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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 1: Leaving the Three Realms

An Immortal estate located within the primordial chaos. This estate was a few kilometers in size, and it was filled with creeks, small streams, flowers, and grass.

“Father, will you live here permanently in the future? Won’t you return to the Three Realms?” Brightmoon held onto Ji Ning’s arm as she looked curiously at the area.

“Yes. I plan to enter secluded meditation.” Ning nodded and smiled. “It will be a long time before I return to the Three Realms.”

The lifeblood oath he had sworn was that he would leave the Three Realms within a thousand years of becoming an Elder God. Once this part of the oath became active, his soul would instantly become bound by its power. Even his Primaltwin would be affected. This was why, even though Ning intended to have his Primaltwin stand guard over the Three Realms, it couldn’t actually live within it. It had to reside in a part of the primordial chaos that was right next to the Three Realms.

Only when he finished his lifeblood oath and actually carried Northrest’s final message to Vastheaven Palace would he be released from it.

“Oh. That works as well, I guess. I’ll just spend a lot of time here in the future. This is actually my first time journeying into the primordial chaos.” Brightmoon was rather excited. “Father, I’m going to go take a look at some other places.

“Go ahead.” Ning nodded.

“Young master.” Autumn Leaf and Uncle White had accompanied Brightmoon here. They knew Ning very well...and they knew it made no sense that he had to remain within the primordial chaos while engaging in secluded meditation.

“Ning, son, are you keeping things from us?” Uncle White asked, and Autumn Leaf looked towards Ning as well.

“A few things.” Ning nodded. “There are some things I have to do. During the past period of time, I’ve been slowly working on rebuilding my Primaltwin. Now that its been restored and now that everything has been settled, I have to go take care of things. Don’t worry. My Primaltwin will remain here.”

His true body would keep a spare clone behind as well, safely ensconced within the prisonworld.

As for his Primaltwin’s spare clone, it would be kept safe within the Crescent major world.

During the Endwar, his Primaltwin had self-detonated. It was at the Ancestral Immortal level, and thus an absolutely inconceivable amount of chaos nectar would be needed if he wanted to immediately revive it. His only choice was to slowly rebuild it naturally. Ning had already mastered the Heavenly Dao of Water and had thus gained a certain degree of insight into the Heavenly Dao of Primordial Chaos. He was now capable of absorbing chaos energy and was thus able to constantly absorb a large amount of it, making the rebuilding process fairly quick.

His true body was a dual refiner and would need ten thousand years to rebuild. His Primaltwin was merely a Ki Refiner; only three thousand years was necessary. Thanks to the Heavengazer Tower, Ning was able to easily maintain a rate of time that was twenty times faster than normal. Thus, his Primaltwin had been rebuilt long ago. The only reason he had taken so long was because he had needed to spend a bit more time settling his affairs in the Three Realms.

“Young master...” Autumn Leaf said worriedly, “Let me go with you.”

“No need.” Ning shook his head.

This was no joking matter. Even the mere process of leaving the Three Realms via that spatial vortex would be incredibly dangerous. No one could say what would happen on such a journey. To have Autumn Leaf accompany him into such great danger would be completely pointless.

His Immortal estate in the primordial chaos had already been set up. Ning had invited some friends and family over to tour through it, with the guest list including the likes of his junior apprentice-brother Mu Northson, his own apprentice Bluecliff Xiaoyu, his senior apprentice-brothers Sun Wukong and Crazy Ji, as well as many other figures. He even invited Lu Dongbin, Kuafu, and other major powers to visit this new home of his as well. Everyone knew that if they wished to meet with Ning in the future, they would have to enter the primordial chaos and visit this Immortal estate.

“Disciple, the primordial chaos is a place where experts are as common as the clouds. Our Three Realms is just a tiny little corner of it. You have to be careful.” Subhuti looked at Ning.

“Don’t worry, master.” Ning nodded.

Today was the day for Ning to set off on his journey. He hadn’t informed anyone of his departure save his master Subhuti.

“When Mother Nuwa left, she never returned. We haven’t heard any word of her at all.” Subhuti said softly, “You have to be careful, careful, careful. If you ever encounter Mother Nuwa, notify me right away.”

“I will.” Ning nodded. His Primaltwin would remain close to the Three Realms within the Immortal estate, and it shared memories with his true body. Whatever his true body experienced, his Primaltwin would also share in.

“Go then.” Subhuti nodded.

Whoosh.

A deep azure flying boat suddenly appeared in midair. Ning boarded the flying boat. A series of spatial ripples spread out around it, and a few moments later the flying boat teleported away through the Void.

“Be careful.” Subhuti watched silently and hopefully as Ning left.

Long, long ago, Mother Nuwa had left the Three Realms. Now, Ji Ning had left the Three Realms as well.

Both of them were the most supreme figures of their times in the Three Realms.

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The azure boat continued to blink through the Void, advancing continuously.

The insides of the flying boat weren't that large. Ning sat in the lotus position, his gaze passing through the walls of the boat and focusing on the primordial chaos outside.

"I'm going to leave the Three Realms and wander through the primordial chaos, all by myself..." Ning shook his head. "A pity that to this very day, I still don't have the power I need to break the chains of the prisonworld."

The prisonworld contained a large number of prisoners within it, including even Elder God and Ancestral Immortal prisoners.

The manacles that held them could only be broken by those who were at the World God or Chaos Immortal level of power. In fact, someone at that level of power could shatter the prisonworld itself. Ji Ning was now extremely powerful, but even when he struck at the manacles with full force using Violetjewel, he was still only able to leave behind a few scratches behind, with the scratches quickly being automatically repaired. Clearly, he was still quite a ways off from being able to sever the manacles.

In truth, if one thought about it in detail, it made sense.

Why did the King of Pangaea arrange for Overseers to watch over the prisonworlds? It was precisely to oversee them and ensure that they would be able to make a report if any World Gods appeared. This meant that even prisoners who ascended to become World Gods would need a fairly long period of time in order to break apart those manacles and the prisonworld. The King of Pangaea would have more than enough time to hasten to the prisonworld! This was the entire point of having an Overseer.

Ning had just barely reached the World God threshold of power. He was able to just barely cause a bit of damage to those manacles now.

"Still...those Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were quite wealthy." Ning nodded secretly to himself. This flying boat he was on, for example, was a top-grade Chaos treasure that was known as the Godwood Moatship.

The prisoners of the prisonworld, including the wild dog Elder God, had all been beaten and plundered by Ning. Even the incredibly savage wild dog Elder God could just barely be considered a supreme Elder God. Ning didn't even need to use Violetjewel; the 'Heartsword stance' alone was enough to easily defeat all of them.

"If I was able to break apart those manacles, I would gain quite a few retainers." Ning shook his head, casting those thoughts aside. With another thought, he caused the 3600 Goldstar Beads of the Heavens to appear around him, swirling around him like countless glittering stars.

Ever since he had mastered the Heartsword stance three hundred years ago during the Endwar, he had spent a good deal of his time quietly training and meditating upon it. As a result, Ning had made continuous improvements into his insights regarding the Dao.

He had insights into primordial chaos...

He had insights into space...

He had insights into water and lightning...

He had insights into the sword...

In fact, Ning had even mastered eight of the Nine Chaos Seals. He was at the same level of mastery as Mother Nuwa had been, prior to her becoming a World God.

“The Ninth Chaos Seal...I have the feeling that if I am able to master it, something special will happen.” Ning could sense that the various insights he had gained were building atop each other in a cumulative fashion. Once he fully mastered the ninth chaos seal, all nine of the chaos seals would merge together into a whole, then completely transform. Ning was quite eager to see this happen.

He spent more than half a month flying through the primordial chaos aboard the Godwood Moatship. Finally, he reached the area which the star map marked as containing the spatial vortex.

“So this is the spatial tunnel?” Ning sat aboard his Moatship, staring in front of him.

An utterly enormous spatial wormhole lay in front of him.

The gigantic vortex tore at the surrounding primordial chaos, causing it to swirl around it in multiple rings. Even Ning felt a sense of pressure and dread.

“The most dangerous vortex of them all.” The alien Outsiders who had been lucky enough to survive passage to the Three Realms had written down extremely detailed records regarding this dangerous vortex.

“It doesn’t matter. I have nowhere else I can go.”

“In we go.”

Ning’s divine power completely filled the Godwood Moatship. In this moment, the Moatship seemed to have transformed into a sword, and Ning commanded it fly in as though he was flying atop a giant sword. Swoosh! After having hesitated briefly before the spatial vortex, the Moatship finally plunged deep inside of it.

Whoooooosh.

The vortex was filled with an incomparably powerful tearing force that was instantly applied towards the Moatship, dragging it deeper inside. Ning commanded the Moatship to follow that dragging power inside while doing his best to keep stable and ablate its power.

As a truly supreme Sword Immortal, Ning had reached a truly inconceivable level of finesse when it came to controlling and ablating power.

Whoosh.

Although the ripping power of the spatial vortex was quite terrifying, the Moatship was able to quite easily and safely make its way deeper inside of it. No problems were caused for Ning at all.

“I hope I can safely pass through this spatial vortex and reach the Badlands Territory,” Ning murmured to himself softly. “Given my abilities with the sword, I should be able to stay alive. But if I get lost...all bets are off.”

In front of Ning was an absolutely enormous spatial tunnel that was filled with countless spatial tears, some pitch-black and some ashen-white.

Whoosh!

The Moatship flew forward, making its way through that enormous spatial wormhole.

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 2: Spacetime Transfer Array

There were three possible outcomes when one flew through this spatial vortex.

The first was that one would be able to safely reach the other side and enter the Badlands Territory. This was the ideal outcome.

The second was that a spatial rift would suddenly appear in front of you and suck you inside, resulting in you being teleported into an unknown territory of the primordial chaos. Ji Ning knew at least a few things about the Badlands Territory, thanks to the detailed star maps which the Three Realms had acquired long ago. The Mindlord which Ning intended to slay also resided in the Badlands Territory. If he ended up in a completely foreign part of the primordial chaos, he would have to slowly figure everything out from scratch. Still, this wasn't the worst case scenario; he'd still be alive, after all.

The third possible outcome was that the spatial rift would teleport him straight into a death trap of some sort.

"I really need to stay away from those spatial rifts."

Swoosh.

The Moatship flew forward at high speed like a sword, agilely dodging and avoiding the suddenly appearing rifts.

Rumble...

An enormous, savage-looking rift of violet light suddenly appeared in front of Ning, instantly covering a very large region.

"Backwards." The Moatship quickly reversed and flew backwards, then curved around the rift and flew away from it.

He had to be able to make up to a thousand corrections every moment. This was an even deadlier process than actually fighting with the sword.

Ning's complete attention was focused on controlling his ship, but he was also able to maintain total control over an area of ten thousand kilometers around himself. This was the 'Heartsword Realm' which Ning had developed some time ago.

Six days later.

A flying boat suddenly flew out from the mouth of an enormous spatial vortex.

“I made it.” Ning’s face was rather pale with exhaustion, but he now revealed a look of delight. “I finally made it through safely!”

These six days had been an absolute nightmare.

Those spatial rifts had appeared and disappeared with incredible speed, and some of them were simply enormous. If Ning was just a bit unlucky, it was entirely possible that rifts would simultaneously appear in every direction around him, making it impossible for him to dodge them. When that happened, the only choice would be to take a chance and choose a rift at random.

During the past six days, there was one time when Ning had actually been drawn into a spatial rift. Thankfully, it had quickly dispersed, allowing Ning to just barely escape from it and return to the spatial wormhole. If he hadn’t been able to do so...not even Ning himself knew what area he would’ve been sent to.

But of course, the more powerful a person was, the better his chances would be of successfully passing through the vortex.

Ning had been lucky in that he had only been sucked into a spatial rift once. This naturally meant that it had been fairly easy for him to survive passage.

Godfiend Witherspike, by contrast, had been drawn into rifts on nine different occasions. However, he had been fairly lucky; all nine times, he had been able to fight his way back out of the rifts before being drawn into the other side.

“The Badlands Territory.”

Seated within his Moatship, Ning stared at the vast primordial chaos around him. “Here I am.”

Thanks to his star maps, Ning knew exactly where this end of the spatial wormhole lay. Thus, without hesitating at all, Ning immediately began to move towards the spacetime transfer array which was closest to him. The primordial chaos was simply too vast; if he was to slowly fly through it while relying on his own power, even a trillion years wouldn’t be enough to finish travelling through every part of the Badlands.

