

## Desolate 461

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 28: Charging Out of the Prison

“Die? From what, those three aberrations of yours?” The nine hundred meter tall giant, Ji Ning, roared with laughter. He continued to furiously pull up the copper pillar, and the force coming from down beneath it continued to strengthen, making Ning’s task easier and easier.

“You...!”

The horned, golden-robed man was filled with utter rage. Because of the caution that had been bred into him during the era of Pangu’s World, he never carried all his aberrations on a particular clone! This particularly clone carried three aberrations, as it was meant to protect the clan; the other clones were secreted throughout the Three Realms, and they naturally had insectoid aberrations of their own. This caused the horned, golden-robed man to feel extremely angry; if all of his aberrations were here, he would probably be able to effortlessly press down the copper pillar.

However...keeping his insectoid aberrations was an ironclad rule he had set for himself! It was the main reason why he had been able to survive through so many countless ages! He would rather pay an enormous price than to violate this ironclad rule.

“Hmph. The [Eight-Nine Arcane Art].” The horned, golden-robed man sent an angry mental message, roaring, “Although the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], you haven’t even overcome your Celestial Tribulation. If I truly were to act against you...you would definitely die.”

“Come, then. Show me everything you have,” Ning snickered.

A cold light flashed through the eyes of the horned, golden-robed man. He sent mentally, “Fine, then...our Youngflame clan is willing to resolve our differences with you. If you agree to cease uprooting the copper pillar and help us push it back down, we definitely won’t act against you again.”

“You call this ‘resolving our differences’? If you don’t come after me, I’d go after you! Do you think the annihilation of the entire Yuchi clan can be forgiven, as easily as that?” Ning was angry now.

“The annihilation of the Yuchi clan?” The horned, golden-robed man had an incredibly exalted status; he wasn’t even aware of such minor matters as the eradication of the Yuchi clan. He immediately sent mentally, “How about this? Those who gave the orders to deal with the Yuchi clan and everyone who acted against the Yucchi clan...I’ll capture them all and give them to you for you to deal with!”

Minor matters such as the extermination of a small clan were normally decided upon by the Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals of a clan. To this founder of the Youngflame clan, who could easily spend a million years in a single closed-door meditation session...Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals were nothing more than individuals that would die and be replaced every so often. Ordinary Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals would never even be qualified to see the founder a single time in their lives.

The Ancestor wouldn’t even care if all of the Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals of the clan were wiped out, to say nothing of a small portion of them.

“As easy as that?” Ning sent a cold laugh. “Celestial Immortal Arcanum sent people to assassinate me, and even the soul of my lifelong friend’s Dao-companion was destroyed thanks to the attacks of four Celestial Immortals of your Youngflame clan. Am I supposed to just write them off? If you really want to resolve our differences...I can agree. Aside from sending me everyone who had anything to do with the Yuchi clan’s eradication, all five of those Celestial Immortals, including Celestial Immortal Arcanum, must die! If you do that, this matter will be at an end!”

“You are going too far!” The Ancestor was enraged.

“Then don’t talk to me about resolving our differences!” Ning continued to furiously uproot the copper pillar; by now, even without him pulling at it, the copper pillar was rising up of its own volition. Even without Ning helping out, the upwards pushing force already eclipsed the downwards pushing force of the Celestial Immortals and three aberrations above.

“You can kill any Loose Immortals, cultivators, or mortals that you wish. You absolutely cannot kill my Celestial Immortals; not even one!” The Ancestor was utterly infuriated by now.

Every clan had its rules. For the sake of the clan, sacrificing a few Earth Immortals or Loose Immortals meant nothing.

But sacrificing Celestial Immortals?

The other Celestial Immortals would probably be terrified and shaken by such an action. All of the Celestial Immortals of the entire clan would feel nervous and restless. In addition, Celestial Immortals were the true foundation of any clan; there was no way the Ancestor would be willing to sacrifice Celestial Immortals.

“I can use magic treasures to compensate you,” the Ancestor said hurriedly.

“Ten top-grade Pure Yang Treasures. Can you afford it?” Ning asked.

The Ancestor was so choked with anger, he couldn’t speak.

Ten?

What did this Ji Ning kid think Pure Yang treasures were? Despite how powerful the Ancestor was and how long he had lived, even he didn’t have ten top-grade Pure Yang treasures.

“Stop. I SAID STOP!” The Ancestor stared at how far up the copper pillar had risen...and realized that the situation could no longer be reversed. Earlier, if Ji Ning had been willing to help out a bit, they could’ve shoved the copper pillar back down. But now? It had risen so much that even if Ji Ning helped them out, they still probably wouldn’t be able to shove it back.

“Ji Ning.” The sinister eyes of the Ancestor were filled with malice and a savage desire to kill. “I, Venomfreak, swear that I will definitely kill you. I will definitely kill you!!! Not only will I kill you, I’ll also wipe out your clan and all those you care about!”

“Don’t worry. I’m planning on killing you too. Hahaha...” Ning raised his head to stare upwards, his eyes blazing with torch-light. He could clearly see the horned, golden-robed man above him.

Rumble...the copper pillar rose up at an ever-fast pace. The pushing power from below now completely outstripped the power of the forces of the Youngflame clan. With Ning helping out as well, the copper pillar was pulled out faster and faster, with Ning's six arms turning into blurs as they moved.

"Damn it." The Youngflame clan's Ancestor had an extremely ugly look on his face. He immediately sent mentally, "Everyone, halt. Hurry up and establish the Eight Immortals Sea-Subduing Formation!"

"Yes!"

The eight Celestial Immortals Arcanum, Infatuation, Goldclock, Deadwood, Sunfish, Flamefish, Goldcloud, and Blackrain, upon hearing the orders of their incomparably venerated founder, all gave up on their attempts and simultaneously flew high into the sky. Even the three aberrations gave up as well; everyone flew up into the sky.

The eight mighty Celestial Immortals fell into formation, with the horned, golden-robed man standing at the very center and the three aberrations circling around them.

"They're coming." The horned, golden-robed man stared downwards coldly.

Clank. The pillar suddenly stopped moving.

Ning, as well, realized that the copper pillar could no longer be budged. More than 4200 kilometers of it was stretching beyond the fiery stone wall.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

An enormous sound, as though the sky itself was bursting apart or as if the earth itself was shattering.

Ning felt the countless runes covering the fiery stone wall beneath his feet begin to flicker...and the fiery stone wall itself began to move.

Whoosh! Ning sent out his divine sense to investigate. He could now see that a crack had suddenly appeared across the surface of the vast, fiery stone wall. The crack was rapidly increasing in size, expanding to each side.

It was like a crack appearing on the lid to a cauldron or a furnace.

"WE'RE OUT!"

"WE'RE OUT!"

"WE'RE FINALLY OUT!"

One figure after another came soaring out from the crack. The tight, dense waves of figures came flooding out, and as they did they rapidly began to increase in size. They started off as tiny dots, but they began to transform into Fiendgods that were thousands or tens of thousands of meters tall! They all let out agitated, berserk howls, and the sound of their roars shook the world around them. Just from listening to their agitated roars, one could sense the infinite excitement these Fiendgods were feeling.

Their roars alone could shake one's soul!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The earth broke apart. Countless Fiendgods came charging out into the sky. Some of the Fiendgods had two horns and flames coming out of their nostrils, some had the appearance of beastmen, and others appeared just like a mass of black fog...

All sorts of Fiendgods had appeared. Tall, muscular ones, sinister and bizarre ones, savage and berserk ones.

Some were large, some were small, but all of them came charging out from the stone wall, and the earth around them was utterly destroyed.

“This...this is...” Ning was completely stunned.

“This many Fiendgods?! And the auras of these Fiendgods...more than half of them are actually Void-level Fiendgods.” Ning instantly understood why the power that had come from below the copper pillar was so enormously powerful.

There were more than nine hundred Fiendgods before him...and more than sixty percent of them were Void-level Fiendgods!

These were true, real Fiendgods, the type that generally had divine abilities of their own. Over the course of countless ages, their comprehension of the Dao had most likely risen to an incredibly high level as well. Every single Void-level Fiendgod was comparable to a Celestial Immortal, and some of them were probably comparable to supreme Celestial Immortals. For so many Fiendgods to unleash their power at once...what an incredible sight that must have been!

“What in the world has the Youngflame clan done? They imprisoned this many Fiendgods!?” Ning was completely stunned.

The faces of the nine midair Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan were all ugly to behold.

“Damn.” The Ancestor’s face was ashen.

“If I had known this would happen...I would’ve killed these Fiendgods long ago.”

“Damn this Ji Ning.”

“He actually released the Fiendgods of the Infinity Furnace.”

All of the Celestial Immortals were extremely enraged.

The nine hundred-plus Fiendgods burst out from the ground, all of them enormous in size. The sky itself seemed to have grown dark as they all turned to stare at the Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan who were hovering in the air. Their eyes were filled with boundless hatred, so thick and dense the hatred seemed to have taken physical form.

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“Not good.” The distant Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals within their formations were completely stunned by what they saw. Everyone could sense the hatred these Fiendgods felt for the nine Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan...and they could also tell that more than half of the Fiendgods were Void-level Fiendgods. So many Void-level Fiendgods...this was utterly terrifying.

Old Demon Windraiser's reacted the fastest. He immediately roared furiously, "Can't you tell that those Fiendgods have gone mad? Quick! Evacuate all of our clansmen here within the Oldjade mountain range. QUICK!"

"Right!

"Yes."

"Hurry up and evacuate them!" The Loose Immortals all began to panic as they carried this out; they still cared quite deeply about their clansmen.

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"YOUNGFLAME CLAN!"

More than nine hundred Fiendgods were in the air. They stared angrily at the nine great Celestial Immortals, each of them filled with endless amounts of hatred. The leader of them, a humanoid Fiendgod who had nine heads, let out an angry roar. "You have imprisoned us for countless years. Tortured us for countless years! I, along with all of the Fiendgods who were imprisoned within your furnace, hereby swear that we will completely wipe out your entire Youngflame lineage!"

"We shall swear to annihilate the Youngflame lineage!"

"Annihilate the Youngflame lineage!"

"Annihilate!"

"ANNIHILATE!"

Their roars shook the heavens. All of the Youngflame clansmen who were located within the protective formations all had ashen looks on their faces. Unpleasant looks were on the faces of the nine Celestial Immortals as well. They knew very well how much hatred these Fiendgods bore the Youngflame clan; anyone who had been tormented for so many ages would feel boundless hatred!

"Imprisoned and tortured you for countless years?" Of the nine Celestial Immortals, the Ancestor was the calmest. He laughed coldly, "And who is to blame for that? You can only blame yourselves, you fools, for not accepting your reality! If you were willing to serve our Youngflame clan, not only would you have regained your liberty long ago, you would also be allowed to enjoy countless things."

"Submit? We Fiendgods war against the heavens and war against the earth; we are the true masters of the universe. How could we possibly submit to you?" The nine-headed Fiendgod roared with anger, and the other Fiendgods let out similarly enraged roars as well.

"Hahaha, the masters of the universe? Haven't dozens of your fellow Fiendgods ended up submitting to me, after suffering my torments?" The Ancestor roared with laughter. "Masters of the universe Hah! I'm dying of laughter. You are nothing more than a pack of fools who were born when this major world was created."

"The ones who submitted to you were trash; they are an embarrassment to all Fiendgods. We TRUE Fiendgod warriors would never bow our heads to you!" The nine-headed Fiendgod roared angrily, "Youngflame Freak, you've caught us one by one and imprisoned all of us for countless years, but your

biggest mistake was not killing us. Now that we are all gathered here together in one place...and we will definitely annihilate your entire Youngflame lineage!”

By now, Ning had also arrived on the surface of the ground. He raised his head up, watching as all of the Fiendgods in the sky swore their oath. From listening to the dialogue between the two sides, he was able to guess at quite a bit..

The nine-headed Fiendgod suddenly lowered his head, looking down towards Ning, who had just emerged on the surface of the ground.

“My good brother, tell me your name!” The nine-headed Fiendgod looked towards Ning; earlier, when they had charged out, they had all seen that it was Ning who had been pulling away at the copper pillar. “You gave us our freedom back. The kindness you have shown us is vaster than the heavens and weightier than the earth. We shall never forget it!”

### **The Desolate Era**

#### **Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 29: The Tenth Stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]**

“My name is Ji Ning. Pulling out the copper pillar was nothing more than a minor thing,” Ji Ning said.

Ning knew very well that this was no longer the Fiendgod Era; this was the era of the Grand Xia Dynasty, which had unified the world! Struggles between human clans were minor affairs, but any Fiendgod that refused to submit to humans would be pursued and assaulted by all parties! The free Fiendgods would have no choice but to flee in pitiful fashion to the ends of the earth. This was what had happened to that ancient Fiendgod who had been in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains; he was clearly more powerful than Loose Immortals, and would be able to effortlessly crush them with his hands...but he didn't dare to fight back at all. He had always been fleeing in a pathetic fashion.

As for submitting?

These nine hundred-plus Fiendgods had been captured and tormented for countless years without being willing to submit to the Youngflame clan; it would most likely be very hard for them to be made to submit to any other human clans.

“We Fiendgods repay benevolence with benevolence, and repay malice with malice,” the nine-headed Fiendgod sent mentally, then turned his head to look at the nine Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan. He let out a heaven-shaking roar and said, “Youngflame clan, you've imprisoned and tormented us for countless years. Today, the day of vengeance is at hand! Let us wipe all of them out before the Godslayer Guards of the Xia Emperor arrive!”

“KILL!”

“KILL THEM ALL!”

Murderous roars filled the skies, the roars themselves filled with boundless hatred.

The nine hundred-plus Fiendgods actually formed into a war-formation. Their divine power flowed through them, merging to become a single whole as the blurry illusion of an ancient Fiendgod suddenly appeared in the skies, its entire body wreathed in flames. Its aura was so powerful that even Ning was

rather stunned. “So this is a Fiendgod war-formation?” He had only heard of Fiendgod war-formations; this was the first time he had seen one.

Fiendgods were born to be powerful fighters and combatants. They truly did war against the heavens and the earth, preferring to die than to submit.

Daoist Threelives was a classic example; after an enemy ripped out off one of his arms, he actually decided to forever have just a single arm! As many humans saw it, this was utter idiocy...but this was exactly what Daoist Threelives did. This was due to his own pride!

When the ancient tribulation had come, he could’ve hidden away and retreated; given his level of power, he would’ve been able to keep himself alive. But...he didn’t do this. He knew that things would be extremely dangerous, but he still went forward to welcome the danger. Even in death, he had felt no regrets!

Ning raised his head to look at the awe-inspiring horde of Fiendgods in the skies. They all held weapons at the ready as they charged towards the nine Celestial Immortals.

On one side, a Fiendgod war-formation; on the otherside, the Eight Immortals Sea-Subduing Formation of Immortal cultivators!

**BOOM!**

A powerful collision could be heard, as though the heavens had broken apart and the earth had collapsed.

A series of massive waves swept past the region surrounding the eight Celestial Immortals, causing the power of the enemy collision to be completely negated. This Eight Immortals Sea-Subduing Formation was one of the most supreme defensive formations of the Three Realms; it focused completely on being flawlessly protective! They knew very well how difficult it would be to kill these Fiendgods.

“Hahaha, is that all you have?” The Ancestor of the Youngflame clan laughed coldly, “I urge you to hurry up and leave; I’ve already notified the Xia Emperor, and I trust that he will soon dispatch the Godslayer Guards to come. If you don’t leave now...none of you will be leaving at all!”

“Kill.”

“KILL!”

The Fiendgods didn’t care at all; they continued to charge forward and attack.

