

Desolate 691

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 25: The Summoning Call

Yellow Emperor Xuan Yuan was utterly besides himself with rage. This was his imperial palace. The Seamless Gate dared to launch a frontal attack against it? As soon as he found out that he was unable to immediately break through the barrier of violet light, he manifested a divine sword that glowed with dazzling golden light. This was the legendary Xuanyuan sword! As the sword struck out, the entire imperial palace began to glow with countless formations. The natural energy of Heaven and Earth began to furiously gather here, causing the skies to turn dark.

“Everwood...f*ck off!” Yellow Emperor Xuan Yuan exploded forth with an utterly astonishing aura. Seemingly limitless amounts of power were being concentrated within the Xuanyuan sword in his hands, and he delivered a downwards chop!

Rumble...

The violet light parted before the blow like the waves of the sea...but then it came together to trap and crush the sword-light, repeatedly grinding away at it. If you strike at water with a blade, the water will continue to flow. Although the sword-light was able to temporarily split the violet light apart, more of the violet light would come forth and merge together anew.

“Xuan Yuan, although you are formidable in commanding armies, in a true one-on-one fight, you are still far from being a match for me,” Keeper Everwood said calmly. His gaze was actually focused on the distant form of Subhuti...because he would sense that Daofather Subhuti was transforming.

“You’ve hidden yourself away for countless years. Subhuti...I’m quite curious to see how strong you are.” Keeper Everwood’s voice rang out next by Subhuti’s ears.

Subhuti was incredibly mysterious. Even during the war that ended the Primordial Era, he had only intervened a few times to save people. He hadn’t truly taken part in the war. He possessed the most formidable fleeing abilities within the Nuwa Alliance, and he was absolutely, unswervingly loyal to them. Why was it that such a steadfast major power had refused to take part in the war? The Seamless Gate’s guess...was that Subhuti was most likely meant to be the escape path for the Nuwa Alliance!

If the Pangu Chaosworld had lost the war and was in true danger of annihilation, Subhuti probably would’ve intervened to lead them all away.

The Lord of All Fiends was the escape path for the Seamless Gate.

Subhuti was quite likely to be the escape path for the Nuwa Alliance.

Thus, the major powers of the Seamless Gate had never dared to underestimate Subhuti. No one knew exactly how strong he was.

“Ji Ning...is my disciple.” Subhuti’s beard fluttered in the wind, his entire body emanating a heart-stopping aura of might. His ancient hands suddenly increased explosively in size, becoming like two massive stormclouds as he clawed forward with them.

Whap! Whap! Whap! Whap!

Even before his heaven-covering palms actually struck the dense violet light, the violet light began to split apart. The palms wildly smashed downwards towards Keeper Everwood, and the closer they moved towards him, the more powerfully the violet light resisted. However, Subhuti's hands were completely covered with dark black light, and they were incomparably sharp. They tore through all obstacles as they grabbed towards the midair Keeper Everwood.

"I knew that you'd be able to break through this protective light of mine." Keeper Everwood's unearthly aura of violet light was nothing more than a divine protective light that surrounded him. Xuan Yuan had used his full power, but had still been unable to break through the barrier of light. In terms of defense, Keeper Everwood was the undisputed number one expert of the Seamless Gate, after all. Most likely, on the side of the Nuwa Alliance, only Lord Tathagata the Buddha could compare with him in terms of defensive strength.

Lord Buddha focused on a few exquisite skills. Keeper Everwood, by contrast, dabbled a bit in everything. He was skilled in almost everything! In formations, he was probably close to being a match for even Fuxi. In close combat, he was top-notch. In golem-making and pill-forging, he was quite the expert as well. Although he wasn't the best in the Three Realms, he was definitely in the top three! This made Keeper Everwood extremely difficult to deal with.

"Careful, Subhuti." Keeper Everwood stretched out the wooden ruler in his hand and pointed.

Whoosh. The wooden ruler instantly expanded to become thirty thousand meters long, and it smashed downwards towards the pair of massive, heaven-covering hands.

Rumble....Heaven and Earth both began to tremble.

"You live up to the stories. Show me all of your power, Subhuti." Keeper Everwood looked towards Subhuti.

"The Seamless Gate has truly used its full power to try and kill my disciple." Subhuti was frantic. He had immediately used one of his killer attacks, but was still unable to do anything to his foes.

"Suiren!"

"Tathagata!"

"Three Purities!"

"Hurry up and come here!" Subhuti's will covered the entire Three Realms as he urged them to make haste.

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Within the distant Mount Innerheart of the Crescent major world.

Snoooooore. Snoooooore. Snoooooore. A skinny old man was snoring contentedly as he slept, a fan placed against his chest.

"Crazy Ji, hurry up and come to the Deerchaser world to save your junior apprentice-brother!"

A voice suddenly echoed within the old man's mind.

The skinny elder was stunned. “The Deerchaser world is the base of Yellow Emperor Xuan Yuan. Master is there as well...but he’s actually been forced to call for reinforcements?” Crazy Ji no longer looked as relaxed as he normally did. His face was now solemn, and a spatial whirlpool appeared in front of him. Crazy Ji took a single step forward, entering the spatial whirlpool.

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On other side of Mount Innerheart.

“Whew! Down you go.”

A woodcutter, dressed in cloth robes and straw shoes, was striking with his hatchet against a large tree, slowly hacking away at it.

“Woodcutter, your junior apprentice-brother is in danger at the Deerchaser major world. The Seamless Gate has attacked, and even I cannot stop them. You can decide for yourself whether or not you wish to come.” Subhuti’s voice rang out in the woodcutter’s mind.

Whoooooosh. A large spatial whirlpool appeared before the woodcutter as well.

The woodcutter no longer seemed as laid back as he normally was. Instead, he hefted his hatchet over his shoulders, staring calmly at the spatial whirlpool tunnel before him. He was the most low-key figure of all of Mount Innerheart. In fact, he remained at the base of the mountain, never going to meet with Subhuti. However, he was indisputably the most powerful disciple of Mount Innerheart.

No one knew what his story was. In fact, no one even knew his real name. The only thing Ning and the others knew...was that their senior brother was known as the ‘woodcutter’.

“Should I go or not? Ji Ning, that little kid who learned archery from me all those years ago?” The woodcutter hefted his hatchet, a hint of amusement playing at the corners of his lips. “They want to kill my junior apprentice-brother...but they haven’t asked me if that’s acceptable.”

Whoosh. Hatchet over his shoulders, the woodcutter stepped into the spatial whirlpool tunnel.

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The major world of Flower-Fruit Mountain.

Flower-Fruit Mountain was an awe-inspiringly famous place back during the Primordial Era. Surprisingly, in the Three Realms era it had become quite a low-key locale. However, the leader of the monsters of Flower-Fruit Mountain was a legendary figure.

He was born from a divine stone which Mother Nuwa had used to repair the heavens, and he emerged from it filled with endless battle-lust!

He battled against Heaven and battled against Earth. He was born to do battle!

Subhuti had taught him, while the Buddhists had tempered him. This truly changed him. Once, a single displeasing word could cause this absolutely savage king to lift up his staff and deliver a ferocious beatdown, but now he had become very low-key. Every day, he spent his time on Flower-Fruit Mountain

with his minions, happily eating Immortal peaches and drinking fine wine. When he wanted to sleep, he would use the natural world as his bed and fall asleep on the spot.

He was like a piece of jade that had originally been filled with imperfections but had now been perfectly carved and polished, revealing all of its glorious luster.

“Wukong, your junior apprentice-brother has encountered grave danger in the Deerchaser world. The Seamless Gate seeks to kill him, and I, your master, am unable to withstand them,” Subhuti sent to him.

“Master.”

The hairy monkey had previously been slouched casually upon a rock, watching as a pair of ants battled. When Subhuti’s voice rang out in his mind, he was momentarily startled.

“They want to kill my junior apprentice-brother?” The hairy monkey rose to his feet, his entire body instantly becoming covered with a dazzling, sparkling golden armor. A long staff appeared in his hands as well.

“Kiddos, your king is going to make a short trip.” His voice echoed in the air above Flower-Fruit Mountain. As for the monkey king himself, he had already pierced through the Void to move towards the Deerchaser world.

Subhuti had instantly summoned the various major powers of the Nuwa Alliance. The Daofathers of Mount Innerheart rarely joined forces, but this time Subhuti summoned all of them.

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The imperial palace of the Deerchaser world.

As Subhuti and Xuan Yuan battled against Keeper Everwood, Ji Ning’s Primaltwin suddenly appeared.

“Eh?” Swordfather Darklight landed on the ground. As he did, he suddenly saw that a black lightning serpent suddenly flew from the slain true body of Ji Ning into a large seal.

“An estate-world treasure?” Swordfather Darklight instantly recognized what that large seal was. Right at this moment, a figure suddenly emerged from the large seal. It was the ape-shaped Envoy of All Things, its entire body blazing with dark red flames. The Envoy’s face, however, had changed. It now had Ji Ning’s face, and Ji Ning’s eyes were filled with murder as he stared at the skinny old man.

“I was overconfident.”

“I was overconfident, and I trusted too much in Master and the others. I forgot that my situation is no longer the same as it was before. In the past, when I was by Master’s side, he could completely shield me from all dangers, blocking out the wind and the rain. There was no need for me to worry about anything. However, I now have the power of a top-tier Daofather, and when I control the Envoy I’m actually even more powerful. I’m probably very close to even Master I power. At a time like this, anyone capable of posing a threat to me is someone that not even Master would necessarily be able to save me from.” Ning had become completely clear-minded now.

“You’ve actually managed to bind the Envoy already? Quite fast. Hmph.” Swordfather Darklight laughed coldly, “A pity that it’s useless.”

Swordfather Darklight stood there in the distance, staring towards Ning.

Bang!

Suddenly, that mysterious, unfathomable streak of black light once more appeared. If last time, the black light was in the shape of a fan and possessed incomparably dominating power that completely tore Ning's divine body apart, this time the black light was like an unending flow of water. It was extremely gentle as it swept towards Ning, seeking to swirl around him and bind him. So long as it could bind him, then it would be able to capture him, much like how Ning himself had bound and captured the Envoy of All Things.

"Presumptuous." Ning's Envoy wielded a pair of divine swords in its hands, and its right hand suddenly moved.

Whoosh!

Sword-light lit up.

Ning was using his Daofather-level energy to control the strength of the Envoy of All Things. He used its terrifying, tremendous power to unleash his fastest sword-strike. Sword-light lit up, and it was as though a bolt of lightning had appeared in the black skies! His sword struck even faster than thunder, and the powerful, penetrative force of this blow pierced straight into the flowing, watery-like stream of black sword-light.

Clangclangclangclang...

An extremely fast series of consecutive clanging sounds could be heard with over a thousand sounds ringing out in an instant.

Countless thin sword-shaped streams of light had appeared in the skies.

Swordfather Darklight's sword-light was formed from countless finger-sized swords, each of which was covered with a flowing layer of black light. The countless slender swords, in the face of Ning's single dazzling sword-strike, were actually blasted apart by the force of the collision.

This sword-stance was the Blood Drop stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art!

"How can this be?!" Swordfather Darklight was shocked. Even amongst top-tier Daofathers, he was ranked quite highly. He probably wasn't much weaker than Patriarch Subhuti. As he saw it, an Emyrean God in command of the Envoy could perhaps just barely be a match for an ordinary top-tier Daofather. Ji Ning should be no match for him at all.

But in reality...he was actually at a disadvantage in this fight!

"He's actually suppressed me." Swordfather Darklight was shocked. However, he knew how important this mission was and so he didn't waste any time marveling at what had just happened. He immediately sent a mental shout, "Shadowless, hurry up and attack! Are you just going to watch as Ji Ning escapes?"

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 26: No Harming My Junior Apprentice-Brother!

As soon as the black-robed Ji Ning had attacked through his Envoy, he had immediately suppressed Darklight. The power he had just displayed stunned everyone. This definitely wasn't the power of an ordinary top-tier Daofather; it was a level of power that was extremely close to that of the Three Sovereigns or the leaders of Buddhism and Daoism. As for Daofather Shadowless? He was hidden in the shadows, but had no time to think about this question.

"We have to get rid of him." Daofather Shadowless launched his attack.

"Eh?" As the Envoy-Ning struck out with his sword, suppressing Swordfather Darklight, he immediately saw a pitch-black figure appear in front of him. This pitch-black figure instantly split apart into six figures, each of who wielded a bladed whip that could be used like a flexible sword.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The six black figures lashed out with their whips, filling the skies with them and completely sealing off the area around Ning. They were like vipers, coiling around Ning and prepared to strike at any moment.

"Daofather Shadowless." Ning could immediately guess at who this was. "The Seamless Gate really thinks quite highly of me. They actually sent their two best assassins to deal with me. The first was Swordfather Darklight, who is skilled in long-distance attacks; the second is Daofather Shadowless, who is skilled in close-range attacks. When the two of them join forces, there aren't many in the Three Realms who can escape them."