Five months after Ning reached the Badlands Territory.

“There we are.” His Moatship flew out from the Void towards an enormous ellipsoid world.

Ning stared at the massive ellipsoid world, then let out a sigh. “This is the ninth chaosworld I’ve seen thus far. According to my star maps, I’ll need to travel past another twenty-six chaosworlds before I’ll reach Earthdrake.”

The spacetime transfer array which was closest to Ning was centered around the Earthdrake planet. There were so many celestial bodies in the primordial chaos that the vast majority were nameless. Only stars and planets with certain special qualities about them would be given names.

Ning had travelled past one chaosworld after another. Every so often, Ning would sense others scanning him with coresense. Each time, he would send his own dominantly powerful coresense right back at them. When their coresenses ‘collided’, the other side would be so terrified that they would immediately stop their scrying attempts.

Thanks to his half-step World God body, Ning's coresense was extraordinarily powerful!

After entering the Badlands Territory, there had been one occasion where Ning had encountered an incredibly powerful soul-sweep conducted by a World God. Ning had been so terrified that he had immediately Void-blinked far away, fleeing without a second thought. Although World Gods generally wouldn't act against Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals without a good reason, Ning still felt that it would be better to stay a safe distance away.

One year and nine months after entering the Badlands Territory.

On this day, Ning finally reached the spacetime transfer array located closest to the Three Realms. For him to be able to reach an array after less than two years was actually quite fast; this would be considered an extremely close array.

The primordial chaos was so vast that even in an area like the Badlands Territory, it was common for individuals from backwater chaosworlds to spend up to ten years in order to reach a spacetime transfer array.

"Earthdrake."

The Moatship hung there in empty space. Ning stayed inside of it, staring at the utterly stunning sight before him.

The primordial chaos in front of him had long ago been torn asunder, revealing eight utterly dazzling stars that glowed with layers of light. These eight stars all revolved around a final planet located in their center. These eight stars were the 'servants', while this ninth planet was the 'master'! These nine celestial bodies came together to form an enormous 'spacetime transfer array', and their light was far more dazzling than even the Solar Star of the Three Realms.

In terms of raw size? The formation was probably comparable to the entire Three Realms!

"How could a single formation be so large?" Ning let out a sigh. "I really can't imagine how powerful the person who set up this formation was." According to his records, not even World Gods or Chaos Immortals were even close to being powerful enough to construct spacetime transfer arrays. These arrays had all been passed down from the most ancient of days.

As for the question of who built them? No one even asked any longer.

"Go over there."

Swoosh. The Moatship quickly flew towards the enormous spacetime transfer array.

The core star surrounded by the eight other stars was the Earthdrake planet. Even before landing on Earthdrake, Ning could sense the ripples of power emanating from atop it. These were ripples that emanated from powerful experts.

"Come back." Ning put away his Moatship, then quickly descended upon the star.

Earthdrake was an enormous planet that was comparable to the Solar Star or the Lunar Star in size. However, the entire planet had been refined and retrofitted, making it more like an utterly enormous magic treasure.

“So many experts...” As Ning sensed the powerful ripples emanating from the star, he immediately transformed into a Ninehorn Lightning Serpent as he flew towards the very center of Earthdrake.

Swish.

The Ninehorn Lightning Serpent was quite fast. While flying forward, Ning encountered quite a few other cultivators. Some looked similar to humans, while some looked extremely different. As they saw the Ninehorn Lightning Serpent fly past them and sensed the undisguised aura of dominating power radiating from Ji Ning, they all revealed looks of wariness on their faces.

Whoosh. Ning landed on the ground, a miniature spacetime transfer array located directly in front of him.

Although spacetime transfer arrays were utterly enormous, their most important cores were just a few hundred kilometers in size. These miniature spacetime transfer arrays actually had buildings located in side of them. Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were stationed in these buildings to keep the array safe. There were also many True Gods and True Immortals here, along with a vast number of Emphyrean Gods and Celestial Immortals. All of them were responsible for maintaining the spacetime array and keeping it in good shape for any future uses.

“Where are you going?” An Elder God dressed in golden robes with a scaly reptilian tail was seated in the lotus position in front of Ning. His body was utterly massive, and he peered down as he looked at Ning. When he sensed how powerful Ning’s aura was, his attitude improved slightly and he even put a smile on his face. Earthdrake was primarily populated by Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. World Gods and Chaos Immortal were incredibly exalted figures, after all; they generally wouldn’t deign to handle such low-level matters.

“Sevenwater Star,” Ning said.

Sevenwater Star was naturally a star that was located at the heart of a different spacetime array.

Actually finding and reaching Vastheaven Palace would be too hard. Ning’s first goal was to deal with the Mindlord, who was one of the Nine Divine Generals of God Emperor Blacklotus. The records the Three Realms had regarding God Emperor Blacklotus stated that he was an incredibly powerful World God who had five other World Gods serving him. Together, they dominated a wide swathe of territory.

The area around Sevenwater Star was dominated by God Emperor Blacklotus, the Starlord of Fogstone, Sovereign Eastvictor, and several other hegemony. God Emperor Blacklotus was just one of them.

“Sevenwater Star?” The Elder God nodded. “If you want to go right now, we can activate the transfer array just for you, but that’ll cost you a total of 120 bottles of chaos nectar. If you are willing to wait...if you are lucky, in around eight years or so there will be another group activation of the array for transference to Sevenwater Star. Only a single bottle will be required.”

“Eight years?” Ning nodded slowly. “Alright.”

This spacetime transfer array was the size of the entire Three Realms. Activating it required a significant cost, and a payment of 120 bottles of chaos nectar was quite standard. However, Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals usually wouldn’t be willing to act in such a wasteful, extravagant manner. The total networth of most Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals wouldn’t even necessarily be that much!

“Yes, eight years.” The Elder God nodded. “There’s a stone stele over there with detailed information regarding transfers.”

“Alright.” Ning walked over to the stone stele, giving it a glance. It was filled with detailed information regarding how long one would have to wait for transference to each other spacetime array.

“If I wanted to go to the Badlands Everworld, I wouldn’t have to wait nearly so long. That destination is a much more frequently visited place,” Ning mused to himself. “Still, there’s nothing for it. I’m simply too far away from Sevenwater Star; if I wanted to fly there by myself, I wouldn’t be able to get there in a trillion years. I might as well wait for eight.” Although Ning had acquired the treasures of the Elder God and Ancestral Immortal prisoners of the prisonworld as well as around 120 bottles of chaos nectar, Ning had left a hundred of those bottles to the Three Realms. He had left them behind for the sake of his daughter and Autumn Leaf.

As for himself? He was strong enough and capable enough to acquire more on his own.

Whoosh.

Ning quickly flew away from this place. He found and selected a beautiful, secluded mountain peak within Earthdrake. He waved his hand, causing an Immortal estate to descend upon the peak. Ning then entered the Immortal estate and began to quietly wait.

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 3: Fogstone Planet

The Heavengazer Tower of the Heavens had been placed within the Immortal estate.

Ji Ning was seated inside the tower in the lotus position, as still as a lifeless rock. He had activated the ‘solitude’ technique of the [Solitary World God] while using the [Nine Elements Annihilation] to work on the [Starseizing Hand].

The ‘solitude’ technique would allow a cultivator to reach an extremely calm state, with the inner heart becoming far more sensitive and nimble. It was meant to allow one to find the secrets of the body, but it also made it easier for one to visualize and hypothesize certain techniques. Buddha Jueming, who had already sacrificed himself, had perpetually stayed in the ‘solitude’ state, which was why he had been able to come up with a divine ability that was just as strong as Lord Tathagata’s.

Right now...Ning was researching and developing the Seventh Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand]!

The first six cycles all served as guides for this project. Previously, when he didn’t have any golden starstone, he had actually used the [Nine Elements Annihilation] to disassemble and overhaul the [Starseizing Hand], allowing him to create a brand new Sixth Cycle. Now, he naturally wished to come up with an even more profound Seventh Cycle!

“A True God body can train in the Sixth Cycle.”

“I already have an Elder God body. Logically speaking, I should be able to train in a Seventh Cycle...but to develop it truly is difficult.” Ning continually visualized and worked on this project but was only able to make a tiny bit of progress.

To train in a Seventh Cycle, one had to first come up with an even more profound way to allow divine power to blast out. In addition, one also needed to come up with a way to transform the palms and make them comparable to Dao weapons. Only then would they be able to withstand the bursts of divine power.

Both of these requirements would be extremely difficult to fulfill.

“Daoist Threelives, as a True God, was able to develop the Sixth Cycle. As an Elder God who has the [Nine Elements Annihilation], I should be completely capable of developing a Seventh Cycle.” Ning was completely absorbed in his meditations.

Thump.

His soul trembled slightly.

The aura of life slowly began to return to Ning’s unmoving, rock-like body. As his aura began to strengthen, color began to return to his skin. Finally, his eyes opened.

“160 years passed in the blink of an eye. It has been eight years in the outside world.” Ning rose to his feet. “Time to head out.”

It was time to journey from Earthdrake to the distant Sevenwater Star.

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“They really know how to make money. A single activation of the formation nets them a hundred bottles of chaos nectar.” Ning shook his head as he walked out of the spacetime transfer array and glanced at the cultivators who were scattering in various directions. “Although each activation of a spacetime transfer array does require a certain amount of resources, they are making at least a 50% profit. They are making money at an insane rate.”

“Every single cultivator has to pay a bottle of chaos nectar each time the array is activated. No wonder only Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals take part.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh to himself.

True Gods and True Immortals simply couldn’t play around like this. The price was too high. True Gods and True Immortals would generally just wander around nearby chaosworlds or follow Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals and servants.

“Any World God or Chaos Immortal would love the chance to take control over a spacetime array like this. A pity that these are all controlled by the Badlands Court.” Ning sighed. The greatest power in the vast Badlands Territory was the Badlands Court. It was an organization that rivaled Vastheaven Palace in power! In the Badlands Territory, the Badlands Court held supreme, unchecked power.

“Where should I go?” Ning stood in the air above Sevenwater Star, staring into the endless primordial chaos.

“God Emperor Blacklotus established his Blacklotus chaos-kingdom and has five World Gods supporting him. He controls a total of fifty-three chaosworlds.” Ning pondered for a moment on some of the ancient information which the Three Realms had collected in the past. “God Emperor Blacklotus is a local hegemon. He has a few neighbors who he is on poor terms, including the Starlord of Fogstone and Sovereign Eastvictor.”

“The Starlord of Fogstone has eight World-level experts serving him and commands ninety-six chaosworlds.”

“Sovereign Eastvictor has six World-level experts serving him and commands sixty-one chaosworlds.”

“Should I join the Starlord of Fogstone? Or should I join Sovereign Eastvictor?”

Ning was pondering on this question.

He had never entertained the foolish thought of going straight for the Mindlord all by himself. He had to verify whether or not the Mindlord really was Old Man Yuan! In addition, not even World Gods would rashly charge into the headquarters of an enemy force. That was just suicide.

“The Starlord of Fogstone and Sovereign Eastvictor are on hostile terms with God Emperor Blacklotus. If I join one of these two sides, I’ll seek out an opportunity to kill the Mindlord when they engage in battle.”

“I’ll also be able to rely on their power to strengthen myself.”

Vastheaven Palace was too far away!

World God Northrest was an extremely exalted figure, yet had hadn’t even heard of the Badlands Territory. This meant that the distance between the Vastheaven Territory and the Badlands Territory was so vast that World Gods would almost never travel between these two locales. If Ning remained a mere Elder God, he’d probably die while attempting to find Vastheaven Palace.

It was best if he became a World God first, then embarked on the journey.

He had a full chaos cycle. Just a tenth of a chaos cycle would be more than enough time for him to grow strong.

“The Starlord of Fogstone and Sovereign Eastvictor...the intelligence I acquired about them is all quite old. Perhaps there have been changes within their respective organizations. Mm...Fogstone is closer by, I’ll go visit it first. I’ll take a good look then make up my mind.” Ning immediately commanded his Moatship to begin flying through space in that direction.

Six months later.

The Moatship had arrived before a distant, beautiful planet.

“That’s Fogstone.” Ning stared at the beautiful planet. According to his intelligence reports, a total of nine World-level experts resided on this planet, along with thousands of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. From this planet, they ruled over and governed a total of ninety-six chaosworlds.

Swoosh.

Ning quickly flew towards the planet.

