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Book 3: Comprehending The Way by the Pond Chapter 15: The Full Story

The twenty seven golden armored soldiers simultaneously stabbed out with their glittering golden spears, carrying boundless force as they attacked Ji Ning! The fifty four golden armored soldiers behind also simultaneously aimed their spears, preparing to swap in at any moment.

“There’s definitely a flaw. There definitely is a chance for success. If they truly are immortal, then they would exhaust me to death through by using up my energy.” Wielding the Darknorth swords in his hands, Ning charged forward, as fast as the wind. Dangdangdang! The Darknorth sword and the spears clashed. Ning blocked the spears while at the same time, charging into the midst of those golden armored soldiers.

“Retreat!”

“Attack!”

The twenty seven golden armored soldiers in the center retreated in unison at high speed, while the fifty four golden armored soldiers then formed an even wider encirclement, allowing Ning to be the ‘turtle in their jar’.

“Can it be?” Ning suddenly frowned.

“Waterflame Lotus!” Ning made his decision.

Huahuahua....

Around him eight pairs of Waterflame Lotuses suddenly appeared, each one created from a single water lotus petal and a single fire lotus petal. Because this attack contained a hint of the true meaning of the Dao, even Ning had to use his full force when utilizing this attack, and dividing his mind to the point of creating these eight Waterflame Lotuses was extremely arduous for him.

“Kakaka...” The eight Waterflame Lotuses swiveled, grinding like millstones while surrounding sixteen golden armored soldiers. These golden armored soldiers all frantically dodged, but all of their bodies began to crack from the tremendous pressure.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

The golden armored warriors howled angrily, bellowing as they dodged past the Waterflame Lotuses and attacked Ning.

Ning, wielding his Darknorth swords, was like a vicious tiger. His sword shadow danced like fire, instantly chopping one of the golden armored warriors into three pieces. But the body of the warrior who was chopped into three pieces quickly then reconnected and reformed, then once more bellowed and attacked Ning.

“So this really is the case. This really is the case.” Ning was jubilant, and he laughed loudly. “What nonsense about these golden armored warriors having ‘immortal bodies’. That’s just for frightening people. Every time I injure you, your power goes down. Haha. I want to see how long you can hold on for.”

Previously, when the eighty one golden armored guards had set up their formation attacks, Ning, when blocking, had discovered that the power of these golden armored guards had dropped slightly. Although it wasn’t by much, Ning’s senses were extremely sensitive, so he was still able to discover it.

Thus, Ning simultaneously created eight Waterflame Lotuses, badly injuring those sixteen golden armored warriors.

After exchanging blows with them again, Ning discovered...that the power of these golden armored warriors had weakened considerably.

“The eighty one golden armored warriors are like a single unit. If one is badly wounded, the others will be affected as well.” Ning said to himself. “In addition, these golden armored warriors are made from golden liquid. They don’t have any ‘vital points’ to speak of. As long as I constantly injure them, their magical power will constantly deplete...and in the end, they will definitely collapse.”

“Kill!”

The golden armored warriors were utterly fearless.

Ning continued to control the eight Waterflame Lotuses, causing them to surround and grind down against the golden armored warriors repeatedly, while at the same time he himself constantly dodged with his Darknorth swords...Ning discovered that each time, when he stabbed the golden armored warriors with his swords, their power dropped very slowly. However, when the Waterflame Lotuses ground them to pieces, the power would drop somewhat faster.

This was a war of attrition.

“Swish!” One golden armor warrior shattered and fell apart, transforming into nothingness. Then all eighty one golden armored warriors completely disappeared.

Ning let out a long breath, releasing his nearby Waterflame Lotuses.

“Too...too troublesome.”

“If I didn’t have the Waterflame Lotus technique, I probably would’ve been exhausted to death.” Sensing the remaining ‘Crimsonbright’ divine power in his body, Ning couldn’t help but sigh. The Crimsonbright divine power in his body only had roughly half left. And this was only because the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] technique he trained in resulted in an extraordinarily dense base of power.

This battle had primarily relied upon Ning using the Waterflame Lotus to grind them into small pieces repeatedly, while he had only utilized the Crimsonbright divine power in his Darknorth swords to defend! Despite that, half of his divine power had been used up.

Ning glanced behind him, seeing those corpses lying on the ground. Some of them had been transformed into dust from the battle, but a few still remained.

“Those that died here were most likely exhausted to death.” Ning said to himself. “Fiendgod Body Refiners are proficient at long-lasting, endurance battles, but I still found it so hard. How could those who relied solely upon Ki Refining to reach the Xiantian level possibly survive?”

Hua...

The two walls of mist at each side of the tunnel slowly dissipated.

Ning carefully made his way towards the corner of the corridor, not going forward yet. He instead took a glance towards the other side, and saw that far away, on the other side of the corridor, there were corpses present as well.

“There’s even more corpses. It seems the next corridor is just as dangerous. I really wonder how many dangers this ancient relic site contains within it.” Ning’s heart shivered. “And most likely, those who died there had successfully passed through those eighty one golden armored soldiers.”

“Come.”

Ning stared at those corpses on the other side of the hall. He realized that here as well, only a few of the corpses had armor and weapons on them. He used his divine will to pull one of the corpses and its magic treasures over to himself.

“Those who were able to break through the previous corridor most likely had quite some magic treasures.” Ning carefully inspected the skeleton. The large skeleton was more than three meters tall. The most likely location of its storage treasure was on the armguard covering its skeletal arm. Ning quickly removed the armguard and bound it. “It really is a storage-type magic treasure.”

“So many things.”

This storage-type magic treasure had more than a thousand magic treasures within it. Ning easily bound all of them, but he discovered to his resignation...that all of them were unranked magic treasures.

“All of them are unranked.” Ning shook his head. “Although there’s more than a thousand, all of them combined are worth perhaps less than 1% of the Traceless Talisman.”

The Traceless Talisman was a guardian treasure of the Prefecture!

Even ranked magic treasures would find it difficult to compare to it.

“Take a rest first.” Ning sat in the lotus position. Taking out a bamboo tube, he opened the cork, raised his head, and drank it. Then he took out some roast meat and began to eat. “Although these old fellows who died left behind their storage treasures, they didn’t leave behind any food at all. It has been too long. Their food became dust long ago.”

“These unranked magic treasures aren’t very useful to me either.”

“After all, I only need a few magic treasures.” Ning shook his head. For example, storage-type magic treasures; what was the point of having several hundred? Would he gain any extra power at all? If he

wasn't able to survive, most likely the thousand-plus unranked magic treasures he had found would in turn be discovered in the future by someone else.

Ning sat there, eating and drinking, not in a rush to go forward.

At the same time, the Crimsonbright divine power slowly began to recover.

After eating and drinking, Ning then flipped through each storage-type magic treasure to see what was inside. Occasionally, he saw some training manuals or sword technique manuals. However, the most important ultimate technique books were generally destroyed after being learned, to prevent them from being leaked to others! Thus, these books which had been brought were all quite ordinary, not very valuable.

Only a single copy was comparable to the [Raindrop Sutra].

"I suppose this is an unexpected benefit." Ning laughed. And then he once more began to flip through the large number of storage-type magic treasures, searching through them.

Clothes!

Utensils!

Toys!

All sorts of curiosities were removed. During the treasure searching process, Ning's mood improved greatly as well.

"Huh?" Ning suddenly picked up a strange piece of bark. He was about to toss it, but then he saw the words atop it. His face immediately changed."

"Wudan, our clan just received word that Immortal Juhua, someone who has lived for millions of years, ever since the Fiendgod era, has publicly announced that he is accepting disciples. Although Immortal Juhua is a Loose Immortal, for him to be able to survive millions of years and undergo countless tribulations without dying means, according to our clan leader, his power is not inferior to that of a Celestial Immortal.

Immortal Juhua has never before accepted a disciple. Not even the Second Prince of our Grand Xia Dynasty was able to successfully become his disciple.

The news that Immortal Juhua is accepting a disciple has been spread long ago.

In addition, Immortal Juhua has also said publicly that the student he is accepting must be a Fiendgod Body Refiner, who at least must be at the Xiantian level, and at most can be of the Zifu level! He would set down two paths...one for Xiantian lifeforms to traverse, while the other is for Zifu Disciples to traverse.

There are three trials in each path!

After breaking through the three trials without dying, one would become the heir to Immortal Juhua!

Immortal Juhua will only accept a single disciple!

As for the place he is accepting a disciple, Immortal Juhua has set his immortal estate down in the Thousand Autumns Island of the Darknorth Sea. Most likely, he will only leave after recruiting his disciple. Traveling from our place to the distant Darknorth Ocean's Thousand Autumns Island will take at least half a year. Make haste. If you are late, someone else will seize the opportunity. Wudan, I've given you the news. Whether you go or not is your decision.

Signed, Godbanian Water!"

Looking at this incomparably ancient tree bark in his hands, Ning couldn't breathe. "Godbanian clan? This tree bark should be the bark of a Godbanian tree. No wonder this ancient letter was able to persist for so long."

The Godbanian tree was immortal and would never decay.

Some precious items would generally be put in wooden cases made out of Godbanian wood. Godbanian trees were the unique products of the 'Godbanian clan', and it was their proof of identity. That was a truly incomparably powerful clan, unspeakably more powerful than the Ji clan. That was a clan that could be described as supreme, even throughout the entirety of the vast domain of the Grand Xia Dynasty!

"Immortal Juhua?" Ning frowned, pondering. "Immortal Juhua was accepting a disciple. He existed in the Fiendgod Era, and had been alive for millions of years when he started looking for a disciple. But from the Fiendgod Era until now, it has probably been billions or trillions of years."

"Far too much time has passed since this 'seeking a disciple' affair. That Immortal Juhua most likely died long ago." Ning understood.

Loose Immortals would constantly undergo the Three Calamities and the Nine Tribulations. It was a miracle for a person to survive millions of years without dying. How could one possibly have survived to this era?

"Then this underground estate..."

"It should be the underground estate where Immortal Juhua tested potential disciples. This corridor that I am currently in should be one of the two corridors for his potential disciples." Ning said to himself.

Ning looked at the distant corpses.

Although those corpses were clearly of Fiendgod Body Refiners, the fact that they still remained meant that they didn't die too long ago.

Clearly, Xiantian-level or Zifu Disciples who were Fiendgod Body Refiners often were transported into this Immortal estate. He himself was one of those unlucky souls.

"Since Immortal Juhua decided to take an apprentice, the requirements for his apprentice must have been extremely strict. Otherwise, he would have easily accepted a disciple long ago." Ning said to himself. "There are three trials on each path. It seems that was the first trial just now, which forced me

to rely on the Waterflame Lotus in order to pass through it. The next two trials will most likely be even more terrifying and dangerous...how will I past them?"

"Can it be that I will be like them? That I will die and rot here?" Ning looked at the distant corpses, not breathing as he pondered.

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Book 3: Comprehending The Way by the Pond Chapter 16: The Waiting Parents

Within West Prefecture City.

"Yichuan, I heard Ji Ning has already broken through to the Xiantian level. Congratulations!"

"Yichuan, your son really is formidable."

"He's only eleven this year, right? A Xiantian at eleven. He ranks amongst the top three talents of the past thousand years for our Ji clan's Five Prefectures."

Ji Yichuan, who had always been like an implacable glacier, had a rare hint of delight on his face. Although he was still stiff-faced, those who were familiar with him could sense how happy Yichuan currently was. Ever since Ning had kicked down the walls of the Riverside Tribe with three kicks, then knocked River Sansi flying with another kick, the news had quickly spread back to the Ji clan.

This news had already spread across all five of the prefectures of the Ji clan. As his father, Ji Yichuan naturally felt very happy in his heart. The past two days, he often heard words of praise and congratulations. By nature, people liked to praise the praiseworthy even further. Now that Ning had already been selected to be the next Prefecture Lord, and also was so monstrous as to become a Xiantian lifeform at age eleven, everyone understood that in the future, the lineage of Ji Yichuan and Ji Ning would be incomparably glorious.

This father-son duo's status in the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan would undoubtedly be extremely high.

"Look at how happy you are." Yuchi Snow held a flask of water as she watered the flowers.

"How can I not be jubilant?" Yichuan sat on a nearby stone bench. Flipping his hand, he retrieved a bamboo flask, contentedly drinking fruit wine. "Ning was able to kill the Aquatic Rhino King before reaching the Xiantian level. Now that he has broken through to the Xiantian level...he was able to send that Riverside Sansi flying with one kick. River Sansi reached the Xiantian level long ago, and is an expert Ki Refiner of the middle Xiantian level, yet he couldn't take a single blow from my son. This means that Ning should have reached the Xiantian level in the Fiendgod Body Refining methods as well!"

According to the news from the black armored guards stationed at the Riverside Tribe, Ning had executed sword flashes to send River He's shortsword flying.

Clearly, Ning had already reached the Xiantian level as a Ki Refiner.

But Yichuan knew his son very well, and knew the weaknesses in his son's arteries. Most likely only after the Fiendgod Body Refining technique raised him to be a Xiantian level and remade his body would Ning be able to make a breakthrough as a Ki Refiner.

"[Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]." Yichuan looked at Snow. "This is the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. The legendary number one Fiendgod Body Refining method! Our Ji clan has never had someone break through to the Xiantian level through it, but Ning accomplished it. In the future, he will definitely be even more powerful than me. His name will be spread throughout the countless tribes, and our Ji clan will become greater and greater!"

Yichuan was filled with a heroic vigor right now.

"The Ji clan will become greater?" Snow nodded gently. "Perhaps because of my son, the Ji clan will reach the same heights of glory as my Yuchi clan once had, but sadly, my Yuchi clan..."

