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Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 28: Just a Tenth

The Divine Solar Tattoo and Divine Lunar Tattoo on Ji Ning's back began to become even more profound and complicated. They were shining brightly, and in the area around Ning, a golden crow that was surrounded by flames began to fly about in a circling manner. At the same time, a jade rabbit appeared as well, filled with an icy aura as it stared upwards into the void, as though seeing the Lunar Star deep within the depths of infinity.

The distant Solar Star and Lunar Star continued to transmit a large amount of Lunar Truewater and Solar Truefire.

Whoooooosh.

Water and fire meshed together like threads being woven into a fabric. Soon, Ning became completely surrounded by them, as though he was within a giant egg. Within the egg, through a mysterious method that Ning couldn't understand, energy was being transmitted straight into his body, rapidly and frantically changing it. His body once more began a fundamental transformation, a transformation brought on by advancing to a separate level in power. Even his Divine Solar Tattoo and Divine Lunar Tattoo were beginning to transform.

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Above the calm surface of Serpentwing Lake, a three meter high 'egg' was hovering in the air. One could vaguely make out that the egg was bi-colored. Although it emanated an invisible field of terrifying power, it didn't disturb the surface of the water in the slightest.

Slowly...

The eggshell grew increasingly thin and translucent. In fact, one could even vaguely make out a human figure within it. Finally, the eggshell completely vanished, and a completely naked youth appeared, standing on the surface of the lake. Moments later, his body became covered with an exquisitely sewn set of fur clothes.

"Whew. I've finally reached the sixteenth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]." Ning let out a sigh of relief. "I should now be comparable to an ordinary late Void-level Fiendgod Body Refiner; before my Fiendgod tribulation comes, I can at most train to the seventeenth stage. I'm very close to my maximum level of power possible, prior to my tribulation."

Once one reached the eighteenth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], the Emyrean Tribulation would quickly descend. Thus, prior to attempting the tribulation, one could at most train to the seventeenth stage.

Today's breakthrough represented an advance to a major new level. It had thus involved a fundamental transformation.

Previously, Ning could at most train to the Third Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], because his divine body had reached a limit in power; there was no way it could withstand any further strengthening. But

now that Ning's divine body had fundamentally been transformed, he could train all the way up to the Sixth Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]! Alas...the price one would need to pay to reach the Sixth Cycle was more than a thousandfold the price one needed for the Third Cycle!

The Ninth Cycle, in turn, needed roughly a thousand times as many materials as the Sixth Cycle! The price was heart-clenchingly high. Even Ning's senior apprentice-brother, Empyrean God Silvermoon, had merely trained to the Sixth Cycle. The number of people in the Three Realms who had reached the Ninth Cycle of the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] could be counted on one hand; they were even rarer than Daofathers or True Gods!

"For a Fiendgod Body Refiner to advance from the early Void level to the late Void level represents advancing across two small stages." Ning mused to himself, "I imagine that by now, my close combat power is probably superior to my power as a Ki Refiner."

Previously, as a Ki Refiner, he could rely on his [Heavenraker] sword formation, which was somewhat more powerful than his close combat abilities. But Ning's divine body was now far too powerful! It must be understood that Fiendgod Body Refiners were powerful to begin with, and Ning was now comparable to late Void-level Fiendgods...and he also had the [Starseizing Hand]! In terms of raw strength alone, when he went all out, he was even stronger than Celestial Immortals. With the Thousandbull Sword and his various sword-arts...he would now be considered a formidable figure, even amongst Celestial Immortals. He was definitely better now than he was in the past, where he would be considered a fairly low-class Celestial Immortal.

After making his breakthrough, Ning continued to lie there within his little boat, floating across the surface of Serpentwing Lake.

It was like he was 'showing off' to his parents after having accomplished something significant, in the hopes of earning a word of praise from them. After increasing his level of power, Ning simply floated there in the waters of Serpentwing Lake. He felt like he was by the side of his parents; he wanted to let them see how strong he had become. The gentle sounds of the waves were like the voices of his mother and father.

"My power has increased greatly after having gone to Mount Innerheart. It is time to take a look into what happened with my parents after they reincarnated," Ning mused to himself.

After death, reincarnation.

Ning naturally had been thinking about this for quite some time now. He wanted to look into this matter. As for his parents from his previous life? Ning wanted to look into what happened to them as well. However, in the past, Ning was simply too weak; there was no way he could investigate them at all. Now, Ning could be somewhat considered a 'powerful' figure. Still...this was not an era of peace. In a peaceful era, everything was under the control of the Netherworld Kingdom, making investigations fairly simple. The Six Cycles of Reincarnation, however, had been destroyed; it would now be far more difficult to investigate anything.

Late night.

Ning returned to Brightmoon Island. After joining Uncle White, Little Qing, and Autumn Leaf in eating some delicacies which Autumn Leaf had personally prepared, Ning once more quietly slipped into his underwater estate.

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The underwater estate.

The giant yellow bear looked at Ning, then laughed. "Congratulations. You've broken through to the sixteenth stage as a Fiendgod Body Refiner; this is a major leap for you. You now have two more chances to attempt the Wargod Hall, and can also choose yet another item from the Treasures Hall. And...I have to say, you've grown remarkably patient. You were actually able to wait until nightfall before coming here, after you made a break through."

Ning just chuckled. He then asked, "Last time, I overcame the eighth floor of the Wargod Hall; the ninth and tenth floor now await me. Senior, how good are my chances for attempting the ninth floor?"

"Ninth floor? Mm...if your true body and your Primaltwin join forces, you'd just barely have a tenth of a chance, I suppose," the giant yellow bear said.

"Just a tenth?" Ning was surprised.

He felt that he would be considered formidable even amongst Celestial Immortals by now...and he also had the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] protecting him.

"How good of a chance did you think you'd have? When you overcome the ninth and tenth floors, you'll receive a Pure Yang treasure," the giant yellow bear said. "The seventh and eighth floor have Immortal-ranked treasures as their rewards, but these two have Pure Yang treasures; naturally, the difficulty level will have risen exponentially. Based on my estimations...one needs to have the power of a supreme Celestial Immortal to be absolutely sure of overcoming the ninth floor. As for the tenth floor...you'll need to have close to the level of a Pure Yang True Immortal to overcome it."

Ning blinked.

The ninth floor...a supreme Celestial Immortal?

The tenth floor...close to a Pure Yang True Immortal?

Ning knew his own limits. It must be understood that there was a huge gap between mastering the [Three-Foot Sword] and mastering the Grand Dao of the Sword. Thus, although in sword-arts Ning would be considered formidable amongst Celestial Immortals and would not be considered weak, he was still quite a ways off from the true peak of power. Most likely, Patriarch Unity had the strength of a supreme Celestial Immortal.

"Fine, I won't try it for now. After all...I only have two chances before becoming an Empyrean God," Ning said. "Senior, let's go. Let's go to the Treasures Hall; I want to choose my treasure."

"You should be careful in making this choice. You wouldn't be able to use a Pure Yang treasure right now, even if I gave one to you...so the most important thing for you right now is a good Immortal-ranked magic treasure. This is your third time choosing one, and so I'll bring out all the Immortal-ranked magic

treasures which Master left behind and let you choose from them.” As the giant yellow bear spoke, he led Ning to the Treasures Hall.

The many magic treasures within the hall were still levitating high up in the air, emanating powerful ripples of majesty.

However...to the current Ning, the ripples of power were virtually negligible. He was now able to forcibly seize even Pure Yang treasures.

“Mm, here is the list for all the Immortal-ranked treasures.” The giant yellow bear gave Ning a thick tome listing many treasures.

Ning immediately lowered his head, beginning to flip through it.

He had already chosen two Immortal-ranked magic treasures; the first time, he had chosen the Tripartite Immortal-Locking Circlet, which was a high-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure which he had chosen for the express purpose of giving it to Uncle White, which he had done so long ago. The second time, he had chosen those nine top-grade Immortal-ranked swords that could join together into the [Heavenraker] sword-formation; clearly, this was a much finer treasure. As for this third time...all of the Immortal-ranked magic treasures were now available for his perusing.

“Wow.”

“These things are way better than the Heavenraker swords.” Ning was speechless at what he saw.

Although the Heavenraker swords were excellent...compared to the truly top-notch Immortal-ranked items which Daoist Threelives had collected, they were far inferior. After all, those nine swords were template-produced items.

“These are all the very best available; most likely, in the current Three Realms, they would be considered amongst the most exquisite of Immortal-ranked treasures. When leaving them behind, Master elected not to break up any of the sets,” the nearby giant yellow bear said.

Ning’s eyes were shining with glee as he read through the book.

For example, this one!

A Pentabolt Ship of Cosmic Light: A top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure that could move extremely fast, as fast as an Empyrean God or True Immortal! And once one filled it with elemental ki, Pentabolts of Cosmic Light could be used to attack the enemy.

Pentabolts of Cosmic Light were comparable to the Divine Venomflame of the Nine Heavens in power. If one hid within the ship, the enemies would be unable to do anything to you, while you could release Pentabolts of Cosmic Light to strike your opponent at your leisure! Even the vast majority of Celestial Immortals would perish under such a wild assault; after all, there were very few who were like Ning, who had trained in something that was as protective as the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. This item alone was definitely no less valuable than a Pure Yang treasure! This was because there were very few Pure Yang treasures that were capable of unleashing Pentabolts of Cosmic Light.

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“This one. This is absolutely...” Ning’s eyes were absolutely huge right now.

Tiangang Disha net formation 1 : This was a terrifying, large formation that was formed by 3600 top-grade Immortal-ranked flying knives! Once the enemy was trapped within the formation, the 3600 flying knives would wildly attack from every direction, in such a flurry that they would be almost impossible to block. The flying knives themselves would also be supported by the mysteries of the formation. This set was so powerful that if a Celestial Immortal were to possess it, it would be enough for him to arrogantly roam the realms as he pleased. A grand formation composed of so many top-grade Immortal-ranked flying knives...no one would be so foolish as to accept even a standard Pure Yang treasure in exchange for it!

“Senior, these 3600 top-grade Immortal-ranked flying knives...they are considered ‘one set’?!” Ning couldn’t believe it.

Although the value of a flying knife was generally a bit lower than a flying sword...3600 flying knives were equivalent to hundreds of flying swords. And the Heavenraker swords were merely a set of nine!

“Of course. There are plenty of fine treasures here. In short, all of the fine Immortal-ranked treasures which Master ever acquired have been left here. Just keep looking,” the giant yellow bear said.

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“Myriad Extermination Needles!” Flipping through the book, Ning found the set with the highest number of top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures.

There was a full myriad of flying needles! Ten thousand flying needles, all contained within a needle-box. The needle-box itself was already an extremely valuable top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasure which had a Dao-diagram within it. When battle began, one would open the box, and countless flying needles would come flying out...and the power of the Dao-diagram was truly terrifying as well.

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“Stellar Revolutions sword-formation? Pretty formidable...but it’d be better if it had more flying swords.”

The Stellar Revolutions sword-formation consisted of 360 top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords that were specially forged in order to unleash the Grand Stellar Revolutions formation. Once activated, every single sword would seem to have transformed into a star as it smashed down towards the foe.

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Ning was completely intoxicated as he flipped through the supreme Immortal-ranked magic treasures he found within this tome. These were the items which Daoist Threelives had collected for the express purpose of passing them down to his successors; they weren’t meant for any single person, but rather an entire generation of successors. Thus, he naturally had to prepare quite a few items.

1. Tiangang Disha is a very hard term to translate that comes from the legendary Chinese novel, the ‘Water Margin’. There are 36 ‘Tiangang’, which literally translates into ‘celestial stars (of the Big Dipper)’, and 72 ‘Disha’, which literally translates into ‘terrestrial fiends’. In the Water Margin, they were a group of 108 demons that were banished but managed to escape, and were reborn into outlaw heroes

that fought for justice. Suikoden's '108 Stars of Destiny' and Saint Seiya's '108 Specters' all fundamentally derive from this tale.

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Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 29: Preparing to Head Out

"Choose carefully," the giant yellow bear said with a smirk. "When you come choose Pure Yang treasures, you'll have to wait until your third shot before you once more see such an awesome display."

Ji Ning nodded. He understood this, of course. The first time he had chosen Immortal-ranked magic treasures, he had only been able to choose a high-grade treasure, the Tripartite Immortal-Locking Circlet. Only on the second time had he been given the option of choosing the set of Heavenraker swords. As for the third time...it had been completely different.

The first two times he would have to choose a Pure Yang treasure, he would have to overcome the ninth and tenth levels; the number of treasures would probably be limited. Only after becoming an Empyrean God would he have the third chance to choose Pure Yang treasures; only then would he have the chance to see the most powerful treasures on offer within the entire underwater estate.

But the prerequisite...becoming an Empyrean God!

Empyrean Gods were comparable to Pure Yang True Immortals in power. To become an Empyrean God, one would have to overcome nine nine-sets of the thunder tribulation. In addition, given how extraordinary Ning's background was, with him being a successor to both Daoist Threelives and Patriarch Subhuti...his Empyrean Tribulation would probably be even more difficult than that of most Fiendgods. Thus, Ning didn't dare to be the slightest bit overconfident.

"My [Greater Thousand Swords Formation] requires a total of 729 Immortal swords. Most likely, for the foreseeable future, I'll be using top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords," Ning mused to himself.

Even after he became a Celestial Immortal, it wasn't very likely that he would be able to acquire more than seven hundred Pure Yang treasures, even if he was able to acquire a few.

He had to become an Empyrean God. The third chance to choose a Pure Yang treasure from the underwater estate's Treasure Hall...perhaps there would be a chance. Just a chance! After all, Daoist Threelives had merely left behind some of his stored items; he didn't necessarily have nearly a thousand Pure Yang flying swords that he could leave behind for use in a formation!

And in addition, becoming an Empyrean God was far too distant a goal!

As Ning planned it, he definitely had to let his Primaltwin undergo its tribulation first; only then would he let his true body undergo the Celestial Tribulation. This was because his Primaltwin was merely a Ki Refiner; its tribulation would be a bit easier. As for his true body, a Fiendgod Body Refiner...its tribulation would be utterly terrifying. Since he knew that, he naturally wasn't going to let his true body and his Primaltwin undergo tribulations simultaneously. Ning didn't even dare imagine how terrifying the Celestial Tribulation would be if he did!

In addition, back when he was living on Mount Innerheart, Ning had often chatted with his senior apprentice-brother Silvermoon and the others. His various senior apprentice-brothers had all advised him to have his Primaltwin be the first to undergo the tribulation. That way, it would first enter the

Celestial Immortal stage, allowing him to comprehend the Grand Dao of the Sword at a faster rate. Once his level of insight into it became higher...after his preparations were more thorough...only then would his true body undergo the tribulation.