More than half of Fogstone was perpetually covered with blurry shadows. Clearly, it was protected by some sort of formation. The other half, however, was not covered by any formations.

“Right there.” Ning immediately saw a series of islands within the seas of Fogstone. He immediately flew straight towards it.

Swoosh.

As Ning drew closer to those islands, a figure suddenly flew out from one of them. It was an azure-armored man whose aura was that of a True God’s.

“Greetings, senior.” The azure-armored man said respectfully, “Senior, this should be your first visit to Fogstone. Do you need me to guide you around?”

“Very well.” Ning nodded and smiled. “Are you in charge of welcoming Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals? Do many come to Fogstone?”

“Fogstone rarely has visits from unaffiliated Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.” The azure-armored man smiled. “This junior was ordered to guide the path for any who do come. During the past thousand years, I’ve only welcomed around a hundred.”

“Ah.” Ning nodded.

This was in keeping with what Ning knew.

A core planet that was responsible for governing a chaos-kingdom would generally have certain areas that were meant for trade and business. Cultivators needed to purchase treasures, divine abilities, spells, secret arts, golems, and other things. Thus, there was always a need for trading posts. Emphyrean Gods, Celestial Immortals, True Gods, and True Immortals rarely had good treasures. Thus, there generally wouldn’t be any people responsible for receiving them.

As for the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who served Fogstone, there was no need to guide them around either; they knew the place well enough.

Only first-time visitors like Ji Ning who were at least Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals would merit a guide! If a World God was to arrive, the entire world of Fogstone would be put on high alert. Most likely, a World God of Fogstone would be assigned to welcome and greet such a visitor.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

The two of them descended upon a spacious cloud street.

This street was completely formed from clouds. It led from the vast seas to the various islands.

“Do you need any servants, senior?” The azure-armored man pointed towards a distant, enormous island. “That’s the slave island. Many slaves are imprisoned there, ranging from Celestial Immortals and Emphyrean Gods to Ancestral Immortals and Elder Gods! So long as you are willing to pay the price, you can purchase as many slaves as you wish.”

Ning nodded. Imprisoned Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would often be sold off as slaves. Generally speaking, they were enemies who had been captured during conflicts against other organizations.

“I don’t need any for now,” Ning said.

The two walked forward through the cloud path. There were many other cultivators on this path, but almost all of them were below the Elder God level of power. This was why they all hurriedly parted before Ning when they saw him. In this world, the difference in status between the strong and the weak was very obvious.

“This place specializes in selling formations. Yes, that island over there! We also have shops that specialize in selling Ki Refining techniques, divine abilities, secret arts, sword-arts, lightning arts...” The azure-armored man warmly pointed at one island after another.

“Sword-arts?” Ning’s eyes lit up..

“Right.” The azure-armored man said hurriedly, “That island is known as the Sword Pavilion! The Sword Pavilion has many sword-arts within it, at least ten thousand! Some are weak, some are strong. Even the [Skystar Sword] which our Starlord of Fogstone made famous throughout the Badlands Territory is available for sale, so long as you are willing to pay the price.”

“The [Skystar Sword]?” Ning was surprised.

“This is one of the most awe-inspiringly famous sword-arts of the entire Badlands Territory. Once you master it, you might even be able to become a World God through the Dao of the Sword.” The azure-armored man let out a sigh. “That really would be incredible.”

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 4: Joining Up

“Oh?” Ji Ning was intrigued.

His own [Nameless] sword-art was something which even World God Northrest of Vastheaven Palace had been mesmerized by. Just by mastering three of its stances, one could become a World God.

This [Skystar Sword], however, needed to be fully mastered in order for one to become a World God. It seemed as though it was quite a bit inferior to the [Nameless] sword-art. Still...Ning knew very well that since the Starlord of Fogstone was willing to sell it, it probably wasn’t the best technique he truly possessed. From what Ning had heard, the Starlord of Fogstone was actually quite shockingly powerful.

“Can I ask what the price of purchase would be?” Ning asked.

“Ten cubes of chaos nectar,” the azure-armored man said.

“Ten cubes?” Ning was speechless.

A bottle of chaos nectar contained ninety-nine drops.

A thousand bottles of chaos nectar made up a cube! Ten cubes represented ten thousand bottles!

“There aren’t even many World Gods who would be willing to pay such a price. Not just anyone can learn a peerless sword-art that allows you to reach the sixth stage of swordforce.” The azure-armored man smiled.

“When I first arrived at Fogstone, my plan was to purchase a detailed star map of the region around Sevenwater Star,” Ning said.

“Come this way, please.” The azure-armored man knew that most newcomer Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would first wish to get a better idea of the situation in the area. They soon traversed another cloud street and arrived at a quiet island that had a single pavilion atop it.

There were several female Celestial Immortals located inside the pavilion, each of whom was incomparably beautiful. There was also a truly ravishing female True Immortal who headed straight towards Ning.

“Respectful greetings to you, senior.” The female True Immortal smiled.

Ji Ning nodded.

“Bring me a star map,” the azure-armored man instructed a female Celestial Immortal.

“Yes.” The female Immortal immediately brought a furled scroll over, respectfully handing it over to the azure-armored man, who then smiled and respectfully handed it over to Ning. “Senior, this star map contains a detailed breakdown of the various powers and regions around Sevenwater Star. It only costs ten chaos gems.”

“Very well.” Ning handed over ten chaos gems.

Chaos gems and chaos nectar were a form of common currency, with chaos nectar having more marvelous properties but coming in smaller amounts. Chaos gems were able to contain more energy within them, with the result being that many powerful formations and golems made use of them as energy sources. Generally speaking, a single chaos gem was considered equivalent to a drop of chaos nectar.

Whoosh. Ning sent his divine energy into the scroll. Instantly, a large amount of information was transmitted to Ning, who memorized it all.

“So not much has changed.” There were very few differences between this intelligence report and the report which the Three Realms had acquired long ago.

God Emperor Blacklotus had increased his territory and now commanded a total of sixty-one chaosworlds.

The Starlord of Fogstone still commanded ninety-six chaosworlds.

Sovereign Eastvictory’s territory had lessened and he now commanded just fifty-eight chaosworlds.

The information in this star map regarding the Badlands Territory was a bit more detailed than the information the Three Realms had, but it was still limited to just this territory. There was no information regarding any other territory, to say nothing of Vastheaven Palace.

“Mm. Judging from this, I should probably join the Starlord of Fogstone for now.” Ning made up his mind. Still, he wasn’t in a rush. He first said to the azure-armored man, “Come, lead me to see a few other places.”

“This way please, senior.” The azure-armored man was quite friendly as he guided the way forward.

After walking about for a long period of time, the azure-armored man began to secretly grumble to himself. "This senior's been walking around forever, but the only thing he purchased was a single map. This sucks. I ran into a skinflint of an Elder God. I probably did all this work for nothing."

Anyone who came all the way here via a spacetime transfer array generally did so with a specific purchase in mind, such as buying some of the unique products that belonged to this planet. It cost a bottle of chaos nectar to use the array, after all; anyone who was willing to pay that price to come here would generally be willing to spend even more to buy the desired items. But...this Elder God before him was clearly an exception. All he had purchased was a star map, nothing else.

"And what's this island? It looks quite impressive." Ning pointed to an enormous island up ahead.

"That? That island is our mustering grounds." The azure-armored man was beginning to become a bit casual in his speech. "Fogstone commands a total of ninety-six chaosworlds, which means we have many cultivators, quite a few of whom wish to join the Fogstone Army. Ordinary cultivators are naturally not permitted to go into the interior regions of Fogstone; only this trading region is open for all. Cultivators who wish to join our ranks have to first go to the mustering grounds and be tested before being granted entry."

"But of course." The azure-armored man smiled at Ning. "If you wished to join the army, it would be much simpler, senior. As an Elder God, there's no need for you to be tested."

He said these words quite casually, but they were true. Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals could be considered powerful experts, and to raise a new crop of them was very difficult. Fogstone controlled many chaosworlds and had many legacies and training techniques to offer its geniuses, but it only had a few thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals within its ranks, despite the passage of countless years. All organizations, including ones that were even more powerful than Fogstone, were willing to recruit and retain Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. Frankly speaking, Fogstone wasn't that powerful of an organization within the Badlands Territory.

If the azure-armored man was able to recruit an Elder God or Ancestral Immortal into their ranks, his reward would be quite considerable!

"Oh?" Ning nodded. "Let's go take a look."

"Uh, y-you can't just go randomly wandering around the mustering grounds. It is an important place," the azure-armored man said hurriedly.

"Didn't you say...I would be able to join your army?" Ning asked.

"Senior..." The azure-armored man stared. "Senior, are you saying you wish to join the Fogstone Army?"

"Yes." Ning nodded.

"G-g-great!" The azure-armored man was shocked and delighted. He immediately said, "The Fogstone Army is very welcoming towards Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who have journeyed and adventured through the primordial chaos. Although you'll be given certain restrictions, since you are an Elder God the restrictions will be quite lax. The only requirement will be for you to take part in critical battles, while you'll be given many benefits upon signing up. You'll get chaos nectar, treasures, and all sorts of other things."

Ning followed the azure-armored man forward. They passed through more cloud streets as they moved towards the mustering grounds.

“Brother Mu, this is the mustering grounds.” A black-armored True God who was leaning relaxedly against a boulder while drinking some wine gave Ning a glance, then snapped at the azure-armored man, “You should lead this senior away from here.” Although Ning was an Elder God, he was still an outsider. The True God soldier really didn’t care about him at all.

“You imbecile, this senior is planning to join our Fogstone Army!” The azure-armored man hissed.

“He’s joining the Fogstone Army?” The True God’s eyes bulged out and he hurriedly jumped to his feet, his attitude markedly more respectful than before. He had acted arrogantly because he was a member of the Fogstone Army and really didn’t care about outsiders, but if this Elder God was to truly join the Fogstone Army, he would clearly become one of the core members of it. The Elder God would become one of his superiors, at which point it would be very easy for this Elder God to punish him.

“This way please, senior.” The black-armored True God hurriedly spoke with respect.

“Senior, we’ll part ways for now.” The azure-armored man smiled merrily. He was quite pleased. Today, he had just earned a bundle for himself!

“Alright.” Ning immediately followed the black-armored True God forward. As he did, he began to hear cries ringing out from afar.

“How much longer do we have to wait? We have to go through nine rounds of testing, but this is just the third round. This is so pointless.”

“If you aren’t even patient enough to wait, what makes you think you are qualified to join the Fogstone Army? My senior apprentice-brother told me that last time, the nine elimination rounds took a total of a thousand years.”

“Hey, what’s going on over there?”

“Why is that white-robed youth being led into the restricted area?”

There were quite a few True Gods and True Immortals waiting in the mustering grounds. They had come from the ninety-six chaosworlds and were taking part in the elimination trials. The nine rounds of eliminations would usually take quite a long period of time, mainly because the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals in charge of the trials were usually quite relaxed and lazy about them. They might end up going into seclusion for a hundred years between rounds, which was why the trials often ended up taking forever.

“Island master.” The black-robed True God immediately ran over to the side of a gray-robed elder who was fishing in a relaxed manner. “This senior wishes to join our Fogstone Army.”

The gray-robed elder put down his fishing rod, rising to his feet as he looked at Ning.

Ning looked at the gray-robed elder as well. This elder had a closed vertical eye-slit on his forehead; most likely, he was an Elder God as well. The Elder God waved his hand, dismissing the black-armored True God.

“My name is Fushe,” the gray-robed elder said. “The master of this island, the mustering grounds.”

“Darknorth,” Ning said.

“Brother Darknorth, do you truly wish to join our Fogstone Army?” The gray-robed elder asked.

“I do.” Ning nodded.

The gray-robed elder smiled. “Elder Gods do not need to go through the elimination process. They can directly join the Fogstone Army. However...even Elder Gods have different statuses within the army. There’s a great difference between an ordinary Elder God and a supreme Elder God, after all.”

Ning nodded.

“The Elder God soldiers of the Fogstone Army can be promoted based on their military accomplishments; with enough military successes, they will be promoted to very high levels. A second possibility is for them to be promoted based solely on power. If you are strong enough, you can be promoted to a high rank even if you haven’t fought in battle yet.” The gray-robed elder looked at Ning.

“Generally speaking, you have to fight against and defeat certain golems in order to prove your strength. We have three types of golem on this island; they represent ordinary Elder Gods, elite Elder Gods, and supreme Elder Gods. The golems aren’t that skillful, but beating the first golem means you have the power of an ordinary Elder God. Beating the second golem proves that you have the power of an elite Elder God. Beating the third means that you have the power of a supreme Elder God.”