"There is no clan that will exist forever without perishing." Yichuan said. "Even the almighty Grand Xia Dynasty which has existed for countless years, ever since being founded during the Fiendgod Era, exterminated other ancient dynasties before unifying this land. Those ancient dynasties had their own extremely long history as well. Weren't they destroyed in the end also?"

Yuchi Snow nodded. "I understand. I've already made my peace with this. In Ning's veins also flows the blood of my Yuchi lineage. In the future, when Ning's name is known throughout the boundless earth, my ancestors of the Yuchi clan will feel very happy as well, no doubt."

"Right." Yichuan nodded.

Just as the husband and wife couple were chatting happily, the face of Ji Yichuan, who had been drinking wine from the bamboo tube, suddenly changed. This was the moment where Ning, at Serpentwing's lair, had suddenly been transported into that mysterious, ancient underwater estate relic site.

"What is it?" Seated next to him, Yuchi Snow noticed that her man's mood had dramatically changed. "What happened?"

"Nothing." Yichuan shook his head. "Only, I just remembered something I have to do."

Snow frowned. "You want to deceive me? Your face is completely incapable of fakery. Given your mental willpower, normal matters aren't able to cause you to panic...and for you to panic to this degree, this must be a major event. Speak."

Looking at his wife, Yichuan sighed, "I originally gave Ning a jade sword. No matter how far away he is, I'll be able to sense Ning's location. I had warned him quite strictly that he is not permitted to wander more than ten thousand kilometers away from the West Prefecture City. If he goes beyond it, I will capture him, bring him back, and put him in the prison for three years."

"What, he went more than ten thousand kilometers away from West Prefecture City?" Snow hurriedly asked.

"That's not it." Yichuan's face was unpleasant. "I can't sense the jade sword at all."

"What!" Snow, shocked, suddenly rose to her feet, then began to cough, cough very hard.

"I didn't want to say it, but you forced me to." Yichuan hurriedly helped support his wife, rubbing her back. "Feel better?"

Snow said frantically, "How can you not be able to sense the jade sword? Didn't you say that you can sense it no matter how far away it is? If you can't sense it...does that mean Ning has encountered danger?!"

"Don't panic." Yichuan said hurriedly. "There's two possible answers for why I can't sense the jade sword."

"The first possibility is that Ning has encountered some danger, and then took out the jade sword, but before he was able to break it, the enemy instantly disintegrated the jade sword."

"The second possibility is that Ning was instantly transported to a very distant location, so distant that even I can't sense it."

Snow calmed down.

Snow was very experienced as well, and she nodded. "Even if your jade sword was destroyed and broken into small pieces, you should still be able to sense it. Unless it was completely disintegrated; only then would you be unable to sense it. But right now, Ning is very strong. He was able to send River Sansi flying with one kick. If he encountered such great danger that he had to take out the jade sword...he would be able to break it instantly. How could it be that he wouldn't even have the opportunity to break it?"

"In addition, if an enemy wanted to kill Ning, but was capable of instantly destroying the jade sword in Ning's hands before Ning had a chance to break it, then he would have the power to easily kill Ning. Why bother with breaking the jade sword?"

Snow's train of thought helped her calm down slightly.

Logically speaking, her son shouldn't have died yet!

"So it's the other possibility." Yichuan said. "Ning was instantly transported to an incomparably distant location. I can sense my jade sword no matter where it is...although this is a slight exaggeration, within an area of a million kilometers, at least, I should still be able to sense it. To instantly be transported more than a million kilometers is rather inconceivable as well. I think the more likely answer is that Ning should have been transported to another dimension. He stumbled into a relic site."

"Stumbled into a relic site?" Snow nodded as well.

The two of them had adventured in the outside world, and had significant experience. They knew that this vast, boundless world was incomparably marvelous. The relic sites that were left behind from the Fiendgod era alone were uncountable in number. Some of those greater powers were capable of opening their own small dimension or small world.

"Where was the last place you sensed Ning's at?" Snow asked hurriedly.

"Serpentwing Lake!" Yichuan said.

"Let's go to Serpentwing...cough!" Snow started to cough again.

Yichuan said hurriedly, "I'll go. You can't go out yet."

“Ning is in danger. How can I not go?” Yuchi shook her head. “You know this stems from the illness that I had when I was pregnant with Ning. It’s fine.”

Seeing the look in his wife’s eyes, Yichuan could only nod. “Fine. We’ll go find Auntie Flower and borrow her Azure Firebird. We’ll head to Serpentwing Lake at full speed.”

The vast Serpentwing Lake was very calm.

A godlike husband and wife couple were currently standing atop the back of an enormous Azure Firebird, flying at high speed in the air towards Serpentwing Lake.

“Hurry up and report to the great King that Ji Yichuan has come again. He brought a woman as well.”

“Ji Yichuan.”

“And sitting on that Azure Firebird.”

Some of the lesser aquatic monsters glanced into the sky, then, terrified, hurriedly went to make their report.

On the back of that Azure Firebird, Yichuan and his wife exchanged glances. Soon, Yichuan pointed at a nearby shoreline. “There are black armored guards there. Azure Firebird, go there!” The Azure Firebird hurriedly flew towards that direction, and the two black armored guards that had been keeping watch on the shores of Serpentwing Lake stared in astonishment at the male and female atop the back of the distant Azure Firebird.

“Our respects to you, Commander!” The two black armored guards hurriedly fell to one knee in terror. They all recognized Yichuan.

“I ask you, have you seen my son, Ning?” Yichuan asked directly.

“We saw him.” One of them, the taller black armored guard, immediately replied. “Just now, young master Ji Ning was walking atop the surface of the lake, calling out for Serpentwing to come and do battle with him.”

“Serpentwing?”

Yichuan and Snow both had the same thought. However, they didn’t believe that their son, at his current level of power, wouldn’t even have the chance to break the jade sword when fighting against the Diremonster, Serpentwing. In fact, they even believed that Ning was fully capable of staying alive in the face of Serpentwing’s attacks.

“But this time, the Diremonster, Serpentwing, wasn’t willing to come out.” The black armored guard said. “Young master Ji Ning called him out to do battle multiple times. His voice echoed across the entire lake, and most likely the black armored guards in the other areas all heard it as well. But because Serpentwing still refused to come out, nothing happened. We were too far away, so as to where young master Ji Ning went afterwards while walking on water, we don’t know.”

The island was located in the center of Serpentwing Lake.

The distance from the shore to the island was tens of kilometers. At the distance of tens of kilometers, the black armored guards were not able to see Ning at all.

“Oh? You are certain they didn’t do battle?” Yichuan quickly asked.

“They didn’t. We didn’t hear anything at all.” The two black armored guards were absolutely certain.

Yichuan went to the other black armored guards to ask them these questions, and even sought out Autumn Leaf and Mowu, who were waiting at the designated meeting point. From these two, Yichuan understood that Ning had come in anger, intending to execute Serpentwing, but Serpentwing had remained in hiding and hadn’t come out...Ning had remained standing atop the water, and then walked off and disappeared!

“Where did he go?” Standing by the lakeside, Yichuan and Snow stared towards the vast lake, frowning in concern.

“Wife, what do you think?” Yichuan looked at his wife.

Snow said pensively, “There wasn’t any disturbance at all. It shouldn’t have been a battle. It’s very possible that it really was an ancient relic site! These relic sites might be in the middle of an empty area, only sealed off from us by a thin barrier, but we can’t see them or sense them at all.”

“Perhaps our son is within a world that is hidden within a single speck of sand at the bottom of Serpentwing Lake.”

“Or perhaps he is within an ancient, hidden formation.”

“Only, the two of us aren’t capable of dealing with any of these possibilities.” Snow shook her head. “All we can do is wait. Wait for our son to come back to us, alive.”

“Right. Wait.” Yichuan looked at the immeasurably vast lake as well. “I believe our son will come from afar, walking across the water back to us.”

Snow nodded gently, leaning against her man.

They were still waiting. Waiting for their son’s return.

Within the corridor of the aquatic estate, it was very dark. It felt that even the passage of time was slow here.

Ning, his divine power fully recovered, finally stood up. Staring at the other corner of the corridor and its corpses, he understood that he had nowhere to retreat to. If he wanted to leave, he had to go forward!

“I have to live.” Ning stared at those distant corpses, then walked over.

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Book 3: Comprehending The Way by the Pond Chapter 17: Dao Battle-Armor

Wielding a Darknorth sword in each hand, Ji Ning headed straight towards the center of this ancient corridor.

Suddenly, a thousand or so meters in front of him, several blackish-blue seeds appeared at the same time, four ahead of him, five behind him. These seeds appeared at the same time as nine sets of battle armor. The battle armors were all completely black, and the weapons were identical as well; long staffs that were seemingly made of stone.

Nine seeds. Nine sets of battle gear.

“Hua...” The blackish-blue seeds suddenly transformed into a liquid, flowing into the armors, then transforming into massive men with blackish-blue skin. These massive men were several meters tall and had two horns in their foreheads. Their faces were ugly, and they had sharp fangs in their mouths. They donned the armor, while simultaneously picking up those three-meter long stone staffs next to them.

The nine ugly giants all glanced at each other, their eyes filled with savagery and excitement.

“It’s been so long. We’re finally out again!”

“This time, the person we have to deal with is this human youth. Such a tender-fleshed human. I can squeeze him to death by myself. The nine of us combined, and with these godly weapons and armor, haha...this is going to be too easy.”

“Set up the formation first.”

The nine ugly giants all began to chant the words to some foreign tongue which Ning couldn’t understand, but his face quickly changed, because he understood that these ugly giants which had sprouted from those seeds were intelligent, and even capable of conversation!

The two ends of the halls once again became filled with dense fog.

“Human, prepare for death.” The nine ugly giants all released furious roars. The ancient armor on their bodies immediately began to emit dazzling black light. The black light, emitting the stench of blood, quickly connected with each other, forming an enormous spiderweb in mid-air.

Ning was shocked. “Dao Battle-Armor?”

Dao Soldiers were a type of seed-soldier often used by the Grand Xia Dynasty. The Ji clan’s most powerful seed-soldier, the ‘Scarlet Guardians’, were the lowest-level type of Dao Soldiers. Every single Dao Soldier’s armor contained a large number of rune inscriptions, and the Dao Soldiers were capable of combining their energy together to attack the opponent together. They were also capable of combining their defense.

Dao Battle-Armor like that of the Scarlet Guardians of the Ji clan were at most capable of allowing nine of the Scarlet Guardians to combine forces. Once they joined together, nine Scarlet Guardians were even capable of giving an early Xiantian expert a good fight.

What’s more, the Ji clan had five hundred thousand of these powerful seed-soldiers, the Scarlet Guards!

This was the true backbone of the Ji clan.

Normally, missions were carried out by black armored guards. Each time the Scarlet Guardians were sent out, it was only after the Ji clan's Five Prefectures all agreed to send them out, and it would have to involve a major event of the Ji clan.

"Dao Battle-Armor. Aren't they all used for Houtian experts? And they should be covered with a large number of runes that can be seen at a glance." Ning stared at them. "But these nine strange giants have armor that don't have any runes on top of them, and each of them have power that is not weaker than that of a Xiantian."

"This is going to be trouble." Ning held his breath.

Dao Battle-Armor which Xiantian experts could use was something which the six hegemons of Swallow Mountain simply did not have. Ning hadn't even heard of such a thing. Most likely, only the armies of the Grand Xia Dynasty had them!

"Kill!" The nine ugly giants raised their large, thick staffs, charging towards Ning from both directions with angry roars, that enormous illusory spider web still connecting them from up above.

Ning immediately transformed into a ray of smoke, quickly pouncing towards the direction which only had four of those strange ugly giants, who were maintaining a distance of several meters from each other as they wielded their massive stone staffs and charged forward wildly with long steps.

"Kill!" One of the ugly giants raised his enormous stone staff up high, then smashed downwards.

"Come on." Ning let his strength explode as well. His Fiendgod-like power completely filled his Darknorth swords, and he took this blow head on. He wanted to get a clear understanding of the strength of these ugly fellows.

Swish!

The stone staff was as thick as a man's thigh and over three meters long. It slashed through the air, smashing down on Ning's Darknorth swords. Immediately afterwards, with a 'Swoosh!' Ning's entire body was sent flying backwards, while the strange giant only took a single step back, garbling in his racial tongue, "This human has great strength. However, he still cannot compare to me, much less the nine of us combined."

Although Ning had only fought one of them head on, because of the Dao Battle-Armor...in reality, that staff blow had contained the combined strength of those nine strange giants.

Flying backwards through the air, Ning felt his entire body was numb. His hand was damaged, and even the Darknorth sword in that hand flew out.

"Can't take it head on!" In mid-air, Ning flipped over, his Fiendgod body quickly healing. Still in mid-air, he stepped onto the sides of the corridor walls, then like a giant Roc, scurried out, quickly leaping past the oncoming charge of those nine strange ugly giants.

"Don't run!"

"What sort of talent is fleeing?"

"Humans only know how to run."

The nine strange giants opened their fanged mouths, howling angrily. They discovered that this human was even faster than them.

Ning pointed from a distance. "Waterflame Lotuses!"

Huahuahua...

Every single Waterflame Lotus was formed from a fire lotus petal and a water lotus petal. Six sets of Waterflame Lotuses appeared out of nowhere, completely surrounding those nine ugly giants within. Every single lotus petal was slowly swiveling in opposite directions, forming a terrifying grinding, killing force.

"What a powerful human." The nine ugly giants came to a halt and looked at each other. "Without this godly armor, we probably would've been injured long ago."

Ning saw that the nine giants had come to a halt, and were even conversing in their strange tongue.

But his ever-successful Waterflame Lotuses were completely unable to harm them.

"No use." Ning was surprised. Last time, when fighting against Ironwood Zhan, Zhan had relied on his formation and his Diamond Seal to hold on for a long time, which let Ning understand that his Waterflame Lotuses couldn't actually break through everything. "My Waterflame Lotuses were developed just recently, and were originally meant to protect me. Thus there are some deficiencies when using them to attack.

