

## Desolate 411

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 8: Qi, the Primordial Divine Archer

Princess Xiyue, Fairy Azurewillow, Feng Yungu, and the others were watching in amazement. That arrow in Ji Ning's hand...it was actually worth such a precious amount of money! This was simply inconceivable.

However...Ning had always been a man of mysteries.

When he had first arrived at the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, he had purchased the elemental peacock plumes. Afterwards, he had seized the championship of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny...and then refused to accept Sword Immortal Evergreen as his master, instead disappearing for over thirty years. Upon his return, his power had increased greatly; for him to now produce an arrow of such great value wasn't too inconceivable, all things considered!

However, this arrow was simply too valuable; the likes of Princess Xiyue could only feel shock and awe, rather than jealousy.

"Damn. Damn!" Young master Yunpeng, however, felt extremely jealous right now. He was the unhappiest of the lot.

"How could the arrow which Ji Ning produced be worth this much?!" Young master Yunpeng knew that his personal strength was perhaps inferior to Ning's, but he had felt certain that he had far more treasures! This was his greatest source of self-confidence...but a single arrow from Ning had completely crushed him in this regard.

Young master Yunpeng felt unhappy. Deeply unhappy!

"Fine. Then I'll engage in this trade with the Heavenly Treasures Mountain," Ning said.

"I'll go make the arrangements." The silver-haired man nodded, then immediately began sending mental messages to make the arrangements.

Ning suddenly turned his head to glance at Princess Xiyue. Smiling, he said, "Princess, when I first entered the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, I was surrounded by danger, but you stretched out your hand to aid me. To this very day, I haven't had a chance to repay you...if there's anything you wish to buy today, Princess, then I, Ji Ning, will buy it for you as a gift."

"Eh?" Princess Xiyue was startled.

"This Ji Ning..." A hint of anger instantly flashed past young master Yunpeng's eyes. He had been wooing Princess Xiyue this entire time, and had been relying on his wealth to do so! For Ning to suddenly plan to give her gifts as well...if his gifts were more valuable, then that would be the same as crushing him underfoot.

The nearby Feng Yungu raised his head to give Ning a glance as well.

Fairy Azurewillow said, "Young master Ji Ning, Xiyue has been hoping for a mobile Immortal estate that she could carry on her person, but even the cheapest of such estates would cost at least five hundred

thousand kilograms of liquefied elemental essence. Alas, young master Yunpeng wasn't quite willing to part with such a sum."

Young master Yunpeng's face instantly turned white.

Five hundred thousand kilograms wasn't a small figure; it was enough to purchase an ordinary low-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure! If he were to casually toss out half a million kilograms just to chase after a girl...if this sort of gift-giving became habitual and he ended up failing, he would probably be out five million kilograms or more! Succeeding was one thing, but failure meant it would have all been for nothing! Although young master Yunpeng was the son of the master of the Windlocked Isles, he still had to calculate his expenditures. The most valuable gift he had given Princess Xiyue was worth merely a hundred or two hundred thousand kilograms or so; over the course of the past half year, all of his gifts combined were worth just barely half a million kilograms.

"Azurewillow." Princess Xiyue was rather unhappy.

"A mobile Immortal estate?" Ning suddenly laughed. "I was once lucky enough to acquire such an estate, but since I already had one, I've never used the second one. It's the perfect present for you, Princess."

Ning waved his hand, and a small, exquisitely designed Immortal estate appeared within his palm, glowing with golden light.

Everyone present turned to look at it.

"This Immortal estate...?" Everyone was curious. Even young master Yunpeng frowned as he looked at it; none of them could quite tell how valuable it was.

Ning laughed.

After he had successfully overcome the fifth level of the Wargod Hall, he had acquired a set of Heaven-ranked magic treasure, the Waterbreaker Godshark Swords. After becoming champion of the Conclave, he had arrived at Mount Innerheart, and during his thirty-plus years there Ning's [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] had broken through to the thirteenth stage. Since that represented an advance to the Primal Daoist level, he had been permitted to choose another Heaven-ranked magic treasure from the Treasure Hall.

By then, Ning already knew that Heaven-ranked magic treasures weren't going to be of much use to him in the future; what he needed was Immortal-ranked treasures.

However...Ning couldn't let this opportunity of choosing a treasure from the Treasure Hall to go to waste. Thus, Ning had chosen an item that was of fairly high value; simply put, he had chosen an item that he could use to sell for a great deal of liquefied elemental essence. Thus, he had chosen a mobile Immortal estate, a 'Goldlight Immortal Estate'. Ning had been planning to sell it here to trade for Immortal-ranked magic treasures, but he had risen in power more quickly than even he had expected, and had acquired the treasures left behind by that ancient Fiendgod corpse. By now, this Goldlight Immortal Estate was nothing to him.

Ning's set of Waterbreaker Godshark Swords were worth roughly one million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence! This Goldlight Immortal Estate, however, was on an even higher level of value!

“What generosity and magnanimity, young friend Ji Ning! Your gift to a beauty is actually an Immortal estate such as this.” The silver-haired man laughed. “This Immortal estate is worth at least four million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence!”

“Four million kilograms!?” Fairy Azurewillow, who had intentionally been causing some trouble, was shocked as well.

“That much?” Princess Xiyue felt that this was far too much.

Young master Yunpeng’s face became even more unsightly. “Four million kilograms...how can this Ji Ning be willing to give up an estate like this? How can he?!”

He hadn’t even been willing to buy an Immortal estate that was worth half a million kilograms, but now Ning’s very first gift was worth four million kilograms. How could the ‘wealthy’ young master Yunpeng not feel choked?

“It’s too much. Too much.” Princess Xiyue shook her head hurriedly.

“This is nothing to me,” Ning laughed. “And I’m preparing to stay at King Yan’s Estate for quite some time; how can I stay for so long without bringing a little gift?”

“Quite some time?”

Young master Yunpeng felt even more miserable now.

He was staying at King Yan’s Estate. If Ning stayed here as well, they would repeatedly run into each other. In terms of reputation...Ning surpassed him, as he had become champion of the Conclave. In terms of background...Ning’s backer was probably more formidable. In terms of personal strength...given that Ning’s Primaltwin had been able to kill Loose Immortals when it had been merely at the Primal Daoist level, there was no need to even compare the two of them. And now in terms of wealth...young master Yunpeng’s wealth had been his greatest source of confidence, but even in this regard, he had been crushed in an utterly dominating manner!

More importantly of all...

The princess didn’t like him!

She would rather marry Feng Yungu than marry him. Previously, young master Yunpeng had felt that he was superior to Feng Yungu in every way, which was why he had felt so confident when staying at King Yan’s Estate. But now...Ji Ning had appeared! Ji Ning crushed in him every aspect, and he appeared to be so close to the princess!

“Xiyue,” Young master Yunpeng suddenly said.

“Hm?” Princess Xiyue looked towards him.

Young master Yunpeng smiled. “I’ve spent quite a bit of time here at the Grand Xia Dynasty. It’s time to go back to the Heaven Realm. Help me convey my thanks to King Yan; I won’t be going back to King Yan’s Estate.”

“Let’s go!” Young master Yunpeng immediately led his two servants away.

Just like that...

Young master Yunpeng departed!

Princess Xiyue was startled for a moment, and then she looked towards Ning. She sent mentally, "Little brother, this was your plan all along, right? You wanted to force him to leave?"

"He's the son of the master of the Windlocked Isles; someone like him is naturally the proud sort. The reason why he was at King Yan's Estate was because he felt he was superior to Feng Yungu in every way," Ning sent back. "All I had to do was to make him feel as though he was inferior to me in every single way, as though he would feel miserable every time he saw me. Given that you don't like him, cousin...of course he would choose to leave on his own, rather than feel angry all the time here!"

"You..." Princess Xiyue sent resignedly, "Fine. Since you've chased off that little rich boy, you can put away your mobile Immortal estate. This is a critical point in time for you; you'll need many treasures for the upcoming storm."

"Cousin, I gave you this Immortal estate, which means it is yours! A few million kilograms is a minor sum to me now; compared to this arrow of mine, it is worth far, far less. In addition, I've received an extra fifteen million kilograms today; there's no need for you to refuse, cousin," Ning sent back.

Princess Xiyue looked towards Ning.

"And...I really don't want you to force yourself to suffer. Even if you are to choose a Dao-companion, you should choose someone you like. Don't casually choose someone like this Feng Yungu," Ning sent mentally. "Don't let yourself suffer any further."

Princess Xiyue suddenly felt an ache in her heart. She couldn't prevent the tears from coming to her eyes.

"Treasures, liquefied elemental essence...your little brother has them!"

"If enemies come...your little brother will help you kill them!"

"Take this Immortal estate, elder sister. In the future, when your little brother grows even stronger...forget about Immortal-ranked magic treasures, I'll even be able to casually gift you with a set of ten Pure Yang treasures," Ning sent solemnly.

Princess Xiyue looked at Ning. "Alright."

Ning smiled.

The resurrection of the Yuchi clan!

This wasn't just his cousin's wish; this was Ning's wish as well. Although his mother had never spoken to him of it, Ning could sense that his mother had always been thinking of her Yuchi clan. His mother's heart was not with the Ji clan; it had always been with her Yuchi clan.

For the sake of his mother...Ning, too, wished to resurrect the Yuchi clan!

Thus, this was a task for not just his cousin, but also himself!

“Xiyue, look at how excited you are. You are so excited that you are crying!” Fairy Azurewillow laughed, “But if someone were to give me a mobile Immortal estate, I’d be extremely excited as well. Young master Ji Ning...” As she spoke, she looked towards Ning.

“I found a Dao-companion long ago,” Ning said hurriedly.

“Oh. I heard about this; the Rainbowflame Fairy, Yu Wei. She’s Patriarch Lu’s disciple.” Fairy Azurewillow suddenly turned her head as a black-robed elder walked over, respectfully handing over a storage-type bracelet to the silver-haired man.

The silver-haired man handed it straight to Ning. “Young friend Ji Ning, take a look; are these the items from the list that you needed?”

“Uncle White, take a look,” Ning said.

Uncle White nodded. He immediately bound the storage bracelet, then quickly began to scan through the many precious materials within it.

Someone without sufficient skill wouldn’t be able to set up such peerlessly ferocious formations, even if they had all the necessary materials. Even Uncle White merely understood how to set up these three supreme formations; he didn’t truly understand the mysteries within them. This was because they were simply far too complicated; that was why even True Immortals or Empyrean Gods would find it hard to break through them.

“Everything’s correct.” Uncle White nodded.

The nearby silver-haired man instantly smiled, then handed Ning a jade bottle. “There are fifteen million kilograms within.”

“Then let this arrow go to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.” Ning handed it over to him.

“Precisely speaking...it goes to the Xia Emperor,” the silver-haired man said with a laugh.

Ning was startled for a moment, but then he nodded.

Behind the Heavenly Treasures Mountain stood the Grand Xia Emperor.

“Now that this deal is concluded...young friend Ji Ning, if you acquire any other treasures, our Heavenly Treasures Mountain will always welcome you here to sell them. I, Skyfox, will personally come welcome you.” Only now did the silver-haired man tell them his name.

“Skyfox?” Ning was secretly startled. “So it’s him?”

The Grand Xia Emperor had two spirit-beasts who had become Celestial Immortals. One was a skyfox, and it was this skyfox who had established the Heavenly Treasures Mountain for the Grand Xia Emperor. He was in complete control of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain.

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Within the darkness of space.

A blurred figure was seated in the lotus position. Suddenly, a silver-haired man appeared out of nowhere within the void.

“Master, here is the arrow which Ji Ning just traded to our Heavenly Treasures Mountain.” The silver-haired man respectfully offered the arrow. The flaming arrow hovered there in space, emanating ripples of power.

“This arrow...this is a Firetruth Arrow. It is the most famous type of arrow which was created by Divine Archer ‘Qi’ 1 of the Primordial Era. Even I would perish under the power of a single one of these arrows,” the black-robed Xia Emperor said in a low voice.

He was of the lineage of the Primordial Imperial Clan, and had lived through that period of time. Even in the Primordial World of Pangu, there were only a few extremely famous divine archers. All of them had their own specialties, and anyone could recognize their arrows at a single glance.

“When Pangu’s World was shattered, the most powerful treasures were quickly seized away by the various major powers. Since Ji Ning has acquired one of these arrows...then he most likely has a connection to one of those major powers; otherwise, how could he have acquired a treasure like this?! In addition, Ji Ning didn’t apprentice himself to anyone in Daofather Crimsonbright’s league...but Master actually ordered me not to investigate this matter. Ji Ning must have a Daofather behind him.”

“Keep a close eye on Ji Ning. The Three Realms are currently in a state of chaos; Ji Ning can become our friend, but he absolutely must not become our enemy.” The black-robed Xia Emperor’s voice echoed forth within the darkness of the void.

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#### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 9: Laying Down the Formations**

“Cousin, no need to send me off.”

Ji Ning was bidding Princess Xiyue farewell in midair.

“Didn’t you say earlier that you were going to stay at King Yan’s Estate for an extended period of time? Why are you leaving after shopping at the Heavenly Treasures Mountain?” Princess Xiyue truly didn’t wish to part with him. Her grandfather, King Yan, had just recently become a Celestial Immortal; thus, he spent much of his time in secluded meditation, and rarely had time to accompany her. In addition, Ji Ning was of a similar age to her; there were many topics she could discuss with him but not her grandfather. Naturally, she wanted him to stay longer by her side.

“Given that the Grand Xia world is now filled with dangerous undercurrents, I need to go back as soon as possible and set up layers of formations around the Ji clan’s Swallow Mountain region,” Ning said. “I will permanently stay in the Swallow Mountain region. If you are free, you can come visit me there.”

“Permanently?” Princess Xiyue was surprised.

“Right.” Ning nodded.

He had acquired many techniques at Mount Innerheart, be it Ki Refining, Fiendgod Body Refining, or sword-arts manuals. All of them provided guidance towards the level of Daofather of the Great Firmament. He also had the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], the [Starseizing Hand], [Houyi’s Archery], and the

[Torch Dragon's Eye], some of the most supreme divine abilities of the Three Realms. He needed to spend time on training these techniques.

Given that the Three Realms were about to be engulfed by a storm...Ning did indeed plan to permanently live at Serpentwing Lake as he awaited Yu Wei's return.

"That's good. I'll be able to find you there whenever I want. You need to be careful; my grandfather also told me that the world has been quite chaotic lately. Even multiple Celestial Immortals have perished," Princess Xiyue said.

"I know. Don't worry. Others might be able to kill Celestial Immortals, but killing me will be very difficult," Ning said.

"Oh?" Princess Xiyue revealed a look of surprise.

Ning laughed. "Don't forget that I just returned after studying with my master. Alright, enough talk; I need to go now."

And then, Ning led Little Qing and Uncle White in using a spatial teleportation to vanish from the air above the imperial capital of the Grand Xia.