“It is quite rare for new entrants to the Fogstone Army to be able to defeat the third golem. I’ve only encountered two during my tenure here as master of the island,” the gray-robed elder said with a smile.

Ning asked, “Just these three types?”

“If you are strong enough, there’s no need to even go through the golem testing. You can ask a World-level expert to come here and attest to your power.” The gray-robed figure continued, “However, there are very few figures that are stronger than supreme Elder Gods. Although the Fogstone Army does have a few such figures, they only became that powerful after spending quite a bit of time improving themselves after joining us. There have been none who have requested a World-level expert come and testify to their power immediately after they join our ranks.”

Ning nodded.

He had inherited the legacy of World God Northrest and was quite familiar with some of the unspoken rules of the primordial chaos. He truly did wish to establish himself here on Fogstone and receive the resources he would need in order to grow more powerful! In the future, he would go out and battle on behalf of the Fogstone Army and find a chance to slay the Mindlord. This was why Ning had decided long ago that he would shock them all upon arriving, ensuring that the World Gods of Fogstone all knew his name.

“Please invite a World-level expert to come, then.” Ning nodded.

“Invite a World...” The gray-robed figure stuttered. “W-what did you just say?” His mind went blank.

“No need to bother with the three golems,” Ning said. “I wish to invite a World-level expert to come here and attest to my strength.”

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 5: Military Headquarters

The gray-robed elder stared blankly at Ji Ning, as though he was staring at some bizarre monstrosity. He then murmured in a low voice, “Brother Darknorth, it’s not that I look down upon you, but I would still recommend that you go fight the third golem. That’ll be enough! If you are truly powerful, you’ll have chances to prove it once you enter the army. But if you insist on asking a World-level expert to verify it...you should know how high the standards of World-level experts are. If you are over-confident in your powers, you can easily cause the World-level expert to feel dissatisfied with you.”

“I understand.” Ning nodded.

This was no joke. Ning knew exactly how powerful he was. Even an ordinary Elder God who used the ‘Heartsword stance’ would instantly become comparable to a supreme Elder God! Ning, however, was a half-step World God. When he used the ‘Heartsword stance’, he could dominate supreme Elder Gods.

If he also used Violetjewel...he would be at the World God threshold of power.

Or, as Godfiend Witherspike had put it...Ning ranked amongst the top three Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals he had ever seen! Not one Elder God in ten thousand would be a match for Ning. The Fogstone Army only had a few thousand Elder Gods and Chaos Immortals. Although they were a fairly elite force, Ning felt confident that he could probably dominate all of them even without using Violetjewel.

“I’ll ask you one more time. Are you sure you wish to ask a World-level expert to come and attest to your strength?” The gray-robed elder said solemnly.

“Yes.” Ning nodded.

“Alright.” The gray-robed elder nodded as well. “Since you’ve made the request, I’ll report it to my superiors! Still...as you can probably guess, most World-level experts spend the majority of their time in seclusion, while others will often go out adventuring. If a World-level expert is available, he or she will come and test you out. I can’t say exactly who it will be or when this will happen. It’ll all be up to the World-level experts.”

Ning laughed. “Of course. Should I just wait here on the mustering grounds island?”

“No need for that.” The gray-robed elder shook his head. “The mustering ground is really for True Gods and True Immortals. How about this? I’ll give you a set of silverscale armor on loan. That’ll allow you to enter the city alongside me. When the World-level expert comes and tests you out, we’ll make a decision on what your actual military rank will be.”

“Alright.” Ning nodded.

A short while later.

Ning was now dressed in a set of silverscale armor, and he was flying through the air alongside the gray-robed elder.

“The core of the army generally consists of Elder Gods and first-tier Ancestral Immortals,” the gray-robed elder said with a laugh. “There are essentially three ranks; silverscale warriors, goldscale warriors, and generals.”

“Ordinary Elder Gods and elite Elder Gods are generally silverscale warriors.”

“Supreme Elder Gods are generally goldscale warriors.”

“As for generals, all of them have transcended supreme Elder Gods in power.” The gray-robed elder continued, “Our Fogstone Army has a total of five generals, and they are able to style and color their armors as they see fit. Other soldiers have to wear the assigned armors.”

Ning nodded while feeling surprised.

This silverscale armor was a top-grade Protocosmic armor that had protective properties! This was a treasure that was comparable in value to a Chaos treasure because protective armors were extremely rare.

“This armor of yours is merely a suit of top-grade Protocosmic armor. The goldscale armors are all Chaos armors.” The gray-robed elder chuckled. “Goldscale armors will generally be able to block against most ordinary attacks. In all the Badlands Territory, there are just a few organizations that are willing to give their soldiers such valuable suits of armor.”

Ning nodded.

If someone with a weak divine body who wore a suit of Chaos armor was struck, the shockwave from a sufficiently powerful blow could still cause some damage. By comparison, being capable of reinforcing the body to make it as tough as a treasure was far more useful! Still, these powerful suits of armor were at least able to help ablate 99% of the incoming damage.

“Brother Fushe,” Ning said, “You just told me that the Fogstone Army has five generals. Might I ask how strong they are compared to the Nine Divine Generals of God Emperor Blacklotus?”

“Hmph.” The gray-robed elder smirked. “Those nine aren’t even qualified to be mentioned in the same breath as our generals! They actually came up with their ‘Nine Divine Generals’ because they envied us for having our five. All they did was promote certain supreme Elder Gods with special skills into the ranks of their nine. All nine of them combined are actually a bit weaker than our five.”

Ning nodded.

Indeed. Judging from his fight against Old Man Yuan, Old Man Yuan was probably just an ‘ordinary’ supreme Elder God; his main advantage lay in the fact that he was incredibly skilled in heartforce.

The two continued to fly forward together, chatting the entire time. They quickly arrived at a major continent, and Ning stared at a towering citadel that had appeared in front of him.

“What a large city,” Ning marveled.

The city emanated ripples of absolutely incredible power. Chaos energy swirled around it, so dense as to seem almost solid. The city was furiously devouring the chaos energy, using it to maintain the enormous formation that protected the entire planet of Fogstone.

“This is Fogstone City.” The gray-robed elder pointed towards the citadel. “The military camps are located inside, as are various entertainment venues. True Gods and True Immortals generally required to reside within the city, while Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals are given more freedom to wander around. They are permitted to choose a residence of their choice on Fogstone and just occasionally go to the army camps to meet with the others.”

Whoosh.

The two slowly began their descent as they flew through the enormous citadel gates of Fogstone City. Ripples of power swept past them but no one came out to bar their path.

“The army camp is over there. The army camp is divided into two major regions. The nicer-looking region is where the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals usually gather together, while the other one is meant for True Gods and True Immortals. Go in and take a look for yourself. I need to make a report on your behalf. I trust that a World-level expert will soon come over to test your strength out,” the gray-robed elder said.

“Go ahead.” Ning smiled at the gray-robed elder, who quickly flew away.

As for Ning, he transformed into a streak of light as he flew towards the entrance of the army camp. There were two black-armored soldiers standing guard at the entrance, but upon seeing the silver-armored youth move towards them they both simply bowed slightly.

Ning entered the army camp.

After doing so, he saw two main paths. These two paths led to two separate drill areas. One area had quite a few soldiers within it, almost all of whom were True Gods or True Immortals. The other drill area had far fewer people, just a few dozen or so Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. The vast majority of them were dressed in silverscale armor, with just one dressed in goldscale armor.

“Eh? Who is this?”

“Anyone know him?”

“Don’t know’m, never seen’m.”

“He should be new.” The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all watched as Ning moved towards them.

The one dressed in goldscale armor rose to his feet. He was rather skinny, and he had some jade-green tattoos around the corners of his eyes. He smiled in quite a radiant manner. “Are you new, my friend?”

“I just joined.” Ning nodded.

“My name is Skyleave.” The goldscale soldier smiled.

“Darknorth,” Ning replied.

“Brother Darknorth, which squad do you belong to?” The goldscale soldier asked curiously.

“I don’t know yet. I just joined. I haven’t really been assigned to anyone,” Ning said. This was true. The island master had to first report Ning’s request to the World God, at which point he would be assigned a rank and a position.

“Haha, I’m the captain of the tenth squad,” Skyleave said. “You might end up assigned to me. All of you, come over here. This new friend of ours is Darknorth, a new member of our Fogstone Army.”

“A new brother? Captain, we have to hold a feast to welcome him.” A rather chubby, smooth-faced soldier dressed in silverscale armor immediately called out.

“Right, Captain!”

“We need to have a feast.”

The others all called out excitedly as well.

“You guys...ugh. Blackpeak is about to attack us, but all you care about is eating and drinking. Fine, fine. We’ll feast, we’ll feast,” Skyleave said with a laugh.

“Ahaha, brother Darknorth, my name is Baiwu.” The chubby silverscale soldier slapped his arm around Ning’s shoulders, then said with a laugh, “Our captain is rarely this generous. He almost never treats us to meals. This is your first time here; you need to taste some of the delicacies of Fogstone as well. Ah, man...I’ve lived for ages but I still as much of a glutton as ever. But the thing is, the better something tastes the more expensive it is. Ugh...”

Ning laughed.

When Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had access to good techniques and tutelage, they would usually either break through to become a World God within a single chaos cycle or never be able to become a World God at all. Most of these soldiers had been alive for quite some time, and none of them had much hope of breaking through. Thus, all of them liked to enjoy life instead. Some liked food while others had other hobbies.

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were all immediately led towards a lavish, semi-translucent building located nearby.

“Three basins of dragon meat first!” Once the soldiers sat down, the chubby Baiwu was the first to call out and make an order.

“You bastards.” The goldscale soldier, Skyleave, just shook his head helplessly.

Soon, all sorts of strange delicacies and dishes began to make their way to the seated soldiers. The most impressive were those three giant basins of dragon meat that were each thirty meters long. The dragon meat was tinged with a dark-red color and emanated an aura of absolute fragrance. Even Ning couldn’t help but drool once he caught a whiff of it. The soldiers all stretched out their hands to grab at the pieces of dragon meat, pulling them out from the basins and chewing on them.

Chomp, chomp, chomp. The Elder Gods chomped through meat and bone alike, enjoying the food and the wine.

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 6: Elder God Blackpeak

“Is it really that good?” Ji Ning picked up a large chunk of meat that was as thick as his arms, then gave it a bite. A blissful feeling filled his entire body as a surge of pleasure went through him.

“Dragon meat is one of the top ten delicacies of the entire Badlands Territory. There’s no way for dragons to be raised in captivity; they can only survive and thrive in certain special areas...and capturing them isn’t easy.” The goldscale soldier Skyleave laughed. “I usually end up spending more than half of my chaos nectar on food.” For Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, other types of entertainment might be quite cheap, but top-quality food was very hard to find.

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals chatted, drank, and laughed amongst themselves. Ning began to learn more and more about them.

Roughly two hours into their feast...

“SKYLEAVE!”

“SKYLEAVE!”

An enormous roar blasted out like thunder, echoing throughout the surrounding area.

“Eh?” The Elder Gods had been eating and drinking happily, but they now all came to a halt.

“He’s here.” The goldscale soldier rose to his feet.

“The other dishes don’t matter, but make sure you take away the dragon meat. We’ll eat it later.” The soldiers all quickly packed up the dragon meat. They had been eating quite slowly, enjoying every mouthful of it. Clearly, they didn’t want to waste it by gulping it all down too quickly.

“Captain, you don’t even need to bother with Blackpeak.”

“Right. That idiot caused the deaths of more than twenty of our fellow soldiers. So what if you lectured him a bit?”

“Idiot.”

The other soldiers were all cursing the man.

“I said what I said. If he wants to fight, we’ll fight. Does he think I’m afraid of him?” Skyleave laughed coldly. “Let’s go.”

“Let’s go.”

The soldiers all hurriedly followed behind Skyleave.

“What’s going on? Who is this ‘Blackpeak’ you guys are talking about?” Ning followed behind as well while chatting with Elder God Baiwu.

Baiwu pursed his lips. “Blackpeak was once a captain as well...but he was too arrogant and proud. Not too long ago, we had a clash with the Blacklotus Empire. Because of his arrogance, twenty-three of his soldiers paid the ultimate price. Twenty-three Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals! Even the Starlord of Fogstone was notified of this. He was punished by being demoted to be an ordinary silverscale soldier. However, quite a few of the dead Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had friends in the other squads,

all of whom were quite angry with Blackpeak. Our captain once cursed him out, causing a bit of friction between the two. They decided to have a duel with each other today.”