Daofather Shadowless was a dual refiner, both a Daofather and a True God. He was far more powerful than Daoist Threelives had been, and was a terrifying figure who was every bit a match for the likes of Subhuti and Old Man Yuan.

There were many differences between Swordfather Darklight and Daofather Shadowless. Swordfather Darklight used long-range treasures to attack, allowing him to deliver an instant, death-dealing sword-stroke that was able to unleash explosive power. However, in sustained battle, he was a bit weaker.

Daofather Shadowless, however, was a master of close combat! He trained in an extremely bizarre divine ability that was known as the [Shadowless Fiend Sutra]. Only a few of the absolute most top-tier major powers of the Seamless Gate knew this technique, but the only one who had been able to truly master it was Daofather Shadowless! This divine ability was similar to the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods], but of course there were differences between them.

When one used this divine ability, one would be able to instantly manifest six mighty clones! Each of the six clones would have the same level of power as the original body, and they were like shadows. There was no way to kill a shadow! When Daofather Shadowless activated this technique, the six clones created would all look like mere shadows, with just one of them containing his true body within it!

However, distinguishing the true body from the five false ones was incredibly difficult, and Daofather Shadowless was also able to easily alternate amongst his six mighty clones.

This divine ability allowed his power to increase dramatically, and also made him virtually unkillable! Given that Daofather Shadowless had the power of a top-tier Daofather to begin with, after he had mastered this technique he had naturally become comparable to Subhuti and Old Man Yuan.

“Break, break, break!” Ji Ning was a peerless Sword Immortal, and his Envoy lashed out with a pair of divine swords with frenzied abandon.

Even though Daofather Shadowless was occasionally struck, each time it turned out that it was only one of his ‘shadows’ that was hit. Daofather Shadowless continued to strike with his frenzied whip-blocks, forcing Ning to keep an extremely tight defense. If Ning made the slightest of mistakes, the whips would most likely be able to wrap themselves around him.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Riiiiip!

The Envoy-Ning battled against Daofather Shadowless in close combat, the two furious exchanging blows.

One was completely invulnerable to weapons and reputed to be the number one sword-user of the Three Realms.

The other had six indestructible bodies that could attack simultaneously, and also had the long-distance support of Swordfather Darklight. The two could be said to make a perfect pairing.

Ning had been completely shut down.

“What should I do? My attacks are useless against Daofather Shadowless, but his whip strikes have completely tied me down here, restricting my movements. And that damnable Swordfather Darklight...he keeps on interfering with me as well. There’s nothing I can do; my only choice is to try to buy time. The more time passes, the more major powers of the Nuwa Alliance will get here,” Ning mused to himself.

Although all this took time to describe, these major powers actually exchanged blows lightning-fast against each other.

Moments after Ning’s true body had been ambushed and assassinated, his Primaltwin had emerged with the Envoy of All Things and launched an attack, resulting in Swordfather Darklight and Daofather Shadowless joining forces.

“Right at this moment...”

“EVERWOOD!!” An enraged roar rang out.

A towering figure clad in just a fur loincloth had appeared in the skies, and the space around him had been completely torn apart. Utterly terrifying waves of flames were swirling around him, emanating an utterly horrifying aura of power. But if one was able to stare deep into the flames...one would unconsciously feel warmth in the heart, as though hope could be seen living within the flames.

This was Suiren’s ‘Eternal Kindlefire’.

“It’s Suiren.” Ji Ning, battered by Swordfather Darklight and Daofather Shadowless, instantly felt hope in his heart.

“Suiren’s come.” Yellow Emperor Xuan Yuan was overjoyed as well.

Suiren was secretly acknowledged by many as the number one expert of the Nuwa Alliance. But of course, it was also possible that Lord Tathagata the Buddha and Daoist Three Purities had made breakthroughs in recent years which allowed them to surpass him! Still, for now at least, the level of power that Suiren had made public was enough to let him stand at the very peak of the Three Realms.

The mid-air Suiren was wielding a long black staff in his hands. He brandished the stave, unleashing an aura of endless power that struck out like a falling star, smashing through all impediments. The violet light was instantly shattered.

“Just in time.” Keeper Everwood struck out with his wooden ruler as well.

Both weapons had transformed to become three million meters long.

Wooden staff against wooden ruler. The two collided, and the heavens themselves trembled.

Keeper Everwood was knocked two steps backwards. He had to twirl the wooden ruler in an arc before him in order to deflect the remainder of the shockwave.

“I’m still a bit weaker than you in close combat.” Keeper Everwood laughed softly, but his eyes were as cold as ice. “Alas for you, there’s no need for me to actually fight you.”

“Transform.”

Keeper Everwood’s body blurred as he used [Three Heads, Six Arms]. Each of his six arms now wielded a wooden ruler.

“Everwood. I really don’t want to kill you.” A sigh suddenly rang out in the heavens as a enormous, dazzling, shining golden palm suddenly ripped through the skies, smashing downwards.

“Tathagata.” Two of Keeper Everwood’s hands increased in size as well, and he sent his massive palms and wooden rulers to block against this attack.

Almost as soon as Subhuti had called out to them, Suiren, Tathagata, and Daoist Three Purities had arrived.

Suiren’s wooden staff was as heavy as the Solar Star or the Lunar Star, and each blow from it knocked Keeper Everwood stumbling backwards.

Tathagata’s palm contained an entire vast major world inside of it, and those two hands had long ago reached the level of Chaos treasures.

Daoist Three Purities’ ‘Immortal Slaying Sword Formation’ was the most offensively terrifying attack of them all, and Keeper Everwood spent nearly half of his efforts on defending against it.

“A pity that Shennong and Fuxi are both within the primordial chaos. It will take them time to get here.” Subhuti was frantic. “If it was the Lord of All Fiends or Daomother Devilhand attacking, there’s no way they could possibly tie down Three Purities, Tathagata, and Suiren at the same time. Only Everwood is capable of such a deed.”

Subhuti's heart was burning with anxiety. His power primarily lay in his escaping techniques. Although he was close to the overlord-level in close combat, he was still considerably weaker than the likes of Three Purities, Tathagata, and the others.

As for Keeper Everwood, he was an utter freak. He knew far too many techniques, and when he put them all on display he was able to simultaneously tie down Three Purities, Tathagata, and Suiren for a brief period of time. The very sight of such a feat was terrifying!

"Devilhand, go ahead and strike. Remember, keep the strike surgical. If we can avoid starting the Endwar, we need to try and do so," the Lord of All Fiends instructed mentally.

"You should've let me attack long ago."

A violet-robed woman appeared in the air above the imperial palace.

She was adorably short and slender, with beautiful features, but the strength of her killing intent was enough to cause the entire Deerchaser world itself to shudder. Dark stormclouds began to gather, and when Subhuti, Daoist Three Purities, and Tathagata saw the violet-robed woman, their faces all changed.

A true fiend amongst fiends! A true mass-murdering maniac! A devil that had caused even the Seamless Chaosworld to tremble in terror!

Daomother Devilhand!

"I didn't expect that even when Shadowless and Darklight joined forces together, they still wouldn't be able to do anything to Ji Ning. I have no choice but to let Devilhand to engage as well. I hope that she won't expand the scope of things too much." The Lord of All Fiends felt some worry in his heart. Ji Ning, when in command of the Envoy of All Things, truly was much more powerful than they had expected. They had to send out their overlord-level experts, as otherwise it would be extremely difficult to capture him.

The Lord of All Fiends had no choice. He had to send out Daomother Devilhand.

As soon as the violet-robed woman had appeared, she stretched out her slender, ivory-white arms. Her palms sliced through the air, clawing towards the Envoy-Ning, who was still engaged in a furious battle against Swordfather Darklight and Daofather Shadowless.

As for Subhuti, Xuan Yuan, Three Purities, Suiren, and Tathagata? For now, they had all been completely tied down by Keeper Everwood alone! Although this was incredibly difficult and taxing for Keeper Everwood, he was able to endure them for now. Lord Tathagata the Buddha was able to rely on the formidable power of his golden body to endure a hit while striking solemnly towards Daomother Devilhand, but she just used one of her own palms to defend while sending the second clawing towards Ji Ning.

"NO HARMIN' MY JUNIOR APPRENTICE-BROTHER!"

Heaven and Earth suddenly echoed with this furious bellow, and a murderous aura that was just as savage as Devilhand's soared towards the skies. A monkey-shaped figure had appeared on the distant horizons, and he delivered a furious, double-handed blow with the staff in his hands. The enormous

staff, glowing with dazzling golden light, smashed downwards like a thunderbolt from the heavens towards Daomother Devilhand.

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 27: Eldest Disciple

“Unruly monkey!” Daomother Devilhand glanced sideways at him. She didn’t hold the King of Flower-Fruit Mountain in any regard, but she still halted her assault on Ji Ning and instead waved her hand towards the Monkey King, intending to deal with him first.

Daomother Devilhand stood there in midair, one palm clashing with the oncoming blow from Lord Tathagata the Buddha, the other smashing towards the Monkey King.

THUD!

A deep, dull sound rang out. It was the sound of the gleaming golden staff colliding with Daomother Devilhand’s ivory-white hand. Daomother Devilhand’s hand actually came to a halt. It was actually forced to a halt by that staff!

“Eh?” Daomother Devilhand’s face changed as she stared at the distant Monkey King.

“My junior apprentice-brother has only trained for a few short centuries, but he’s reached an incredible level of power. It’s been countless years since the war that ended the Primordial Era. Did you think that I, ol’ Sun, wouldn’t have made some improvements of my own?” The Monkey King sped through the air, closing in on her with his staff in his hands, filled with an unearthly aura of battle.

“The monkey has reached such a level of power as well...our Seamless Gate has been hiding some of our forces, and now it seems the Nuwa Alliance has hidden quite a few of theirs as well.” The Lord of All Fiends secretly sighed to himself.

The war that ended the Primordial Era had occurred far, far too many years ago, after all. It had been more than half a chaos cycle.

After so many years, it was entirely possible that a formerly ordinary True God or Daofather could suddenly reveal the power of an elite Daofather, or perhaps even an overlord-class Daofather. Both sides would only reveal their final trump cards in the final instant, at the critical moment which would determine victory or defeat, life or death. Trump cards that were left hidden were the most dangerous cards of all.

During the Endwar, a single slip-up or a single unexpected power-up by a major power could have a huge impact on the outcome of the war. Thus, both sides were hiding their true power. Even when they were forced to fight, they would only reveal the powers that the other side already knew about.

“Back then, although the monkey was favored by Nuwa, he was still merely an elite Daofather. But now, he’s close to being an overlord-class Daofather,” the Lord of All Fiends mused to himself.

Sun Wukong, the King of Flower-Fruit Mountain. The shadow of Mother Nuwa could be seen behind him on his path to power.

He had been born from the only piece of stone that Mother Nuwa had used to repair the heavens. How could she possibly not pay attention to him?

He won his treasures from the Dragon Palace, apprenticed himself to Subhuti, was tempered by the Buddhist Sangha, and in the end was provided with the personal tutelage of Mother Nuwa herself. It could be said that Mother Nuwa focused more on training this monkey than she had on anyone else. During the war that ended the Primordial Era, the Seamless Gate had been quite wary of this monkey, as they were afraid that he might possess a terrifying amount of power. However, the reality was that although the monkey was extremely skilled in battle and had many magical treasures on him, he was fairly weak with regards to his insights into the Dao, and so was just barely at the level of elite Daofathers in strength.

Now, half a chaos cycle had gone past. The Monkey King had truly transformed, and this was one of the reasons why Subhuti had summoned him.

Subhuti had summoned three of his main disciples. The eldest disciple, the woodcutter; the second disciple, Crazy Ji; the sixth disciple, Sun Wukong. In truth, Subhuti actually had another Daofather under his command; his twelfth disciple. However, his twelfth disciple was merely an ordinary Daofather who wasn't strong enough to get involved in battles at this level, and so Subhuti did not summon him.

"This monkey is quite hard to deal with." Daomother Devilhand immediately gnashed her teeth after their initial clash. "Before Nuwa left the Three Realms, she definitely provided this monkey with some assistance."

Although Devilhand was skilled in battle, she was different from Everwood; Keeper Everwood was able to simultaneously tie down multiple overlord-class experts thanks to his defensive prowess, while her skills revolved around attacks! If she spent enough time and effort, she'd be able to wipe out the monkey, but time was a rare and limited commodity right now. The more time passed, the more major powers would make it to this place.

Their target for this mission was Ji Ning!

Although the monkey was formidable, he had long ago become a True God and Daofather; there was no way he could get involved in the war for karmic luck. Ji Ning was clearly just an Emyrean God and True Immortal, but he was able to unleash an utterly unearthly level of power. Now that he had an Envoy of All Things, he was actually able to unleash a level of power that was close to that of an overlord-class Daofather. A monster like this...no matter what, they could not permit him to live.