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“The Three Realms are in a state of chaos. I’ll be relying on this final set of flying swords to protect myself! I’ll also be using them to withstand the Celestial Tribulation!” Ning was extremely cautious and careful as he flipped through the book, reading each page carefully. He saw many formidable sets of powerful top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords, but unfortunately there were no sets of nearly a thousand top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords.

But suddenly, his eyes lit up and came to a halt.

“There it is.” Ning revealed a look of delight.

The Yin-Yang Duality Thousand Supremes Formation: A sword-formation formed by a set of five hundred extremely Yin-aligned ‘Sole-Ki Frost Swords’ and five hundred extremely Yang-aligned ‘Qiangang Inferno Swords’. They could combine into the Yin-Yang Duality Thousand Supremes Formation; once formed, Yin and Yang would intersect and fire and water would converge, annihilating all things. All of the swords were top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords; they could be controlled by two different people at the same time, with one controlling the five hundred Sole-Ki Frost Swords and the other controlling the five hundred Qiangang Inferno Swords, with the two working together to set up the formation. However, all thousand swords could be used by a single person to establish the formation as well.

The book had quite a few mysteries recorded within it. In fact, it even recorded one of the major formations that could be used with this Yin-Yang Duality Thousand Supremes Formation.

However, there were some things regarding this formation that were never recorded down. In truth, this sword-formation had originally been controlled by a pair of Celestial Immortal Dao-companions. The female Immortal controlled the Sole-Ki Frost Swords, while the male Immortal had controlled the Qiangang Inferno Swords.

Controlling this many top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords was simply too mentally exhausting; there were very few individuals, even amongst Celestial Immortals, who would be able to control a thousand of these top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords to set up the Yin-Yang Duality Thousand Supremes Formation.

“This formation is far too difficult.” Ning’s face couldn’t help but change as he read through it. “Although this formation uses swords, it actually places a higher burden with regards to understanding the Dao of Formations. These precious Immortal swords are actually merely used as markers to position the formation; what a waste of fine swords!”

There were many Immortals who used swords, but they weren’t necessarily Sword Immortals!

For example, Immortal Fivecraze was a wielder of Immortal swords, while Little Qing’s weapon of choice was also an Immortal sword. Most likely, more than half of the Loose Immortals alive all used Immortal swords as their weapon of choice...but less than one in a thousand of them were Sword Immortals! In

this Yin-Yang Duality Formation, every single sword served as a formation-base, allowing the establishing of a truly enormous formation of unearthly power.

“Only in my hands shall you truly be able to unleash the power of a ‘sword’,” Ning murmured to himself.

Ning continued to read.

Soon, he finished reading the entire book. This book had notes on quite a few sets of Immortal swords, but there were only two sets of sword-formations that included more than 729 swords! The swords of the Yin-Yang Duality Thousand Supremes Formation were divided into Yin and Yang; in terms of the Dao of Formations, Ning just so happened to be fairly skilled in harmonizing Yin and Yang, and so he ended up choosing this set.

“This’ll be the one,” Ning said with a smile.

The underwater estate. The Stellar Hall.

Ning was seated in the lotus position within the thatched cottage, holding an Immortal sword that was emanating an icy cold aura. A small, snow-white snake suddenly appeared on the surface of the Immortal sword. “Are you the master of myself and my many sisters?”

“Sisters?” Ning smiled as he gave this snow-white snake a glance.

“All five hundred of us Sole-Ki Frost Swords are dear sisters to each other,” the little white snake said, “While those five hundred Qiangang Inferno Swords are our rowdy brothers.”

Ning laughed. He pointed towards the empty air and elemental ki flew out from his finger, forming into a series of runes. These runes emanated a blurry, dark light as they simply hung there in the air. These had been taught to Ning by his master, Patriarch Subhuti, in transmitting the technique for the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]; the Old Patriarch had used up an enormous amount of energy in developing them.

Moments later, more than ten thousand runes had appeared in midair, forming into a strange, enormous Fiendgod character, ‘thousand’.

“Condense.” Ning activated his elemental ki one more time. Instantly, all of the many runes joined together, transforming into a single rune of incomparable complexity; this was the ‘Greater Thousand Rune’. This, too, was a simple rune-fusing technique which the Old Patriarch had taught him. An expert in runes would be able to instantly generate this Greater Thousand Rune; Ning, by contrast, had to first manifest each of the small runes.

“Combine.” Ning slapped his palm against the Greater Thousand Rune, then slapped the side of the Immortal sword, pressing them together.

The blade of the sword instantly began to manifest a distorted yet complicated pattern of runes on it, and it seemed as though the aura of this Immortal sword had grown sharper as well.

“One down. Another!” Ning continued to create his runes.

One Immortal sword after another was retrofitted by Ning. To the current Ning, the runes of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] could probably be generated with a single thought and within a single

breath as he imprinted all the swords with the Lesser Thousand Rune. However, this Greater Thousand Rune that was created based off the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] and other exceptional skills that involved many treasures was a far more complicated creature. Just setting up a single Greater Thousand Rune required more than ten thousand smaller runes; every single one of them far more complicated than the Lesser Thousand Rune.

He spent a total of three days before finally imprinting the last of the 729 Immortal swords with the Greater Thousand Rune. As for the remaining 200+ swords, Ning temporarily put them away.

“Arise, my [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]!”

Ning tested time and time again, but he realized that even with the help of the Greater Thousand Runes, and even though the many Immortal swords would resonate together as if they were one...his true body and his Primaltwin, combined, were at most only able to unleash the second level of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation], controlling 182 top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords! This was a maximum limit, and if his true body needed to also spend some of its attention on close combat...at most, he would be able to unleash the first level of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation].

“What terrifying power.”

The hundred-plus top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords, even without using any formations, just chopping wildly, still made for an awe-inspiring sight.

By relying on the power of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation], they could merge their power together.

In an instant, Ning’s power as a Ki Refiner once more surpassed his true body’s close combat power as a Fiendgod Refiner!

After making his breakthrough, Ning remained at Swallow Mountain for a few more times, carefully testing his close combat power and his [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]. After stabilizing at his latest level of power...Ning finally left Swallow Mountain.

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Flamedoor Commandery. The air above Weirflow City.

It was dawn. The air above Weirflow was cold and crisp. A faint spatial ripple suddenly appeared, then a fur-clad youth emerged from within it.

This time, Ning had come alone, primarily because he was relying on the ‘Seventy-Two Transformations’ for his investigations; it wouldn’t be appropriate for him to bring Uncle White and the others.

“Last time, I fled a million kilometers through teleportation; I ended up arriving here, at Weirflow. My original prediction was the mountain range I was in was the Eastwoods mountain range, but I don’t know if that was a correct guess or not.” Ning smiled. “Time to go test it.”

Swoosh!

Ning flew straight towards the direction he had fled from previously. While flying, he would occasionally do a short ten-kilometer teleportation. Soon, Ning verified that his original hypothesis was indeed correct; that place was indeed the Eastwoods mountain range of the Eastwoods Sect.

“The Eastwoods Sect?”

“How should I get in?”

“Should I change into a bug? But the Eastwoods mountain range is protected by formations; if a mosquito or bug was able to break through it, others would probably notice.” Ning frowned in a pondering manner...then decided to begin the area surrounding the Eastwoods mountain range. “I refuse to believe that not a single disciple of a major school such as this would enter or leave from time to time!”

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Ning first went to the Heavenly Treasures Mountain to buy some reports regarding the experts of the Eastwoods Sect, so that he might be able to recognize their important figures. Ning then set up watch outside the Eastwoods mountain range, often using the [Torch-Dragon’s Eye] to search the surrounding area.

Ning searched for three full days.

“We are venerable Primal Daoists, but we are now in such a sorry state that all we can do is act as messenger dogs and servants. We have to buy Immortal nectar, Immortal fruit, and all sorts of other queer marvels and strange beasts to be butchered and cooked. How sad!” A large warship descended, and two Immortal practitioners walked out from within it, walking side-by-side, chatting mentally to each other. They were so cautious that they used mental messages to carry out their grumblings.

“Even the sect leader is summoned willy nilly by them; what can Primal Daoists like us do about it? Forget it. Just endure it. Didn’t that general himself say that he would definitely leave within a thousand years and give us our freedom back?”

“We’ll probably have died before then.”

The two Primal Daoists were complaining. Tens of thousands of kilometers away from them, there sat a fur-clad youth in the lotus position. His eyes were glowing with torch-light, and as he saw them from afar, a look of delight instantly appeared on his face. “Hey, aren’t those two the Primal Daoists of the Eastwoods Sect? I knew it; an enormous clan that’s taken up a hundred thousand kilometers of space definitely has people entering and leaving it. It seems I need to rely on them to get inside.”

Ning suddenly disappeared as he executed a void blink, stealthily moving closer to them.

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Book 14: Return to the Grand Xia Chapter 30: Within the Eastwoods Sect

The two Primal Daoists walked forward, shoulder-to-shoulder. Suddenly, a light flashed in front of them, then a fur-clad youth appeared out of nowhere.

“Who are you?” The faces of the two Primal Daoists changed as they shouted simultaneously.

Boom! An incomparably terrifying majesty swept out from Ji Ning's body, and space within three thousand meters became completely frozen.

The wind halted. The swaying grass froze mid-sway. The hopping grasshoppers paused mid-jump. The flowing waters of the nearby creek stopped in its tracks. Even the beads of water spraying into the air from the creek just hovered there.

The faces of the two Primal Daoists were completely filled with terror and shock...but they, too, were completely unable to move. When that terrifying Dao Domain descended, they were completely unable to resist at all.

Back when he had been in the Crescent world, Ning had been able to use his Dao Domain to easily render a squad of Flamewing Guards completely helpless. By comparison, these two Primal Daoists were actually slightly weaker than the Flamewing Guards.

"In you go." Ning waved his hand, and an irresistible force drew those two individuals into his mobile Immortal estate.

Ning swept the surrounding region with his gaze; when making his move, he had been extremely cautious. He had kept his Dao Domain to a radius of merely three thousand meters, not affecting the area beyond this region at all.

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Within his mobile Immortal estate.

The two Primal Daoists stared at their surroundings in terror.

"What is this place?"

"Where are we?! This...can this be a mobile Immortal estate?!" The two Primal Daoists, upon viewing their surroundings, could only think of this one possibility.

"Easthill, who was that youth? How is it that he was able to render us completely helpless merely through using his Dao Domain? Can he be a Celestial Immortal?"

"He most likely is on their level."

These two Primordial Daoists were filled with terror and worry. The enemy's power was simply too great; they weren't able to fight back against him at all. Not even the more powerful Loose Immortals of their Eastwoods Sect was capable of using a simple Dao Domain to render them completely helpless; clearly, this youth's Dao Domain had surpassed that of virtually every single member of the Eastwoods Sect.

"The two of you." The black-robed Ning appeared.

"Senior, why have you seized the two of us?" One of the two Primal Daoists, a tall, skinny man, hurriedly spoke out.

"Senior, if there's anything you need from us, just tell us," the other Primal Daoist, a man with triangular pupils, said quickly.

The black-robed Ning smiled. "It is simple. I want to soul-scour the two of you."

"Soul-scour?!" The two instantly revealed looks of terror.

Soul-scouring. If one was lucky, one might be able to maintain their ordinary faculties, at most losing a few of their memories. But if one was unlucky...they might be turned into idiots!

"The two of you should know that killing you is effortless for me," the black-robed Ning said. "I can forcibly soul-scour you, but as you should know, doing that would be quite damaging to you, possibly resulting in the two of you being turned into idiots. Thus...I hope that the two of you will accept it and won't fight back. That way...your Primal-level souls should be able to maintain normalcy."

The two Primal Daoists exchanged a glance.

They felt helpless.

Why were they so damn unlucky?

They knew very well that if they were to resist and be forcibly soul-scoured...then things would be even more disastrous for them.

"We accept. Senior, please spare our lives," the two said.

"Don't worry. I won't kill you," the black-robed Ning said. In truth, based on the intelligence reports which Ning had received from the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, these two had done quite a few evil deeds. Given Ning's usual temperament, he would've killed them long ago...but if he did, then the life-tablets of the two within the Eastwoods Sect would shatter, and the Sect would know that they died. Once that happened, his plan would fail.

The two Primal Daoists closed their eyes.

The black-robed Ning stretched out his hand, placing it atop the head of the tall, skinny Primal Daoist. He immediately used the 'Thousand Stars Soulscour' technique; this technique was a soulscouring technique which he had acquired in the Crescent world after killing that evil Patriarch.

Moments later...Ning lowered his hands.

A look of joy appeared within the eyes of the tall, skinny Primal Daoist. "I'm fine. I'm fine!"

"I told you. If you don't resist at all, your soul will find it easier to maintain its normalcy, and in fact very few memories will be lost." The black-robed Ning looked towards the other person, the triangle-pupiled Primal Daoist. That Primal Daoist closed his eyes as well, accepting the soulscouring. Ning walked over to him, placing his palm atop his head as well.

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At the base of the Eastwoods mountain range.

"So the two of them were so spineless," Ning mused to himself. Waving his hand, he produced a sack that was filled with the items that had been purchased.

Roughly thirty years ago, the Eastwoods Sect had suffered a calamity. The majority of its tougher figures were all wiped out, while a few who were able to suppress their anger were able to survive. They all hoped for freedom to come. However...the Eastwoods Sect also had some spineless figures who even helped the mysterious power act against their fellow disciples!

Daoist Easthill and Daoist Eastharm were two such spineless figures! They abused their former 'fellow disciples', currying favor with the mysterious figures as if they were dogs!

Naturally, this resulted in the two of them being viewed with favor, and they were even allowed to go out and shop.

However...

Although they did their utmost to please, the mysterious power still viewed them as nothing more but dogs. They were absolutely forbidden from going near the most important 'forbidden region'; in fact, even the Eastwoods sect leader was forbidden from entering it!

"A mysterious power?"

"The leader is a 'general'? Supposedly at the Celestial Immortal level?"

"A forbidden region?"

After finishing the soulscouring, Ning immediately began to pay attention to this supposed 'forbidden region'.

The forbidden region was simply too mysterious. After taking over the Eastwoods mountain range, the mysterious power had designed a certain part of it as a 'forbidden region', with many people being sent within it. In fact, even that 'general' would often go inside.

"Change!" Ning instantly changed, transforming into the appearance of that tall, skinny Primal Daoist – Daoist Easthill.