"This little brother of mine...it seems as though these thirty-plus years have been extraordinary for him." Princess Xiyue let out a relieved sigh. The more powerful Ning became, the more relaxed she would be. "However...his words were a bit too much. 'Others might be able to kill Celestial Immortals, but killing him will be very difficult'? It's like he's implying he's more powerful than Celestial Immortals. I imagine that his master probably bestowed some sort of protective item upon him."

Swoosh.

Princess Xiyue charged downwards towards her residence, flying back into King Yan's Estate.

This time, Princess Xiyue's guess was wrong. In terms of power, Ning truly was on the level of a Celestial Immortal Patriarch by now. Most importantly of all, Ning had trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]; it would be extremely difficult for others to injure him. And through the 'Seventy-Two Transformations' the arcane art permitted...if he transformed into the Grand Xia Emperor, even King Yan probably wouldn't be able to tell any difference at all.

This was why, generally speaking, those who trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] were incredibly talented in staying alive. Ning's training in the arcane art was the reason why Patriarch Subhuti had permitted Ning to depart from his tutelage.

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"Master, Ji Ning suddenly left Stillwater City and headed towards the imperial capital."

"The imperial capital remains the most dangerous place in the Grand Xia world for us. That's not the place for the assassination. Continue to watch over him."

"Yes."

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Swallow Mountain.

After using a spatial teleport to return here from the imperial capital of the Grand Xia, Ning immediately summoned the high-level Ji clansmen. The latest generation of Wanxiang Adepts and Zifu Disciples were all clustered together in one hall, including the likes of Ji Mo and the others who had been provided guidance by Ning. Now that the clan had a stable footing, all of their talents received good resources for cultivation; their situation was far better than the situation had been in the past for Ji Ninefire, Ji Truekeep, and the others. Thus Ji Mo, for example, had already become a Wanxiang Adept.

Only upon being summoned here did they learn that Ji Ning had returned! All of them were utterly overcome with joy. The younger generation of Ji clansmen had long ago begun to idolize Ning; after all, becoming the champion of the Conclave was something out of legends! That was an event where the geniuses of the entire world came together in a competition!

“I agree! Of course I agree. Stillwater Commandery is in a chaotic state right now; if Uncle Ji Ning plans to set down layers of mighty formations around Swallow Mountain, then that means that our Ji clan shall have a foundation that will flourish for countless generations!”

“Right. With these grand formations, we will no longer need to fear the Youngflame clan.”

“I agree.”

“I agree as well.”

Not a single Ji clansmen was in opposition. Ning’s words were like music to their ears! Ning had told them that once the formations were established, even Celestial Immortal Patriarchs could forget about barging through them. Only individuals who surpassed the power of Celestial Immortals had a chance of making it through!

It must be understood that in the entire world of the Grand Xia...even for the likes of ancient clans that had existed since the Fiendgod Era, such as the Northmont clan of Stillwater or the Youngflame clan, Celestial Immortals represented the height of their power.

With these grand formations protecting it, Swallow Mountain would become an absolutely secure location; the Ji clan could safely and stably flourish within this place!

A truly powerful clan had to have an extremely safe base. Some of them even hid their headquarters within unknown minor worlds! Naturally, the Ji clan wished for such a secure base as well.

And Ning wasn’t lying when he had told them these things!

The three supremely ferocious formations also included a ‘sealing’ component; this sort of grand sealing formation couldn’t be broken through technique, they had to be destroyed through raw force! Unless one had the power of a True Immortal or Empyrean God, there was no way whatsoever to break through.

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A snowy white hound was standing in the sky. Behind him, a series of glistening, gem-like rocks appeared out of nowhere. There were a total of 108 such rocks.



The snowy white hound stared far away, towards the peak of a mountain.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Instantly, the stones hovering around him shot out like meteors, piercing deep into various parts of the mountain. Immediately afterwards...the mountain peak itself vanished, and circles of blurry light began to manifest around the mountain peak with the appearance of clouds.

“The final formation-base of the ‘Eighteen Hypnotic Illusions’ has been established.” The snowy white hound let out a relieved sigh.

“Arise!”

As he activated the formation, every part of the Swallow Mountain region, including the mountain peaks, the rivers, the lakes, and the wildernesses all began to summon the elemental power of heaven and earth. At the same time, the various formation-bases began to resonate with each other, joining together into an enormous combination formation. Every single part of the formation came together in a marvelous, perfect manner.

Soon, the entire hundred thousand kilometer region of Swallow Mountain seemed to have been transformed into a truly hypnotic, illusory area. Unless one had a talisman issued by the Ji clan, anyone who entered would immediately become forever lost within.

Rumble...

Serpentwing Lake. Ordinary mosquitoes were flying about, and some would often fly into Brightheart Island.

In wild areas, mosquitoes were extremely common. However, these were very ordinary mosquitoes; they couldn't even be considered monsters. Even Ning's divine sense could find nothing strange about them at all. However...the core of this ‘Eighteen Hypnotic Illusions’ formation was Serpentwing Lake. After the formation was activated, although its core location of Serpentwing Lake appeared as ordinary as usual...there was now no way at all for these ordinary mosquitoes to fly towards Brightheart Island.

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An ordinary commandery city of the Grand Xia. Within an estate.

Swoosh.

A skinny man whose eyes glowed with green light suddenly appeared within the courtyard. In the courtyard, there was a black-robed man who was leisurely sipping tea. The man had long, unbound black hair, and in his forehead there was a vertical slit.

“Master,” the skinny man said respectfully.

“Mm?” The long-haired, black-robed man looked over. “What is it??”

“The entire Swallow Mountain region has become covered by a strange illusory formation. Even my little ones are completely unable to penetrate it; they have become completely lost within it, and they aren't even able to return.” A hint of resentment was in the green, glowing eyes of the skinny man. Those mosquitoes were indeed extremely ordinary, but they were linked to his mind; this was no easy task!

“Oh?” The long-haired, black-robed man frowned. “An illusory formation? It seems as though Ji Ning has returned to Swallow Mountain to set down formations for it. It is fine; since the Ji clan wishes to establish Swallow Mountain as their foundation for flourishing, they will naturally need to maintain contact with the outside world. That means merchant caravans will be sent to and from it, and the Ji clan will guide them through the formations, ensuring them that they won’t be lost. You no longer have to worry about this matter any further; I will arrange for others to go keep a watch on things. Rest and build up your strength; I imagine that you won’t be able to recover your ‘little ones’.”

After all, even if someone else was sent into Swallow Mountain, they wouldn’t be able to recognize which of the mosquitoes were ‘special’.

“Alright,” the skinny man assented in a low voice, and then he departed.

The long-haired, black-robed man quickly began to give instructions a different subordinate. This seemingly ordinary commandery city of the Grand Xia was, in reality, one of the important bases for Bloodcloud Hall.

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Time flowed out.

Bloodcloud Hall used all sorts of tools to investigate. Mosquitoes, merchant caravans, scrying arts...even possession arts! They began to use every method they had to infiltrate Swallow Mountain!

But as each of the great formations of the Whitewater Hound began to be erected, especially in the Serpentwing Lake region, it became rare for even the Ji clansmen to encounter Ji Ning. Only Ji Truekeep, Granny Shadow, and a few others could go directly to see him. Even the likes of Ji Mo and the others had to first request a meeting. Thus, it became extremely hard for even Bloodcloud Hall to determine whether or not Ji Ning was actually staying at Serpentwing Lake.

“Master.”

The same ordinary commandery city as before. A white-haired elder said in a lowered voice, “Swallow Mountain is now surrounded by layers of grand formations. One of my clones was accompanying a merchant caravan in investigating the place, and the number of formations that I’ve already uncovered is enough to cause even Celestial Immortals to become lost after entering it. One has to use a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal to flee the place. Now, it seems, Swallow Mountain is completely under Ji Ning’s control. Within this region, Ning can use the formations to his advantage; killing him there is extremely unlikely. Just investigating the various formations, especially the dangerous ones, is essentially suicide. I imagine a large number of Loose Immortals would have to die in the process.”

“Right.” The long-haired, black-robed man nodded. “Since even you feel this way, Elder Chu, then it seems Swallow Mountain truly is not an appropriate place for assassination. Then...let us wait. Wait for Ji Ning to leave Swallow Mountain.”

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The very same day in which Elder Chu was making a report to Bloodcloud Hall. The skies above Brightheart Island was filled with plumes of snow.

“After tirelessly working day and night for forty-nine days, I’ve finally set up the first of the three supremely lethal formations.” The white-robed Uncle White let out a laugh, but his gaze was filled with exhaustion. “I really didn’t dare to be slightest bit careless. If I was even slightly careless, everything would’ve gone wrong, and most likely some of those ingredients would’ve been imploded and destroyed by elemental energy.”

“Sorry for the trouble, Uncle White.” Ning had an understanding of formations as well; he knew very well that even being able to merely set up these three supreme formations required one to have the ability of a grandmaster of formations. This was because even Ning felt his head grow dizzy when he simply looked at the arcane mysteries contained within the formations, to say nothing of actually laying them down.

“It wasn’t so bad. I’ve already set up one of the three supreme formations; the entire Swallow Mountain region is already stabilized. I can take it a bit slower for the other two,” Uncle White said with a smile.

As they were chatting.

“Ji Ning.” A voice rang out from far away.

Ning immediately arose and turned around; it was the voice of the clan leader, Ji Truekeep.

“Ji Ning, Immortal Fivecraze of the Black-White College has arrived.” Truekeep walked over, Immortal Fivecraze by his side.

“Big brother Fivecraze.” Ning immediately went forward to welcome him. Because he was now a Void-level Earth Immortal, according to the rules of the Black-White College, the two of them had to refer to each other as they would equals of the same generation.

“Ji Ning, your master has left his secluded meditation. He is preparing to undergo his Celestial Tribulation in nine days!” Immortal Fivecraze said solemnly.

“Nine days?!” Ning was instantly stunned.

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#### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 10: The Celestial Tribulation**

“This is your master’s own decision,” Immortal Fivecraze said.

Ji Ning immediately understood. The Celestial Tribulation was the most important event a cultivator would encounter in his life; generally speaking, they would choose to attempt it at a time whispered to them by their subconscious. Since his master had chosen to attempt it nine days hence, then that meant that his master would have the greatest chance of success nine days from now.

But even though that would be the ‘greatest chance’...the chance was still comparatively slim. After all, the Grand Xia world had countless Void-level Earth Immortals, but often more than a million years would pass without a single Celestial immortal arising! Only in a time like this, when the Three Realms were in a state of upheaval, did the Grand Xia see multiple Earth Immortals overcome the tribulation during the past twenty, thirty years. But even then, only a few had succeeded. Spread out across 3600 commanderies and four seas...the chances were still extremely low!”

“Very few people know that your master is attempting the Celestial Tribulation nine days from now. You can’t tell anyone,” Immortal Fivecraze instructed.

“I understand.” Ning looked at the nearby Ji Truekeep. Truekeep nodded. “Don’t worry; I won’t tell anyone. Right...the two of you can chat in private.” Truekeep knew exactly how major a matter this was, and so he immediately departed.

Within the hall, only Ji Ning, Immortal Fivecraze, and the Whitewater Hound were left.

“Your master is going to attempt the Celestial Tribulation, but his chances are less than one in ten thousand. The tribulation is simply too hard. Thus...we need to ensure that no one disturbs him,” Immortal Fivecraze said seriously. “That is why your master will definitely need protectors during his tribulation.”

“Protectors?” Ning nodded. “I will naturally serve as a guardian for my master.”

“I discussed this matter with your master already. This time, the only people protecting him shall be you and me; just the two of us,” Immortal Fivecraze said.

“Two?” Ning was surprised.

“Your master has gained new insights after perusing the Dao-repositories you brought back to the Black-White College. His power has advanced exquisitely!” Immortal Fivecraze said. “I have gained insights as well, and my power is comparable to a Loose Immortal who has lived for six or seven hundred thousand years. The other Loose Immortals of the Black-White College, by comparison, are a bit weaker.”

Ning nodded.

“Your Primaltwin was able to kill Loose Immortals all those years ago, when it was merely a peak Primal Daoist. Given your training speed, I imagine it must now be at the late Void-level; after thirty years, you are probably no weaker than me,” Immortal Fivecraze said with a laugh. “There’s no need to be modest at a time like this; the more powerful you are, the more confident your master will feel during his tribulation.”

Ning nodded. “I should...be no weaker than Immortal Northwalker was in the past!”

Immortal Fivecraze was instantly startled. It must be understood that the Immortal path grew increasingly difficult as one progressed through it, and that the chances of becoming a Celestial Immortal were extremely low. The chances of becoming a True Immortal or Empyrean God? That was even rare, even if one’s vision spanned the entirety of the Three Realms. Every single commandery had Loose Immortals at the five hundred thousand year power level, but there were very few in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty who were at the level of a million year old Loose Immortal. As for Loose Immortals who had lived for millions of years...it was rare for the entire Grand Xia Dynasty to have a single such person!

“You?” Immortal Fivecraze could hardly believe it.

“My child Ning has long ago mastered the full nine stances of the [Three-Foot Sword]. He’s even improved on it,” the nearby Whitewater Hound said.

“Excellent!” A look of wild joy appeared on Immortal Fivecraze’s face. He said jubilantly, “Wonderful, wonderful, absolutely wonderful! Ji Ning, in terms of sword-arts alone, you are probably the most powerful figure our Black-White College has ever seen!”

Immortal Fivecraze sighed in absolute amazement.

This Ji Ning who stood before him...

He himself was like a sword! Swords were objects that were used to charge forward, to cut with incomparable sharpness! Ji Ning was like a sword who chopped through all the bushes and thorns that lay in his path. Years ago, as a youth, he had become the champion of the entire Conclave of Immortal Destiny! After the past thirty-plus years...he had mastered and even perfected the [Three-Foot Sword] of Immortal Northwalker, customizing it for his own use!

What sort of talent was this? After a few more decades or a century, how powerful would he become?

“The sword is my body.”

“The sword is my life.”

“The sword is my path.”

Immortal Fivecraze nodded as he looked at Ning. “When every Sword Immortal embarks on the Dao of the Sword, they will understand their own sword-hearts and these principles. But understanding is easy; action is hard! There are very, very few who can truly reach this level, and in this vast world, countless Sword Immortals have fallen. I can sense, however, the towering sword-intent radiating from you, a sword-heart that is simply inconceivable. You truly were born to be a Sword Immortal.”

In truth, many years ago, the likes of Lu Dongbin had already felt certain that Ning was born to be a peerless Sword Immortal.

The reason for his current success was partially because of his experiences from his past life, but also because of his parents in this life.

His father had given him a sword.

His mother had given him a heart.

.....

After chatting for a short while, Ning asked, “Is master in a rush? If he isn’t in a rush, I’ll stay one more day here at Serpentwing Lake; I’ll reunite with all of you at the Black-White College tomorrow.”