Wielding their stone staffs, the nine strange giants once more charged forward en masse.

"Lotus Protection." In the area around Ning, three fire lotus petals and three water lotus petals appeared, surrounding him. When the nine strange giants charged over and collided with the swiveling Waterflame Lotus, they were all impacted and were no longer able to attack Ning together.

Ning, wielding his Darknorth swords, chose one of them to attack!

"Die."

His sword flashed like fire, moving at astonishing speed as he displayed the killing technique of the [Thunderflame Sword], the 'Thunderflash Flint'.

Hua! Hua! Hua!

Rays of sword light shot towards the giant, who howled with valiant fury as he brandished his stone staff. The stone staff was incomparably heavy. Last time, when Ning had struck it, his entire body had gone numb. No longer daring to take it head on at all, Ning completely relied upon his marvelous sword techniques to deal with the giant in front of him.

The battle armor was only capable of protecting part of the body. The head and some other areas were still exposed.

Ning's sword blows were all aimed at this giant's head!

Only, each blow was hampered by that dense black light. After just barely breaking through the obstruction, it was only capable of leaving some wounds on the giant's face, which immediately would heal, leaving the giant unwounded.

"Kill, kill, kill." Ning was going all out.

"I want to live! So I have to kill you all!" Ning used all his strength, even filling the Darknorth swords with his Xiantian ki as well. All he could do, however, was to leave some flesh wounds on these strange giants. The giants were capable of completely ignoring the negligible drop to their strength from these wounds.

They fought for the amount of time it would take to brew a pot of tea.

Because he had been controlling the Waterflame Lotus this entire time, and also fighting all out, his divine power was being used up at a fast rate.

"Their power isn't dropping at all. I'm not even able to badly injure them." Ning could sense that he had less than half his divine power remaining. He didn't dare to keep fighting them head on like this. He hurriedly flashed through their encirclement.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Ning utilized the Windwing Evasion, scurrying first in this direction, then in that direction, dodging the pursuit and attacks of these strange giants.

"Human, don't run."

"You won't be able to run."

"Humans are only able to run." These nine ugly giants roared angrily as they ran forward majestically, continuing their attacks. Ning didn't take them head on at all, relying on his Windwing Evasion to throw them off time and time again.

In his heart, Ning was sighing.

He had trained in swordplay for so long, but in the end, it was still the Windwing Evasion technique which allowed him to stay alive!

Another long period of time passed.

"What should I do?" While fleeing, Ning was thinking frantically. Staring at the nine furiously roaring giants, who didn't seem to grow tired at all, he thought, "They have been chasing me for half a day now, but they still aren't getting tired. My divine power, however, is down to 20%."

The Windwing Evasion technique required him to use his Crimsonbright divine power as well! Although it used it up at a rate that was far slower than the rate it was used up in battle, running around for half a day would consume a great amount as well.

“My full-strength sword attacks are only capable of giving them some light flesh wounds.” Ning said to himself. “But the nine of them are actually those nine transformed seeds, just like those eighty one golden armored soldiers I fought earlier. When I shattered their army, they immediately reformed.”

Ning understood very well...

Even if he were to pierce through their heads, they still probably wouldn't die.

More importantly, his full strength attacks were only capable of leaving behind some flesh wounds.

“What should I do?”

“What exactly should I do?” Ning constantly pondered.

He had no options.

Despair!

“In the long-ago distant past, those Fiendgod Body Refiners of the Xiantian level who were transported probably watched, just like me, in despair as their divine power was used up, and then were killed.” Ning now understood his weakness. His weakness was that his [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] was only at the fourth stage.

This corridor was meant for Fiendgod Body Refiners of the Xiantian level to go through.

When Immortal Juhua had accepted disciples, most likely the majority of those who had attempted these trials were at the peak Xiantian level as Fiendgod Body Refiners! But Ji Ning? Only when reaching the sixth stage of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] would he be a peak Xiantian. He was currently only at the fourth stage! In terms of the purity or the depth of his divine power, he was still at an incomparable distance from the limits of the Xiantian level.

It was only natural that he wouldn't be able to complete these three trials.

“Compared to those Xiantian experts who wanted to become the disciple of Immortal Juhua and came here to attempt these trials, my divine power is very shallow.” Ning understood. “Fortunately, I gained a hint of understanding in the true meaning of the Dao, and then developed the ‘Waterflame Lotus’ technique, which is why I was lucky enough to complete the first trial! Otherwise, I probably wouldn't even have been able to complete the first one.”

“But...there are three trials.”

“Forget about the third trial. This second trial...” Ning could sense that he already had dropped to less than 10% of his Crimsonbright divine power left. Deep in his heart, he felt both panic and despair.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 3: Comprehending The Way by the Pond Chapter 18: Determining Life and Death

“I can't keep running. If I keep running, the Crimsonbright divine power in my body will be completely used up. Once my divine power is used up, I will definitely die. I won't even be able to struggle.” Ji Ning suddenly came to a halt, then turned to look towards the four ugly giants, already extremely angry due to the long chase. The ugly giants wielded those stone staffs, charging forward with large steps.

“He finally stopped running.”

“The human should be out of divine power by now.”

“Competing with us in running. We could run for several more days without fear.” The nine ugly giants wanted to devour this human in front of them.

Ning wielded a sword in each hand, standing there calmly.

Faced with life and death, Ning’s spirit was incomparably calm and empty. In this moment, he had thrown all other thoughts to the back of his mind, and in his heart, the only thing remaining was this battle.

“Hmph.” The nine ugly giants charged forward, and Ning immediately charged forward as well. Three fire lotus petals and three water lotus petals slowly swiveled around him, causing the giants to be unable to attack Ning simultaneously when they drew near him.

Ning’s sword struck out.

A sword like fire!

Wanton slaughter!

“Haha, his sword is too weak.”

“Too weak.” The ugly giants didn’t care at all. Ning’s sword pierced through the protection of that thick black light, but was only able to leave behind a hint of a wound.

Although Ning was very calm, he was using his full force.

“Not much divine force left.” Ning could feel that his divine power was ebbing. Grinding his teeth, he suddenly charged forward like a giant Roc soaring into the skies.

Swoosh!

The corridor was a hundred meters high, so Ning leapt a hundred meters into the air. While flying, two ancient Dao-seals appeared in Ning’s hands. One was a Light Body Seal, while the other was a Divine Movement Seal. The Xiantian ki in his body immediately rushed into the two Dao-seals, and two queer surges of power immediately flowed into Ning’s body.

“The last sword!” Ning hit the very top of the corridor, and then with two kicks, released all of his power!

He charged downwards!

Fast!

Fast!

Fast!

Relying on the force from springboarding off the ceiling, the always-terrifying speed of the [Windwing Evasion], and the force of gravity pulling him downwards, as well as the Light Body Seal and the Divine

Movement Seal, his speed became all the more terrifying! In this moment, Ning's downward charging speed had reached a heretofore unreached level, as fast as light!

Speed is power. When speed reaches a certain extreme, the power of the sword would naturally be great as well.

"The raindrop holds the meaning of Raindrop Pierces Rocks. The raindrop can become a Rain Line, a Thin Stream, a river or an ocean." As Ning charged downwards, he was using the killing stroke of the Raindrop Sutra, the 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks'. As he did so, in his mind, he couldn't help but think back to the scene of his father, Ji Yichuan, teaching him swordplay. His father had once demonstrated all nine stances of the Raindrop Sword for him, three times.

At this moment, when faced with death, Ning immediately understood.

When his father demonstrated the swordplay, he moved very slowly. He started from 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks', then moved to 'Rain Line', 'Eternally Fresh Waterflow', 'Merciless Waterflow', and then finally returned to the 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks'.

Right after that, it transformed into 'Drizzling Rain', 'Tempest Curtain', 'Water Curtain Links to Heaven', and finally returned once more to the 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks'!

After that, it transformed once more into 'Thin Streams Flow Forever', 'Watertight', before finally returning to 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks' once more!

"Raindrop Pierces Rocks is the most powerful attack, but also the weakest attack. The amazing mysteries in the [Raindrop Sutra] are inexhaustible and boundless. One can spend a lifetime training in it. Remember...Raindrop Pierces Rocks!" Yichuan had said these words. At the time, Ning had felt he understood them.

But after that night of meditating on the Dao, and these repeated life-and-death battles, Ning at this moment finally, truly understood what his father had labored to teach him.

"This is the attack."

"Raindrop...!"

Ning, charging downwards at high speed with twin swords, immediately drew away one of the stone staffs of an ugly giant, sending it smashing to one side. With his right hand, Ning pierced directly towards the ugly giant's skull! The ugly giant's stone staff had missed its downwards smashing mark; naturally, he didn't have the chance to raise it back to block, but he wasn't afraid at all. "He can't hurt me."

"...Pierces Rocks!" Ning only stared calmly at the head of that giant.

Chi!

His sword was like water, like a heavy raindrop landing upon a stone. Pa! The sword instantly pierced through that thick black barrier, driving itself deep into the head of that giant, even into the brain. The terrifyingly natural power of the blow suddenly exploded. There was nothing in the body that could block it, and so, instantly, with a 'Swish!' sound, the head exploded. It transformed into a puddle of black water, and the armor and the stone staff all fell to the ground.

“Collect.” Ning immediately collected both the armor as well as the stone staff into his own storage magic treasure.

The pool of black water quickly reformed into the strange giant again, who called out in shock, “How is that possible? How is that possible?”

“Nothing is impossible.” Ning was now completely confident. He understood that these nine strange giants were no longer able to stop him.

“Die.”

Ning only had to control his Waterflame Lotus to quickly once more smash the strange giant into a puddle of black water. Without the protection of the Dao Battle-Armor, the giant wasn’t able to resist the crushing force of the Waterflame Lotus at all.

“The eight of you can die as well now.” Ning transformed into a blur, once more flashing forth like lightning.

All nine Dao Battle-Armors had to be linked together for them to be able to assist each other. Right now, the strange giants weren’t able to combine their strength at all. Now, when facing Ning’s vastly improved swordplay...they became unable to flee. All of them were killed, one after the other, and even their Dao Battle-Armor and stone staves were stored by Ning into his storage treasure.

“Die.”

Ning stood there unmoving, only relying on the Solar and Lunar Divine Tattoos to control six Waterflame Lotuses, repeatedly grinding down on those nine giants, smashing them time and time again into black water. Even though they reformed, Ning would simply grind them apart again.

After being crushed just a few times, the nine strange giants completely collapsed and weren’t able to reform.

The fog at the two ends of the corridor slowly faded away.

“Father.” Ning gently murmured.

Although that night he had spent meditating on the Dao resulted in Ning gaining a hint of true understanding regarding fire, water, and wind, understanding was nothing more than understanding; whether or not it could be used was another matter. In the past, Ning only understood the Waterflame Lotus, this single technique, which was meant for self-protection, not for attacking.

But just now, relying on the guidance his father had given him to be his foundation, in that moment between life and death, he had finally understood the true meaning of the [Raindrop Sutra] – the True Meaning of the Raindrop!

In terms of levels of understanding...

The level above ‘one with the world’ was that of the ‘True Meaning’!

“The True Meaning of the Raindrop originates from the ‘raindrop’.” Ning sighed in amazement. “A single raindrop is the source. When there are many raindrops, it can transform into a line and become the

'Rain Line'. When there are even more raindrops, naturally it can begin to flow and have life force, which is the 'Eternally Fresh Waterflow'. And once the waves swell to an unblockable tide, that becomes 'Merciless Waterflow'. But when the countless raindrops all come together, you can still describe it as just a single raindrop."

"Raindrop Pierces Rocks is the most powerful attack of the Raindrop Sutra, but also its weakest." Ning laughed. "That is true for defense as well. Drizzling Rain, Tempest Curtain, Water Curtain Links to Heaven...they all become Raindrop Pierces Rocks in the end. Thin Streams Flow Forever and Watertight also become Raindrop Pierces Rocks."

"The True Meaning of the Raindrop."

"An unending circle." Ning sighed in amazement. "No wonder Father said that one can spend a lifetime on the Raindrop Sutra."

Without question, his father had clearly understood the True Meaning of the Raindrop long ago.

One truly could spend a lifetime to understand that the [Raindrop Sutra] could infinitely circle in on itself to grow even more powerful.

Strictly speaking...

Upon gaining insight into the True Meaning of the Raindrop, the [Raindrop Sutra] itself actually became without value. Perhaps the ancestor who had originally developed the [Raindrop Sutra] himself only reached this level, the True Meaning of the Raindrop, after having in some lucky circumstance developed these nine techniques that could forever cycle without ending. But of course, it was also possible that it was some sort of powerful Fiendgod or powerful Immortal who intentionally developed this sort of inexhaustible, circular, increasingly powerful swordplay.

"Raindrop Pierces Rocks. Raindrop Pierces Rocks." Ning chanted softly, and then he shut his eyes to rest. That battle had been too exhausting.

After resting and eating to his fill, Ning's divine power recovered and then he began to perfect his True Meaning of the Raindrop. Upon having learned the True Meaning of the Raindrop...he was completely capable of using one small raindrop after another to create a thin line, then execute the 'Rain Line'. The power of this attack was far greater than that of Raindrop Pierces Rocks.

Time flowed on.

Ning ate and drank. Fortunately, prior to this, his kalestone and Ironwood Zhan's storage treasure all had some food within it. What he lacked right now was time. As time went out, if he was able to increase his [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] by another stage, if he could make his swordplay become even more powerful, then his chances of survival would naturally become greater.

Ning understood...