Ning immediately headed straight towards the entrance to the Eastwoods Sect.

"Daoist Easthill has returned? Where is Daoist Eastharm?" One of the two gate guards asked.

"It has been a long time since Daoist Eastharm returned to his tribe, so he made a side trip this time. I came back first," Ning said with a smile. Due to the soulscouring, Ning now knew well that these spineless figures were rather trusted, and so they were often allowed to return to their tribes. That way, the spies of the imperial Xia clan wouldn't notice anything strange about the Eastwoods Sect.

Otherwise...if all of a sudden, no members of the Eastwoods Sect were returning to their clans...in an era like this, when the Three Realms were in a state of turmoil, the imperial Xia clan would definitely investigate.

Ning smiled as he spoke, then walked in. In a very familiar manner, he walked through the various formations. He knew exactly how to bypass them, because of what he had learned through the soulscouring.

.....

Upon 'returning' to the Eastwoods Sect and handing over the purchased items, Ning chatted for a while with some of the cultivators of the Eastwoods Sect, then went to the residence of Daoist Easthill.

"Change!"

A mosquito flew out from Daoist Easthill's residence.

Mosquitos were extremely common; even if one were to wipe out a swathe of them, the next night many more would most likely appear, especially since the Eastwoods Sect was located within a mountain forest. Ning, in the shape of a mosquito, flew closer and closer to the 'forbidden region'.

The forbidden region was layered with increasingly powerful formations.

The mosquito-Ning was forced to come to a halt outside the formations, landing on the ground.

"Step closely.

"Hurry up. Keep in line! We're about to enter the formation. If you get out of line, you'll be trapped within the eighteen great formations. I really don't want to have to go find those guys and ask them to save you." A group of black-robed figure was flying towards the formation, with the one in the very rear urging them to move faster.

Whap.

As they walked forward, the foot of one of the black-robed figures was stained with a speck of mud. This mud was the transformed Ning!

Not even Immortal cultivators would constantly use their power to dissipate the dust and mud from their feet with every step; how tiring would that be?! As the group of black-robed figures advanced through the region, carefully passing through all eighteen formations, the bit of 'mud' staining one of their feet was also brought through the eighteen formations.

After passing through the formations...they entered the 'forbidden zone'. There were many roving patrols here.

Rumble...

The mosquito-Ning was flying through the forbidden region.

"This place truly is guarded tightly. What's going on here?" The mosquito-Ning flew into a gorge with many mosquitos, maintaining the speed of an ordinary mosquito. "The deeper I go into this gorge, the tighter the guard becomes."

Deep within the gorge, there was a castle.

The castle was covered with a layer of light which not even mosquitos could pass into. The number of black-robed figures patrolling this place was simply astonishing. All of them emanated auras of tremendous power, at least at the Earth Immortal or Loose Immortal level.

"Some of the black-robed figures are merely at the Wanxiang or Primal level...but the ones guarding this castle are all Loose Immortals, and there are more than a hundred of them?" Ning was secretly

speechless. More than a hundred Loose Immortals were standing guard outside; the number of true guardians must definitely be even greater.

“This castle...?” The mosquito-Ning landed, staring at the distant castle.

He waited until nightfall, until a group of gray-robed figures came walking out from within the castle.

“Finally, someone came out from the castle. These people have fairly powerful auras; they seem to all be Earth Immortals or Loose Immortals. Heeeeey...why are they all...?”

Ning suddenly discovered, to his astonishment, that each of the gray-robed figures had looks of exhaustion on their faces. Their exhaustion was so evident that Ning could sense it from a great distance away.

“They are all Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals; how could they become so tired?” Ning couldn’t believe it; Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals had very strong minds. Only if their mental energy was utterly exhausted would they appear like this.

Mental exhaustion usually wasn’t that important to Immortals. But if it reached a certain level...it could become quite terrifying. For example, if an Immortal, in order to produce a powerful magic treasure, was to work day and night and use up all his blood and effort, he might even perish; this sort of event happened quite often within the Three Realms. Generally speaking, after Immortal cultivators grew tired, they would rest and relax for a time.

“How can they be so exhausted? And it’s not just one or two of them, but an entire group?” Ning was puzzled.

Suddenly...

Ning was stupefied!

Towards the back of that squad of gray-robed figures, there was a fairly small, skinny gray-robed figure who woodenly walked forward.

“Junior...junior apprentice-brother?!” Ning stared in disbelief. That gray-robed figure was Ning’s junior apprentice-brother, a person he was incomparably familiar with...it was Mu Northson, who had been missing for more than twenty years!

Mu Northson!

Years ago, he had found a Dao-companion and begun to enjoy a happy life. But soon...his Dao-companion perished, and he himself had vanished as well.

The Black-White College had searched for him but was unable to find him!

Ning had never imagined...that here, within the Eastwoods mountain range, he would run into his junior apprentice-brother! Even less did he imagine that his junior apprentice-brother would end up looking like this!

His body, beneath that gray robe, had become even thinner and frailer. He clearly had the aura of a Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal...but Ning could not sense any power at all coming from him. All he

could sense was that his junior apprentice-brother was like a sputtering candle that could go out at any moment. His life force was extremely weak, and waves of exhaustion flowed out from him.

The frailness was just a minor matter; what really mattered was that Ning couldn't sense any vigor at all coming from his junior apprentice-brother. It seemed as though the vigorous, lively youth had completely disappeared, transforming into someone who seemed like an old man that was on the verge of death.

His face was ashen, and his hair was a complete mess. In fact, he even had quite a few white hairs.

"Junior apprentice-brother..." Ning felt that the white hairs were particularly painful for him to see.

For an Earth Immortal or Loose Immortal, there was only one reason a person would develop white hairs, unless they intentionally used a technique to change it; utter mental exhaustion. If one was utterly mentally exhausted, one's hair might even turn completely white within a single night...or even perish.

"What on earth happened?" Ning was truly stunned.

His memories remained so clear and vivid...

"My name is Mu Northson?" That youthful white-robed youngster had been so full of vigor.

"My name is Ji Ning. I'm sixteen this year. How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

That was their first meeting. That bashful, youthful figure...Ning remembered it all as if it was yesterday.

"Senior apprentice-brother, I'll go with you. Going with you and fleeing together is bound to be an exciting life." When Ning had killed Youngflame Nong, his junior apprentice-brother had shown no hesitation at all; he had been filled with energy and determination, even in the face of life as a refugee.

"What...what in the world has caused junior apprentice-brother to become like this?"

Ning stared at the gray-robed Mu Northson...at the decrepit, exhausted Mu Northson.

.....

The group of gray-robed figures walked past. Mosquitos flew about within the gorge, with one of them flying behind the gray-robed figures.

"You only have two hours to rest," a black-robed figure barked.

The group of gray-robed figures began to separate, each returning to his own residence. The gray-robed Northson began to move towards his residence, one of the many residences in this area. He pushed open the door, entered, then shut the door.

Within a room in his residence.

Northson sat in front of a wooden desk. He picked up a canteen of water, pouring himself a cup, then began to quietly drink it.

It was quiet. Terrifyingly quiet.

The only sound within the room was that of the quiet gurgling of water. Northson then put the cup down silently, then sat there wordlessly, not saying a single thing. His gaze was straight forward.

Whoosh. Northson suddenly waved his hand, and a blocking formation suddenly appeared within the room. He then waved his hand again, and a wooden figurine appeared. This was the figurine of a woman, and it was very lifelike. Northson stared at the figurine, then placed it on the table. Waving his hand again, he produced another block of wood, then began to carve it with a small knife. He carved in a very slow manner, sending wood chips flying everywhere as the block of wood began to gradually be formed into a woman's appearance.

Finally, the sculpting was complete.

He placed the wooden sculpture on the desk, then stared at it. Simply stared at it in a daze.

"Junior apprentice-brother!" Suddenly, a voice rang out.

A fur-clad youth appeared within the room.

That familiar voice seemed to summon suppressed memories from deep within the soul of Mu Northson. He raised his head to look...and was suddenly arrested. His entire body became completely frozen. He just stared at the fur-clad youth who was standing there.

Those familiar furs...

That familiar appearance...

That familiar voice...

Those eyes...that gaze...

"Senior, senior apprentice-brother?" A very dry, rusted voice emerged from Northson's throat, as though it had been a long time since he had spoken.

"Junior apprentice-brother. Junior apprentice-brother!" Ning stared at his junior apprentice-brother, his eyes moist. "What has happened?"

Northson looked at Ning. Stared at him. His tears suddenly came cascading down. He opened his mouth, wanting to cry, but nothing came out. His body just shuddered, his tears continuing to flow.

Ning hurriedly stepped forward, embracing Northson.

"Cry, cry. Let it out. Don't keep it suppressed in your heart. Let it all come out." Ning's own eyes were red as he spoke softly. He could sense the endless pain suppressed within his junior apprentice-brother's heart. He couldn't even imagine...he didn't even want to imagine...what his junior apprentice-brother had experienced over these years. What in the world had caused his junior apprentice-brother, whose Dao-heart had been so strong, to become like this?

Ning could sense his junior apprentice-brother's body trembling within his arms.

Ning felt as though his own heart was trembling as well!

What had happened?

What had happened!

Why had it ended up this way?

Why?

“Let it all come out. Don’t keep it suppressed in your heart. Cry it all out. Your senior apprentice-brother is here. Now that I’m here, it will all come to an end. It will all end,” Ning said, holding his junior apprentice-brother’s shuddering body in his arms. His junior apprentice-brother’s tears flowed onto his clothes, even onto his neck.

Ning could feel his junior apprentice-brother’s tears.

“AHHHH!!!!” An agonized cry finally ripped through the room.

“AHHH...AHHHHHHH!!!!” Northson’s cries carried a sound of utter desolation and hoarseness. He sobbed furiously, howled agonizingly.

Ning tightly held his beloved friend in his arm, listening to his cries. He could sense the bottomless, endless depths of pain, misery, grief, and despair explode forth from the cries. Ning tightly held his dear brother, his own heart shaking. He felt as though his own heart was being stabbed by knives.

Pain.

Splitting pain.

What had happened? That young white-robed youth, the one who could ignore even the threat of death and choose to follow Ning in fleeing across the world...what had changed him so?!

“I swear!!!”

“No matter who did it! No matter who they are...all of them...each of them...every last one of them...they will all die. ALL OF THEM WILL DIE!!!” Ning held his sobbing junior apprentice-brother, his own tears falling down as he swore an oath in his mind.

The Desolate Era

Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 1: The Full Story

The pain and despair that he had suppressed for so many years all came howling out with his cries. Slowly, Mu Northson regained his faculties and let go of Ji Ning. “Senior apprentice-brother, I’m fine now. I wasn’t able to control myself just now; I made a fool of myself in front of you.”

“We’re brothers; why say such things?” Ning looked towards Northson. “Junior apprentice-brother, tell me – what happened?!”

“Nothing.” Northson shook his head. “What was to happen already has.”

Northson looked at Ning. “Senior apprentice-brother, how did you get here? This is a forbidden region that is tightly guarded; not even Celestial Immortals can barge their way inside.”

Ning looked at his tired, downtrodden junior apprentice-brother. He felt pain in his heart; at a time like this, his junior apprentice-brother was actually refusing to say anything. Ning immediately said, “I know

this is a forbidden region. I also know...that this is the Flamedoor Commandery's Eastwoods mountain range. Given my abilities, if I want to enter this place, no one will be able to find out. Junior apprentice-brother, tell me...what has happened?!"

"No need to ask." Northson shook his head.

"If I was faced with this situation, wouldn't you ask?" Ning rebutted.

Northson was startled. It was true. They were like brothers; if Ning was in such a dire situation, Northson wouldn't be able to ignore it.

"Tell me," Ning said earnestly.

"Senior apprentice-brother." Northson looked at Ning. "Telling you would be harming you. I've already been damned; I don't want you to be damned as well."

Ning understood that this must certainly involve an important matter; the number of Loose Immortals around that castle was enough to tell Ning that the amount of power that had been gathered here in the Eastwoods mountain range alone was on the same level as the power available to the Northmont clan of Stillwater; in fact, it might even be greater. As for the great power behind this place...

"Junior apprentice-brother, don't underestimate me. You know very well that this is a forbidden region which is not easily entered, but I still managed to make it in. I'm no longer the same person I was," Ning said earnestly. "After the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, I joined a Daofather's school and became the Daofather's disciple."

The Old Patriarch had only forbidden Ning from saying that he was his disciple; so long as Ning didn't say the words 'Patriarch Subhuti', he wouldn't be violating his master's orders.

"What?!" Northson was stunned.

"I've trained for thirty-plus years and my power has increased greatly. I finally managed to obtain permission from Master to return to the Grand Xia." Ning looked at Northson. "Even if I truly do encounter any danger, my master will intervene and rescue me. The world of the Grand Xia currently truly is filled with dangerous undercurrents, and there is even a hidden power that is capable of fighting against the Grand Xia Emperor himself. But if my master was to intervene, he would be able to save my life with utter ease...and thus, there is nothing for you to worry about."

Northson was dazed.

"You don't believe me? Take a look!" Ning waved his hand. Instantly, one top-grade Immortal-ranked flying sword after another appeared, clustered together in a tight pile. Because they all had to be kept within this room, they were all piled on top of one another.

"These..." Northson could sense the power of these top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords.

"You should be capable of recognizing these for what they are by now," Ning said.

"Top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords?" Northson guessed.

"Yes." Ning nodded. "There are a thousand here."

Northson's throat clenched. Even though he was here in this forbidden region where he had seen a fraction of the true strength of this mysterious power...he was still stunned by Ji Ning! Top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords...every single one of them was extremely valuable. A set of a thousand was utterly inconceivable!

"After I left my master's tutelage, my master gifted them to me." Ning looked at Northson. "In addition, I was able to easily enter this forbidden region. Do you believe me now?"

Northson was beginning to be moved.

"Take a look at this." Ning's body flickered.

Swish. He transformed into another Mu Northson, dressed in the same gray robes, with the same exhausted complexion and some white hairs on his head.

"But, but..." Northson stared in disbelief at Ning. "Even the aura is absolutely identical...even the amount of karmic virtue is the same! This cannot be!"

"Why can't it be? Change again!"

Ning then transformed into Immortal Fivecraze, then into the Fiendgod Xiangliu Fang, then into Youngflame Nong, then into Celestial Immortal King Yan...

He quickly transformed into more than ten figures the two both recognized before changing back into his normal appearance.

"Are you still worried about me?" Ning looked at Northson.