**BOOM!**

The massive, fiery illusion of a Fiendgod that had been formed by their war-formation once more slammed against the Eight Immortals Sea-Subduing Formation. The faces of the Celestial Immortals sustaining the formation all turned ashen.

“Ancestor, what should we do? What are our options?” Celestial Immortal Arcanum sent frantically, “We won’t be able to hold for too long; their Fiendgod war-formation is too powerful.”

“What can we do?” The horned, golden-robed man gave Celestial Immortal Arcanum a cold look. “There are more than nine hundred Fiendgods here, and more than six hundred of them are Void-level Fiendgods. When they work together, they are capable of shaking the world itself; you won’t even be able to use a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal to escape. As for hiding into a mobile Immortal estate, then using the Greater Teleportation Dao-seal? The combined strike from so many Fiendgods will reduce any estate to dust in an instant. You want to run? There’s no way to run! There is only one option; buy time! Buy a little bit of time...because once the Godslayer Guards of the Xia Emperor arrive, we’ll be rescued!”

Using a Greater Teleportation Dao-seal required time...and one couldn’t be disrupted in the process!

“Will the Godslayer Guards of the Xia Emperor make it in time?” Celestial Immortal Goldclock asked.

“I’ve already notified the Xia Emperor,” the horned, golden-robed man said.

“What if the Godslayer Guard intentionally delays? What then?” Celestial Immortal Arcanum asked worriedly.

The pupils of the horned, golden-robed man shrank, but he said in a low voice, “That won’t happen. The Xia Emperor, that old bastard, knows very well that I have a treasure that can protect you and take you all away with me. However, that treasure will shatter after a single use. Unless things become critical, I absolutely won’t use it.”

A treasure capable of blocking the combined strikes of over nine hundred Fiendgods was equivalent to a second life for a Celestial Immortal; the Youngflame clan’s Ancestor wasn’t willing to use it if he didn’t have to!

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“You Fiendgods, you are wasting time. The more time you waste, the more of you shall die later.” The horned, golden-robed man sent a mental message through his elemental ki, and his voice echoed throughout the nearby area. “Once the Godslayer Guards arrive...you know exactly how powerful they are. You will be dead!”

“Even if we die, we’ll annihilate your Youngflame clan as well!” A Fiendgod covered with scales roared this back at him.

“What’s to fear about death? Youngflame clan, all of your Celestial Immortals shall die!”

“Youngflame Freak, I know that you yourself have countless clones, but those eight Celestial Immortals under your command shall all die today!”

The Fiendgods were all roaring as they once more joined their power to charge against the Eight Immortals Sea-Subduing Formation.

“You really are quite bold and daring; you don’t even want to live any longer! But such a pity; you’ve managed to endure for so many years, managed to endure all sorts of torments, refusing to bow your heads for the sake of one day gaining your freedom...but now that you are free, for the sake of taking your so-called ‘revenge’, you are all going to be caught and slaughtered by the Godslayer Guards. What a true pity! If I were you, I would’ve fled to the ends of the world by now...in fact, I would’ve fled from the entire world of the Grand Xia!” The horned, golden-robed man roared with laughter.



Indeed, a portion of the nine hundred-plus Fiendgods hesitated.

It was true.

Freedom!

To no longer be imprisoned; to no longer be tortured! It was hard to understand how precious freedom was to them. They had waited for this day for far too long. Were they going to give it all up for the sake of vengeance?

“If we don’t kill the Youngflame clan, even if we live, we’ll live with regret. Today, we shall kill the Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan. After we slaughter them all, we’ll joyfully flee!” The nine-headed Fiendgod roared angrily.

“That’s what we want! To live joyfully!”

“Hahaha, Ninehead, I feel as though I’ve returned back to the old days when we warred against the humans. Right! What we want is to live joyfully! What’s so scary about death?”

“Wonderful, wonderful!”

All of them let out heroic roars.

The more powerful a Fiendgod was, the more fearless they would become; the desire to do battle that they were born with caused them to become extraordinarily berserk.

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Ji Ning, watching from below, was stunned.

“Fiendgods...?” Ning murmured to himself.

Although he, too, trained as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, he didn’t have the heart of a true Fiendgod. He was a human, after all.

If he had been imprisoned and tortured for countless eons...upon escaping and seeing a tremendous threat approaching, he probably would’ve chosen to flee. Only later would he prepare for revenge! But Fiendgods were different; they weren’t willing to wait at all. In their rage, they would take vengeance right away, with no fear of death at all. This sort of desire to do battle stemmed from their very bones; they were born for war. It all completely stunned Ning.

“Kill.”

“Kill.”

BOOM! Explosions rang out unabated within the skies. The eight Celestial Immortals would occasionally eat a spirit-pill to replenish their elemental ki, striving to defend for as long as they could. The power of the collisions caused even the golden pellet Jindan in their bodies to be damaged. They were only just barely able to hold on, while the Fiendgods were growing increasingly berserk.

Time continued to pass, one second after the other.

None of the Fiendgods, however, departed; they all continued to attack in a berserk manner.

“To be joyful and act as one pleases.”

“For a desire for battle to be so powerful as to fill the skies.”

“To wipe out all foes.”

Ning was mumbling to himself. Suddenly, streaks of sword-ki began to appear around him. Covered by countless streaks of sword-ki, Ning looked like a spirit composed of swords.

Ning closed his eyes.

Threads of enlightenment continuously flowed towards him...

Ever since Ning had truly decided to start his war against the Youngflame clan, his heart had started to become even more clear, and his desire to do battle had grown.

However, upon seeing the Fiendgods who had been imprisoned and tormented for countless years choose to ignore their freedom in favor of a joyful battle against those they hated, the desire to do battle in Ning’s heart began to grow even stronger.

Stronger and stronger, it grew...and his heart became clearer and clearer.

All the insights he had gained in the past began to gather in his mind.

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In the skies above, those nine hundred-plus Fiendgods continued to frantically assault the nine Celestial Immortals. The nine Celestial Immortals were only trying to buy time. As for the Ancestor, he was gnashing his teeth. He truly didn’t wish to use his supreme protective treasure; in his heart, it was far more important than the lives of one or two of his Celestial Immortals. But if eight Celestial Immortals under his command died...then he truly would become the lone survivor of the clan. He didn’t wish for this to happen.

“Wait a little longer. A little longer.” The Youngflame clan’s Ancestor was frantically encouraging them.

The other eight Celestial Immortals were doing their best to hold on as well. They couldn’t break; they had to stay strong.

Rumble...

Suddenly, a ripple of power appeared.

It was the ripple of a Greater Teleportation.

“Mm?” The nine Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan simultaneously raised their heads.

The nine hundred-plus Fiendgods raised their heads as well.

High in the sky, an ancient-looking warship that appeared to be formed from waves of blood. This bloodwave warship was manned by warriors who were dressed in blood-red armor, each of whom had utterly astonishing auras of power.

“THE GODSLAYER GUARDS!” The nine Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan were overjoyed.

“Let’s leave now!”

“Flee.”

“Scatter!”

The nine hundred Fiendgods could no longer afford to wait around. With a series of booms, they tore through space, using spatial teleports to rapidly flee in every direction.

“Chase after them!” A tall, muscular general who stood upon the deck of the bloodwave warship gave the nine Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan a cold look, then immediately gave the order.

Instantly, with many bloody flashes of light, the Godslayer Guards tore holes through space as well as they engaged in pursuit.

The world became peaceful once more.

The Fiendgods had disappeared.

The Godslayer Guards had disappeared as well.

“Whew.” The nine mighty Celestial Immortals all let out sighs of relief.

“Thank goodness. Thank goodness!” The horned, golden-robed man nodded to himself. “Thank goodness I wasn’t in a rush to use my treasure. Otherwise, it would’ve been wasted.”

“...that Ji Ning actually hasn’t fled!” Celestial Immortal Arcanum pointed downwards, laughing coldly, “Although we are heavily injured, with the three insect aberrations present...we are completely capable of suppressing him.”

All the other Celestial Immortals looked downwards as well, the Ancestor included.

Ning was standing in the midst of some rubble. His eyes were closed, and he even had a hint of a smile on his face. This was the feeling of joy he had when he was gaining insights into the Dao.

“Where the Dao is...” Ning opened his eyes, then said softly, “Though ten million soldiers bar my path, I shall relentlessly advance!”

**BOOM!!!**

The rubble around Ning, including the countless pieces of shattered rocks, broken bits of grass, and even drops of water all began to levitate into the air...and as they did, sword-light began to gather around them. It was as though all things had become a sword! Even the many Immortal swords and Darknorth swords that floated in the empty space within Ning’s Zifu region began to emit sword-hums.

“Although I am very talented, and although my insights into the Dao have long ago surpassed that of senior Northwalker...in terms of my sword-heart, perhaps only today have I just barely reached his level.”

Ning could feel a surge of sword-intent that wished to burst forth from within his heart. This sword-intent was so powerful, so resonant.

“Where the Dao is...”

“Where the Dao is...”

Ning murmured softly to himself, “This new sword-art that I just developed...let it be named the ‘Relentless Advance’, then.”

The tenth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword] – Relentless Advance!

Ning raised his head to look towards the sky. The sky was now devoid of Fiendgods...only the nine Celestial Immortals and the three aberrations were still present.

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#### **Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 30: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals**

There were some Loose Immortals who were gathering within the protective formations far away.

“Windraiser, I’ve already moved all of the mortals and Immortal cultivators in the area under my control into this Qiankun pearl.” A green-haired Immortal lifted up a black pearl that glowed with soft light. He then waved his hand and put it away. Looking towards the outside, he said with a chortle, “But from the looks of it, I didn’t need to evacuate them at all; the Fiendgods have all left, leaving behind just Ji Ning.”

“Indeed.” Windraiser smiled and nodded as well.

They had been evacuating many of their clansmen because they had been afraid of those nine hundred-plus Fiendgods.

Now that the Fiendgods were being pursued by the Godslayer Guards of the Xia Emperor...the only enemy left was Ji Ning.

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“Master, Master! Aren’t you going to flee?” Little Qing, within the ten thousand kilometer formation region, was absolutely frantic. “Not even nine hundred-plus Fiendgods were able to break through the defenses of those eight Celestial Immortals. What’s the point of staying there by yourself? Quick, flee!”

“Senior apprentice-brother!” Northson was very worried as well.

“Don’t panic. My boy Ning isn’t the rash sort.” Uncle White stared off into the distance. In the heart, he murmured, “Ning, son, be careful.”

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The nine Celestial Immortals in the air now felt far more confidence than they had earlier. The Ancestor of the Youngflame clan said, “Earlier, you all suffered attacks from those Fiendgods; your wounds are all significant. It’s best if you join into a formation to provide assistance to me...and leave Ji Ning to me. Just assist me.”

“Alright.”

“Although we are injured, we’re still able to use thirty to forty percent of our power. The power of the eight of us, joined forces, is still significant. Against Ji Ning, there’s no need to use the ‘Eight Immortals

Sea-Subduing Formation'. It's better if we use the 'Eight Trigrams Roving Dragon Formation'," Celestial Immortal Goldclock said with great confidence.

"Mm."

"Alright."

"The Eight Trigrams Roving Dragon Formation is more than enough to block Ji Ning's attacks." Even the most careful of them all, Celestial Infatuation, nodded in agreement.

Different formations naturally had different levels of power.

The Eight Immortals Sea-Subduing Formation was completely focused on defense; it didn't have any offensive techniques at all, naturally resulting in an extremely powerful defense.

The Eight Trigrams Roving Dragon Formation was fairly balanced; its attacks and defenses were even. After all, the Celestial Immortals now knew how strong Ning was; they didn't need to waste too much of their energy on unnecessary defense.

Previously, they had faced nine hundred-plus Fiendgods, with roughly six hundred being Void-level Fiendgods. In truth, Void-level Fiendgods were generally on par with the likes of Immortal Northwalker in power; that Void-level Fiendgod which Ning had encountered in the wild marshes of the Gaol Mountains had once suffered Immortal Northwalker's wrath. Although Void-level Fiendgods had divine abilities to add to their power, allowing them to become comparable to Celestial Immortals...their ability to comprehend of the Dao was simply too low. Once they reached a bottleneck, they might spend a trillion years at that bottleneck without advancing at all.

Even Mount Innerheart had quite a few Fiendgods who remained unable to beat the ninth golem.

Their inferiority in comprehending the Dao were their greatest weakness!

And so, while there were six hundred Void-level Fiendgods...even Patriarch Arcanum who was the weakest of the eight Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan was far more powerful than the likes of Immortal Northwalker, a Loose Immortal who lived for a million years! As for Celestial Immortals Goldclock, Deadwood, and Flamefish, they were even more powerful. Celestial Immortal Infatuation, in turn, belonged to the supreme tier.

Thus...it took roughly ten or so of the Void-level Fiendgods to match a single one of the Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan.

That great gathering of Fiendgods, in turn, was just comparable to thirty or fifty Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan.

When eight Celestial Immortals completely focused on defense, they would generally be able to hold off against a group of thirty to fifty Celestial Immortals for a short period of time. However, those Fiendgods had been too berserk; although the battle had been very brief, they had still managed to heavily injure all eight of the Celestial Immortals, causing even their golden pellet Jindans to be seriously damaged. They would all require many spirit-pills, medicines, and time to slowly repair the damage done. Now that they were going to deal with Ji Ning while heavily injured...the weakest of them, Celestial Immortal Arcanum, was only able to use perhaps ten to twenty percent of his full power, while the mighty

Celestial Immortal Infatuation was still able to use fifty to sixty percent. As a whole, the eight Celestial Immortals were at roughly thirty to forty percent of their full power.

Rumble...

The Eight Trigrams Roving Dragon Formation took form.

Instantly, an enormous golden set of eight trigram symbols appeared. The eight mighty Celestial Immortals were the 'points' at which the eight trigrams were located. Around them coiled a golden, roving dragon that hovered in midair.

The eight Celestial Immortals all stared downwards.

"Goldclock, once we trap Ji Ning, you'll absorb him into your golden greatclock," the horned, golden-robed man sent through his divine power. A smile was on his face, and he was extraordinarily confident right now.

"Yes, Ancestor!" Celestial Immortal Goldclock was extremely excited; they had been under tremendous pressure when facing so many Fiendgods, but against this single person, Ji Ning...in addition, given that they had already battled against Ning within the trapping formation earlier, they knew how strong he was. This just made them even more confident of their chances.

On the ground below.

The sword-intent surging forth from Ning's heart was continuously growing in strength. Ning raised his head to look towards the sky. There were nine mighty Celestial Immortals in the sky. The ugly, horned, golden-robed figure produced a horsetail whisk, and before him stood three enormous insect aberrations. As for the other eight Celestial Immortals, they were in some sort of Eight Trigrams formation next to him.

"The eight Celestial Immortals came under a wild assault from those nine hundred-plus Fiendgods just now...clearly, they were only just barely able to hold on. They are probably all heavily injured, but they actually aren't retreating and are facing me. They probably don't hold my strength in any regard." After pondering for a moment, Ning immediately knew what his foes were thinking.

However...Ning wasn't like those Void-level Fiendgods!

His special divine ability was something more powerful than the likes of the other divine abilities which most Empyrean Gods or True Gods of Primal Chaos could come up with. It was the [Starseizing Hand], the supreme divine ability which Daoist Threelives had once used to roam and dominate the Primordial Era. The escaped Void-level Fiendgods had all been born during the creation of this major world of the Grand Xia; by comparison, their divine abilities were much weaker.

Ning's palms, in turn were akin to supreme Pure Yang treasures.

As for his insights into the Dao...he used to be on par with Patriarch Goldclock, but he had now completely surpassed him, reaching a new, higher level.