He had relied on the Waterflame Lotus to make it through the first trial, while in the second trial, he had been pushed to his limits, at which point he had gained insights into the True Meaning of the Raindrop, finally making that breakthrough in peril. Based on the increase in difficulty, the third trial would

definitely be very terrifying. Since Immortal Juhua had publicly called for a disciple, one could imagine how difficult this third trial must have been.

By Serpentwing Lake.

Ji Yichuan and Yuchi Snow, husband and wife, were temporarily staying here by the side of Serpentwing Lake. They were quietly waiting. Waiting for their son to return. But as one day after another passed, their hearts grew increasingly frantic, because the more time passed, the lower the chances were that their son was still alive.

“Cough, cough.” Snow was coughing.

“Don’t panic, don’t panic.” Yichuan saw that in one short month, his wife’s illness had rapidly worsened, making him feel all the more pity for her.

“I don’t want to panic either.” Snow stared at the endless waters of Serpentwing Lake, then sighed. “But Ning, Ning, he...it’s been more than a month. Why hasn’t he come back yet. Why hasn’t he come back yet!”

To Yuchi Snow, her son was her whole world.

“Our son will definitely come back. Definitely. When you were pregnant with Ning, the roots of your illness took hold. You can’t be angry, and you can’t panic. You know that. Take care of your body.” Yichuan’s heart was as frantic as a scorching fire. In his heart, he cared deeply about his son, but he was also worried about his wife by his side. Ever since that great battle they had fought on the way back from the Darknorth Seas...

Although the Whitewater Hound had braved a serious injury to take his wife away and flee, and their son had been lucky enough to survive, his wife and his son had both been injured.

“Ning.” Yichuan stared at the boundless lake waters as well. “You have to come back alive.”

Within the endless hallway.

There was no day or night within this hallway, and there was no way to clearly judge the passing of time. His appetite was enormous, but the amount of food in the kalestone wasn’t that much, nor the amount in Ironwood Zhan’s storage treasure. After all, they could hunt for food at any time in Swallow Mountain, while the kalestone had size limitations, so why put in too much?

After a month, all of the stored food was completely devoured.

“Thin Streams Flow Forever and Rain Line have all reached the ‘True Meaning of the Raindrop’ level.” Ning said to himself. One was a defensive technique, while the other was offensive. His power could be considered to have greatly advanced. “After a month of training, my divine power has grown stronger as well. This third trial is the final battle...”

Ning understood how terrifying this final trial would be.

He also understood that if he passed through it, then he would survive.

But if he failed, he would die!

“Whether it is life or it is death, it all comes down to this.”

“If I die, I will most likely go to the Netherworld Kingdom again. This time, I probably won’t be so lucky as to avoid drinking Granny Meng’s Elixir. After drinking it, I will no longer be myself.” Ning had a dim sense right now, the deep, unconscious sense which one would have when one’s soul grew powerful. His unconscious sense felt a type of incomparable terror right now, as though he was about to face an incomparably terrifying trial.

“Time to determine life or death.”

Wielding the Darknorth swords in his hands, Ning headed directly for a twisting corridor, which still had three corpses on it that hadn’t completely rotted away, as well as some magic treasures scattered on the floor.

Ning used his divine sense to pick them up, calmly binding them. Upon investigating, he found that there were thousands of magic treasures stored within a storage treasure, all of which he could easily fuse. Indeed, these were all unranked magic treasures. However...such a terrifying number still represented an incomparably astonishing wealth. Ning was very calm though. Because...if he died, what use would these be?

“You finally came.” A hoarse voice rang out, in the tongue of the humans which was spoken everywhere throughout the Grand Xia Dynasty.

Ning immediately looked over. From afar, in a place filled with black mist, a figure walked out. He had a crooked body, an oily green gaze, and his entire body was covered with black fur. He seemed to walk very slowly, but with each step, he travelled dozens of meters. “A pity. You are too weak.”

Hua!

In an instant, he appeared in front of Ning. His fan-sized, big grey palm carried a dense, deathly aura which slammed down towards Ning. This simple slap was so fast that Ning was completely unable to dodge. All he could do was relying on using his two swords to execute his ultimate defensive technique, ‘Thin Streams Flow Forever’, to block it. This ‘Thin Streams Flow Forever’ technique was currently also holding the True Meaning of the Raindrop within it.

“*Swish!*” Ning was knocked flying, and his hands instantly turned numb.

“No...” Ning wanted to tighten his grip over the Darknorth swords in his hands. If his swords were sent flying, how would he use his sword techniques? But his fingers were already completely numbed and had no feeling. *Hua! Hua!* His shattered fingers and his two Darknorth swords flew far away, smashing into the distant walls and emitting a clear ringing sound.

Every part of Ning’s skin had split open, and he was surrounded by a bloody mist. The fingers on both hands had been shattered. And so, his entire body covered by that bloody mist, he flew backwards and smashed against the distant ground.

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The Desolate Era

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 1: His Waiting

Ji Ning slammed onto the ground, but he felt the area around him was so quiet. So terrifyingly quiet.

He couldn't hear anything at all.

At the same time, his entire body had lost all feeling. The powerful life force within his Fiendgod-like body immediately got to work, and his divine power quickly began to heal everything. The torn muscles and skin on his body, and even his torn intestines and organs began to rapidly heal. Ning's ears could now hear again, and he gained feeling in his body again.

"Pain. Such pain." Ning hurriedly looked into the distance. In that moment when he had completely lost all feeling and lost all hearing, he had been terrified.

"Truly too...too terrifying." Ning stared at that distant, stooped, black-furred monster which emanated that thick, deathly aura. "That slap's speed was so fast I couldn't dodge at all. His strength in turn is far greater than the combined strength of those nine strange giants!"

The black-furred monster stood there quietly, his oily green eyes staring at Ning. He let out a hoarse sigh, which carried an endless resignation and disappointment. "I've waited for far too long, so long that I've forgotten time. All you need to do is pass the three trials without dying. You don't need to kill me. You just need to knock me down, to injure me. That's all."

With difficulty, Ning climbed to his feet, the ground stained with blood.

"Knock you down?" Ning stared at the stooped, black-furred creature.

"No. More precisely speaking, as long as you can injure me, can break my skin, can make me bleed." The black-furred creature said slowly, "I will immediately fall down. I've already calculated...the last time, when Immortal Juhua was recruiting a disciple, there were ten people who had completed the trials and appeared before me. It was so rowdy. There was one of them, a youth, who relied on an extremely powerful Dao-seal to injure me. But I just took a step back instead of falling down...if I had fallen down, there would have been no need for me to endure these countless, lonely years. Loneliness truly is terrifying, very terrifying..."

Listening to this, Ning held his breath.

The black-furred creature in front of him had actually existed in the era of Immortal Juhua. He definitely wasn't training the Immortal ways, because there was no way for an ordinary Immortal to live this long. Only by becoming a Celestial Immortal would one truly have an unlimited lifespan, but there was no way a Celestial Immortal would be like the person in front of him. Most likely, a single breath from a Celestial Immortal would disintegrate Ning.

"Master only said that anyone able to injure and knock me down would be considered to have passed this trial." The black furred creature said slowly in that hoarse voice. "Come. Injure me. As long as you can injure me, I will immediately fall down."

"Injure you?" Ning's divine will once more picked up those two Darknorth swords. His severed fingers were reattached. This black-furred monster only watched silently, not interfering.

The black-furred monster looked at Ning, then said slowly, "Come at me full force. Everyone in the countless years who has come before me, I have given them this same chance. As long as a person can injure me, I will immediately fall down. Only...none of them were able to injure me. Not one!"

Ning's heart shook.

"Only that one time, when Immortal Juhua was recruiting a disciple, did that Dao-seal injure me. Why didn't I fall down? Just that one time. I missed that opportunity and never had another one." The black-furred creature spoke very slowly. Tormented by countless years of loneliness, he no longer wished to live.

"Injure him?" Ning was frightened and shocked.

Based on what this creature which had most likely lived since the Fiendgod era was saying, only a single person had ever been able to injure him, and that was through using a Dao-seal!

"These people who made it here over the years most likely also included geniuses who had reached the level of comprehending the True Meaning of the Dao." Ning felt an unbearable pressure. "What should I do?"

"Come." The black-furred creature began to walk forward, his body hunched. "Come. Wound me."

Ning clenched his Darknorth swords.

Swoosh!

Ning suddenly charge into the air, two Dao-seals appearing in his hands. They were a Light Body Seal and a Divine Movement Seal...although he had found many Dao-seals in the storage magic treasures on the corpses, virtually all of them had lost their magic power over the passage of countless years and become useless. Only a hundred or so seals were left, amongst which the Divine Movement Seal and the Light Body Seal were the most common. The two Dao-seals immediately entered his body upon activation.

"Die." Ning charged upwards, reaching the ceiling of the corridor, then kicked off with his two legs, utilizing the Windwing Evasion as he charged down from the top of the prefecture.

At this moment, Ning had reached the limits of his speed.

"Die!"

Ning's entire strength was focused on the Darknorth sword in his right hand, stabbing directly downwards.

The stooped frame of the black-furred creature came to a halt, raising its head and staring upwards with its oily green eyes at the downwards charging Ning. He just watched, watched quietly...his eyes didn't have a hint of life, seeming very slow and numb.

"Raindrop!"

"Pierces Rocks!"

Ning charged downward, the tip of his sword transforming into a drop of water. 'Drip'. It dripped onto the fur-covered face of that black-furred creature. At this moment, both his divine power as well as his

Xiantian ki were being released at full power, and penetrative force from his high speed combined with the 'True Meaning of the Raindrop' had formed an extremely terrifying sword...

"Chi!"

The tip of the sword pierced onto the black-furred creature's face, who simply continued to look at Ning with an upraised face.

"You are still very far off." The black-furred creature sighed, his oily green eyes filled with boundless disappointment. "I need to keep waiting, keep waiting...as for you, I have no choice but to kill you."

Ning's sword had stabbed onto the black-furred creature's face, but hadn't left behind any injury. Unwilling to accept this, the Darknorth sword in his twin hands executed the 'Rain Line' and 'Moth Flies Into the Flame', two great killing strokes, stabbing at the creature's chest and face, but once again, he was unable to harm the creature at all.

"Retreat." Ning hurriedly retreated dozens of meters.

The black-furred creature's stooped form continued to make its way forward, slowly shuffling, but moving dozens of meters with each step. In terms of speed, he was actually even faster than Ning! Whether it was walking speed or attack speed, he was faster than Ning. This was the first time Ning encountered someone faster than him in this corridor of trials.

Previously, he was able to rely on his Windwing Evasion to flee and buy time for himself, but this time, he was not able to do so.

"How can his skin be as tough as this?" Ning was incomparably frantic. Although the other Fiendgod Body Refiners of the Xiantian level who had previously fallen here served as proof that harming this black-furred creature was an incomparably difficult task, Ning still felt a sense of hopelessness after he himself truly used a full force attack and yet was unable to scratch the other's face.

"Die. Stop struggling." The hoarse voice rang out, and the stooped black-furred figure appeared out of nowhere by Ning's side.

Ning's body immediately became surrounded by three fire lotus petals and three water lotus petals, swiveling slowly in opposite directions and generating a stirring force. But to this black-furred creature, the force generated by the Waterflame Lotus was like nothing more than walking within small rippling waves, unable to budge his body at all.

Ning's two hands once more executed the 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks' attack, stabbing at the black-furred creature's legs and genitalia.

"I'm unable to flee, and defense is useless. I have to find a chance of survival. Killkillkill! Perhaps the other parts of his body have a weak point that I can stab." Ning definitely wouldn't just give up.

"Stop struggling."

The black-furred creature sighed, and his fan-shaped giant palm once more slapped down towards Ning. He couldn't be bothered to take about Ning's swords, allowing them to stab on his body as he still slammed his palm down on Ning's body.

“Bang!!!”

The armor-type magic treasure Ning was wearing instantly split apart, and the giant palm, filled with that dense deathly aura, went straight through Ning’s chest, and then Ning himself was sent flying far, far away.

Bang.

Ning lay there on the floor, a huge hole in his chest. His body had nearly been torn in half. Ning lay there, completely unable to move. Such a huge hole suddenly appearing in his chest had caused his entire body to be paralyzed. He had to wait for the life force in his body to begin to regenerate it, but that needed time. He would most likely need half a minute before he would be able to recover his ability to move again.

But that distant, black-furred creature was already walking over again. Most likely, in just another second, he would be in front of Ning.

“Die.” The stooped figure of that black-furred creature ambled forward.

“No!” Ning’s heart was filled with incomparable ardor, ardor for life. He had died before, and had even gone to the Netherworld Kingdom and had seen Grandma Meng’s Elixir. So he all the more desired life...he didn’t want to go drink Grandma Meng’s Elixir. “What should I do? How can I survive? I can’t even move...right now, all I have left is my divine will. Can it be that I can rely on my divine will to wrap up the Darknorth swords to pierce into the black-furred creature.”

Ning felt hopeless.

Ning knew very well the level of strength the divine will was capable of. When he had killed Ironwood Zhan, he had investigated. Divine will was capable of wrapping up trees, boulders, with a force that was roughly equivalent to a late-stage Xiantian Fiendgod Body Refiner! The power of will made physical was very powerful and very strong. But what good would it be right now?

—————

“I also have them.” Ning, seeing the black-furred creature draw closer, suddenly thought of something, letting out a heroic cry. “All out, now!”

Huahuahua....

In the area around Ning, one magic treasure after another appeared out of nowhere in a dense cluster. Sabers, swords, spears...thousands of magic treasures hovered there. These magic treasures were all controlled by his divine will, and the blade tips, sword tips, and spear tips were all pointed towards that black-furred creature.

“All of my Xiantian Ki! Let’s go!” Ning had gone completely mad. The Xiantian ki in his dantian fully entered every single magic treasure.