"I believe you when you say that you took on a Daofather as your master. I've never even heard of a transformation ability like this one." Northson nodded, then said in a low voice, "I know that you, senior apprentice-brother, definitely wish to understand everything which happened. Fine...I'll talk."

Ning let out a sigh of relief.

Northson sat down. "We still have slightly less than an hour...so I'll start from when I met Yu Xia. Years ago, in Stillwater City, I met Yu Xia. She was a disciple of the Thousand Rivers Sect, but was filled with curiosity towards the Dao of Constructs. But naturally, her ability in the Dao of Constructs was far inferior to mine."

After the death of his master, Northson could be considered the number one expert in the Dao of Constructs within the Black-White College! This was because there were very few people within the College who trained in this Dao, and also because he truly did have a high amount of talent within this Dao.

"Yu Xia would often ask me for guidance, and I'd give her advice." A hint of a smile appeared on Northson's face. "After a long time...the two of us ended up together, becoming Dao-companions. Those were the happiest days of my life; I felt carefree and without any worries. Alongside my Dao-companion, I continued to study the Dao of Formations in a content, relaxed manner."

"Yu Xia and I lived in an out-of-the-way place, atop a wild prairie. We built a house next to a lake, and we lived a peaceful life there."

"I wish so deeply..."

"...to have been able to live there forever."

Northson shut his eyes. "But then...that day came. A group of black-robed men arrived, all of them Loose Immortals, and formidable ones at that. Yu Xia was merely a Wanxiang Adept, while I had just broken through to become a Primal Daoist. The two of us were completely unable to fight back."

"I was captured. Yu Xia was killed. After she died, her soul wasn't permitted to be reborn; rather, it was captured as well."

Ning's pupils shrank.

Even after Yu Xia died, her soul had still been captured?

"I was brought here," Northson said. "Brought here, to this forbidden region. The people in this region ordered me to help them build constructs."

"Build constructs?" Ning instantly understood. "Those other gray-robed figures...they were also brought here because they were skilled in the Dao of Constructs?"

"Right. There are more than one hundred grandmasters of the Dao of Constructs in this area," Northson said. "They've all been brought here. I suspect that the Eastwoods mountain range is a gathering point for the mysterious power behind this place, for more than a hundred nearby commanderies."

Ning frowned. "One of the gathering points? You know of other gathering points?"

"I have some guesses," Northson said. "During these years, I've seen seven generals come to this place. 'General' is a fairly high rank here, and all of them were at the Celestial Immortal level. The Eastwoods mountain range has a general who is permanently stationed here, but on multiple occasions there have been other generals who escorted deliveries of treasures to this place. In total, I've seen twelve different generals!"

Ning was secretly startled.

Twelve Celestial Immortals? And this was just the tip of the iceberg!

"They are asking you to create constructs?" Ning asked. "What sort of construct?"

"An extremely large one." A look of disbelief was in Northson's eyes. "This power has an extremely deep level of understanding regarding the Dao of Constructs; their understanding, compared to the secret arts recorded down within our Black-White College regarding the Dao of Constructs, must be billions or even trillions of times greater!"

Ning was rather stunned upon hearing this.

Billions? Trillions?! This was too insane.

"Don't think I'm just talking," Northson immediately said. "I feel that I am an extremely talented person with regards to the Dao of Constructs, but when I first came, they taught me some construct-creation methods that they felt were fairly low-level. When creating the constructs, I was inspired by the

mysteries and profoundness of them, causing my level of insight into the Dao of Constructs to rapidly increase.”

“As my level of insight increased, they began to let me create increasingly more powerful constructs. They also bestowed liquefied elemental essence upon me, allowing me to reach the Void level and become an Earth Immortal.”

“Now, within this forbidden region, I can be ranked amongst the top hundred grandmasters of the Dao of Constructs,” Northson said. “Right now, the other grandmasters and myself are currently working together to forge an incomparably massive construct. It should be the most powerful Fiendgod Golem this forbidden region is producing.”

“Grandmaster of the Dao of Constructs?” Ning could hardly believe it. His junior apprentice-brother had advanced so quickly?

“Senior apprentice-brother...you have no idea what life here has been like,” Northson said. “They squeeze every single drop of usable energy out of you, forcing you to go all out to construct new constructs! But every single powerful construct expands our horizons as well. As for the most powerful Fiendgod Golem we are currently creating...that’s even more terrifying.”

“How terrifying?” Ning asked.

“Below the level of True Immortals or Empyrean Gods...it is all but invincible,” Northson said seriously. “If a Celestial Immortal was controlling it, not even ten or a hundred Celestial Immortals fighting together would be able to stop it.”

Ning was incomparably shocked.

“Don’t be so shocked. The slightly weaker golems which the other grandmasters and myself have been constructing, when controlled by Loose Immortals, all have the combat power of Celestial Immortals.” Northson sighed, “You have no idea what a deep level of understanding of the Dao of Constructs this organization has. Those construct formation-diagrams are incomparably profound; in terms of better understanding the Dao of Constructs, every single diagram is like a supreme treasure to us. And here, I’ve already seen more than a thousand such construct formation-diagrams...”

Ning nodded gently. “So this forbidden region is being used to produce constructs...but can it be that everyone is just willing to work here?”

“How can we be ‘willing’?” Northson said with grief, “Nobody is ‘willing’. Creating these top-tier golems is extremely difficult, and it uses up a tremendous amount of our mental energy. And yet, we are still having the life squeezed out of us; the amount of time for rest we have been given is growing less and less.”

“We all hate them for kidnapping us, and in fact many wish to die. I originally wanted to die as well.”

“But...Yu Xia’s soul is in their hands,” Northson said. “If I diligently work to create golems, I can go visit her once a month and speak with her. But if I dare to commit suicide...once I die, they will torment her soul for thousands on thousands of years, never giving her a chance to be reborn.”

Ning couldn’t help but shiver. Never be given the chance to be reborn?

“I do not dare kill myself.” Northson laughed bitterly. “Their general, however, has voluntarily sworn an oath to the Dao of the Heavens that if we stay here and peacefully build these constructs, within a thousand years we will be granted our freedom, and the soul of our loved one will be released as well.”

Freedom?

A thousand years?

Ning understood now. In one hand, a big stick; in the other hand, a carrot. Although the people here were being tormented and exhausted, they still saw hope, and so they were able to endure.

The Desolate Era

Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 2: The Rescue Plan

Ji Ning now knew about all the twists and turns that had led to the current situation. He immediately said, “Junior apprentice-brother, I’ll come up with a way to save your Dao-companion’s soul, then lead you away.”

Although his heart was filled with a desire for murder, Ning knew very well that the truly important thing was to rescue his junior apprentice-brother and the soul of Yu Xia.

“It’s useless.” Mu Northson shook his head. “There’s no way I can leave the forbidden region.”

“Why?!” Ning hurriedly asked.

“This mysterious power seems to be worried that we might have a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal hidden within our Zifu region; without killing us, there’s no way they can find out,” Northson said. “To prevent us from escaping, when they caught us, they forced us to swear oaths to the Dao of the Heavens that unless they voluntarily grant us freedom, if we are to flee this place and go beyond the confines of the Eastwoods mountain range, we shall have our souls shattered.”

“What?!” Ning was stunned.

This was going to be trouble.

“We only have two paths before us. The first path is the path of death, followed by the souls of our loved ones suffering for countless ages, never to be reborn! The second path is to swear the oath to the Dao of the Heavens, then obediently work hard. Those of us who did not commit suicide...we are all hoping for our final freedom,” Northson said.

Ning nodded lightly.

Aside from the tight watch they maintained, they had also forced Northson and the others to swear oaths to the Dao of the Heavens not to flee. Quite cautious indeed!

“You said...‘unless they voluntarily grant you freedom’?” Ning suddenly asked.

“Right,” Northson said. “After all, the general himself also swore an oath to the Dao of the Heavens to free us within a thousand years. If we are to never be given freedom, many people would likely choose suicide instead.”

Ning pondered for a moment, then said, "Right...earlier, you said that you and the other grandmasters are pooling your abilities to create an incomparably terrifying Fiendgod Golem...and that if a Celestial Immortal was to command it, it could be described as invincible against any foes beneath the True Immortal or Emyprean God level! Then the creation of this golem must be very hard, right? The materials are quite precious?"

There were quite a few Celestial Immortals who had Pure Yang treasures. For this Fiendgod Golem to be referred to as 'invincible against any foes beneath the True Immortal or Emyprean God level' had to mean that it was vastly more valuable than any ordinary Pure Yang treasure.

"The creation is indeed quite difficult." Northson nodded. "Although all of us are Loose Immortals or Earth Immortals, and have detailed blueprints, the golem formation-diagrams within...they are simply unfathomably profound. We grandmasters are like a horde of ants, diligently working away at the task. We've spent more than twelve years on it, but we've managed to finish more than half of the Fiendgod Golem. I trust that in two or three more years, we'll have finished it."

"As for the materials? They are naturally of enormous value. This mighty golem has extremely exacting standards when it comes to its materials; weaker materials are completely unable to withstand the power that will be circulated through it via the mighty formation-diagrams. To put it another way...this Fiendgod Golem is the most important task I have been given since I was brought here! All of the grandmasters have joined forces to work on it, while the ordinary golem-masters are merely working on secondary constructs instead."

Ning nodded lightly. "All the grandmasters have joined forces and have spent twelve years on it? Most of you, when first arriving, must have been at a comparatively low level of skill in the Dao of Constructs. By working on secondary constructs, your skill began to slowly rise to the level of a grandmaster...which is to say, the main purpose this forbidden region has had over the past thirty years was to produce this golem!"

"Right." Northson nodded in agreement. "As for the precious materials, they are escorted here by other generals. One time, seven generals came together in escorting a shipment."

Ning nodded.

Of course that was how it had to be. A construct meant for a Celestial Immortal to control, that was invincible against all other Celestial Immortals. A few dozen or a hundred such Fiendgod Golems would probably be enough to completely sweep through the entire world of the Grand Xia! Ning was now a disciple of Patriarch Subhuti and had a certain level of insight into the world...but golems as terrifying as these probably were superior to even top-grade Pure Yang treasures!

They were truly priceless!

"Since you are here working on this golem, then you definitely will come into contact with it," Ning said.

"Yes." Northson nodded.

"Good. Then I'll make a trip with you...and I'll take away the Fiendgod Golem when the time is right," Ning said confidently. "I'll threaten that 'general' and force him to release you and Yu Xia's soul."

“How would you enter? What will you transform into? That castle is extremely tightly guarded; no living creatures are allowed in, not even mosquitos,” Northson said.

“I’ll change into...” Ning laughed. “...a hair on your head.”

“Hair?”

Northson was speechless.

Ning laughed. Swish! He disappeared into thin air, and then an extra hair appeared on top of Northson’s head.

“What do you think, junior apprentice-brother?” Ning’s voice echoed out.

Northson, amazed, reached out with his hand to stroke this additional strand of hair that had just appeared. “You can do this?!”

This was indeed a flawless plan!

Swish.

Ning reappeared.

“If you transform into my hair...there’s no way I could recognize you. But is it possible that someone within the castle might detect you?” Northson asked, worried.

“Even True Immortals and Empyrean Gods will be unable to detect me,” Ning said confidently. The ‘Seventy-Two Transformations’ was no ordinary divine ability.

“Good.” Northson revealed a look of delight. “The other grandmasters and I are working in a region deep within that castle, where we are forging that Fiendgod Golem. That region is primarily meant for us grandmasters; there are only two guards there. No one else will go there to disturb us. Since there’s no way for us to escape, they aren’t worried about us at all. So long as you go...you’ll be able to easily capture that Fiendgod Golem.”

“But senior apprentice-brother!” Northson said with worry. “Once you seize it, everyone in the castle will know right away. In fact, even that general will immediately be aware of it. If you threaten them, they might just kill you, then take the Fiendgod Golem back.”

“Kill me?” Ning shook his head. “They won’t be able to kill me...so they will have to choose to lower their heads.”

All he had to do was enter his mobile Immortal estate for just a brief moment, then immediately use a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal.

The enemies would probably truly be forced to lower their heads!

Northson began to grow excited as well. His senior apprentice-brother’s plan was indeed workable. He hurriedly said, “We have to first acquire Yu Xia’s soul. I’m not afraid of death, but I’m terrified of the thought that Yu Xia’s soul will be tormented for countless ages.”

Ning was startled for a moment, then nodded. “Right.”

He could threaten them and force them to submit...but they might just pull out Yu Xia's soul to counter-threaten him! His junior apprentice-brother would rather die than cause Yu Xia to be eternally unable to be reborn.

"Are you able to acquire Yu Xia's soul?" Ning asked.

"It's been a month since I've seen Yu Xia," Northson said hurriedly. "After I enter the castle, I can request to see Yu Xia. Each month, we can see our loved one a single time! They won't refuse...they'll take me there, then I'll see Yu Xia. You, senior apprentice-brother, will immediately strike and seize her soul."

"However..."

"Seizing Yu Xia's soul, or seizing the Fiendgod Golem. We have to choose between the two." Northson began to frown.

Ning laughed. "That's simple. I'll first go with you on a trip to the Fiendgod Golem, and then I'll go to Yu Xia's place. I'll acquire her soul, then immediately use a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal to immediately head to the Fiendgod Golem and seize it as well."

"A Greater Teleportation Dao-seal?" Northson said, worried, "But once you move to flee the Eastwoods mountain range...will you have another method of escape?"

"I have a few of these seals," Ning said with a laugh.

He did indeed. He had acquired one from the underwater estate, a second from killing Youngflame Nong, then more than ten from killing the monster kings and the vile Patriarch on the Crescent world. Every one of the monster kings had at least one Greater Teleportation Dao-seal on them; given their statuses, acquiring one wasn't too hard.

And now, given the number of treasures Ning had and his connection with Patriarch Skyfox of the Heavenly Treasures Mountain, it wouldn't be too hard for him to buy eight or ten Greater Teleportation Dao-seals.

"First seize Yu Xia's soul, then Greater Teleport to seize the Fiendgod Golem." Northson asked, "The seizing of the soul will cause alarms to go off within the castle; I imagine that seizing the Fiendgod Golem will prove troublesome."

"Don't worry. As long as we are fast enough, and as long as we immediately Greater Teleport upon acquiring the soul...there will be no one who can stop us," Ning said. "The only person in the entire Eastwoods mountain range who can threaten me is that general you spoke of. By the time he hears of the soul being stolen, I'll have already taken the Fiendgod Golem as well."

The plan had more or less been set. The two of them discussed some of the finer details, then Northson began to give a introduction to the layout of the castle.