“We are planning to leave the Black-White College in three days and head to the chosen tribulation area,” Immortal Fivecraze said. “We have a day to spare. You can make your preparations here at Serpentwing Lake.”

“What will be the tribulation area?” Ning couldn’t help but ask.

“That is a secret for now,” Immortal Fivecraze said. “Once your master’s enemies learn of it, they will immediately head to that location to attempt to ruin your master’s tribulation. Thus, the tribulation area

is something which only your master knows at present. Even I don't know. After we head arrive there, we shall know."

Ning laughed. "That's for the best. If only master himself knows, there's no fear of it leaking."

"Alright. Make your preparations; I'm leaving now." Immortal Fivecraze left right away.

Within the hall.

Soon, Little Qing was called back by Ji Ning. Within the courtyard was Ji Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing.

"Master is about to undergo his Celestial Tribulation. This matter is extremely important; we can't be reckless in preparing for it," Ning said with absolute solemnity. "That's why both I and Uncle White are leaving...and we'll leave Swallow Mountain in your hands, Little Qing."

The formations of Swallow Mountain were too numerous and too complicated.

Even those lower-class formations required experts who were at least at the Primal Daoist level to completely control them. But right now, aside from Ning, the most powerful members of the Ji clan were only at the Wanxiang stage! As for the supreme formations...just activating them would require the power of a Void-level Earth Immortal, but there was no way Ning would teach the secrets of these formations to the monsters of the Witchriver Immortal Estate.

"Actually, I really want to go as well. The Celestial Tribulation...I've never even..." Little Qing stopped midway through her words as Ning gave her a look.

"Master, I know what really matters," Little Qing hurriedly said with a laugh.

"Uncle White, Little Qing...both of you, hurry up and raise your power to the late Void-level today," Ning said. "These two jade bottles each contain 2.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence."

Ning trained in the [Darknorth Sutra], which allowed one to train all the way to the Daofather level, and yet his Primaltwin had only needed 2.5 million kilograms to go from the peak Primal stage to the late Void-level. Uncle White and Little Qing had both already reached the early Void-level; 2.5 million kilograms of liquefied elemental essence would be more than enough to let them reach the late Void-level."

"Remember, don't train to the peak of the Void-level, no matter what," Ning warned.

"Don't worry. We aren't anywhere close to being prepared for the Celestial Tribulation."

.....

While Uncle White and Little Qing trained, Ning's true body entered the Still Room of the underwater estate. For the sake of his master's tribulation, Ning was going to raise his power to the highest level possible as well! Fortunately, he had acquired 15 million kilograms at the main headquarters of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain; although he had spent some of it to purchase a few treasures, he still had more than ten million kilograms left!

The handsome, delicate-looking fur-clad youth seated himself atop the netherwater jade bed.

In front of him was a tiny jade bottle.

“Begin.”

A torrent of liquefied elemental essence flooded out from the jade bottle, forming an awe-inspiring lake within the Still Room. Around Ning, a dark vortex appeared, and the limitless amount of essence began to disappear as it drew near the dark vortex, having been sucked into Ning’s Zifu Region.

Within the Zifu Region.

His golden lotus, after absorbing an enormous amount of essence, began to shudder and grow out from within that scorching sea of Primal Fire. The golden lotus was constantly growing taller, and both its petals and its stem began to quickly increase in thickness. The elemental ki within the golden lotus grew increasingly pure as well, so pure that it would cause one’s heart to tremble. At the same time, that adorable little lotus seedpod at the very top of the golden lotus began to slowly increase in size, and within the heart of the lotus seedpod, an unripe lotus seed took form.

“The late Void level!” Everything came to a halt.

The now-enormous golden lotus swayed within the Primal Fire that blazed atop the back of the continent-sized Turtle-Snake. This golden lotus was now the absolute most dazzling ‘location’ within the entire Zifu region.

Upon reaching the late Void level, the ‘Goldlotus Primal’ was already extremely powerful; it was just a hair away from complete perfection.

The next day.

Ning, Uncle White, and Little Qing gathered together for a meal. They had all increased in power to the late Void-level the previous night. After the meal, Little Qing was left behind to protect Serpentwing Lake, while Ning led Uncle White towards the Black-White College.

.....

The Black-White College. Immortal Diancai’s abode.

“Ji Ning, you came.” The black-robed Immortal Diancai was seated in the lotus position atop a jade bed, a calm look on his face. “Sit.”

Next to him was a prayer mat, seated atop which was Immortal Fivecraze.

Ning nodded, then sat down on another prayer mat while the Whitewater Hound lay down behind Ning.

“I heard senior apprentice-brother Fivecraze say that you’ve already mastered the complete nine stances of the [Three-Foot Sword], and that you have perfected it?” Immortal Diancai said with a laugh.

“Yes.” Ning nodded.

Immortal Diancai smiled. “Good. With you having reached such a level in the sword...even if I fail my tribulation, I’ll still feel satisfied.”

“Master, how can you say such things?” Ning said frantically.

“I’m just making conversation. It seems you aren’t even as calm about this as I am,” Immortal Diancai said.

Ning was silent.

He was indeed nervous; after all, the chances of success were simply far, far too low. If his master were to fail...

Immortal Diancai, seeing this, simply laughed. He understood Ning’s temperament very well; Ning was a passionate man who cared deeply about his feelings and his relationships! For the sake of his relationships, he could even give up his life! It was precisely because he had come to understand Ning’s personality over their many years of knowing each other that Immortal Diancai felt so extremely fond of this disciple of his. That was why he treated him with such sincerity.

“This Whitewater Hound is coming as well?” Immortal Diancai asked.

Ning nodded. “Master, don’t underestimate Uncle White. He is extremely talented in formations, and when I went to study from my master, Uncle White learned some extremely profound formations as well; he can be described as a grandmaster of formations. I wouldn’t dare proclaim him as being the best in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty...but here within Stillwater Commandery at least, he would be one of the top two.”

“Oh?” Both Immortal Diancai and Immortal Fivecraze revealed looks of delight.

Anyone who dared refer to himself as a grandmaster of formations would definitely be an extraordinary person.

Ning laughed confidently. In terms of the Dao of Formations, Uncle White was indeed a grandmaster. In addition, however, Uncle White knew how to set up some extremely rare and exceedingly powerful formations, and so even other grandmasters of formations would lose to him in a competition of formations! That supremely ferocious formation that he had set up around Swallow Mountain, for example; most likely, there were extremely few people in the entire Grand Xia Dynasty who could set up such a powerful formation.

But of course, the Grand Xia Dynasty definitely had individuals who were superior to Uncle White in formations; for example, that formation surrounding the imperial palace of the Grand Xia was something that only a truly major power could set up! It was several levels higher in power than the formations around Swallow Mountain.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 11: Four Great Tribulations**

“Since you’ve arrived, Ji Ning, that means we are all present. Let’s head out tonight to the tribulation area, then,” Immortal Diancai said.

Ning and Immortal Fivecraze exchanged a glance, then both nodded. “Fine. We’ll head out tonight.”

This tribulation had to be kept top-secret. Ning and the others didn’t dare be even the slightest bit careless. Even during a normal situation, one would have to be extremely careful in attempting the



Celestial Tribulation, but given that the Three Realms were currently in a state of chaos...Ning and the others naturally had to be even more careful than normal.

Late night.

Immortal Diancai, Immortal Fivecraze, Ji Ning, and the Whitewater Hound stealthily used a spatial teleport to depart from Stillwater City.

.....

In the air above an awe-inspiringly vast sea, a spatial ripple suddenly appeared. Three human figures accompanied by a large, snowy white hound appeared from within the ripple.

“Where are we?” Ning looked at the surrounding area. Because it had been his master, Immortal Diancai, who had used the spatial teleport, not even Ning knew where they were exactly.

“The great Darknorth Sea,” Immortal Diancai said. “The location that I’ve chosen for my tribulation is a minor world which I discovered by accident when I was adventuring through the Darknorth Sea as a child. This minor world was extremely well-hidden, and it is extremely well-suited for attempting the tribulation. Follow me!”

Clouds instantly appeared around them as Immortal Diancai used a technique to lead Ning, Immortal Fivecraze, and the Whitewater Hound in quickly flying forward. Soon, an island appeared in the distance. The island was scorchingly hot, as there was a live volcano atop it.

“The entrance to that minor world is within the volcano on that island.” Immortal Diancai led the group to fly into the air above the island, then charged straight into the mouth of the volcano.

The region within the volcano was extremely strange. A large amount of lava was bubbling and frothing about.

Immortal Diancai quietly glanced at one corner of it, a complicated look in his eyes. He said softly, “In my youth, I was young and arrogant; I roamed the world in a fearless, untamed manner. And now, I am about to attempt my tribulation...life truly is a marvelous, strange thing.”

Ning and Immortal Fivecraze could both sense that Immortal Diancai’s mood seemed rather off.

“For this tribulation...if I fail, I shall die!” Immortal Diancai said softly. “If I die...then I’ll reunite with you, junior apprentice-sister.”

Deep within his memory...

There was a young, carefree, brilliant genius youth; Immortal Diancai, the number one peerless genius of his generation within the Black-White College.

With him was a reincarnated Immortal maiden who was known as Fairy Drizzlerain, and who had countless admirers and pursuers.

They adventured together, shoulder-to-shoulder, experiencing life-and-death events together. They had roamed through countless places, entering mountain ranges and passing through seas. And then, one day, they had encountered an ancient Primal-level Fiendgod of fire. The ancient Fiendgod had emerged

from within the lava...and their parting on that day truly became an eternal one. The flames of the Fiendgod caused his junior apprentice-sister's soul to be shattered...

"Master." Ning was shocked. His master was actually planning to die if he failed?

It must be understood that the Celestial Tribulation was extremely dangerous; even the Goldlotus Primal would be heavily wounded. Some would realize halfway through the tribulation that they wouldn't be able to succeed, and so they would give up, choosing to become a Loose Immortal. Because the amount of damage sustained by each person's Goldlotus Primal was different, the purity of the elemental ki would vary amongst Loose Immortals. Formidable ones were comparable to peak Void-level Earth Immortals, while weaker ones might only have elemental ki comparable to early-stage Void-level Earth Immortals.

Some Earth Immortals, however, would go welcome the tribulation with the intent of rather dying to it than giving up!

This did indeed give someone a significantly higher chance of overcoming the Celestial Tribulation. But at the very end, if they failed...then their souls would be shattered!

"You still haven't forgotten." Immortal Fivecraze shook his head.

"Forget? Why should I forget? How could I bear to forget?" Immortal Diancai replied softly.

Ning said, "Master, leave yourself a sliver of a chance, so that you can have a chance at reincarnation. If you fail in this life, you might succeed in the next one."

"No need to try and dissuade me." Immortal Diancai shook his head. "My decision is made. Let's go. Let's go inside."

Whoosh!

The lava below them suddenly parted as Immortal Diancai led them deeper downwards. At the very deepest part, a winding tunnel suddenly appeared. Immortal Diancai led them through the tunnel in an extremely familiar manner, and a dark cave soon appeared before them.

"Go in." Immortal Diancai led Ji Ning and the others to fly into the black cave.

.....

This was a world that was filled with an infinite aura of death. Even the mountains had turned black, while the earth itself was a sickly yellow. Not a single hint of green could be seen, and no ordinary grass lived here. This world only had a strange type of vegetation that was pitch-black and covered by spikes.

Whoosh...

The side of a large mountain began to ripple and shake. Immortal Diancai, Immortal Fivecraze, Ji Ning, and the Whitewater Hound flew out from within it.

"Such a strong aura of death?" Immortal Fivecraze frowned as he stared at the surrounding area. "What happened to this minor world? Logically speaking, even if it suffered some sort of disaster, given the power of the Solar Star and the Lunar Star, it should have eventually recovered."

“This was a world where a Fiendgod of fire hid within,” Immortal Diancai said. “The Fiendgod caused this minor world to become completely filled with lava, causing all the living creatures within it to perish. Although that Fiendgod is now dead, for this minor world to recover...a very long period of time will be needed.”

Ning nodded.

It was easy to ruin a minor world, but in order for it to recover, a million years would be needed or perhaps even longer. Only then would new vegetation arise and new creatures and birds be born.

“This minor world is extremely well-hidden, and it has no living creatures; I don’t have to worry about any ordinary life-forms being killed as collateral damage. It is very well-suited for my tribulation attempt,” Immortal Diancai said. “In a normal situation...chances of being discovered while undergoing a tribulation in such a well-hidden place should be very low. However, now that the entire Grand Xia world is in a state of chaos...I’ve heard that quite a few Void-level Earth Immortals have suffered attacks during their tribulations of late.”

“Right. All Void-level Earth Immortals choose extremely well-hidden places for their tribulations...but they were still discovered and assaulted,” Immortal Fivecraze agreed somberly. “We have to be careful.”

“Don’t worry, Master. Leave everything to me and big brother Fivecraze,” Ning promised solemnly.

“Alright.” Immortal Diancai nodded, then began to fly far away. Ji Ning, Immortal Fivecraze, and Uncle White hurriedly flew after him.

After flying for a period of time.

Immortal Diancai descended upon a wide area that had been completely scorched black. He then sat down in the lotus position...and began to wait quietly.

“After eight days, the Celestial Tribulation shall descend. Everything will be up to your master, then.” Immortal Fivecraze was worried.

“He will have to rely on himself.” Ning was worried, too.

When the Celestial Tribulation descended, all outside sources of help were forbidden.

Even Daofathers of the Great Firmament wouldn’t dare to intervene and assist others in their tribulations. If anyone tried to help someone else defeat a Celestial Tribulation...then the tribulation would instantly unleash a divine punishment upon the offender, even if the offender was a Daofather. If the Daofather immediately stopped, that was one thing, but if he tried to continue and resist...even the Daofather would be annihilated by the divine punishment!

Thus, from ancient days till now, no one ever dared to help someone else resist a Celestial Tribulation.

In addition...

Even setting up formations was considered ‘outside help’. If Immortal Diancai himself had been the one to set up the formations, that wouldn’t be as much of an issue! At most, the formation would be destroyed and the power of the Celestial Tribulation would be increased. But if someone else, such as

Uncle White or Ji Ning, was in control of the formation...then the two of them would suffer divine punishment!

This was the reason why Ning hadn't invited his master to go to Swallow Mountain for the tribulation.

There were far too many places in the world with extremely formidable formations. The headquarters of powerful sects all contained exceedingly mighty formations; for example, the formation within the imperial citadel of the Grand Xia was something which a major power had set up. If a Void-level Earth Immortal could temporarily borrow the strength of a formation to fight the Celestial Tribulation, then overcoming it would become far too simple!

Thus...

All sources of outside help were completely forbidden! The Celestial Tribulation was the test which all Immortal cultivators faced on their Immortal path! Even experts in the Dao of Formations such as Uncle White would only be permitted to use magic treasure formations, such as the Fuxi Staff Formation. When the Celestial Tribulation truly descended, they would be allowed to use the Fuxi Staff Formation to defend against it.