"Darklight, Shadowless, stop this monkey for me. Leave Ji Ning to me." Daomother Devilhand instantly sent mental instructions to the other two. She didn't want to allow the monkey to be able to distract her.

"Alright." Swordfather Darklight had been airborne this entire time. With but a thought, he caused the black, sword-shaped stream of light under his control to switch directions, striking towards the Monkey King that was charging towards them from afar. The Monkey King had no choice but to use his power to defend against the sword-light. No one would dare to be overconfident when faced with Swordfather Darklight's sword.

Swish. Daofather Shadowless quickly withdrew as well, turning to charge towards the distant Monkey King.

“Ji Ning. Die.” Daomother Devilhand was still using one hand to clash against Lord Tathagata. With her other, she struck out from hundreds of thousands of kilometers away towards Ning.

“Daomother Devilhand.” Ning felt breathless upon seeing this palm crash down towards him.

If he was in the Rahu Formation, he would probably be instantly annihilated. However, using the Envoy made him much more powerful; more than ten Rahu Formations would be needed to match its power.

“Soleheart stance.” Ning’s twin swords simultaneously unleashed his most powerful supreme defensive technique. A pair of sword-light black holes appeared before Ning. When the terrifying, ivory-white palm lashed out towards him, it was blocked by the black holes. Daomother Devilhand could clearly sense that her hand was being repelled by multiple layers of strange energy that were furiously ablating the power of her strike.

“Eh?” Daomother Devilhand frowned. “Leafseizer.”

Her ivory-white hand suddenly changed, unleashing an even more intricate and terrifying palm-art. Her forefinger, middle finger, and thumb drew close to each other, as though she was holding a leaf between them.

Whap!

The five fingers of her palm danced their way into Ning’s sword-light black holes. And then, following a series of exploding sounds, the black hole vanished, with the fingers latching onto Ning’s Darknorth swords.

“Impossible.” Ning stared in disbelief, his heart filled with shock and dread. Daomother Devilhand’s seizing technique had been simply too dazzling and beautiful. It was a technique that was so complicated as to cause one to feel almost uncontrollably intoxicated upon seeing it. In fact, the technique was even more complicated than Ning’s sword-arts, which was why it had been able to break through it.

Perhaps Ji Ning was the number one expert of the sword in the Three Realms...but in palm-arts, Daomother Devilhand was number one. Even Lord Tathagata, who also specialized in palm arts, was slightly weaker than her.

Whoosh.

Daomother Devilhand’s dainty white hands went through multiple different variations; the ‘Leafseizer’ stance, the ‘Flowerpicker’ stance, the ‘Wilted’ stance, and more. These stances all had graceful, refined names, and Daomother Devilhand’s movements were quite beautiful as well. However, the power of these techniques caused Ning to feel despair. He was wielding a pair of swords, but one of them had already been seized. Twelve stances later, the Envoy-Ning was struck on the waist by the palm, causing him to uncontrollably fall down to the ground.

“Come in.” Daomother Devilhand suddenly produced a Protocosmic spirit-rope in her hands, and she quickly tossed it around the Envoy of All Things.

Trapped inside the Envoy, Ning just felt a sense of powerlessness and reluctance. Although he had already fought as hard as he could, he was still a bit weaker than Daomother Devilhand, a fiend amongst

fiends who had once battled Mother Nuwa to a standstill for a short time during the war that ended the Primordial Era. She had only been using one hand, but had been able to capture him after just ten or so stances.

“If I was able to reach the fifth stage of swordforce, my sword-arts would become even more intricate. Combined with my weapon speed surpassing the limits of the Heavenly Daos...perhaps in that situation, Daomother Devilhand wouldn’t be able to capture me,” Ning sighed to himself.

For the sake of seizing Ning as quickly as possible, Daomother Devilhand had showed no mercy whatsoever. She had unleashed more than ten absolutely dazzling palm-arts with her hand, causing all of the major powers present to feel shocked. “Daomother Devilhand’s techniques truly have become even more exquisite since the Primordial Era.”

Ji Ning had been captured.

Although he was unwilling to accept this, there was nothing he could say. He had been simply too careless, and he was simply not strong enough. Fortunately, he had kept clones outside; even if he died here today, he would have the chance to return to his full level of power in the future. Alas, his Ninehorn Lightning Serpent, Darknorth swords, and other treasures would be lost.

“Daomother Devilhand, please release my junior apprentice-brother.” A chuckling voice rang out as a skinny old man dressed in tattered clothes emerged from a spatial whirlpool. He stretched out his hand, and it glittered with golden light. This was the [Golden Body] technique of the Buddhists, and his shining golden hand struck out towards Daomother Devilhand, seeking to stop her.

“You think to stop me, you crazy monk?” Daomother Devilhand stretched out her own massive hand, many hundreds of thousands of meters in length, and seized the Envoy of All Things, completely ignoring Crazy Ji’s attack.

Clank!

Her ivory-white hand and Crazy Ji’s golden hand, which looked as skinny as a chicken claw, collided against each other.

Crazy Ji’s face changed while Daomother Devilhand revealed a disparaging smile. However, right at this moment, Daomother Devilhand’s face changed as well, becoming ugly to behold. She stared in disbelief at the figure that had just appeared in midair. From that very same spatial vortex, a woodcutter who wore straw shoes and carried a hatchet over his shoulders had appeared. He had come here at the same time as Crazy Ji.

Crazy Ji had been the first to strike, but he had failed.

Only then did the woodcutter brandish his hatchet, and as soon as he did so, Daomother Devilhand’s face turned terrible to behold.

“No!” Daomother Devilhand actually voluntarily released Ji Ning, sending her ivory-white hand upwards to block the hatchet with full force.

“Let it be severed.” The woodcutter spoke in a calm, soft voice.

Swish.

His hatchet seemed extremely ordinary, but Daomother Devilhand's incomparably marvelous palm-arts were actually unable to block it. The hatchet swished past her defenses, landing on her arm. Slash! Daomother Devilhand's arm was immediately severed.

Whoosh. After chopping through Devilhand's ivory-white arm, it suddenly accelerated past the speed of light and chopped towards Swordfather Darklight, who had been controlling his magic treasures to attack from afar.

"Flee." Swordfather Darklight had no idea that this disaster would suddenly descend upon him from out of nowhere. Although he had noticed the woodcutter appear, he had been quite confident in Daomother Devilhand's power. He hadn't expected that a single blow from the hatchet would sever her arm while still carrying enough power to continue to chop towards him. As for the speed of the hatchet...it was even more terrifying than Ning's sword.

He wanted to flee. But...how could he possibly escape that terrifying hatchet?

Slash. Swordfather Darklight's body was immediately bisected by the hatchet. His soul and his Jindan were both annihilated, and the two halves of his corpse fell down from the skies, landing on the ground and splattering blood everywhere.

A Daofather who had reached the fifth stage of swordforce and who was skilled in assassinations..had died, just like that.

The entire battlefield had turned silent.

Daoist Three Purities, Lord Tathagata, and Suiren had come to a halt as well. Keeper Everwood had also come to a halt.

Everyone's gaze was turned towards the hatchet-wielding woodcutter. The woodcutter looked very ordinary, and he was dressed very plainly and simply...but just now, that 'ordinary' hatchet had delivered a blow that had stunned all of the overlord-class major powers present.

Long, long ago, there had been another figure who had similarly stunned them with his attacks.

It was Houyi with his arrows!

And today, this woodcutter had stunned them with his hatchet.

"Junior apprentice-brother." Crazy Ji was rescuing the Envoy of All Things.

Daomother Devilhand retracted her treasures, her arm once more growing out and healing. She stared intently at the woodcutter, completely ignoring Ji Ning. She did not even think about trying to capture him again.

"Houyi. Is that you?" Daomother Devilhand's voice was crisp and pleasing to the ear.

"It's me." The woodcutter's reply was very calm.

The entire imperial palace had turned deathly silent. After a long period of silence...

Boom! Boom! Boom!!!

The skies above the imperial palace repeatedly exploded as more and more major powers descended. It was the other major powers of the Nuwa Alliance, who had all hastened here to help out. They included Exalted Celestial Thundergod, Exalted Celestial Carefree, Buddha Amitabha, Buddha Maitreya, and more.

Although this fight took time to describe, it had actually occurred at high speed. Only brief moments had passed between Ji Ning's true body being killed, his Primaltwin appearing within the Envoy, the Envoy being captured, and Crazy Ji and the woodcutter intervening.

A very short period of time had passed...but now, all the major powers were completely focused on the woodcutter rather than Ji Ning.

"It's been so many years. Sorry for the trouble, Master." The woodcutter looked towards Subhuti.

"Haha...I imagine Three Purities, Tathagata, and the others would've fought over the chance to accept Houyi as a disciple." Subhuti laughed merrily. "Wonderful. You've finally decided to come out. I had thought that you wouldn't come out this time."

"My junior apprentice-brother was very nearly killed. How much longer could I possibly wait?" The woodcutter looked at the distant, unnerved figures of Daomother Devilhand and Keeper Everwood. "As I see it...right now, our priority should be having a nice discussion with you of the Seamless Gate."

"It is indeed time for a chat." A red-robed, azure-haired figure appeared in the air.

"Windfiend." The woodcutter looked towards the man.

A large number of major powers had appeared in the air above the imperial palace, but none of them dared to make a sound; all of them were strictly conversing through quiet mental messages to each other.

As for Ning, still within the Envoy of All Things, he raised his head to stare at the midair woodcutter, astonishment in his heart. "Eldest disciple? Woodcutter? Houyi?"

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 28: Negotiations

The eldest disciple of their league, the low-key woodcutter who always spent his time chopping down trees at Mount Innerheart...was actually Houyi?

When Ji Ning had first started to train in [Houyi's Archery], the woodcutter had walked past him a few times, hatchet over his shoulders. He had even given Ning a few critical words of enlightenment when Ning was at a bottleneck. Ning hadn't thought much of it back then, as he thought it was normal for someone as powerful as the eldest apprentice-brother to be able to provide him with some guidance. Who would've thought that the man was actually the creator of [Houyi's Archery], Houyi himself!

"Junior apprentice-brother." Crazy Ji fanned himself, smiling as he called out.

"Junior apprentice-brother." A streak of light flew towards him from far away, landing on the ground next to him. It was the Monkey King, dressed in dazzling golden armor.

“Second apprentice-brother. Sixth apprentice-brother.” Ning hurriedly called out to the two of them. As he did so, he couldn’t help but take a close look at his sixth apprentice-brother. There were many legends of the Primordial Era that circulated amongst the nations of Earth. Although some of them weren’t quite accurate, his sixth apprentice-brother Sun Wukong was a tremendously famous figure on Earth. But of course, by now Ning had met with many major powers.

Lu Dongbin, Daoist Three Purities, Patriarch Subhuti, Lord Tathagata the Buddha...he had met them all. Thus, Ning was quite calm when meeting with his sixth apprentice-brother for the first time. He was just a bit curious about the man.

“Heh heh...I didn’t expect my eldest apprentice-brother to actually be Houyi.” Sun Wukong chortled merrily. “When I first went to apprentice myself to Master, he actually gave me directions. I had thought him to be an ordinary woodcutter. Only later did I realize that he was actually our eldest apprentice-brother! Even back then, I mumbled to myself that he was really good at hiding his abilities...but only today do I know he is actually the great divinity Houyi of the Primordial Era. His level of subterfuge is quite extraordinary!”

Houyi had become famous very, very early on. When he had slain the Golden Crows, Sun Wukong hadn’t even been born into the world!

“I became apprenticed to Master very early on, but even I didn’t know of his true history.” Crazy Ji chortled merrily, “When I became apprenticed to Master, our eldest apprentice-brother was already there by his side. However, even back then he spent his days as a woodcutter chopping trees. Honestly, I was quite puzzled back then; he was clearly Master’s disciple, but why was it that I never saw him asking Master for guidance? But Master told me that our eldest apprentice-brother already had the power of a True God and Daofather, and that there was no way to ‘teach’ him; he needed to gain his own insights. Thus, I didn’t think too much on it.”

“I heard that long ago, because of Chang’e, our eldest apprentice-brother actually slaughtered a path to the Lunar Star, planning to chop down the osmanthus tree on the Lunar Star. However, whenever he struck at the tree, it would immediately heal. No matter what he did, he couldn’t chop the tree down. At Mount Innerheart, our eldest apprentice-brother spends all his days chopping down trees...is it because he plans to once more pay a visit to the Moon Palace of the Lunar Star?” The Monkey King lowered his voice and even went so far as to block out sound from the surrounding area.