Just as the two grew more and more animated in their discussions...

Northson's face suddenly turned ashen.

“Senior apprentice-brother!” Northson looked towards Ning with worry. “If you steal Yu Xia’s soul, then threaten them to force them to release me...they’ll definitely suspect there is a connection between us. Given that you’ll have to fight when moving to steal the Fiendgod Golem...you’ll probably have to use your skills as a Sword Immortal, at which point they’ll know it is a Sword Immortal they are facing.”

“They would be able to guess right away that the person who rescued me was most likely you, senior apprentice-brother.”

“They’ll be able to tell it from your swords.”

Northson stared at Ning.

Ning sighed mentally to himself.

His junior apprentice-brother had discovered the flaw.

Right...

He had already been trapped within this Eastwoods mountain range once; given the power of that mysterious organization, they probably suspected that he had trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].

Given that he was then able to enter stealthily, then steal the Fiendgod Golem despite the tight defenses and guard...they would probably grow even more certain that he had used the ‘Seventy-Two Transformations’. After all, other methods of entry, such as a Greater Teleportation, would cause spatial ripples and be discovered.

The chances of him being exposed would be very high.

He absolutely could not underestimate this foe. They were far too powerful...Ning knew this all along.

“Junior apprentice-brother,” Ning said. “Don’t worry. Even if I am exposed in the end...all I’m doing is rescuing you. To this mysterious power, a single grandmaster of constructs isn’t that important. You are nothing more than one amongst many such grandmasters. It is the Fiendgod Golem which truly matters. So long as they let you free, I’ll return that to them; they won’t have lost much. They won’t go so far as to make an enemy out of a Daofather’s disciple over this matter.”

Northson shook his head. “Senior apprentice-brother, your words are reasonable, but I can sense how savage and arrogant that organization is...and they truly are powerful. I don’t want them to act against you. I’d rather stay here and endure the thousand years.”

“Will you be able to endure it?” Ning snapped frantically, “Look at yourself right now. You’ll probably die halfway through it!”

“Enough!” Ning said seriously. “If you disagree, then I’ll do it myself, without your help.”

“Senior apprentice-brother...” Northson couldn’t believe it.

“Decide!” Ning said. “Am I going to do this myself, or are we going to do it together?”

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Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 3: Class: Winged Immortal

Mu Northson stared at Ji Ning. Finally, he nodded. "Fine. We two brothers shall do it together."

"Hahaha, that's more like it!" Ning laughed, then slapped him on the shoulder.

Northson looked at Ning, then smiled as well. Deep in his heart, however, he firmly engraved the memory of this kindness into his soul.

.....

The two hours of rest time had concluded.

The gray-robed figures all returned from their various residences. Northson returned as well, his hair still disordered.

"Hurry up."

"All of you, hurry up!"

The black-robed figures were already snapping at them to move faster, but the grandmasters remained calm and silent. They completely ignored the black-robed figures; they were grandmasters of the Dao of Constructs, after all. If they didn't work hard, they might suffer some consequences or punishments, but taking their two-hour rest was ordinary.

"The black-robed figures have very low statuses in this mysterious organization. Those Wanxiang and Primal level black-robed figures are merely Fiendslaves, while the Loose Immortal and Earth Immortal black-robed figures are Fiendserfs." Ning had already learned a bit regarding this mysterious organization thanks to Northson's explanations.

Rumble...

A blurry light flowed across the castle. The gray-robed figures passed through it to enter the castle, and Northson entered as well.

Ning's field of vision changed. Within the castle gateway, he saw a bronze-armored man whose aura was clearly much more powerful than the individuals he had seen earlier.

"Bronze-armored guards? Fiendguards? I wonder how many Fiendguards this location has," Ning mused to himself.

Fiendslaves were at the Wanxiang and Primal level.

Fiendserfs were at the Loose Immortal or Earth Immortal level.

Fiendguards were extremely powerful Loose Immortals; as Ning saw it, most likely each of them was roughly at the power of that vile Patriarch he had killed.

Above them...were the Fiendlords!

The Fiendlords were the 'generals', all of them at the Celestial Immortal level.

The corridors within the castle were deep and gloomy. The surrounding area was divided up into numerous large regions, each of which had grandmasters of the Dao of Constructs! Northson, however, continued to walk deeper into the castle.

“Here we are.” At the end of the tunnel, a bronze-armored Fiendguard said with a laugh, “Open up!”

“Yes.”

The nearby black-robed Fiendserf quickly pushed the door open. It rumbled open, then the gray-robed figures entered. As for Ning, in the shape of a strand of hair, he followed Northson in as well.

“Whew.” Northson let out a sigh of relief. “Senior apprentice-brother’s transformation abilities truly are formidable; the castle is protected by layers of formations, but it still wasn’t able to detect him.”

After entering through the gate, they were now in an incomparably enormous stand-alone region.

This region was thirty thousand meters in circumference, and the gray-robed figures were all standing atop clouds, walking around an enormous golem. The area around the golem was filled with many materials, and all of the grandmasters immediately began their fabrication efforts.

“That’s huge.” The hair-Ning stared at the enormous golem. “Although I heard junior apprentice-brother speak of it...this golem is truly stunning to behold. So when a Celestial Immortal controls it, it is virtually invincible to anyone below the True Immortal or Empyrean God level.”

Per what his junior apprentice-brother had said, the most important golem within this forbidden region was referred to as the Fiendgod Golem; it was of the ‘Fiendgod’ class.

Its body was more than three thousand meters tall. It was pitch-black, and appeared similar to a crab in appearance. It had eight slender, sharp claws, as well as two enormous pincers. Its torso was filled with countless runes that joined together into a formation-diagram that caused Ning to feel dizzy just looking at it. It was simply too complicated.

“How savage. Just by looking at it, I can tell that it was meant for war.”

The aura alone which emanated from this massive, black, half-finished, crab-shaped Fiendgod Golem was already superior to that of an ordinary Celestial Immortal’s!

“This place has experts in the Dao of Constructs from more than a hundred commanderies,” Ning mused to himself. “And this is just a single gathering point...yet it’s already able to create such terrifying golems. Based on what junior apprentice-brother said...they are able to produce one in roughly ten to twenty years. Then...across the 3600 commanderies and four seas of the Grand Xia Dynasty...how many gathering points are there?! How many of these golems are they able to produce every century?”

Ning understood, naturally, that things couldn’t be calculated in this manner.

After all, the materials required to produce these golems were all extremely expensive. Many grandmasters in the Dao of Constructs alone wouldn’t suffice; materials would also be needed.

“This has merely been thirty years. But in the many years before they even came to the world of the Grand Xia?”

Ning couldn’t help but feel shock in his heart. This power was simply unfathomable ! No wonder even Patriarch Subhuti, he who possessed the [Dream of the Three Realms], felt so worried.

Swoosh!

Suddenly, Northson halted his forging, flying towards one of the entrances to this region. There were two black-robed figures standing at the entrance.

“What are you doing? Why aren’t you forging?” One of them barked.

“I wish to see my Dao-companion,” Northson said.

“See your Dao-companion?” The black-robed man frowned.

“I haven’t seen her this month,” Northson said. “I can see her once a month.”

“Fine, fine. What a pain in the ass. Wait a moment, I’ll go inform his lordship,” the black-robed figure said.

Northson just stood there obediently.

Within another region inside the castle. There were a group of gray-robed figures here as well, surrounding an enormous golem. They couldn’t help but stroke the enormous golem in a sad, longing manner. This golem had cost them their blood, sweat, and tears...but now it had been completed, and it was going to be taken away.

Although they wore gray-robos, their statuses were lower than that of Northson and his fellows. They were also more numerous; they were comparatively less skilled in the Dao of Constructs.

“Milord, this ‘Winged Immortal’ class golem has been finished.” There was a red-robed elder standing nearby. One of the black-robed figures made this report respectfully to him.

“Mm.” The red-robed elder revealed a smile. “The forging speed is rather slow. These young fellows from the world of the Grand Xia truly are weak in the Dao of Constructs. It took so many of them so long just to complete a single golem of the ‘Winged Immortal’ class.”

The nearby black-robed figure was secretly speechless.

Slow? You old bastard, you don’t even know how to forge constructs, and you have a low status within the sect as well; the only thing you can do is flatter the general, which is why you were given the job of overseeing the construction of these golems. If any of the formal disciples of the sect who actually trained in the Dao of Constructs was to appear, you’d probably immediately kneel down and lick their toes, you old bastard!

“Out of the way!” The red-robed elder walked forward whiel shouting loudly, and the gray-robed figures quickly retreated.

Smiling merrily, the red-robed elder waved his hand. Instantly, the enormous winged golem, the ‘Winged Immortal class golem’, was stored into his storage bracelet. “We’ve finished yet another Winged Immortal class. Heh heh heh...within the sect, my branch in the forbidden region should be ranked amongst the top ten in producing Winged Immortals. Once the Fiendgod-class is completed...we’ll most likely all be awarded many gifts.”

“Milord, milord.” Suddenly, a voice disturbed the red-robed elder’s ruminations.

The red-robed elder glanced sideways irritably. Seeing the lowly black-robed figure running towards him, he snapped coldly, "You useless piece of trash...can't you see I'm busy? What's this about, with all the screaming and shouting?"

"Mu Northson wishes to see his Dao-companion," the black-robed figure said hurriedly. In his heart, however, he was cursing at the old bastard.

Fiendslaves, Fiendserfs, Fiendguards...

They were ranked according to power.

Strictly speaking, this red-robed elder was merely a Fiendserf. However, he was awarded the red robes as a gift and sent to oversee the creation of constructs in this part of the forbidden region. But in truth, as far as strength went, he was merely on par with the other black-robed figures. Seeing how arrogantly the red-robed elder acted, the black-robed figures naturally felt resentment. All of them hoped for the day when the red-robed elder fell!

"Mu Northson?" The red-robed elder pursed his lips. "What a pain in the ass. Fine, fine, fine. Let's go see him."

There were only so many grandmasters within the castle; he naturally memorized the names of every single grandmaster clearly.

.....

Soon, the red-robed elder saw Northson.

The hair-Ning saw the red-robed Elder as well. Northson had told him long ago that this red-robed elder was a fairly important figure in the forbidden region; his name was Qu Huan, and he was in charge of overseeing those who were fabricating the golems. As far the souls went...it was this red-robed elder who was in charge of hiding them somewhere within the castle.

Northson immediately said, "I wish to see my Dao-companion."

"Let's go," the red-robed elder said irritably. "You all have a chance to see your family once a month; we'll definitely make it happen. But you have to work hard in your fabrications; if you don't work hard, then...hmp. You should know what will happen."

Northson nodded. "I know, I know."

The red-robed elder walked in front, passing through a wide hall, then entering a slender passageway. Soon, they arrived within a private room.

"Wait here. I'll be back shortly," the red-robed elder said.

"Alright." Northson sat in the lotus position on a prayer mat. This room was very quiet; the only person present was a black-robed guard who was keeping watch on him from the door.

A short while later.

The red-robed elder appeared once more. He walked into the room, then also sat down in the lotus position. Snorting coldly, he said, "You only have as much time as needed for a stick of incense to burn

down.” He waved his hand, and a glittering jade sphere flew out. There was a woman’s figure within the jade sphere, her form lithe and slender, carrying a hint of sadness within.

“Little Xia,” Northson immediately said excitedly.

The woman within the jade globe looked towards him, then immediately said with excitement, “Northson.” The voice of the soul, after exiting the jade sphere, actually reverberated within the room, causing the people present to be able to hear it with their ears.

The hair-Ning clucked to himself in surprise.

Generally speaking, souls were unable to speak verbally. It seems that it was the jade sphere that allowed this one to speak...but in turn, Yu Xia’s soul was trapped within it.

“It seems as though Yu Xia and junior apprentice-brother truly do have deep love for each other,” the hair-Ning observed.

“Northson, I know you are very tired.” The woman floated within the jade sphere, saying with worry, “Every time I see you, I feel as though you are even older and more tired than the last time. If you really can’t take it any more...then just stop worrying about me.”

“Hmph.” The nearby red-robed elder snorted coldly. “The two of you really are quite close to each other.”

Northson just looked at the woman in the jade sphere. He said hurriedly, “Little Xia, one day, I will bring you out of here. Definitely.”

“Right. Work hard in the service of the general. Within a thousand years, you shall definitely be set free,” the red-robed elder said.

Northson’s eyes were filled with tears as he looked at the woman within the jade sphere. Suddenly, he used his elemental ki to send a mental message to Ning: “Senior apprentice-brother, kill this Qu Huan and grab the soul.”

“Fine.”

A single hair from Northson’s tousled hair suddenly vanished.

Immediately afterwards, a white-robed man appeared out of nowhere. When the white-robed man appeared, his enormous palm struck out with the full power of the [Starseizing Hand], slamming down on the body of the surprised and terrified red-robed elder.

BOOM.

Instantly, the red-robed elder was instantly transformed into dust. The white-robed figure waved his hand, collecting the jade sphere, the storage bracelet, and magic treasures.

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Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 4: Those Who Bar Me, Die!

The red-robed elder, Qu Huan, had been instantly slain. The black-robed guard standing at the entrance couldn’t help but feel shocked...but in the next instant, a streak of sword-light instantly slashed past him.

“No...” The black-robed figure felt despair. He didn’t even have a chance to let out a single cry before the sword-light transformed him into dust.

“Let’s go.” Ning pulled Mu Northson into his mobile Immortal estate, then immediately used a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal.

Rumble...

Ning disappeared into thin air.

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“What just happened?!”

“Why was there such a powerful ripple?” The black-robed figures all noticed it. Although Ning had tried to control his power as best he could, he couldn’t completely block it from leaking out; after all, the entire castle was filled with guards who had very acute senses.

And right at this moment...a spatial ripple appeared!

“Teleportation.”

“A Greater Spatial Teleportation!” The black-robed figures and bronze-armored Fiendguards all had changed looks on their faces. Although the defenses here in their castle were extremely tight, there was no way they could block out a Greater Spatial Teleportation. However...outsiders knew nothing of the layout within the castle, and so even if they were to use a Greater Teleportation, it would be hard for them to teleport into the castle.

Deep within the castle, within that giant, stand-alone region. The many gray-robed figures here were like ants that were crawling throughout the areas close to the enormous Fiendgod Golem, constantly forging new parts to further perfect it.

Rumble...

Ripples of a spatial teleportation.

All of the gray-robed grandmasters present were completely absorbed with their forging; the many years they had spent on this task had rendered them numb. They weren’t on their guard at all.

“Who are you?” A gray-robed person noticed the white-robed Ning suddenly appear out of nowhere.