The [Heavenraker] and the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] were all considered types of sword-formations.

However, formations that were locked onto one location and which were set up using precious ingredients were considered outside sources of help! [Heavenraker], the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], and the Fuxi Staff Formation, however, were all considered part of one's own strength.

"Master." Ning suddenly walked over.

"Yes?" Immortal Diancai raised his head to look towards Ji Ning.

"Master, I have five top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords. If you use them, your chances of overcoming the Celestial Tribulation shall be greater." Ning willed it, and five pitch-black Immortal swords suddenly appeared out of nowhere to hover next to him. These were the Heavenraker Immortal swords. Ning had already dispersed his elemental ki from within them; they had become ownerless items now.

Immortal Diancai was stunned. "Five top-grade Immortal ranked swords?"

"Top-grade Immortal-ranked...and five of them?" Immortal Fivecraze revealed a look of crazed joy as well. "Wonderful! Ji Ning, you truly have been hiding some incredible secrets."

Ning laughed.

Items at the level of a top-grade Immortal-ranked flying sword could no longer simply be purchased; they had to be traded for! Five such swords, and all from the same source...they were far more valuable than the combined value of all of the Immortal swords Ning had acquired from killing the monster kings and that vile Patriarch. These were items from the underwater estate's Treasure Hall; they were naturally exceptional!

"Take them," Immortal Fivecraze said with a chortle. "Your disciple is telling you to use them; are you going to be wishy-washy about it?"

“Fine.” Immortal Diancai’s aura instantly changed. “With these five top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords, my chances of overcoming the Celestial Tribulation shall be much greater...at least for the first three tribulations.”

The Celestial Tribulation was divided into a total of four great tribulations.

They were the wind tribulation, the fire tribulation, the thunder tribulation, and the demonheart tribulation!

The first three could be blocked, but they would grow increasingly powerful and terrifying; the vast majority of Void-level Earth Immortals would perish over the course of the first three tribulations. The thunder tribulation in particular...bolts of divine lightning would crash down, completely disintegrating the bodies of many Void-level Earth Immortals. The Goldlotus Primal would be heavily injured by the slamming thunderbolts, and many were so terrified that they would give up and flee, becoming Loose Immortals. In the past, Immortal Juhua had also failed during the thunder tribulation...and it was because he didn’t have any good Immortal-ranked magic treasures!

If he had top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures, given Immortal Juhua’s power and Dao-heart, he might’ve become a Celestial Immortal.

“Right. Your chances are now much greater...but you still need to be careful. The Celestial Tribulation...magic treasures are only one part of your power. When iron is being forged, it has to rely on its own innate hardness. The Celestial Tribulation primarily tests one’s personal power,” Immortal Fivecraze said seriously.

“I understand.” Immortal Diancai nodded.

Even many disciples of True Immortals or Empyrean Gods would fail during their tribulation. Generally speaking, disciples of True Immortals or Empyrean Gods all had top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures, and yet many still failed. Clearly, the Celestial Tribulation was different for each person! The more monstrously talented someone was, the more powerful one was, the more ridiculously terrifying the Celestial Tribulation would be.

.....

One day after another went by

Immortal Diancai familiarized himself with the Heavenraker swords, then began to wait quietly. Ji Ning, Immortal Fivecraze, and the Whitewater Hound also quietly stood to one side, standing guard for him.

And finally...

Whoosh...

Suddenly, a gentle wind began to blow, rustling Immortal Diancai’s Daoist robes.

Immortal Diancai opened his eyes. “Senior apprentice-brother Fivecraze, Ji Ning, brother White...stand guard for me. My Celestial Tribulation has begun.”

Ning and the others could sense that the nearby wind was beginning to slowly grow increasingly fierce. They couldn’t help but nervously look towards the seated Immortal Diancai.

## The Desolate Era

### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 12: Celestial Immortal Body**

Whoosh...

The wild wind that had suddenly arose in this world of death came from every direction. All the winds surged towards Immortal Diancai's direction, and Ji Ning, Immortal Fivecraze, and the Whitewater Hound could all sense how powerful this wind was. However, they were able to resist it by using just a bit of elemental ki.

The closer the wind moved towards Immortal Diancai, the more powerful it became. The wind gathered from all corners of the world, slowly merging into an azure windblade. By the time this azure windblade actually flew towards Immortal Diancai, it had turned such a deep azure color that it could almost be described as a black windblade.

Just staring at it caused Ning and the others to feel shocked.

"Open."

The black-robed Immortal Diancai stood there, the five Heavenraker Immortal swords floating around him, swiveling. It was as though five rainbows were swirling around him. Although the terrifyingly powerful black windblades chopped repeatedly towards him, all the strikes were blocked.

"Junior apprentice-brother Diancai's sword-arts have already risen to such a level?" Immortal Fivecraze revealed a look of delight. "Ji Ning, I had an idea as to what level your master's sword-arts had reached...but he is even more powerful than I had expected! Long ago, I came to the conclusion that junior apprentice-brother Diancai had the highest chance amongst us of becoming a Celestial Immortal, and back then his sword-arts were already at an astonishing level. After adventuring for forty years, and after receiving your Dao-repository, his sword-arts...they are not one whit inferior to Immortal Northwalker's. He truly does have a chance to become a Celestial Immortal!"

"Right." Ning was filled with eagerness as well.

Everything else aside, the 'Five Elements Sword-Intent' which his master had just displayed was enough to let Ning know that his master's sword-arts were most likely on a level comparable to his own. His master truly lived up to his reputation as the peerless genius of the Black-White College with the highest chances of becoming a Celestial Immortal.

.....

The savage black windblades hammered repeatedly against the five rainbows of light, causing even the surrounding space to crack and fracture.

Rumble...

All of the black windblades suddenly vanished. The world actually turned completely calm and tranquil again...but then yet another series of winds began to appear. The winds stabbed like sharp needles...and a series of needle-like spikes began to appear in midair. The thousands of spikes all gleamed with golden light as they stabbed towards the five Immortal swords which were in the form of five rainbows of light.

.....

Savage. Insidious. Soft. Icy. Blazing...

All sorts of wind came in an unending flow. In fact, a total of twelve types of skywind appeared as well!

Suddenly, the surrounding area once more turned calm. For a long period of time, no further gusts of wind appeared.

“Not good.” Immortal Fivecraze was startled. “The final part of the wind tribulation has begun.”

Ning was nervous and restless as well. He looked anxiously towards his master, standing there in the distance.

The Celestial Tribulation consisted of four great tribulations; the wind tribulation, the fire tribulation, the thunder tribulation, and the demonheart tribulation. The wind tribulation...it first consisted of ordinary wind, then types of skywind of different power, and then finally the most terrifying of all, the Celestial Immortal Wind. This Celestial Immortal Wind was invisible and formless; it was hard to locate within the Three Realms, and would only appear during the Celestial Tribulation.

No magic treasures were capable of blocking the Celestial Immortal Wind; it would form directly in front of the tribulant's body, then surge in through the head. Nothing, not even Daoist robes, would be able to block the penetrating power of this wind in the slightest!

After surging in through the head, it would naturally disperse and tear through the vital organs.

What it tested was a person's Dao-heart. If one's Dao-heart was weak, then once the Celestial Immortal Wind surged in through the head, their body would most likely instantly melt and transform into dust, allowing only the Goldlotus Primal to survive and flee. More than 99% of Void-level Earth Immortals would be defeated by the Celestial Immortal Wind.

If one's Dao-heart was strong and stable enough, then the trial of the Celestial Immortal Wind would actually be a transformatative baptism, allowing the tribulant to slowly begin to develop a Celestial Immortal Body.

“Master, you have to hold on,” Ning said, extremely worried.

“Hold on.” Immortal Fivecraze stared at him as well.

Immortal Diancai stood there by himself, surrounded by those five pitch-black Immortal swords. He opened his eyes, revealing a smile as he looked towards Ning and Immortal Fivecraze. “The wind tribulation is over.”

“Good.” Immortal Fivecraze laughed loudly, “I just knew that your Dao-heart had to be strong, junior apprentice-brother! The wind tribulation was unable to do anything to you at all. Hurry up and replenish your elemental ki and prepare for the next tribulation, the fire tribulation!”

Ning let out a sigh of relief as well.

At least the first tribulation had been overcome.

In truth, given the Dao-heart which his master normally displayed, Ning should have felt quite confident in him. However, right before they entered this minor world, his master's emotions had been disturbed,

and he had even spoken of reuniting with his deceased junior apprentice-sister. Ning had been very worried about the effects of this former relationship on his master's heart. Once one's Dao-heart became even slightly unstable, then one's body would quickly be transformed into dust.

The Celestial Tribulation was truly dangerous. One couldn't make a single error in it; a single error would represent a complete failure!

.....

Ning, Immortal Fivecraze, and Uncle White kept their divine senses spread as they stood vigilant guard for Immortal Diancai, whom they continued to watch.

Roughly an hour after the wind tribulation ended.

Rumbling red clouds suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the skies; it was as though a cloud created from an enormous ball of flames had appeared.

"The fire tribulation has arrived." Ning and Immortal Fivecraze both watched nervously.

The fire tribulation wasn't as insidious as the wind tribulation, but it was even more savage and ferocious! The power of those flames...if a Void-level Earth Immortal slipped for a single instant, then his body would instantly be charred into ash.

The fiery clouds in the skies slowly descended. Instantly, the temperature of the surrounding area began to rise, and the air itself seemed to glow with a blurry red light.

Crackle crackle crackle...

The ground itself began to turn soft. It began to transform into lava and began to bubble and froth.

Immortal Diancai began to levitate into the air. "Go!" Immortal Diancai pointed with his finger, and one of the five Heavenraker swords actually flew out, transforming into a giant serpent of fire that flew through the skies, stabbing straight towards the enormous fiery cloud, slashing through it and causing it to grow chaotic and disordered. However, the Heavenraker sword was quickly knocked flying backwards.

Instantly, the fiery cloud began to drop at an even faster pace. Soon, it completely enveloped Immortal Diancai within it.

Hiss hiss hiss...

The temperature had risen to a terrifying level, and even the lava within the region had been completely incinerated and transformed into nothingness. Even the stones in the distant region where Ning and the others were watching had been transformed into lava. From this, one could tell how terrifying the temperature was.

Rumble...whoosh...crackle...

Streaks of skyfire could vaguely be seen blazing from within the fiery cloud. There was golden skyfire, black skyfire, green skyfire, and even skyfire that seemed to flash like the stars...

"The various types of skyfire have descended." Ning and Immortal Fivecraze both watched nervously.



Boom!

Suddenly...

The entire fiery cloud began to converge and coalesce around a single central point. Suddenly, a human-shaped figure appeared from within it, protected by five Immortal swords. The fiery cloud had transformed into a blazing light that was completely insubstantial. The light passed through the blocking Immortal swords, flying straight into the human-shaped figure's body.

For a moment, the entire world turned silent. The surrounding temperature began to drop at a rapid pace. Immortal Diancai, however, emanated a fiery light as he hovered there in the skies. Ning stared at his master; his master was emanating so much fiery light, he seemed to be made out of flames himself.

"The final type of fire within the fire tribulation...the Celestial Immortal Fire," Immortal Fivecraze said worriedly.

A Celestial Immortal Body had to be tempered by wind, fire, and lightning. Only afterwards could the Celestial Immortal Body be forged. Then, after undergoing the trial of the demonheart tribulation, the Celestial Immortal's Dao-heart would be formed.

Only after all tribulations were passed would one become a carefree, unbound Celestial Immortal!

"He overcame it." The distant Ning revealed a look of joy on his face. He saw that the distant Immortal Diancai's body was beginning to slowly turn a duller color as he slowly returned to normal.

Immortal Diancai landed. He immediately sat down in the lotus position, quietly adjusting his energy levels and recovering his elemental ki.

"The fire tribulation is over. Next comes the most dangerous tribulation, the thunder tribulation!" Immortal Fivecraze murmured softly.

"Right. The thunder tribulation." Ning's heart clenched as well.

Of the four great tribulations, the final demonheart tribulation was the strangest tribulation. But the thunder tribulation was the most terrifying one!

The thunder tribulation was the most brutal one of all. Layers of lightning bolts would descend, continuously rising in power. Even past figures like Immortal Juhua and Immortal Northwalker had eventually been destroyed by the power of the continuous, unending thunderbolts, resulting in their Goldlotus Primals being damaged and them fleeing to become Loose Immortals. The thunder tribulation was an absolute nightmare! The vast majority of peerless geniuses would end up perishing in the face of this tribulation. There were absolutely no tricks that could be used to block the thunderbolts; each time a bolt descended, you had to block it head-on. If you couldn't? You'd be finished!

Simple as that!

"I wonder how many bolts of thunder will fall." Immortal Fivecraze was worried.

"Master has an extremely high level in sword-arts. His talent is very high, and he has five top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords. I imagine there will be quite a few," Ning said worriedly as well.

The thunder tribulation...some Earth Immortals might only encounter nine bolts of thunder. Others, however, might meet with eighteen, twenty-seven, or thirty-six bolts...and according to the stories, the highest number possible was eighty-one bolts!

The power of the skythunder would be linked to many factors; in fact, it was also linked to karmic merit. Still, generally speaking, Ki Refiners would never suffer the legendary 'eighty-one bolt skythunder tribulation!' Generally speaking, only Fiendgod Body Refiners would encounter it while undergoing their tribulation. Many monstrously powerful Void-level Fiendgod Body Refiners would be hammered to death by the consecutive lightning bolts!

Ning knew very well that although he had already trained in the third stage of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], if he were to encounter the eighty-one bolts of lightning, he would definitely be crushed into nothingness by the power of those bolts!

"I hope he has less than 36 bolts," Immortal Fivecraze whispered.

"Right." Ning nodded gently as well.

Ki Refiners were innately weaker than Fiendgod Body Refiners when it came to withstanding skythunder. Generally speaking, it would be very hard for them to succeed if there were more than 36 bolts.

.....

Another hour passed.

Two enormous stormclouds suddenly appeared out of nowhere from within the calm skies. These two stormclouds converged rapidly from different directions, completely blotting out the sun as they drew close to each other. Instantly, electric streaks of lightning began to crackle between the two massive clouds. The awe-inspiring power from within them caused Ning, Immortal Fivecraze, and the Whitewater Hound to all feel trepidation.

Slowly, the two massive stormclouds began to merge, and as they combined to form a single supermassive stormcloud, the supermassive stormcloud began to rotate. Soon, the thunder tribulation stormcloud had transformed into a vortex of lightning and clouds.

"What an enormous thunder tribulation cloud." Immortal Fivecraze's face suddenly changed.

"What's wrong?" Ning asked, worried.

"When I faced my tribulation, it was this thunder tribulation which defeated me. But...the thunder tribulation cloud I faced wasn't this big," Immortal Fivecraze said worriedly.