“Damned monkey, do you think that our eldest apprentice-brother’s affairs are something for you to pry into?” Crazy Ji hurriedly reprimanded him. “You can’t talk about this matter.”

“Eldest apprentice-brother can’t hear me. I’d only ever discuss it behind his back.” Sun Wukong blinked a few times.

Even Ji Ning knew that the affair between Houyi and Chang’e had been a scarring one for Houyi! Picking at another’s scars and scabs was not a good idea.

“Let’s go. Buddha, Three Purities, and the others are negotiating with those of the Seamless Chaosworld. Let’s take a break for now.” Crazy Ji gave Sun Wukong a hard stare. “Don’t cause trouble, you monkey. If you piss off our eldest apprentice-brother, none of us would be able to save you.”

“Right.” The Monkey King shivered slightly, nodding repeatedly. “During the Primordial Era, he roamed the world with his archery skills. Now, even his hatchet skills have become so incredibly powerful. Daomother Devilhand is an awe-inspiringly famous figure on the level of the leaders of Buddhism and Daoism, but our eldest apprentice-brother was actually able to sever her arm with a single blow of his hatchet.”

“That was because Daomother Devilhand was too proud and overconfident,” Crazy Ji said. “Our eldest apprentice-brother was incredibly powerful even during the Primordial Era; even the leaders of Buddhism and Daoism were forced to use all their might when facing him. For Daomother Devilhand to actually try to face him with a single arm...hmp, it would’ve been shocking if she didn’t suffer for it.”

Ning laughed. He was about to put away the Envoy of All Things, but he suddenly then thought of how Daomother Devilhand had struck him with a blow, causing him to uncontrollably fall to the ground. Ning took a careful look at the Envoy.

“Eh?” Ning’s face changed. “What’s this?” Ning immediately noticed that the energy core of the Envoy, located at its waist, had actually cracked open.

Ning hurriedly tried to use the Envoy’s power, only to discover that it was now completely inoperable. It was as though the cracks here had severed the Envoy’s ability to send energy around its body. The Envoy had suddenly become useless.

“It’s been made useless? How?!” Ning was stunned.

The Envoy of All Things.

B-but...this was the most powerful tool he had at his disposal! When using it, he would be able to unleash a level of power close to that of the overlord Daofathers, on the same level as Subhuti and Daofather Shadowless. Just like that, the Envoy had suddenly been rendered useless?! It must be understood that even full-force blows from the leaders of Buddhism and Daoism would barely be able to damage the thing!

Daomother Devilhand had landed a gentle blow on the Envoy’s waist...and just like that, the Envoy had been ruined? Still, it had been quite strange; a single blow had been all it took to cause the Envoy-Ning to collapse.

“Second apprentice-brother, sixth apprentice-brother.” Ning said in a low voice, “The Envoy of All Things has been ruined.”

“What?” Crazy Ji and the Monkey King were both shocked.

Ning nodded solemnly. “It should’ve been ruined by Daomother Devilhand. I don’t know how she accomplished it.”

The Monkey King gnashed his teeth. As for Crazy Ji, he frowned and said in a soft voice, “Mm...this Envoy golem was created by the Seamless Gate. They probably put in certain mechanisms to prevent us from being able to take them over, such as a self-destruct mechanism that would cripple it. However, activating such mechanisms probably isn’t easy. During the war for karmic luck, your opponents have all been Empyrean Gods and True Immortals; they wouldn’t have the ability to ruin your Envoy. Daomother Devilhand, however, is an overlord-class major power. Given that she knows exactly how the Envoy is

structurally composed and where its weaknesses are, it makes sense that she would be able to easily destroy it.”

“Right. I heard that when the Lord of All Things died, all of his Envoys were rendered completely inoperable as well.” The Monkey King nodded in agreement.

“In contrast, the Envoys of the Seamless Gate can only be destroyed by the personal touch of someone like Daomother Devilhand. Comparatively speaking, they still aren’t a match for the Envoys of the Lord of All Things,” Crazy Ji said.

Crazy Ji suddenly added, “Report this to Master right away.”

“Right, tell Master right away,” the Monkey King agreed.

Only the most supreme figures took part in the negotiations between the Nuwa Alliance and the Seamless Gate.

Time slowly trickled forward.

The other major powers continued to wait quietly at the Deerchaser world for the results of their negotiations. Ji Ning, Crazy Ji, the Monkey King, and the other members of the Mount Innerheart League all waited patiently as well.

A long amount of time passed. The skies were slowly beginning to turn bright. Only now did the major powers of the Seamless Gate leave the Deerchaser world.

“Master. Eldest apprentice-brother.”

Ji Ning, Crazy Ji, and the Monkey King had been seated, but now all three of them hurriedly rose to their feet. Patriarch Subhuti and Houyi were walking shoulder-to-shoulder towards their residence from afar.

“How did it go, Master?” The Monkey King asked hurriedly.

“Your junior apprentice-brother Ji Ning suffered a heavy loss. Our Nuwa Alliance as a whole didn’t do that badly,” Patriarch Subhuti said.

“For me to suffer a loss is nothing. Our side gaining an advantage in this war is what really matters,” Ning said.

Subhuti looked at Ning. “Myself, Houyi, and the other major powers discussed this in secret. Our main concern is that for the Seamless Gate to suddenly act against you in such a manner, they must have made many careful preparations for the possible consequences. They are prepared, but we are not...and we currently hold the upper hand in the war for karmic luck. Thus, although we were infuriated, we still would not choose to rashly launch the Endwar right away.”

Houyi nodded as well. “But of course, if the Seamless Gate insists on starting the Endwar, then so be it.”

“Clearly, your eldest apprentice-brother’s sudden appearance and power has caught them rather off-guard,” Subhuti said. “The negotiations ended up being fairly beneficial for our Nuwa Alliance.”

“What were the results?” The Monkey King asked hurriedly.

“The Seamless Gate had only one request. Ji Ning is not permitted to take part in the war for karmic luck,” Subhuti said.

Ning’s face changed.

“WHAT?! But that’s...!” The Monkey King was instantly enraged.

Subhuti continued to talk. “We accepted. Our request...was that not a single one of the Seamless Gate’s Envoys are to be permitted to take part in the war for karmic luck either. Although the Seamless Gate has lost one of them, they still have nine more! If all of them were activated, even my disciple Ji Ning would have to clone himself several times over to deal with them.”

“Right.” Ning nodded. It was true. He needed time to deal with even a single Envoy, to first destabilize it and then knock it to the ground. If there were two Envoys working together, there would be nothing Ning could do against him. The other seven Envoys would be free to fight and kill as they pleased.

“Ji Ning suffered a heavy loss, after all; they had to pay a price for what they did. As for Swordfather Darklight, he died for nothing; his death wasn’t taken into account.” Subhuti looked towards Ning. “Disciple, there’s no way you can take part in the rest of the war for karmic luck, but none of their Envoys will be allowed to take part as well. You really have accomplished something tremendous for our side. If there’s anything you need, just tell me.”

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 29: Three Great Secret Manuals

“No need.” Ji Ning shook his head.

“Whatever you need, whatever you are lacking for...just speak.” Subhuti continued, “Three Purities, Tathagata, and the others all feel that we owe you.”

Ning shook his head again.

He had gained many legacies from World God Northrest, and he had also acquired the treasures of the many prisoners of Prisonworld 17. He really didn’t need to ask these major powers for anything.

“Junior apprentice-brother.” Houyi looked at Ning.

Ning looked back at this plainly dressed man, the legendary Houyi. The great divinity still looked as though he was nothing but an ordinary mortal, but Ning felt true admiration towards him. Long ago, Houyi had dominated the Three Realms through archery! But today, he had actually been able to injure Daomother Devilhand when using his hatchet. How powerful would he be when using his arrows? How truly unfathomable! Houyi’s sudden appearance and intervention had stunned everyone. They weren’t just stunned at the fact that he was Houyi; they were mainly stunned that the number one divine archer of the Three Realms, Houyi, was actually so terrifying when wielding a hatchet.

“In the end, the war for karmic luck will only have a certain degree of effect on the final Endwar,” Houyi said. “In the end, winning the Endwar will primarily be dependent on the respective major powers on each side! The more powerful one is, the more of an impact one will make on the battlefield. The gain or loss of an overlord-class Daofather will have an enormous impact on the battlefield...and of course, if a

Pangu-level expert appears, that person will be able to completely dominate all comers. In that scenario, a war for karmic luck would be completely useless.”

Ning nodded.

“Thus...focus calmly on your training.” Houyi looked at Ning. “Train hard. If there’s no need for you to take part in the war for karmic luck, then you might as well focus on your training. In the end, the most important affair of all is the Endwar.”

“Right.” Ning agreed with this analysis.

Ning wasn’t opposed to not being able to take part in the Endwar. What he truly wished for was the destruction of the Seamless Gate, and his deepest desire was to personally kill the Godking!

.....

The Allfiend world.

“Windfiend, I really am not happy that the Envoys are not going to be able to take part in the world for karmic luck.” Daomother Devilhand’s slender face was as cold as ice, and her eyes were filled with murder.

“It might be a good thing that the Envoys will not take part.” The nearby Keeper Everwood explained, “Although Ji Ning’s true body has been destroyed, he still has his Primaltwin. If he uses his Primaltwin to control the Rahu Formation, he has the power to kidnap yet another Envoy. He’ll be strong enough to be close to matching overlord-class major powers. That’ll make him equivalent to a host of Envoys.”

“Letting him capture an Envoy is one thing. Would we really let him capture a second?” Daomother Devilhand laughed coldly.

“Ji Ning isn’t alone; he has the entire army of the Nuwa Alliance supporting him. There are no absolute certainties in war.” Keeper Everwood shook his head. “And this time, our side was in the wrong to begin with. The furious Nuwa Alliance might very well have actually launched the Endwar. You saw Houyi’s power for yourself.”

“I was overconfident. I had no idea he was Houyi. If I knew he was Houyi, do you think I would’ve fought against him with just one hand?” Daomother Devilhand shook her head. “If we both fought at full strength, it’s not certain who would win and who would lose.”

Thus far, the Lord of All Fiends had remained silent. Now, however, he made a calm comment: “But Houyi was using a hatchet. What if he was using his Houyi Godbow?”

Daomother Devilhand was stunned.

“Houyi is clearly far more powerful than he was during the Primordial Era; even I can vaguely sense danger emanating from him.” The Lord of All Fiends shook his head. “The true purpose of building the Envoys is to have Daofathers command them and use them against the enemy overlord-class powers. If they can’t be used in the war for the karmic luck, then that is that. It’s almost worth it just to ensure that Ji Ning cannot participate either.”

“Right; did you ruin that Envoy he had?” The Lord of All Fiends asked.

"I did." Daomother Devilhand nodded.

There had been multiple layers to their plans. Ruining the Envoy was one of them. If one of them was to destroy a critical part of the golem, Grandmaster Blackheaven would be able to easily fix the damage once they brought it back. But since the Nuwa Alliance lacked the critical formation-diagram, there was no way whatsoever for them to repair it.

"Good." The Lord of All Fiends nodded. "Ji Ning cannot participate in the war for karmic luck; he'll only be able to participate in the Endwar. Without the Envoy, he's now much less of a threat."

"When the Endwar comes, Ji Ning won't amount to much," Daomother Devilhand agreed calmly.

"His true body has been destroyed, while his Primaltwin is only a Ki Refiner," Keeper Everwood said.

"There is no way a pure Ki Refiner can reach the overlord class of power."

It was true. In all the Three Realms, be it in the Nuwa Alliance or the Seamless Gate, the most supreme figures were not merely Ki Refiners.

Three Purities, Tathagata, Fuxi; they were born True Gods of Primordial Chaos, but gave up their bodies when they sent themselves into the cycles of reincarnation. However, even in their later lives they were dual refiners, training as Fiendgods and as Ki Refiners! Shennong and Suiren both had incredibly powerful divine bodies, while even Subhuti and Old Man Yuan were born as True Gods of Primordial Chaos! As for the Seamless Gate's side, Daomother Devilhand, the Lord of All Fiends, and Keeper Everwood all specialized in close combat; all three of them trained as both Ki Refiners and as Fiendgod Body Refiners!

Theoretically, a pure Ki Refiner could also reach the overlord level if they reached a sufficiently high level of insight into the Dao. However, to date the Three Realms had never produced anyone who could reach such heights as a pure Ki Refiner. Moreover, attempting to reach that level of power purely through cultivating in the Dao would take time. Ji Ning had yet to master even a single Heavenly Dao; he was far, far away from becoming an overlord.

Thus, the Seamless Gate believed Ning to be much less of a threat with his true body gone. This made quite logical sense.

"If he only has a Primaltwin, he's much less dangerous now. He's only been training for so many years; his weakness is quite apparent." Keeper Everwood shook his head. "This Ji Ning truly is a monstrously talented figure. If he was given another hundred thousand years, he probably would become an extremely dangerous figure. Unfortunately for him, he won't have enough time to train..."

