

Desolate 781

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 21: Azureflower Space

The sea of consciousness was located very close to the forehead...and within Ji Ning's sea of consciousness, there was an absolutely beautiful azure flower that was swaying in the wind.

"I never would've thought that after mastering the Nine Chaos Seals, an azure flower seal would appear, with an azure flower appearing in my consciousness as well." Ning could sense himself transforming. In the past, after mastering each chaos seal he would be able to more closely attune with the essence of certain concepts such as destiny, slaughter, darkness, the sword, etc.

Now that the nine had come together, Ning felt an even greater attunement towards the essence of the sword. It made sense; he had the most insights in this regard, after all. He also felt much closer attunement towards rainwater, lightning, space, and other Daos...

"What is this azure flower meant for?"

"Is it meant to help me be more closely attuned to the various essences when I meditate?" Ning was puzzled. He carefully inspected that swaying azure flower.

Whoosh.

When Ning's heartforce brushed against that azure flower...it suddenly began to transform.

Crackle...

Heartforce was supposed to be formless and untouchable, but as soon as it touched the azure flower it was immediately devoured by it.

Inside the azure flower was a region of its own. This space was a blurry, empty region. However, a mist was slowly beginning to materialize inside of it.

"My heartforce was transformed by the azureflower space into mist?" Ning was so surprised and shocked, he immediately came to a halt. Almost ten percent of his heartforce had been used up in an instant!

"Heartforce is ephemeral and formless. Only certain special techniques, such as Houyi's archery techniques, are able to make use of heartforce. But this azureflower space was actually able to convert and transform heartforce..." Ning could sense that the mist within the azureflower space was filled with a strange, marvelous type of power.

"It can convert heartforce. Is it also capable of converting divine power and Immortal energy?" Ning wondered to himself.

Ning willed a tiny thread of divine power to seep into his sea of consciousness as well. As soon as it brushed against the azure flower, it was immediately devoured by the flower, resulting in a bit more mist to appear inside of it.

"B-b-but..." Ning was dazed.

“It’s actually...the same?”

“When heartforce is devoured, it transforms into mist. When divine power is devoured, it also transforms into mist. And...the mist is the same?!” Ning could hardly believe it. Heartforce and divine power were two completely different types of power; the differences between the two were enormous! And yet, both were somehow converted into a different type of energy, one which Ning was capable of controlling?

Ning could sense how terrifyingly powerful the energy contained within the mist was.

“Or perhaps...it isn’t a ‘conversion’. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the azure flower was able to ‘eat’ my divine power and heartforce, then give birth to this new type of energy?” Ning mused to himself.

“So it can eat both divine power and heartforce...what of Immortal energy?”

Ning willed it, and his Immortal energy flew into his sea of consciousness as well. As soon as it touched the azure flower, it was also devoured right away, resulting in even more mist appearing within the azureflower space.

Ning remained seated in the lotus position inside the cave, a very complicated series of looks flashing over his face. There was surprise on his face as well as puzzlement and excitement.

The azure flower that appeared after the Nine Chaos Seals merged together was simply too marvelous.

Divine power, Immortal energy, heartforce...these were three completely different types of energy, but the azure flower was capable of eating them all and then giving birth to more of the mist.

“How is this azure flower so powerful? It’s actually capable of eating and transforming three completely different types of energy.” Ning murmured silently to himself, “I wonder...was it true that the Nine Chaos Seals were formed naturally by the primordial chaos? Or were they created by some ancient power? They are simply too marvelous.”

“Doesn’t matter, I suppose.” Ning pushed that aside for now.

Many of the abilities these ancient powers were capable of were beyond Ning’s imagination. For example, the supreme figure of the Badlands Everworld was Daolord Badlands, someone who also stood on a level of power that surpassed that of the World-level.

“Let’s see just how powerful that mist is.” Ning willed a hint of the mist to emerge from the azureflower space. Instantly, his entire body began to be filled by the mist, absorbing it like a dry sponge absorbing water. As it did so, Ning began to transform.

“Eh?”

“There’s no way to make the power of the mist leave the body?” Ning was shocked.

Divine power, Immortal energy, and heartforce could all be made to leave the body. This mist energy, however, could not.

Ning spent some time testing it out. Indeed, the mysterious mist was only able to reside within his body, unable to leave it!

“What on earth is this mist good for?” Ning knelt down on one knee, stretching out his right hand and suddenly slapping it against the stone ground. As he did so, a surge of power suddenly burst forth.

BOOM!

The entire cave trembled and a few cracks actually appeared.

“This...” A shocked look was on Ning’s face. He hurriedly waved his hand, causing an estate-world to appear within the cave. Ning quickly entered the estate-world.

This was a Chaos-level estate-treasure which Ning had acquired after entering the Ruins. Ning had quite a few estate-worlds now; the reason he had chosen this one was because it was extremely large.

The insides of the estate-world was nearly ten million meters in size. It contained a vast mountain range, a wide sea, a series of giant continents, and many alien Outsiders that lived here.

Whoosh.

Ning suddenly appeared within the skies of this world.

“Let’s give it a try.” Ning’s eyes lit up and he began to fly through the air.

Boom!

He didn’t use the Ninehorn Lightning Serpent; instead, he just relied on the power of his divine body as he flew. He instantly transformed into a streak of rainbow light...and as he flew, he actually broke past the speed of light. If in the past he was able to travel three hundred thousand kilometers in an instant, now he was able to travel nearly four hundred thousand kilometers in an instant!

It looked like a simple increase of just a third, but in reality breaking past the speed limits of the Heavenly Daos was incredibly difficult. And more importantly, in the past Ning had to rely on the Ninehorn Lightning Serpent in order to reach the speed of light. Now, he wasn’t using the lightning serpent at all, merely relying on the power of his divine body...and yet, he was able to breach the speed of light! Ning hadn’t gained any new insights with regards to space or speed, but his flying speed had just dramatically increased!

It was almost like becoming a World God.

World Gods were dramatically strengthened in every single way, resulting in them completely eclipsing the various limits of the Heavenly Daos. The limits of the Heavenly Daos were now completely unable to restrict them any further, allowing them to ‘brute-force’ past the speed of light.

“I was actually able to brute-force past the limits?” Ning came to a halt. He stood there in the air, completely astonished.

“I originally just had the body of a half-step World God....but with the mist supporting me, I’m actually able to effortlessly brute-force the limits of the Heavenly Daos?” Ning truly couldn’t believe it.

In truth, when he had struck the ground of the cave with a palm just now, he had already begun to sense it. The power of his palms definitely equaled the power of a Dao weapon. It was absolutely at the level of a World-level expert!

Now, he had apparently also reached the World-level in terms of speed as well.

And the reason for these miraculous results...was the power of the mist that formed within the azureflower region.

Although the energy was unable to leave his body, it supported and reinforced it, upgrading Ning in every single area to an entirely different level. He was now stronger and faster...and Ning had the feeling that he was now as fast as a World God. Even if he wasn't, he had to be extremely close to that level.

He was able to fly faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos while relying solely on his body.

He was able to strike as hard as a World God while solely striking out with his palms. This, too, represented a breaching of the limits of the Heavenly Daos.

The limits of the Heavenly Daos...they were like paper, easily pierced through by Ning.

There was no need for him to rely on his insights from the [Five Treasures]

There was need for any other forms of support.