“Oh.” Ning nodded.

“Blackpeak is arrogant and prideful, but he is also quite strong.” Baiwu said in a low voice, “The number of captains stronger than him in the Fogstone Army can be counted on one hand.”

As they chatted, their group arrived at the drill area once more. Quite a few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had arrived here, all for the sake of watching this battle.

“The tallest one over there? That’s Blackpeak,” Baiwu said.

Ning glanced over. The man was dressed in silverscale armor, but his body was incredibly slender. He had a total of four arms and the parts of his skin that were exposed were all completely pitch-black. He had a pair of cold and narrow golden eyes, and a mocking look could be seen within them. He spoke out and said with a cold smile, “Skyleave. How is it that an imbecile like you would consider yourself qualified to lecture me? Today, I’ll let you know exactly how great the difference in power between us is.”

“Cut the crap.” Skyleave’s face was cold.

“According to the rules of our Fogstone Army...” Blackpeak strode forward, a cold smile on his face.

“Duels have to be fought for stakes. How many treasures can you bring out? I’ll match any stakes you issue.”

“A hundred bottles of chaos nectar,” Skyleave said coldly.

“Oho! You are actually willing to risk that much? It must’ve been hard for you to store up that much chaos nectar. If you insist on giving it all to me, how could I possibly refuse? I accept.” Blackpeak licked his lips.

Some of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were here in support of Skyleave. The rest were just here to watch. Blackpeak had come all by himself; clearly, he didn’t have many friends.

Soon, the battle began between these two Elder Gods.

“Ahahaha, you really think you are a match for me?” Blackpeak held four great warhammers in his four arms, and they all glittered with earthen yellow light as they smashed downwards like mountains in an utterly dominating fashion. Although there were many who disliked Blackpeak, all had to admit that he was incredibly powerful, even amongst his fellow captains.

“Hmph.” Skyleave held a pair of shuttles in his hands as he moved around like a blur. He let out a furious growl, then his body suddenly manifested four more arms, giving him six arms and six shuttles.

“Useless. I won’t even have to use any divine abilities against you,” Blackpeak bragged loudly.

“Fall down!”

“Fall down!”

“FALL DOWN!”

Blackheaven fought in a crazed fashion as he furiously smashed down with his warhammer, each blow containing utterly shocking amounts of power. Fortunately, this arena was protected by formation spells which ensured that Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals could fight at full power without any qualms. The Starlord of Fogstone was happy to have his subordinate Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals compete against each other, so long as none of them ended up dying.

Skyleave endured six heavy hammer blows in a row. Finally, upon receiving the seventh hammer, he spat out a mouthful of blood as he was sent flying backwards.

Boom!

Blackpeak instantly chased after him, smashing his warhammer against Skyleave's chest. Although Skyleave was protected by his goldscale armor, the concussive power of the blow was still quite tremendous and enough to instantly and completely shatter his chest. Blackpeak tapped another hammer against Skyleave's head, then smirked. "You lost, you idiot." As he spoke, he stomped down on Skyleave's face with his foot. Boom! Skyleave's face was instantly caved in and reduced to mush.

Whoosh.

A stream of divine power quickly reassembled far off in the distance, reforming Skyleave's body.

"Blackpeak." Skyleave's face was ashen. He had just had his face stomped on so hard that it had been destroyed. How could he not be enraged by this sort of insult?

"Blackpeak, our captain had already lost. You went too far."

"Blackpeak..."

Skyleave's soldiers were all furious.

"In our duels, the only rule is that we are not allowed to kill our opponents. Everything else goes, right?" Blackpeak's face was a mask of innocent confusion. "All I did was cave his chest in and stomp his face in. He's an Elder God! That's not nearly enough to kill him. I didn't break the rules, right? Even if you reported it to Starlord Fogbeast, he'd find me innocent."

"Damn."

"Damn him."

All of the soldiers had ugly looks on their faces.

Ning couldn't help but secretly sigh in surprise. When these two had fought, they had controlled their power in an extremely meticulous way, with no wasted energy or movements. Both Blackpeak and Skyleave were more powerful than Lord Demonheart had been.

The chubby Elder God Baiwu had been standing next to Ning. Now, he stepped forward. Everyone fell silent as they all turned to look at Baiwu. Baiwu said in a cold voice, "I'll duel you next."

"You?" Blackpeak said disdainfully, "You are a silverscale soldier. I can't be bothered."

"Aren't you a silverscale soldier yourself?" Elder God Baiwu said coldly, "What, do you still take yourself to be a goldscale soldier? If you forget, take a look at the armor you are wearing."

Blackpeak's face instantly changed. Clearly, Baiwu had just hit him where it hurt. He was an incredibly proud person. Even though he had been demoted, he still felt himself to be a goldscale soldier, an equal of the other captains. Blackpeak stared at Baiwu coldly. "Very well. Since you insist on giving me your treasures, I have no choice but to accept. But if you want to duel me, you need to prepare at least fifty bottles of chaos nectar. Otherwise, don't even bother taking your stakes out."

"If I lose, I'll give my Ninestar Skyhooks to you." Elder God Baiwu's body blurred momentarily as he manifested a total of six arms, each of which held onto a curved hook.

"A set of Ninestar Skyhooks? I'll be generous and value that as being worth sixty bottles," Blackpeak said.

"Good." Elder God Baiwu looked at him coldly.

"Baiwu..."

"Baiwu, don't do this."

"Blackpeak is incredibly strong."

His fellow soldiers quickly began to send mental messages urging him to back down.

Quite a few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were watching this happen from afar.

"Blackpeak is quite strong; he was one of the strongest goldscale captains we had. Even Skyleave lost to him. For Baiwu to challenge him is just foolishness."

"Baiwu is definitely going to lose."

"Skyleave, you should talk your soldier out of this. It isn't worth it for him to lose a set of Chaos treasures just like this," a spectator purposefully called out in a loud voice.

Captain Skyleave was just doing just that. He sent mentally, "Baiwu, I'll eat my loss and swallow my pride for now. When I become more powerful, I'll come back and challenge him again. If you go, all you'll do is lose your treasure. It isn't worth it."

But Baiwu completely ignored everyone as he marched straight towards Blackpeak.

Blackpeak smirked.

Boom!

Whoosh!

The two transformed into streaks of light and clashed against each other.

"This Baiwu fellow is really strong!" All of the spectating Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were rather surprised, because Baiwu had just shown himself to possess the power of a supreme Elder God. The two were actually fighting to a standstill.

"Baiwu, you made a breakthrough?" Skyleave revealed a look of surprise and joy.

"Brother Baiwu, kick his face in!"

“Teach him a lesson, brother Baiwu!” Skyleave’s soldiers were all hollering excitedly on his behalf.

The pudgy Elder God Baiwu continuously struck out with his six hooks. No matter how hard the warhammers struck at him, he was able to easily deflect every single attack. His pudgy body was like a ball of meat that continuously rolled everywhere, easily absorbing and deflecting the force of the Blackpeak’s blows.

“Ahahaha...so you actually have a bit of power after all. Pity for you that it won’t make a difference.” The warhammers suddenly vanished from Elder God Blackpeak’s hands, only to be replaced by six slender swords.

Swish!

Both his body and his swords were extremely slender. His movements became ghostly and unpredictable as he launched a furious barrage of blows with his slender swords against Baiwu. Previously, his attacks had been dominating and savage. Now, they were strange and unpredictable. These were two diametrically opposed styles of combat, and this sudden change caused all of the watching Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were quite shocked as Blackpeak quickly seized the upper hand.

Boom!

Baiwu vomited out a mouthful of blood as he was knocked flying by a hard kick.

“He lost.” The soldiers next to Skyleave all shook their head.

“Ugh...”

The spectators all shook their heads as well.

Swish.

Suddenly, a black streak of lightning flashed past, covering Baiwu and quickly moving him away.

“Eh?” Blackpeak had been about to trample over Baiwu, but he immediately came to a halt. Frowning, he stared off into the distance where a silverscaled youth was holding Baiwu in his arms. A moment later, the youth released Baiwu.

“If he lost, he lost. No need to keep hitting him,” the silverscaled youth said.

“Baiwu, why haven’t you given me your Ninestar Skyhooks yet?” Elder God Blackpeak smirked.

Baiwu gritted his teeth, then waved his arm and sent his six hooks flying over. Elder God Blackpeak accepted them smugly, then began to laugh with delight. He pointed at Skyleave, Baiwu, and the rest of the Elder Gods. “I’ve been pretty pissed lately. Thanks for presenting yourselves before me and letting me beat you up. That really felt good. And you gave me quite a few treasures as well! Ahaha...and just look at the looks in your eyes! Do you want to keep dueling me? I’ll take on any of you. If you want to give me your treasures, I’d hardly refuse.”

Suddenly, a voice rang out. “I want to compete against you.”

Blackpeak glanced over, puzzled. It was the silverscaled youth who was standing next to Baiwu.

“You?” Blackpeak laughed. “What’s going on with the silverscale soldiers? All of them are getting too big for their britches. For yet another one to challenge me...”

“You are a silverscale soldier as well,” the youth said.

Blackpeak’s face instantly turned ugly.

“If the bet is too small, I can’t be bothered,” Blackpeak said coldly.

“If the bet is too big, I’m afraid you won’t dare to accept,” Ning replied.

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 7: The First Battle

“Won’t dare to accept? A bet with you?” Elder God Blackpeak’s face turned even uglier as rage began to burn within his heart. Ever since he had returned after losing a few Elder Gods, the soldiers of the Fogstone Army had all treated him in a completely different way. In fact, some would actually curse at him to his face or mock him, with Elder God Skyleave being one of them. These insults and this mockery caused him to feel quite unhappy.

He had lived for more than a chaos cycle and had no hope of breaking through to become a World God. For people like him, face mattered more than anything else. In recent days, he had been stewing angrily.

For Skyleave to duel him was one thing.

For a silverscale soldier like Baiwu to challenge him as well? Bah, forget it. He was still a figure with quite the reputation.

But now, a silverscale soldier he had never even met before was also daring to challenge him?

“Yes. A bet with me.” Ji Ning looked at him.

“What’s the bet?” Blackpeak smiled coldly. “No matter how much you bring out, I’ll match it.”

“Three hundred bottles of chaos nectar,” Ning said.

“Three hundred bottles?” Blackpeak blinked, then let out a cold laugh. “Do you even have that much? Take it out.”

Supreme Elder Gods would generally be able to take out a hundred bottles of chaos nectar. If they also added their magic treasures into the mix, they might just barely hit three hundred bottles worth....but how many would generally be willing to add their most important treasures to the stakes of a duel?

Ning waved his hand, causing more than ten thousand chaos gems to appear next to him. “There are 160 sets of chaos gems here.”

In the primordial chaos, chaos gems and chaos nectar were the most commonly used currencies. A single drop of chaos nectar was equivalent to a single chaos gem, with a set of chaos gems being equivalent to ninety-nine gems!

Ning had pillaged all of the Elder Gods of the prisonworld. He had acquired some chaos nectar as well as quite a few chaos gems from them. The total number of chaos gems he had acquired was over 160 sets.

“These two Chaos treasures should be worth at least 140 bottles of chaos nectar.” Ning waved his hand again, causing a pair of Chaos treasures to appear. One was a pair of flying scissors that was shaped like a Flood Dragon, while the other was a set of nine flying needles. These were both quite valuable top-grade Chaos treasures which Ning had acquired.

“So you have some treasures after all.” A cautious look appeared in Blackpeak’s eyes as he looked at Ning. This unremarkable little silverscale soldier appeared to be hiding quite a few secrets.

“Screw’em. I’ve made a few breakthroughs lately, and I daresay none of the supreme Elder Gods of the Fogstone Army are definitively stronger than me now. Only the five generals are definitely more powerful than me and can beat me. What, can this silverscale soldier possibly have the power of a general?” The flames of rage within Blackpeak’s heart began to burn brighter and brighter, and his aura began to increase in might as well.

“Fine. Three hundred bottles of chaos nectar. I’ll take that bet.” Blackpeak waved his hand, causing 240 black jade bottles to appear alongside the Ninestar Skyhooks. A hundred of the bottles had come from Skyleave while the hooks had come from Baiwu. Only the 140 of the bottles really belonged to him. He had actually prepared the chaos nectar for the sake of this duel, but he had all but wiped out his savings in doing so.