"What?! How many bolts of thunder were you up against during your thunder tribulation?" Ning asked.

"I don't know. However, the twenty-fifth bolt of skythunder shattered my magic treasures and blew apart my body. I thus chose to give up and flee," Immortal Fivecraze said. "Junior apprentice-brother Diancai will definitely face far more bolts of skythunder than I did."

Just as his words came out...

BOOM!

Ning could hear a thunderous noise in his ears as an absolutely dazzling bolt of lightning suddenly streaked down from the lightning-cloud vortex in the skies, slamming directly downwards towards Immortal Diancai.

### The Desolate Era

#### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 13: My Master**

Immortal Diancai stood there on the ground. His head raised, he stared at the lightning-cloud vortex, those five pitch-black Heavenraker swords swirling around him. When that first bolt of skythunder fell down from the skies...

“Go!” Immortal Diancai pointed. Instantly, one of the five Heavenraker swords shot out. It seemed to have transformed into an enormous mountain peak, carrying incomparable weight and power behind it as it went forth to welcome the bolt of lightning.

BOOM!

An enormous collision sound. The Heavenraker Immortal sword, as stable as a mountain, just trembled for a moment, whereas the bolt of skythunder was completely dispersed.

“The first bolt of skythunder is the weakest; even the most ordinary of Void-level Earth Immortals can withstand it. Given junior apprentice-brother Diancai’s power and the fact that he has five top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords...he will probably only begin to find it taxing when he reaches the twenty-seventh bolt of skythunder,” Immortal Fivecraze said.

“Mm.” Ning nodded in agreement. Immortal Fivecraze had been defeated by the twenty-fifth bolt; if he had top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords back then, he probably would’ve been able to make it past the twenty-seventh as well.

Skythunder...every nine bolts represented a different level of power.

The first nine bolts were weak. Eighteen bolts were stronger. But twenty-seven bolts, thirty-six bolts...every nine bolts represented an increase in lethality. The legendary eighty-one bolts of skythunder...even the thought of them was enough to terrify.

BOOM! BOOM!

Skythunder exploded forth with wild fury. One bolt after another came crashing down. Immortal Diancai was able to use a single one of his top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords to block all of the first eighteen bolts, causing a hint of joy to appear on his face. Although he knew in theory how powerful these swords were, only now did he truly understand how tremendously helpful these top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords were during the terrifying thunder tribulation!

BOOM! The nineteenth bolt of thunder was more savage than the last, and it came down even faster. It seemed to carry annihilating power within it; it was clearly on a higher level of power than the previous bolts.

That single Heavenraker sword once more flew up to greet it, still as stable and weighty as a mountain.

BANG!

The illusory mountain around the Heavenraker sword collapsed, and the sword itself was knocked downwards. The remaining force of the skythunder continued to crash down towards Immortal Diancai, but Immortal Diancai didn't panic in the slightest. He just let out a low growl, and instantly three of the four remaining Immortal swords around him flew upwards, glowing with golden light, watery light, and earthen light.

The three Heavenraker swords formed into a tripartite formation, effortlessly blocking the remaining power of the skythunder.

"Your master has only used his Tripartite Sword Formation," Immortal Fivecraze said. "Your master was exceedingly gifted, and many years ago he reached the Dao Realm level in three mastered Dao-Paths. He's also embarked on the path of a Sword Immortal. He originally only used three Immortal swords, and the technique he used the most often was this Tripartite Sword Formation. However, after training for so many more years, he's gained even more insights and has thus developed the Five Elements Sword."

Ning nodded slightly. Indeed. After his master switched to using three Immortal swords, his power seemed to increase dramatically. He was able to withstand one bolt of lightning after another, even overcoming the twenty-fifth bolt which had done in Immortal Fivecraze. He was able to persist all the way through the twenty-seventh bolt.

"It's time for another increase in power," Immortal Fivecraze said with concern.

Twenty-seven bolts...this represented the end of the first three nine-sets.

Thirty-six would represent the end of the fourth nine-set!

As the twenty-eighth bolt came crashing down, the Tripartite Sword Formation was suddenly pressed downwards...but it was still able to withstand the bolt. But then came the twenty-ninth, the thirtieth bolts...the power of the skythunder was slowly increasing, and the Tripartite Sword Formation was beginning to crumble. By the time of the thirty-sixth bolt of skythunder, Immortal Diancai let out a low growl. Instantly, all five of the Heavenraker swords flew upwards to welcome this bolt.

Rumble...

As the five Heavenraker swords flew upwards, they formed into the illusion of five massive mountains in the sky, each of a different color. The five Immortal swords combined their power, becoming incomparably weighty and solid as they effortlessly deflected the thirty-sixth bolt of skythunder as well.

"Fine treasures. A fine sword-art!" Immortal Fivecraze said excitedly.

"Even the thirty-sixth bolt was blocked." Ning revealed a look of excitement as well...but immediately afterwards, his face changed. This was because an even more terrifyingly powerful bolt of lightning was beginning to descend from the vortex of lightning.

"What?! Can it be that your master's tribulation involves forty-five bolts?!" Immortal Fivecraze felt shocked.

Ning's face turned solemn as well. Ki Refiners couldn't be the slightest bit overconfident in facing their tribulations...because even a tiny unblocked fraction of the thunderbolt would be enough to completely blow apart their bodies! Fiendgod Body Refiners, by contrast, would generally be able to use their bodies to withstand a small amount of remnant power from the thunderbolts.

Thus...for many, thirty-six thunderbolts represented a plateau, the conclusion of the fourth nine-set. Ki Refiners generally had a chance to survive the first four sets...but after that, chances would grow dim!

.....

The thirty-seventh bolt of skythunder was clearly far more powerful than the previous bolt. Ning could sense the invisible pressure and power of the bolt just by looking at it. The power of this bolt of skythunder was at the level of a Celestial Immortal already!

Rumble...

From within the five enormous illusory mountains, the five Immortal swords managed to block this bolt of skythunder, but they were pushed down strongly in the process.

"Such power." Immortal Diancai's face changed as well, but his expression remained cold and his gaze remained resolute.

He wasn't going to retreat or flee!

BOOM!

The thirty-eighth bolt of skythunder came crashing down, and Immortal Diancai once more used his five top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords to greet the attack, managing to force it aside once more. But this time, the five illusory mountains that represented the five swords were nearly destroyed.

"Not good." Watching from the distance, Immortal Fivecraze's face changed dramatically. "It's very hard to say as to whether or not your master will be able to overcome the forty-fifth bolt of skythunder."

Ning didn't say anything; he just watched closely. He could tell this as well!

Given that even the thirty-eighth bolt was already almost powerful enough to cause his master's sword-arts to crumble...it was very hard to say if his master would be able to make it all the way past the forty-fifth. In the past, Immortal Fivecraze had succumbed to the twenty-fifth bolt, rather than the twenty-seventh bolt.

BOOM!

The lightning-cloud vortex in the skies spat out the thirty-ninth bolt of skythunder, even more ferocious than the previous bolts.

"BLOCK!" Immortal Diancai let out a howl. The five Heavenraker swords were like fish that were swimming against the flow of the river. They carried those five illusory mountains to greet the bolt of skythunder, but when the skythunder came hammering down, all five swords were knocked downwards towards the ground. Still...the bolt of skythunder was almost consumed as well.

"Not enough!" Immortal Fivecraze said frantically.

“Master, Master!” Ning was panicking as well.

“I have to hold.” Immortal Diancai’s face suddenly turned a swollen red color, and his aura increased explosively in power as well. Clearly, he had just used a forbidden technique.

Immortal Fivecraze’s eyes were filled with nervousness. “Your master has used a forbidden technique to compress and squeeze more power out of his Goldlotus Primal. I hope that this technique will be enough to help him withstand the tribulation. It has to be enough. Don’t fail. You can’t fail!” He had seen far too many of his fellow disciples fail during the Celestial Tribulation. He had failed. His master had failed. His brothers had failed...

One after another had been toppled by the Celestial Tribulation.

Immortal Diancai was the most promising one he had seen, and he even had the aid of five top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords.

“You have to hold,” Immortal Fivecraze murmured.

“Master...Master...” Ning’s heart was tight as well. He felt even more nervous than when he himself was facing life-and-death. Although he had heard long ago that the Celestial Tribulation was truly frightening, upon seeing the actual bolts of increasingly powerful skythunder come crashing down from the skies, Ning became terrified that one of them would actually strike his master’s body! A single strike...that would be it. He would be finished!

.....

The fortieth bolt. The forty-first bolt. The forty-second bolt...

After using the forbidden technique, the power of Immortal Diancai’s five swords increased dramatically, and they took on multiple bolts in succession.

BOOM!

The forty-fourth bolt of skythunder!

Immortal Diancai’s face was somewhat distorted now, and his eyes were filled with madness. The five Immortal swords once more flew upwards to greet the thunder, and the imposing illusion of the five mountains seemed mighty enough to suppress and seal away this entire minor world. But in the face of the all-annihilating bolt of skythunder...the five illusory mountains were dissipated, and all five Immortal swords were knocked flying backwards.

“He blocked it. Just the last one; the final bolt of skythunder,” Immortal Fivecraze said worriedly.

“Master...” Ning was so frantic, he wanted to charge forward himself to help.

Blood was beginning to appear on the skin of Immortal Diancai’s face. This forbidden technique was drawing out elemental ki in such a berserk, forcible way that even blood was being drawn out.

BOOM!

The forty-fifth bolt!

“Block it again!” Immortal Diancai seemed to have entered a berserk state, and all five Heavenraker swords frantically rose. It seemed as though, in this dire situation, he was able to unleash more power than he ever had before, and the five illusory mountains once more joined together, increasing their power by a little bit compared to the past.

BANG!!!

The bolt of skythunder, representing annihilation, came crashing downwards.

Slash...

The five Immortal swords were knocked backwards, and a small amount of remaining power from the skythunder came crashing down towards Immortal Diancai as well.

“NO!” Ning felt as though his heart was about to split apart. He was so frantic, his eyes turned completely red.

“NO!” Immortal Fivecraze was filled with terror as well.

But Immortal Diancai actually let out an utterly berserk howl as five more Immortal swords suddenly appeared above him. These were the five swords which Immortal Diancai himself had been previously using! He had often used these five swords...and he only had enough time to transform them into five streaks of rainbow light before the remaining power of the lightning crashed down into them.

BANG! The five flying swords were all knocked flying, with one of them actually stabbing through Immortal Diancai’s chest, cutting out a bloody hole. However, the remaining power of the lightning had been completely dispersed.

“Hahaha, hahahaha...” Immortal Diancai began to laugh. Clutching the wound over his chest, he raised his head to the heavens and laughed.

Ning and Immortal Fivecraze were stunned for a moment...but in the next moment, they went berserk with joy.

“He blocked it!”

“Master blocked it!”

This sort of feeling, of victory snatched from the jaws of defeat, caused both Ning and Immortal Fivecraze’s emotions to go through a series of turbulent changes.

“But why...” Immortal Fivecraze raised his head, staring at the lightning-cloud vortex. His eyes suddenly became filled with despair and terror. “Why...why hasn’t...”

“Why hasn’t...hasn’t it dispersed?” Ning could feel a cold feeling sweeping through him from head to toe.

The vortex of lightning in the skies was continuing to swivel...and it was gathering an even more terrifying amount of power.

Immortal Diancai, still clutching his chest, was suddenly stunned. He stared blankly at the lightning-cloud vortex in the skies, his eyes filled with rage and despair. He unleashed a savage roar from his soul: "Why, why, WHY ARE THERE STILL MORE?!"

"Six nine-sets...six nine-sets..." Immortal Fivecraze's eyes were filled with despair. "Six nine-sets of thunder. My junior apprentice-brother isn't the disciple of a Daofather; he's not even the disciple of a Celestial Immortal. Why would the sixth nine-set appear...why..."

"F\*CK YOU, HEAVENS!" Ning raised his head as well, letting out a grief-stricken, enraged roar. Two streaks of tears began to fall from his eyes. "Master, master...my master!!!!"

BOOM!

Another enormous bolt of lightning was born from within the lightning-cloud vortex...and it came crashing downwards.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 14: Extermination**

Ji Ning felt as though his heart was being torn apart. This pain filled every part of his body. Ever since his parents had passed away, he truly had very few kinsmen. Although his master Diancai always had a strict look and a cold face, Ning could sense the love and caring his master felt for him from deep within his heart. His master had the exact same sort of disposition which Ning's own father, Ji Yichuan, had.

"No. No..." Ning's heart was filled with nothing but despair.

Nobody could rescue his master from the Celestial Tribulation! Even a Daofather of the Great Firmament would only be able to watch from one side...because upon interfering, heaven's punishment would be triggered, causing even a Daofather who tried to withstand it to perish.

Next...Ning suddenly felt a powerful desire enter his heart.

"I've had enough. ENOUGH!!!" Within his own mind, Ning let out a howl of utter despair. "I've had ENOUGH of this feeling of powerlessness. I don't want any more of my loved ones to leave me. I don't have it. I WON'T HAVE IT!"

His mother had passed away...

His father had passed away...

And now, even his master was going to pass away...

Ning's heart felt like it was being chopped apart by knives! An incomparably powerful desire filled him; the desire to not let him or his loved ones be toyed with by destiny. A desire to completely control his own destiny, his own fate.

"I need to grow powerful. More powerful. If I can become like Pangu, capable of establishing the heavens and forming the earth, or like Nuwa, capable of repairing the heavens or destroying them...then perhaps the so-called Celestial Tribulation would be nothing more than a joke in my eyes." For the first time in his life, Ning had the goal to truly stand at the absolute top of the Three Realms, the unquestioned top, beyond all other powers...



...to be at Pangu's level.

Pangu, he who had established the heavens and formed the earth, creating the Primordial World.

Nuwa, who had mastered 84,000 Daos, and had become heralded as Maiden Nuwa, the 'Supremely Benevolent, Supremely Holy Pangu-God'. She had reached Pangu's level, and had also become the undisputed number one figure of the Three Realms!

At their levels...

Even the heavens and the earth would have to submit, much less the Celestial Tribulation, which was nothing more than a mere part of the heavens and the earth!

"Master..." But no matter what Ning currently desired within his heart, he wasn't able to change anything. All he could do...was watch!

.....

Although Ning and Immortal Fivecraze both felt pain and resentment...in this moment, it was the tribulant, Immortal Diancai, who truly felt utter despair.

Immortal Diancai clutched at his chest, head raised. When he saw that the vortex of lightning and clouds was not dispersing, and was instead nurturing an even more powerful bolt of lightning, Immortal Diancai felt despair. "Why are there more coming? Why are there more..."

Despair.

"Junior apprentice-sister, I'm coming." Immortal Diancai's face turned calm. He stared at the bolt of lightning forming within the skies, then pointed towards it. "Go!"

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

The five Heavenraker swords all soared into the heavens, preparing to welcome that bolt of lightning.