Just by allowing the mist to reinforce his body, he was able to completely breach the limits of the Heavenly Daos in every single way. Even if he wasn't a World God, he wasn't far off from that level.

"How could it be this powerful?" Only now did Ning truly understand how marvelous the azureflower space was.

"Who on earth came up with this technique?"

The primordial chaos did have quite a few monstrously powerful techniques. For example, Ning's combined usage of the second stage of the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods] and the [One True Body] technique to give himself the power of a half-step World God. The primordial chaos also contained stories of some even more powerful techniques that had been devised by truly ancient powers, and in some of those stories these techniques allowed extremely powerful Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals to slay World-level experts.

What did one need in order to kill someone on a higher level?

Ridiculously powerful techniques, terrifying treasures, shockingly high levels of insight into the Dao, and more. Only when one had reached the utmost peak of power in every single aspect could one produce such extraordinary results.

Ning had the feeling that the technique which produced his azureflower space was one such technique.

The stronger one became, the harder it would be to grow even more powerful. There were actually quite a few strength-enhancing techniques akin to the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods] or the [One True Body], such as the [Thousand Bodies Sutra], a technique which was even more monstrous. However,

after all those clones were joined together into one, it would become thousands of times more difficult to improve the body any further.

Or, to put it another way...the azureflower space technique was a technique that was thousands of times more valuable than the combination of the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods] and the [One True Body] techniques.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 22: Continuing Downwards

Ji Ning began to feel excited.

He had just undergone a transformation on a qualitative level. He had long ago mastered the 'Heartsword stance', ensuring that he would be able to withstand a blow or two from even a true World-level expert. If he was able to completely repair Violetjewel, then he might actually be able to give those World-level experts an actual fight.

"Am I going to be one of those legendary monsters who are able to slay World-level experts despite merely being an Elder God?" Ning mumbled to himself, then grinned.

It was too difficult to break through to the World-level.

Every single person who was capable of succeeding in doing so was an absolute genius who had many fortuitous encounters. Thus, an Elder God who could slay a World God had to be an even more brilliant genius who had even better luck and even deeper insights.

"The Dao of the Sword is a Dao meant for combat. I need to do my best to master the second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art. I might not be capable of becoming one of those monsters, but I still need to work as hard as I can to advance through my chosen path." Ning had a look of desire in his eyes.

A man had to aim for the stars and set high goals for himself on his path to cultivation. That way, even if he didn't succeed in his goals, he would still be able to travel farther than most cultivators.

Ning once more appeared within the cave inside the pit. With a wave of his hand, he put away his estate-world treasure.

"This mist energy is truly marvelous. Still...I imagine it'll be used up quite quickly in battle. I need to store up more of it." Ning waved his hand, causing the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance to appear next to him, then entered it.

Within the Heavengazer Tower.

Ning began to fill the azure flower with his heartforce, divine power, and Immortal energy. The azure flower accepted it all, ravenously devouring the energy and converting it into mist, resulting in the mist growing denser and denser.

After most of his energy was used up, Ning took a break to recover. He could withdraw energy from the primordial chaos to replenish his divine power, but his heartforce could only be recovered through rest.

After recovering...he continued to pour all his energy into the azure flower.

Whoosh. Finally, once the mist in the region reached a certain level of density, a vortex suddenly formed which drew in all the mist energy, converting it into a single crystalline drop of water.

“A drop of water?”

Ning attuned to it briefly, then immediately understood.

This drop of water was the form the mist took when it reached an extremely high level of density. When battle began, he would be able to draw the mist energy out from the drop of water.

“I have to use up almost all of my divine power, heartforce, and Immortal energy in order to condense a single water drop.” Ning couldn’t help but feel shocked. “Well, time to continue.”

The primordial chaos was truly vast and infinite. There was a limit to how much of its energy a cultivator could draw upon, with the hard limit being how much the cultivator’s body could withstand! Thanks to the Heavengazer Tower, Ning was able to withdraw chaos energy at a rate that was ten times faster than someone in the outside world. He repeatedly went through a cycle of exhausting all his heartforce, divine power, and Immortal energy, then replenishing it through resting. More and more water drops began to appear in the azureflower space. One drop. Two drops. Three drops...

Every single drop was formed through Ning completely exhausting and converting all his energy.

Finally, after a long period of time, a total of thirty-six drops of water were circling within the azureflower space. A strange equilibrium had been reached, and a sense of pressure radiated outwards from the azureflower space, letting Ning know that it had reached its limit for now.

Ning spent a few more days in the cave after this. He needed to get a full picture of what the azure flower could do. As for the other clone of his true body which was within the prisonworld, it had also mastered the Nine Chaos Seals and had gained an azure flower seal of its own, one which was also capable of manifesting those drops of water.

However, for the clone, three drops was the absolute limit.

“It seems as the my true body’s azureflower space is able to hold more power than my backup clone’s?” Ning murmured to himself.

“Is it due to it having a stronger divine body? A stronger Jindan? Or is it due to the soul?” Ning was filled with many questions.

His true body was formed through merging seventeen clones. It had a more powerful divine body, a stronger soul, and a Jindan that was comparable to first-tier Jindans. Its azure flower was more powerful as well.

“No need to dwell on it. For now at least, it seems as though the azureflower energy can only be applied to the divine body,” Ning mused to himself. He had a feeling that the azureflower energy wasn’t that simple, but despite spending quite a bit of time analyzing it he was still unable to discover any other methods of applying it.

“Given Mother Nuwa’s abilities, I’m sure she must’ve been able to merge the Nine Chaos Seals together as well. She also must have an azureflower space of her own, and I’ll wager her insights into it are much greater than mine. She might’ve discovered some of its secrets,” Ning mused. “But...I still have no idea where she’s gone off to. There’s actually no record of her in the Badlands Territory.”

Mother Nuwa had left the Three Realms roughly half a chaos cycle ago. If she had arrived in the Badlands Territory...given her power, her arrival definitely would’ve been recorded down. It must be understood that even the more powerful Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were known throughout the Badlands Territory. As for the World Gods, all of them would definitely be recorded down. And yet, Ning was unable to find any records of Mother Nuwa at all.

“Or perhaps she didn’t make it to the Badlands Territory? Did she get lost in the spatial vortex tunnel? Given her power, Mother Nuwa should’ve been able to traverse that tunnel with ease unless her luck was so horrid that she was completely surrounded by spatial rifts, giving her no way out at all. The chances of that happening, however, are quite low.”

“Or did she hide her true identity here in the Badlands Territory?”

“Mm. Well, I’ll worry about that later. Given her power...if she’s still in the Badlands Territory, her reputation will quickly spread throughout the region.” Ning was in quite a good mood right now. His mastery of the azureflower space had been more beneficial to him than anything he could imagine. Even if his true body ended up dying here, his backup clone would eventually be able to rebuild it.

“Thank you, senior Waterwind.” Ning turned to look at the words left behind on the cave walls.

It was thanks to the diagram of the ‘Hundred Streams merging together to form the Dao’ that Ning had been able to gain tremendous insights of his own and thus master the Nine Chaos Seals. This was far more valuable and important to Ning than merely improving his sword-arts a bit.

Ning moved to stand at the edge of the cave. He first stared upwards, then downwards towards the bottomless abyss.

“Should I climb upwards? Or should I go down?” This was what Ning was pondering.

With the azureflower energy supporting him, he would be able to easily climb upwards and escape from the pit. But after leaving the pit, would he be able to escape this place safely? Hard to say.