These were all unranked magic treasures that had been left behind by deceased Xiantian lifeforms over the course of countless years. Ning had been able to easily bind them. All of these were usable by Xiantian experts, but generally speaking, Xiantian experts would wield them with their hands. Ning, because he had divine will, was able to use his divine will to wield the magic treasures.

It was as though thousands of hands had suddenly snatched up every single magic treasure, aiming them at the black-furred creature.

All of his Xiantian ki had entered every single magic treasure, causing Ning's meridians to be torn. Generally speaking, a Xiantian lifeform could battle for a very long time, but Ning had used all of his Xiantian ki to be dispersed amongst thousands of magic treasures, causing the amount to drop.

"Kill!"

Ning's badly damaged, completely immobile body lay there as he howled heroically with a savage look on his face.

His heroic howl was filled with incomparable ardor for life!

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Countless sword flashes, saber flashes, spear flashes, and more all shot out, instantly turning the entire corridor into a wall of dazzling white color. All of them were aimed with incomparable accuracy, stabbing out at the same time at the body of the black-furred creature, who had already closed his eyes and spread his arms out.

"Bang...."

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 2: The Fifth Master

Thousands of magic treasures shot out like rays of sword light, blade light, spear light, and more. They were like thousands of Xiantian Ki Refiners attacking in unison! But Ji Ning did this all by himself. If Ning hadn't reached the 'divine will' level of the soul, there would have been no way for him to control so many magic treasures so accurately.

If Ning hadn't gained such astonishing regenerative abilities at the Xiantian level as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, he wouldn't have been able to so wildly have all of his ki explode outwards; the only thing that would have happened was that his arteries and meridians would completely shatter, resulting in him becoming a cripple.

"Swish...."

The black-furred creature didn't block at all, nor did he dodge at all. He held his arms wide and closed his eyes. He was waiting...hoping...

The corridor was a cacophony of sound.

The black-furred creature was like a mountain collapsing. With a rumbling sound, he fell over!

"Did I wound him?" Ning stared with incomparable hope.

Right now, his body was ravaged, his meridians and arteries were ripped, and not a single drop of his Xiantian ki was remaining.

"I must have...I must have..." Ning stared hopefully. From afar, the fallen black-furred creature suddenly sat up, lowering his head to look at his chest. At his chest, his black fur had been torn apart, revealing

faintly red flesh and deep green-colored blood. A thin line of blood oozed out from the wound, and then the wound rapidly healed, leaving behind only that line of deep green blood.

Ning's eyes instantly turned round, and he stared at the traces of deep green blood on the chest of that black-furred creature.

Success!

He had succeeded!

He would live!

"Father. Mother. I've survived." Ning's Fiendgod-like body was quickly recovering. Although he was unable to move, Ning forgot his pain; rather, he felt wild joy at having overcome that tribulation.

"Wounded me. You wounded me." From afar, the black-furred creature was first stunned, and then he raised his head, letting out a wild, heroic howl. "Aooooooooooooooooooooo!"

This heroic howl contained incomparable madness, sadness, and a sense of release.

Ning managed to sit up as well now, and he stared at the distant, howling black-furred creature...the loneliness and torment which could be heard in this great howl, which had been suppressed for trillions of years, caused even Ning's heart to feel a sour bitterness.

After a long time, the sound ceased.

The black-furred creature stood up and look at Ning. In his hoarse voice, he said, "Thank you, my new master! Hurry up and bind this Immortal mansion. We will meet again."

Hua!

Immediately afterwards, the black-furred creature disappeared into thin air.

Ning quickly was able to stand up as well. The previous wounds to his meridians had been completely healed now, and he collected the thousands of magic treasures that lay scattered on the floor, storing them into his storage treasure.

"I didn't expect that in the end, I would rely on these unranked magic treasures to pass the third trial." Ning let out a long sigh. A Fiendgod Body Refiner at the Xiantian level was able to use thousands of magic treasures in a single combined strike...he had never even heard of such a thing, so prior to this, he hadn't even considered the possibility.

This was because this sort of action would only be possible for a freakishly talented person like Ning, who clearly was only a Xiantian level, and yet whose soul was already on the level of having 'divine will'.

Ning had been visualizing the [Nuwa Painting] since he was an infant. The [Nuwa Painting] was one of the best visualization techniques even in the Celestial Realm or the Netherworld Kingdom, much less in the mortal realms... the likes of the Ji clan had never even heard of 'visualization techniques'. In fact, Ning believed that even in the entire vast area controlled by the Grand Xia Dynasty, the best visualization techniques couldn't necessarily compare to the [Nuwa Painting].

“Success.”

“I successfully passed this tribulation.” Ning stared at his surroundings. He saw the corpses and skeletons in the distance on the ground, and felt all the more emotional. “The dead became these skeletons. The survivor, according to what the black-furred creature said...I should be the new master.”

Ning was in no hurry to advance. Instead, he sat down in the lotus position and rested.

It took a full day for the Xiantian ki in his body to return to normal. Only then did Ning rise and continue to advance. When walking through the twisting corridors, Ning didn’t move very quickly. Instead, he carefully inspected this ancient Immortal estate.

After a long time...

“Um?” Ning saw that not far away, there was an exit, outside of which a pillar could faintly be seen.

“I’ve arrived?” Ning quickly walked out of the exit, and as he did, he had to suck in a cold breath. This was an incomparably vast palace, at least thousands of meters high. Compared to this vast palace, the nearby hundreds of meters tall corridors appeared to be extremely small.

In the front of the palace, there was an enormous praying mat, which was also three hundred meters in diameter.

And in the back of the palace...

There were also hundreds of enormous prayer mats scattered about as well.

“Such an enormous prayer mat?” Ning’s heart was filled with many questions. “Prayer mats are meant to be sat on, but this three hundred meter long prayer mat...what sort of a giant would sit atop this? And it seems that in addition to the giant who would sit at the top of the hall, there would also be hundreds of other giants sitting in front of him.

“The Immortal estate of Immortal Juhua?” Ning shook his head.

If the Immortal was a human, his body should be sized like a normal humans.

“This doesn’t make sense.” Ning hurriedly walked about, carefully inspecting this palace. The entire palace was very old and plain. Aside from those hundreds of prayer mats, there were no other decorations at all. One plain stone pillar after another supported the palace hall, and on each of the two sides of the palace hall were corridors, some three hundred meters tall, others three thousand meters tall.

There were three of the corridors that were three thousand meters tall, while only two of the corridors that were three hundred meters tall.

“I can’t go in?” Ning discovered that he wasn’t able to enter any of the corridors, including the one he had just come from. It was as though there was an invisible wall blocking them.

“The palace door!” Ning turned to look at the imposing palace door. Outside the palace door...there was an area completely enveloped in mist that one couldn’t see through at all.

Ning stood there, in this incomparably vast palace. He was as small as an ant. He then walked over to one of the prayer mats and sat down. He himself was only 1.7 meters in height, but he was seated on a three hundred meter long prayer mat. Ning felt that this was quite amusing.

“It really is comfortable.”

While sitting on the prayer mat, Ning could feel his mind growing more alert, and even his thoughts became much more rapid and nimble.

“How strange. I clearly have made it past the three trials and arrived at this palace hall. But right now, I’m not able to enter any of the corridors of the palace halls. I’m trapped here.” Ning said to himself. “The original master of this Aquatic Manor, having left behind those three trials, should have made some preparations for the successor who passed those trials, right?”

For example, the black-furred creature was teleported to him, then teleported away.

He himself had been teleported here as well...clearly, someone should be controlling this Aquatic Manor.

Right at this moment, as Ning was sitting on the prayer mat and pondering, suddenly, from one of the three thousand meter tall corridors off to the side of the palace hall, an old black bull walked over.

As though sensing it, Ning turned his head to look. As he did, he saw an old black bull that was many meters in length slowly walk in. The old bull’s eyes were filled with curiosity and liveliness as it carefully inspected Ning.

“Senior, might I ask who you are?” Ning immediately spoke out.

Most likely every single creature which appeared within this Aquatic Manor was extraordinary.

“Me?” The old black bull shook its head. “Don’t call me ‘Senior’. I’m nothing more than the spirit of a magic treasure.”

“Spirit of a magic treasure?” Ning was astonished. “Magic treasures have spirits?”

He’d never heard of such a thing.

“I’m the magic treasure which Immortal Juhua always kept by his side.” The old black bull sighed. “Child, don’t think too much about it. Even if I brought my ‘body’ in front of you, given your power, there is no way you would be able to bind me.”

Ning nodded. He understood this. As a Xiantian, he was only capable of binding some unranked magic treasures. Even ranked treasures had high and low level ones. The more powerful the magic treasure, the more difficult binding it was!

“Might I ask about the status of the master of this Immortal estate?” Ning hurriedly asked.

“Dead. All dead.” The old black bull shook its head. “Dead for I don’t even know how many years.”

Ning nodded to himself. It was as he had thought.

“It has been too long, far too long. Over these slow, countless ages, I’ve teleported in quite a few Xiantian-level Fiendgod Body Refiners, as well as Zifu Disciples.” The old black bull sighed.

“Unfortunately, not a single one was able to succeed. At most, they would make it to the third trial, where they would all die. I didn’t expect that you, child, who clearly don’t have sufficiently dense divine power, would be able to succeed. This can be considered a miracle.”

“That third trial in particular.”

“Your soul has actually reached such a stage of power. However, the technique which you used is completely impractical.” The old black bull said disdainfully. “Thousands of magic treasures, aimed in a single direction. All the enemy has to do is dodge, and then you would have to immediately control thousands of magic treasures to change direction and aim at him again...it will be very hard for you to actually strike your enemy.”

Ning nodded. “True.”

“However, that golem was driven to nearly the point of insanity by the torment of countless years of loneliness, and so he actively welcomed the attack.” The old black bull said. “And so, you succeeded.”

“Golem?” Ning said in surprise. “It was a golem?”

He had seen golems before. When he had been training with a sword, his father had procured a training golem for him. But that black-furred creature just now...it had blood, had flesh, and was even capable of speech. How could it be a golem?

“Child, how much do you know? There are many different types of golems. That one just now was just a golem which had a soul inserted into it.” The old black bull said. “After implanting a soul into it, it gains intelligence and is even capable of displaying the ‘one with the world’ sage, or even more profound sword techniques, saber techniques, boxing techniques, etc. Naturally, its power would multiply manifold.”

Ning now understood.

“As the soul trapped within the golem who is forever incapable of being reincarnated, it will be endlessly tormented.” The old black bull said. “However, your own level of enlightenment is not low. That lotus flower you created earlier was based on the fact that your body has the Divine Solar Tattoo and the Divine Lunar Tattoo. For you to have these two great divine tattoos means that you most likely are training in the most powerful Fiendgod Body Refining technique of the Fiendgod era, the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. Given your density of divine power, I expect you have only reached the fourth stage!”

Ning hurriedly said, “Senior, your judgment is wise.”

“The [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] is a very powerful technique.” The old black bull sighed. “You were able to break through to the Xiantian level, but you are only at the fourth stage. Most likely, you broke through just recently. You should be only ten or so years old as well.”

“Eleven.” Ning didn’t try to hide it.

“An eleven year old Xiantian who trains in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. And at such a young age, you were able to reach the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’ in swordplay.” The old black bull shook its head. “A genius like this is someone whom even the Grand Xia Dynasty would expend countless efforts in cultivating and training. There’s no way they would be willing to let someone like you take tutelage under the auspices of Immortal Juhua.”

Ning lifted an eyebrows.

“Actually, just by reaching the sixth stage, given the amount of divine power you would have, and your understanding of the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’, you would have been able to succeed in the third trial. However, for you to succeed in the way you have is still quite impressive. Your soul is powerful, and your level of enlightenment is high. Your future accomplishments will be limitless.” The old black bull sighed. “I still have to congratulate you. You have become the fifth master of this place.”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 3: To Make a Copy

“The fifth master?” Ji Ning was astonished. “Me?”

The old black bull had a hint of laughter in his eyes. He slowly ambled over, his body seeming vaguely illusory. He wasn’t a material creature, after all; just the spirit of a magic treasure.

“Of course it is you.” The old black bull said.

“That’s not what I meant. What I meant was...I’m only the fifth master?” Ning hurriedly asked. “Can it be that Immortal Juhua wasn’t the first one?”

He had previously discovered the letter on that Godbanian tree bark, and had hypothesized that after Immortal Juhua died, he shouldn’t have given this Immortal estate to anyone else.

“Immortal Juhua was the third master of this Immortal estate.” The old black bull said.

“Who was the fourth?” Ning asked.

The old black bull’s eyes held a hint of wistful memory in them. He slowly said, “In those days, Immortal Juhua’s fame was widespread. He was someone who stood at the very forefront of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. A Loose Immortal capable of living for millions of years is an absolute miracle. The Three Disasters and Nine Tribulations which everyone who embarks on the Immortal path must endure...each tribulation is fiercer than the last. He had lived for simply too long, and the difficulty of the tribulations had reached an inconceivable level. Even Celestial Immortals probably wouldn’t be able to survive them. The longer he lived, the more the people in the Grand Xia Dynasty became aware of how formidable he was.”

“Immortal Juhua knew that his time was limited, and so he wanted to accept a disciple, and thus he spread the word...that he would only accept a Fiendgod Body Refiner who was at least a Xiantian lifeform but no more than a Zifu Disciple. Of the major clans of the Grand Xia Dynasty, the ones who were in the know all sent their disciples to attempt the trials of that corridor.

“Two corridors. One for Xiantian lifeforms, one for Zifu Disciples.”

“One young person after another died. In the end, finally, a Zifu Disciple named ‘Rampart’ successfully passed the three trials of his corridor, and thus Rampart became the fourth master of this Immortal estate.

Ning nodded.

Immortal Juhua was the third.

Rampart was the fourth.