This time, Immortal Diancai used the most beautiful, magnificent, and most powerful sword-art he had ever used since he was born. The five Immortal swords swirled around each other, joining together as they went to welcome annihilation.

.....

Back when Immortal Diancai had merely been a third-generation disciple of the Black-White College.

"Young fellow, you should be filled with the vigor and energy of youth. Why are you like this?"

"My junior apprentice-sister is dead. Life holds no meaning for me now. Life holds no meaning!"

"Life holds no meaning? Since you feel as though life has no meaning...this old man actually just so happens to want to kill someone today. Don't fight back. Just let me kill you."

Whoosh.

Five unranked flying swords flew together towards the numb, despairing youth...and invisible sword-intent instantly transmitted into the youth's brain.

One sword-stance after another was demonstrated...and the sword-art became filled with increasing despair, the utmost despair.

“Five Elements Sword, stance eighteen: Minor Five Elements Extermination!”

Each stance was more complex and inconceivable than the last.

“Five Elements Sword, stance thirty-six: Major Five Elements, All Life!”

“Hahaha...”

“Destiny brought us together, and so I will teach you this set of sword techniques. Meditate well on them, young man. Your future path will be a long one!”

That voice had echoed within his mind.

By the time the young Diancai had woken up, he could no longer find that old man, no matter how hard he searched.

This stroke of karmic fortune caused Immortal Diancai to skyrocket in power in sword-arts. He was acknowledged by all the Loose Immortals of the Black-White College as having the highest chance of becoming a Celestial Immortal! After gaining the assistance of Ning’s Dao-repository and being able to compare the techniques within to his own techniques, he gained new insights and made another breakthrough, reaching Immortal Northwalker’s level. But even up till now, he had only reached the level of the seventeenth stance of the Five Elements Sword!

It must be understood that the first eighteen stances represented the first half of the technique. The next eighteen stances were far more mysterious and profound.

The old man definitely was a formidable figure of the Three Realms, given that he was able to transmit a technique such as this. Clearly, he was just wandering casually through the Three Realms, and happened upon Immortal Diancai by chance. Upon seeing that Immortal Diancai had potential, he had casually taught him this sword technique, then left. This didn’t mean he had taken Diancai on as a disciple! If he had, he would’ve taught him Ki Refining techniques, secret arts, and more; in fact, he would often provide guidance to help Diancai work through anything he found confusing. The reality was, Immortal Diancai had to rely on himself and his own efforts in order to resolve any confusions he had regarding the Five Elements Sword!

“Huh?!”

Immortal Diancai suddenly understood.

It was like the golden light of the sun piercing through the darkness of the skies. The thunder tribulation had completely disrupted his emotions, causing him to rise to triumphant heights, then fall in an abyss of despair. Now that he was preparing to welcome death...his sword-arts broke through to a new level.

He finally comprehended what it truly meant to be reach the limits of despair...and what the true mysteries of the ‘Minor Five Elements, Extermination’ technique truly meant! 1

“Five Elements Sword, stance eighteen: Minor Five Elements, Extermination!” Immortal Diancai continued to clutch at his chest, but suddenly...he smiled.

The five black flying Immortal swords in the skies, joined into the illusion of five massive mountains, had previously each been glowing with a different color of light. The light had circulated from sword to sword, joining them together and supporting each other. But Immortal Diancai suddenly willed them to change...

Rumble...

Space itself seemed to shake.

The five illusory mountains suddenly merged into a single illusion, an enormous five-fingered mountain. The five mountains had become one! There were five peaks jutting out from the top of this mountain like five fingers; each peak was of a different color! The mountain carried with it a feeling of incomparably heavy despair and depression, as though its despair could smother and exterminate anything in the world!

This was the final stance of the first half of the Five Elements Sword, the sword-stance that represented mastery of the first half...Minor Five Elements Extermination!

Rumble...

The forty-sixth bolt of skythunder crashed against the five Heavenraker swords which appeared like a mountain with five fingers stretching out from its peak.

The entire mountain trembled slightly, and the bolt of skythunder was dispersed.

Rumble...

The forty-seventh bolt of lightning came crashing down!

Still holding his chest, Immortal Diancai just smiled as he stared upwards. The five Heavenraker swords went up to greet the lightning, and the mountain peak they formed was incomparably tall and massive, so much so that its peak seemed to encompass this entire minor world. Once more, it blocked the bolt of skythunder.

.....

"This..." Immortal Fivecraze and Ning were both stunned. Both of them had been gripped by despair, but now they were stunned.

"Earlier, junior apprentice-brother used a forbidden technique to overcome the first five nine-sets of the thunder tribulation. Why is it that the sixth set has become so simple for him?" Immortal Fivecraze was completely flabbergasted. "A sudden breakthrough? But...but...a breakthrough during the Celestial Tribulation?"

Ning felt dazed as well. Generally speaking, one might make sudden breakthroughs in combat, but the crashing skythunder didn't carry within it any of the mysteries of the Dao; it was nothing more than raw, primalistic strikes of lightning. Could it be that somehow, it had taught his master something? How did his master's sword-arts suddenly become this powerful?

Although Ning didn't know how his master had made a sudden breakthrough, he still felt his heart become filled with the utmost of joy.

“Hahaha...keep blocking. Keep blocking!” Ning watched eagerly.

One thunderbolt after another continued to come crashing down. Each time, Immortal Diancai used the ‘Minor Five Elements Extermination’ to defend against the attack...but starting from the fifty-first bolt, he was clearly beginning to find it a bit difficult! The power of the fifty-second bolt caused his five Immortal swords to be smashed downwards by three hundred meters, and the fifty-third bolt caused the illusory mountain his swords had created to nearly be dispersed!

“The last one...the last one!” Ning and Immortal Fivecraze both stared intently.

BOOM!

The fifty-fourth bolt of skythunder came crashing down! This bolt of skythunder was tinged with a hint of violet light.

“Block!” Immortal Diancai’s aura actually grew even more powerful; his Dao-heart had been baptized by despair and grown even more stronger. The five Heavenraker swords ferociously battled upwards, transforming into an enormous illusory mountain.

BANG!!!!

The skythunder and the mountain crashed against each other. The mountain was completely destroyed and the five Immortal swords were blasted away...but the skythunder was completely dispersed as well.

“HE BLOCKED IT!” Immortal Fivecraze let out an excited howl.

Ning raised his head, staring intently at the lightning-cloud vortex in the skies. Immortal Fivecraze immediately did the same as well. Both were worried that even more skythunder would be coming. However...this time, no more came. The vortex of lightning in the skies began to dissipate towards the four directions, and as they did, a single streak of electricity began to swirl around Immortal Diancai’s body.

When this streak of lightning appeared and descended upon Immortal Diancai, his aura began to subtly change and grow profound; this was an aura that completely surpassed that of Void-level Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals.

“A Celestial Immortal Body.” Ning and Immortal Fivecraze both revealed looks of delight.

“Congratulations, Master.” After the final flickers of electricity disappeared, Ning immediately called out to his master in a loud voice.

“Junior apprentice-brother, that was a thunder tribulation of six nine-sets. It’s utterly unfathomable that a Ki Refiner actually met with six nine-sets...I imagine that generally, only disciples of Daofathers and other legendary figures would be subjected to such a tribulation. But you actually overcame it! Ahaha, I’m in utter awe of you. Junior apprentice-brother, hurry up and rest up; soon, the demonheart tribulation will arrive. You’ve already overcome the most dangerous and most terrifying tribulation, the thunder tribulation; don’t be felled by the demonheart tribulation,” Immortal Fivecraze said.

“Right.” Immortal Diancai nodded calmly, a smile on his face. He pointed a finger towards Ning, and all five Heavenraker swords immediately flew towards Ning. “I no longer need these five Immortal swords.”

Ning nodded, immediately taking back the five Heavenraker swords.

“The demonheart tribulation will take a minimum of seven days,” Immortal Fivecraze said solemnly. “Ji Ning, when my junior apprentice-brother is undergoing his demonheart tribulation...we absolutely cannot allow anyone to disturb him. If there are any enemies preparing to attack, they will most likely do so during this final tribulation. You and I both need to be careful.”

“Right. Understood. No one will be permitted to disturb my master,” Ning said seriously as well.

His true body had trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]; it was extremely well-suited for close combat. He truly wasn't worried about anyone in terms of a head-on fight. As for his Primaltwin, it had the [Heavenraker] sword formation, which would be formed from nine Heavenraker Immortal swords. All by himself, he would be able to deal with two Celestial Immortals.

No one would be allowed to interfere! No one at all! Regardless of who they were or who their backer was...they would not be permitted to disturb his master's tribulation!

.....

Within Stillwater Commandery. A ripple appeared in the darkness of the empty skies, and a white-robed female suddenly emerged from the ripple.

She had a slim, pretty face and a reserved aura, but she was on the level of an Earth Immortal or Loose Immortal. Her eyes, however, were filled with a natural arrogance, an arrogance that held all those before her in contempt.

“Mm?” The white-robed woman stared at the distant mountains. “Here we are!”

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 15: Enemy**

The white-robed woman stood there in the void, staring at the mountain range. She immediately waved her hand, producing a bronze talisman within it. She filled the talisman with her elemental ki.

Rumble...the talisman became scorchingly hot.

This mountain range was, in reality, the headquarters for the Blood God Church; it was known as the Bloodlake Mountains. There were layers of formations protecting this mountain range, causing even the Northmont clan of Stillwater to be unable to do anything to it.

Within the mountains. A towering, large palace.

Above the palace, there was a jade bed that emanated with a hint of azure light. Seated atop the jade bed was a blood-robed man whose eyes glowed with a bloody light. He was the leader of the Blood God Church, the Scion of the Blood God!

“Eh?” The Scion frowned, then immediately waved his hand, producing a bronze talisman of his own. The talisman had become scorchingly hot.

The Scion was startled for a moment...then he immediately disappeared from atop the jade bed. Moments later, he appeared in the air above the mountains. Based on the resonance from the

talismans, he turned to look towards the white-robed woman's direction, then took a single step and arrived before her. He bowed respectfully. "Greetings, Emissary!"

"Yet another Void-level Earth Immortal is undergoing a tribulation within your Stillwater Commandery," the white-robed woman said calmly. "It is Immortal Diancai of the Black-White College. Here is the detailed intelligence information about him." As she spoke, she tossed over a leatherbound scroll towards the Scion of the Blood God, who immediately accepted it in a respectful manner.

The white-robed woman gave the Scion a glance, then snorted and departed gracefully, quickly disappearing into the distant horizons.

The Scion stood there in the air, scroll in hand. He watched in a cold, sinister manner as the woman left. "A mere Emissary dares to put on such airs before me? If it wasn't for the power behind you, I would've annihilated you with a wave of my hand."

Whoosh. The Scion opened the scroll, which had detailed information regarding Immortal Diancai's tribulation, as well as a map and directions.

"He's actually in a minor world, with the entrance being in the Darknorth Sea?" The Scion couldn't help but feel a chill as he read the information. "This mysterious power...they are a bit too all-knowing...how can they even know about such a well-hidden tribulation location?"

He had only interacted with this mysterious power for roughly thirty years...but the more he interacted with them, the more terrifying he found them to be!

They had given him just a slight bit of help, but that had been already enough to make his Blood God Church strong enough to tussel against the Northmont clan of Stillwater. Although their roots weren't as powerful and as deep as the Northmont clan's...there was no way for the Northmont clan to wipe out the Blood God Church now.

"They've already given me two intelligence reports regarding Earth Immortals undergoing a tribulation. This is the third one." The Scion frowned. "How on earth did they find out?"

A traitor or a spy?

The Scion of the Blood God didn't believe it!

Earth Immortals were extremely cautious when undergoing their tribulations; they would only invite protectors that they had absolute faith in! In addition, they would usually personally use a spatial teleport to go to the tribulation location; not even the protectors would know exactly where the tribulation would be attempted. Indeed, Ji Ning and Immortal Fivecraze weren't told in advance, and they didn't know exactly where in the Darknorth Sea the island they had been taken to was located!

"How did they find out? This is too incredible. I've heard from others that due to the fact that the Three Realms are filled with dangerous undercurrents, fate and destiny have been thrown into a state of chaos, making it virtually impossible for someone to Foretell where a tribulation will occur," the Scion mused puzzledly. Normally, powerful experts of the Three Realms might be able to Foretell through augury some rather well-hidden mysteries...but fate itself had been thrown into a state of flux. There was no way to do so now!

“No wonder they hold the Grand Xia Dynasty with no regard. No wonder they dare to act against the entire Dynasty,” the Scion mused privately. “Doesn’t matter. I’m not going to make enemies with them; all I need to do is borrow from their strength to strengthen myself. As long as they can strengthen my Blood God Church, that’s all that matters.”

“Right. This Immortal Diancai is of the Black-White College; the Black-White College is one of the strongest supporters of the Northmont clan of Stillwater. They are one of their most loyal dogs! I need to seize this chance to wound them,” the Scion nodded to himself.

Although the white-robed Emissary had delivered the intelligence report, she hadn’t ordered the Scion to do anything.

To kill or not? This was up to the Scion himself. If he chose not to attack, the mysterious power wouldn’t care.

Whoosh.

The Scion of the Blood God returned to his palace.

“Have the seven Law Protectors come see me right away,” the Scion instructed from atop his jade bed.

“Yes,” an attendant said respectfully.

Soon, seven black-robed Law Protectors hurried over.

“Greetings, sect leader,” the seven black-robed Law Protectors said respectfully.

“Immortal Diancai of the Black-White College is currently undergoing his tribulation. The Black-White College is one of the most loyal dogs of the Northmont clan; we need to seize this chance to eradicate Immortal Diancai,” the Scion said calmly. “The other Immortals of the Black-White College are all within their College; it is very likely that the only guardians with him right now are his disciple Ji Ning as well as Immortal Fivecraze, the most powerful member of the Black-White College.”

“Make a trip with me. Let us eradicate these three members of the Black-White College,” the Scion of the Blood God said. “With these three gone, the Black-White College will be badly wounded; this is akin to breaking one of the Northmont clan’s legs.”

“Sect leader, just the seven of us and yourself? Will it be enough? I heard that this Ji Ning had gone missing for thirty-plus years; he must have taken on an expert of the Three Realms as his master.”

“The Black-White College isn’t easy to deal with; even if the seven of us go along with you, we will still probably suffer some losses even if we win.”

The seven Law Protectors were all hesitating.

The Scion said calmly, “Don’t worry. I have complete confidence; do you think I would let the seven of you take on any serious danger?”

The seven Law Protectors raised their heads to stare at the Scion of the Blood God.

“Hmph.” The Scion let out a cold snort, then waved his hand. A small black ship had appeared within his palm.

“This is...” The eyes of the seven Law Protectors lit up.

“With this treasure in my hands...I trust you are all convinced now?” The Scion said.

“We shall naturally obey your orders, sect leader.” The seven Law Protectors no longer hesitated.