What would happen if he climbed downwards? Still hard to say.

“It won’t be too hard for me to climb upwards, but...” Ning nodded slowly. “I don’t need to rush out of here. I’ll go down and take a look first. Countless cultivators must’ve been swallowed by the Windsource. Hellsword himself had a pair of Dao weapons on him. The depths of the Windsource Ruins must hold many treasures.”

Although the path downwards might be filled with many dangers, it was also a path that led to great treasures.

It wasn’t impossible that Ning might end up finding four or five Dao weapons there.

“Time to go.” Ning no longer hesitated.

Cultivators were meant to battle against Heaven and Earth. If they wanted to acquire good treasures, they'd have to risk their lives for it!

Ning's arms stretched out many hundreds of meters. He looked like a giant ape as he swung from crevice to crevice, the azureflower energy filling his body making the process quite simple. In fact, Ning was now able to easily grasp onto jutting pieces of rock without needing to focus on cracks. Previously, Ning wouldn't be able to maintain his grip, but now he was able to do so with ease.

Swoosh. Swoosh. Swoosh. He clambered down very agilely with six arms, moving so fast that he looked like a blur.

Ten kilometers. A hundred kilometers. A thousand kilometers.

Ning continued his downwards descent.

Every so often, he would encounter a treasure that was caught within a crack or on a ledge.

"This is way too deep. I must've gone down at least thirty thousand kilometers by now." Ning couldn't help but secretly sigh in amazement. "The deeper I go, the more powerful the Windsource seems to become as well."

Right now, the Windsource was at least five or six times more powerful than it had been when he was next to the cave. However, Ning had become so much more powerful that he was still able to proceed in a very relaxed manner.

"Eh?" Ning's eyes lit up as he saw a warblade that glistened with bloody light that had been caught within a crevice. As the gray wind blew past the warblade, it emitted an ear-piercing screech. The warblade was quite dazzling to behold, and its aura caused even Ning's heart to clench.

"A Dao weapon!" Ning revealed a look of delight. "After climbing down thirty thousand kilometers, I picked up more than a hundred Chaos weapons. Now, I've finally found a Dao weapon."

Whoosh.

Ning reached out with his arms, stretching them out several hundred meters as he stuck his hands deep into the crevice, then pulled the warblade out. Judging from the ripples emanating from the warblade, it was an ownerless item. Its former owner had most likely died a long time ago.

"I feel as though its aura is even stronger than Violetjewel's aura is," Ning murmured to himself. "It must be quite a powerful Dao weapon."

Ning's guess was correct.

This warblade was a weapon which an Elder God had acquired from an incredibly deadly place. It was a top-grade Dao weapon! However, after acquiring the weapon, the Elder God had been unable to escape the danger zone he was in. He continued to flee through the area and in the end had been swept into and perished within the Hundred Streams of the Windsource.

"For the sake of this warblade alone, I have to make it out of here alive. It'd be a huge waste if I died." Ning quickly put the warblade away. One could perish at any moment when trapped within a deadly area such as this...but the rewards one could reap could also be staggering.

“I’ll keep going downwards.”

“I still haven’t seen those two Dao weapons which Hellsword found.” Ning reached out with his six arms, continuing his quick downwards descent into the depths of this bottomless pit.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 23: Windbeast

Ji Ning continued to clamber downwards, traversing yet another ten thousand kilometers. On the way down, he picked up another twenty-plus Chaos treasures. The reason why he picked up no Protocosmic spirit-treasures was because the gray wind here was so strong that even Protocosmic spirit-treasures would be slowly ground to dust by it. Only Chaos treasures were able to survive the wind for extended periods of time.

“Eh? I reached the bottom?” Ning held onto the walls with his six long arms as he stared downwards.

Rumble...

The gray wind formed a swirling maelstrom at the bottom, but the pit itself had come to an end. All Ning could see was the small part of the enormous maelstrom that was visible from his location.

“This should be the bottom. This is where the wind transforms into a maelstrom, at least. That means that the treasures left behind by the dead cultivators should all be here.” Ning began to grow rather excited. Hellsword had two Dao weapons on him, and Ning had already picked up over a hundred Chaos treasures and a top-grade Dao warblade on the way down. The number of treasures at the bottom had to be immense.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

The closer he got to the treasures, the more careful he became. He slowly climbed downwards, carefully inspecting his surroundings as he did so. The gray wind here was so powerful that if it wasn’t for his azureflower energy, there was no way he would be able to climb around here.

“The maelstrom is pretty large.” As he continued to climb downwards, the true size of the gray maelstrom of wind began to reveal itself.

“What?!” Ning was stunned.

The enormous maelstrom covered an area of roughly a thousand kilometers. On one end of the maelstrom was the deep pit which Ning had just emerged from, while on the other end of the maelstrom was another pit that seemed just as deep and dark. Quite a bit of the gray wind would occasionally howl towards and go through the second pit as well.

“This is...?” Suddenly, Ning had a thought. The image of the ‘Hundred Streams’ once more appeared in his mind, with those rivers all surging forward before coming together as one.

“Now I understand. This is what senior Waterwind spoke of when he said he saw the marvelous sight of the Hundred Streams of the Windsource. What I experienced just now should’ve been just one of those flows.” Ning immediately understood.

The Hundred Streams of the Windsource represented a hundred of these tunnels that coiled deep into the planet before joining together at a common location. Each tunnel had to be more than a million kilometers long. The Hundred Streams contained all of the Daos which had been mastered by the ancient power behind this estate!

Waterwind had viewed several of the flows and gained many insights into them. Thus, he had left behind his diagram atop the walls of that cave.

“The pit I just climbed out of and the pit on the other side should belong to the same flow.” Ning nodded slowly to himself. “It’s much like how the waters of a river will occasionally form small whirlpools when going past certain bends. So I’ve only been on a single stream this entire time. Still, it makes sense. Even someone as unfathomably powerful as Waterwind was only able to investigate a few of the streams.”

“I’ll wager that quite a few of the treasures ended up being piled up here somewhere.”

Now, Ning finally understood. After he had been drawn in here from the outside world, he had begun his journey through a single stream and had now encountered the first ‘bend’ in the stream. This meant that he was most likely in the outermost layer of the Hundred Streams!

“The farther down I go, the more dangerous it will probably become!” Ning mused to himself. “Even Daolord Badlands and senior Waterwind were unable to fully conquer this ancient ruin. If I try to go much deeper, I’ll probably be throwing my life away.”

Upon realizing that he was still at the outermost layer of the Hundred Streams of the Windsource, Ning immediately came to his senses.

“I should take away these treasures, then get the hell out of here.” Ning immediately came to this decision, then once more began to carefully crawl forwards. Soon, he reached the bottom.

The maelstrom itself didn’t have too much of a sucking power to it, just some tearing power. The margins of the maelstrom were actually quite peaceful, and many treasures had been swirled about and tossed to the edges of the maelstrom. Ning saw that there had to be hundreds, perhaps over a thousand treasures with tremendously powerful auras that were scattered around the edges of the maelstrom.

“Seven Dao weapons?” Ning was delighted when he saw this. “And that’s just what I can see with the naked eye. There are probably several other Dao weapons that are hidden within storage treasures.”

“Hmph.” Ning willed the azureflower mist energy to reinforce his legs, allowing him to easily walk across the bottom of this chamber. The sucking power wasn’t that strong here, allowing him walk about quite freely.