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“Everyone, be careful. This Ji Ning is no ordinary Fiendgod; he is a supremely talented monster with a very high level of sword-arts. He was previously able to crush the five of us, and now, although we eight have joined forces, we are only able to use a portion of our strength. We must be careful. Let the Ancestor serve as our main attacker, while we shall serve merely as support,” Celestial Immortal Infatuation warned.

“Don’t worry, Infatuation. When the five of us previously used the Five Elements Mountainhold Formation, we were able to easily block his attacks. Now that the eight of us have joined into the Eight Trigrams Roving Dragon Formation...even though we are only at thirty or forty percent power, our strength is quite close to the level of power which a full strength Five Elements Mountainhold Formation has. We’ll absolutely be able to block him,” Celestial Immortal Goldclock said confidently.

“Kill!” The horned, golden-robed man immediately gave the order.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Instantly, the three enormous aberrations all charged downwards.

BOOM! Ning, who had originally been standing on the ground, suddenly charged into the skies, moving like a streak of light.

By comparison, Ning was like a tiny little dot that was rising, while the three enormous insectoid aberrations came charging down from above.

“[Obscuring Wind of the Nine Heavens]!”

Whoosh! A gust of wind blew past. Ning, moving at a speed that rendered the Youngflame clan completely speechless, was actually able to move past all three of the aberrations. This was an evasive divine ability which Patriarch Subhuti had specially designed for Ji Ning. Although it could only be considered a top-class divine ability of the Three Realms, and couldn’t compare to supreme evasive techniques like the [Wings of the Garuda], Ning actually wouldn’t have been as fast when using the [Wings of Garuda]. After all...Ning himself wasn’t a golden-winged Roc; he was a human. It would be impressive for humans to be able to use even thirty to fifty percent of a divine ability designed for birds.

“Too fast.” The horned, golden-robed man was surprised by this.

“Stop him.”

“Everyone, be careful.” The eight Celestial Immortals saw that as Ning used his evasive divine ability, he was making his way towards them.

“Tie him down while I use my insectoid aberrations to attack him,” the horned, golden-robed man said hurriedly. He had to tie down Ning. Otherwise, given Ning’s speed...there was no way those insects could catch up to him at all. Once they actually got into battle, his insectoid aberrations were more than powerful enough to keep Ning completely occupied, making it impossible for him to dodge. They would they draw him into the divine greatclock!

It must be understood that of the three insectoid aberrations, the winged rhinoceros creature alone was, in terms of strength, comparable to Ning at full power. It was precisely due to creatures like this

that Immortal Venomfreak was able to become so famous within the Three Realms; these aberrations definitely couldn't be underestimated.

Whoosh.

The [Obscuring Wind of the Nine Heavens] blew forth, and Ning arrived in front of the eight Celestial Immortals.

"Kill!" The eight Celestial Immortals stared towards Ning from afar. The giant golden dragon that had been coiled around them let out an earth-shattering draconic roar and charged straight towards Ning.

Ning's gaze was as deep and fathomless as the depths of the sea. His six arms instantly appeared, and the fingers of those six enormous hands, glowing with golden light, simultaneously formed into a set of sword-fingers, unleashing techniques that represented the most powerful sword-arts which Ning had created thus far. Although in terms of profoundness, some of the other sword-arts Ning had learned in the past were comparable to this stance he had created...his own stance was the stance that was most appropriate for him. Only the creator of a technique would be able to truly unleash its full, maximum power.

Ning's sword-fingers all became three hundred meters long!

Enormous sword-fingers...like the fingers of a divinity.

At the same time, in front of the sword-fingers appeared divine black swords that was fully three thousand meters in length!

As far as the eye could see...

There were six entire divine black swords that were over three thousand meters long, gathering the power of heaven and earth within them. One of the divine black swords chopped directly against the body of the golden dragon, causing it to shudder and turn dim. The golden dragon roared as well, furiously striving to resist the sword...but the five of the other enormous swords stabbed straight towards the Eight Trigrams Roving Dragon Formation.

BOOM! The golden Eight Trigrams symbols trembled, and then with a booming sound completely blew apart.

"No!"

"What?!"

The eight Celestial Immortals were all stunned.

"Not good." The horned, golden-robed man wasn't too far from them. Shocked, he hurriedly stretched out the horsetail whisk in his hand...but alas, distant water is unable to quench thirst.

Ji Ning's attack speed was extremely fast!

As Ning's five sword-fingers, in the form of five divine black swords, stabbed through the Eight Trigrams Roving Dragon Formation, two of the swords turned to pierce towards the closest Celestial Immortal, Goldclock. Goldclock was utterly terrified; he wasn't able to flee at all, and so all he could do was



immediately unleash his most powerful treasure, the top-grade Pure Yang divine greatclock. Ignoring the wounds which his golden pellet Jindan had suffered, he immediately and frantically began to squeeze every last drop out of it, struggling to increase his power as much as he could.

BOOM! The divine greatclock was sent flying from the strike of the first divine black sword. As for the second divine black sword, it slashed across Celestial Immortal Goldclock's body...which was promptly reduced to ash by what seemed like an endless torrent of sword-ki.

The golden palm that had launched the divine black sword that had sent the golden greatclock flying away swung out, grabbing the now-ownerless greatclock.

BOOM! Two other streaks of black sword-light were flying towards the other nearby Celestial Immortal, Flamefish. Although Celestial Immortal Flamefish also frantically sought to squeeze as much power from his Jindan as he could...Ning, even back when he had first trained in the [Starseizing Hand], was already comparable to Celestial Immortal Infatuation. Now that he had developed an even more powerful sword technique, he was clearly much more powerful than before. In addition, his sword-fingers were akin to a supreme Pure Yang treasure; how could the likes of Celestial Immortal Flamefish possibly withstand him?

The two streaks of sword-light flashed past, and Celestial Immortal Flamefish was reduced to dust as well.

Clang!

Clang!

The other six Celestial Immortals went absolutely all out, finally managing to block the last streak of sword-light Ning had sent out.

This initial strike by Ning had claimed the lives of two out of eight Celestial immortals!

"DAMN HIM!" The distant Ancestor of the Youngflame clan's eyes turned so wide, his eyelids threatened to split apart. His eyes were now completely bloodshot.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 31: The Evacuated Youngflame Clansmen**

The Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals of the Youngflame clan who were hiding behind their formations had previously felt quite relaxed; some of them had already stopped evacuating the mortals in the areas they were responsible for. When they had seen the nine hundred-plus Fiendgods attack, they had been quite worried...but upon seeing only Ji Ning remained, they felt quite relaxed.

But...

"How...how can this be? How could he have broken through a formation of eight Celestial Immortals?"

"Didn't five of our Celestial Immortals battle Ji Ning within that formation of his? Now that they know exactly how powerful he is...how could they have made a mistake on this level?"

"Good heavens!"

The Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals were completely dazed.

Celestial Immortals had incomparably exalted statuses...and two had just died now, all of a sudden. And they were Celestial Immortals who had belonged to the Youngflame clan!

“Quick, hurry up and re-launch the evacuation process,” Old Demon Windraiser sent mentally with a furious roar. “This Ji Ning has a body as tough as a magic treasure; he doesn’t fear the attacks of Celestial Immortals. If the Celestial Immortals of our Youngflame clan are unable to do anything to him...he might start massacring us soon!”

“Right, right, right!”

“Keep evacuation.”

“Quickly!”

The Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals who had yet to completely evacuate the mortals and cultivators in their regions once more began to quickly do so.

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“Wooooooow!” Little Qing’s eyes bulged out. She looked as though she had seen a ghost. “Two Celestial Immortals...Celestial Immortals! Those were Celestial Immortals who had escaped the confines of the Three Realms after overcoming their Celestial Tribulations! They were far, far more precious and venerable than Void-level Fiendgods. Celestial Immortals are so powerful and mighty, but...but two of them just died?!”

Mu Northson was speechless as well.

The nearby Uncle White was even more stunned. A Celestial Immortal! Each served as the foundations for a truly supreme clan. It was rare for a single one to be produced in the Grand Xia Dynasty in a million years...and two of them had just died like that?

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Ning stared at a distant flying shuttle. The flying shuttle was completely black, and was roughly three hundred meters long. Just now, all six of the surviving Celestial Immortals had flown over and hidden themselves within the flying shuttle; only the horned, golden-robed man remained outside the shuttle, standing atop it and staring towards Ning.

“They ran pretty fast,” Ning mumbled to himself.

He had suddenly killed two Celestial Immortals earlier, causing the remaining six Celestial Immortals to immediately flee into that shuttle. In fact, after they did so, they had completely sealed off all openings to the flying shuttle, giving him no chance to attack them at all.

“How can this be?!” The enraged Ancestor glared coldly at Ning from his position atop the shuttle. He sent an angry mental howl, “Infatuation, didn’t you say earlier that the eight of you combined were more than enough to stop him? Didn’t you say that even though his power suddenly increased significantly after your last ambush, that he’s still just roughly on par with you?”

“We didn’t know either!”

“When we were hiding at Mu Northson’s place and ambushed him...he truly was quite weak, even weaker than Goldclock and Deadwood.”

“Right, right! That really was the case. And just a short while ago...the five of us fought against him within his formations. We were quite surprised at how much his power had increased in merely half a month; he was now close to Infatuation in power. But now, in the blink of an eye, his power has increased even more?! He’s even stronger than Infatuation now!”

“The amount of time that passed since our battle was roughly as much as needed to boil a kettle of tea. How could he have grown so much stronger?!”

“It’s not that we were overconfident; it’s that all of this is simply inconceivable!”

Celestial Immortals Infatuation, Deadwood, and Sunfish all felt quite miserable as well.

They clearly had fought Ning just a short while ago...but after he had released those nine hundred-plus Fiendgods, he had grown even more powerful. This rate of increase in strength was simply too fast! Generally speaking, the higher one’s level was, the slower one would increase in strength. It was one thing for Ning to increase so rapidly in power after being ambushed, but for him to suddenly increase in strength yet again in the blink of an eye?

“Damn, damn!” The horned, golden-robed ground his teeth. Any cultivator who was able to train to the Celestial Immortal level would be extremely cautious; if they couldn’t win a fight, they would flee. But this time, they truly had been overconfident, primarily because they had already fought against Ning and knew exactly how strong he was! This single instance of overconfidence had cost them two lives.

They had gone all out to fight against the nine hundred-plus Fiendgods. They had survived.

Against Ji Ning, they had been overconfident...and ended up losing two of their ranks.

“All of you are wounded; you are not to interfere in this fight against Ji Ning. Leave it all to me,” the horned, golden-robed man sent.

“Yes, Master.”

“Yes, Patriarch.”

They all acknowledged the command.

The horned, golden-robed man stared towards the distant Ning, then roared angrily, “Ji Ning, you’ve slain two Celestial Immortals of my Youngflame clan. I shall not live under the same skies with you! I shall kill you. KILL YOU!”

“...Earlier, when I was pulling out the copper pillar, didn’t you already swear an oath that you were going to wipe me out, along with my clan and my friends? You know, you only need to say nasty words like these a single time. I’ve already memorized them quite firmly. Don’t worry...killing two of your Celestial Immortals was just the start. I’m going to wipe out all of the Celestial Immortals of your Youngflame clan, as well as all of your Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals. As for your other cultivators and

mortals...I trust I won't even need to act against them. There will be plenty of other major clans that will come to annihilate you," Ning said.

As the saying goes, a wall falls when many hands push on it. There were many others who had feuds with the Youngflame clan, such as the Kindwater clan, which was even stronger than the Youngflame clan.

And even for those who didn't have a feud with the Youngflame clan...given that the Youngflame clan took up three major commanderies, each of which was far larger than Stillwater Commandery...there were naturally many others who were envious of their territory. Once all their Celestial Immortals died, the cultivators and commoners of the Youngflame clan would be doomed! They would be effortlessly swept aside.

"All by yourself? I, Youngflame Freak, have roamed the universe since the Primordial Era, but no one has ever dared to claim they can kill me." A savage light flashed through the eyes of the horned, golden-robed man. "Have a taste of what my children can do, first!"

The three enormous insectoid aberrations flew towards Ning, blotting out the sun with their size. Their auras were extraordinary in power as they came rushing towards Ning.

Ning stood there in midair, a tiny little dot by comparison, but one with three heads and six arms. His arms swept through the air as his golden fingers formed into sword-fingers, transforming into divine black swords that were more than three thousand meters in length...

His terrifying sword-intent radiated outwards. Anyone could sense the resolve contained within it, and just by looking at it, one could feel as though no one could possibly withstand his sword.

Slash! A large wound appeared on the body of the black viper aberration, but the wound quickly began to recover, completely healing in the blink of an eye.

Crunch! The winged rhinoceros-aberration had incomparably tough skin, but Ning was still able to punch a hole through it. Still, the winged rhinoceros kicked Ning's palm aside, and the hole in its flank quickly regenerated.

The armored insectoid aberration had even more powerful defense, and Ning was just barely able to leave a wound behind on its body.

"What a nasty little pest." Ning was secretly startled by this first exchange of blows. "All three of these aberrations are this powerful?"

In terms of their comprehension of the Dao, the three insectoid aberrations were vastly inferior to him.

But their physical strength and close combat power was simply too great.

Each of them had extremely durable physical forms; even their thick skin and armored carapaces were comparable to Heaven-ranked magic treasures. The flesh within their body was extremely sturdy as well, and for every inch of flesh Ning penetrated, he felt an extremely powerful force resisting him. And even if he did manage to injure them...they would be able to heal in a very short period of time! They were also enormously strong; the black viper and the armored insect were nearly half as strong as Ning

when Ning used the Fourth Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand] and [Three Heads, Six Arms], while the winged rhinoceros was comparable to Ning's full power!

"Activate!" The distant horned, golden-robed man watched coldly, then let out a soft bark. Instantly, the back of the armored insect began to release large numbers of divine tattoos. These divine tattoos flickered and flashed, causing the armored insect to rapidly shrink in size, while beginning to split apart. By the time it shrank to three thousand meters, it completely split apart to become a pair of the armored insects. By the time it shrank down to three hundred meters, it had split apart to become four armored insects. And by the time it shrank down to thirty meters...there were eight of those armored insects.

"ROAAAAR!" The winged rhinoceros let out a furious roar, its four powerful leg-trunks beginning to merge with its main body. From the center of its body, a single leg-trunk that was even thicker and longer began to rapidly grow out.

The four-legged winged rhinoceros had actually transformed into a single-legged rhinoceros.

"Hissssss." The black viper's serpentine head suddenly bit down upon its tail. Instantly, its entire body began to glow with divine tattoos. Its scales were rapidly changing, becoming even finer and longer while also beginning to glow with a golden light.

"Die." The horned, golden-robed man had just revealed one of his favorite, consummate tricks.

Ning suddenly transformed into the [Obscuring Wind of the Nine Heavens], surging straight towards the winged rhinoceros.

"KILL!" Ning was charging forward like a brutish Fiendgod, his six massive arms wildly assaulting the winged rhinoceros in close combat!

Clang clang clang...the eight armored insects all struck towards Ning, but Ning completely ignored them. The only result was a series of clanging sounds that could be heard from Ning's body.

Whoosh! The black viper, now in circular form, swirled towards Ning, seeking to entangle him.

Ning swept out with two of his palms, which struck out like two streaks of sword-light. In terms of the Dao, how could the viper possibly compare to Ning? He was struck head-on and knocked flying away by Ning's sword-light.

"This brat..." The horned, golden-robed man's eyes flashed with cold light.

His armored insect had been completely nullified by Ning. He had been hoping that Ning would be too arrogant and allow the viper to coil around him. Once it did...no matter how strong he was, he would find it difficult to escape. But Ning didn't give the viper any chance at all to draw near him!

"Kill!"

"Die for me!"