“Unfortunately.” The old black bull shook his head. “In the face of the endless tribulations, Immortal Juhua died. Not long after Immortal Juhua died...Rampart, who was merely at the ‘Wanxiang Adept’ level died as well. As for how he died and where he died, that’s unclear. Ever since Rampart died, this Immortal estate has not had an owner.”

Ning nodded, then said questioningly, “Rampart didn’t carry the Immortal estate with him?”

“Carry it with him?” The old black bull said in a low voice. “He was unable to even completely bind this Immortal estate. How could he have carried it with him?”

“He, a venerable Wanxiang Adept, was unable to bind it?” Ning asked.

The old black bull said, “Child, don’t underestimate this Immortal estate. This Immortal estate has an extraordinary background and history, and binding it is extremely hard. You should know that the more powerful a magic treasure is, the harder it is to bind it. This Immortal estate is actually a ‘dwelling’ type magic treasure...only by becoming a Primal will one become just barely capable of binding it and carrying it.”

“A Primal can only just barely bind it; he wouldn’t be able to completely control this Immortal estate, which has some secret areas within that he still wouldn’t be able to enter. Only by becoming an Earthly Immortal or a Loose Immortal will one truly be in control of this Immortal estate.”

Ning understood. It made sense. If one was able to easily bind a magic treasure which was capable of teleporting people, that would be bizarre.

“Child, do you now understand how extraordinary this Immortal estate is?” The old black bull said complacently.

“Elder, you can address me as Ji Ning.” Ning said.

“Child Ji Ning.” The old black bull stepped onto one of the giant prayer mats on the ground. “Take a look at this prayer mat. The prayer mats are all hundreds of meters wide. Have you considered why?”

Ning pondered, then said, “Elder, when I first arrived within this palace hall, I was very puzzled as well. There is no need for an Immortal estate to have such enormous prayer mats. I actually wondered...if this Immortal estate was previously lived in by a race of giants or some other races.”

“Although Immortal Juhua was only a Loose Immortal, he survived for millions of years before dying.” The old black bull sighed. “He is the only Loose Immortal I know of who lived for so long! Why was Immortal Juhua so powerful, and why could he last for so long before dying? It was because of this...this Immortal estate!”

“This Immortal estate’s age is beyond reckoning. According to the guesses of Immortal Juhua, this should have been the dwelling of an extremely powerful Fiendgod, which is why such enormous prayer mats, beds, and corridors were built.” The old black bull said. “Immortal Juhua had, when he was young, made it past three trials before becoming the third master of this place.”

“Immortal Juhua had to pass three trials as well?” Ning was stunned.

The old black bull said, “The three trials...was the rule set down by the first master of this Immortal estate! That first master should have been an extremely powerful Fiendgod. Judging from the way the giant prayer mats in this hall are laid out, that Fiendgod should have been sat on the one up front, expounding on the Dao, while below many other Fiendgods would listen. Haha, these are all the affairs of the past. The Fiendgod Era ended long ago.”

The old black bull and Ning chatted for quite a long while.

Ning finally couldn’t help but ask, “As the fifth master of this Immortal estate, what sort of benefits do I get?”

The old black bull blinked.

“Immortal Juhua was a Loose Immortal who had lived for millions of years. He should have left some things behind.” Ning asked.

The old black bull remained silent.

“You...”

“Alas!” The old black bull finally let out a sigh. “The third master and the fourth master both died, and they died too long ago. Immortal Juhua had originally given Rampart some treasures, but Rampart died outside. Countless years have passed, and you can’t possibly get anything from Rampart. Immortal Juhua did indeed leave some magic treasures within this Immortal estate, but you won’t be able to get them.”

“Why not?” Ning asked. “Aren’t I the master of this Immortal estate now?”

The old black bull shook his head. “Imagine that you are the owner of a storage-type magic treasure, but you aren’t able to bind it. Will you be able to take out the treasures within it? This Immortal estate is a dwelling-type magic treasure. If you don’t bind it, there are many areas you cannot enter. Right now, you are only able to be here in the main palace hall. The other areas are off limits to you.”

“I can only enter this main hall?” Ning was astonished.

“You should have discovered that you are only able to be in this main hall and that you are unable to enter the other areas of this Immortal estate.” The old black bull said. “First become a Zifu Disciple; that will allow you to bind the control talisman. When you bind the control talisman, there will be many benefits to you. You will be able to enter many of the areas within the Immortal estate, and you’ll also be able to voluntarily enter the Immortal estate from outside; for example, at Serpentwing Lake, you’ll be able to enter the Immortal estate as you please.”

Pa!

Out of nowhere, a dark gray talisman appeared, landing on the floor with a clattering sound atop a prayer mat.

“This is the control talisman.” The old black bull said. “Only the master is permitted to have the control talisman. Hurry up and take it. Once you reach the Zifu Disciple level, you’ll be able to bind it. After binding it, come back to the Immortal estate. Right now, you aren’t able to enter any place at all, and you won’t be able to get anything.”

Ning collected this talisman.

The talisman was very rough. Atop it, there was a complicated, ancient-looking character; ‘Left’! Just a single character. Although Ning had never learned the meaning of this character, upon seeing it, he naturally understood what it meant.

“Control talisman?” Ning stored it into his storage-type magic treasure.

“Alright. You’ve taken the control talisman, and I’ve told you everything. You can leave now.” The old black bull said. “I’ll send you off now and teleport you back to that island in Serpentwing Lake.”

Ning hurriedly called out, “Stop!”

The old black bull looked towards Ning. “Is there something else?”

“Just like that...I’m supposed to leave?” Ning couldn’t help but say. “I just barely survived, and I’m supposed to leave with just a control talisman?”

The old black bull blinked twice. “Whose fault is it that the previous owner has already died? If he was alive, he could probably guide you or help you. But I’m just the spirit of a magic treasure...I don’t have any magic treasures or curios of my own. As for you yourself, you train in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique which was even better than the technique which Immortal Juhua trained it. What can I give you? Oh! You probably don’t have any visualization techniques, right?”

“visualization techniques?” Ning was startled.

The Lord of Cui Palace had given him the [Nuwa Painting] visualization technique!

“visualization techniques are capable of refining the soul and strengthening it.” The old black bull said hurriedly. “This is something only the most powerful of clans have access to. I have a visualization technique in my memory. I’ll transmit it to you.”

“Transmit?” Ning was curious.

“Take out a quill and some ink.” The old black bull urged.

Flipping his hand, Ning took out a quill and some ink, as well as a large piece of beast skin, placing them to one side.

The old black bull looked at the quill, which began to hover in the air. “I am the spirit of a magic treasure who has trained for countless years, but my ‘divine will’ is most likely still weaker than yours. Still,

grabbing a quill isn't too difficult." Controlling the quill, he began to draw a painting onto that glossy beast skin parchment. Soon, a picture of a Buddha that had a compassionate look on his face began to appear on the parchment.

This Buddha had the sun and the moon behind his back, and radiated boundless light.

Just by looking at it, Ning felt slightly affected.

"What do you think?" The old black bull casually controlled the quill and tossed it to one side, then said delightedly, "This is a painting of the true form of Buddha, and the Shining Sun Moon Buddha at that! This [Inner Visualization of the Shining Sun-Moon Buddha] is the visualization technique which Immortal Juhua had previously used. I always was by his side, looking at this painting of Buddha, and thus I naturally memorized it. Although my painting isn't as good as the original, as long as you often look at this painting of Buddha...you will definitely strengthen your soul.

Ning was puzzled. "Inner visualization of Buddha?"

"To become a master of the Great Dao, aside from your body, you must understand the myriad mysteries of the Great Dao." The old black bull said.

Ning only felt resigned. Compared with the [Nuwa Painting]...it wasn't even comparable. His [Nuwa Painting] had been imprinted by the Lord of Cui Palace into his very soul and his memory. Naturally, he could sense it much more clearly. This old bull had simply drawn out an image of Buddha based on his own memory.

"Can it be that you already have a visualization technique?" The old black bull noticed that Ning wasn't very excited, and he couldn't help but nod. "Makes sense. Your soul is so powerful. You should already have a visualization technique. Right..."

The old black bull pondered for a while.

Ning just waited.

This old bull was the spirit of an extremely powerful magic treasure who had followed Immortal Juhua for countless years. He should know many things.

"I remember now. Before this, you controlled thousands of magic treasures, right? I have a secret sword formation technique that is suitable for you to learn." The old black bull suddenly said hurriedly. "In the past, I watched Immortal Juhua kill a powerful enemy who controlled a large number of flying swords in a formation to attack his enemies. His sword formation was thus recorded down by Immortal Juhua, who carefully looked through it. Although I only saw it once, I completely memorized it. I'll make a copy for you."

Ning hurriedly took out a large number of beastskin parchments.

The old black bull once again controlled the quill and began to write with it.

At the very top of the beastskin parchment were four words: [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 4: Lesser Thousand Swords Formation

Ji Ning watched off to the side, not daring to disturb the old black bull as he wrote. On the skin parchment, one line of words after another swiftly appeared, along with the occasional formation diagram.

Soon, the pages of skin parchment were completely filled.

“All done.”

The old black bull tossed the quill aside, saying delightedly, “Child Ji Ning, you can be considered to be exceptionally talented. A Xiantian who actually has such an astonishing soul! Only with a sufficiently powerful soul is one suited for utilizing this ‘Lesser Thousand Swords Formation’. However, the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] also requires flying sword type magic treasures, and it has exceptionally high requirements with regards to the amount of magic treasures.

“I have plenty of these unranked magic treasures.” Ning laughed.

The old black bull shook his head. “Once you reach the Zifu Disciple level, those unranked magic treasures will no longer be usable. At that time, what you will need is ranked magic treasures, and generally speaking, you will need a large number of flying sword type magic treasures in order to utilize this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] technique’s power.”

“A large number of ranked magic treasures?” Ning was stunned. “How many?”

“The [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] at this highest level requires 729 flying swords.” The old black bull said. “Even if you are just using the weakest types of ranked magic treasures, you still need 729 of them...the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] requirements regarding magic treasures are very high. The more flying swords, the better. The more you have, the greater the power of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] technique.”

Ning was stupefied.

Over seven hundred ranked magic treasures, and all sword type? He wasn’t sure if the entire Five Prefectures of the Ji clan combined would be able to buy so many, even if they sold off all their assets.

“As your power increases, the number of flying swords you can use will naturally increase.” The old black bull said. “Starting from Mortal-level magic treasures to Earth-level magic treasures, to Heaven-level magic treasures, to Immortal-level magic treasures...”

“I, I...” Ning felt an unbearable pressure. He hurriedly said, “It wouldn’t have been hard for Immortal Juhua to procure and leave behind a few hundred flying swords here in this Immortal estate prior to his death, right? And Immortal Juhua killed that powerful enemy, who used the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] right?”

The old black bull shook his head. “That great enemy was known as the Thousand Swords Immortal! Immortal Juhua had to expend enormous amounts of effort in order to kill him. Although he had acquired those flying sword magic treasures after killing him, it was a waste to just keep them without using them. Thus, Immortal Juhua immediately traded them away for a large number of precious materials, which he then forged me out of! Thus, if you want to acquire thousands of flying swords from Immortal Juhua, it is impossible. Truly powerful Immortals will usually only carry a few magic treasures

which they are particularly skilled in. After killing an enemy, they will immediately use the enemy's tools to upgrade their own magic treasures! They won't just leave them there to be wasted."

"Understood." Ning was somewhat despondent.

"Don't think too much of it. Don't think that just because you received this Immortal estate that you'll instantly fly to the heavens." The old black bull said. "There are countless relic sites left from the Fiendgod Era, but how many people are able to truly stand at the very top of the Grand Xia Dynasty? The fourth master, Rampart, only reached the Wanxiang Adept level before dying. Don't end up like him."

The old black bull continued, "My creation was thanks to this Thousand Swords Immortal. Thus, I paid especial attention to this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. I didn't just read it once; I also carefully pondered it. I'll explain to you."

Ning immediately began to listen attentively.

"The [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] uses nine flying sword type magic treasures to form the base of a formation! You need nine formation bases...in order to form a sword formation. This is the most basic sword formation, which requires eighty one flying sword type magic treasures. This is the first level [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] attack."

"If you are able to control a second set of eighty one flying swords and have these two sword formations cooperate...your power will instantly multiple! This is the second level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]! You will need 162 flying swords!"

"If you are able to control 243 flying swords to have three sword formations join forces, your power will multiple once more. This is the third level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!"

"Four sword formations will again multiply the power, and is known as the fourth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]."

"And so on and so forth."

"In the end, with nine sword formations combined, you will need exactly 729 flying swords, which will be the ninth level of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. The power is so great...as to be inconceivable! But of course, given your current soul strength, even if you are able to control many unranked flying swords, you are far from being able to reach this level for now."

Ning nodded as though understanding.

"For example, if you were to become a Wanxiang Adept, you would be able to use unranked magic treasures to set up nine sword formations! But if you were to use ranked magic treasures, most likely you wouldn't even be able to set up two or three sword formations." The old black bull said, "The more powerful a magic treasure is, the more mental energy you use up in controlling them. Naturally, it won't be easy to control them. But this also means that even after becoming a Celestial Immortal, you can still use this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. However, by then, perhaps you would have acquired an even better sword formation. But of course, this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...should be good enough for you to use for a thousand years."

“The most important secret of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] lies in the ‘Lesser Thousand Seal Lines’...”

The old black bull continued to explain some of the mysteries.

A while later, Ning had finished reading the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] for the first time. He couldn't help but sigh in astonishment. Compared to the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], that ‘Yin-Yang Twin Energy Formation’ which Ironwood Zhan had used was absolute trash.

Ning immediately and quickly withdrew nine sword-shaped magic treasures from his storage treasure. Because these were all unranked magic treasures, generally speaking they were meant to be held in the hand when engaging in battle; there were thus some differences between them and flying swords.