Ning silently crept forward, soon arriving in a region that was roughly three hundred meters long. There was no wind here at all, and quite a few treasures had been piled up here.

“This is great.” Ning waved his hand, collecting the treasures.

Whoosh.

That small corner contained dozens of Chaos treasures as well as a Dao weapon. The Dao weapon was an odd-looking fist-sized slab. Ning used his divine power to bind it, and upon doing so Ning realized that this 'slab' was actually a flexible sword of incredible sharpness that could also be used as a whip.

"Eh? What are these fragments?" Ning glanced at the unremarkable fragments nearby.

Ning waved his hand, picking up a fragment of a sword handle. "What's this?" Ning frowned. He could clearly see deep indents on the surface of the handle.

"Are those...fang marks?" This thought suddenly flashed through Ning's mind.

"Come here." Ning waved his hand, causing the many shards and fragments to all fly into his estate-treasure. Within the estate-treasure, Ning's coresense wouldn't be disturbed by the gray wind, allowing him to more carefully inspect the fragments. What he found was a very strange object located within the large pile of ordinary fragments.

Ning waved his hand, causing the strange object to fly out and come to a rest within Ning's palm. It was a large, palm-sized bluish-white scale.

The fragments he had picked up were of all different colors, and so Ning hadn't noticed the scale earlier.

"A scale?" Ning glanced at the patterns on the scale. It looked quite like a scale that would appear on some sort of a beast.

"And those fang marks...fangs that were able grind apart a Chaos treasure...and a scale? I can't stay here. I need to pick up these treasures, then get out of here." Ning didn't even dare to imagine what creature had caused this. He hurriedly flew towards a different corner of the chamber, but as he did so he saw a streak of light fly against the gray wind, emerging from the depths of the chamber and flying towards him with astonishing speed.

Ning blanched when he saw this.

Good heavens.

Even though he had become dramatically stronger, he still had to use his arms and hands to crawl around this place. However, that streak of light was not only moving against the wind, it was doing so at an utterly inconceivable speed.

"Flee." Ning no longer dared to tarry. His hands stretched out thousands of meters as he hurriedly began to crawl upwards and flee at high speed.

"My...my treasures..."

Just as Ning had picked up that scale, a creature had stirred from deep within this chamber. Its entire body was bluish-white, it had a crystalline mane, the head of a tiger, a body that was completely covered in scales, an extremely long tail, and four mighty limbs.

After being born, it had lived its entire life here within this endless tunnel.

It would occasionally discover some sabers, knives, staves, hammers, and other weapons that fell into its lair. These weapons were useless to it, but it liked to collect them and hoard them! It even placed a few

of the scales it had shed in the corners of the chambers where there was no wind, so as to signify that those treasures belonged to it!

“You actually dare to rob me of my treasures.”

“Die.”

“Die!”

It was enraged. It immediately transformed into a streak of light, flying against the wind towards the invader.

“What sort of a freak is this? How can it possibly fly directly against the wind of the Hundred Streams? Does this scale belong to it?” Although Ning had fled after taking just one glance at the creature, he was still able to tell that it was a strange beast that was completely bluish-white in color, while the scale he had acquired was also bluish-white. “And those shards of treasures that had been bitten apart...did those teeth marks come from it?”

“The undamaged Chaos treasures were all high-grade or top-grade in quality, while the broken ones were all fairly low quality Chaos treasures.”

“Still...for it to be able to chew Chaos treasures apart...”

Ning immediately understood that this monster was most likely far too powerful for him to handle.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!!!

Ning’s six arms moved in a blur as he frantically clambered upwards. He had never crawled as fast as he was crawling right now. Before this, he had been moving very slowly, for fear of something dangerous happening. Now, he was climbing at his absolute maximum speed. In almost the blink of an eye, Ning propelled himself upwards ape-style by more than ten thousand kilometers.

Whoosh!

But despite how fast Ning was climbing, that bluish-white streak of light flew upwards even faster, even though it was going against the wind. In fact, it had caught up to him!

“Damn. I found so many treasures. Am I going to die here now? This sucks!” Ning turned his head, staring at the ferocious, bluish-white monster that had drawn close to him.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 24: The Battle in the Abyss

The crystalline mane of the bluish-white beast trembled as it glared at Ji Ning, its dark yellow eyes filled with hatred and murder.

Ji Ning clung onto the walls of the pit with one hand, as he turned to stare at the bluish-white scaled monster.

Their gazes met.

"I don't want to be enemies with you," Ning said.

"Die!!!" The bluish-white monster suddenly let out a furious roar as it struck out with its tail, striking so fast that Ning blanched.

Ning hurriedly use his five free arms to strike out with his sword-arts. It was as though five black holes had suddenly appeared in the air and moved to deflect the oncoming attack.

BOOM!!!

The incredible power of the collision caused even Ning's body to tremble, smashing him against the stone walls behind him. A large crack had appeared on the walls, but thankfully Ning had a tough divine body and a top-grade suit of Chaos armor, as well as the support of that azureflower mist energy. All these things ensured that he was able to withstand the blow...but from this very first clash, Ning instantly understood that his foe was even more stronger than he was!

Ever since Ning had mastered the Nine Chaos Seals and acquired the azureflower energy, Ning had felt confident that he was very close to the World God level of power and perhaps had even reached it.

But this monstrosity before him...a simple strike from its tail had complete overpowered Ning!

"Die!" Die!" Die!" The bluish-white monster charged forward furiously, raking out with its claws.

"I gotta get out of here." Ning quickly clambered up the walls like a spider, sometimes using his left hand to climb, sometimes using his right. He'd occasionally block an attack while occasionally borrow from the force of the collisions to propel himself further upwards.

Riiiiip! The sharp claws tore a gash through the stone walls.

Whap! The powerful tail-strikes caused the stone to shudder.

Ning was at a complete disadvantage.

"Eh?"

"This beastie...doesn't seem to be that tough." After exchanging a few dozen blows with the creature, Ning was slowly beginning to come to this conclusion. "It is strong and fast, and its claws are quite sharp, but...it doesn't seem to have many insights into the Dao at all. It has an incredibly powerful body, but in battle it is clumsy beyond belief."

The azureflower mist energy had strengthened Ning's body, making it so that the difference in power between him and the beast wasn't that great. If Ning hadn't mastered the Nine Chaos Seals and was only as strong as he was when he had first been drawn into the pit, he would've been flattened by that first swipe of the tail. It wouldn't have mattered how profound his insights into the Dao were!

"I can't keep wasting time with it. If too much time passes, my azureflower mist energy will be used up and I'll be finished." After battling for just a short period of time, one of the drops of liquid azureflower energy had already been used up. This shocked Ning and brought him back to his senses.

"You can't kill me!" Ning barked.

"You. Die!" The bluish-white scaled creature continued to fight in a berserk manner.

Ning took out the warblade. This was the Dao weapon which he had picked up a short while ago, and Ning had already bound it to himself quite some time ago. In terms of raw power, it was even stronger than the still-damaged Violetjewel!

“F*ck off!” Ning exploded with power.

Swords are double-edged weapons. Sabers have just a single blade. However, the tip of this warblade was incredibly sharp, and thus it could also be used to stab, split, and scrape, just as a sword would. Still, it was still better suited for more explosive and forceful attacks.

“Heavenbreaker stance!”