Ning and the winged rhinoceros were battling wildly against each other. Ning was completely unwounded, while large amounts of flesh and blood were being sheared off from the winged

rhinoceros, under the repeated blows of Ning's knife-sharp palms. Finally, with a furious roar from Ning, the head of the winged rhinoceros was chopped off.

"What should I do? What should I do? What the hell should I do?" The horned, golden-robed man felt a sense of powerlessness in his heart, as well as...hesitation!

"Should I have other clones come over here as well?"

He had other insectoid aberrations!

If all of the insectoid aberrations he commanded were all to gather here, he would be able to completely overwhelm and crush Ji Ning.

"No. I can't let all of my clones appear in one place; that will cause me to risk true death." The horned, golden-robed man knew very well that due to his insidiousness and viciousness, he had many enemies spread throughout the Three Realms. For example, the Empyrean God of the Kindwater clan had a very powerful desire to kill him. However, because his many clones were all scattered throughout the realms, the Empyrean God was hesitant to make a move, and so had not truly acted to launch a war to wipe out the Youngflame clan.

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Ning, by relying on the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], was even more berserk in his attacks than the three insectoid aberrations. After he forcibly ripped off the head of the winged rhinoceros, the skeleton of the winged rhinoceros flew back towards the horned, golden-robed man. It transformed back into a winged rhinoceros, but one which was only three thousand meters in length, then flew back into the mouth of the horned, golden-robed man.

"TEAR APART!" Ning's six arms now began to wildly assault the black viper. Two of his arms moved to chop a wound in the body of the black viper, while the other four arms grabbed onto it and gave a vicious tug in two opposite directions.

Riiiiiiip.

The black viper was forcibly torn apart, its black, foul-smelling bloody spraying everywhere.

Ning was fighting even more savagely than he usually did. The three insectoid aberrations, in the face of his fury, were at a complete disadvantage.

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"What should we do?"

"Can it be that our Youngflame clan cannot resist this Ji Ning?"

"This Ji Ning is too terrifying!"

The Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals who were hiding behind their formations were filled with terror at what they were seeing.

"Windraiser, all of the mortals within the protective formations have been evacuated. Even if Ji Ning breaks the formations, he can forget about harming our clansmen." The Loose Immortals and Earth

Immortals viewed Old Demon Windraiser as their leader; in the Oldjade mountain range, Old Demon Windraiser had an extremely high status.

Old Demon Windraiser nodded. "Give me your Qiankun pearls."

"Alright." The Loose Immortals and Earth Immortals all handed over their Qiankun pearls.

Qiankun pearls were residence-type magic treasures! Generally speaking, Celestial Immortals who had a very solid grasp of the Dao of Qiankun would be able to establish a small dimension within a Qiankun pearl. In truth, these were very common treasures, similar to sacks and bags that had private dimensions within them, except these were used to collect and hold people! The space within a Qiankun pearl wasn't that small, being over ten thousand kilometers, but there were no resources within them; there was no way life could be supported within them long-term. They could only be used to temporarily hold living creatures.

And so, they were perfectly suited for moving or evacuating populations.

"Right." Old Demon Windraiser accepted all of the Qiankun pearls.

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"Damn." The horned, golden-robed man was utterly enraged by what he saw, but he was unable to do anything to Ning.

Ning wildly assaulted the black viper, but even after ripping it apart, the black viper merely transformed into two smaller vipers. Still...its aura had noticeably weakened, and Ning continued his assault against it.

Suddenly...a spatial ripple appeared. It was Greater Teleportation.

"Eh?!" Ning turned, only to see that Old Demon Windraiser had appeared in the distance.

"Old Demon Windraiser didn't die?" Ning was startled.

"Windraiser, don't go crazy!"

"Windraiser, go back!"

Celestial Immortals Arcanum, Infatuation, and the others were using their coresense to watch the battle. Upon seeing Old Demon Windraiser appear, they all hurriedly sent mental messages, calling out to him.

"He killed my disciple and destroyed my true body. I cannot live under the same heavens as him!" Old Demon Windraiser suddenly waved his hand, causing a dense cluster of hundreds of spots of starlight to appear. The air above him was also filled with the enormous illusion of the Solar Star, and all these things flew straight towards Ning.

Ning was cold and uncaring. "You, Old Demon, had a Primaltwin? I didn't go kill you, but you came to throw your life away."

How could Ning possibly hold Old Demon Windraiser in any regard? He immediately swept out with his own palm to attack. His golden palm smashed apart everything that came before him. Bang! Bang! Bang! The hundreds of miniature stars were instantly knocked flying away.

Crack!

A very peculiar sound rang out.

It was like...an egg cracking.

But those hundreds of star-grains were a set of Immortal-ranked magic treasures; how could Ning have shattered Immortal-ranked magic treasures with a single palm?

“AHHHHHH!!!”

“NOOO!”

“NOOOOO!”

Countless miserable screams rang out.

Within a special region. Countless mortals and cultivators were all squeezed together. These were the evacuated cultivators and mortals...but this region was beginning to crumble and break apart. Although this was merely a small pocket dimension...with the dimensional walls crumbling, how could mortals possibly survive? All of them were ground apart and killed. Only some of the more powerful cultivators were able to survive.

A few people suddenly appeared in the region before Ning's giant golden palm. These were the Immortal cultivators who had survived the collapse of that pocket dimension...but the power of Ning's earlier blow was simply too great. Even the mere aftershock from his blow was enough to cause these newly emerged Immortal cultivators to be instantly blown into dust.

Infinite despair...despair that filled the skies...it all swept towards Ning.

Infinite resentment!

Infinite hate!

“No...I don't want to die!”

“Oh gods...”

“Who...who...”

“Who killed us?!”

Countless voices rang out in Ning's mind, assailing his heart.

“Ahahahaha!” The distant Old Demon Windraiser was absolutely berserk in his laughter. “You've killed ten billion mortals...what a sinner...what a tremendous sinner!!!”

Rumble...

Rumble...

The skies instantly turned blood red, so red that it was utterly terrifying to behold, so densely red that it caused everyone's heart to tremble. The terrifying redness appeared out of nowhere, and it appeared



simultaneously in the skies above Ji Ning and Old Demon Windraiser. These were the legendary...karmic sinflames!

The two clouds of bloody red karmic sinflames reflected and resonated with each other.

The karmic sinflames...descended!

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 15: The Sword Eradicates Celestial Immortals Chapter 32: I'll Send You On Your Way**

The red karmic sinflames were terrifying to behold...but they also had a strange, holy aura about them.

They existed purely for the sake of burning away all sin!

“AHHHH!”

In midair, Ji Ning's eyes turned completely red. He frantically clutched at his head as he fell down from the skies.

Within the Still Room of the underwater estate.

The black-robed Primaltwin Ning had originally been seated in the lotus position atop the netherwater jade bed, but his body was now blazing with red karmic sinflames as well. The black-robed Primaltwin Ning was now kneeling on the netherwater jade bed, letting out howls of utter agony and misery. He crawled forward in utter pain, falling down from the bed.

“No...no...” The black-robed Primaltwin Ning let out an agonized howl.

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In the outside world, Ning fell down from the skies. As he fell, he clutched at his head, letting out terrifying, frenzied, throat-tearing howls.

“He didn't die?” The Ancestor of the Youngflame clan was extremely shocked. The other six Celestial Immortals had joined him outside, atop the flying shuttle. They, too, looked with shock and delight upon this scene. They said in amazement, “He actually didn't instantly die from burning?”

“Ahahaha...”

The distant Old Demon Windraiser continued to hover in midair. Surrounded by karmic sinflames, he actually let out laughter that caused one's heart to shudder. His face was utterly contorted, and his eyes were blood-red. Pain wracked every single cell of his body, but he continued to laugh wildly. “It really is...really is...even more fun...than the million-year Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations...ahahaha...ahahahaha!!!”

Old Demon Windraiser was filled with the agony of being burned by karmic sinflames as well.

“Windraiser's Dao-heart is no weaker than my own,” Celestial Immortal Infatuation said. “For even him to be in such agony...it's utterly inconceivable for this Ji Ning, who has trained for less than a century, to actually stay alive and not perish instantly from the descent of karmic sinflames.”

“Right. He's trained for less than a century, but his Dao-heart is actually this strong...”

“When karmic sinflames descend, they shall unleash multiple layers of punishment. This is but the start.” The Ancestor of the Youngflame clan said in a low voice, “I refuse to believe Ji Ning will be able to survive it.”

Karmic sinflames...

They were the holy flames that burned away sin. They represented the utmost limits of sin.

These flames were the flames of the void, flames that burned away at the soul, at the heart!

They actually weren't that harmful to the physical body; after all, the heavens always gave one at least a slight chance for survival. If karmic sinflames were to burn away at the body as well, then Fiendgod sinners would have too much of an unfair advantage compared to Ki Refiner sinners.

But although it didn't harm the body that much...it was utterly terrifying in terms of the damage it did when burning the soul! Even someone like Ning, who had trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], had no advantages whatsoever in facing these karmic sinflames...

When facing karmic sinflames, all cultivators were treated absolutely equally. The only test right now was of one's Dao-heart. Would one's Dao-heart be able to survive while being incinerated by karmic sinflames?

Once one's Dao-heart crumbled, the soul would be unprotected and would be instantly burnt to ashes and dissipated.

Luckily enough, Ning had just come up with the tenth stance of the [Three-Foot Sword]. His Dao-heart now contained the resolve that was embodied in the lines, 'Where the Dao is, though ten million soldiers bar my path, I shall relentlessly advance!' This allowed Ning's Dao-heart to survive the first round of punishment unleashed by the karmic sinflames; 'Agony'.

“He actually...hasn't...hasn't died...what a monster!” Old Demon Windraiser's entire body was wracked by pain as he stared downwards at the fallen Ji Ning.

Old Demon Windraiser's Dao-heart was extremely strong.

He had already lived for a million years. Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations...every three hundred years, a calamity; every nine hundred years, a tribulation. He had endured countless cycles of the Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations over the past million years. Under this sort of constant pressure, his Dao-heart had actually transformed and grown incredibly powerful, with the result being that he had found even the Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations at the million-year mark to be quite easy to overcome.

Clearly, his Dao-heart was far more powerful than Immortal Northwalker's had been. It was comparable to that of many Celestial Immortals...and even amongst Celestial Immortals, he would probably be ranked at the very top.

Although the first round of punishment brought by karmic sinflames, 'Agony', was extremely painful...he was still able to maintain consciousness. He was even able to open his mouth and speak, albeit haltingly; clearly, he was far more powerful than Ning in this regard.

.....

“What?!”

Within their ten thousand kilometer formation, the Whitewater Hound, Little Qing, and Mu Northson were completely stunned.

They stared at the blood-red skies, as well as the blood-red karmic sinflames that had appeared around Ning’s body. Upon seeing the karmic sinflames appear...they all immediately were able to guess at what had happened. They watched as Ning had let out an agonized, frenzied scream, then collapse from the skies...and their hearts became filled with despair.

“Karmic sinflames...how could Master have caused karmic sinflames to descend?!” Little Qing was utterly horrified.

“How could...senior apprentice-brother...senior apprentice-brother Ji Ning...” Northson was so frantic, he was shaking. “It’s all because of me...because of me...no...don’t...”

The Whitewater Hound stared at Ning, who had fallen down from the skies. Watching the karmic sinflames roast Ning, Uncle White’s tears instantly began to streak down his face. “Ning, son...son...”

Despair!

They were all Immortal cultivators; they knew how terrifying karmic sinflames were, as well as the fact that when they descended, nobody could help out at all. To survive the descent of karmic sinflames was simply far, far too difficult; only truly powerful figures with incomparably mighty Dao-hearts would be able to survive.

But Ning had only trained for less than a century! Although he was publicly acclaimed for having a firm Dao-heart, having a strong sword-heart, and being a born Sword Immortal...he simply hadn’t trained for long enough.

The punishment brought by karmic sinflames would come in repeated waves that only increased in power and terror.

“Ning, son, you have to endure it...you have to.” The Whitewater Hound stared towards Ning. “I promised Big Brother to take care of you, to always protect you.”

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Atop the flying shuttle. The Ancestor of the Youngflame clan and his six mighty Celestial Immortals were also watching the fallen Ji Ning.

“He actually didn’t die right away from the descent of karmic sinflames.” Patriarch Arcanum said hurriedly, “Ancestor, the punishment brought by karmic sinflames will grow increasingly powerful...but to prevent a miracle from happening which results in this punk surviving, let’s suppress him right away. He’s completely unable to fight back right now; this is the perfect time to trap and suppress him.”

“Right.” Celestial Immortal Infatuation nodded as well. “Although I don’t believe Ji Ning will survive, if by some miracle he does survive...it’s best to suppress him now.”

“Suppress him.”

“It’s a shame that Goldclock died, and his divine greatclock was stolen by Ji Ning as well.”

“I naturally have other suppressive treasures. Although they aren’t comparable to the divine greatclock, one is still a middle-grade Pure Yang treasure; there’s no way he can escape.” The Youngflame Ancestor suddenly waved his hands, producing a pair of copper cymbals. He threw them out, and the pair instantly expanded in size, transforming into copper cymbals that were more than three hundred meters long.

The copper cymbals split apart, one flying to be above Ji Ning while the other flew underneath him. Once the pair of copper cymbals came together once more...there would be no way for him to escape.

Ning’s eyes were completely red, and his face was completely distorted with agony. He couldn’t help but let out roars of agony...

...but his Dao-heart hadn’t dissipated yet!

He still maintained a single thread of consciousness. He could see what was going on in the outside world, but everything he saw was twisted and blurry. This was because his eyes were too bloodshot right now; if they were just a bit more bloodshot, he would probably be completely blind! When these two giant copper cymbals came to surround him, Ning immediately struck out with his two arms. Bang! Bang! He instantly knocked the two copper cymbals flying.

“He’s actually still able to pay attention to the outside world?” The Ancestor of the Youngflame clan was surprised.

“Even if he is...the amount of intellect he’s able to use right now must be very, very low,” Celestial Immortal Infatuation said. “He’s like a beast, right now; all he knows to do is to knock away anything dangerous. He doesn’t even know to flee! He could’ve just used his evasive techniques to dodge, but he didn’t move at all; from this, one can tell that his intellect has dropped to a very, very low level right now.”

“Let’s all act together. Perhaps we can trap him.”

“Let’s give it a shot.”

The six Celestial Immortals all moved.

Black chains flew out. Thousands of tendrils and vines whipped out. The strands of an enormous horsetail flywhisk that was thirty thousand meters long flew forth.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Everything in front of Ning was blurry, but he did see many vines swinging towards him. He struggled to wave his arms about, using the [Starseizing Hand] to knock all the magic treasures flying and away from his body. The tendrils all completely snapped apart, unable to even draw near him. After all, these Celestial Immortals were all heavily wounded; when controlling magic treasures from afar, how could their power possibly compare to the power of Ning’s twin arms?

Even if the six Celestial Immortals were to use a formation, given how badly injured they were, they still wouldn’t be able to withstand Ning’s [Starseizing Hand].

“Mmm...he really does seem like a wild beast. Anything that gets close to him, he'll wildly lash out at and knock away.” The Youngflame Ancestor nodded lightly. “I have an idea...one that will ensure his death.”

“Oh?” They all looked towards the Ancestor, save for Celestial Immortal Infatuation, who suddenly said, “Can it be...the Worldhold Pagoda?”

“Infatuation read my mind.” The Youngflame Ancestor nodded lightly. “Fortunately, when I came out of seclusion this time, Arcanum and the others came over as well. There was no one left to guard the pagoda, and so I brought it over here as well.”

Whoosh.