If Ning had chosen to wager five hundred bottles, Blackpeak really wouldn’t have been able to provide enough chaos nectar. He probably would’ve been forced to throw his most important treasures into the mix.

A bet of three hundred bottles of chaos nectar...this was quite the wager!

Supreme Elder Gods rarely made wagers of this magnitude. As for ordinary Elder Gods or even elite Elder Gods, most of them wouldn’t be able to come up with that much money, even if they pawned everything they had.

“Three hundred bottles?”

“I don’t think I’ve met that silverscale soldier before. Any of you know him?”

“No clue.”

“Never met him.”

“I don’t know him either.”

“The Fogstone Army only has so many Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. Where did this guy come from? He probably is quite strong.”

“If he dares to make a bet of this size, of course he must be strong enough to back it up...but so what if he’s strong? Blackpeak might be an idiot, but he really is powerful. In the past, he’s always used warhammers, but just now he switched to using those slender swords. I bet Blackpeak is hiding even more techniques that we don’t know about. I’ll wager that none of the supreme Elder Gods of the Fogstone Army are definitively stronger than him. Do you really think a silverscale soldier will be able to beat him?”

“Agreed. He’s just a silverscale, after all.”

The spectating Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all chatted amongst themselves. Clearly, in their eyes there was a limit to how impressive this unremarkable-looking silverscale soldier could be. They refused to believe that someone with the power of a general would be so bored as to pretend to be a silverscale soldier. Even if the man wanted to be low-key, there was no way he would be THAT low-key.

“Don’t do it, brother Darknorth.”

“Brother Darknorth, this Blackpeak guy is hiding his true power. I suffered due to it just now!”

“Darknorth...” The soldiers under Elder God Skyleave all hurriedly sent mental messages to him, urging him to stop. They had feasted alongside him just now and were rather friendly towards him. In addition, it could be said that Ji Ning had stood up for them just now. They didn’t wish for Ji Ning to lose his treasures to Blackpeak.

“No need to worry, my friends.” Ning turned his head and smiled towards them.

Skyleave and the others felt helpless. Cultivators at their level wouldn’t be so easily dissuaded!

“Brother Darknorth probably has some certain special techniques that he is confident in...but what he doesn’t realize is that the soldiers of the Fogstone Army all have access to the various legacies and techniques of Fogstone. They won’t have any glaring weaknesses in any areas. It’ll be hard for him to achieve victory using whatever special skills he has. Ugh...he’s too new. There’s too much that he doesn’t know.” Skyleave and the others all shook their heads in worry.

The more powerful a legacy was, the fewer flaws it would have.

Ji Ning, for example. He was skilled in soul defense, heartforce scouting, resistance to illusions, and had powerful protective divine abilities. He was quite formidable in every single aspect, all because of the many techniques included in World God Northrest’s legacy. Dealing with someone like him, who had no glaring weaknesses, would be an incredibly difficult task. Blackpeak was a supreme Elder God of the Fogstone Army; he naturally had learned quite a few formidable techniques of his own as well. The chances of successfully using a special technique to defeat him would be very, very low.

The drill area.

Blackpeak and Ji Ning stared at each other from afar.

“For you to gift me with so much chaos nectar...ahahaha...” Blackpeak held four heavy warhammers in his hands as he boomed out with laughter, his powerful aura rolling out in waves around him.

As for Ning, he just stood there in a very placid manner, his aura the same as it normally was.

He had been planning to familiarize himself with this army camp first, which was why he had kept his aura in check this entire time. His aura was merely that of an ordinary Elder God’s. If he was to allow his true aura of a half-step World God leak out, he probably would’ve immediately become the focal point of the entire planet. Ning wasn’t the flashy, ostentatious type. He preferred to keep a low profile whenever possible...and now an unexpected benefit of that was that he was going to earn some chaos nectar.

He was going to teach Blackpeak a lesson at the same time as he earned some money. Wasn’t this just perfect?

“Be careful now. I kicked your captain’s face in just a few moments ago,” Blackpeak said. As he spoke, he also attacked with his full power, not daring to be negligent.

“Just show me what you have.” Ning stood there without moving.

“This silverscale soldier isn’t even taking out his weapons? Is he actually planning to use his hands?” Blackpeak mused to himself. It was quite common for experts to use their hands to fight as hands were even more dexterous and nimble than most weapons. One could strike with a palm, a fist, a finger, or a claw. There were also some special body-enhancing techniques that could refine one’s hands to make them as powerful as magic treasures.

“Hmph.” Blackpeak instantly transformed into a streak of light and shot towards Ning. As he flew over, he lashed out with his giant warhammers, causing the air to shudder as though the heavens themselves had come crashing down to earth.

“FALL!” Blackpeak roared loudly.

“[Starseizing Hand].” Ning immediately struck out with his right hand. His palm was filled with tremendous power, as though it was the gigantic axe which Pangu had used to cleave Heaven from Earth. It became three hundred meters large as it smashed towards Blackpeak like a gigantic black stormcloud. Ning’s hands were comparable to Chaos treasures and were completely capable of withstanding the tremendous amount of divine power which was instantly unleashed by his [Starseizing Hand].

He had the body of a half-step World God. When he allowed his [Starseizing Hand] to burst forth with power, he was overwhelmingly stronger than almost any supreme Elder God.

“FALL!” Blackpeak’s words continued to echo in the air, and his eyes were filled with madness as he sent his great warhammer in a vicious blow towards the giant palm. So what if he makes his palm huge? Even if he makes it ten thousand kilometers long, I’ll still smash it into meat paste.

BOOM!

The warhammer smashed against the giant palm.

Rumble...

It was like swatting a mosquito. When the giant palm came crashing down, it smashed Blackpeak down to the point of imprinting him into the ground.

Ning withdrew his palm.

Everyone present was silent. All of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals turned to look at Ning.

Blackpeak crawled out of the Blackpeak-shaped impression in the ground, an ugly look on his face. He growled out, “I haven’t lost yet!” As soon as they had exchanged blows, he had instantly realized how terrifyingly strong this silverscale soldier was. In a head-on collision, there were very few supreme Elder Gods who would be a match for him...but in a real battle, raw strength alone wasn’t worth that much.

Whoosh. The warhammers disappeared from Blackpeak’s hands, replaced by those thin swords.

Swish. He transformed into a streak of light and shot towards Ning once more.

“Shameless.”

“You got the crap smashed out of you just now. If he had pressed the attack, you would’ve been finished.”

The spectators all shook their heads, but they didn’t say anything. This was because in a normal duel, the duel would proceed until one side was completely unable to fight back, had his body completely smashed apart, or perhaps had his protective magic treasures knocked far away. Only then would the duel be considered lost. Simply being knocked down didn’t really matter that much. Blackpeak’s body was comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic spirit-treasure; it wouldn’t be so easily damaged. If he didn’t want to admit defeat, there was nothing that could be said or done about it.

Generally speaking, he would’ve voluntarily admitted defeat for the sake of saving face...but the thing was, Blackpeak still thought he could win!

“He’s just physically strong. I won’t compete against him in strength.” Blackpeak’s four slender swords struck out towards Ning in a ghostly, unpredictable fashion.

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 8: Chaos Immortal Abyssus

“Go.” Ji Ning once more struck out with his palms. If supreme Elder God wanted to avoid competing on raw strength, he would have to use some of his true abilities if he still wished to win. As far as raw strength went, even Old Man Yuan’s ‘Blacklotus Guard’ had been beaten by Ning to the point of collapse. This was a testament to Ning’s raw strength. As for technique? Ning hadn’t even used any of his sword-arts yet!

Ning’s palms once more transformed into a pair of giant black stormclouds that covered the skies, but this time the stormclouds moved even faster than before. They moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos, and they carried a strange aura of destruction about them.

[Brightmoon] sword-art, Heavenbreaker stance!

Ning had reached such a high level in sword-arts that his Heavenbreaker stance possessed truly shocking amounts of power. It had become even faster than before, and it also carried a terrifying aura of utterly crushing annihilation that made it difficult for an enemy to dodge.

“How can he be this fast?!” Elder God Blackpeak couldn’t even dodge in time. All he could do was stare wide-eyed as the giant black stormclouds came smashing down towards him once more.

“Damn.” He hurriedly used the four slender swords in his hands to block.

Boom!

Blackpeak staggered backwards but was still able to block the attack in a stable manner. He was skilled in every aspect; furious attacks, strange sword-arts, and defense. The reason why he had been knocked down the first time was because he had overestimated himself and competed against Ning in raw strength. Despite that, he had been able to endure the full brunt of Ning’s attack. Now that he was using four swords to ablate the force of Ning’s strikes, he was able to hold his own.

“This Blackpeak’s defensive powers are actually a bit inferior to Old Man Yuan’s.” After this second clash, Ning became certain of his victory.

Old Man Yuan was able to use palm-strikes to set up a completely airtight defense. Ning had to use the ‘Heartsword stance’ in order to achieve victory.

Blackpeak was more skilled in offensive attacks. Although he did understand certain defensive arts and mysteries, he was still a bit inferior compared to Old Man Yuan.

“Blackpeak is actually losing?”

“Blackpeak is completely focusing on defense. He isn’t able to launch any attacks at all. The difference in power between the two is quite obvious.”

“This silverscale soldier’s palms are able to strike faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. How impressive! He’s also incredibly powerful as well. Blackpeak focuses on physical strength, but even he isn’t able to withstand the silverscale’s blows.”

All the watching Elder Gods and Ancient Gods sighed in amazement. This was too incredible.

“Fall down!” Ning suddenly let out a roar as he manifested three heads and six arms. All six of his arms suddenly stretched out, transforming into six enormous black stormclouds that all moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. He once more used the Heavenbreaker stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art, striking out with incomparable ferocity as his palms smashed down towards Blackpeak.

The six massive palms struck out in a furious, consecutive series of blows that seemed to have no end.

“He’s terrifying.”

“Who could possibly withstand such a furious barrage of palms?”

“Fast and furious.”

All of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, including the ones under Captain Skyleave who had chatted and feasted with Ning, felt a cold chill. They could tell that almost no supreme Elder God could compete against Ning’s palms in raw power. For it to also surpass the limits of the Heavenly Daos in speed...

The six palms continued to furiously rain down upon Blackpeak with tremendous power and great speed. Ning’s techniques seemed simple, but all of the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals present felt as though they couldn’t even breathe. There was no way to defeat this at all.

Sometimes, the simpler something was, the more it could drive someone to despair.

“No.”

“Impossible!”

Blackpeak was drowning in palm-shadows. He was only able to withstand the attack for a brief moment before finally falling down. In the end, his defenses simply weren’t good enough.

Whoosh.

As soon as he fell down, Ji Ning struck him with a giant palm. His body went completely limp, then Ning seized him and lifted him up.

Ning dispelled the [Three Heads, Six Arms] divine ability, hoisting Blackpeak up with one hand. Blackpeak struggled forcefully with his four arms, but Ji Ning was simply too strong. He was completely unable to break free.

“Give up?” Ning looked at the captured Blackpeak.

“You...” Blackpeak gritted his teeth. Three hundred bottles of chaos nectar!

Ning shook his head. “It seems as though you are going to force me to seal you away and then slowly refine you...” Blackpeak’s body was comparable to a top-grade Protocosmic treasure. If Ning wanted to actually break his body apart, he would either have to use Violetjewel or seal the man away and slowly refine him to death.

“I admit defeat.” Blackpeak lowered his head and spoke these words with extreme reluctance.

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“What do you think?” Two figures were standing at the very edges of the area. One was the gray-robed elder Fushe, the master of the mustering grounds. The other was a handsome, white-haired, white-robed man. The handsome man was carrying a box on his back as he quietly watched the battle proceed between Ji Ning and Blackpeak.

“He’s quite ferocious.” The white-robed, white-haired man sighed softly. “He must have trained in an extremely formidable divine ability. How else could he be this dominating in raw strength?”

“His palm-arts are quite formidable as well. Every palm-strike surpasses the limits of the Heavenly Daos,” Fushe said.

“Mm.” The white-robed man nodded slowly. “Still, if this is all he has, there’s no need for us to have my master get involved.”

“This might be just part of his true power,” Fushe said. “I have the feeling that he wasn’t lying to me.”

The white-robed man nodded as he continued to watch.

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Ning withdrew his palms, allowing Blackpeak to fall to the ground. Blackpeak rubbed his throat, then gave Ning a hard look. “I’ll remember you.”