Ning held the warblade in a two-handed grip. He allowed his divine power and the azureflower mist energy to both blast forth at full power as he raised the warblade up high, then furiously chopped down towards the bluish-white scaled monster before him.

The ‘Heavenbreaker stance’ was Ning’s most forceful attack. Of Ning’s many sword-arts, it was the sword-art which was best suited for use with a weapon such as this warblade. In fact, after getting some insights into the second stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, Ning’s ‘Heavenbreaker stance’ now contained even more of a killing intent than it did before. When Ning unleashed this attack he was striking downwards, resulting in the attack being sped up by the howling wind. His saber-light flashed out far faster than the speed of light, giving the bluish-white scaled monster no time to dodge at all.

“GWRAAAR!” The monster confidently blocked with its claws.

The enormous crescent saber-light actually blasted the sharp claws aside, landing against the creature’s scaly body.

BOOM!

The bluish-white scaled creature was actually knocked backwards, scales shattering at the point of impact and flying out of its body. It slammed into the stone walls of the pit with a bang, causing the stone to tremble and multiple cracks to appear.

In raw power alone...with the aid of the warblade, Ning was actually able to overpower even the bluish-white beast. It was the beast’s own fault for being too stupid; it had a mighty body that was stronger than even the body of a World God, but the way in which it was able to use that power was quite crude. It simply had far too low a level of insight into the Dao.

Or perhaps it might have no insights at all. Perhaps all it knew was just the most basic of attacks.

“AWOOOO!” After smashing into the stone walls, the bluish-white creature suddenly raised its head and let out a furious howl.

Its howling voice contained a strange, rippling wind to it.

Whoosh.

The sound of its voice was carried away by the Windsource and instantly transmitted to a different region.

Deep within a distant pit, a windbeast that had been slumbering suddenly raised its head. It murmured softly to himself, "An invader?"

"There's an invader?"

"That kid Fuu hasn't been alive long enough. He's too weak, which is why we had him stand watch over one of the least dangerous regions. And yet he's asking for reinforcements?"

The windbeasts all heard this sound.

Some of them had powerful auras, some of them had weak auras. Some of them actually shook their heads and sighed.

Whooooooooosh.

Nine of the closest windbeasts transformed into streaks of light, flying through the wind like fish swimming through water. When Ning had seen the bluish-white creature fly at high speed against the wind, he had been so terrified that he immediately fled. Only after actually fighting it did he realize that he was actually able to beat it. These windbeasts were born in the Windsource, after all; this was why they were able to fly within the wind with such ease.

"His body is too tough. Even my warblade is only able to chip off a few of its scales." Upon seeing this, Ning instantly lost all desire to fight against the creature any longer. In a place as dangerous as this, he couldn't just waste his azureflower energy willy-nilly; if he ran out, he'd die!

"Time to leave."

Ning quickly clambered upwards, moving more than a thousand kilometers.

"Running?" The bluish-white scaled monster continued its pursuit.

"What was that?!" As Ning climbed upwards while blocking the attacks from the first monster, Ning suddenly saw a second streak of light fly towards him from down below.

"Another one?!" Ning was horrified. "Move! Move! Move!" Ning was truly panicking now. He used four of his arms to furiously climb upwards while his other two arms used the warblade to furiously strike down upon the chasing windbeast. Each blow consumed quite a bit of his azureflower energy, but each time the windbeast suffered just slight injuries. It refused to give up the chase.

Whooooosh!

Ning continued to climb upwards at high speed. "I should be just a few thousand kilometers away from the exit. Once I escape the pit, the gray wind won't be able to cause me any trouble. I'll easily be able to fly faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos and it'll be much easier for me to deal with that monster."

"You can't even deal with a single invader?" The second streak of light had arrived as well.

"Help me kill him," the first windbeast growled.

"Shit." Ning gritted his teeth as he saw yet another streak of light appear in the depths of the pit.

“How many of the damned things are there?” As Ning continued to climb upwards, he defended himself with two hands. He now wielded the warblade with one hand, using it to launch incredibly powerful attacks. With the other hand, he activated the slab that he had picked up, causing a flexible sword to immediately fly out from within it. This was the second Dao weapon which Ning had acquired.

The warblade was used to launch ferocious, savage attacks. The flexible sword was used to execute the ‘Shadowless stance’ and other unpredictable sword stances.

As for Ning’s other four hands, he continued to use them to frantically climb upwards.

Boom! Boom!

“Kill!”

Two of the windbeasts furiously assaulted Ning, and he defended against them while continuing to climb upwards. Right at this moment...the third windbeast arrived as well.

“B-b-but...” Not only was Ning facing the attacks of three windbeasts, he could see two more streaks of light soaring upwards from the dark depths of the pit. One of those streaks of light moved with incredible speed; clearly, it was the fastest of the five.

“If I let them surround me, I’m dead.”

Ning furiously defended against their attacks, using his Dao weapons to block. He also redirected some of their attacks, making it so that the three windbeasts interfered with each other’s attacks.

“There it is!” Ning could see the bright opening above him.

“Gotta charge out!” Ning could already see the fourth windbeast, the incredibly quick one, drawing very close to him.

BOOM! Ning intentionally let himself be hit by a claw strike.

Swoosh! He borrowed the power of the blow, letting it sweep him upwards and shoot him outside of the pit entrance.

“GRWAAAAR!”

“Fuu, not only were you unable to kill him, you actually hindered me.”

“You idiot! He was barely able to handle me. You were useless!”

“Both of you, shut up.”

“All three of you idiots, shut up!” The fourth windbeast let out a roar, causing the other three to fall silent.

The four windbeasts all looked upwards, a look of rage and dread in their dark yellow eyes. They didn’t dare fly out of their pit, as the Ruins were far too incredibly dangerous. Even they were only able to live peacefully in their local part of the Hundred Streams. There were many places which were death traps even for them.

“Eh?” After flying out of the pit and away from the gray wind, Ning landed on the ground. He glanced towards the deep, enormous pit in surprise. “They didn’t come out?”

“Whew. I finally escaped!”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 25: The House By the Lake

Ji Ning kept a firm hold on the ground. Only when he saw that no windbeasts were emerging did he relax and glance at his surroundings.

“Eh?” Ning slowly rose to his feet, looking around himself with surprise.

The vast skies were filled with streams of gray energy that criss-crossed in the air. A stream of gray energy was flowing through the endless pit he had just crawled out of as well. Ning immediately understood that the gray energy was actually the gray ‘wind’ which had enveloped him and Hellsword earlier.

“When Hellsword and I were fighting, we must’ve activated some restrictive spell by accident, resulting in us being swept into that tornado.” Ning carefully inspected the area. “If those windbeasts were too afraid to come out here, it has to mean that this place is dangerous.”

He was in a vast new realm. Aside from some enormous pits, Ning could also see some enormous continents, mountains, valleys, and lakes.

Everything looked so peaceful!

However, Ning’s heartrate began to speed up. Ever since he had manifested the azureflower seal after merging the Nine Chaos Seals, Ning had become even more keenly attuned to the essence of destiny. He was able to easily see the future destinies of mortals at one glance, and he could now sense that destiny was warning him that this place was incredibly dangerous. It was as though those peaceful-looking continents, mountains, and lakes were all filled with danger.

“What should I do?” Ning raised his head to stare towards the skies, then towards the area around him. “I can sense that every single direction is filled with grave danger.”

“If every direction is filled with danger...and if the pits are filled with all those windbeasts...”