A small pagoda suddenly appeared within the Youngflame Ancestor's hands. This was the ancient pagoda which Celestial Immortal Arcanum and the others had been guarding previously. This pagoda...it was truly the most important of all treasures which the Youngflame clan had. To the Youngflame clan, the most important person was naturally the Youngflame Ancestor, Immortal Venomfreak, who had countless clones spread everywhere. Only second to him in importance was this Worldhold Pagoda.

This was a Protocosmic spirit-treasure, the greatest treasure which Immortal Venomfreak had acquired over the course of countless ages.

Whoosh. The small pagoda within the Youngflame Ancestor's hand flew out, transforming into a pagoda that was thirty thousand meters tall. The pagoda hung high in the air, hovering roughly three thousand meters above him. The Youngflame Ancestor and the others had noticed earlier than three thousand meters seemed to be a limit; once one went beyond that range and moved closer to Ji Ning, Ji Ning would instantly begin to strike and knock things flying.

“Ji Ning...I'll send you on your way,” the Youngflame Patriarch said softly.

Whoosh. The entire surface of the pagoda suddenly lit up, especially at the base where a giant black vortex suddenly formed. The vortex began to quickly spread outwards, soon covering a region of a hundred kilometers. Naturally, this completely covered the area where Ning was located as well.

Everything within the area was completely drawn in by the whirlpool.

Normally, the quick-witted Ning would've immediately noticed that something was wrong. He would've immediately departed from this region...but Ning was currently clutching his head in utter agony, the karmic sinflames blazing around his body gradually increasing in power. In fact...the second round of punishments was about to descend. The single thought in his mind was to prevent any magic treasures or spells from drawing near his body; how could he possibly have the presence of mind to notice anything else that was amiss?

Rumble...

The pagoda began to glow brighter and brighter.

And then....whoosh!

The very tip of the pagoda suddenly grew blindingly bright. Swish! A streak of light shot from it into the skies, as though piercing through the walls of reality itself...then vanished.

As for the vortex region of a hundred kilometers...it had become completely empty. Ji Ning had completely vanished. He had vanished from the world of the Grand Xia...and in fact, he had even vanished from the Three Realms themselves. He was now outside the Three Realms...

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 16: The Nihilum Zone Chapter 1: You Did Not Sin**

“Senior apprentice-brother!”

Mu Northson was watching from within the ten thousand kilometer formation region, wracked by agony and self-hatred for being unable to help Ji Ning. Little Qing and Uncle White’s faces both changed dramatically as well.

Both of them could tell that there had just been a spatial teleportation of some sort!

“I can no longer sense Master’s location,” Little Qing said frantically. “I can’t even get the vaguest sense of the direction he is in. Master is no longer in the world of the Grand Xia; he’s gone to an extremely distant place.”

“I can’t sense him either,” Uncle White said, trying to attentively sense Ning’s location.

“It’s all my fault. It’s all because of me, a useless piece of trash. I shouldn’t have been in such a rush to take revenge. I shouldn’t have...” Northson was filled with utter regret.

It had been Ning who had rescued him and Yu Xia’s soul from the Eastwoods mountain range...but afterwards, when the Youngflame clan’s Celestial Immortals had ambushed Ning, Yu Xia’s soul had been completely destroyed. Although he had felt utter hatred for the Youngflame clan, in truth, Northson did feel a bit of resentment towards Ning as well in his heart.

However...given Ning’s great kindness towards him, and given that they were lifelong friends to begin with, he had buried that resentment deep within his heart.

But in this moment...

When he saw the descent of the karmic sinflames, as well as the agonized look on the face of Ning as he was being burnt by the sinflames...Northson felt incomparable guilt in his heart. “If I hadn’t kept clamoring on and on about revenge, senior apprentice-brother wouldn’t have been in such a rush. He would’ve kept on waiting, waiting until he grew even more powerful...and then, he would’ve completely wiped out the entire Youngflame clan. This is all due to my own impatience.”

“Say no more.” Uncle White growled, “The Youngflame clan’s Celestial Immortals are already flying towards us. Let’s hurry up and leave. Little Qing, we need a Greater Teleportation.”

“Alright.”

Little Qing tamped down the grief and pain she felt, immediately waving her hand and bringing along Uncle White and Northson into a Greater Teleportation.

Whoosh!

They disappeared into thin air, having returned to Swallow Mountain.

.....

The seven Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan were indeed flying straight towards the formation area. With but a single void blink, they arrived directly outside of the formation. However...as soon as they arrived, Little Qing, Uncle White, and Northson departed. Little Qing and the other two knew quite well that there was no way they could possibly deal with these Celestial Immortals. They were far too weak; they could only suppress their hatred for now. If Ning had truly died...they would train hard so that in the future, they would be able to take revenge for him.

"They ran quite fast," Celestial Immortal Arcanum sneered.

"They were weak to begin with; they only dared to attack this place because of Ji Ning. Now that he's dead, why wouldn't they flee?" Celestial Immortal Blackrain said coldly.

The nearby Infatuation shook his head. "Blackrain, Ji Ning isn't dead yet."

"When karmic sinflames descend, they shall bring multiple rounds of punishment. I refuse to believe he won't die," Celestial Immortal Blackrain said. "In addition, Master also used his Worldhold Pagoda; he must have sent Ji Ning to one of the danger zones within the void beyond the Three Realms. Some of those danger zones are enough to cause even True Immortals or Emyrean Gods to perish, much less a little brat that hasn't even overcome his Celestial Tribulation."

The nearby horned, golden-robed man turned his head to look at the distant Old Demon Windraiser, still wracked by indescribable pain. He spoke out and said, "If Windraiser is able to withstand this tribulation of karmic sinflames...I shall personally escort him to the Ten Yama-Kings of Hell. When he is reborn, he absolutely must be reborn into our Youngflame clan. No expenses will be spared in training him."

"Right."

"Of course."

All of them nodded.

This was no joke. If someone was able to overcome karmic sinflames, they would undergo an utterly astounding transformation, and their Dao-hearts would become truly remarkable in strength. Although they would lose their memories of their former lives upon being reborn...such a soul would still have enormous potential in the new life. Upon regaining one's previous memories...one would have an extremely good chance of overcoming the Celestial Tribulation.

"Let's see if he can overcome the karmic sinflames," the horned, golden-robed man said with a sigh.

"Every single person who is capable of overcoming karmic sinflames is an extremely remarkable person. Even amongst Celestial Immortals, such individuals are amongst the very top."

There were very few, even amongst Celestial Immortals, who could withstand the power of karmic sinflames!

In truth, it was very hard for someone to tell how strong another person's Dao-heart was. Even someone as powerful as Celestial Immortal Infatuation wouldn't dare claim for certain that he was able to withstand karmic sinflames! Thus...Celestial Immortals were generally quite cautious. Only if there was no other choice would they allow themselves to act in a way that would cause karmic sinflames to

swirl around their bodies. The descent of karmic sinflames was truly terrifying...but once one overcame it, one's power would generally skyrocket!

In the Three Realms...every single person who overcame karmic sinflames would end up being an incredible figure.

For example, Ning's senior apprentice-brother, Empyrean God Silvermoon, was a person who had karmic sinflames constantly swirling around him. Silvermoon, however, completely ignored them...proof that he truly was an utter demon.

The world of the Grand Xia. The western seas. The Seamless Gate's gathering spot.

The enormous mirror had displayed all the scenes of the battle that had just occurred in the Oldjade mountain range. The escape and wild assault of nine hundred-plus Fiendgods...the pursuit of the Godslayer Gods...Ning's sudden, unexpected explosion of power that had resulted in the slaying of two Celestial Immortals...Old Demon Windraiser, a Loose Immortal of the Youngflame clan, attacking 'suicidally'...the descent of karmic sinflames...Ning being burnt by karmic sinflames...Ning being teleported away by the Worldhold Pagoda...

"Exciting. How very exciting." Celestial Immortal Blackheaven sighed repeatedly in praise. "That Windraiser...he really is both decisive and vicious. He was able to come up with this plan and settle on it in such a short period of time...and those who died were all his own clansmen! Ten billion of his clansmen died, just like that...his heart truly is vicious and merciless. He truly does have the temperament necessary for a demon."

"You are actually praising him? You are actually praising such a despicable, contemptible little man?" Violetgrass frowned.

"Violetgrass, little girl, you are wrong; although you are a Celestial Immortal, in terms of Dao-hearts, you are probably inferior to that Windraiser." Celestial Immortal Blackheaven shook his head. "As far as craftiness...you are even more inferior to him. This is one of the reasons why the Gatemaster has never let you truly command your own forces; there are far, far too many things you need to see and experience first."

"So I'm inferior to him?" Violetgrass was angry.

"How many setbacks have you encountered in life?" Celestial Immortal Blackheaven shook his head. "Although we are Celestial Immortals who hold Loose Immortals in contempt, and although indeed 99% of Loose Immortals are not worthy of us paying attention to...amongst the countless Loose Immortals who are alive, there are some who have lived for over a million years. This type of Loose Immortal has suffered repeated assaults from the Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations. Their many experiences with the demonheart tribulation has caused their Dao-hearts to become incomparably mighty."

"You, by comparison, became a Celestial Immortal early on. Although you've lived longer than them...how many actual tribulations have you undergone? Despite your talent and the fact that you have superior comprehension abilities...you've suffered far too few setbacks. Your Dao-heart truly might be inferior to theirs. Look – even though he's being burned by karmic sinflames, he's still able to maintain enough presence of mind to carry on a conversation with the Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan. Would you dare make the claim that you could do the same?"



Violetgrass was startled.

Even monsters like Ji Ning were just barely able to maintain a modicum of consciousness when being assaulted by karmic sinflames. Old Demon Windraiser, however, was clear-minded enough to carry on a conversation. He clearly was far superior.

“The lives of ten billion commoners, in exchange for the life of a peerless, monstrous genius like Ji Ning...worth it.” Violetgrass suddenly said, “Old geezer, tell me; can this sort of method be used against Celestial Immortals?”

“Are you suicidal?” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven shook his head. “As the person who gave the order...you, the mastermind, will also incur enormous sin. Ten billion mortal lives! If you are lucky, you’ll have a bloody aura of sin that will surround you and stretch out to many hundreds of meters; if you aren’t lucky, you’ll probably see karmic sinflames descend right away as well! As for the person you sent out to actually do it...that person will definitely suffer the descent of karmic sinflames. Such an action is utter suicide.”

“In addition...perhaps ordinary Celestial Immortals are unable to withstand karmic sinflames, but the truly powerful Celestial Immortals are generally able to do so. As for True Immortals or Empyrean Gods...they are the experts of the Three Realms! All of them are capable of withstanding karmic sinflames. Don’t even ask about Daofathers.” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven sighed. “Thus...this sort of method really isn’t worth it.”

“Anyhow. This Ji Ning is being burned by karmic sinflames, and has also been teleported by Youngflame Freak to one of the danger zones in the void beyond the Three Realms. There’s nothing for me to do here. Time for me to go.” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven rose to his feet, still carrying a gourd of Immortal nectar. Drinking and whistling, he began to walk away.

“Old geezer, this one doesn’t count. You still owe me two favors,” Violetgrass called after him.

“Don’t worry. I’m not as shameless as you.” Celestial Immortal Blackheaven’s voice echoed out within the palace, but he himself had disappeared.

Violetgrass turned to stare back at the mirror, still depicting events within the Oldjade mountain range. She mumbled to herself, “So he was actually sent into a danger zone, just like that. I didn’t even have anything to do with it. Still...that’s a good thing for me.”

.....

Within the ancient pagoda tower.

All seven of the Celestial Immortals, including the Youngflame Ancestor, were gathered here. Not too far away was Old Demon Windraiser, who was seated in the lotus position. However, his body was clearly trembling slightly. The karmic sinflames around him were beginning to vanish; clearly, the trials brought by the karmic sinflames were nearing their end.

“This is already the seventh day. Windraiser is still holding on.” Celestial Immortal Arcanum’s narrow eyes were filled with eagerness.

“The longer it goes on, the more dangerous it becomes. The seventh day is the final day. If he is able to withstand this day...he’ll survive. But if he doesn’t...” The Youngflame Ancestor shook his head. Suddenly, however, his face changed as he turned to stare at Old Demon Windraiser.

Old Demon Windraiser’s aura was beginning to gradually weaken.

This was the aura of his soul weakening in strength.

“What’s going on?”

“Why is his aura weakening?”

Everyone was extremely worried.

They knew very little about karmic sinflames; all they knew was that the karmic sinflames brought a tribulation that lasted for seven days, and that the final stages were the most terrifying of all! Once one made it past the seven day mark, the karmic sinflames would vanish; one would only be able to detect them through coresense or divine sense, and not with the naked eye. However...although invisible, the karmic sinflames would always be present. The constant swirl of karmic sinflames on one’s body would feel like being eternally roasted in the pits of hell.

“His heart...his heart is weakening,” the Youngflame Ancestor said. “When his heart weakens, his aura weakens as well. Once his heart dies...then his soul will instantly be burnt to ash. This is why karmic sinflames are so terrifying! The initial ‘Agony’ phase from when the karmic sinflames first descend merely cause brute-force pain. Those with powerful Dao-hearts, however, are often able to overcome this phase. The latter parts have a softer approach which will slowly cause pain and regret to seep into one’s heart...causing the tormented person’s heart to slowly wither and die. It is akin to suicide!”

Old Demon Windraiser’s aura was indeed growing weaker and weaker.

The seven Celestial Immortals watched with incomparable nervousness.

Six more hours passed.

His aura was completely extinguished.

BOOM!

After his aura had completely disappeared for just a few seconds...it suddenly began to increase rapidly in power. Finally, Old Demon Windraiser opened his eyes.

“I survived.”

Old Demon Windraiser said in a low voice, “What terrifying ‘karmic sinflames’ indeed! They were far more powerful than the Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations that one experiences at the million year mark. I actually survived...but I really don’t want to experience that again. I really do not.” A deep, haunted look was in Old Demon Windraiser’s eyes.

“Windraiser,” the Youngflame Ancestor called out.

Windraiser hurriedly came to his senses.

“Ancestor.” Windraiser said hurriedly, “Patriarchs, I, Windraiser, condemned ten billion members of our clan to death. My sin...”

“Enough. You did not sin; in fact, you rendered major merits,” the Youngflame Ancestor said with a loud laugh. “It was just ten billion mortals, after all. We can bring a few billion mortals over from our other two headquarters, and in a few more decades this place shall be flourishing once more. The reason why we were able to deal with Ji Ning this time was you; you ignored your own well-being and willingly endured karmic sinflames to deal him a fierce blow. You did very well!”

Old Demon Windraiser’s voice was still very low. “Ancestor, I’ve incurred far, far too many sins. A storm is coming to the Three Realms. Me being alive will only result in a hugely negative influence upon the Youngflame clan. I’m preparing to kill myself, then head to the Netherworld.”

“Yes.” The Ancestor nodded. “It is for the best. Given how many sins you have incurred...after you die and go to the Netherworld, you will be punished in the deepest depths of hell and tormented in countless unspeakable ways. After you are finally allowed to be reborn...I will definitely bring you back into the Youngflame clan. In the past, dealing with matters in the Netherworld Kingdom might be a bit troublesome, but now that Daofather Crimsonbright has re-established a minor cycle of reincarnation, all ten of his Yama-Kings of Hell will assuredly give me some face. I will arrange everything necessary for you.”

“Yes.” Old Demon Windraiser said respectfully, “Then...I’ll leave now.”

Old Demon Windraiser didn’t hesitate at all.

Whoosh!

His golden lotus spirit voluntarily dissipated, and a human-shaped soul, wreathed by karmic sinflames, flew straight towards the minor cycle of reincarnation.