"Right."

"I still feel as though giving up our plans to have Envoys take part in the war for karmic luck will have an excessively large impact." Daomother Devilhand frowned.

"There's no need to discuss this matter any longer," the Lord of All Fiends said. "Right – Everwood, how are your negotiations with Old Man Yuan coming along?"

"He wants access to our Seamless Gate's three great secret manuals." Keeper Everwood let out a sigh.

"He wants all three, not a single one less. Only if we give him all three would he be willing to join us."

“The three great secret manuals? And all three of them?” Daomother Devilhand let out a cold laugh. “Old Man Yuan really is quite ambitious. Even I have merely studied two of them.”

Long, long ago, when the Seamless Chaosworld was still intact, when the Lord of the Demonheart had been roving the primordial chaos he had accidentally discovered three incomparably profound secret manuals. These manuals were the [Seven Hearts], [Coiling River], and [Shadowless]. These became the most important and most profound techniques techniques which the Lord of the Demonheart used, and they were one of the most important reasons why he was able to unify the entire Seamless Chaosworld in such a short period of time.

In order to draw more allies to his side, Lord Demonheart would occasionally bestow the techniques upon others.

Originally, [Seven Hearts] was something which Lord Demonheart kept for himself; he was only willing to teach the [Coiling River] and [Shadowless] to the others. However, after the Lord of All Fiends rescued the entire Seamless Gate after they lost the war, Lord Demonheart had decided to bestow [Seven Hearts] upon the Lord of All Fiends, even though Lord Demonheart himself had already become one with the Heavenly Daos.

In other words, the only people in the entire Seamless Gate who had studied all three of those secret manuals were Lord Demonheart and the Lord of All Fiends.

“The [Seven Hearts] is a heartforce technique,” the Lord of All Fiends said. “Truthfully speaking, most major powers can’t even make use of it. One has to reach the fifth level of heartforce before one can master this technique. In truth, it’s not impossible for us to impart it to Old Man Yuan. His faction has quite a few major powers, after all, and they are quite powerful.”

“Right.” Keeper Everwood and Daomother Devilhand both nodded.

The most powerful members of Old Man Yuan’s faction were known as the Four Ancestors of the River Source! They also had other major powers within their faction as well. Although Old Man Yuan himself had already revealed himself to be close to the overlord level of power, who knew if he was hiding his true strength?

Thus, both sides wished to draw this incredibly powerful faction into their ranks.

“My worry is that once we give him the three secret manuals, he’ll then decide to join the Nuwa Alliance and hand them over,” the Lord of All Fiends said. “I heard that alien Outsiders have a way to set down something known as a ‘lifeblood oath’, but none of us have any idea as to how that is done.”

“I’ll go speak with him a bit further.” Keeper Everwood frowned. “We have to draw Old Man Yuan into our orbit. If he joins us, the Nuwa Alliance will have lost one of its original members. This will represent a significant shift in the balance of power. We have to recruit him. Also – Windfiend, I’ll leave the other matters in your hands.”

“Yes, leave the matters in the primordial chaos to me.” The Lord of All Fiends nodded. “It has been more than half a chaos cycle since the war that ended the Primordial Era. Although we’ve hidden much of our power, the Nuwa Alliance is not to be underestimated. Don’t forget that Nuwa had reached the World God level of power. It’s hard to predict what she left behind her for her alliance.”

Both sides were extremely cautious. The war for karmic luck was just one element out of many that would impact the Endwar. However, both sides were doing everything they could to increase their chances of winning...because when the Endwar erupted, either your side would die or my side would die.

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Within the endless primordial chaos. Inside a frozen star.

This star was fairly unremarkable, and it didn't even have a name assigned to it. It was, however, the place where Ning had placed Prisonworld 17.

Ji Ning had already been forgotten by the Seamless Gate, having been deemed to no longer be a threat. And yet, at this moment, he quietly emerged from the prisonworld.

The black-robed Ning stood there within the deep crevice, staring at the endless glacial ice before him. "In the coming days, unless something major happens, I'll just calmly spend my time in the prisonworld, working on improving my power as best as I can."

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 30: Recovering

Ji Ning was all by himself within the deep crevice, but his heartforce had been spread out to cover the entire frozen star. It was like a star-sized lake, and layers of ripples emanated out from it, sweeping through every part of the star.

This was a little trick for using heartforce to scout, and it was one of the many techniques World God Northrest had left behind. Although it was just a little trick, this heartforce scouting technique ensured that none of the major powers of the Three Realms would be able to follow him without him sensing it.

When roaming the primordial chaos, it was important to know many auxiliary techniques, such as aura-suppressing techniques, heartforce scouting techniques, disguising techniques, heartforce soul-locking techniques...these minor auxiliary techniques wouldn't allow him to grow more powerful, but they greatly increased his survivability. Without them, it would be easy to fall and perish when wandering the primordial chaos.

These auxiliary techniques seemed unremarkable, but in truth they were amongst the most important and most elite of techniques which World God Northrest had left behind. Not even the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals of the chaos-kingdom of Pangaea would have the chance to learn these techniques.

"I had thought that after I revealed such incredible power, the Seamless Gate would be even more wary of me and perhaps even trail me. I actually took an incredibly roundabout way to get her...but now, it seems, they no longer view me as being a threat at all." The black-robed Ning let out a mental sigh.

Prior to visiting this frozen star, he had paid a visit to the Crescent world, so as to impede the Seamless Gate from following him. But alas, it was pointless; the Seamless Gate hadn't even been tracking him at all.

"It makes sense. Since I can no longer take part in the war for karmic luck, I am now much less of a threat to them than I was before. As far as the major powers are concerned, without the Envoy I am far

too weak for them to be worried about!” The black-robed Ning shook his head, then disappeared into thin air.

Within the prisonworld.

A white-robed youth was seated in the lotus position, and in front of him was a great cauldron that glowed with faint light.

This was the Five Elements Cauldron. The Five Elements Cauldron no longer looked as dirty and ragged as it had before; clearly, it was now revealing its true luster.

“There he is.” The white-robed youth raised his head to look over as the black-robed Ning flew towards him from far away. When the black-robed Ning landed, a black lightning serpent instantly appeared out of nowhere, quickly scurrying into the white-robed youth’s body.

Ning’s true bodies were all lightning-attribute bodies, which was why they were all capable of controlling the Ninehorn Lightning Serpent with ease. The Primaltwin was very powerful but had no way of controlling the serpent.

“I used up a veritable sea of treasures, melting down almost all the items I acquired from this prisonworld for Five Elements essence. Who would’ve thought that I would be unable to repair even the surface appearance of Violetjewel?” The black-robed Ning looked at the ancient stone platform. Atop the stone platform was the completely blood-colored sword Violetjewel, the body of the sword still covered with countless cracks.

Once Violetjewel absorbed enough Five Elements essence for its surface layer to be repaired, it would be possible for Ning to carry it into battle, and it would be far more powerful than a Chaos weapon. If Ning was able to acquire enough essence to completely and truly repair it, it would possess enough power to intoxicate even Chaos Immortals and World Gods.

“I feel as though only a fifth of the surface layer has been repaired.” Ning secretly shook his head.

There had been more than a thousand Emphyrean Gods and Celestial Immortals in the prisonworld, and Ning had already extorted all of them!

He had also acquired quite a few treasures from True Gods and True Immortals as well. Aside from a tiny number of treasures that he kept for himself, he had melted down all the rest.

“And this isn’t to forge or reforge Violetjewel, it’s just to repair the superficial, surface damage. For even the surface layer to require so much Five Elements essence...if I had instead used the essence to upgrade my Goldstar Beads of the Heavens, some of them probably would’ve been upgraded to Chaos treasures by now,” Ning mused to himself.

Five Elements essence was primarily used to repair treasures, but they would also be used to enhance and upgrade certain special treasures. Some treasures had excellent foundations and were thus able to absorb Five Elements essence and be upgraded by it.

The Goldstar Beads of the Heavens were no ordinary treasures.

They weren’t like the Protocosmic spirit-treasures which were naturally born from Heaven and Earth after Pangu established the world. Instead, they were formed in the primordial chaos from the leftover

essence of enormous chaos stars that had reached the ends of their lives, with the essence having condensed into gems. They had just so happened to be floating the area when Pangu had established the world, and thus had accidentally been drawn into the world and become transformed into Protocosmic spirit-treasures.

Gems like them were actually icredibly valuable! When smaller chaos stars died they generally didn't have enough leftover essence for gems to be crystallized. Only larger chaos stars were able to give birth to these gems. Every single gem could be used as a valuable ingredient and would generally be used to forge a Chaos treasure. Because they ended up floating into the newly-established Pangu Chaosworld, they ended up being titled the Goldstar Beads of the Heavens and used to smash people.

But this was truly a waste!

Those Protocosmic spirit-treasures that were born from the Pangu Chaosworld itself didn't have much potential, but the Goldstar Beads of the Heavens had tremendous potential. They were capable of withstanding reinforcement from Five Treasures essence and being upgraded to become Chaos treasures. Alas, the amount of essence needed to upgrade all of those 3600 beads to become Chaos treasures...Ning knew it to be nothing more than a pipe dream.

"A set of 3600 Chaos treasures?" Ning secretly shook his head. Not all the treasures of the entire prisonworld combined might be enough.

The Five Elements Cauldron was placed right next to the white-robed Ning, who remained seated in the lotus position, a bottle of chaos nectar before him.

Whoosh.

One drop of precious Chaos nectar after another was absorbed into the white-robed youth's body, and then a series of phantom, ghostly figures flew out of him. When each phantom landed on the ground, it solidified into yet another white-robed youth.

Time slowly flowed on, and one white-robed youth after another was materialized. Ning's bodies were still at merely the second stage of the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods]; he had relied on the [One True Body] technique to merge seventeen of those bodies together. Now, he once more replicated his seventeen destroyed bodies by using the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods] to absorb chaos nectar.

"Now, [Icefire Jindan Smelting]."

Each of the seventeen white-robed youths had a globe of Ninefire Lava and Iceheart Pith floating before them.

The black-robed Ning stood off to one side, staring at the Ninefire Lava and the Iceheart Pith. He secretly sighed to himself, "I still have quite a bit of Ninefire Lava, but there's not much Iceheart Pith left. After this, I'll only have around fifty thousand kilograms of Iceheart Pith left."

His main body had been destroyed. Thanks to chaos nectar, Iceheart Pith, and Ninefire Lava, he was able to completely heal himself in a single short month! However, if the main body was destroyed yet again...he didn't have enough Iceheart Pith, nor did he have much chaos nectar left. If he wanted to recover from it a second time, he would probably need an extremely long period of time to do so. The

same had been true of Youngflame Freak in the past; if too many of his bodies died, he would need an extremely long period of time to recover.

A month later. The seventeen white-robed youths had all seen their golden pellet Jindans upgraded, and they now once more used the [One True Body] technique to merge together.

“I’m back to full power.”

A hint of a murderous look flashed through the white-robed Ning’s eyes.

He would never forget the sight of the Godking annihilating Yu Wei’s soul. That sight would probably haunt him for the rest of his life.

“Godking. I’m not strong enough yet, so just keep waiting for now. I’ll be back.” Ning’s heart was filled with the utmost resolve.

“Let’s go.” Swoosh. The white-robed youth collected the black-robed Ning, then flew outwards, leaving behind just a single clone to continue using the Five Elements Cauldron. Ning would use this clone to as he had in the past, to serve as a base template for slowly rebuilding his other bodies if his main body was destroyed. Thus, Ning absolutely would not permit this body to be merged with the others through the [One True Body] technique. If he did that and then died, his death would be a true death.

After flying for a while, the white-robed Ning’s speed began to lessen. A series of stone steles lay in the grasslands before him, like monoliths that jutted out from the plains. These stone steles surrounded an unspeakably beautiful jade palace.

“I was gravely wounded, which was a disaster, but the chance to fight against Swordfather Darklight, Daofather Shadowless, and Daomother Devilhand was a blessing,” Ning mused to himself. Although he was able to battle against True Gods and True Immortals in the prisonworld, the ones that were imprisoned here generally had yet to master any of the Heavenly Daos.

If they did, they would become Ancestral Immortals!

It was precisely because they hadn’t been able to master a Heavenly Dao that these True Gods and True Immortals, in terms of raw power, were generally just comparable to ordinary Daofathers. Occasionally, a few possessed divine abilities that allowed them to release the power of a elite Daofather, but the likes of Swordfather Darklight and Daofather Shadowless were experts even amongst their elite Daofather peers. As for Daomother Devilhand, she was an overlord-class figure!

Although the Daofathers of the Three Realms had relatively weaker foundations than the denizens of Pangaea, in terms of insights into the Dao, they were far superior. In terms of insights into the Dao, only a minority of the Ancestral Immortals and Elder Gods who were imprisoned in Prisonworld 17 were a match for the likes of Daomother Devilhand.