“An invader!”

“An outsider!”

The two black-robed figures that were responsible for overseeing this stand-alone region were all shocked. They let out cries of rage, then charged straight towards Ning.

“Hmph.” Ning let out a cold snort. Waving his hand, he caused the enormous, three thousand meter tall Fiendgod Golem to suddenly vanish into thin air.

“NO!!” The faces of the two attacking black-robed figures completely changed. The invader had actually come for their Fiendgod-class golem! This was the most important golem in the entire castle; if it truly

was to be lost...then the outcome would be disastrous for these two black-robed Fiendserfs who were responsible for guarding this place.

Streaks of snowy-white sword-light came sweeping towards them, causing the world to instantly be frozen. The two black-robed figures were also completely frozen, then shattered into dust.

The gray-robed figures in the region all stared in astonishment. Still...all of them were quite uncaring, and so they simply stood there and watched. They were filled with hatred towards the power that controlled this forbidden region; as far as they were concerned, the more black-robed figures died, the better.

“The white-robed figure is quite formidable. He actually launched an attack within the forbidden region...and by the looks of it, he even knows about the Fiendgod Golem. He took it away right away.”

“Mm. He is pretty powerful; the black-robed figures are all at the Loose Immortal level, but they were eradicated with one blow.”

“It’d be nice if all of the black-robed men and the bronze-armored Fiendguards were to die.”

The gray-robed figures just watched and chatted to the side.

The bronze-armored Fiendguard outside the entrance to this region noticed the spatial disturbance inside. He came charging inside, but could only watch as the two black-robed figures were instantly killed. There was no chance to save them at all.

“Do you KNOW where you are? Do you really think this is a place you can just break into?” the Fiendguard let out an angry howl, then produced a longsword in his hands. He threw it viciously towards Ning.

Swoooooosh! The longsword flashed with golden light, carrying an aura of tremendous power as it stabbed towards Ning.

“A Void-level Fiendgod?” Ning laughed coldly.

The bronze-armored fiendguards all at least had the power of Loose Immortals who had lived for a million years. This particular bronze-armored Fiendguard was one of the most powerful Fiendguards in this area; he was an ancient Void-level Fiendgod! This was why he had been assigned the duty of watching this region.

“DIE!!!” Ning swept out with his palm.

His palm instantly transformed, becoming more than three hundred meters long. After using the [Starseizing Hand], Ning’s palm carried an unearthly level of power. He slapped downwards, swatting the golden longsword aside. Although Ning’s [Starseizing Hand] had merely reached the Third Cycle, it already had the power of a Pure Yang treasure! The reason why Ning rarely used his hands to attack, preferring to use his Immortal swords, was simply because he was afraid that others would find out about him possessing the [Starseizing Hand].

However, Ning now trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], causing his entire body to become powerful; thus, he could use his hands to attack without fear of the [Starseizing Hand] being exposed.

Sword Immortals didn't necessarily have to use swords all the time. To a true Sword Immortal, a blade of grass, a stick, a longstaff, a spear, a palm, a leg...all of these could be used to execute swordplay. Ning's enormous, massive palm...glowed with a blurry golden light, as though it were a giant golden sword.

"How can this be?" The void-level Fiendgod Fiendguard was shocked. Letting out a growling roar, he used one hand to grab his longstaff while using the other to block towards Ning.

BANG!

The enormous palm struck him directly on his body.

The powerful Void-level Fiendgod Fiendguard only had enough time to let out an agonized roar before his body was blasted apart. Just as his shattered body began to attempt to heal, a second, similarly enormous palm came slamming towards him. The two palms merged into a single palm which once more splattered the body of the Fiendguard. Bang! Bang! Bang! The two giant palms struck out repeatedly at a lightning-fast speed, each time shattering the body of the Fiendguard into ever-smaller pieces. More and more of the Fiendguard's divine power was used up, and after just a few more strikes, all of the divine power within his body had been depleted.

In just the blink of an eye, the Void-level Fiendguard had been killed!

"Such power!"

"But, but..."

"He's too incredible."

The watching gray-robed figures were all stupefied by what they saw. They knew exactly how powerful that bronze-armored Fiendguard had been. A Void-level Fiendgod! And yet, he had been killed, just like that?

"This is the true [Starseizing Hand]!" This was the first time Ning had truly unleashed the power of the [Starseizing Hand] as much as he pleased. "After I train in the Fourth Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand]...my hands alone will be comparable to supreme Pure Yang treasures, close to middle-grade Protocosmic treasures. By then...the power of my [Starseizing Hand] shall undoubtedly be even greater."

The Fifth Cycle would make his hands comparable to supreme Protocosmic treasures.

The Sixth Cycle was the level which Daoist Threelives had reached; at this level, he would be able to effortlessly shatter an entire major world with his hands!

BOOM!!!

Ning collected the treasures left behind by the Fiendguard, then charged out of the region like a primordial Fiendgod in full flight.

"Stop him."

"Kill him."

All the black-robed men and bronze-armored Fiendguards within the castle were quickly gathering together.

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Within the Eastwoods Sect of the Eastwoods mountain range. A silver-armored youth was fishing in a leisurely manner.

Suddenly...

A spatial ripple. It was like a stone had fallen into a lake, causing a ripple to spread in every direction. When it reached the silver-armored youth, his face instantly changed as he turned to look towards the forbidden region. "A Greater Spatial Teleportation? Not good!"

Bang!

The silver-armored youth instantly transformed into a streak of light, charging towards the forbidden region. He moved lightning-fast; although the forbidden region was protected by layers of mighty formations, the formations were all under his control! He was able to easily bypass all of them, and he quickly arrived within that massive gorge. He immediately saw that castle up ahead.

Sounds of explosions could be heard from within the castle. Everything was in a state of the utmost chaos.

"THOSE WHO BAR ME, DIE!" An icy voice roared out from within the castle. The faces of the black-robed figures outside the castle were all ashen, and terror could be seen in their eyes.

"It's only been a few moments, but three of my bronze-armored Fiendguards have died already? Even Bosia died?" When the silver-armored youth sensed what had happened, his face grew even uglier. The Fiendguards were the most powerful warriors under his command; he knew all of them intimately. As he sensed one mighty aura after another be wiped out, he couldn't help but feel shocked...and realize how terrifying this foe was!

It had taken him very little time to return to the forbidden region, but three bronze-armored Fiendguards had already perished, to say nothing of the black-robed figures.

"Someone dares attack on my territory?"

The next feeling the silver-robed youth had was a feeling of anger and humiliation that he had never felt before. This was a proud man!

"Die!" The silver-robed youth could sense that the powerful figure within the castle had already charged out to the castle gates. The restrictions within the castle were also under the control of the general, and so he could clearly sense everything going on within it...as well as the fact that the Fiendgod Golem had already vanished.

A fiery godbow suddenly appeared in the silver-armored youth's hands, and a similarly fiery arrow appeared as well.

He pulled the bow!

He fired the arrow!

BANG!

The arrow shot out, instantly transforming into an enormous, divine flaming dragon that surged straight towards the castle gates.

A terrifying sword-light flew out from the castle gates, transforming into a divine black dragon. The divine black dragon and the divine flaming dragon collided against each other in midair, and in that instant, a white-robed youth walked out from the castle gates. The white-robed youth was surrounded with a teeming mass of Immortal swords, each one possessing an unearthly amount of power. They spread out in every direction, as though escorting their emperor forward.

The white-robed youth raised his head, looking upwards. He saw the distant silver-armored youth in the distant skies.

The silver-armored youth lowered his head, looking at the white-robed youth.

Their gazes met in midair, colliding as though they had mass to them.

“Nearly two hundred Immortal swords? And all of them seem to be top-grade Immortal-ranked!”

“A bow? Can it be that he, too, is a master archer?”

Each had their own thoughts.

Rumble...

The terrifying arrow and the light of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation] collided head-on. The entire world seemed to go dark for a moment. And then...with a rumbling sound, rippling shockwaves spread out in every direction, with the ripples containing hints of sharp light. When the ripples struck some of the nearby black-robed figures, they were instantly turned into dust.

“Block!”

“Block it!”

More than ten Loose Immortals perished before the rest of the black-robed figures were able to escape from that ripple.

“Fiendserfs, all of you, step back,” the silver-armored youth barked coldly. In a fight on this level...these black-robed Loose Immortals would be nothing more than cannon fodder.

“Yes.” Instantly, all of the black-robed figures hurriedly fled. They normally liked to flaunt their power, and they could kill Wanxiang Adepts and Primal Adepts as easily as killing chickens, but upon encountering this terrifying figure...it was their turn to become the chickens.

“Fleeing? I have not permitted it!” The distant white-robed Ning let out an angry roar. Instantly, a hundred of the top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords around him shot out in every direction, striking towards the fleeing black-robed Loose Immortals. Ning had sworn long ago...that he wouldn’t spare a single one of these figures who had harmed his junior apprentice-brother!

“You are courting death!” The silver-armored youth was enraged. He waved his hand, and instantly a black cloud that covered the skies appeared, spreading in every direction.

The Desolate Era

Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 5: Who Will Give Me My Freedom?

The black cloud was filled with a resilient power that covered the entire region below. The hundred top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords were unable to penetrate the black cloud, but...Ji Ning’s attack was simply too fast. Prior to the black cloud appearing, he had killed more than twenty of the black-robed Loose Immortals.

The silver-armored youth’s face grew even grimmer.

“Break.” Ning took back his Immortal swords, then began to condense a streak of sword-light generated from the second stage of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]. This blindingly bright sword-light transformed into a divine black dragon which ripped apart the black clouds, soaring forward with arrogant abandon.

“Hmph.” The silver-armored youth waved his hand, summoning the black cloud back. He glanced downwards, seeing that the black-robed figures had already fled by now.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

One bronze-armored Fiendguard after another began to arrive, coming to gather in the air behind the bronze-armored youth.

“Fiendguards, join into formation and launch a combined attack!” The silver-armored youth pointed downwards, then shouted, “You are not to attack separately.”

“Yes.” Instantly, the Fiendguards began to organize into squads of nine, joining into formations that transformed into Godbeasts that were three hundred meters long. This type of Godbeast appeared to be a tiger, but had even sharper claws and even longer fangs, while its fur was shaggier. Their eyes were filled a cold azure light.

“A Bi’an Godbeast tiger?” Ning was startled. “Last time, I encountered Bloodcloud Hall’s Ba-Serpent Formation; I didn’t expect to encounter a Bi’an Formation this time. This organization really is quite formidable.” 1

Countless ages ago, the Ancestor Dragon was born from the primordial chaos. It was the most ancient of divine dragons, the first to be born from the chaos. It was even older than the Torch-Dragon! As the first dragon, it became known as the Ancestor Dragon.

The Ancestor Dragon had nine sons. 2

Every single one of the Nine Sons of the Dragon possessed tremendous power...and the Bi’an Tiger was one of them.

“Kill!”

“Kill him!”

The three Bi'an Godbeast tigers charged downwards from midair. Ning raised his head, staring up at those three Bi'an Godbeasts. He suddenly sensed the castle behind him beginning to shake. Turning his head, he glanced backwards, only to see another Bi'an Godbeast charging from him from the castle gates as well.

There had also been some bronze-armored Fiendguards within the castle. Because Ning had attacked so unexpectedly, they hadn't had the chance to join together into a formation yet.

"This white-robed man's Immortal swords are quite formidable; he should be a powerful Sword Immortal who is a Ki Refiner. Although Ki Refining Sword Immortals are formidable...they hate close combat. If we attack en masse, and if one of our claws land on him...he's dead."

"Kill him. Otherwise, both the general and us shall be doomed."

They all harbored murderous thoughts in their mind.

None of them wanted to let Ning leave alive. This was because the fact that the Eastwoods mountain range was being used to manufacture golems was a matter of the utmost secrecy. Once this location was exposed...the Grand Xia Dynasty would probably begin a frantic investigation. Now that they had a specific target, they'd probably be able to uncover even more gathering spots.

It must be understood...that up till now, not a single one of the gathering points had been exposed yet! Although the Grand Xia Dynasty had discovered that a few places were rather 'strange', they weren't sure what the places were doing, and so the Dynasty hadn't made any rash decisions yet.

The Eastwoods mountain range gathering point was damnably unlucky. After all...the only person in the entire world of the Grand Xia who trained in the Seventy-Two Transformations was Ji Ning. Only he had the ability to stealthily infiltrate this place! Anyone else would have been completely unable to enter the area and discover the secrets within.

"We can't let him escape!" The silver-armored youth's eyes flashed with cold light as he stared down from the skies towards Ning. "If he flees, we'll be in big trouble. The Master will definitely blame me for this!"

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The four Bi'an Godbeast tigers all possessed auras of tremendous power and majesty. Every single one of them was comparable to the Ba-Serpent of Bloodcloud Hall which had attempted to assassinate Ji Ning...but this Ji Ning was no longer the Ji Ning of the past. After reaching the sixteenth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], his power had skyrocketed once more.

"F*ck off."

An enormous palm, also three hundred meters long, swatted down towards one of the Bi'an Tigers. The Bi'an Godbeast howled and swept out with its sharp paws, making full use of its extremely long and knife-sharp claws.

BANG!!!

The giant palm, covered with golden light, completely knocked this Bi'an Godbeast flying. The other three Bi'an Tigers attacked wildly en masse, but Ning began to brandish his other palm as well. As he did

so, this palm also instantly increased to a size of three hundred meters, and it too swatted a Bi'an Godbeast away.

"Three Heads, Six Arms." Ning transformed into his three-headed, six-armed form. Now, six utterly enormous palms were slapping and swatting in every direction.

His palm-strikes all possessed the power of a Pure Yang treasure; they were far superior to Immortal swords. In addition, using Immortal swords required the use of elemental ki, whereas his [Starseizing Hand]-enhanced hands had been transformed into magic treasures long ago; just like the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], his palms didn't need to use any divine power at all. However, actively using the [Starseizing Hand] to unleash tremendous strength did require the use of divine power.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! Six giant palms, each flashing with a sharp golden light, struck out like a series of sharp swords, either chopping or thrusting or swatting.

The four Bi'an Godbeast tigers had intended on launching a group assault, but they were instead knocked flying backwards, one after the other.

"General!"

"General, this man is a fiendgod! And his divine body is extremely powerful; his body seems to be as unbreakable as a vajra. He's actually able to block our attacks just using his hands."

The bronze-armored Fiendguards all sent hurried mental messages to the silver-armored youth.