Swoosh! The Youngflame Ancestor immediately headed towards the minor cycle of reincarnation as well.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 16: The Nihilum Zone Chapter 2: Red Dust Tribulations**

[Note – Red dust is an allegorical Buddhist term that refers to worldly affairs, attachments, and desires. It is often said that in order to achieve Buddhahood, one has to be able to ‘see past the red dust’. ‘Women of the red dust’ is also a phrase that is specifically used to refer to courtesans.]

Stillwater Commandery. Swallow Mountain. Serpentwing Lake. Brightheart Island.

Uncle White, in human form, was seated within a pavilion, moodily drinking wine by himself. Mu Northson was seated as well, leaning against the pavilion railings with his eyes shut. As for Little Qing, she was hugging her knees, seated quietly within a corner of the pavilion.

They were all completely silent.

A long time later...

“Should we tell Autumn Leaf?” Little Qing suddenly said.

“We should not.” Uncle White sighed. “In Autumn Leaf’s heart, my son Ning is...ugh. She wouldn’t be to take the blow. Let’s wait for now. We can tell her that Ning is in secluded meditation.”

“Are we supposed to just keep hiding this from them?” Little Qing asked.

“We can sense that my son Ning is still alive,” Uncle White said. “As long as he is still alive...let’s keep things hidden from Autumn Leaf, as well as all of the Ji clansmen.”

Little Qing nodded gently as well, then said, “Then about about Ji Ning’s master, Immortal Diancai?”

“Diancai...”

Uncle White hesitated a moment, then said, “Let’s wait. The most terrifying punishment brought by karmic sinflames will arrive on the seventh day. As long as he survives the seventh day, he will have survived the karmic sinflames. If he doesn’t come back after seven days...that means he truly is trapped in some mysterious danger zone located outside the world of the Grand Xia...at which point, we will notify Immortal Diancai.”

“Alright.” Little Qing nodded.

They fell silent once more.

None of them had anything to say. They just waited, quietly.

Seven days...

These seven days posed a huge tribulation for Ning. If he didn’t die within these seven days and withstood the karmic sinflames...he would have overcome this tribulation. However, they didn’t have any idea as to where the Youngflame clan had teleported him to...but given the amount of hatred they felt towards him, they must have sent him to a truly terrifying place.

.....

The banks of a vast, roaring river. There was an azure-robed man seated in the lotus position here. He wielded an Immortal sword in his hands, but the Immortal sword actually had a fishing line hanging down from it; clearly, he was using it to fish.

Whoosh.

From high up in the skies, a handsome-looking youth came flying over atop a cloud. He landed on the ground, then bowed respectfully. “My respects to you, Patriarch Lu. Per the Xia Emperor’s orders, this junior has come to send you a message.” A scroll appeared before him, which he respectfully offered with both hands.

“A letter? The Xia Emperor?” Lu Dongbin turned his head to look. He waved his hand, and the scroll flew straight to him. He tapped on it gently, and the scroll unfurled on its own.

Lu Dongbin read through it carefully. His face changed slightly.

“Understood. You can leave now,” Lu Dongbin said calmly.

“Yes.” The handsome youth departed gracefully.

Lu Dongbin, however, began to frown. "Karmic sinflames descended? The Youngflame clan actually used a method like this? Although Ji Ning is indeed talented, he's trained for less than a century. Will he be able to survive?" Lu Dongbin turned his head to look towards the distance. A golden rune suddenly appeared in his pupils, and instantly his gaze was able to pierce through space, seeing an island that was ten million kilometers away.

At the quiet, secluded island, there was a black-robed maiden seated in the lotus position on a beach.

"This disciple of mine...she keeps her thoughts and secrets guarded quite tightly," Lu Dongbin mused softly to himself. "That killing intent within her heart...it is even more terrifying than I had predicted it to be. In addition, at the Grand Xia Dynasty, she was hiding her true power the entire time. But...when I went to find Judge Cui to inspect her past lives, everything seemed normal. Although in her previous life, she was a powerful, fiendish figure, a demon whose power was comparable to a Loose Immortal who had lived for a million years...for a person to be powerful in a previous life is a good thing. There's no need to hide it. When she awakened her memories during the Conclave of Immortal Destiny, given how powerful she was in her previous life...she absolutely could've made it to the top three, and perhaps she could've even become champion."

Originally, Lu Dongbin had deeply desired to take on Ji Ning as his disciple, because Ji Ning truly was born to be a Sword Immortal. In addition, he had vaguely sensed some of Ning's other extraordinary attributes.

As for Yu Wei...

Lu Dongbin had originally felt that Yu Wei was hiding even more secrets. However, he wasn't certain at first; after taking her on as his disciple and interacting with her for a long period of time, he had naturally been able to discover many flaws in Yu Wei's façade. In the end, Yu Wei had been forced to admit it: "Master, I was indeed hiding my true strength. This was because I don't wish for others to know about my past life. I don't want others to know that in my past life, I was such a vile, demonic figure. I'm tired...so tired. I want this life to be a bit more relaxed."

Yu Wei clearly knew very well that Lu Dongbin, given his status, could easily investigate her past lives. She no longer maintained her façade before him.

"Was it really just because she wishes for this life to be a bit more ordinary and relaxed?" Lu Dongbin was at such a high level of enlightenment that he was extremely close to the level of the Daofathers! He could vaguely make out the tides and portents of destiny...and he always felt that Yu Wei wasn't as simple a figure as she made herself to be.

However, he had investigated the Book of Life and Death.

Yu Wei hadn't lied to him.

Could it be that he was wrong?

"Right now, Yu Wei needs to keep her heart steady and calm. When the time is right, the Celestial Tribulation shall come," Lu Dongbin mused to himself. "The Celestial Tribulation is incomparably dangerous; in her past life, she failed to overcome it. In this life, it shall be extremely dangerous as well!"

I can sense that her feelings towards Ji Ning are genuine. If he truly is trapped in a danger zone...if I tell her, her demonheart tribulation will probably become even more terrifying.”

“For now, I won’t tell her. After she overcomes her tribulation, I’ll tell her.”

Lu Dongbin continued to ponder pensively.

.....

Yu Wei sat there in the lotus position at the beach. The seas and the skies were the same color, giving an impression of an infinitely vast firmament. Her heart was extremely calm right now.

She was nurturing her Dao-heart.

She was quietly preparing...

Based on what Patriarch Lu had said, once she overcame her tribulation and became a Celestial Immortal, she would leave his tutelage.

“Junior apprentice-brother, I’ll undergo my tribulation soon. Afterwards, I’ll go seek you out right away.” A hint of a smile played at the corner of Yu Wei’s mouth. Ji Ning was the warmest memory in her heart; when Ji Ning had returned to the Grand Xia, Patriarch Lu had naturally informed her once he had learned of this. However, Yu Wei didn’t have any idea that Ji Ning was currently trapped in a danger zone.

The term ‘Three Realms’ referred to the Heaven Realm, the Netherworld Kingdom, and the Mortal Realm.

The Heaven Realm and the Netherworld Kingdom were extremely vast, while the three thousand major worlds and trillion minor worlds of the Mortal Realm were as countless as the stars of the Milky Way. And beyond all of these realms...there was the vast, limitless Void, an empty region that was even greater than the Three Realms themselves. Within the Void were two supreme stars, the Solar Star and the Lunar Star, as well as many other stars.

Within the infinite Void, there were countless danger zones, including some which would cause even True Immortals and Empyrean Gods to perish. In fact, there were some places which even True Gods and Daofathers would hesitate to venture into, preferring to simply watch them from a distance.

The three thousand major worlds and trillion minor worlds were like tiny little islands or reefs located within the infinite Void. The three thousand major worlds were like large islands, while the trillion minor worlds were reefs. At the very center of the three thousand islands and trillion reefs, there was an enormous ‘continent’ located within the infinite void.

This ‘continent’ was countless times greater than any of the major worlds. There, space and time clashed and twisted against each other...

It truly was a terrifying place. And at the places where the chaotic continent and the empty Void intersected, there were constant waves of void-ripples that spread out.

Rumble...

It was much like how, on a mortal world, where the waters of the ocean met the land, enormous oceanic waves would slam down against the land.

The waves of Void slammed repeatedly against the margins of the vast, chaotic continent...and the constant collisions formed a region of utter annihilation. The Nihilum Zone!

.....

The Nihilum Zome.

Rumble...

A streak of white light suddenly flashed by, transporting a youth to this location.

“AAAARGH!”

Pain.

Pain like he had never experienced before. For mortals, once their level of pain reached a certain threshold, they could actually die from it. As for Immortal cultivators...the terrifying agony brought by the first round of punishments from the karmic sinflames was an agony that was applied directly to their souls. There was no escape, nowhere to hide. The pain of it vastly outstripped the pain of one's soul being torn apart.

There was a limit to how much pain the body and the soul could take.

The amount of pain the heart could suffer, however, was limitless.

Once the Dao-heart collapsed due to agony, the soul would quickly burnt to ash.

“No. No...” Ning was struggling to stay alive. He was able to remain just barely conscious, but that hint of consciousness was simply too weak; he wasn't even able to pay any attention to his surroundings.

Finally, the increasing amount of pain reached a peak, a plateau.

Instantly...the pain vanished.

Ning was rather stunned. To go from a peak of pain to no pain at all...this, too, caused Ning's Dao-heart to tremble.

“This place is...” Ning finally managed to look at his surroundings.

Blackness surrounded him.

Aided by the incomparably dim wisps of light sent forth by the distant Solar Star, Ning was able to just barely see that the darkness arounded him seemed to surge and ebb like flows of water. The void waves...they stretched off into infinity, while Ning was nothing more than a tiny little speck in the midst of a vast, endless void sea.

Rumble...a void wave came sweeping over. Ning felt his entire body tremble; the terrifying power of the wave vastly surpassed the combined power of all the Celestial Immortals of the Youngflame clan.

Immediately afterwards...

Ning's entire world went dark.

.....

"Young master." An utterly ravishing beauty, dressed in thin, gauzy clothes, was looking straight towards Ning. She gently loosened her clothes, allowing them to slide downwards, half-revealing her body. She then gently licked at one of her fingertips, then used that finger to flick at her her shoulders, causing her clothes to slip down even further. Instantly, her clothes slipped all the way down, revealing her completely bare body. She walked over slowly, her large, limpid eyes staring longingly towards Ning. "Young master, I want it..."

This woman's appearance was a mixture of the best aspects of Cloudjade, Autumn Leaf, Yu Wei, and Ninelotus' appearances.

However, she was even more alluring and even more enchanting; she completely aroused Ning's desire.

"F\*ck off."

Ning remained clear-minded; he knew that this was an illusion created by the descent of the karmic sinflames. This was the second tribulation brought by the sinflames; the 'lust tribulation' of the 'red dust tribulations'. Once one became enmeshed into the illusions, one would truly die. He immediately struck out with his arm, intending to smash the woman before him into dust.

However...Ning suddenly realized that his body had become extremely weak. When his palm struck out, it only carried the amount of power an ordinary mortal would have. The nude beauty stretched her own hand out, immediately catching Ning's arm. She whispered softly, "Are you shy?" She immediately pressed Ning down to the ground...

.....

When gripped by the throes of lust, one's Dao-heart could indeed be shaken. Ning was completely unable to fight back; all he could do was strive to maintain his Dao-heart, strive to resist what was happening.

"It seems this humble one's services weren't enough. However...this humble one has six sisters who are even better." The woman lying across Ning's chest whispered gently into his ears. Instantly, six more beauties appeared in the distance. Each had their own unique charms; truly, beauties like these were almost impossible to encounter the real world. In addition, each were exactly the type of woman which Ning liked the most, and also the type of woman that stirred his lust the most.

He knew that this was all just part of the 'lust tribulation'.

But...how could the lust tribulation be so easily overcome? It was much like how, in real life, many people knew that drugs were harmful, but upon having tasted it once, they would never be able to abstain from them ever again. By the same principle...a person might know that his soul would be destroyed if he succumbed to lust, but succumbing to lust was a very basic part of human nature. There was no way for a person to completely rid himself of lust; all a person could do was suppress it. However...when one was unable to resist, one would still be repeatedly enticed and aroused by lust.



“Powdered skeletons. All of them are nothing more than skeletons; they are transformed toads that have pustules on their skin. All of them have intentionally transformed into this appearance to deceive me.” Ning repeatedly mumbled these words to himself, continuously and forcibly suppressing his own desires.

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 16: The Nihilum Zone Chapter 3: Iceheart**

Although he did his best to visualize these seven beauties as skeletons, or as transformed toads and other abominations...deep in his heart, Ji Ning knew that they weren't toads. They were part of the 'red dust tribulation' which the karmic sinflames had brought; they were created from his own heart, and they weren't actually disgusting. This caused Ning to unconsciously be drawn further and further into lust.

“Hold, hold, hold...” Ning was repeatedly suppressing his own lusts.

But as time flowed on, the amount of lust he felt was increasing nonstop.

“Wait.”

Ning suddenly came to his senses. He thought about a legend he had read about on Earth, a legend about Yu the Great taming the floods. “Rather than dam it all up, he spread it out in channels. How can lust possibly be forcibly suppressed? The red dust tribulation...the red dust tribulation...according to the records of Mount Innerheart, in order to overcome a red dust tribulation, one has to both enter the red dust as well as emerge from the red dust.” 1

“But if I allow myself to enter the red dust...if I succumb to it, what then?”

“What should I do?”

All sorts of thoughts began to war with each other in Ning's heart.

The more one knew, the harder it was to deal with the red dust tribulation. In addition...‘knowing’ was one thing, being able to actually ‘do’ was another thing.

“No matter what...”

“My heart cannot succumb.”

“This is nothing more than my baptism through the red dust.”

Ning didn't dare to relax his vigilance in the slightest.

Actually...Ning had actually made the correct decision. This was because ordinary cultivators, when being tested by a red dust tribulation, would generally be able to first allow themselves to succumb for a long period of time. Afterwards, when the day came for them to suddenly be enlightened and emerge from the red dust, their Dao-hearts would naturally be strengthened tremendously. Ning's situation, however, was different! His 'red dust tribulation' came from the descent of karmic sinflames; he absolutely couldn't allow himself to succumb to them at all.

Time flowed on.

Lust. Gluttony. Rage. Avarice. Love. Hate...

Within the red dust tribulation, all the desires one could feel when trapped within the mortal world, the world of red dust, would be amplified to an extreme.

Lust – The most soul-stirringly beautiful women would appear.

Gluttony – Unimaginably delicious delicacies, delicacies that would cause your soul to quiver.

Rage – All sorts of arguments, jealousies, disputes...as well as the joy and jubilation that came after violent conquest.

Love – Parental love, spousal love, romantic love, brotherly love, master-disciple love...the word 'love' truly did involve many things that people were willing to die for.

Hate – Towering, earth-shattering hatred and resentment that filled every inch of one's heart. Hatred that not even the waters of the four seas could wash away...boundless hatred and a desire to kill one's foes...

.....

At first, Ning did his best to suppress all of the desires of the red dust, trying to push them away from him. This, however, caused Ning's heart to feel increasingly tired. But slowly...Ning began to understand.

"Let these enticements come as they may. My heart abides."

"This...this is nothing more but a mortal, fleshly coil."

Ning completely separated the innermost part of his heart from the outside world.

He let his lust soar to the skies. He let himself feel excitement, rage, hatred, joy, disappointment, grief, happiness...Ning no longer suppressed any of it, allowing the feelings to invade every part of his entire body. Ning's heart, however, transcended it all. It was like a bystander, simply watching everything and keeping an eye on everything.

"One's true heart...one's fleshly body...?" Ning slowly began to understand...and he thought of [Houyi's Archery].