“Forget it. I’ll just randomly choose a direction. It’ll be up to luck.”

After pondering for a moment, Ning had no choice but to harden his heart. Warblade and flexible sword in hands, he began to carefully move forward. If every direction was filled with danger, then picking a particular direction didn’t matter.

Ning walked out of the barren wastelands and into a grasslands. Although he sensed tremendous danger the entire time, he made his way forward safely.

“Maybe I’ll be able to walk out of this place,” Ning consoled himself.

“The lake is quite pretty.”

He saw a lake within the grasslands, so beautiful that it looked like the tears of a lovely maiden.

"I hope nothing dangerous suddenly pops out of the lake." Ning continued to remain vigilant, and he even kept the Goldstar Beads of the Heavens around him, so as to help forewarn him of any incoming danger. Of course, if he wasn't strong enough no amount of vigilance would matter.

Whoosh!

A ripple suddenly spread out and encompassed Ning, causing his surroundings to change and transform.

"This is...?" Ning stared at his surroundings. He could still see the beautiful lake, but a quiet little residence had appeared by the side of the lake. The house was emanating ripples that were so powerful, they caused Ning to shiver.

"What's going on?"

Ning could sense how terrifying and deadly that house was. He wanted to move away from it, but no matter how he walked he was unable to move farther than three kilometers away from the house. It was as though space itself was twisted here.

"If I can't leave, I suppose I'll have to go over and take a look," Ning mused to himself. "The person who built this house has to be far more powerful than me. If he wants me dead, I won't be able to escape."

He had no other options. His only choice was to go forward, and he did so, gently pushing open the gates to the courtyard of the house.

Inside the courtyard was a garden and a grassy lawn, as well as several seats that were scattered across it. In the center was a graceful, elegant house that emanated ripples of tremendous power. Ning walked over towards the house.

Three of the four sides of the house had windows, while one side had a door. The windows were made from wood and could be easily seen through.

"Eh?" Ning could vaguely make out a figure seated in the lotus position inside the house. This caused Ning to feel quite shocked. However, Ning still chose to walk forward to the doors of the house.

Inside the house, there was an old man dressed in golden Daoist robes who was seated atop a prayer mat. The old man's eyes were closed, and he was holding a horsetail whisk in his hands. Next to him lay a miniature nine-level pagoda.

His Daoist robes, his whisk, the prayer mat, the nine-level pagoda...everything emanated ripples of absolutely shocking power.

"That nine-level pagoda in particular radiates an aura that is a hundred times as powerful as the aura of the warblade. This was the aura which Violetjewel gave me before I bound it." Ning was stunned. "Can it be that this nine-level pagoda is also a treasure that is on a higher level than that of Dao weapons?"

Ji Ning was no longer the same person he was back in the Three Realms. He was now a vastly more experienced figure.

Chaos treasures were generally wielded by Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.

Dao weapons were generally employed by World Gods and Chaos Immortals.

As for weapons which surpassed Dao weapons like Violetjewel or this tower...they were items which would drive any World-level expert mad with desire!

"His robes, the whisk, the prayer mat...those three are all Dao weapons, and they each have auras that are as strong as the aura of my warblade." Ning's own eyes were shining with desire as well. The treasures that he could see were already enough to drive any World-level expert mad with lust.

"But...it seems as though this old man is already dead?"

Ning sensed no life energy at all from the old man's body, only an aura of ancient might.

"I'll give it a test." Ning moved many steps backwards, then willed his Protocosmic spirit-rope to fly out. Ning didn't dare to actually approach the old man and try to take the treasures himself, for fear of activating some sort of dangerous spell or formation. Thus, he instead willed his Protocosmic spirit-rope to loop around the nine-level pagoda, intending to tug it over. If he could acquire that pagoda, this entire trip would be more than worth it.

The pagoda was something which even World-level experts would go crazy for. The only reason why World God Northrest was able to acquire Violetjewel was due to the assistance of Vastheaven Palace. For Ning to be able to so easily acquire another such treasure was simply a bit of staggeringly good luck.

Rumble...

As the Protocosmic rope moved within nine meters of the old man, a wind suddenly arose around him. As the wind blew past the Protocosmic spirit-rope, half of it was instantly disintegrated into dust.

A series of words suddenly appeared in midair, every single character gleaming with golden light.

The fellow Daoist who is capable of defeating the Windsource Formation shall acquire my treasures.

Ning was filled with both shock and desire.

Windsorce Formation? What was the connection between it and the Hundred Streams of the Windsorce? Could it be that this old man was the creator of these ancient ruins? If he really was, could this house be the house where he lived? Ning couldn't quite believe it.

"If you die, you die. Why did you have to put up these formations and spells?" Ning's head hurt. He had grown dramatically more powerful, but he was still just barely capable of damaging a Protocosmic spirit-treasure. To instantly disintegrate it into dust? He was far from capable of such a thing.

"Let me try it again."

Ning willed a large battleaxe to appear. This battleaxe was covered with divine runes, and it was a top-grade Chaos treasure.

"A top-grade Chaos treasure...I refuse to believe you can destroy it." Ning immediately used his Immortal energy to send the battleaxe to fly towards the seated old man. Once more, when the axe reached nine meters of the old man, a wind arose. Hissssss! When the wind blew across the axe, it emitted an ear-piercing hiss.

The axe remained undamaged...but it was unable to advance any further.

“What’s going on?” Ning could sense incredibly powerful energy blocking his battleaxe’s path. No matter how hard he ‘pushed’, he was unable to make it advance at all.

Swoosh.

Suddenly, a stream of energy flew out from the nine-level pagoda next to the seated old man. The stream of energy transformed into the appearance of a black-robed child.

“Stop trying. You aren’t even a World-level expert. Why are you wasting your time?” The black-robed child snapped rather irritably.

“You...” Ning was startled.

“I’m a treasure spirit. Haven’t you seen one before?” The black-robed child glanced sideways at the old man’s corpse, then said, “And you can stop lusting after the old man’s treasures. Even if you managed to break through the Windsource Formation, you’d have to swear a lifeblood oath first. Only after accomplishing it would you be allowed to acquire these treasures. As for breaking through the formation? Only peak World Gods would have a shot at it.”

“Only peak World Gods would have a shot at it?” Ning was puzzled. “What level was this senior at?”

“He was just a peak World God as well.” The black-robed child smirked. “However, he was one of the servants of Daolord Windsource, who gave him a few treasures like the Windsource Formation. Although no one is currently commanding it, it’ll still be very hard for anyone to break through it.”

Ning nodded slowly.

This all made sense. The deceased World God had used the phrase, ‘the fellow Daoist who is capable of defeating the Windsource Formation’; for him to use the words ‘fellow Daoist’ meant that the person capable of defeating the formation would probably on the same general level of power as he had been.

“Ugh. When Daolord Windsource died, all of his servants accompanied him to the grave. If he died, he died, but why the hell did the old man have to keep me trapped here as well?” The black-robed child sighed, then shook his head. “I’m a venerable treasure that has a quintessence inside, but I’ve been trapped here for ages. What a waste!”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 26: Escaping Alive

A magic treasure that had a quintessence core within it?

Right. Violetjewel had a quintessence core within it as well. Its physical body had suffered incredible damage but the quintessence core inside of it was completely unharmed.

“Don’t you want to leave?” Ji Ning asked.

“Of course I do. I’m bored to death here.” The black-robed child glanced sideways at Ning.