“The stakes?” Ning said calmly.

“The stakes!”

“Elder God Blackpeak, hand over the stakes!” Captain Skyleave and the other Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all grew excited and ran over to stand next to Ning. Elder God Baiwu excitedly slapped Ning on the shoulders and sighed in amazement, “Impressive. Given how strong you are, why the hell are you wearing silverscale? You should at least have a set of goldscale armor. Blackpeak, don’t just stand there like an idiot. Hurry up and hand over the stakes.”

Blackpeak let out a snort, then waved his hand, causing the 240 bottles of chaos nectar and the Ninestar Skyhooks flew over to Ning. He then turned his head and left, his body blurring as he disappeared into the army camp.

Ning waved his hand, collecting the items.

“Brother Baiwu, here’s your treasure.” Ning handed the Ninestar Skyhooks over to Elder God Baiwu.

“I c-can’t...” Baiwu hurriedly waved in refusal. “I lost it to Blackpeak, while you won it from him.”

“This is something you actually use in battle. You’ve used it for many years; I imagine you must be quite used to it by now,” Ning said.

Baiwu hesitated a moment. This set of treasures had indeed accompanied him for a long period of time, and he was emotionally attached to them. He gritted his teeth, then nodded. “Alright, I’ll accept them back. Brother Darknorth, I owe you one. If there’s anything you need me to do in the future, just let me know.” Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals generally weren’t willing to be in the debt of another; the only reason why Baiwu had accepted the treasures was because he truly had used them for a very long period of time.

“Captain Skyleave.” Ning waved his hand, causing a hundred bottles of chaos nectar to float over towards him.

“No need.” Skyleave laughed and shook his head. “If I lost some chaos nectar, so be it. I won’t go so far as to take it back. No need to even discuss this.”

Accepting the chaos nectar meant accepting a favor from Ning. Baiwu might’ve accepted his treasures back, but he was planning to repay Ning as well.

“Come, come! Darknorth won so much that we really need to feast in celebration. We stopped halfway through the last one. We didn’t even get to finish!”

“Right, right! Let’s go!”

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were all quite happy. To make Blackpeak suffer a loss like this was a happy thing.

“Don’t be in such a rush, everyone.” Two figures walked towards them from afar.

“It is Imperius.”

“Imperius.”

The white-robed, white-haired man and Fushe walked over towards the group.

“Brother Fushe.” Ning smiled.

“This is Imperius.” Fushe made the introductions. “He is the senior disciple of Immortal Abyssus.”

The handsome man known as Imperius was dressed in long robes and carried a box on his back. He smiled and said, “On my master’s orders, I’ve come to invite you to the Abyssus Palace.”

The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals nearby were all shocked.

“Hurry up and go!”

“Darknorth, hurry up and go. A Chaos Immortal has summoned you!” They all secretly sent mental messages over to Ning.

Ning felt his heart clench in nervousness as well. One of the nine World-level experts resident on Fogstone was known as Immortal Abyssus. He was a Chaos Immortal who had joined from outside the region. He had been a wanderer of the primordial chaos, but he had decided to take up residence on Fogstone, possibly because he was tired of wandering or for some other reason.

Almost all of Immortal Abyssus’ disciples had originally been his followers who had decided to join him on Fogstone. All of them were outsiders. After taking up residence on Fogstone, he had only accepted a grand total of two disciples over the course of countless years.

“It seems as though Immortal Abyssus will be the one responsible for verifying my strength,” Ning mused. “I’ve heard about the power of World-level cultivators for so long, but I’ve never actually met one.”

Immortal Abyssus would be the first World God or Chaos Immortal Ning would meet.

“Everyone, I’ll head to the Abyssus Palace first.” Ning turned to nod towards Skyleave and the others.

“Let’s go,” Ning said.

Escorted by Island Master Fushe and Ancestral Immortal Imperius, Ning departed from the army camp. The citadel was quite large, and the nine World-level cultivators all resided in their own palaces.

“That’s Abyssus Palace over there.” Imperius pointed towards a distant, towering palace that was almost completely black in color. The palace emanated golden ripples of power in every direction, with the ripples being so strong as to cause even Ning to feel secretly shocked.

“Abyssus Palace is a Dao treasure.” Imperius laughed. “When we followed Master in adventuring through the primordial chaos, we went to countless dangerous areas. In many cases, we had to rely on the Abyssus Palace to survive.”

Ning nodded.

There was a guard at the entrance of Abyssus Palace. Upon seeing Imperius, Fushe, and Ning fly towards him, he stepped aside and didn’t try to stop them.

The insides of the palace were quite spacious. Beautiful women belonging to many different races could be seen everywhere, as well as valuable beasts and birds. There were also springs of water that emanated auras of intoxicating spirituality; clearly, these were extraordinary holy springs.

“Master is in the main hall.” Imperius pointed towards the front, then smiled. “After he learned of your presence, he was quite curious about you.”

“Eldest apprentice-brother, eldest apprentice-brother!” A lively young maiden dressed in gauze came running out. When Ning saw her, he was secretly puzzled. She was merely a True Immortal! For a True Immortal to become apprenticed to Immortal Abyssus was no easy feat.

“What is it, junior apprentice-sister?” Imperius asked.

“World God Blackmist has arrived.” The maiden hurriedly lowered her voice and whispered, “He’s right there inside the hall. Master is accompanying him.”

Ning’s heart thumped.

World God Blackmist?

Of the nine World-level experts on Fogstone, three were World Gods. World God Blackmist was one of them.

“Oh?” A thoughtful look seemed to flash past Imperius’ eyes as he grinned at Ning. “It seems you’ve attracted quite a bit of attention, brother Darknorth. Come, let us have you pay your respects to Master and World God Blackmist.”

“Right.”

Ji Ning, Elder God Imperius, and Island Master Fushe walked towards the gates of the hall together.

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 9: Sword-Arts

After entering the main hall, Ji Ning felt as though he had entered a completely different world. He had heard nothing when he was outside the hall, but upon entering it he could clearly hear the sound of music reverberating throughout it.

Ning swept the hall with his gaze.

There were female Immortals dancing within the hall, as well as musicians who were playing all sorts of various instruments. There were nine separate musical groups spread throughout the hall, each separated by curtains of brocade cloth. There had to be several hundred musicians present as well as several hundred dancing female Immortals. All of them merely fluttered about at the margins, providing just a bit of extra festivity.

“Greetings to you, senior Blackmist,” Ancestral Immortal Imperius said respectfully. “Master, I’ve brought Elder God Darknorth.”

Ning glanced upwards. There were two tables placed at the front of the great hall. On the left sat a white-haired elder dressed in loose white robes, while on the right sat a black-haired man who looked rather sloppy and poorly dressed. Both of them emanated ripples of power that were so great, they felt as though they were the ripples that would emanate from entire chaosworlds.

“World God. Chaos Immortal.” Ning could sense that these two posed a deadly threat to him.

Although he had just barely reached the World God threshold when using Violetjewel, the difference in power between him and these two figures who had long ago crossed that threshold was still quite apparent.

“Respectful greetings to you, seniors.” Ning and Fushe both spoke out with respect. As Elder Gods, they had enough status to speak while remaining on their feet, as opposed to True Gods and True Immortals who had to kneel.

“So you are Darknorth?” The old man dressed in loose white robes spoke out slowly. He was Chaos Immortal Abyssus.

“I am,” Ning said respectfully.

“You seem quite confident in your skills. You asked for a World-level expert to attest to your strength as soon as you joined the Fogstone Army.” Chaos Immortal Abyssus smiled gently. “You’ve made an impression on all nine of the World-level experts of Fogstone.”

Island Master Fushe had made the report to all nine of the World-level experts, including the Starlord of Fogstone. Immortal Abyssus was the first to respond, but all nine of them knew about this matter.

“Mhmm.” World God Blackmist glanced downwards as well while sipping from his winecup.

“Master.” A red-lipped, red-robed standing off to one side suddenly spoke out loudly. “We don’t even know where this Elder God Darknorth came from. Are we supposed to trouble you with every random Elder God or Ancestral Immortal, master? Your disciple is willing to test him out first and see how much power he actually has. If he can’t even beat me, there’s no need whatsoever for you to intervene.”

Immortal Abyssus chuckled.

World God Blackmist played with his winecup, a drunken look in his eyes. “Brother Abyssus, this disciple of yours is pretty strong. You can let him have the first go with this Darknorth fellow.”

“Might as well.” Immortal Abyssus nodded, then instructed, “Disciple, have a little contest with Darknorth. Neither of you are to kill the other.”

“Understood,” the red-robed youth said respectfully.

“Understood,” Ning said as well.

Two World-level experts had made their wishes known. How could he possibly disagree?

Both Immortal Abyssus and World God Blackmist were watching the proceedings from their tables.

“What’s your impression of Darknorth?” Immortal Abyssus asked with a smile.

“He seems quite calm and confident,” World God Blackmist said. “He should have a bit of strength.”

Immortal Abyssus nodded in agreement. “Then who do you think will win, Abyssus?”

“Let’s watch and see.” World God Abyssus had a look of curiosity on his face.

Restrictive spells automatically sprang into place within the hall, completely covering both Ji Ning and the red-robed youth.

Ning and the red-robed youth stared at each other from within.

“Listen up. My name is Shadesoar.” The red-robed youth produced a pair of swords within his two hands. “My area of expertise is sword-arts.”

“My area of expertise is also sword-arts.” Ning also produced a pair of Darknorth swords. Previously, he had merely used his palms and the [Starseizing Hand] to crush Elder God Blackpeak. Now that he was performing in front of a pair of World-level experts, Ning felt it was best to be cautious. He was still able to perform sword-arts better with his swords, after all.

The sword was both sharper and faster.

“His area of expertise is sword-arts?” Ancestral Immortal Imperius and Island Master Fushe were both surprised. Ji Ning had fought in a tyrannical, dominating fashion earlier. He was actually a sword-user as well?

“He also uses the sword?” World God Blackmist let out a laugh. There were two World-level experts on Fogstone who were extremely skilled in using the sword. One was the Starlord of Fogstone, who had devised and was willing to sell his ‘Skystar Sword’ manual to those who were willing to pay the right price. The second was World God Blackmist. World God Blackmist was very good friends with the Starlord of Fogstone; it could be said the he had watched as the Starlord of Fogstone slowly grew up and rose to power.

World God Blackmist had actually taught the Starlord of Fogstone his sword-arts. But of course, Fogstone was now far more powerful than Blackmist by now.

“A competition between two swordsmen. This will be interesting.” Immortal Abyssus smiled. “Blackmist, if Darknorth is skilled you can choose him as your disciple.”

“I told you, I’ll never accept a disciple,” World God Blackmist said.

Immortal Abyssus secretly shook his head.

Long ago, World God Blackmist had a disciple. After that disciple died, Blackmist refused to accept any more disciples.

Suddenly, both Ning and the red-robed youth made their moves as they charged towards each other.

Both had reached extremely high levels of expertise in sword-arts and were able to control their divine power freely, letting none of it leak out or go to waste.

“Fifth-stage swordforce? His sword-arts are quite impressive as well.” Ning immediately felt a hint of pressure as he started to fight against the red-robed youth. The youth’s sword-arts were nimbler and more agile than his, like an antelope galloping through the woods or a pegasus flying the skies. Every single strike of the sword moved faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos; clearly, he had also learned and mastered a technique similar to the [Five Treasures].

None of this surprised Ning. This was a disciple of a Chaos Immortal, after all; it made sense for him to possess this type of technique.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

By comparison, Ning’s sword-arts were more unpredictable and formless.

Ning was using the 'Shadowless' stance of the [Brightmoon] sword-art. The red-robed youth found that this stance was extremely difficult to block.

"Your sword-arts aren't bad, but if this is all you have, you aren't qualified to exchange blows with my master," the red-robed youth barked out while fighting.

"Then you had best be careful!" Ning let out a loud roar.

BOOM!

Ning's two fluttering swords suddenly exploded with might. His swords had previously moved in strange, unpredictable ways. All of a sudden, they grew dramatically more powerful than before. Prior to this, Ning hadn't been using the [Starseizing Hand], while the red-robed youth had actually already used his own divine abilities. Only by doing so was he able to match Ning, a half-step World God, in might. Now that Ning was using the [Starseizing Hand], the power of his blows increased dramatically.

Fast, strong, bizarre...

