared at the scene before him in astonishment. Ning had already spent more than an hour within the third forbidden zone after taking his first step...but after that first hour, each subsequent step needed less than the time needed to boil a kettle of tea. One step at a time, he broke through the illusions until finally, all of them vanished.

The black-robed youth laughed, then said with a soft sigh, “So he is the one.” And then, he disappeared into thin air.

.....

Ning arrived at the side of the Fiendgod corpse, having completely awoken. He stared at the enormous figure of the Fiendgod corpse, at the shattered armor it wore and the black greatbow with the snapped bowstring, as well as those two glowing arrows.

“Master...thank you.”

Ning's gaze was distant and dreamy. He murmured softly, "Although the time I spent in that illusory world was very short...it was the happiest I've ever been since I left Swallow Mountain. That experience made me even happier than acquiring these treasures left behind by this Fiendgod."

Ning knew quite well that this third forbidden zone had been created by Patriarch Subhuti himself. It must be understood that when Pangu's World was destroyed, it had been Patriarch Subhuti who had personally teleported each remnant onto his Crescent world. Naturally, it had also been Patriarch Subhuti who had set up the forbidden zones. As for which of his disciples would be able to acquire the relics and treasures from the Primordial World, that was up to luck and destiny.

"Young fellow." Suddenly, the figure of the black-robed youth appeared in the air above the black greatbow. He said delightedly, "I bet you didn't guess this, did you?"

"You are..." Ning was startled. "...the spirit of the treasure?!"

"Of course! When I told you I was a Celestial Immortal, I was just playing with you. I didn't expect you to actually pass the third forbidden zone. Based on what Patriarch Subhuti said back in the day, anyone capable of passing the third forbidden zone would have to have an incredibly formidable Dao-heart." The black-robed youth sighed. "Although you haven't overcome the Celestial Tribulation to become a Celestial Immortal yet, you aren't bad at all."

Ning laughed softly.

"You...don't seem that excited." The black-robed youth sat in the lotus position above the black greatbow. He said in amazement, "I bet you don't know who I am, right? Let me tell you. I am one of the top ten divine bows of the Primordial World, a high-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure!"

"A Protocosmic spirit-treasure? Wonderful." Ning revealed a smile and said a word of praise.

"But...I don't feel as though you are that excited." The black-robed youth frowned.

"That's only because just a short while ago, I was given something even more precious." Ning smiled. "Please introduce yourself to me, as well as this ancient Fiendgod."

The black-robed youth nodded. "In the era of the ancient Primordial World, the major powers once killed an incredibly terrifying creature named 'Rahu'.¹ They used the various components of Rahu's corpse, mixed with many other incomparably precious materials, to finally forge a top-grade Pure Yang spirit-treasure. That would be me...and the name given to me was the 'Rahu Bow'. Over the course of countless ages after my creation, my spirit grew increasingly powerful until I finally evolved to become a Protocosmic spirit-treasure. As soon as I made my breakthrough, I became a high-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure."

"Oh." Ning nodded.

"Just 'oh'?! I'm one of the ten great divine bows of the Primordial Era! Only one bow, the legendary Houyi's Bow, was ranked as the undisputed number one; the rest of us, such as the Qiankun Bow or the Blacknether Bow are all ranked on par with each other." The black-robed youth said arrogantly, "In fact, during that great tribulation, all of Master's Pure Yang treasures were damaged, and even the spirits of those treasures were destroyed. I was the only one left."

Ning chortled. "But your bowstring is broken."

"You can just help me get another bowstring, right?" The black-robed youth shook his head. "You need to understand that for divine bows like myself, the bow shaft is what matters; that's where the increased power comes from. But of course, the bowstring is also very important. In the future, I'll help guide you to picking or forging a good bowstring."

"Alright." Ning asked, "How should I bind you, then?"

"Just use your elemental ki. I'll give you all the help I can," the black-robed youth said. "I've been here for an eternity. I've been bored senseless."

"Alright." Ning immediately began to bind it.

Generally speaking, binding Mortal-ranked, Earth-ranked, Heaven-ranked, Immortal-ranked and Pure Yang treasures all had certain requirements in terms of elemental ki. For example, one had to at least be at the Void level to bind Immortal-ranked magic items, or at the Celestial Immortal level to bind Pure Yang treasures.

However, Protocosmic spirit-treasures had the blessings of Heaven and Earth. They were extremely mysterious...and if the spirits of the treasures was willing, they could allow even an ordinary mortal to use them!

If they were unwilling...even Celestial Immortals would be unable to bind them. Perhaps Pure Yang True Immortals could forcibly bind them, but if the spirit of the Protocosmic spirit-treasure were to resist, the binding process would be extremely tiresome. It would have to be done at one go; if one were to pause midway through, the efforts would be for naught, and one would have to start from scratch again.

Thus, binding a Protocosmic spirit-treasure was very troublesome. Fortunately, the Rahu Bow had a good impression of Ning. By overcoming the third forbidden zone, Ning received his acknowledgment.

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Just a short while later, the binding process was complete.

Ning hefted the Rahu Bow in his hands. He could sense the limitless power hidden deep within it; this was a sort of sinister might that also carried a sort of power that was akin to the ripples of water. This power was unfathomably deep and infinitely powerful.

"In you go." Ning waved his hand, and the Fiendgod corpse next to him was collected as well.

Instantly, all of the ancient restrictive formations that had existed within the Riverfang Mountains were automatically deactivated. Previously, divine sense could not be used to search the region, but now it could.

Ning used his divine sense to sweep the region, locating the Goldfur Barking and Patriarch Limitless outside the gorge.

"Time to go back." Ning flew into the skies, then immediately executed a spatial teleportation. Entering the spatial ripples, Ning disappeared into thin air.

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“Divine sense?” Both the Goldfur Barking and Patriarch Limitless were stunned. There was no way to use divine sense within this region...but just now, they sensed someone scan them with it.

“The restrictions are gone.”

“The lightning zone is gone as well.” They quickly discovered that even the terrifying ripples that had emanated from deep within had also disappeared. By the time they charged into the gorge...they saw nothing within it at all.

The Riverfang Mountains had become an extremely ordinary mountain range. Although there were some peculiarities to it, it was no longer anything special.

“The treasure was taken away by uncle-master Darknorth.” Patriarch Limitless knew what had happened.

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Ning returned to Mount Innerheart. He first rested for a day, then went into the mountain forests of Mount Innerheart. A violet greatbow appeared in his hand; this was a Heaven-ranked treasure.

“The test for [Houyi’s Archery] really isn’t easy.” When Ning thought back to the trial mentioned on the abridged version of [Houyi’s Archery], he couldn’t help but feel a headache.

It really was too hard. This was the hardest trial of the Three Realms Palace.

“Junior apprentice-brother.” Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Ning turned his head to look, only to see a hatchet-carrying swarthy-skinned man wearing hemp sack clothes, a grass hat, and grass shoes come walking towards him with a smile.

“Eldest apprentice-brother,” Ning hurriedly greeted him. Mount Innerheart was vast; he needed some additional space for training in archery, and so he had left the Tristar Crescent Abode and come to the mountain forests outside of it. He hadn’t expected to run into his eldest apprentice-brother.

“Why have you come here?” The woodcutter asked him.

“I want to train in archery,” Ning replied.

“Oh?” The woodcutter glanced at Ning’s greatbow, then asked, “[Houyi’s Archery]?”

“Right.” Ning nodded. “But only the trial for [Houyi’s Archery] for now.”

“That’s not easy. Train hard.” The woodcutter smiled, nodded, then leisurely sauntered away, hatchet over his shoulders.