The reason why [Houyi's Archery] was able to rank amongst the top ten divine abilities of the universe and was considered comparable to the [Starseizing Hand], but the actual application of it was even more complicated. It had higher requirements with regards to skill, it required extremely good bows and arrows...and it only allowed for very, very few shots. However...its power was truly ridiculous as well.

At the peak of its power, [Houyi's Archery] was even more terrifying than the [Starseizing Hand] at its peak! Even Houyi, a divine archer of the Primordial Era, would only be able to shoot out ten or so arrows at maximum power before growing exhausted. The power of those arrows, however, was truly terrifying.

In addition, the application of divine power was just one part of [Houyi's Archery]. The true reason why it was dominant throughout the Three Realms and became acknowledged as the number one archery technique was thanks to...heartforce!

Heartforce was a source of power that was invisible, formless, but incomparably mysterious and miraculous.

This was a force that was completely outside the types of power which Immortals and Fiendgods could normally control. Elemental ki, Immortal power, and divine power were all visible to the naked eye...but heartforce was invisible. In fact, unless one was using it to support something like archery, heartforce alone was completely unable to injure anyone.

However, it was precisely this energy, 'heartforce', which allowed divine archers to become truly terrifying figures. Houyi was the most powerful of the divine archers, and the [Houyi's Archery] technique which he developed was able to strengthen the application of heartforce to a truly frightening level. This was why this technique was such an unearthly, powerful one.

Heartforce, invisible and formless...

And yet, it allowed one to reach astonishing levels of power. In the Primordial World, not even True Gods or Daofathers would willingly become enemies with Houyi. He was truly an incomparably terrifying man amongst the True Gods and Daofathers, a legendary divine archer even in an age of legends.

[Houyi's Archery] clearly differentiated heartforce into multiple levels.

The first level of heartforce could be considered the 'basic' level, the level which Ning had currently reached. If one could truly apply heartforce to one's arrows and cause one's arrows to be able to strike unerringly at a distance of ten thousand kilometers, one had reached the basic level.

Ning had spent many years training archery painstakingly at Mount Innerheart before reaching the basic level. Generally speaking, upon reaching the basic level, one could already be considered as having entered the ranks of the 'divine archers' and be viewed as one of them, having reached a level that was as far above the other archers of the Three Realms as the heavens were above the earth. If one didn't understand heartforce, one would never be able to become a true 'divine archer'. Only by understanding heartforce could one's archery become truly terrifying.

The second level of heartforce was known as 'iceheart'!

Iceheart...

This meant that one's inner heart had completely transcended the body. It would no longer be shaken or bedazzled by foreign influences. The waters of one's inner heart would have frozen into a cube of ice; there would no longer be any ripples within it! Once one's heart reached this level, one's 'heartforce' would begin to qualitatively evolve and also increase in power tremendously.

.....

"So, under the pressure of the sinflames of karma...I had unknowingly reached the level of 'iceheart', improving my heartforce." Ning felt a calm joy in his heart. "It truly is as others have said; so long as one can survive the descent of karmic sinflames, one's Dao-heart will undergo a qualitative change, and one will increase in power dramatically."

The descent of karmic sinflames was a portent for three great tribulations, each more powerful than the last.

Ning had just experienced the second round of tribulations, the 'red dust tribulations', resulting in him reaching the iceheart level of heartforce. From this, one could see that that although karmic sinflames truly did represent a tremendous tribulation...disaster and fortune came in a pair. If one survived this tribulation, one would reap certain rewards.

However, very few Immortal cultivators would willingly allow karmic sinflames to surround them. After all, once they did, even if one did survive the three rounds of karmic tribulations, in the future, the karmic sinflames would perpetually blaze around their bodies. One would constantly suffer from the agony of being burnt by karmic sinflames! Although the pain wouldn't be as agonizing as during the three rounds of tribulations, to be constantly burnt alive...unless it was absolutely necessary, who would willingly endure such a thing?

In addition, it was extremely difficult for one to lower one's level of sin by enough to drop back down to the level of being surrounded by a 'bloody aura of sin'.

Karmic virtue, karmic sin. It was hard to gain karmic virtue, but karmic sin came with ease!

Killing mortals was a tremendous sin; doing so would allow one to effortlessly accrue an enormous amount of sin...

But it was far, far harder to acquire karmic virtue. For example, after Ning had killed that evil Patriarch and many evil Diremonsters that had been surrounded by the bloody light of sin, and after when he had taken on a disciple who had whole-heartedly devoted herself to him, he had only just barely been able to upgrade his level of karmic virtue to being surrounded by golden karmic light. The range of his aura of golden karmic light had been extremely small as well! To reach the legendary level of karmic virtue where one's body would be surrounded by a rainbow of light would be unfathomably more difficult!

And in fact...sometimes, one might do evil, even with the best of intentions. Karmic virtue was something which even figures as possible as True Gods or Daofathers were unable to completely understand the rules of. Although saving figures of karmic virtue and killing sinners did seem to be virtuous acts, and although ninety-nine out of a hundred such actions would result in an increase in karmic virtue...there would always be one who would instead be condemned as a sinner.

For one to go from the level of having karmic sinflames to having a bloody aura of sin was comparable in difficulty to increasing from having a golden aura of karmic virtue to a holy rainbow-colored aura.

Thus...once one became bathed in karmic sinflames, it was virtually guaranteed that one would never, ever be able to escape from them.

To be eternally burnt by karmic sinflames...who would be willing to suffer such a thing?

.....

"Is there anything else?"

For a time, Ning had transcended everything; it was as though he had been seated upon an imperial throne, as though he had unified the world, as though no one would disobey his orders.

But suddenly...everything in front of him disappeared.

The scene before him transformed. He now saw a very ordinary courtyard, within which was a woman who was carrying an infant. Another woman was next to her, teasing the infant. In the center of the courtyard, there was a muscular man who was slicing animal meat.

“Eh?” Ning suddenly realized that he had become that infant.

“What’s going on?” When Ning realized that he had taken on the role of the infant, he was puzzled; during all of the previous tribulations, he had always remained in his own body.

But as time went on...Ning slowly began to understand.

He had become the infant. The infant slowly grew up, becoming a toddler. All the toddlers received the same type of tutelage within the clan...but given how young he was, how could he possibly not be restless? Only after even more time passed did he slowly begin to study hard. And at eight years of age...his father went out hunting in the mountains, never to return.

He began to grow up, because he was the only man in the family. Under the tutelage of his mother and his second matron, he began to work hard. 2

His mother and his second matron, in order to ensure that he would receive good tutelage within the clan, suffered countless hardships.

He swore an oath to himself...

He would definitely let his mother and his second mother live a good life.

“Luo Jun, at the age of sixteen, you were able to train to the peak of the Houtian level; you have quite a bit of potential. What you need to do now is experience life-and-death dangers. If you can break through to the Xiantian level...then the lives of your mother and your second matron will be much better.” A middle-aged man smiled at him. “At that time...you’ll truly become acknowledged as a member of the Youngflame clan.”

“Right.” The youth’s eyes were filled with desire.

However...Ning, whose soul was riding with the youth, felt increasingly worried and uneasy.

Just as the youth had finished a dangerous adventure and had returned to his city, a green-haired Immortal had suddenly appeared in the skies above the city.

“Everyone in the city is to be evacuated,” the green-haired Immortal ordered, his voice echoing everywhere.

Within the courtyard, the youth and his two mothers both raised their heads to look. They felt puzzled and mystified; evacuated? How?

Whoosh.

Moments later, they could feel space twisting around them...and they then appeared in a different dimension.

“So many people?” The youth felt as though they were surrounded by an endless sea of people.

“Luo Jun, what...what’s going on?” His two mothers were both panicking.

“Don’t worry. This is a technique of Immortals,” the youth said confidently. “There are countless clansmen here; we’ll know what’s going on soon.”

Not too long later...

Whoosh.

They were once more teleported away. This time, even more people were here.

“This time...it must be when Old Demon Windraiser put everyone together?” Ning could vaguely sense what was going to happen, and he felt dread in his heart. After having spent more than ten years alongside the youth, Ning sympathized with him as he would for himself. He knew how honest and good this youth was...and he knew how deep the love was between this youth and his two mothers.

He already knew what was in the youth’s future. He didn’t wish to believe that this future would come true.

Rumble...

The dimension exploded.

### **The Desolate Era**

#### **Book 16: The Nihilum Zone Chapter 4: The Third Sinflame Tribulation**

The dimension blew apart, reality shattering into tiny little pieces. The more powerful Immortal cultivators within the dimension roared with fury, seeking to charge out from within it.

“What’s going on?”

“Heavens above!”

“Abu!”

Countless mortals were completely dazed and confused. They watched as the world itself shattered...and they were completely unable to resist. They cried out in terror, in pain, in panic.

“Mother, second matron...no...no...” The youth was completely dazed. He watched as the two most important people in his life, his mother and his second matron, be ground apart as the walls of reality itself imploded.

The most important people in his life!

“Mother!”

“Second matron!”

The youth felt unbearable pain. He was filled with hatred and despair...and then, his consciousness went dark.

Ning’s soul was riding with the youth, and the emotions which the youth felt slammed into Ning as well. After riding with the youth for more than ten years, Ning had feelings for the two women as well. He

viewed them almost as he would his own mother...and when they died, Ning was filled with boundless anger, regret, and...self-blame! He couldn't help but blame himself for what had happened.

If...if I hadn't shattered that Qiankun pearl...how wonderful it would have been...

"That poor child. Those poor mothers..." Ning's heart had already reached the iceheart level, and so he was able to quickly suppress that thread of self-blame. He quickly and completely escaped from being in the mindset of that youth.

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"Listen up! A foolish idiot like you isn't worthy of my little sister." A muscular, powerful man was standing on the prone body of a youth. The man was roaring angrily, "If you know what's good for you, stay away in the future. Don't you dare get close to my little sister again. Otherwise...next time I see you, things won't end as easily as they have today. There are plenty of monsters in the deep mountains outside the city; if I were to throw you into the mountains, before a single night is over, you'll have been completely devoured, leaving behind not even a bone."

The muscular man gave two more kicks before turning and leaving.

Ning felt pain throughout his entire body. He rose to his feet, his face swollen and his forehead busted open.

"Am I now riding with this youth?" Ning mused to himself.

The youth turned, then hobbled with difficulty towards his own residence.

That night.

"Ji." A maiden stealthily crept in. Upon seeing the appearance of the bedridden youth, she felt such pain that her tears came cascading down. "It's all my fault. All my fault..."

"Yu Wei?!" Ning couldn't help but feel shocked when he saw the maiden.

They looked too similar.

Far too similar! In fact, she looked utterly identical to his senior apprentice-sister, Yu Wei. But Ning quickly came to his senses; given that there were ten billion mortals within the Oldjade mountain range, it made sense that there was at least one maiden who looked almost identical to Yu Wei. In addition...after he gave her a closer look, he saw that this maiden appeared simpler and more guileless than Yu Wei; she didn't have the transcendent aura possessed by an Immortal cultivator.

The maiden helped the youth bind his wounds, applying medicine to him. She had even brought over a meat soup for him to drink.

"We need to be even more careful in the future. We can't let my big brother see us again, or any other members of my family," the maiden said hurriedly.

"Believe me, Lotus...I'm definitely going to train to the Xiantian level, at which point I will openly woo you and wed you," the youth said seriously.

"I know." The maiden nodded gently.

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“You little punk...why don't you take a good look at yourself? You really don't know your own limits. You little bastard, you aren't even a Xiantian lifeform! My little sister is so beautiful, she's like an Immortal fairy who has descended to the mortal world; she's one of the most beautiful women of the entire city of Eastring. Plenty of people wish to wed my little sister.” The muscular man was roaring at him. “And you think you can dream of the same? I warned you last time...so don't blame me for showing no mercy this time! Servants, tie him up and send him to the mountains. Feed him to the monsters!”

“Yes!” Two servants hurriedly assented.

The youth was pressed down against the ground, and his mouth was gagged with a cloth rag. His hands, arms, and entire body were quickly bound. He let out an unhappy groan, but the muscular man just stared at him coldly.

The youth was sent outside the city, deep into the mountains.

“Leave him here. Soon, he'll be eaten up.” The two servants tossed him down to the ground.

The bound youth landed on the ground, covered with rocks and stones. One protruding stone stabbed deep into his chest. The youth immediately spat out a mouthful of blood, rolling around in agony on the ground.

“Am I going to die? Die here?”

The youth's heart was filled with terror.

Time passed on...

Rustle, rustle, rustle...

Sound rang out. The youth's heart clenched; had a monster just arrived? Forget about monsters; even ordinary animals would be able to effortlessly eat him right now.

“I'm absolutely sure that he's over here.”

“You led us astray earlier. If you are wrong again, you can go die with that brat.”

“Earlier, I led you the wrong way because it was dark. This time, there's no mistake at all.”

Alongside the voices...

A muscular man appeared, leading two servants.

“Urrr. Urrr.” The youth's mouth remained gagged; he was unable to speak, but he stared towards the three with surprise and anger.

The muscular man was so angry, he laughed. “You didn't die. Your luck really isn't bad! I really wonder what you did, you little brat, to make my little sister so besotted that she threatened suicide. Bring him back!”

Only later did the youth discover...



Lotus, upon learning that Ji had been sent to the deep mountains to be fed to monsters, had been stunned. And then...this girl who had always been innocent, pure, and obedient...went berserk. She threatened suicide: "If I don't see Ji before dawn, I'll go join him." The girl had pressed a sharp knife towards her heart. In the past, she had always been very obedient towards her peak Xiantian father, but this time, she wasn't willing to compromise at all. "Father, you might be able to take away my knife and tie me up, but if I want to die...you won't be able to stop me."

In the end...her strong, domineering father had bowed his head.

After this, Lotus' father and elder brother no longer tried to prevent the two from being together. To the contrary, they began to train Ji, providing him with good cultivation techniques. Thanks to the help of Ji's father-in-law and brother-in-law, he truly did break through to become a Xiantian lifeform.

"What?" The youth used his Xiantian energy to probe Lotus' stomach. He revealed a look of delight. "This, this is..."

Lotus laughed as well.

"I'm going to be a father. Hahaha, I'm going to be a father. Wonderful! Ahahahaha..."

The youth was wildly overjoyed. Lotus, however, just quietly smiled.

"Lotus, I, Youngflame Ji, swear that I will definitely take good care of you and our son." The youth said excitedly, "My son, in the future, shall become a truly formidable figure. In fact, he'll be one of the most formidable figures of our entire Youngflame clan."

"Right." Lotus nodded gently as well.

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Ning's soul was riding with the youth. He had a very strange feeling in his heart. Lotus looked almost identical to Yu Wei. The excitement which Youngflame Ji had felt when he had discovered that Lotus was pregnant...

Ning had a strange feeling. It was as though he had completely become one with Youngflame Ji, as though he and Yu Wei were about to have a child together.

"I, Youngflame Ji, swear that I will definitely take good care of you and our son." When Youngflame Ji said these words...Ning felt a powerful sense of responsibility.

A husband's...a father's...

Responsibility.

"Can it be that they are also going to..." Ning could vaguely see their future, a future that caused Ning's heart to feel pain. This girl looked identical to Yu Wei. She was simple and honest, but her heart was whole-heartedly with her man. Ning truly didn't wish to see Lotus die.

Time passed, one day after another.

Lotus' belly grew bigger and bigger. The young Youngflame Ji was working hard to acquire all sorts of treasured herbs, which he gave to Lotus to eat. "My child must be born with the best of talent. In the future, he will definitely become an important person."

Each time Youngflame Ji had that eager, excited look on his face, Lotus would laugh as she looked at her man.

This was bliss.