The silver-armored youth, upon seeing this happen from his position in midair, had an unsightly look on his face. "I didn't expect that his close combat abilities would be even more formidable than his sword-formation abilities." In truth, if Ning had to use Immortal swords, his close combat abilities truly would be a bit weaker...but by relying on the power of his palms, he was actually slightly more powerful than the second stage of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation].

"Ahahah! 'General'...do you wish to keep fighting? You aren't able to do anything to me, while I can leave whenever I want." Ning's laughter rang out from below.

"Halt!" The silver-armored youth barked.

Instantly, all four of the Bi'an Godbeast tigers hurriedly retreated, coming to hover in the air to each side of the silver-armored youth. They stared at the distant, white-robed Ning. All of them were rather shocked...the thirty-six of them, all Fiendguards, were actually unable to do anything to this person, even when fighting together. No wonder he had been able to so effortlessly slaughter them in the castle earlier.

"Given your power, you should've been able to use a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal to leave long ago, when you were still inside the castle," the silver-armored man said coldly. "But you didn't. This was for the sake of Mu Northson, right?"

Ning was startled. He had used the Seventy-Two Transformations to completely change his aura; why was it that this general immediately mentioned Mu Northson?

"Ji Ning." The silver-armored youth looked downwards. He said coldly, "Did you think I wouldn't be able to guess that it was you? In the entire world of the Grand Xia, the only ability that could allow someone

to so stealthily infiltrate this castle is probably you, after using your Seventy-Two Transformations. When I also noticed that the only grandmaster within the castle who vanished was Mu Northson...the only person I could think of who would come to save him would be you, Ji Ning.”

“Previously, I wasn’t completely certain that you trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], but now...I am.” The silver-armored man let out a cold laugh.

The white-robed youth below let out a loud laugh as well. His body flickered, then transformed into that of the fur-clad Ji Ning.

“Correct. It is indeed me. I knew that I wouldn’t be able to hide the fact that I trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] for too much longer...after all, last time, I ended up trapped in your Eastwoods mountain range for quite some time. I didn’t expect you to be able to guess it right away this time,” Ning said. “I know that this Fiendgod Golem of yours is quite important. I can give it back to you, but you have to release my junior apprentice-brother, Mu Northson, and give him back his freedom.”

“I trust that reobtaining a golem like this, comparable to a top-grade Pure Yang treasure, in exchange for just giving me my junior apprentice-brother is actually quite a decent bargain,” Ning said.

“A decent bargain? No. This is nothing more than a half-finished golem; it’s not even finished. It isn’t actually worth that much,” the silver-armored youth said.

“Perhaps not to outsiders, but to you, it is extremely valuable. You can work on it and complete it.” Ning raised his head to stare at the silver-armored youth. “I have only one request. Give my junior apprentice-brother his freedom back.”

“Hahahaha...freedom?!” The silver-armored youth was so enraged, he began to laugh. “If I give Mu Northson his freedom, who will give me my freedom?”

Ning was startled. Who would give him his freedom?

“You’ve discovered this forbidden region, which means its secret has been revealed. If I don’t kill you...how can I escape punishment?” A savage look was on the silver-armored man’s face. “Both you and your junior apprentice-brother can die.”

Ning instantly understood. Given that the mysterious power divided up its forces into ‘Fiendslaves’, ‘Fiendserfs’, ‘Fiendguards’, and ‘Fiendlords’, they undoubtedly held their Fiendlords to very high standards. Ning had barged into this location...once he exposed its secrets, the mysterious power would be put on a very bad position.

“Wait a moment,” Ning said hurriedly. “I’m willing to swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens that I will not reveal what is happening here within the Eastwoods mountain range to anyone, and I will also return your Fiendgod Golem to you. You, in exchange, will release my junior apprentice-brother.”

“Even if you swear an oath to the Dao of the Heavens, I will still be punished. Thus...only if you die will I be safe.” The silver-armored youth let out a lowl growl. “Do you think that just because you’ve trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] that I am unable to do anything to you? Hmph. Hmph! Many Celestial Immortals have perished before me, much less you, a mere Void-level.”

As his words came out, an azure serpent that was more than ten kilometers long suddenly appeared in midair. This azure serpent was extremely slender, and it came coiling towards Ning.

“A rope?” Ning was startled.

The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] divine ability feared restrictive magic treasures the most. For example, if he ended up being bound by this rope, there would be no way he could use any Dao-seals or enter his Immortal estate. That would be very bad indeed.

Thus...he absolutely could not let himself be bound.

“All I’m asking is that you let my junior apprentice-brother go free.” Immortal swords clustered around Ning as a sharp golden sword-light began to form in front of him.

“Only if I kill you will I be able to live comfortably,” the silver-armored youth bellowed back.

The golden sword-light collided against the enormous azure serpent in midair. The power of that rope, in the shape of the azure serpent, was truly tremendous. A single collision with it was enough to completely blast apart the divine black dragon which Ning’s golden sword-light had transformed into.

“If you don’t agree...then I’ll beat you until you do!” Ning had grown angry now as well. A black-robed Ning suddenly appeared out of nowhere next to him.

The two Ji Nings stood there, shoulder to shoulder.

A total of 324 top-grade Immortal-ranked magic treasures appeared in midair. His true body and his Primaltwin each controlled 162 of these Immortal swords! It must be understood that the memories and minds of the two bodies were completely linked and synced, and both of them trained in the [Darknorth Sutra] as Ki Refiners...and in fact, both were at the late Void level!

The power of the [Darknorth Sutra] filled every single one of the top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords. Although his true body and his Primaltwin controlled the swords separately, it was as though a single person was controlling them!

And thus, a total of more than three hundred top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords were able to completely join together in formation!

Ruuuuuumbble...

A golden Immortal sword, carrying a terrifying aura of majesty, manifested before Ning’s true body and Primaltwin.

[Greater Thousand Swords Formation] – Stage Four!

This was Ning’s true maximum combat power as a Ki Refiner! Power that was even greater than his true body’s close combat abilities!

The fur-clad Ning and the black-robed Ning simultaneously let out an enraged roar.

“KILL!!!!”

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Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 6: Sultamer Jade

Many combination-formations, such as the Ba-Serpent Formation or the Bi'an Formation, relied on different people occupying different parts of the formation. Upon coming together, their strength would increase explosively! What Ji Ning was currently using with his Primaltwin was something similar, something which mimicked a combination-formation. Although this wasn't intentional, it was even more meticulous and intricate than many true combination-formations.

“ROAAAAR!”

The golden Immortal sword before them transformed into an incomparably massive divine black dragon that was coiled. The divine black dragon let out a draconic roar, and the sound of this roar completely shook the world around them.

This was a majesty that came from more than three hundred top-grade Immortal-ranked flying swords, after their power had been merged together through the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation]!

This power was so great, it eclipsed that of most divine abilities that Fiendgod Body Refiners trained in!

“What?!” The silver-armored youth's face changed slightly as he stared down from midair. “Block!”

“Hissssss...”

The azure serpent-formed rope in midair let out a hissing sound. The enormous azure serpent slithered forth, moving to collide head on against the divine black dragon.

The divine dragon soared into the skies!

The azure serpent came slithering forth!

BOOM!

The world itself shook tremendously...and then a blast of wild power exploded out in an omnidirectional ripple. When it struck the bodies of those four Bi'an Godbeasts, a series of crackling sounds could be heard...but of course, they were able to withstand this level of energy. As for those weaker black-robed Loose Immortals, they had fled far away long ago.

The gorge around them, however, was in for some pain. It rumbled as the ground began to crack apart, and many nearby boulders were transformed into dust. The cliffs on each side of the gorge began to break apart on a large scale.

Faced with that blast of wild power, the surface of the castle began to flicker with a dark light. It managed to withstand the collisive force.

“Not good.” The silver-armored man's face changed dramatically; the azure serpent in the air had been completely destroyed, transforming back into its original form of a rope. The divine black dragon, however, was still filled with enormous power. It continued to roar with abandon, wanting to continue to strike against the azure serpent. “This Ji Ning is actually so powerful! He's not even a Celestial Immortal yet, but the power of his Immortal swords is already so great.”

“You want to capture me? General, you aren’t strong enough yet!” The fur-clad Ning and the black-robed Ning both let out furious roars.

ROAAAAR!

The divine black dragon in the skies let out a draconic roar as well, then continued its upwards charge.

“I don’t believe it. Don’t believe it! I have to capture him.” The silver-armored youth gritted his teeth. He didn’t want to fail; he wasn’t willing to accept the repercussions of failure. His hands joined together to form a seal as he shouted loudly, “ASURA!”

A powerful Immortal power rapidly began to summon the majestic power of the Heavens and the Earth, forming a tall, skinny, hideous, and completely black warrior. This hideous warrior hefted a double-edged blade with three tips and pointed it straight towards Ning, letting out a bellow: “Little thief, die!” And then, the hideous warrior charged straight forward.

“CELESTIAL GUARDIAN DRAGON!” The silver-armored youth’s hand-seals changed once again.

Yet another creature appeared in midair, a coiling divine dragon which was golden in color. The divine golden dragon let out a draconic roar of its own, then charged downwards as well.

“BIND!”

The enormous rope in midair once more transformed into that queer azure serpent. This time, the azure serpent’s tail had a snakehead at the end; it now had a head on each end, and it howled through the air as it charged towards Ning.

Controlling two secret arts and this magic treasure was actually extremely tiring for this silver-armored general as well.

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“Break. Break. Break!” The fur-clad Ning and the black-robed Ning simultaneously controlled the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation], using the more than three hundred top-grade Immortal-ranked magic swords to once more generate that incomparably sharp golden flying sword. The golden flying sword howled through the air, transforming into that divine black dragon. Now, there were two of the divine black dragons in the air.

Simultaneously maintaining two of the fourth-stage [Greater Thousand Swords Formation] sword-lights was a tremendous burden on Ning as well.

“Bind him. I have to bind him.” A look of savagery was on the face of the silver-armored youth. “I was only able to escape after enduring for countless years. I don’t want to be punished again. Absolutely not!”

From high up in the skies, the hideous Asura warrior, the Celestial Guardian Dragon, and the two-headed azure serpent launched simultaneous attacks downwards.

Two divine black dragons flew upwards, greeting the attacks.

BOOM BOOM BOOM!!!

A series of explosions could be heard from within the skies, and the surrounding area was filled with clashing blasts and ripples of power.

“Hahaha...General, this bit of ability isn’t enough,” Ning laughed loudly. The fourth-stage [Greater Thousand Swords Formation] sword-light, in the shape of the two divine dragons, was actually able to blast apart the Asura warrior and the Celestial Guardian Dragon before vanishing.

“Suppression!” The silver-armored youth suddenly waved his hand, and one giant seal after another began to appear in the skies. A total of seven grand seals appeared, each glowing with blurry light. The grand seals were covered with some characters, and they hovered there in the skies like giant mountains. Light flowed from one seal to another, merging them into a single whole.

“Crush him!” The silver-armored youth pointed furiously towards Ning.

The seven grand seals descended in awe-inspiring fashion en masse, rapidly joining together as they descended. They actually transformed into a true, enormous mountain as they smashed towards Ning.

“Break!”

Ning pointed upwards as well. The sword-light of the [Greater Thousand Swords Formation], in the form of two divine black dragons, soared straight into the heavens like fish that were swimming against the flow.

Boom...

The enormous mountain came crashing down. Both of the divine black dragons were actually blasted apart, causing Ning’s pupils to contract. He immediately executed his divine ability, transforming into a three-headed, six-armed giant that was three hundred meters tall. Ning simultaneously struck out with six mighty palms from his true body, slapping them against the descending mountain.

Rumble...

The world itself seemed to shake. Ning’s true body was actually pushed all the way into the ground, which completely caved in and shattered in every direction.

Ning’s true body was pressed chest-deep into the ground, but with a flicker he once more re-emerged.

“Hahaha, General, what a fine ability!” Ning laughed as he looked at the silver-armored youth.

The silver-armored youth had a gloomy look on his face.

“Damn. Damn!” The silver-armored youth’s heart was filled with resentment. He now knew exactly how strong Ning was. He had to admit, this foe’s sword-formation was incredibly powerful, but in terms of raw strength...Ji Ning was definitely far inferior to him. He was a supreme figure even amongst Celestial Immortals, after all!

But this wasn’t a competition to see who was better; it was a fight where he had to capture his foe using his rope!

If they were simply competing to see who was better, he could wantonly use his seven low-grade Pure Yang treasures, those seven mighty seals, to unleash his most powerful attacks. But what he was trying

to do was to trap his foe; thus, he had to divert some of his attention to controlling his rope, and also use quite a great deal of his energy to strengthen the rope. It was no easy feat to capture or trap a Fiendgod who trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]!

Since he had to split his attention up between his rope and the seals, he was naturally unable to use the seals to the full extent of their power.

“You win!” The silver-armored youth gave Ning a dark look. “I can neither kill you nor capture you.”

He was clearly significantly stronger than Ji Ning...but he was simply unable to capture him!

This was what made the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] so formidable. There had to be an utterly enormous difference in power, allowing him to first break apart Ning’s defense before capturing him. Clearly, the difference in power between the general and Ning, while significant, wasn’t ridiculously huge.

The entire gorge had been transformed into rubble. In the air above the rubble, the only figures that could be seen were the silver-armored general, a group of bronze-armored Fiendguards, as well as Ji Ning and Mu Northson.

The silver-armored general had finally bowed his head. He was unable to kill Ji Ning, and would be unable to avoid punishment. All he could do now was try his best to lessen the amount of damage caused and lower the amount of punishment he would receive.

“Good.” Ning smiled and nodded. “That’s wise.”

The nearby Northson immediately had a look of relief appear within his eyes. Right then and there, Ji Ning, Mu Northson, and the silver-armored general all swore oaths to the Dao of the Heavens. Ning’s promise...was that if Mu Northson was given freedom, he absolutely would not reveal the secret of the castle to others. Northson swore the same, that he absolutely wouldn’t reveal this secret to anyone else.

The silver-armored general naturally gave Northson his freedom back after this.

“General, please open your formation and let us leave.” Ning stood there in midair, Northson by his side with a relieved look on his face. He seemed to have suddenly become filled with vitality, as well as hope for the future.

“Not so fast.” The silver-armored general let out a sigh. “Before you leave, I will tell you a bit of bad news.”

Ning and Northson’s faces instantly changed.

Bad news?

“This was a disastrous defeat for me.” The silver-armored general sighed. “The forbidden region was under very tight guard, and even the formations experts which I captured were all forced to swear oaths to the Dao of the Heavens not to flee. If they do...they die. Thus, I never thought that someone would be able to sneak in...I suppose I’m just damned unlucky to encounter someone who trains in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].”