Daomother Devilhand’s palm-arts were reputed to be number one in all the Three Realms, superior to even that of Lord Tathagata the Buddha.

When Ning fought against her, he had naturally been considerably enlightened and stimulated.

“I need to carefully think over what I saw and quietly ponder it all. Perhaps I’ll be able to make use of this setback to reach the fifth stage of swordforce.” After Ning entered the jade shrine, he sat down on a

prayer mat woven from a type of Chaos treasure known as Winterheart Grass. His heart and soul quickly grew calm, and he began to engage in silent meditation and reflection. He thought back through all the things he had seen when battling against Swordfather Darklight, Daofather Shadowless, and Daomother Devilhand.

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 31: Fighting, Killing

Daofather Shadowless, in terms of power, was slightly superior to Swordfather Darklight, but that was primarily because of his divine abilities. In terms of raw technique and skill, Swordfather Darklight was actually superior.

His sword-arts were the strongest sword-arts the Seamless Gate had, and his assassination techniques were second to none. Alas...he had died under Houyi's hatchet.

Ji Ning pondered over Swordfather Darklight's sword-arts in close detail, replaying every single sword-stroke in his mind and learning much from them. Daomother Devilhand's palm-arts...although there was no way for Ning to understand them, he had been able to see some of the underlying mysteries behind them. As quietly reflected on them now, he was able to discover more and more of their secrets.

By the time Ning opened his eyes, nine days had gone past.

The white-robed Ning left the jade shrine. With a wave of his finger, he materialized a longsword before him.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Sword-light flickered in a light, graceful manner. It was occasionally sharp and valiant, occasionally strange and mysterious, and occasionally brutal and dominating.

"I can clearly sense that I'm just a tiny step away...but why is it that I'm just not able to break through?" Ning shook his head, murmuring to himself. He had thought that the insights he had gained from this fight would allow him to reach the fifth stage of swordforce. Daomother Devilhand was an overlord-class expert, after all, and she had mastered four of the Heavenly Daos of the Seamless Chaosworld: Earth, Fire, Water, Wind. A chance to face her in a life-and-death battle was a rare opportunity indeed.

When Ning had been meditating, he could sense that his improvements had been quite remarkable. And yet, he was still unable to reach the fifth stage of swordforce.

"To advance from the fourth stage of swordforce to the fifth stage really is extraordinarily difficult." Ning had a sudden thought, and he immediately waved his hand. Boom! Boom! Boom! One enormous goldstar bead after another came crashing down upon the flat plains, falling down around the scattered stone steles. After all 3600 goldstar beads landed, the Nine Chaos Seals began to manifest atop them.

Ning stood there, carefully staring at the giant goldstar beads and the stone steles covered in sword-arts.

The stone steles had been left behind by World God Northrest for his successors. As for the Nine Chaos Seals of the goldstar beads, they were even more arcane.

He spent half a day staring at them. Then, Ning shook his head. "Come back." He waved his hand, instantly causing the jade shrine, the ninety-eight stone steles, and 3600 goldstar beads to all be collected.

"In the end, life-and-death battles are what truly matter."

Swoosh. The white-robed Ning instantly transformed into a lightning serpent, speeding off into the distance at high speed.

A short while later...

"Eh?" A skinny, short man with horns on his forehead was seated in the lotus position in the desert. He raised his golden eyes, staring intently at Ning. He laughed coldly, "Overseer, why have you come again? Last time, you used a pile of Protocosmic spirit-treasures to threaten me. What are you planning to do this time? Try everything you have. You want me to submit to you, a trifling True Immortal? You are absolutely dreaming! You-...eh? This time, you've completely suppressed and withdrawn your aura to the point where even I cannot sense it. Did the other True Gods and True Immortals berate you so much that you ended up deciding to hide that puny little aura of yours?"

The white-robed Ning stared at the skinny, short man.

For the sake of conducting more soulscours and acquiring more Protocosmic spirit-treasures, Ning had taken all of his spoils of war and used them to threaten all of the True Gods and True Immortals of the prisonworld, one at a time. All of those True Gods and True Immortals understood that if they continued to fight against Ning, they would eventually die. When they saw how many Protocosmic spirit-treasures Ning had, they knew that it was true that some True Gods and True Immortals had eventually lowered their heads.

However, only about twenty True Gods and True Immortals in the entire prisonworld had been willing to surrender without even fighting back. The others would not lower their heads so easily! Only when they truly sensed death impending would they be willing to bow their heads towards Jindan, a puny True Immortal with a third-tier Jindan.

"Puny?" Ning's aura suddenly soared to the heavens, so powerful as to cause the smirking man's face to instantly change.

"Y-you..." The skinny man stared at Ning in shock.

Ning's current aura was no weaker than his.

"Have a fight with me." Ning wielded a Darknorth sword in each hand, and with a swish he transformed into a streak of light that flew towards the skinny man.

"He actually dares to fight me in close combat?" The skinny man licked his lips. "Although he's grown much more powerful, that's only in terms of the Immortal energy in his body. His divine body shouldn't be as strong as mine yet. Since he dares to fight me in close combat...fine. To be able to kill an Overseer before dying will be worth it."

The skinny man's heart was filled with a desire to do battle. A pair of enormous axes appeared in his hands, and his body rapidly began to increase in size as well. He had been incredibly skinny, all skin and

bones, but now his muscles rapidly began to grow out. His emaciated body instantly became tall and strong, and his golden eyes became filled with a dominating, savage aura.

Twin axes in his hands, he let out a wild laugh. "Since you seek death, let me send you on your way!"

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The two instantly collided.

Clang! The True God actually stumbled two steps back. Clutching at his axes, he stared in absolute shock at Ning, who had been knocked flying backwards as well. He said disbelievingly, "You've surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos? Y-your sword arts...where did you learn them from?"

Every single technique that surpassed the Heavenly Daos in some way was incomparably priceless. Even he hadn't had the chance to learn one of them.

Just now, he had very nearly been chopped in half by Ning's sword-strike. Fortunately, his reaction speed was fast and his axe was large, allowing him to use it almost like a shield. This was the reason why he had been able to block that strange, bizarre sword-art.

"That's not something for the likes of you to find out about." Ning narrowed his eyes, staring at his foe. How formidable! Although his foe's axe-arts were ordinary, he was still a True God. Ning was just a half-step True God! In power, speed, and every other aspect, he was on a slightly lower level. The only reason why he could even pose a threat was because he had the number one sword-arts of the Three Realms.

However...that's what made it fun!

Only when he was under enough pressure in a true life-and-death battle would he be able to truly temper his sword-arts. Although battling against the prisoners of the prisonworld did carry some degree of risk, the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique ensured that he'd have a very good chance of successfully escaping any dangerous situation.

By comparison, in similar a battle in the outside world, he would be in much more danger than he was here.

"Be careful. Don't end up letting yourself be killed by me," Ning said.

"Hmph. You? Even though you have a sword-art that surpasses the Heavenly Daos, you aren't a match for me." This True God prisoner was quite proud and arrogant. His foe was clearly not a True God. How could he possibly lose?

Swoosh! Swoosh!

The two clashed against each other repeatedly in close combat.

This sort of close combat was far more dangerous than a fight in which both sides used magic treasures to attack from afar. In addition, after having being put at a disadvantage in their first clash, the True God prisoner had become much more wary of Ning's sword-arts.

Ning's sword showed absolutely no mercy at all.

The True God prisoner wanted to seize this opportunity to annihilate Ji Ning, the current Overseer. Perhaps in Ning's relics, he would be able to find the technique which had allowed Ning to surpass the limits of the Heavenly Daos.

This sort of battle...it was exactly what Ning needed right now.

Clang! Swish! Slash! Ning's sword-light and the True God's axe clashed again and again against each other.

Their battle grew longer and longer. One hour. Two hours. What truly astonished the True God prisoners was...he could vaguely sense that this Overseer's sword-arts were actually slowly rising in power. What he didn't realize was that ever since Ning had left Undermoon Lake, he had had very few chances to engage in true life-and-death battles; the only real fight he had thus far was against Daomother Devilhand and the others.

As for his capture of the Envoy, that was an act of utter domination.

This fight against the True God prisoner was the first time Ning had truly been able to go all-out in a sustained battle. The insights he had gained over the course of six hundred years in Undermoon Lake, combined with the new ideas he had gained while battling Daomother Devilheart, were all being brought to the surface. In fact, as they continued to fight, he began to suddenly gain insight into some of the intricacies of the sword-arts left behind by World God Northrest that he previously didn't understand.

Swish! Sword-light flashed.

The True God prisoner's body was split in half.

Ning put away his sword, standing quietly to one side and watching as the prisoner's divine body merged together and healed.

The True God stared at Ning, a complicated look on his face. From the way in which Ning had continuously increased the power of his sword-arts, he could sense that Ning was far more talented and gifted than he was. In truth, every single person who was successfully in mastering a technique that surpassed the Heavenly Daos in some way was an absolutely peerless genius.

The True God prisoner said in a low voice, "I lost."

Ning felt a surge of joy in his heart.

Some of the mysteries of the sword couldn't be understood simply through meditation. Only true life-and-death battles would allow one to truly understand how those mysteries were to be used and applied.

"A pity that this True God's axe-arts aren't strong enough. It would've been better if he was stronger," Ning mused to himself. "A single life-and-death battle like this is worth more than a year's worth of meditation. Mm. Time to go seek out the next True God."

Of course, prior to finding the next True God, he would have to take away this prisoner's treasures. His Violetjewel sword was in desperate need of Five Elements essence.

In the past, he had to use some Protocosmic spirit-treasures to slowly grind away at the energy reserves of a True God or True Immortal in order to beat them. He would then tell them, 'So-and-so has already submitted to me. All those who resist me will die.' He would use words to threaten them and bully them. Although he was occasionally successful, those successes made up just a tiny portion of the total number of True Gods and True Immortals in the prisonworld. The more powerful one was, the less likely they would be willing to lower their heads.

To rely on slowly exhausting his foes required him to spend decades for each True God and True Immortal.

But now, he could fight them head-on! Things would be much faster than before.

"Are you willing to submit?" Ning looked at the True God prisoner.

The True God prisoner returned to his emaciated, skinny form. Lowering his head, he gritted out the words, "I am willing."

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 32: An Unexpected Surprise

Ji Ning first soulscoured him, then took away his treasures. Of course...he gave the True God some spirit-pills as well. Due to their length battle, this True God had used up quite a bit of his divine power; if he wasn't given enough spirit-pills, his life probably wouldn't last for much longer. Although there was no way to replenish his divine power, replenishing his Immortal energy would also suffice for him to sustain his life.

There were relatively few Ki Refiners who also trained as Fiendgod Refiners, but almost every single Fiendgod Body Refiner was also a Ki Refiner; the only question was how talented they were in that respect. Subhuti, Daoist Three Purities, Tathagata, and many others were all born as True Gods, and they eventually trained to become Daofathers of the Great Firmament as Ki Refiners.

Through the use of spirit-pills, these prisoners would be able to live a very, very long time. Right now, they only used up energy to keep themselves alive, after all; their energy expenditures were quite low.

"It seems that it is unlikely that I'll find what I need from the memories of these prisoners," Ning mused to himself. "Still, it makes sense. I've already acquired many techniques from World God Northrest. Given what I already have, it is quite unlikely that a prisoner of Pangaea will be able to provide me with a nice surprise. Still, I won't give up hope, no matter how faint it is."

Different chaosworlds would give birth to different civilizations. Perhaps some of them would produce unique techniques of their own. With the Endwar nigh, Ning naturally wanted to seize every chance he could find to grow more powerful.

One had to remember that the prisonworld itself had been located in the hands of someone as weak as Youngflame Freak. The prisoners of Pangaea were far more powerful than Youngflame Freak; perhaps one of them might've had a great stroke of fortune in the past and acquired certain special treasures or unique abilities.

Whoosh. Ning landed atop an island within a placid lake. With a wave of his hand, he caused the jade shrine to descend upon the island as well as many stone steles. Finally, the enormous goldstar beads plummeted like meteors to land on the island as well.

Ning stepped into the jade shrine, then sat down in the lotus position atop the prayer mat. He stilled his mind, beginning to mentally go through his recent battles and experiences.

Every single battle had to be analyzed with great care. He had to pull the experience he needed out of them and use it to improve himself.

There were only so many True Gods and True Immortals in the prisonworld; after fighting all of them, Ning would no longer be able to find any new opponents. Thus, he had to value every battle and opponent.

Ning spent more than ten days meditating on his insights, supported by the goldstar beads and the stone sword-steles. After ten days, he had gained all that he could, and so Ning put away the treasures and once more transformed into a streak of black lightning, flying towards the next True God.