Ning's sword-light brought such tremendous pressure upon the youth that his face changed. His body blurred as he manifested a total of six arms, but Ning immediately manifested six arms of his own as he continued to press the assault.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Ning's sword-light struck with incredible weight and savagery, causing the nimble sword-arts of the red-robed youth to be completely disrupted.

Boom!

A streak of sword-light slammed against the red-robed youth's body. The youth was knocked flying backwards and fell to the ground, causing even the palace hall itself trembled slightly. The red-robed youth couldn't help but vomit out a mouthful of blood.

"He's just a bit stronger than me, that's all." The red-robed youth didn't want to accept the loss and wished to charge towards Ning once more.

"Enough."

A voice rang out from on high. "If you lost, you lost."

"Yes, Master." Rather embarrassed, the red-robed youth assented in a respectful voice. He had wanted to defeat this unknown Elder God, but instead he himself had been defeated. In terms of sword-arts, he was actually one of the top three Fogstone soldiers...and yet, he had been defeated by this Darknorth.

"What do you think?" Immortal Abyssus looked towards World God Blackmist. "You are more qualified to judge him than I am."

World God Blackmist looked downwards at Ning, a hint of praise in his eyes. "This Darknorth has reached a very high level of skill in sword-arts. It seemed as though the two were on par with each other, with Shadesoar only losing because he was a bit weaker, but...in this fight, Darknorth's techniques came out in a steady, unbroken stream. His techniques were very well-rounded and perfected, allowing him to battle in a very natural, unrestrained manner. If my guess is correct, Darknorth has revealed just a hint of his true prowess with the sword. He hasn't shown his most formidable techniques yet."

“Oh?” Immortal Abyssus was rather surprised.

World God Blackmist had long ago reached the ‘Sword World’ level in the sword. He was better equipped to evaluate sword-arts than almost anyone else.

“Although he hasn’t revealed his most formidable techniques yet, he isn’t able to hide the slick perfection of the techniques he has revealed.” World God Blackmist smiled. “It is very hard for a weakling to pretend to be an expert of the sword, but it is also very hard for an expert of the sword to pretend to be a weakling. Every single stance he uses is extraordinary, as is his sword-intent. Abyssus, I have a rather unreasonable request to make.”

“Oh? What is it?” Immortal Abyssus asked.

“Let me be the one to compete with him instead.” World God Blackmist put down his cup of wine. “Only when I personally test him out will I be sure as to exactly how strong he is.”

“Haha, my attainments in the Dao of the Sword are quite average. You are actually the best choice possible.” Immortal Abyssus nodded in agreement.

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Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 10: World God Blackmist

Chaos Immortal Abyssus and World God Blackmist both suddenly turned to look towards the outside of the hall.

Whoosh.

Another figure suddenly walked into the hall.

Ji Ning, the red-robed youth, Ancestral Immortal Imperius, and Island Master Fushe all turned their heads to look. The new arrival was a man who was dressed in a robe of stars. He had long black hair, with every single strand of hair glimmering with the light of the stars. His gaze caused Ning and the others to feel an uncontrollable desire to drop their eyes.

“This aura...” Ning’s heart trembled. Upon seeing this man who had just arrived, he felt as though he was seeing the planet of Fogstone itself glittering within the skies.

“Starlord.” Immortal Abyssus had already risen to his feet. He immediately waved his hand, causing a third table to appear in the center of the hall. He and World God Blackmist quickly seated themselves to either side of the table.

“Childstar.” World God Blackmist rose to his feet as well.

Whoosh.

The starry-robed man moved to the front of the hall, then sat down in the lotus position as well. He smiled. “Second Uncle, Abyssus, please take a seat. Don’t stand on such ceremony. I just heard a short while ago that an Elder God named Darknorth wishes to join our Fogstone Army. I just so happened to leave my meditations and had nothing to do, so I came over to take a look.”

“Haha, Blackmist was just about to personally test this Darknorth’s power.” Immortal Abyssus smiled. He was very respectful towards the Starlord of Fogstone because the Starlord was an incredibly powerful figure. Compared to him, even the other two nearby hegemony such as God Emperor Blacklotus and Sovereign Eastvictor were a bit lacking.

Immortal Abyssus truly admired him, which was why he was willing to take up residence here.

“Second Uncle, you plan to personally test him out? Haha, it seems like my decision to come here was the right one.” The Starlord laughed.

“Darknorth seems to be quite talented in the Dao of the Sword.” World God Blackmist nodded his head and smiled. The little kid really had grown up and become powerful.

The Starlord of Fogstone, Immortal Abyssus, and World God Blackmist chatted amongst themselves. None of the others could hear a thing.

“Is that the Starlord of Fogstone?” Ning and the others, including the disciples of Immortal Abyssus, all felt breathless.

The Starlord of Fogstone was a legend.

Strictly speaking, every single Starlord of Fogstone had been a figure of incredible power. Fogstone had a long, ancient history that stretched even further back than the lineage of the Badlands Court itself! Whenever a successor became powerful, the previous Starlord of Fogstone would depart and go out to adventure through the primordial chaos. They would search for their own paths, and as a result many of them would die on other worlds during their adventures.

After adventuring for many years, some would come back and visit their old home. Thus, although every so often the Fogstone lineage would be wiped out, in every case it had been quickly restored to power once more.

In addition, whenever any of the successors formally assumed the mantle of ‘Starlord of Fogstone’, they would suddenly become dramatically more powerful.

One of the reasons why Ning had decided to join Fogstone was precisely because the Starlords of Fogstone had very deep roots. They could rely on the power of Fogstone itself to quickly improve themselves.

“Darknorth.” Immortal Abyssus spoke out.

“Present.” Ning replied with respect.

“It shall be World God Blackmist who tests you out,” Immortal Abyssus said. “World God Blackmist has long ago reached the ‘Sword World’ level in the Dao of the Sword. Don’t waste this opportunity.”

“Understood.” Ning grew excited.

Sword World?

The sixth stage of swordforce? The stage which allowed one to become a World God through the Dao of the Sword?

“My second uncle rarely shows his power. You need to treasure this,” the Starlord of Fogstone said with a laugh.

“I won’t take advantage of you, kid.” World God Blackmist waved his finger, causing a drop of blood to fly towards Ning and manifest into an identical clone of Blackmist. However, this clone’s aura was noticeably weaker. “This blood incarnation is a bit weaker than an ordinary Elder God. Use your most powerful attacks against me.”

“Alright.” Ning’s eyes lit up.

Ning and Blackmist’s incarnation stared at each other from afar.

Blackmist’s incarnation was rather weak in both speed and strength for an Elder God, while Ning was a half-step World God. This gave Ning a huge advantage...but Ning knew that his opponent was at a much higher level of skill and enlightenment than himself.

“Senior Blackmist, this is the most powerful sword-art I have developed to date. Please provide me with some advice,” Ning said solemnly, holding a single sword with a twohanded grip. The entire hall suddenly seemed to echo with his sword-intent as Ning took complete control over the entire area.

[Nameless] sword-art, Heartsword stance!

Ning had gone into seclusion for three hundred years after the Endwar, which translated into six thousand years in the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance. Although he had spent much of the six thousand years restoring his bodies, most of his attention had been spent on meditating on the Dao and on the Sword. His sword-arts were even more formidable and perfected than they had been when he had slain Old Man Yuan.

Swish! Ning flew forward, his entire being seeming to have transformed into a sword.

“This sword-intent...he really is a true expert in the Dao of the Sword.” Blackmist’s incarnation let out a laugh as he produced a sword and began to fight against Ning.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Tens of thousands of sword-shadows appeared as the two furiously battled against each other.

Ning possessed tremendous power, formidable divine abilities, and shocking sword-arts. World God Blackmist’s sword, however, was even more unpredictable and ephemeral, causing each of Ning’s strikes to fall empty and miss their mark.

“Second Uncle, you probably won’t be able to do anything to Darknorth with just an incarnation. He has gained certain insights into the true essence of the sword. Although he’s lacking in other respects, his control and mastery over the sword has reached a level of perfection.” The Starlord of Fogstone was even more skilled in the Dao of the Sword than World God Blackmist. Upon seeing this battle, he immediately laughed and gave his input.

“He shows no openings or weaknesses at all. With every step he takes, he crushes down upon me, taking advantage of the fact that I don’t have enough divine power.” The incarnation of Blackmist simply didn’t have enough divine power to fight. “I need to take part with my true body.”

Swoosh.

World God Blackmist suddenly flew away from his seat, dispelling his clone and instead charging forward to battle against Ning personally.

“What? World God Blackmist has engaged with his own body?”

“The incarnation of World God Blackmist wasn’t enough to deal with Darknorth?” All the spectators, including Island Master Fushe and the disciples of Immortal Abyssus, were stunned.

Immortal Abyssus himself was also puzzled. “Brother Blackmist is tremendously skilled with the sword. Although his incarnation is a bit lacking in physical strength, brother Blackmist should be talented enough in sword-arts to defeat Darknorth despite being physically weaker.”

“That’s where you are wrong,” the Starlord of Fogstone said. “The Dao of the Sword is a Dao meant for battle and slaughter. Thus, when most swordsmen reach a sufficiently high level of insight into the Dao of the Sword, they will first gain insight over the sword-intent of slaughter. This Darknorth, however, didn’t gain insight into the sword-intent of slaughter; instead, he gained insight into something else, a sort of absolute control over the sword. He’s able to unleash the maximum power of every single stance he uses while showing almost no weaknesses or flaws, making it extremely difficult for anyone on the same level of power as him to actually defeat him.”

“Absolute control?” Immortal Abyssus didn’t really understand.

The Starlord of Fogstone chuckled calmly. “The true essence of the sword is a vast, endless sea. Different experts in the Dao of the Sword will gain different insights when they study the essence of the sword. The insights Darknorth gained pertain to control, control over the sword. His sword isn’t the fastest, nor is it the sharpest, but he has the most perfect control over his sword.”

Indeed.

The deceased World God Northrest had left behind ninety-eight stone steles for his successor, so as to help his successor master the concept of the ‘hidden edge’. This was a concept that centered around control, not an all-out attack. Later on, Ning had finally mastered the ‘Heartsword stance’ during the Endwar. The [Nameless] sword-art required its practitioners to have absolute control over their Immortal swords. If one couldn’t fully control the sword as one wished, then one would never be able to become truly powerful, no matter how strong one’s blows became.

“This is a level which many experts of the Dao of the Sword dream of reaching. If you are completely flawless, then when you encounter an enemy of the same level of power it will be very difficult for that person to defeat you.” The Starlord laughed. “I only reached this level after I became a World God. My second uncle still has yet to reach this level of mastery. He’s embarked on a different path in the Dao of the Sword.”

World God Blackmist suppressed his own power as he fought, strictly competing against Ning in sword-arts.

Rumble...

Sword-light flashed throughout the hall.

Ning felt as though he had been trapped in a web of countless sword-shadows, all of which were crushing down upon him. He couldn't even see any of the other people in the hall. All he could see were those attacking streaks of sword-light, each of which seemed to emerge from a black mist of sword-shadows. Every single blow was ghostly yet brutal and overbearing.

"Kid, this here is my Sword World. Take a good look!" World God Blackmist's voice echoed in the hall.

Ning was using every inch of power he had to defend. Supported by the 'Heartsword Realm', his [Brightmoon] sword-art was executed in a perfect, intricate manner...and yet, he still was at the verge of being defeated. All he could do was fight with full power, infusing all of the insights he had gained into his sword-arts.

In recent years, Ning hadn't been able to meet a truly skilled opponent in the Dao of the Sword! He had been painstakingly training on his own this entire time. Now, however, a World God who had mastered his own Sword World was sparring against him in person, giving him a chance to see a completely new world and gain an even deeper glimpse into the true, vast essence of the sword. In fact, Ning was actually beginning to gain more and more insights into the second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art.

"Six thousand years of training wasn't as useful as this single battle." A berserk look appeared in Ning's eyes as he did everything he could to continue fighting against World God Blackmist. He tested out many of the insights he had gained into the Dao of the Sword, hoping that this battle against World God Blackmist would persist for a bit longer.

In fact, his sword-arts were improving at a rate which was visible to all the spectators.

"He's growing more powerful?"

The Starlord of Fogstone continued to watch from his position, and his eyes lit up when he saw this. "It seems that this Darknorth has never encountered true experts in the Dao of the Sword in the past. Second Uncle, spend some extra time sparring with him! It's quite rare for us to acquire such an expert in the Dao of the Sword."