The Scion immediately sent a further mental order: “Three Elders, the seven Law Protectors and I are going out on a trip. The affairs within the Church shall temporarily be managed by you three.”

“Don’t worry, sect leader. Leave it to us,” the three Elders replied.

“Let’s go!”

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

With the Scion in front and the seven Law Protectors behind, the eight flew high into the sky, moving like streaks of light. And then, they quickly used a spatial teleport to disappear.

.....

The distant Darknorth Sea. The air above the island with a volcano.

The blood-robed Scion of the Blood God along with the seven black-robed Law Protectors were all standing in the air above the island.

“The entrance to the minor world is there, within that volcano,” the Scion said calmly. “Based on our intelligence report, Immortal Diancai should have spent two days undergoing the tribulation by now. If he failed in overcoming the fire, wind, or thunder tribulations, then he is most likely either dead or a Loose Immortal by now. Even if he survived...he should currently be undergoing the demonheart tribulation.”

“Later, do as I instructed to you previously.” The Scion swept the seven Law Protectors with his gaze.

“Yes, sect leader,” the seven black-robed Law Protectors said respectfully.

“Go in.”

The Scion of the Blood God gave the order. Swoosh swoosh swoosh!!! Eight streaks of light instantly streaked across the sky, entering the mouth of the volcano.

Soon after they disappeared, there was yet another a ripple in space near the entrance to the volcano. Twelve white-robed figures emerged, the leader a figure with a bloody scar on the arm.

“The forces of the Blood God Church of Stillwater Commandery have entered,” a white-robed youth said with a chortle. “Captain, you truly predicted everything in a godlike manner; you knew that they would definitely go.”

“The Black-White College is located right in Stillwater Commandery; over the course of countless ages, they have always walked in lockstep with the Northmont clan of Stillwater! The Northmont clan, in turn, has always protected the Black-White College. Of the eight great powers, the Black-White College is the most loyal one; naturally, the Blood God Church will seize this chance to annihilate Immortal Diancai



during his Celestial Tribulation.” The leader, a white-robed man, continued calmly, “By borrowing from their strength, our own assassination attempt will become easier.”

“Is there a need for us to be so cautious in dealing with Ji Ning?”

“Right. Even our superiors simply instructed us to be careful of the school behind Ji Ning; he himself isn’t worthy of such concern. We’ve killed even Celestial Immortals; how powerful can a young fellow who has trained for less than a century possibly, even if he is a Daofather’s disciple?”

They all spoke out. The leader, the scarred white-robed man, laughed. “Ji Ning naturally isn’t worthy of concern, but I’m afraid that if something unexpected happens, his school might intervene. That’s why this assassination must be a quick one! We need to avoid anything unexpected.”

“Right.” Everyone nodded. They were all mainly worried about Ning’s school, worried that a True Immortal or Empyrean God might suddenly appear and massacre them!

No one knew where Ning had disappeared to during the past thirty-plus years. However, the intelligence reports which the Bloodcloud Hall had received indicated that his disappearance...was almost assuredly linked to an extraordinary twist of fate!

“Execute our assassination plan,” the scarred, white-robed man said solemnly.

Swoosh swoosh swoosh!!!

The twelve figures instantly disappeared as they too entered the mouth of the volcano.

.....

Within the charred minor world that was filled with an aura of death.

Immortal Diancai was seated in the lotus position. Three thousand meters away from him, an enormous restrictive formation had been set up, and the surface of the formation glowed with light.

Within the formation were only two figures; Immortal Diancai and the Whitewater Hound.

Ji Ning and Immortal Fivecraze were both outside this grand sealing formation!

Earlier, during the wind, fire, and thunder tribulations, Ning’s group hadn’t dared to set down any formations...they didn’t wish to disturb the Celestial Tribulation and incur divine punishment. They would’ve been finished! But now that they were at the final tribulation, the demonheart tribulation, setting up a grand restrictive formation no longer made any difference whatsoever. Ning and Immortal Fivecraze were both worried about enemies would sneak close through using some technique to avoid divine sense scans, and so they had set up this grand sealing formation.

With it present, one would have to either break the formation or use a Greater Teleportation technique in order to reach Immortal Diancai!

“This is master’s second day undergoing the demonheart tribulation.” Ning turned to glance at Immortal Diancai, seated calmly in the lotus position at the center of the grand sealing formation. No one knew what Immortal Diancai’s demonheart tribulation was like; generally speaking, wayward thoughts were easily to withstand, but if one had to withstand them for an extremely long period of time...

It must be understood that at least seven days of time in the real world had to pass, but within the world of the demonheart tribulation, ten thousand years or more might pass. Some would even forget what reality was, and they would be completely submerged within the illusory world until finally they perished!

“Eh?” Ning was suddenly startled as a terrifying premonition of danger swept out from within his subconscious.

“Danger!” Ning sent frantically, “Old brother Fivecraze, Uncle White, be careful. I can sense danger drawing near!” Immortal practitioners generally had extremely accurate subconscious premonitions. However, Ning was quite astonished at the fact that he had such a powerful premonition of danger...because he had already trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]! Logically speaking, there should be very few things in the world capable of threatening him.

“Even if enemies came to attack Master...can it be that the amount of power they prepared is enough to threaten me as well?” Ning could barely believe it. “If that’s the case, then we are in for huge trouble.”

Ning’s eyes suddenly lit up with torch-light.

[Torch Dragon’s Eye]!

He immediately scanned in every direction with both his divine sense as well as the [Torch Dragon’s Eye].

### **The Desolate Era**

#### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 16: No Mercy When Striking**

“Danger?” Both Immortal Fivecraze and the Whitewater Hound were startled, but neither of them doubted Ji Ning in the slightest. As time passed, they too began to subconsciously sense danger impending.

Immortal Fivecraze, in particular, felt cold fear his heart. He was stunned by this. “What sort of danger is this? Why is it that I feel so threatened? Nothing’s even happened yet, but I already feel somewhat terrified?!”

“Ji Ning?” Immortal Fivecraze looked towards Ning.

“Uncle White, prepare to use your formations; no one is permitted to go close to Master. Old brother Fivecraze, be careful,” Ning instructed. His eyes were blazing with torch-fire as he continued to scan the surrounding area.

All of the light from the distance, including refracted light and bounced light, were all being drawn into Ning’s eyes.

More than sixty thousand kilometers away.

“There they are!” Ning could clearly see a giant black ship that was flying towards them from far away. Atop the giant black ship, there were eight blurry figures standing atop the deck. The leader was a blood-robed man who was filled with an unearthly, baleful aura. Behind him were seven black-robed individuals.

Ning was aware of all of the famous Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals within Stillwater Commandery, and had seen pictures of them in scrolls.

“The leader of the Blood God Church and their seven Law Protectors?” Ning was startled. “How did they find out that my master was undergoing the tribulation here?”

His master had led the three of them into a spatial teleport and directly arrived at this volcano within the Darknorth Sea; neither Ning nor Immortal Fivecraze knew exactly where this volcano was! Could it be that his master had himself revealed it to another? Impossible!

“No wonder so many Earth Immortals have suffered assaults during their tribulation here in the Grand Xia as of late,” Ning mused to himself. “It seems the culprit behind these events must have a special method to clearly sense where a Celestial Tribulation is occurring.”

This caused Ning to feel even more nervous. The power behind these things...what in the world was it?

No wonder even the Old Patriarch had felt fear. The mere fact that this person was able to calculate where Earth Immortals were undergoing their tribulation...this was already something that was entirely inconceivable.

“It seems that things are as Master said; I cannot fight head-on against this sort of power. If I prance about in front of it, most likely my fate can be summarized in one word; death!” Ning could dimly sense that this approaching storm was going to be like a massive tidal wave which no one could possibly block; anyone who tried would be smashed apart. Not even Patriarch Subhuti dared to attempt to block it; if Ning did, he would undoubtedly be crushed to smithereens as well.

“I don’t dare go cause trouble for the mastermind. But little shrimps like the Blood God Church? They are nothing.” This, Ning understood well.

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“It is the Blood God Church.” Ning immediately sent a mental message to Immortal Fivecraze and Uncle White. “A total of eight have arrived; they are the sect leader and his seven Law Protectors.”

“What? The Blood God Church? No wonder my subconscious was telling me that this threat was so dangerous.” Immortal Fivecraze’s face instantly changed dramatically as he frantically sent mentally to Ning, “Ji Ning, the leader of the Blood God Church’s power has increased dramatically; he is able to compete against Celestial Immortals now. As for his seven Law Protectors, each of them increased dramatically in power as well; each are most likely comparable to me. Given the power of the eight of them...there’s no way I can block them at all. I’d probably die within a single breath’s worth of time!”

The seven Law Protectors of the Blood God Church, thirty years ago, were nothing more than ordinary Loose Immortals! At most, they were perhaps on par with Loose Immortals who had lived for a hundred thousand years.

Now, however, they had all increased in power enormously, at the five hundred thousand year level, very close to Immortal Fivecraze’s own level!

“Understood.” Ning grew solemn as well.

“What should we do? How should we stop them?” Immortal Fivecraze was restless and nervous. “They are too powerful, far more powerful than the three of us. Ji Ning, although you are comparable to senior Northwalker, there are eight of them. So long as a single one of them goes to fight against junior apprentice-brother Diancai, they’ll be able to kill him!”

During the demonheart tribulation, one’s mind would be completely subsumed within the demonheart world. There was no way to fight back in the real world at all. Thus, Ning’s group not only had to overcome the foe, they also had to be able to completely block the eight of them. If a single one managed to slip by...

“Leave it to me.” Ning’s eyes were filled with a sharp light. “Old brother Fivecraze, go into the grand sealing formation right away. Stay close to my master and protect him. As for these eight...leave them to me. If any make it pass me, it’ll be up to you.”

“Fine.” Immortal Fivecraze didn’t hesitate, and the Whitewater Hound immediately let him inside.

Ning’s eyes blazed like torches as he watched the giant black ship slowly draw near. Soon, it reached ten thousand kilometers of Ning. By now, the members of the Blood God Church could see the distant grand sealing formation with their naked eyes.

“A grand sealing formation.” The Scion of the Blood God laughed coldly. “It seems this Immortal Diancai has already overcome the first three tribulations of wind, fire, and thunder. He is engaged in the demonheart tribulation. If we didn’t come...he might very well have succeeded and become a new Celestial Immortal. Alas...this impending Celestial Immortal of the Black-White College is about to die a stillborn death at our hands.”

Rumble...

A powerful divine sense came sweeping outwards in a wave, crushing down towards the eight of them. The divine sense roared angrily, “Scion of the Blood God, seven Law Protectors, I’m asking you to hurry up and leave!”

“Ji Ning! He lives up to his reputation as the number one peerless genius of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny; his divine sense is able to stretch over ten thousand kilometers.” The Scion’s own divine sense interacted with Ning’s. “Ji Ning, your master is undergoing his tribulation, yes? Don’t deny it; we know it all. Heh heh...I can see that your master is only being protected by yourself, Fivecraze, and that Whitewater Hound spirit-beast of yours. Ahaha, that’s too weak. With this amount of power...there’s no way you’ll be able to stop me.”

The Scion felt absolute self-confidence.

“Scion of the Blood Good, if you leave now, then I, Ji Ning, shall remember your kindness in showing mercy on this day,” Ning sent back angrily through divine sense. “But if you attack...then I, Ji Ning, shall begin a death-feud with your Blood God Church!”

The Scion could sense the savagery and madness within Ning’s voice. He couldn’t help but feel briefly startled...but then he snickered, “Death-feud? Not even the Northmont clan of Stillwater was able to do anything to me; I’m supposed to be afraid of you?”

“Seven Law Protectors, leave Ji Ning to me; I’ll handle him. As for Fivecraze and that spirit-beast, I’ll leave them to you. While dealing with Fivecraze...go ahead and kill Immortal Diancai,” the Scion sent. “Up to the task?”

“Don’t worry, sect leader.”

“Just leave it to us, sect leader.”

The seven Law Protectors all felt complete confidence. In truth, they were only wary of Ji Ning; after all, Ji Ning was simply too mysterious. However, they now only had to deal with Immortal Fivecraze and that spirit-beast. They were still quite confident in being able to do so! The seven of them, joined together, were able to completely crush and dominate Fivecraze. As for the Whitewater Hound spirit-beast? According to the intelligence report, it had previously been merely at the Wanxiang level in the past; although it was now at the Void-level, it had risen too fast and most likely did not have a solid foundation. Killing it would be effortless!

“Fine!” The Scion laughed and said, “Then let’s do it!”

BANG!

The black ship suddenly drew near at high speed. Three thousand kilometers. Two thousand. One thousand...

“Attack,” the Scion shouted mentally.

“Let’s go!” The seven Law Protectors came out in a great show of force as the seven of them soared into the skies like seven black shadows. Immediately afterwards, streaks of bloody light began to swirl around them, joining together into a Blood Dragon that was more than three thousand meters long. This Blood Dragon was covered with distinct draconic scales, had long draconic whiskers, and a pair of eyes that were filled with a killing intent.

Since they were reputed as the Seven Law Protectors, they naturally had their own joint formation. Back in the past, when they were weak, they had relied on this formation to roam Stillwater Commandery fearlessly; now that they were powerful, they were close to the level of a Loose Immortal who had survived for a million years.

Whoosh...

The Blood Dragon flew to one side, avoiding Ji Ning. The giant black warship, however, flew straight towards him. Atop the deck stood the Scion of the Blood God, whose eyes were filled with fiendish savagery. His divine sense once more clashed against Ning’s as he sent, “Ji Ning, you can block me, but you can’t block my seven Law Protectors. Your master is definitely going to die. As for you...I actually want to see for myself exactly how powerful the number one genius of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny is!”

“Hmph.” Ning laughed coldly as he stood there...but his heart was clenching!

For the sake of protecting his master, Ning had made many preparations. Although the eight members of the Blood God Church were seemingly powerful...Ning was completely confident in being able to stop

them. There was no way the eight of them could pose a mortal threat to him...but his premonitions of danger couldn't be wrong. Where, then, was the danger hiding?

"All I can do is handle it when it comes," Ning mused to himself.

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Immortal Fivecraze stood a few dozen meters away from Immortal Diancai, seven Immortal swords swirling around him. His heart was filled with worry. "Ji Ning said that he'll block them, and that any that get past him I am to handle. But the Scion of the Blood God is now dealing with him while the seven Law Protectors are attacking this way. How can I block seven of them? If I, a Loose Immortal who has lived a few hundred thousand years, were to perish, it wouldn't matter...but junior apprentice-brother was able to overcome even six nine-sets of the thunder tribulation. If he were to be killed by the Blood God Church, that would be too unfair."

"No matter what...even if I have to give up this old life of mine...I have to protect my junior apprentice-brother." Immortal Fivecraze gritted his teeth, staring towards the distant Blood Dragon.