Battle. Meditation. Battle. Meditation...

It became a regular pattern!

Ning gained experience from every single battle, allowing him to further perfect his sword-arts. However, upon encountering the fifth True God prisoner, Ning suffered a sudden, unexpected loss.

“Die.”

The tall, ugly, skinny old man’s six arms all rapidly expanded in length as he sent his six claws tearing towards Ning from multiple directions. His claw-arts were unfathomably strange, and Ning’s body was covered with blood. Just now, he had been able to withstand the first wave of attacks but his body had been ripped open. In the face of this terrifying opponent, it seemed that the [Eight-Nine Arcane Art] wasn’t going to be very useful.

“Mirrors of the Heavens!” The battered Ning immediately willed it, and the skies above him became filled with ancient copper mirrors. The 3600 mirrors hung in the air, blocking the impending claw attacks and buying Ning just a tiny bit of time.

Swoosh!

Ning hurriedly used the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique to dodge more than a thousand kilometers away, leaving the jail ‘cell’ region.

“What a terrifying True God Ultrafish. It seems that the information I gained from soulscouring the other True Gods and True Immortals wasn’t completely correct.” Ning stood outside the restrictive formation, filled with terror at the close call. This foe’s claw-arts were absolutely terrifying; Ning had been badly injured in their very first clash, and the only reason he had been able to survive was because his own sword-arts were formidable as well. Otherwise, he would’ve instantly been ripped apart into tiny pieces.

Ning didn’t just pick foes randomly; there was a plan behind it. He had soulscoured many prisoners and thus he knew a fair amount of information regarding the many True Gods and True Immortals of Pangaea.

Ning had mentally divided these True Gods and True Immortals into three different types.

The first type was comparable to an ordinary Daofather of the Three Realms.

The second type was comparable to a top-tier Daofather of the Three Realms.

The most powerful type was close to overlord-class Daofathers in power.

Most of these True God and True Immortal prisoners were at a fairly low level of insight into the Dao, with very few having gained insight into the Heavenly Daos. This was why most of them were merely comparable to ordinary Daofathers! Some, by relying on powerful divine abilities that were as dominating as Ning's own [Starseizing Hand], were able to unleash the power of a top-tier Daofather. And some were like True God Ultrafish.

"True God Ultrafish...in the memories of the other True Gods and True Immortals, he was supposedly quite an ordinary True God with very ordinary divine abilities." Ning mused to himself, "I didn't expect that he would've reached the fifth stage in abyssforce; in terms of power, he should be comparable to a top-tier Daofather now."

Abyssforce wasn't that powerful in attacking, relatively speaking. If Ultrafish had reached the fifth stage in an offensively oriented type of power like swordforce, Ning probably would've been completely destroyed in their first exchange.

It really was true that True God Ultrafish's life experiences and luck had been average, resulting in him not being able to acquire any particularly powerful divine abilities. Otherwise, if he was able to use them in concert with his fifth-stage abyssforce, he would absolutely be close to an overlord-class Daofather in power.

"I need to be more careful," Ning mused to himself. "Although I do have the intelligence I gained from soulscouring those prisoners, they've all been trapped here for a very long period of time; it isn't strange that some of them may have made breakthroughs. Mm...in the future, each time I fight someone, I need to first use [Three Heads, Six Arms]; just now, if I had used that technique, I wouldn't have suffered so badly."

Ning had been so caught off-guard by the suddenly, unexpected danger that he didn't even have the time to activate the [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique, to say nothing of [Three Heads, Six Arms].

[Three Heads, Six Arms] allowed him to manifest two more heads and four more arms with his divine power. This meant it needed time to activate, albeit just a tiny bit of time. By comparison, activating the [Starseizing Hand] was so fast as to be nearly instantaneous, requiring just a thought.

"Ahahaha...kid, is that all you have? And you want to make me submit?" The tall, skinny old man laughed in an ugly manner. "You ran pretty fast just now, and your mirrors are quite bizarre as well. Otherwise, you would've lost your little life. You should feel lucky that you managed to witness my claw-arts and survive to tell the tale."

"True God Ultrafish." Ning actually chuckled. "Very good. Yet another powerful opponent for me."

"Opponent?" The skinny old man laughed coldly, "You want to use me as a way to train yourself? Hmph. Careful that you don't die from it."

“I’ll be back.” Ning turned, transforming into a black lightning streak that quickly flew away.

“Hmph.” The tall, skinny old man watched coldly as Ning left. After Ning departed, he finally frowned “This Overseer has a pretty Immortal energy aura, but his divine power’s aura is clearly weaker than mine. Just now, I actually wasn’t able to kill him in one blow, and his sword-arts really were quite fast, even faster than my claw-arts. Was that a sword-art that has surpassed the Heavenly Daos? Where did he learn such a thing?”

.....

Ning felt happy whenever he encountered a powerful opponent. He could sense that he was continuously improving, and that he was gaining more and more insights into the sword-arts left behind by World God Northrest.

Ning continued his voyage through the prisonworld, battling True Gods all the way. Some True Gods, Ning could defeat. Some, Ning could just barely fight to a standstill. Whenever Ning encountered foes like these, he would immediately leave after a short battle. He would come back for them later.

There were also some who could completely suppress Ning in strength. In fact, there were some like True God Ultrafish who could very nearly kill Ning.

As for the most absolutely, monstrously talented True Gods who were comparable to Elders Gods or overlord-class Daofathers in strength...Ning didn’t even dare to touch them. He didn’t have an Envoy on him right now; fighting such an opponent would be like courting death.

Of course, if he chose to focus on long-range attacks using his Daofather-level energy with his [Brightmoon] sword-art, he would definitely be able to match a top-tier Daofather in power. But Ning’s goal here was to temper his sword-arts, which was why he focused on close combat, which his weakness right now.

Whoosh.

The True God’s body was split in half and knocked flying away. Far off in the distance, the two halves joined together into a new whole.

“I lost.” Yet another True God bent the knee to Ji Ning.

Ning reached out with his hand, placing it atop the True God’s head. The True God did not try to fight back.

Ning quickly flipped through this person’s memories, discarding all the useless ones in search of something that would benefit him. Although none of the previous soulscours had proved fruitful, Ning had never given up. So long as there was even a hint of a chance, he would continue in his current path.

“Eh?” Ning suddenly saw a seemingly ordinary memory, but was instantly stunned by it. Then...he revealed a look of joy.

“A Heavengazer Tower of Radiance?” Ning murmured to himself. “A treasure like this actually exists? How marvelous. The chaos-kingdom of Pangaea truly does have a much more powerful foundation than that of the Three Realms.” Ning’s pulse began to quicken.

Heavengazer Towers were a type of Chaos treasure...and the type which Ning desperately needed right now. In truth, while soulscouring his defeated opponents, Ning had discovered quite a few treasures which he desired, but none of them existed within the prisonworld.

The Heavengazer Tower's owner, however...was imprisoned right here inside the prisonworld!

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Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 33: Five Years Later

What did Ji Ning need the most right now?

He was in desperate need of more time!

His talent was beyond dispute. Even as a youth, Patriarch Lu and Subhuti had favored him. After experiencing so many things, he had only become an even more outstanding figure. An Immortal cultivator's talent wasn't something that was set in stone; it could change and transform as he grew up and experienced all sorts of events. Some might regress, while others might soar to the heavens and become increasingly dazzling.

Clearly, Ning was the type to become more and more dazzling...but even the most monstrous of geniuses needed time to grow!

Treasures that could change the rate at which time flowed...yes, they existed in the Three Realms. The Grand Xia Emperor, for example, had been able to use the Brightmoon Diagram of the Mountains and Rivers to change the flow of time within it! But this sort of temporal change used up an enormous amount of energy, even though the magic treasure itself was helping to facilitate it. Although the Xia Emperor was a Pure Yang True Immortal, he was only able to allow some weak Wanxiang-level children to experience a different rate of time. He wasn't capable of doing the same for Celestial Immortals.

Ning was an Emyrean God and True Immortal. To change the rate of time for him...even Subhuti and Daoist Three Purities would feel a headache if they had to come up with such an idea.

If Mother Nuwa was still around, she would be able to do it.

Mother Nuwa had created the Six Paths of Reincarnation. Time flowed at a much, much faster rate than normal in the region around the Bridge of Despair and the Six Paths of Reincarnation! Countless souls flowed into the place, but time continued to flow through the area at a terrifying pace without the need for any Immortals or Fiendgods to use up their energy to maintain it. This was because the Six Paths of Reincarnation were made perfectly; they used up very little energy, and the amount of energy they absorbed from the outside world was more than enough to sustain themselves.

But the Six Paths of Reincarnation were a formation!

The Heavengazer Tower of Radiance was a magic treasure!

Inside the Heavengazer Tower, time was stably maintained at a rate that was ten times faster than that of the outside world. Ten years would pass inside for every year that passed outside. This was an extremely stable mechanism, and there was no need for any outside sources of energy. The treasure itself was a stable spacetime dimension of its own. Even True Gods, Daofathers, and World Gods could go inside it, and time would still flow at ten times the normal right.

In addition...

This magic treasure could also be used to accelerate the speed of time even further! However, if one wanted to go beyond the 'base' of ten times normal speed, one would have to use up some Immortal energy. In addition, the more powerful the user, the more energy would be used up in speeding up time for cultivation.

"A stable spacetime treasure," Ning marveled. "My master Subhuti was able to establish the Crescent world in a different fold of spacetime, but not even he would be able to forge such a stable spacetime treasure such as this."

Stable spacetime treasures were far too difficult to make. This was the only one Ning had ever heard of, and it was a Chaos treasure.

More than anything else, Ning needed time. The Heavengazer Tower was able to speed up time by a factor of ten, and if Ning was willing to use up some of his energy, it would be able to speed up time even faster. Most importantly of all...this treasure existed within the prisonworld. A True God was carrying it!

"True God Shiyu?" Ning frowned.

The possessor of the Heavengazer Tower was True God Shiyu.

This True God, however, could be said to be the most terrifyingly powerful True God in the entire prisonworld. Almost all of the True Gods and True Immortals imprisoned here knew of him, but very few knew that he was in possession of the Heavengazer Tower. Ning had soulscoured many True Gods and True Immortals, but he had only learned this bit of information now because the True God which Ning had just soulscoured had been one of True God Shiyu's subordinates.

"He's very hard to deal with. He's clearly just a True God, but he once battled against Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. If you factor in the Heavengazer Tower, he has a total of three Chaos treasures," Ning mused to himself. "Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals...in the Three Realms, they would be considered overlords. In other words, he's at a level of power which is close to that of an overlord-class expert."

"Exhausting his energy reserves? That won't work either. He's at a very high level of enlightenment; he's one of the tiny handful of True Gods and True Immortals in the prisonworld who is able to draw energy from the primordial chaos," Ning mused to himself.

One had to have a certain degree of insights into the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos in order to be able to extract energy from it, but once this became possible, one would no longer have to worry about one's energy being used up.

All Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were capable of this, but only a tiny number of True Gods and True Immortals were. True God Shiyu, however, was obviously one of them.

"What should I do? How should I deal with him?" Ning pondered to himself. "I put the Starseizing Manor in the Crescent world...but even if I went back there to gather the people I need for the Rahu Formation, I'll still be significantly weaker than someone of the overlord level of power."

Ning had fought against an overlord-class expert before. Daomother Devilhand, using just one hand, had been able to defeat Ning while he was in command of an Envoy. But of course, her attacks were considered extremely formidable even amongst other overlord-class Daofathers.

As for True God Shiyu, he was only able to stay alive in the face of attacks from Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals; in terms of raw power, he probably wasn't much stronger than Ning had been when controlling the Envoy.

"Perhaps, when my swordforce reaches the fifth stage, I'll have a chance of beating him," Ning mused to himself.

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Ning continued to battle his way through the prisonworld. He no longer solely fought against True Gods; he even began to act against the True Immortals as well.

He was constantly gaining insights into the mysteries behind the sword-arts left behind by World God Northrest in the hopes of reaching the fifth stage of heartforce as soon as possible.

However...

Although he was slowly improving nonstop, he still felt as though he was just a hairsbreadth away from reaching that stage. This sort of feeling was absolutely maddening. However, Ning was able to remain quite calm. He knew that so long as he continued to advance like this, sooner or later he would make his breakthrough.

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Time continued to flow on, day by day, month by month.

In the Three Realms.

Yet another great Realmwar was taking place now, this time on the Kingshill major world of the Zhuaxu Realm.

This was the second Realmwar to occur after the one in the Yellow Emperor Realm. In terms of size, it was considerably smaller than the Yellow Emperor Realmwar, but it was still far larger than many of the Realmwars that had come before it, such as the Crimsonbright Realmwar.

On the Nuwa Alliance's side, there was a total of more than eight hundred Epyrean Gods and True Immortals.