“Lesser Thousand Seal Lines.” Ning tested drawing the lines out on the floor with his finger.

Given Ning's control of his body, he was naturally able to completely duplicate the seal lines.

The old black bull, by his side, shook his head. “No. It isn't the appearance that needs to be the same; the inner meaning needs to be the same. When you draw the ‘Lesser Thousand Seal Lines’, you need to faintly activate the power of the heavens and the earth. Only then will the seal lines be complete.”

“Alright.” Ning continued to draw.

Because his copying ability was quite accurate, and given that Ning had already reached the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’ level, and also had a faint hint of understanding regarding the ‘Dao’...after drawing it 312 times, he drew a seal line which was capable of utilizing a hint of the power of the world.

“Right.” The old black bull nodded. “Your level of comprehension is very high, your soul is powerful, and you are very sensitive towards the heavens and the earth. It is only normal that you learn quickly...remember, the Lesser Thousand Seal Lines is the base for the entire [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. You must not reveal it. Once the Lesser Thousand Seal Lines are revealed, some of the larger tribes will definitely be able to develop this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] just based on the seal lines.”

Ning nodded. “I understand.”

“Then you can begin.” The old black bull watched from one side.

Ning let himself calm down, and then he withdrew a small basin from within his storage treasure. He placed his finger within the small basin, and from within his fingernail, one drop of blood after another began to well up and flow out. Soon, he had a small basin that was half-full of blood. Watching to the side, the old black bull shook his head and sighed emotionally, “Fiendgod Body Refiners have extremely powerful life force. They can be chopped into many pieces without dying, while Ki Refiners will die to a blow to the heart. If a Ki Refiner was to lose this much blood, their face would turn pale. For you, though, most likely your body replenished the blood as soon as you let it out.”

Ning didn't say anything. Instead, he picked up a sword-type magic treasure, which suddenly shrank in size greatly. Ning's finger, stained with blood, began to draw atop the sword.

In the blink of an eye, a single Lesser Thousand Seal Line appeared on the sword. A bloody light flashed, and quickly, the seal line completely merged into the sword.

“Success.” The old black bull nodded.

Ning then picked up yet another sword-type treasure. Once he had mastered the Lesser Thousand Seal Lines, he virtually never made a mistake. During this attempt at the trials, he had acquired thousands of magic treasures, with swords being extremely common. He had a full thousand sword-type magic treasures. Ning straightforwardly drew onto 729 of the sword-type magic treasures.

“Formation base!” Ning sat there in the lotus position, and imposed his will.

Shua! Shua! Shua! Shua! Shua! Shua!

Immediately, nine swords swung into the air around Ning, slowly revolving. But there was something missing. Ning frowned.

“Remember. The power of the sword formation comes from attuning to the heavens and the earth.” The old black bull said to one side.

After the amount of time it took to brew tea.

The nine swords hovering around Ning were faintly carrying within them a type of invisible intent. It was as though the nine swords actually formed a single entity. In that moment, the nine swords were positioned in a very perfect manner with respect to each other.

“The formation base is complete. Formation, arise!” Ning willed it, and then 72 more swords suddenly lifted up, all of them in groups of nine.

The first level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] required 81 swords to be formed into a formation.

“Huahuahua...”

81 sword-type magic treasures circled and hovered around Ning, while Ning himself closed his eyes as he controlled them. Soon, with the Lesser Thousand Seal Lines in each sword as the base, the 81 sword-type magic treasures began to emit a hazy glow while countless sword glows quickly converged around Ning.

A constantly fluctuating sword light hovered there in the air next to Ning.

Ning finally opened his eyes and stared at the hovering sword light next to him. This sword light was the Xiantian ki of his which had been transformed and compressed by the magic formation of the 81 sword-type magic treasures. The amount of power had already caused a qualitative change, and the strength was astonishing.

“Not too bad.” Ning willed it. Another 81 swords rose into the air.

The old black bull stood there, watching. He couldn't help but sigh in amazement at the strength of Ning's soul. This wasn't as simple as what he had done earlier, just stupidly and wildly controlling

thousands of magic treasures to go forward in one direction. He had to carefully control every single flying sword...causing them to form a perfect, complete sword formation which was continuously able to summon the power of the heavens and the earth.

“He mastered the third level as well. In terms of strength alone, the power of his sword light right now isn’t any longer than his earlier attack of thousands of magic treasures.” The old black bull sighed in astonishment. The power of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] multiplied several times over with each increase in level.

Hundreds of sword-type magic treasures swiveled around Ning, with the surface of each sword having a hint of light on it. In front of Ning, the solidified, devouring sword light grew even more powerful.

Yet another 81 swords entered the mix, with the level of difficulty in controlling them quickly increased as well.

Ning’s forehead began to be covered in sweat.

Rumble...

All of the swords were hovering with a faint light.

“Success.” The old black bull was stunned, incomparably stunned. “He is actually able to utilize the fifth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!”

Papapapapapa...405 swords clattered and fell to the floor. His forehead covered in sweat, Ning opened his eyes and murmured to himself, “The fifth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] is too arduous. My head hurts terribly. Normally, in battle, I should limit myself to the fourth level. Using the fourth level is much easier.”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 5: Ancient Rites

The old black bull looked at Ji Ning, head covered in sweat, and said in praise, “Formidable, formidable. Ji Ning, my child, you are so young but you are already able to utilize the fifth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. Compared to you, that Rampart is nothing worth mentioning at all! I didn’t expect that after the Immortal estate has waited for so many years, an unpolished jade like you would appear!”

Ning murmured to himself, ‘unpolished jade’? He himself had the experiences of his previous life, the [Nuwa Painting], and had been training hard since he was young. All these factors combined were what led to the old black bull praising him as being a piece of ‘unpolished jade’.

“Senior, right now, I find it difficult to utilize the fifth level.” Ning repeatedly shook his head. “I’m only able to use the fourth level freely.”

“Using it freely is more important.” The old black bull sighed. “Have you discovered that although the fourth level of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] only allows you to control three hundred or so flying swords, in terms of power, it is already greater than when you wildly controlled thousands of magic treasures!”

Ning revealed a hint of amazement. “Even more powerful than the combined attack of thousands of swords from earlier? Although I was able to feel that the sword light I created was done so in a free manner and that it held great power, I didn’t know exactly how much power it had.”

The old black bull said, “The fourth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] will allow you to kill most peak Xiantian lifeforms as easily as you wish.”

Ning was delighted upon hearing this.

“Senior.” Ning hurriedly asked, “Dare I ask, how is my current power? How does it compare to a Zifu Disciple?”

“Right now, you have two primary types of battle tactics. The first relies on your Fiendgod body and your close-combat sword techniques.” The old black bull said. “Your swordplay already carries within it a hint of the True Meaning of the Dao. Most Xiantian lifeforms aren’t at such a high level of comprehension; most peak Xiantian lifeforms are at the ‘one with the world’ stage. Just based on this alone, you are at an advantage compared to most peak Xiantian lifeforms! But of course, I’m just talking about ‘ordinary’ Xiantian lifeforms. If your enemy is as much of a freak as you are, whose swordplay is not inferior to you, then it would be hard to say who would win.”

Ning nodded.

He understood. For example, his father, Ji Yichuan. His swordplay was most likely still inferior to that of his father; after all, Father had long ago reached the peak Xiantian level. Ning naturally wouldn’t be a match for his father.

“If you relied on your [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...” The old black bull continued, “Given your powerful Fiendgod body, if you use hundreds of flying swords to form into a [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], the power will indeed be very formidable. In terms of strength, it will be far beyond that of peak Xiantian lifeforms. It should have reached the power level of most early Zifu Disciples.”

“Just early Zifu?” Ning felt that his improvement should be larger than this.

The old black bull shook his head. “Don’t underestimate Zifu Disciples. Once Zifu Disciples internally establish their Zifu, the ‘Violet Palace’, their bodies will begin to generate elemental power! Even simple attacks such as punches and kicks will be far greater than that of the Xiantian level. These are two fundamentally different levels! In addition, more importantly, Zifu Disciples are capable of using ranked magic treasures.”

“Ranked magic treasures are extremely powerful. Zifu Disciples, when using them, are far more powerful than you Xiantians can imagine. The difference between a peak Xiantian and a Zifu Disciple is like that of an infant and an adult.” The old black bull sighed in praise.

Ning understood.

Right. From the Xiantian level to the Zifu level was a fundamental change. It allowed one to be able to use ranked magic treasures. It was much like how a Xiantian lifeform could kill a peak Houtian expert as easily as chopping vegetables. Zifu Disciples could kill Xiantian lifeforms just as easily.

“Remember.” The old black bull shook his head. “No matter what, do not underestimate Zifu Disciples. Every single Zifu Disciple has bizarre, strange abilities. Some are skilled at formations, others are skilled at venomous pests, still others at controlling souls or creating golems, or even sorcery...there’s no way to describe them in ‘general’. If you run into someone who is a bad matchup for you, you will definitely die.”

“The weak can overcome the strong.”

“If a bad matchup happens, an early Zifu expert can slay a late Zifu expert.” The old black bull sighed. “The path of Immortality includes everything in existence. There are too many techniques...a Zifu Disciple might be weak, but if he had raised millions of terrifying venomous insects, even a Wanxiang Adept might be devoured alive!”

Ning swallowed a cold breath of air.

“But it’s rare.” The old black bull said hurriedly. “It’s quite rare for someone of a lower rank to kill someone of a higher rank. For example, someone like you who has such an incredibly powerful soul as well as hundreds of flying swords, and the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...many factors combined to give you this sort of combat potential. I’m just warning you not to underestimate any opponent. Even Xiantian lifeforms.”

Ning nodded gently. “Understood.”

Upon reaching the Zifu Disciple level in particular, no one was easy to deal with.

In his heart, Ning was still quite joyful. On this trip to the underground estate, he had acquired a killing attack; the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!

“Child Ji Ning.” The old black bull continued, “Before this, when I watched you attempt the trials, I discovered that the power of your swords is fairly average. Can it be that you aren’t aware of the ‘Fiendgod Bloodforging’ technique?”

“Fiendgod Bloodforging technique?” Ning blinked. “What’s that?”

The old black bull couldn’t help but say, “In the Fiendgod Era, virtually all people with a bit of power or clans of a decent size would know about this. This is because every single Fiendgod knew it, and this was something which every single Fiendgod had to learn. I saw that you are clearly a Fiendgod Body Refiner, but you it seemed as though you didn’t know the Bloodforging technique. Naturally, that made me curious.”

“Senior, please instruct me.” Ning asked hurriedly.

Having an old person at home was like having a treasure.

This sort of old man who had lived since the Fiendgod era knew so many things.

“Fiendgods are not the same as we humans.” The old black bull said. “They don’t train in Ki, and are unable to use magic treasures. However, they need weapons as well. As their strength increased in power, however, how could they find a suitable weapon for them? Thus...the great powers amongst the Fiendgods developed the Fiendgod Bloodforging technique!”

“First, find a weapon, and then utilize the complicated Rites of Bloodforging! After the bloodforging is completed the weapon will be able to absorb various auras, such as a baleful aura, an evil aura, a killing aura, and other auras. The more enemies you kill, the more powerful the enemies you kill, the more the weapon will naturally strengthen. It can change in size and weight as you please.”

“This sort of weapon is often referred to as a ‘divine weapon’, a ‘demonic weapon’, or a ‘slaying weapon’.” The old black bull said. “As the strength of the master increases, and as the master kills more and more powerful opponents, the strength of the weapon will increase as well, to the point where in the Fiendgod era, some divine weapons and demonic weapons were even more powerful than Immortal-level magic treasures.”

Ning’s eyes were shining.

Right. The heavens were always fair. The Fiendgods were completely unable to use magic weapons, but thus they had some techniques to make weapons for themselves. So it was through absorbing baleful auras and other auras; causing their divine weapons to increase in power through slaughter.

“Senior, please teach me.” Ning said hurriedly.

“Since I’ve mentioned this to you, of course I will teach you.” The old black bull said. “The Rites of Bloodforging are very complicated. Listen carefully.”

The old black bull stood there, expounding on the process of the Rites of Bloodforging, while at the same time drawing down some diagrams on occasion. Ning just listened and memorized.

Why was it known as the Rites of Bloodforging?

The primary required ingredient was the blood of Fiendgods. For a human Fiendgod Body Refiner, only the blood of one who had naturally developed divine tattoos while reaching the Xiantian level would suffice, as only then would they have been reborn into the body of a Fiendgod. Only such a person would be able to use the Fiendgod Bloodforging technique. Some of the lower-class Fiendgod Body Refiners were unable to use this bloodforging technique.

“Huahuahua...” Ning took out a gourd. This gourd was originally used to store wine. It didn’t look large, but it was able to contain ten thousand kilograms of wine. Ning poured out all of the remaining wine in the gourd, not leaving a single drop behind, and then placed his finger into the gourd.

Blood dripped out from his finger, flowing into the gourd.

A long time later.

“A thousand kilograms of blood is enough.” The old black bull said to the side. “This bloodforging technique is only usable by Fiendgods. Normal Ki Refiners who lose this much blood will definitely die.”

Ning sat there in the lotus position. Immediately after having released the blood, the powerful life force in his body naturally began to regenerate his blood. The only thing which was used up was divine power. When the divine power in Ning’s body was reduced to just half, roughly a thousand kilograms of blood had entered the gourd.

“There are seven steps to the rites. You must be sincere.” The old black bull warned.

Ning respectfully knelt down and kowtowed three times, and then stood up before kneeling down and kowtowing three more times. He did this eight times, in all eight directions!

“Hua...” Ning suddenly overturned the gourd in his hand. From within the gourd flowed out a large amount of fresh blood. As soon as it flowed out, it was wrapped up by Ning’s divine will and quickly scattered in an area of roughly two hundred and fifty meters around him. The countless droplets of blood formed into a massive diagram, a diagram of a head with disheveled hair.