“Aside from breaking the Windforce Formation and swearing a lifeblood oath, is there truly no other way of taking you away?” Ning asked. “If you can tell me a way, I’ll definitely do my best to carry it out.”

“Well, there is.” The black-robed child nodded.

“There is? What?” Ning’s eyes lit up.

“Become a Daolord first,” the black-robed child said.

Ning instantly felt speechless. The only Daolord in the Badlands Territory which Ning was aware of was Daolord Badlands. There might be other Daolords who were in seclusion, but regardless of how many were present, their level of power was a level far beyond Ning’s. If Ning truly did become a Daolord in the future, it wouldn’t be hard for him to acquire treasures such as this. Didn’t Daolord Windsource himself parcel out such treasures to his World God servants?

One could imagine how fabulously wealthy Daolords were!

“How many servants did Daolord Windsource have exactly?” Ning asked curiously.

“Kid, you aren’t even a World God yet.” The black-robed child shook his head, then said in a smug manner, “Let me broaden your horizons a bit, then.”

“Right, right.” Ning’s eyes lit up.

“Daolord Windsource had a rather weird disposition, but he truly was an incredible figure. He roved through the endless primordial chaos and journeyed through many of its territories. He directly enslaved over five hundred World-level experts, with more than a hundred others willingly joining him as retainers...” The black-robed child let out an amazed sigh. “In fact, he even had a Daolord as his retainer.”

“What?!” Ning was shocked.

“Incredible, right?” The black-robed child said smugly, “When Daolord Windsource descended upon this territory, the owner of this territory came out and welcomed him with great ceremony and courtesy.”

“But alas...I heard that Daolord Windsource failed in his attempts to merge his Hundred Streams together down. Before dying, he exiled his eldest disciple, the one who had become a Daolord, as well as some other disciples and retainers. He then led all of his slaves and the rest of his World-level retainers to this place.”

“According to what Daolord Windsource said, this was his ancient homeland. He left this place long, long ago and voyaged through the outside the world. If he was to die, he wished to die at home.”

“However, his ancestral chaosworld had vanished long ago. Thus, Daolord Windsource established the Windsource Chaosworld in the same location where his ancient chaosworld had been. He then established the Windsource Ruins. Supposedly, he did all this to show off all the insights into the Dao he had gained during his life. After leaving his Dao behind...he died.” The black-robed child pointed towards the seated old man. “Look. That’s one of the poor bastards who served him and was forced to join him in death.”

“More than five hundred World-level experts joined him in death?” Ning was speechless.

“Right.” The black-robed child nodded. “Daolords, y’know? Daolord Windsource was actually pretty peaceful. Some of the crazier Daolords will go completely berserk. When they die, they will make their entire territory die along with them, going so far as to slaughter every living being they can find before dying in a sea of corpses.”

Ning truly was unable to say anything.

Make an entire territory die with them, then continuing to slaughter until they themselves perished?

Madmen.

The more powerful a person was, the more terrifying they would be when gripped by madness. It seemed as though Daolord Windsource really was fairly calm by comparison.

“So you are saying that more than five hundred World-level experts died in these ruins?” Ning sighed in amazement.

“A Samsara Daolord, more than five hundred World-level experts, and an enormous number of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals all died here,” the black-robed child said. “Over the course of countless years, quite a few treasure-seeking cultivators have died here as well, leaving behind many of their own treasures. Thus, this place really is like a giant treasure vault. The only question is...are you strong enough to loot it?”

“You are actually pretty lucky.” The black-robed child let out a sigh. “You actually were able to find this place. The wind is formless and fickle, and thus the internal structure of Daolord Windsource’s estate is also ever-changing. Since you were able to find this place, you now have a chance of being able to escape.”

“A chance of being able to escape?” Ning was surprised and delighted.

“Right. There’s a pavilion over there. Once you go inside of it, it’ll teleport you to the outer regions. The outer regions are much safer than this place,” the black-robed child said. “Alright, that’s all. Hurry up and beat it. You were lucky enough to find this estate this time, but you probably won’t be so lucky next time.”

After speaking, the black-robed youth flew back into the nine-level pagoda.

Ning once more turned his gaze towards the golden-robed old man who was seated in the lotus position within the house. He couldn’t help but shake his head and sigh. This old man was a peak World God; most likely, he was on par with even the likes of World God Northrest or even stronger. And yet...his destiny had been to accompany his master unto death!

Daolord Windsource had only driven away some of his disciples and retainers. The rest of his retainers, along with his slaves, had all died with him here. Apparently, the retainers who had died were the ones he didn’t like. The ones he did like, he had exiled along with those disciples, sparing them instead of having them die with him.

“The treasures are right there in front of me, but I just can’t get at them.”

“Forget it. Time to go.”

Ning knew that luck and fortune couldn’t be forced. If he really was lucky, he’d be able to find a World God’s corpse that wasn’t protected by any formations or spells at all, allowing him to easily take away any treasures. That would really be a helluva stroke of luck!

And yet, he was still fairly lucky. Although he hadn't been able to acquire the treasures, he had learned of a safe route out of here.

After leaving the house, he turned to glance one final time at the golden-robed elder's corpse. Only then did Ning begin to make his way through the courtyard. There were a total of three pavilions within the courtyard, but Ning was in no rush to leave. Instead, he first inspected the other rooms.

"There might be some other treasures left here," Ning mused to himself.

"Eh?"

Ning really did find something inside one of the rooms.

This was a room with a study. There was a table here, a quill pen having been tossed atop of it. The table was covered with golden paper, but there was plenty of paper scattered on the ground as well.

"Damn. Damn. Damn."

"Damn me for choosing to serve that old bastard."

"Damn that old bastard for being unfair and partial."

"You damn well deserved to lose your Dao and die!"

The words on the paper were filled with hatred. In truth, the retainers didn't realize what had happened right away. Only after Daolord Windsource had sealed their truesouls did they understand what was happening. Given that it was guaranteed that their souls would soon be shattered, how could these slaves and retainers possibly feel afraid of him any longer? For them to merely vent their rage on a few pieces of paper was nothing!

A pity for them that Daolord Windsource had already went into silent seclusion to wait for death to come. How could he possibly care about the ravings and curses of these ant-like beings?

In the instant of his death, the seals covering the truesouls of his slaves and retainers were all activated, causing all of their truesouls to be destroyed as well.

"This World God must've been fond of calligraphy. This pen is actually a Dao weapon." Ning was amazed. This was the first time he had seen a pen-shaped Dao weapon. He hurriedly picked it up and easily bound it to himself.

The quill of this pen could transform into countless strands of white thread that could entangle one's foes, while the tip of the pen could be used as an awl or dagger.

It could be used for soft attacks or hard attacks. This truly was a fierce weapon. However, the deceased World God had long ago grown accustomed to using it for calligraphy.

"If I keep searching, perhaps I'll find more." Ning thoroughly searched the rest of the rooms but found nothing else. Still, Ning was in an excellent mood. A quick search had resulted in him gaining a pen-shaped Dao weapon which other Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would go mad over.

"Time to go." Not hesitating at all, Ning immediately began to move towards the pavilions.

There were three pavilions in total. Ning used his Immortal energy to take control of the nearby grass to test the pavilions out. When he sent the grass into the second pavilion, the grass suddenly disappeared as it was teleported away.

“There it is. It really was teleported away. I wonder if it was teleported to some place safe or some place dangerous.” Ning could sense the ripples from the teleportation. “At least there’s a chance of getting out of here. In I go.”