“Enough with the crap. What do you want to say?” Ning barked with a frown.

After the silver-armored general let out another series of sighs, he looked towards Ning and Northson, then said with a cold laugh, "The person in charge of matters within the castle, Qu Huan, is already dead. If my guess is correct...this Mu Northson has already taken his loved one's soul back."

Northson barked, "So what if I did?"

"Have you heard of soultamer jade?" The silver-armored general chortled as he spoke. He felt delighted in being able to irritate these two figures.

"Soultamer jade?" Northson and Ning's faces instantly changed. Ning had learned about quite a few bits of common knowledge regarding the Three Realms while at Mount Innerheart; naturally, he knew of soultamer jade. As for Northson, given he had analyzed the Dao of Constructs quite extensively, he naturally had heard of soultamer jade, one of the legendary materials for the Dao of Constructs.

Soultamer jade: Once a soul was placed into the soultamer jade, it would become one with the jade. There would be no chance of escape! However, the soul would be nourished by the soultamer jade; so long as it didn't suffer any attacks and wasn't destroyed, the soul inside could live forever. Generally speaking, golem experts would place soultamer jade into their golems, allowing the soul within the soultamer jade to control the golem, making it sentient.

"Can it be that you can't tell?" The silver-armored general smiled. "That crystalline globe used to store her soul is soultamer jade!"

"What?!" Northson was shocked and angry.

"It's finished." Ning looked towards his nearby junior apprentice-brother; now that Yu Xia's soul had been placed within that soultamer jade globe, she would never be able to emerge from within it. She would forever have to live within that tiny little space. This was actually quite a painful thing...and she would have forever lost her chance to be reincarnated.

"But perhaps this is a good thing," Ning mused.

There were two sides to every coin. Yu Xia's soul had been merged into the soultamer jade, and she would never be able to leave or be reborn; this was indeed quite a painful thing.

And yet...this meant that she would still be able to accompany Northson.

"Mu Northson," the distant silver-armored general said with a cold laugh, "Your loved one's soul shall accompany you for eternity. You are quite blessed. But...don't forget that she'll be forever trapped within that tiny space. How agonizing must that be? This sort of agony will accompany her for countless ages, until the day comes that she is attacked and her 'body' is destroyed. In that moment...her soul shall shatter."

Northson gritted his teeth. "Little Xia..."

He felt guilt.

Seeing this, Ning couldn't help but secretly sigh to himself. The distant silver-armored general, however, just laughed loudly. "See how nice I am? I even told you this bit of information. Alright...you can scam now."

“Let’s go.” Ning gave the distant silver-armored general a cold glare, then took Northson into his mobile Immortal estate. He then flew into the skies, the formations not blocking him at all. Ning quickly flew away, then once more used a spatial teleportation technique. He disappeared.

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Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 7: The Cavemaster

The silver-armored youth raised his head, staring at the sky. It was dusk. He let out a sigh. “My happy days are coming to an end.”

“General.”

The bronze-armored Fiendguards all nervously stared at the silver-armored youth.

After sighing, the silver-armored youth turned and quickly moved through the many layers of restrictive formations around the forbidden region. Outside were gathered many of the black-robed figures, as well as the members of the Eastwoods Sect. The enormous disturbance and the spatial teleportations had attracted attention from many outsiders.

“General.” The Eastwoods sect leader hurriedly went forward to greet him. “What has happened? Is there anything you need our Eastwoods Sect to do?”

“What happened?” The silver-armored general murmured these words, then waved his hand. Instantly, the illusion of an enormous mountain appeared out of nowhere. It smashed straight down on the body of the Eastwoods sect leader. Boom! The Eastwoods sect leader was completely smashed into pulp, then the remnants were transformed into dust that flew away.

The surrounding Loose Immortals, Earth Immortals, Primal Daoists, Wanxiang Adepts, and other disciples of the Eastwoods Sect were all in disbelief.

Some of them, however, revealed looks of joy. “It’s good that he died.”

The Eastwoods sect leader had been a classic case of a spineless figure who had quickly capitulated. This caused some of the disciples who had been unhappy with the current state of affairs to feel disdain for him.

The silver-armored general instructed calmly, “All disciples of the Eastwoods Sect, hear me: If you are willing to be loyal to me and serve me, if you are willing to become slaves under my command...go down on your knees immediately.”

His voice was actually quite soft...but it echoed within the minds of each member of the Eastwoods Sect. Everyone in the sect, whether roaming around, patrolling the mountain, training, or resting in seclusion...was completely stunned.

“You have to a count of ten to decide,” the silver-armored general said calmly.

“Willing! I’m willing!” Instantly, some disciples capitulated and knelt down.

However, quite a few disciples revealed looks of disbelief.

Loyalty? Submission?

This was simple.

But willingly become slaves? This was too ridiculous. They were Immortal cultivators, and many of them had felt unhappy for quite some time now. At first, the silver-armored general had been fairly amiable towards them, but now he actually spoke of them being his slaves? Slaves...that meant giving their lives to him and completely obeying his orders.

“Ten. Nine. Eight. Seven...” The silver-armored general counted slowly. “Six. Five!”

After counting to five, he suddenly stopped counting.

The silver-armored general let out a laugh. With a single step, he moved to stand high up in the air. The world itself began to shudder, and one massive mountain after another began to lift up and hover in the air. This was the Divine Venomflame of the Nine Heavens Cauldron which he had previously used against Ji Ning.

“The Eastwoods Sect has more than thirty-nine thousand disciples.” The silver-armored general’s voice reverberated in the air. “More than twenty thousand have knelt, including twenty-one Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals and three hundred and one Primal Daoists. These three hundred and twenty-two are permitted to remain alive...the rest shall all perish!”

His voice reverberated throughout the entire Eastwoods mountain range.

And then...flames began to erupt throughout the area, moving to fill every single part of the Eastwoods mountain range.

“General, you haven’t finished counting to ten yet!”

“General!”

The hesitating Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals, upon seeing this, instantly began to call out frantically. Some of the Primal Daoists, Earth Immortals, and Loose Immortals actually fell to their knees right away.

“Too late,” the silver-armored general laughed.

Streaks of flame were filling the entire region. Those hidden away in secret rooms, those roving the mountains, those fleeing...all of them were turned to ash as soon as they were touched by the flames! The Divine Venomflame of the Nine Heavens was very dangerous for Celestial Immortals; how could these ordinary disciples of the Eastwoods Sect possibly withstand it?

“No! I submitted! I SUBMITTED! General, I’m willing to be your slave!” A youth cried out miserably, right before he was burnt to ash by the flames.

“A puny Zifu Disciple...just what am I supposed to do with you?” The silver-armored general sneered.

Despair filled every part of the Eastwoods mountain range.

The only ones to survive were the Primal Daoists and Void-level Immortals who had knelt by the count of five. The others disciples...perished to the man. Some of them chose to self-detonate, but their souls

were still trapped by the grand formation protecting the Eastwoods Mountain range. Their souls were annihilated; none were spared at all.

Moments later...things turned completely silent.

“Come in.” The silver-armored general waved his hand, and an enormous sack suddenly appeared. The mouth of the sack opened, instantly drawing in the Primal Daoists, Loose Immortals, and Earth Immortals below him.

He made one more trip to the forbidden region, collecting all of the grandmasters of the Dao of Constructs, the castle, and the other things within.

“Time to go.” The silver-armored general led his bronze-armored Fiendguards to the entrance to that black, fog-shrouded cave...then stepped straight into it.

Moments later...the cave entrance itself disappeared.

The entire Eastwoods mountain range had become completely silent. All living creatures, including the animals that had lived here, had been completely wiped out. Even all the formations present, such as the Divine Venomflame of the Nine Heavens Cauldron, had been broken.

The Eastwoods Sect...starting from today, it truly no longer existed!

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This was an extremely large world.

The commandery city in the center of this world was an incomparably massive fortress. The fortress was so large that even Celestial Immortals would be unable to see it in its entirety.

“We’re back. We’ve finally returned to the Fifth World.”

A black foggy cave entrance appeared in the skies, and the silver-armored youth and his bronze-armored Fiendguards appeared from within it.

Rumble...an invisible surge of power swept across this squad.

“General.” The bronze-armored Fiendguards looked towards the silver-armored youth.

“Go to the headquarters and await further orders,” the silver-armored general said with a sigh. “This time, I shall most probably be sent into exile...and you’ll probably have to suffer with me.”

“It’s not your fault, General. If we have to blame someone, we have to blame that Ji Ning.”

“Right. That Ji Ning actually knew the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]. You can’t be blamed at all, General!” The crowd of bronze-armored Fiendguards hurriedly said.

The silver-armored general chuckled. “Alright. I need to go see the Cavemaster. Go ahead and wait for me in the headquarters.”

“Yes,” the bronze-armored Fiendguards said.

The silver-armored youth transformed into a streak of light, soaring down from the skies and into that castle below. A corridor automatically opened, granting him entrance. As for the bronze-armored Fiendguards, they all had to land and walk in through the gates to the city. The general was a Celestial Immortal, after all; his status was much higher than theirs.

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Within a massive palace.

A man dressed in fiery red robes was seated up high on a royal throne, staring downwards. His terrifying aura was absolutely no weaker than that of the Grand Xia Emperor's.

The silver-armored youth moved into the palace, then respectfully bowed from the waist. "Greetings, Cavemaster."

"Buchasi." The fire-robed man glanced downwards, then frowned slightly. "Aren't you supposed to be in Flamedoor Commandery of the world of the Grand Xia? Your assignment is to watch over the construction of the constructs there; you can't let anything go wrong. Why have you left the world of the Grand Xia and returned here without being summoned?"

"Your subordinate's base in the Eastwoods mountain range of Flamedoor Commandery was infiltrated..." The silver-armored youth honestly told the complete story of what had happened, because he knew exactly how powerful this organization was. Even if he didn't tell the truth, within a single day, the organization would learn of everything which had happened in the Eastwoods mountain range."

"The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]? Ji Ning?" The fire-robed man frowned.

The silver-armored youth was so nervous, sweat emerged from his forehead.

"You truly have disappointed me." The fire-robed man shook his head and sighed.

"Cavemaster, I...I..." the silver-armored youth felt some unwillingness to accept this. He truly could not be held to blame for what had happened; any base would have found it difficult to deal with the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art]."

"Successes are to be rewarded. Mistakes are to be punished," the Cavemaster said coldly. "Buchasi, because of you, our invasion of the world of the Grand Xia will become even more difficult. I punish you thusly...take your subordinates and go to the Mount Stele major world. Establish a new base there and continue to manufacture constructs. In addition, within a hundred years, you must slay five Celestial Immortals."

The silver-armored youth's heart shook.

The Mount Stele major world?

That world was completely different from the world of the Grand Xia. The Grand Xia world was a unified world, whereas the Mount Stele major world was in a state of tremendous chaos. Thus, battles had swept the world long ago. To go to the world of the Grand Xia was to enjoy life, but to go to the world of Mount Stele was to be forced to prepare for battles at all times...and he also had to kill five Celestial Immortals!

No Celestial Immortal was easy to deal with. They had all lived for countless ages, and no one knew exactly what tricks each had up their sleeves. Perhaps one might have an advantage, but then the enemy's friends or master would suddenly arrive. Thus...killing Celestial Immortals was an extremely dangerous task. Yes, he had killed more than ten Celestial Immortals, but this was a bodycount that had been accumulated over countless ages, and after experiencing countless dangers.

He had finally been given a chance to enjoy life after being sent to the world of the Grand Xia to manufacture golems; in that place, he hadn't had any dangerous assignments at all. And now...the good life had to come to an end. A much harder life was to begin...and he might just die there, within the world of Mount Stele!

And this wasn't as bad as it could have been; if Ji Ning hadn't needed something for him and had thus sworn an oath to the Dao of the Heavens not to reveal this secret, his punishment probably would've been even heavier!

"Yes," the silver-armored youth said respectfully..

"You head out immediately. Go." The Cavemaster waved a hand.

The silver-armored youth immediately retreated, departing from the palace.

The palace became completely quiet.

Whoosh.

An alluring, white-robed woman suddenly appeared behind the Cavemaster. She was utterly ravishing, and her slender waist could just barely be seen under her semi-translucent white clothes. She laughed softly, "Master, Buchashi is one of your most formidable warriors...and hasn't that Ji Ning sworn an oath to the Dao of the Heavens already?"

"What do you know?" The Cavemaster said calmly, "Ji Ning has sworn an oath to the Dao of the Heavens not to reveal the fact that the castle was making constructs, true...but Ji Ning is very close to the Xia Emperor. He can absolutely come up with a way to warn him...and once that happens, our invasion of the world of the Grand Xia shall become even more difficult."

"Why are you so cautious in dealing with this world, a single major world?" The alluring woman mumbled.

"The world of the Grand Xia is different from ordinary major worlds," the Cavemaster said. "The Xia Emperor is of the imperial bloodline of Pangu's World; how deep a foundation do you think he has? No one knows what someone like him, a descendent of the Primordial Imperial Clan, has up his sleeve. In addition, the Xia Emperor and Daofather Raindragon are extremely good friends. When invading the world of the Grand Xia, we have to beware Daofather Raindragon as well. How can I possibly NOT be cautious?"

The alluring woman said with surprise, "Daofather Raindragon? Master, you've never spoken of this before."

"There was no need to. You aren't even a Celestial Immortal," the Cavemaster said with resignation.

“Is the Xia Emperor really such close friends with Daofather Raindragon?” The alluring woman was truly curious about this.

“This is a ‘secret’ for you, but all the experts of the Three Realms know about this.” The Cavemaster shook his head. “In fact, the Xia Emperor has done his best to spread the news far and wide. He even made it so that in his major world, ‘Raindragon Mountain’ was even taller than his own ‘Skylight Palace’! Skylight Palace is his imperial palace; it represents himself, the Xia Emperor. For Raindragon Mountain to be slightly taller than it...what did you think it represented? It naturally represented someone even more powerful than him! In the Three Realms, the only person who has a connection to Raindragon Mountain is Daofather Raindragon!”

The alluring woman now understood. “I’ve always wondered about that! Master, all of you are True Immortals or Emyrean Gods, but none of you have ever fought each other.”

“Don’t underestimate the Xia Emperor. Even if Daofather Raindragon doesn’t intervene, invading the world of the Grand Xia will be no easy task. The Primordial Imperial Clan? Hmph...that’s not just a meaningless phrase. Even though he’s merely of one of the side branches of that lineage, he won’t be easy to deal with,” the Cavemaster said.