The diagram completed.

Boom! Instantly, a bloody aura that was visible to the naked eye began to shine.

“The descendant kneels in supplication to the Ancestor God.” Ning called out in a loud voice.

The first step of the bloodforging rites – Begging the Ancestor God!

The complicated Rites of Bloodforging continued for nearly half a day. The bloody light in the area had already formed into a bizarre character. According to what the old black bull had said...this sort of character was known as Fiendgod characters! It was a type of writing which the heavens had naturally given birth to. Although he had never learned it before, the first time he had seen the characters, he understood it.

The meaning of this Fiendgod character was...‘KILL’!

“Huahuahua...” Three Darknorth swords appeared in mid-air. As soon as they appeared, they began to hover there. The weapons which Ning was planning to use the Rites of Bloodforging on were these Darknorth swords! Because, according to what the old black bull had said, although the Fiendgod Bloodforging technique didn’t have very high standards necessary towards weapons, the better the base material was, the better the results would be. Those unranked magic treasures were simply too inferior.

Based on the judgement of that old black bull, the Darknorth swords should have previously been Heaven-level magic treasures. Although the runes atop them had been destroyed, the only thing that matter for bloodforging was the physical material components. As for the runes, those were meaningless.

“Hua!” “Hua!” “Hua!”

The ‘Kill’ character formed by the nearby blood began to shoot shadows out from itself, entering the three swords. That enormous ‘Kill’ character hovering in mid-air began to dim, and then disappeared. The entire hall once more returned to its usual calm.

Ning let out a long breath.

“Senior.” Ning couldn’t help but say. “Just then, I sensed an awesome presence that seemed even higher than that of the ‘Dao’...” He had meditated on the Dao before, and had gained a hint of an insight into the aura of the Dao. However, just now, when undergoing the Rites of Bloodforging, that ancient, natural aura that had emanated forth made him feel as though he had touched a powerful, mighty existence which was even more ancient than the Dao.

The old black bull sighed. “I didn’t dare to say a word during the Rites of Bloodforging. I was completely stunned. Take a look and see how your weapon seems.”

With a wave of his hand, the three Darknorth swords landed in Ning's grasp. Picking one up with his divine will, he sliced it against his arm. Chi! The skin on his arm, seemingly as tough as leather, began to emit sparks, then finally cracked apart into a wound.

"Much sharper." Ning was shocked.

"Your Darknorth swords were made from good materials." The old black bull said. "Right now, your close combat abilities have increased dramatically. Most peak Xiantian experts won't be a match for you. In close combat, you are only one or two levels lower in power than when using the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. However, you must understand that you are training in the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique. Your close combat strength will increase at a monstrous rate. For example, when you train to the sixth stage, your close combat power should completely eclipse the power of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]! Once you then learn a close-combat type 'divine ability', it will become effortless for you to do battle against those at a higher level."

Ning's eyes lit up. "Elder, do you know any divine abilities?"

"Divine abilities? Those are the secrets of the great powers amongst Fiendgods, which are not taught to outsiders." The old black bull shook his head. "Immortal Juhua only knew a single divine ability; the 'Heavenly Transformation' technique. Unfortunately, I never asked him about it. Alright...given your potential, in the future, you will definitely have the chance to learn a 'divine ability'. Once you do, it will be normal for you to fight those at a higher level. That is the power of a true Fiendgod!"

Ning nodded.

He understood. As an Fiendgod Body Refiner, he had a good foundation. In a few years, he would reach the sixth stage. His [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] would also strengthen alongside his soul, and he was very talented. The only problem was that the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] had very high requirements with regards to magic treasures. When he became a Zifu Disciple, he would have to get hundreds of ranked magic treasures...his head hurt just thinking about it.

"Enough. You can go back now." The old black bull said.

"Thank you so much, Senior." Ning naturally had packed away the scrolls of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] and the [Inner Visualization of the Shining Sun-Moon Buddha]. Although he himself didn't need the visualization technique for himself, he could still leave it for his parents or the Ji clan.

"You can go." The old black bull said.

Hua!

Ning only felt an enormous illusory grizzly head appear, swallowing him within its maw. Spacetime around him once more distorted. He understood that he was about to return to Serpentwing Lake.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 4: Underwater Estate Chapter 6: Ji Ning – Entering Lake, Battling Serpentwing

Ji Ning only felt spacetime changing, and then everything calmed down.

"Huh?" Ning looked at the dark tunnel in the lair. This was the place he had been teleported from. He couldn't help but laugh.

This event truly had been something he had barely survived.

However, in the end, he had lived, and his power was much greater than before as well.

“Next time I go in, I’ll need to have first bound this control talisman.” Ning stretched out his hand, and a roughly made talisman appeared within it, with the Fiendgod character for ‘Right’ embedded on it. Ning had tested binding it, but unfortunately, his Xiantian ki was completely unable to enter it. It seemed as though he absolutely had to wait to become a Zifu Disciple.

“Right?” Ning murmured. “Why is there a ‘Right’ character on this talisman? I wonder what sort of history it has.”

And then, Ning pushed it to the back of his mind as he stored the talisman again. With a leap, he moved out from the corridor as agilely and as quickly as a gust of wind.

Serpentwing Lake, within a crude room. Ji Yichuan and his wife were living here.

Yuchi Snow was currently quietly seated at the side of the lake. In her hand, she held a cup of boiling hot water, which she was slowly drinking.

“Snow, Snow.” Suddenly, a cry of excitement rang out from within the room. Yuchi Snow immediately turned her head to look. The normally glacier-like Yichuan now had his face covered with excitement and joy as he rushed out. On his chest, some drops of water could be seen, with the faint scent of wine.

Yuchi Snow, seeing the way her man was acting, had a sense that she knew what had happened. “What is it?”

“I can sense it.” Yichuan said hurriedly. “I can sense the jade sword. It is completely unharmed! Previously, Ning definitely must have suddenly entered a secret, hidden area, a small dimension or a small world, or perhaps an ancient formation. He has already come out of that hidden area alive.”

Encountering a relic site was a matter of luck, but it also represented an enormous risk! Ning hadn’t left for over a month, and so the two of them had been growing increasingly concerned and increasingly panicked.

Yuchi Snow closed her eyes. Two flows of tears came out, and she murmured to herself, “Thank the heavens and thank the earth. Thank the heavens and thank the earth.”

“He is currently in the center of Serpentwing Lake, most likely on that island.” Yichuan said hurriedly.

“Let’s go see him.” Snow stood up.

“Right.” It had been a long time since Yichuan had lost his composure like this. Even when he had learned that his son had broken through to the Xiantian level, he hadn’t been this excited. Immediately, he took his wife by the hand and began running across the surface of the lake as though it were solid land, transforming into a streak of blue mist as he hurried afar.

The Azure Firebird couldn’t always be here waiting. After all, that was the spirit-beast of Ji Redflower! In recent days, Yichuan and Snow had been living here, while the Azure Firebird had gone home.

Suddenly...

“Diremonster Serpentwing, I, Ji Ning, have come again! You still won’t come out?!” A loud roar spread in every direction, including into the ears of Yichuan and his wife, still walking across the surface of the lake.

“Ning, he...” Yuchi Snow couldn’t help but reveal a hint of a laugh on her face. “As soon as he leaves that hidden relic site, he immediately once again challenges that Serpentwing.”

Yichuan nodded. “Ji Ning relied on the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] to become a Xiantian, and so he wasn’t that far off from Serpentwing to begin with in power. This time, within that hidden relic site, perhaps he had some certain gains...and now that I can sense his location, there’s no need for any concern.”

“Right.” Snow nodded as well.

The two continued to move forward.

Soon...

“Look!” Yichuan saw from afar, in the distance, the waves of the lake were parted as a youngster was walking directly towards the bottom of the lake. “That kid has actually parted the waters and is heading directly towards the bottom of the lake.”

“He’s going to the bottom of the lake?” Snow was shocked.

Yichuan shook his head. “Don’t be worried. You watched Ning as he grew up. Can it be that you don’t know his temperament? If he wasn’t confident, would he go down?”

“Right.” Snow nodded.

“Let’s go over, but we’ll stay on the surface of the lake.” Yichuan said. “We’ll monitor the situation down below at all times. As soon as anything goes wrong, I will immediately go down.”

“Diremonster Serpentwing, I, Ji Ning, have come again! You still won’t come out?!” After calling out while at the surface of the lake, Ning waited for a long time but Serpentwing still did not come out. Ning immediately made the decision to use his power to control fire and water to take command over the water around him in Serpentwing Lake.

Huahuahua....

The waters of the lake were parted by an invisible hand, and were parted, revealing a corridor into the water.

Ning walked directly towards the bottom of the lake. The deeper he went, the more powerful the water pressure became. Ning directly controlled a cylindrical underwater ‘corridor’ roughly ten meters across as he walked down through the corridor.

“That’s the one named Ji Ning.”

“It’s him.”

The aquatic lesser monsters within the lake stared from afar as a human walked down through a corridor. All of them once more went to make the report.

Serpentwing's nest.

The Diremonster, Serpentwing, had already transformed into human form, and was seated on a chair. He was forcibly suppressing his rage. "This Ji Ning came over a month ago to challenge me, and now he is challenging me again! The lake is so enormous. If some Xiantian lifeforms are hidden nearby, who would know? I know you have a trap. How could I let myself fall for it?"

"Great king, great king."

"Great king."

Three lesser aquatic monsters came charging over.

"What is it?" Serpentwing growled.

Of the three lesser aquatic monsters, the leader, a prawn monster, hurriedly reported, "Great king, that Ji Ning suddenly parted the waters and has begun entering the depths of the lake."

"Entering the lake?" Serpentwing suddenly stood up, then immediately said, "When he parted the waters, what method did he use?"

"We didn't see him use any Xiantian Ki, nor did we see anything special. The waters simply naturally parted." That prawn monster said hurriedly.

Serpentwing said in astonishment, "No wonder this Ji Ning dared to challenge me in such a way. So he was capable of controlling water as soon as his Fiendgod Body Refining technique reached the Xiantian level. I wonder which type of technique he trains it. Who cares. When I went to the Western Prefecture City, he was only at Houtian level. Now that he has reached the Xiantian level, he is still only at most an early Xiantian!"

"He actually dares to enter the lake!" The long, narrow eyes of Serpentwing were flashing with a ferocious light. "Hell has no doors, but you insist on barging in. I, Serpentwing, will naturally grant you your wish and send you to the depths of the eighteenth level of Hell."

Serpentwing immediately charged out of his nest.

If they were on the surface of the lake, Serpentwing would be afraid of an ambush. But the bottom of the lake was his territory. Humans who entered it wouldn't be able to use a tenth of their power; even if Yichuan had entered, he would only at most be able to wound Serpentwing.

"Ji Ning is actually as stupid as this? It makes sense. He's just an eleven year old child. His power is great, and so he thinks he is a peerless talent, and he has no regard for anyone. You killed my boy Redtip. I will definitely kill you." Serpentwing, upon leaving his nest, immediately transformed into his enormous winged serpent form, swimming at high speed.

"So it really is him!"

Serpentwing suddenly came to a halt. Staring into the distance, he saw that from afar, Ning was already very close to the bottom of the lake, and a cylindrical downwards corridor was constantly being created, with a human youth slowly walking downwards.

“He really did come to the bottom of the lake.” Serpentwing’s red eyes were filled with a murderous light. “He really is asking for death.”

Hua...

He quickly swam over.

Ning was wielding the Darknorth sword in his hand, striding on the water as he walked towards the bottom of Serpentwing Lake. Wherever he walked past, the waters of the lake naturally parted to form a corridor.

“Hrm?” Ning immediately saw that enormous black shadow draw close to him.

“Serpentwing!” Ning immediately recognized him. As the enormous black shadow drew near, that ferocious head of Serpentwing’s grew clearer as well. Those scarlet red eyes were staring angrily at Ning.

“Ji Ning!” Serpentwing let out a furious howl, his voice ringing out. “You killed my son. Today, I will make you pay for it with your life!”

Ji Ning roared back, “Old monster, you have slaughtered humans in the thousands. You caused the death of Spring Grass, and today, I will personally execute you!”

The original cause of so many things!

So many people had died. Spring Grass had died. All of this came from the enmity between himself and Serpentwing.

“Hahaha, you will execute me? Little child, you truly don’t know your own limits. You actually dare to come into the depths of the water...once you are within the water, you won’t be able to return to the surface of the lake until your next life!” Serpentwing was supremely confident. “Your father wounded me multiple times, but I will let him share the pain of losing a child with me!”

As soon as his words came to an end, Serpentwing suddenly scurried forward, charging straight towards the corridor which Ning had created.

“Hua...” First, a serpentine tail pierced into the watery corridor, smashing straight towards Ning. Serpentwing’s current speed and power...was immeasurably greater than the Azure Skysnake’s.

“He lives up to being a peak Xiantian-level Diremonster.” Ning was startled. In terms of speed alone, the late Xiantian-level Serpentwing was actually somewhat weaker than the Azure Skysnake, but in strength he was definitely above the Azure Skysnake. But now, even in terms of his weakness, speed, Serpentwing was superior to the Azure Skysnake.

As for his strong point, power, Serpentwing had reached an awe-inducing level.

“Old monster, prepare for death!” Ning immediately utilized his Windwing Evasion, transforming into blurred smoke that was even faster than the whipping attack of the serpentine tail of Serpentwing, immediately leaping onto the body of the snake.

“Roaaaaaaaaaaaar.” Serpentwing turned his head, opening his foul maw and biting down towards Ning.

Ning, wielding his Darknorth swords in his hands, leapt up and directly stabbed towards Serpentwing's serpentine head.