"Everyone in the city is to be evacuated!" An ancient voice echoed throughout the city. Youngflame Ji, who had been holding his pregnant wife's hand and accompanying her on a stroll, was startled.

Moments later...

The world around them changed.

Youngflame Ji and Lotus had arrived within a pocket dimension which was filled with countless people.

"Lotus, are you alright?" Youngflame Ji was extremely worried.

"I'm fine. But...but where are we?" Lotus, rather worried as well, clutched at Youngflame Ji's hand.

"Don't worry. I'm here." Youngflame Ji vigilantly scanned their surroundings.

Not too long afterwards...

Whoosh...

A second round of teleportations. This time, they were moved to Old Demon Windraiser's pearl, and the population became even denser.

"No..." Ning's heart was filled with regret. He truly didn't want to see this...this scene of utter despair.

Rumble...

The world broke apart.

Screams of terror...rage...despair...

Countless people began to die within the shattering dimension.

"No, no, no..." The youth was completely dazed. He stared in terror at the surrounding world. He had sworn an oath...he was going to protect his wife! "What should I do? What should I do?!" He was blaming himself over and over; he would rather die than let his beloved wife die! He couldn't forget how they had met...the countless hardships they had experienced together before they had finally been able to be together...

"Lotus..." The youth looked towards the girl, his tears falling down.

He truly was helpless!

"It's good that we're together...our entire family is together..." Lotus tightly clutched her man with one hand while gently touching her stomach with the other.

Whoosh....

The shattering dimension showed no mercy at all. As the cracks in reality swept towards them...the man, the woman, and the child in the woman's belly all perished.

The dimension was completely destroyed.

Ning even 'saw' that giant golden palm appear in the outside world. It was this golden palm that had shattered the Qiankun pearl, causing the three of them to all perish.

And that giant golden palm...was Ning's palm.

"Why? Why wasn't I just a bit more careful...why did I have to destroy it?" Upon seeing Lotus die, he couldn't help but feel as though Yu Wei had just died in front of him. The agony which Youngflame Ji felt was sent straight to Ning's own heart, causing him to feel pain as well.

"It was my fault."

"I shouldn't have."

"Shouldn't have."

Ning had reached the 'iceheart' stage. Although he felt regret ...in the deepest recesses of his heart, he was still able to maintain his state of cold transcendence. He was still able to completely control the emotions he felt regarding what had happened in the outside world, causing it to be unable to shake his inner heart.

.....

One story after another.

Ning's soul rode with one individual after another. For some, he only spent a few months with them; for others, he spent more than ten years. Each person was the type which Ning absolutely wouldn't have been willing to kill...and in fact, many of their stories resonated with him. This sort of soul-riding felt almost like a form of rebirth. However, because Ning had reached the 'iceheart' level, he was able to separate all those emotions from his inner heart, causing it to remain unshaken.

However...the more Ning saw, the more he felt a certain desire in his heart...

If only I hadn't shattered that Qiankun pearl, how wonderful things would be!

Although Ning felt this desire...he also understood that there was no way to change things. He couldn't take it back.

.....

This sorts of feelings continuously accumulated within his heart. Suddenly...

"Mother! Second matron!"

"Lotus!"

"Master!"

“Junior apprentice-brother!”

“Why, why?!”

“I don’t want to die!”

“My baby! Aaaaaaaah!”

In that instant...

Ning had experienced all sorts of powerful emotions over the course of riding with a thousand lives. All sorts of resentment, anger, pain, embarrassment, agony...they all suddenly gathered together. Before this, although Ning was deeply impacted by the emotions he felt when riding with one of the victims, the emotions came in a single, sudden rush. This time, however...all of the emotions came crashing upon him at the same time. The self-recrimination he felt came crashing down upon him like a wave, instantly drowning him within its waters.

“It was all because of you. You!”

“Why did you break it? Why?!”

“You should be damned.”

“Damned!”

“Die.”

“If you die, you’ll be free.”

“Free.”

A flood of emotions...countless voices...they completely buried and smothered Ning. In fact, they were even able to breach Ning’s ‘iceheart’ and completely fill every inch of his inner heart.

This was the most difficult tribulation of the three tribulations of the ‘red dust tribulations’...the ‘thousand lives heart-tribulation’!

### [The Desolate Era](#)

#### **Book 16: The Nihilum Zone Chapter 5: Ruler**

The most terrifying tribulation of the red dust tribulations was this one, the thousand lives heart-tribulation. It was an experience akin to being reborn a thousand times. If one’s Dao-heart was weak, one would probably be lost forever...

After all, to Immortal cultivators, with the passage of countless lifetimes, one would begin to lose the memories of one’s former lives. With so many personalities and experiences in one place...the original personality and person would be lost.

Experiencing a thousand lives, in and of itself, was enough to cause many Loose Immortals to be lost...at which point, the karmic sinflames would burn their souls to ashes.

The thousand lives heart-tribulation was even worse; it wasn’t as simple as causing someone to be actually reborn a thousand times! Ji Ning was a classic example; with each rebirth, he ‘possessed’ the

spirit of someone whose story and personality resonated with his own...and each of their stories caused him to feel self-recrimination and regret. If instead he had been randomly 'reincarnated' or 'possessed' the body of an evildoer, Ning's iceheart-level mind probably wouldn't have been shaken in the slightest.

But every single time, Ning's soul rode with someone whose life experiences and histories resonated with himself. Slowly...these experiences had penetrated his iceheart and entered his inner heart.

And then...they had all merged together!

A flood of emotions born from a thousand lives suddenly exploded forth, reaching an inconceivable level of intensity. This was the final strike of the thousand lives heart-tribulation...and the most terrifying strike of all! Countless peerless geniuses had perished to this strike.

Rumble...

His 'iceheart' had been completely infiltrated and submerged. Ning was no longer able to maintain that state at all.

"Damn you."

"Your fault."

"Die, die."

"Go die."

"I want you dead!"

"Vengeance for Lotus."

The figures from a thousand lifetimes swam before his eyes. They were roaring with rage, their faces savage and vicious.

"...It's all my fault. It's my fault. My fault. If I hadn't shattered that Qiankun pearl, all of them would still be alive. They had children...wives...parents...siblings...if it hadn't been for me, they would still be living happy lives..." Ning had already been completely submerged by the endless waves of emotions that were crashing through him.

"Death is a form of escape...I owe them...I can't face them...only in death..."

.....

Within the Nihilum Zone. Within a vast, seemingly endless black void wave. Ning just drifted about with the waves, sent flying repeatedly in different directions.

His eyes were shut. He simply lay there, amidst the waves.

If Uncle White and Little Qing were present, they would have immediately noticed that Ning's aura was growing increasingly weak at an utterly alarming rate. This was the exact moment when the final, explosive strike of the thousand lives heart-tribulation had arrived!

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“The seven days are almost up.”

“It’s almost been seven days...Master will definitely survive. Definitely.”

“Senior apprentice-brother...”

Uncle White, Little Qing, and Mu Northson were quietly waiting at Swallow Mountain. Uncle White was no longer drinking, Northson was no longer repeatedly sighing and blaming himself, while Little Qing was constantly mumbling to herself nonstop.

They were all waiting and hoping...

Seven days ago, the karmic sinflames had descended.

Now, seven days later...Ji Ning would be facing the most dangerous test of all.

“You have to survive.”

.....

Within the void waves of the Nihilum Zone. Ning’s aura was rapidly weakening in strength...but when it reached an extremely low level, that tiny strand of will just wouldn’t die out, no matter what. It was as though something was forcibly sustaining Ning’s Dao-heart, causing it to be unable to completely, truly break apart.

Within Ning’s soul.

It was completely dark here.

Under the pressure of that torrent of emotions from a thousand lives, Ning’s Dao-heart had weakened so much that his soul had been thrust into utter darkness, the darkness of utter despair. Logically speaking, Ning should have already succumbed to it...but he had not.

“I want to be carefree and unbound!”

“I want to control my own destiny, and to not be toyed with by fate!”

“I don’t want for those I love to leave me...”

In the moment when his Dao-heart sank down to its lowest depths...a voice rang out in the deepest part of his heart. This was Ji Ning’s own voice, a resolute voice, the voice he used when he was at his most stubborn, his most unyielding.

This was a chant which Ning had shouted to himself, even back in his previous life on Earth.

In this life, after seeing his parents perish one by one at Swallow Mountain...this desire was only reinforced.

When he came to understand his own sword-heart...he realized that his sword-heart sought true freedom, sought mastery over his own destiny!

This was the voice that rang out in the deepest depths of Ning’s soul.

“I...”

"I am Ji Ning."

"I ask to be carefree and unbound, to control my own destiny, and not to be toyed with by fate." Ning's Dao-heart rapidly began to condense and strengthen, and as it did, the aura of the young body that was floating about within the Nihilum Zone began to strengthen as well.

Ning slowly regained consciousness. His mind gradually returned to him.

That faith, that chant...it had come from his very essence, rather than from his mind or consciousness.

Now that his mind had returned, Ning's Dao-heart began to heal even more rapidly. His Dao-heart was also growing even firmer and more dense. "It was indeed my fault that they died...but they are already dead. All that is in the past. There is no way to reverse the flow of time, and there is no way to change past history. Punishing one's self for something one can no longer alter...that is nothing more than being made a fool of by fate! The only one who rules over myself...is myself!"

Whooooosh.

The youth floating within the dark void waves of the Nihilum Zone suddenly opened his eyes. His eyes gleamed like the stars, filled with unfathomable profoundness.

"I survived. The karmic sinflames...I endured them," the youth murmured softly.

The karmic sinflames had already turned invisible. It was difficult to see them with the naked eye; one had to use divine sense or coresense to see them. The invisible karmic sinflames continued to swirl around Ning, but they no longer conjured any more illusions. The likes of the 'soullkiller tribulation', the 'red dust tribulation', and the 'thousand lives heart-tribulation' would no longer appear. The karmic sinflames, however, did continue to burn away at Ning's soul, causing Ning to feel pain.

This pain could not compare to the pain Ning had felt when undergoing the first tribulation, the 'soullkiller tribulation'; the soullkiller tribulation brought pain into one's very essence, and thus could increase without any limit. By contrast, there was a limit to how much pain the current karmic sinflames could bring.

However...the pain one felt when one's soul was being burnt was far greater than the pain one felt when one's flesh was being burnt.

Although surviving karmic sinflames was a form of baptism for the spirit, the agony of having one's soul being burned...this, too, was a form of punishment for sin.

"No wonder everyone says that those who can survive karmic sinflames truly are incomparably demonic figures," Ning sighed. "If a vile fiend truly did decide to kill countless innocents and cause karmic sinflames to descend, and yet was still able to withstand the thousand lives heart-tribulation...one can imagine what sort of a heart he has!"

"After having survived the karmic sinflames, my heart has reached the 'iceheart' level; in fact, I nearly reached the 'ruler' level," Ning sighed to himself.

At the last instant, he had broken free of his shackles and awoken.

This was because within his heart, he had a powerful desire sustaining him...and this desire called him awake, condensed his Dao-heart, and made Ning realize that he had to be the one who was the ruler of his own destiny. Even if he was to die...he should only die if he himself chose to die. As for any others who wished to make him die? They could forget about it!

Still, although he understood this in principle, Ning also realized that he hadn't truly reached the 'ruler' level.

[Houyi's Archery] broke heartforce out into multiple levels. The first level was the basic level, the second level was the iceheart level, and the third level was the ruler level!

Once one reached the 'ruler' level...one would be the absolute master of one's self! All outside forces could forget about trying to shake one's heart. If one truly did reach the 'ruler' level, neither the red dust tribulation nor the thousand lives heart-tribulation would be able to cause Ning's aura to weaken in the slightest. This was because Ning would be able to completely ignore all sorts of foreign, outside emotions and feelings.

If the 'iceheart' level could be described as completely separating one's inner heart from the outside world and maintaining utter cold calmness, then the 'ruler' level was a form of supremacy and transcendence. It is better to channel than to dam; experts who had reached the 'ruler' level in heartforce would no longer act to intentionally suppress their emotions and desires, not even in the innermost depths of their heart.

Let any emotions or feelings come as they may...like Yu the Great taming the floods, no matter what waves or floods come, one would be the master of them all.

"I'm not quite there yet."

"The final tribulation, the thousand lives heart-tribulation, caused my 'iceheart' to be improved, nearing perfection. I'm now very close to the 'ruler' level." Ning knew this...but although he knew and could sense that at the end, when he was in the grips of despair, he even touched what it meant to be at the 'ruler' level...actually breaking through to truly reach that level would take a long time.

A breakthrough in the spirit...

This was even more difficult than a breakthrough in training in a Dao.

For Immortal cultivators, the most important thing of all was the Dao-heart. Next came one's insights into the Dao. Last of all was one's cultivation base!

If one's Dao-heart was insufficient...no matter how high your cultivation base was or how many Daos you had comprehended, you would still end up deviating and going berserk. The more powerful you were, the more likely you would die, in fact!

The Dao-heart had to be powerful. Only with a powerful Dao-heart and enough insights into the Dao should a person break through to the next cultivation level. For many peerless geniuses and reincarnated Immortals who had awakened their memories, they had strong enough Dao-hearts and enough insights into the Dao that they could simply use liquefied elemental essence and spirit-pills to increase their cultivation base to the level they wanted it to be at. However, no matter what they did,



they wouldn't raise it to a level which was beyond what their Dao-hearts or cultivation bases could handle.

One could rapidly increase one's cultivation base, but there was no shortcut to strengthening the Dao-heart or comprehending the Dao.

"Despite all this, I was still unable to reach the 'ruler' level. What a pity. If I had reached it...I would have become a truly supreme divine archer of the Three Realms," Ning sighed.

[Houyi's Archery] divided heartforce up into five major levels.

The third level was the 'ruler' level; at this level, one could be considered one of the supreme divine archers of the Three Realms.

The fourth level was the level which the absolute best divine archers of the current Three Realms had reached.

As for the fifth level...this was Houyi's level. However, this divine archer of the Primordial Era, Houyi, had disappeared for countless years. Some claimed he was dead, while others said that he had secluded himself somewhere. However...what was undisputed was that he had gone missing for far, far too long. It was very rare for an expert to be patient enough to go into hiding for that long without interacting with any other major powers, and so quite a few suspected him of being dead.

Ning had nearly perfected the second level of heartforce, 'iceheart'. His heartforce was so powerful that he could now be considered one of the top divine archers of the Three Realms.

Before this, Ning had merely reached the basic level; this had been only enough to let him be ranked amongst the divine archers.

Rumble...

A voidwave swept across Ning, pushing him thousands of kilometers away and bringing him to his senses.

"What a powerful wave. If I hadn't trained in the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art], I would've died long ago." Only now did Ning leave his state of pensiveness and come to his senses. He began to inspect his surroundings. He was within an utterly dark void, and he could vaguely make out voidwaves and voidwinds rage about. "What is this place? Uh...why isn't there any natural energy here at all?"

Ning discovered to his astonishment that there was no natural energy of Heaven and Earth here. Immortal cultivators needed to absorb and refine natural energy in order to replenish their elemental ki, while Immortals needed it to replenish their Immortal energy.

"And...where is the Dao?"

"The Dao of the Heavens?"

In the past, he could clearly sense the Grand Dao of the Sword, the Grand Dao of the Waterdrop, as well as many other Daos...but Ning discovered to his amazement that now none of them seemed to exist. He couldn't sense them at all. The Dao of the Heavens was missing...which meant that no matter how he

infused his swordplay with the profound mysteries of the Dao, he wouldn't be able to summon any of the power of the natural world at all.

"No natural elemental energy...and not even the Dao of the Heavens exists?" Ning stared into the black, dark void around him in disbelief. "Where...where is this place?!"