On the Seamless Gate's side, there were six hundred Epyrean Gods and True Immortals, along with a supporting army of golems.

"It's hard to say who will win this Realmwar." Daofather Netherjade was standing atop a wall, staring off into the distance.

The black-robed Godking chuckled. "That's normal. The war for karmic luck inherently involves an element of luck as well. All we can ask for is for no more monsters like Ji Ning to appear out of nowhere."

“The Primordial Era gave birth to Houyi, while the Three Realms gave birth to Ji Ning. Enough already. If the Nuwa Alliance was to produce a third such monster, we should just go ahead and give the damn war up.” Daofather Netherjade shook his head.

“Agreed. Houyi truly is terrifying.” The black-robed Godking sighed. “I never heard anything about his axe-skills. Didn’t he always use arrows in the past? Archery is a long-range form of combat, while axes are used in close combat. The difference between the two is enormous. How could he have become so powerful with a hatchet?”

“I heard that long ago, Houyi tried to chop down the divine osmanthus tree of the Lunar Star.” Daofather Netherjade chuckled. “That osmanthus tree isn’t so easily chopped down. Anyone capable of chopping it down would probably be capable of annihilating the entire Lunar Star. I’ve always heard that Subhuti’s eldest disciple spent all of his days chopping down trees as a woodcutter. Now, it seems, it was because Houyi has never given up on chopping down that osmanthus tree.”

“But I’m worried...” Daofather Netherjade frowned. “Houyi’s greatest talent always lay in his arrows. If he’s that powerful with the hatchet...how powerful have his arrows become?”

“Exactly. He’s going to be trouble. If his archery skills are too formidable, when the Endwar erupts, most likely only uncle-master Everwood or the Fiendlord would be able to withstand him,” the black-robed Godking sighed.

“Right.” Daofather Netherjade nodded, then sighed again. “Even though it is true that the Endwar is rapidly approaching...I have to admit, Ji Ning is every bit the monster that Houyi was. In fact, he’s grown at an even more astonishing level of speed. In just a few short centuries, he’s mastered a sword-art that surpasses the Heavenly Daos. A peerless, monstrous Sword Immortal like him...if he’s given a few thousand years, it’s hard to imagine how powerful he will become. He would probably become another Houyi.”

The black-robed Godking nodded.

In the past, he had never truly cared about Ji Ning, but the battle at the Deerchaser world and the sight of Ji Ning clashing against Daomother Devilhand had truly caused the Godking to feel nervous. He had to admit...Ji Ning’s potential was downright horrifying.

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Within Prisonworld 17, located inside the stone stele that had been placed inside the gorge of that frozen star in the primordial chaos.

Five years had passed in the blink of an eye.

It had been five years since his ‘assassination’. Ning had come to this world, determined to temper himself through battle, and he had.

Atop a beautiful grassland, there was an absolutely dazzling shrine that seemed to have been carved out of pure jade. Inside the jade shrine, a white-robed youth was seated in the lotus position, his eyes closed.

Rumble...

A surge of power, birthed from the essence of the sword and located in the deepest recesses of the primordial chaos, began to flow to this location.

An indescribably arcane and profound aura began to swirl in the area around Ning, a terrifying, heart-stopping aura that belonged to the essence of the sword.

Slowly, Ning's very body began to emanate with dazzling, rainbow-colored sword-light. It was as though Ning himself had become transformed into an uttering terrifying sword.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 21: The Bloodlotus Blooms Chapter 34: Swordforce, Stage Five

Ji Ning's eyes were closed.

The many insights he had gained into the sword were continuously merging together. It was like mist being condensed. Finally, with a boom, the mist completely condensed into a 'seed', a seed surrounded by a faint aura of sword-ki. This sword-ki seed was the complete crystallization of all of Ning's insights into the essence of the sword. It was something which he could sense in his heart.

It wasn't something that could be seen with the naked eye. It was something that could only be seen and sensed by the heart.

This sword-seed had been planted within Ning's heart.

"Whew." Ning let out a soft breath, then opened his eyes.

The jade shrine had become quiet and peaceful once more. The rainbow-colored sword-light surrounding Ning had vanished as well, and Ning now looked as ordinary as ever. However, his eyes dimly shone with a sharpness that struck fear in the hearts of others.

"When one's insights into the sword crystallize into a seed, it will naturally gain a soul of its own," Ning murmured softly to himself.

Thanks to the guidance of World God Northrest, Ning knew exactly what a Sword Immortal's path would be like.

The fifth stage of swordforce, 'Sword God'. When one's insights into the essence of the sword reached an extremely high level, after one broke the final bottleneck a Dao-seed would naturally be formed. Plant seeds would have to sprout before they could grow, and the same was true for this Dao-seed, which naturally had the aura of the true essence of the sword. In fact, Ning's every punch and kick would now contain the tremendous power of fifth-stage swordforce, which was the dazzling, rainbow-colored light that had surrounded him earlier.

"I've finally reached the Sword God stage." Ning stretched out his middle finger, thrusting it forward as he could a sword. Rumble...instantly, rainbow-colored sword-light emerged from his finger and swirled around it.

The rainbow sword-light was incomparably agile, filled with a transcendent aura of sharpness.

It felt as though it could cut through all things as easily as rotten wood!

It was utterly unshakable and unbreakable.

This...this was the sword!

“No wonder it is this difficult to reach the fifth stage of swordforce. If it wasn’t for the Nine Chaos Seals, the assistance of the stone steles, and all those True God and True Immortal sparring partners, I can’t even imagine how long it would’ve taken for me to break through.” Only after making the breakthrough did he truly sense and understand how different the Sword God stage was.

In this moment, Ning understood that the path of the sword was a far longer one than he had imagined. Even World God Northrest was merely a traveler on that path.

“Good. The more powerful the path is, the better. If there was a limit to it, it would be boring.” Ning rose to his feet, walking out of the jade shrine and staring at the stone sword-steles outside. “I’ve just barely reached the Sword God stage; I need to carefully stabilize myself at this new level of power. Next, I’ll once more ponder on the sword-arts which World God Northrest left behind, so as to incorporate them into my [Brightmoon].”

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It had instantly become much easier for Ning to meditate on the stone sword-steles. Many things which had previously puzzled him had become clear, and his understanding of the sword continued to rise.

He was fusing all of these insights into his own [Brightmoon] sword-art! The [Brightmoon] sword-art was the representation of all of Ning’s insights into the sword, and he had infused it with everything he knew.

This meditation session ended up lasting for three months.

Whoosh. Ning was wielding a Darknorth sword in his hands, gently twirling it around.

Rainbow sword-light flowed over its surface, making it seem so dreamlike that it looked as though it was a series of illusions, making it hard to discern with clarity. This was the new ‘Shadowless’ stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art.

“It’ll be hard for me to improve any further in a short amount of time,” Ning mused to himself. “True God Shiyu possesses the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance; no matter what, I have to acquire that treasure. Given enough time, I’ll be able to grow even more powerful. However, prior to battling against him...I should first use other experts to further temper my sword-arts.”

Sword-arts could only be truly perfected through combat, through trial by battle.

If one completely focused on meditating, perhaps one might reach a high level of insight, but one’s actual combat ability would be flawed.

“Who should I choose to test my sword out? Mm...” Ning suddenly smiled. “Him.”

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A wizened old man was seated in the lotus position atop a desolate grassland.

“Eh?” He suddenly raised his head, glancing at the white-robed youth that had just appeared in the skies far above him. The white-robed youth was charging down towards him.

“The Overseer?” The skinny old man revealed a hint of cold amusement. “He actually dares to return to my place?”

Swoosh.

The white-robed youth landed on the ground, just a few hundred meters away from the skinny old man. He was now located deep within the restrictive formation, and the skinny old man would be able to attack him at any time.

“Long time no see.” Ning looked at him.

“It’s only been five years. I’ve barely had enough time to shut my eyes, but you’ve come back again.” The skinny old man shook his head. “Your Immortal energy truly is astoundingly vast, and you would be able to withstand my power if you controlled magic treasures to fight from afar. You wouldn’t be able to actually do anything to me, but it would be equally hard for me to kill you. I think you should leave. I don’t want to waste more of my divine power.”

This old man was True God Ultrafish, the one who had nearly killed Ning five years ago.

Whoosh. Whoosh. A pair of swords appeared in Ning’s hands.

“Eh?” The skinny old man’s face changed. He smirked. “You want to fight me in close combat again? You?”

“Yes. Me.” As soon as Ning’s words came out, he immediately charged forward.

The skinny old man was instantly enraged. He was a prisoner here, after all, and so he was extremely sparing in his use of energy. Every time he used up a bit of energy, his lifespan in the prisonworld was reduced correspondingly. He could tell that this Overseer would be quite powerful in controlling magic treasures, and so he really didn’t even wish to fight. However, this Overseer was so wildly arrogant as to actually engage him in close combat again?

“Since he wishes to die, I’ll send him on the path to oblivion.” Although the old man could guess that the Overseer had probably made some sort of a breakthrough, he felt that the breakthrough couldn’t amount to much. It had only been five years. How big of a breakthrough could it be?

Boom! Boom!

The two instantly began to clash against each other.

“That’s all the power you have? How dare you come back again!” The skinny old man bellowed.

Their two shadows flickered as fast as lightning as sword-light clashed against claw-light.

“You really have improved a bit...but it is useless. Although your sword is fast, your power is too weak. If you were to become a True God, you might have a chance of beating me, but for now? You are far from that level.” The skinny old man assaulted Ning with both his words and his attacks, but he remained unable to defeat Ning.

Ning was extremely calm.

He had completely suppressed and withdrawn his rainbow sword-light! Its power was simply too great; he'd be able to easily defeat his foe, which wasn't the result he wished for. He had come here to further temper his sword-arts, allowing them to grow and be improved. Naturally, Ning had chosen to suppress his rainbow sword-light, completely relying on the intricacies of the [Brightmoon] sword-art and his divine power as a half-step True God to fight this foe.

Even though he didn't use the rainbow sword-light, his [Brightmoon] sword-art was now far more profound than before, and so he was able to stave off this foe.

"Break, break, break!" The skinny old man fought with utterly wild abandon, and his fifth-stage abyssforce was extraordinarily powerful, but he remained unable to break apart Ning's sword-arts.

"His sword is too fast, faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. Now, it has become even more mysterious and unpredictable than before, and his techniques have become even more skillful. Although I have the upper hand, I'm actually unable to defeat him." The skinny old man grew frantic. "If this continues, my divine power will be depleted soon. Although I have Immortal energy as well, I merely have a second-tier Jindan as a Ki Refiner; I'll be much weaker than I am now in close combat."

The two continued to battle furiously. As more time passed, the old man grew increasingly frantic.

"It's about time." Ning could no longer see anything new coming from the old man's claw-arts, making this fight no longer useful to him. The Darknorth sword in his hands instantly flashed with the colors of the rainbow.

"The Sword God stage?" The skinny old man called out in shock.

Ning's sword, covered with a layer of rainbow swordforce, instantly increased in power by a tremendous amount, becoming even more powerful than the old man's claw-arts!

Slash!

The sword-light drifted outwards, knocking aside the old man's claws and slicing out in a solitary, ghostly arc through the old man's body. The old man's body fell apart into two pieces, then rapidly reformed once more. The old man stared in blank shock at Ning.

"True God Ultrafish...are you willing to submit?" Ning looked at him.

True God Ultrafish stared blankly at him for a long moment, then lowered his head. "I submit."

True God Ultrafish was never the arrogant, prideful type as he had a very ordinary status in the chaos-kingdom of Pangaea. It was only because he had been imprisoned here for a very long period of time that he had managed to break through to reach the fifth stage of abyssforce, resulting in his power increasing dramatically. However, he had long ago grown accustomed to bowing his head before greater powers. He was accustomed to submitting.

"I defeated a True God who reached the fifth stage of abyssforce, just like that." Ning's face was calm, but he felt great excitement in his heart.

This was absolutely the power of a top-tier Daofather.

He hadn't used any formations, nor had he used an Envoy. He had merely used his own close combat skills to defeat his opponent.

The term Sword God, in and of itself, represented a group of utterly terrifying figures. The former number one assassin of the Seamless Gate, the deceased Swordfather Darklight, had also reached the fifth stage of swordforce. The awe-inspiringly famous Daofather Fujū, who had been possessed by World God Northrest, had also reached the fifth stage of swordforce. And now, Ji Ning had reached the fifth stage of swordforce as well, and he had also mastered the [Five Treasures] sword-art.

Fifth-stage swordforce, paired with techniques that surpassed the limits of the Heavenly Daos...this was undoubtedly the most terrifyingly powerful sword-art that existed in the Three Realms.

His sword-arts were now even more terrifying than Swordfather Darklight's had been!

If the current Ji Ning was once more ambushed as he had been a few years ago, Ning could've blocked Swordfather Darklight's ambushing attack head-on!