The seven Law Protectors, in the form of a Blood Dragon, radiated an unearthly, terrifying aura.

As the Blood Dragon drew close, it suddenly lashed out with its tail. In truth, its tail was actually formed from multiple Immortal-ranked magic treasures, including Immortal swords and ribbons!

Rumble...

The tail slammed down directly upon the grand sealing formation, instantly causing it to crack.

At this moment, the Whitewater Hound, who had previously been lying there silently, rose to his feet. Next to him appeared a black-robed youth; it was Ning's Primaltwin! Ning could sense that danger was coming, and so he left his true body outside the formation to serve as the first line of defense, while he had his Primaltwin remain within the formation to serve as the second line of defense.

"You want to harm my master?!" A fierce light flashed through the eyes of the black-robed Ning, and suddenly, nine seemingly translucent pitch-black Immortal swords suddenly appeared out of nowhere next to him.

"Nine of them?" Immortal Fivecraze was both surprised and delighted. "So there were actually nine of those top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords...and Ji Ning, that little kid, actually hid his Primaltwin here. This little fellow...he scared the crap out of me. But will his Primaltwin be able to block these seven Law Protectors?"

Immortal Fivecraze knew very well that he himself was not. It would all be up to Ning.

Riiiiip.

Nine sword-tears in the sky suddenly appeared, like deep furrows that had been raked into it. The nine tears were like an enormous web of swords that swept towards the giant Blood Dragon.

"Break!" The Blood Dragon let out an enraged roar that sounded like the merged voices of all seven Law Protectors, and at the same time it once more slapped its tail towards it.

Riiiiiiip!

Slash!

Whoosh!

Nine sword-tears, each comparable to the strike of an ordinary Celestial Immortal. When combined...the power of this blow surpassed even the power of Ning's true body! When the attacks collided, the tail of the Blood Dragon, its most powerful part, instantly shattered apart. The Immortal-ranked magic treasures were all knocked flying back...and then the rest of the Blood Dragon was shattered as well. The nine sword-tears then continued forward in beautiful arcs, chopping towards the seven Law Kings.

"Die." The black-robed Ning's eyes were filled with nothing but coldness.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 17: Squad Earthnine Makes Their Move**

"Quick, let's go."

"Sect leader!"

The seven Law Protectors let out shrill cries of terror. Their combination-formation had been instantly shattered; this completely terrified them. They didn't even think about fighting back. There was only one thing in their mind; fleeing! The magic treasures that had been knocked backwards were all re-controlled by the seven Law Protectors as they instantly began to execute their escaping techniques.

However...

The black-robed Ji Ning was using the [Heavenraker] technique, a sword technique that was extremely well-suited for engaging in group attacks! In addition, this technique involved nine Immortal-ranked flying swords, whereas there were only seven enemies!

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Under Ning's control, one tear in the sky appeared after another, ripping towards the seven Law Protectors.

Each of the Law Protectors had Immortal-ranked magic treasures of their own, but by the looks of it theirs were quite ordinary. One of them, a silver-haired, hawk-nosed elder, had a total of three flying swords, whereas a youthful-looking one was controlling a large amount of stardust. Each of these two Loose Immortals were being pursued by a pair of Heavenraker swords, while the others were each being pursued by one!

"Block." The youthful-looking Loose Immortals was the most powerful of the seven. His dazzling, sparkling stardust was furiously attempting to block those two half-illusory Heavenraker swords.

Bang! Bang!

Those two tears in the sky forcefully tore through all his barriers, slicing apart his body and revealing a shattered Goldlotus Primal within it. Moments later...the Primal soul completely dissipated.

Die!

“Sect leader, save me!” A black-robed, sinister-looking female Loose Immortal called out frantically for aid, but she too was slashed and slain by one of the Heavenraker swords!

.....

It must be understood that Ning had completed his overhauling of the ninth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] more than five or six years ago. During the past few years, he had been working on the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] and learning archery. This, too, was a way of meditating on the Dao! His improvements in wind and in the Grand Dao of Qiankun were especially significant, and thus Ning’s sword-arts had naturally become more exquisite as well!

In terms of sword-arts, Ning was at an extremely high level now. In addition, he had nine top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords, whereas the seven Law Protectors mostly had low-grade Immortal-ranked treasures, with just a few middle-grade; in fact, some of them were still using Heaven-ranked treasures.

In addition, Ning was using the [Heavenraker] sword technique, a technique developed by a Daofather which was perfectly matched to his Heavenraker swords. Naturally, the power of his attack was increased many times over.

Each of the nine Heavenraker swords, even when used separately, were able to unleash an attack at the level of an ordinary Celestial Immortal.

Thus...

All seven of the Law Protectors perished!

Whoosh! The nine tears in the sky swept backwards, pulling in all of the now ownerless magic treasures in their wake as they flew back towards the black-robed Ning, who collected them.

“This...this is...too...” Immortal Fivecraze’s eyes were filled with wild joy, and he stared towards the black-robed Ning with a scorchingly excited gaze. “Ji Ning, those were the seven Law Protectors, the seven famous Law Protectors! You actually killed them in a single exchange. Everyone said that when the seven Law Protectors join forces, anyone below the Celestial Immortal level will find it difficult to fight against them, but you, you actually...you aren’t at senior Northwalker’s level, you are even more powerful than he was!”

The black-robed Ning said, “In terms of my insight into the sword, I’m actually not that much better than senior Northwalker was. The most important thing is that I have a set of nine top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords, as well as a sword-art which was developed by a Daofather. Thus, even if an actual Celestial Immortal Patriarch came, my Primaltwin would be able to give him a fight!”

.....

The Blood God Church’s forces had been divided into two groups. The seven Law Protectors had gone to go after the seemingly-helpless Immortal Fivecraze and Whitewater Hound, whereas the sect leader, the Scion of the Blood God, had went to deal with Ji Ning’s true body.



“Prepare to die.” The Scion stood atop his giant black warship. Long gray awls suddenly appeared behind his body, their tips glowing with bloody light. A total of nine of these gray awls appeared before all of them shot through the skies, forming a vague illusion of a bloody tidal wave as they moved forward!

The nine gray awls came howling forward, carrying the wave of blood with them.

Ning’s true body stood there, staring towards the distant attack.

“Hmph.” Ning waved his hand, and the Thousandbull Sword appeared within it. He filled the Thousandbull Sword with his late-stage Void-level elemental ki, and the power of this sword which was very nearly at the level of a Pure Yang treasure instantly reached a shocking height.

“This Thousandbull Sword truly is very close to the level of a Pure Yang treasure; a magic treasure like this, which was forged by a person, has extremely exacting requirements in terms of elemental ki. Only Celestial Immortals can use Pure Yang treasures, and this Thousandbull Sword is extremely close to that level; amongst Immortal-ranked treasures, it is a top-grade amongst top-grade items. In the past, I used early-stage Void-level elemental ki to activate its power, but I still wasn’t able to fully unleash it. Only after reaching the late-stage am I able to truly stir its power. However...it still isn’t time for me to truly unleash its full power!”

Ning’s subconscious continued to scream danger to him...but he still couldn’t tell where the danger was! This restless feeling caused Ning to continue to hide part of his power, so as to deal with anything unexpected.

“Arise.” Instantly, an enormous Lotusflower Swordland appeared around him. Because the earthfire and dire-ice in his body had yet to be raised to the skyfire or skywater level, the power of his Waterflame Lotus was still inferior to that of the Lotusflower Swordland.

An enormous lotus bloomed around him, filled with layers of petals. Now that he had a higher level of comprehension regarding the Dao, the power of his Lotusflower Swordland had increased as well.

Boom! Boom! Boom! One bloody awl after another came slamming forward, tearing through one layer of petals after another.

Ning gripped his Thousandbull Sword. Sword-light suddenly flashed in front of him, blocking each of the sharp awls. Explosive sounds rang out without end, and sword-ki billowed forth in a torrent.

By relying on his Lotusflower Swordland and his Thousandbull Sword, Ning was able to knock each of the awls flying backwards.

“Eh?” The Scion was controlling his magic treasures to attack from afar while also watching his seven Law Protectors. “This Ji Ning actually is quite formidable. Although I’ve only used a third of my power, he hasn’t used his [Three Heads, Six Arms] either. He was able to block while just using a single Immortal sword. It seems that if I don’t fight with full power, it will be hard for me to kill him. He’s so powerful, despite only having trained for a century...it seems people like him, the number one peerless genius and champion of the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, truly are quite special. Mm...after the seven Law Protectors kill Fivecraze, Diancai, and that spirit-beast, we’ll join forces...and kill Ji Ning!”

The Scion had thought things out ‘perfectly’. But he suddenly discovered, to his amazement...

That a black-robed Ning had suddenly appeared within the grand sealing formation.

“A Primaltwin? Ji Ning actually split up with his Primaltwin? Isn’t he afraid of them being divided and conquered? He’s quite suicidal to do this.” The Scion was merely startled; he didn’t actually panic. As he saw it, even if the seven Law Protectors weren’t able to suppress Ning’s Primaltwin when they joined forces, at least they should be on par with him.

“Those are...”

Nine terrifyingly powerful Immortal-ranked magic treasures, of such great might that they caused the heart to tremble. They howled through the air as nine sword-formations, blasting apart and disintegrating the Blood Dragon.

The seven Law Protectors fled in a panic, crying out miserably for rescue...but each of them were caught and killed.

The Scion was completely stunned!

Ning’s Primaltwin was vastly more powerful than he had expected. Even if he himself were to strike with full force, there was no way he would’ve been able to destroy the Blood Dragon with a single blow! It must be understood that when two sides were roughly on par with each other, one side would at most be put in a disadvantageous position. To completely blast apart the enemy...that was generally only possible when there was a fairly significant difference in power! This Ji Ning’s Primaltwin was even more powerful than himself, the sect leader!

“My seven Law Protectors are gone...just like that.” The Scion felt utter pain in his heart. “This Ji Ning is absolutely inhuman. He’s a monster! He’s trained for less than a century, but he’s even more powerful than the secret arts I acquired. I imagine that in the entirety of Stillwater Commandery, only that old bastard, ‘Hunchmont’, is at his level.”

“My seven Law Protectors died...I need to teach him a lesson!” A look of savagery appeared in the eyes of the Scion.

The disciples of the Blood God Church were all famous for their brutal savagery, and the Scion of the Blood God himself was known to be a madman. In addition, he had his precious ship with him; why would he leave so easily?

Swoosh!

The long awls suddenly flew backwards, and the giant black warship began to rapidly shrink. The Scion hid himself into the cabin of the warship, which then completely sealed itself off like a fortress.

“Ji Ning, you killed my seven Law Protectors, but I shall kill your master.” The Scion’s bellowing voice echoed in the skies, but he secretly mused to himself, “My losses today were enormous, but killing Diancai should count as having rendered major merits. I have to get some good treasures out of this.”

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Ning hadn’t been paying too much attention to the Scion of the Blood God; he had been spending most of his time staying vigilant and prepared for the invisible threat that he continued to sense. He was ready to fight back at any moment.

Upon seeing the Scion suddenly hide into the shrunken black warship, which was now as tightly sealed as any castle, Ning just frowned and sent mentally, "Uncle White, activate your formation and block the Scion of the Blood God. Don't let him go close to master."

"Don't worry, Ning, son." The Whitewater Hound hadn't even done anything yet; he was the true, final protector of Immortal Diancai!

"This Scion is at most comparable to a Celestial Immortal; killing him is fairly hard, but suppressing him is doable," Ning mused to himself. "And that precious ship of his is merely a protective item...it doesn't actually threaten me. So where is the true danger?"

Ning's eyes continued to blaze with torch-fire as he stared at his surroundings, and his divine sense continuously scanned the area as well. But he couldn't find anything!

But suddenly...

Rumble!

A white-robed man suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The white-robed man had a strange, bloody scar on his arm...and immediately after he appeared, eleven more white-robed figures appeared out of nowhere, each of them radiating auras of incredible power! The invisible pressure they gave off...it seemed as though each of them were comparable to the Scion of the Blood God! As for the first person who had appeared, the impression he gave Ning...was that he was far more powerful than the Scion!

"A Greater Teleportation Dao-seal!" Ning was shocked upon seeing them suddenly appear. "The surrounding area was spacelocked long ago, preventing any spatial teleportations. The only option is to use Greater Teleportation. There's no way one of them could be a freakish monster who mastered even the Grand Dao of Qiankun...they had to have simply used a Dao-seal."

"They were willing to use a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal, just to catch me off-guard? And those eleven who appeared afterwards...they should've been hiding in the Immortal estate of the leader."

Ning was instantly able to draw these conclusions. In turn, these conclusions caused him to feel even more shocked!

Greater Teleportation Dao-seals were extremely valuable. For them to be willing to use one right away...how terrifying would these foes be?!

"Kill!" A white-robed youth in the group let out a fierce-looking grin, then a complicated pattern of light appeared around him, forming into a runic formation. The strange runes hovered into the air, emanating a dark light.

The other white-robed figures were all doing the same. The runic formation created by the leader involved runes that were even larger and even more complex-looking.

"Form!" Suddenly, an enormous black serpent appeared in the skies. The eyes of this giant serpent were golden, while its body seemed to be filled with a strange power that was able to shake the Heavens and the Earth, as though it had taken command of the surrounding world.

"A Primordial Godbeast...the Ba-Serpent?!" Ning was shocked.

The most supreme Godbeasts of the Three Realms were all born in the Primordial Era. They were all comparable to Fiendgods of Primal Chaos in power...and in fact, some of them actually were Fiendgods of Primal Chaos. For example, Primordial Godbeasts such as the 'Raindragon', the 'Garuda', and the Torch-Dragon were actually born from the universe out of chaos; thus, they could be classified as Fiendgods. However, because they also served as the original progenitor for many different types of Godbeasts, with countless Godbeasts having some degree of their blood and lineage, they could also be classified as Godbeasts as well, the most supreme and ancient of Godbeasts.

The Blood Dragon created by the seven Law Protectors through their formation could be considered the product of a very ordinary combination-formation.

But a formation that could form a Primordial Godbeast...such formations were all extremely formidable, and when they joined into a Godbeast, they would possess amazing, incredible powers.

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Although all this took time to describe, it happened in a flash.

The twelve white-robed figures instantly appeared through a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal, then immediately joined into an enormous Ba-Serpent. The Ba-Serpent, capable of shaking the Heavens and the Earth, opened its enormous, bloody maw. The space around its mouth instantly became distorted, as though it was devouring the very world itself. An unearthly, powerful attractive power instantly locked onto Ning's body. Although Ning was a Fiendgod Body Refiner and immediately worked to resist...he was completely unable to resist the devouring power. Not too long ago, there was a Celestial Immortal Patriarch who had similarly been unable to resist and who had been devoured by this Ba-Serpent, then perished.

Swoosh!

As the distant Immortal Fivecraze and Whitewater Hound watched...the enormous Ba-Serpent devoured Ji Ning with a single bite!