Ning strode forward, entering the pavilion. As he did so...swoosh! He disappeared into thin air.

Ning re-appeared somewhere else in the middle of the air.

“Where am I?” Ning glanced downwards, a look of delight instantly appearing on his face. “The region I was in previously?”

He had been journeying through this region for more than a year before encountering and battling Hellsword. Only then had he been swept into the Hundred Streams of the Windsourc. Now, he had made it back to this dangerous region. However, Ning now knew that compared to the core regions he had just escaped, this ‘dangerous region’ and the swamps were all incredibly safe. Even Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were able to wander through this region with ease!

“I managed to come back with quite a haul of treasures. If I died in there, all my treasure-scavenging would’ve been for nothing.” Ning was filled with contentment and happiness.

“Eh?”

Ning suddenly stared off into the distance. His vision was incredibly keen, especially after the azureflower energy began reinforcing every part of his body. He was now able to see to great distances with the naked eye, and he immediately saw a warship drifting through the distant skies next to a chain of mountains. This warship had been resized to be merely a few dozen meters long, and it clung tightly to the chain of mountains.

“Elder God Skysouth?” Ning immediately recognized the warship. He couldn’t help but murmur to himself, “It seems the two of us really are destined to clash.”

Swoosh.

Ning immediately began to fly towards the warship, the Goldstar Beads of the Heavens swirling around him.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 27: Ji Ning and the Flamefairy

Karma was truly a wondrous, mysterious thing.

As Ji Ning flew towards the warship, he couldn’t help but sigh. When he had first entered the Ruins, Elder God Skysouth had relied on his army of slaves to attack Ning and attempt to seize Ning’s treasures. In truth, Ning didn’t hold much of a grudge. Anyone who entered the world of cultivation had to abide by its many unspoken rules, and combat was extremely common within the Ruins. If Ning truly had been killed, he would’ve only blamed himself for being too weak.

Back then, he had elected to flee.

After roaming about the Hundred Streams of the Windsource, he had ended up acquiring multiple Dao weapons and had mastered the Nine Chaos Seals, materializing the azureflower seal and growing dramatically more powerful. And now, as soon as he exited the Hundred Streams, he had run into Elder God Skysouth once more. If there was no enmity whatsoever between the two, Ning probably would've just left; that was the type of person he was. But now that there was a bit of bad blood...Ning didn't hesitate at all in choosing to chase after him.

This, too, was karma!

"Destiny and karma truly do work in unfathomable ways." Ning could sense the unfathomably distant and vast essence-river of destiny ebbing and surging.

He was now able to see the fate of mortals with but a single glance, discerning their future joys and sorrows.

Truly formidable cultivators, however...

Ning found it difficult to see their destinies.

Although destiny was often viewed as being abstruse, it actually operated on simple principles. Destiny was formed by the entangling of countless different strings of karma. For example, Ji Ning held a grudge against Old Man Yuan, which was why Ji Ning had ended up joining Fogstone and being stationed here on the Windsource Chaosworld! But of course, the secret workings of destiny were trillions of times more complicated than the simple 'cause and effect' of karma.

Ning understood another principle as well. The past was difficult to change, but the future was not.

For example, Ning might be able to see the destined life path of a mortal, but because the future had yet to actually happen, for that mortal's destiny to be changed wouldn't be too hard. For example, if a powerful cultivator suddenly chose to intervene in that mortal's life, that mortal's destiny would easily be changed.

The Book of Life and Death was a good example. It set down the destined fates of mortals, but if that mortal gained great karmic merit, his life could be completely changed.

In fact, Ning had the sneaking suspicion that some unfathomably powerful figures might be capable of reversing things that had already occurred in the past! For example...perhaps a cultivator whose truesoul was destroyed could be revived.

This was Ning's greatest hope and goal as he continued on his path of cultivation. His greatest desire was to see his beloved wife be brought back to life.

Ning continued to chase after the warship, moving closer and closer to it, but his mind began to wander as he began to ponder on the workings of karma and destiny. In truth, he didn't view Elder God Skysouth as much of an opponent.

A hundred Elder Gods in an Elder God Formation were very formidable and were capable of holding off even a World God for a period of time, but Ning didn't intend to give Elder God Skysouth the chance to act as he pleased.

The warship continued to slowly fly through the mountains. Elder God Skysouth was seated on at the front of the ship, lazily watching the skies before him. Next to him was a table covered with wine and delicacies, along with two female servants who were attending to him. Behind him were six Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who were maintaining a watchful vigilance.

In front of the warship, a blazing figure was fleeing at high speed. The area around this fiery-robed woman was filled with countless daggers of flame.

“Flamefairy.” Elder God Skysouth chortled. “You’ve been fleeing for quite some time now. I imagine you should understand that you won’t be able to escape me. If I wanted to, I could’ve caught you long ago. However, I chose not to. I can’t bear to see such an unmatched beautiful Immortal maiden like yourself die within a place like this.”

“All I want you to do is be one of my retainers. Why must you be so stubborn?” Elder God Skysouth drained all the wine from his winecup. The female servant next to him smiled flirtatiously and quickly helped him fill it once more.

“Just a retainer?” The fleeing Su Youji laughed coldly.

“You look ravishing when you are angry, Flamefairy. Your [Libertine Dream] technique truly is alluring.” Elder God Skysouth couldn’t help but sigh in praise. “I’m not asking that much. All you need to do is serve me as a retainer while also being my pleasure-companion. What’s the point of cultivation? It is to be able to travel as far as we can on our paths with our hearts filled with pleasure. But for someone like me...I no longer have any hopes with regards to cultivation. All I can seek is excitement and pleasure, yes?”

“I train in the [Libertine Dream]. I cannot possibly become your pleasure-companion,” Su Youji sent mentally.

The [Libertine Dream] technique did not permit the user to lose her virginity.

This was a technique which Su Youji had devised for herself after she saw fragments of an ancient technique. Su Youji had improved with dramatic speed after developing this technique. She had been cultivating for less than a million years but had long ago become comparable to a supreme Elder God or Ancestral Immortal. However, because she was a Ki Refiner, she was a bit weaker than Fiendgod Body Refiners in close combat.

“The forbidden fruits taste the sweetest.” Elder God Skysouth let out a soft sigh, his voice echoing by Su Youji’s ears. “Someone like me can buy and sell even female Ancestral Immortals as chattel, but one as mesmerizing as you is almost impossible to find. I urge you to stop running. If you keep running around like this, you might wind up activating a dangerous formation of some sort.”

Elder God Skysouth was quite relaxed.

As soon as he had seen Flamefairy Su Youji, he had immediately desired to possess her and had tried to force her to become his retainer. She knew that she wasn’t a match for him and so had been willing to bow her head, but...the lifeblood oath which Elder God Skysouth had wanted her to swear had been simply too onerous. Although she was a ‘retainer’ in name, in reality she would be nothing more than a

toy for him to enjoy. The reason why she was known as the Flamefairy was because she had an explosive, fiery temper. There was no way she would accept such terms.

She had trained for less than a million years. Even though she was just a Ki Refiner, she was still comparable to supreme Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. She had an extremely high level of insight into the Dao and could quite possibly reach the World-level of power. How could someone like her possibly be willing to become someone else's plaything?

But Elder God Skysouth was quite patient. He was willing to slowly chase after her.

He had once tried to send his servants to chase after her, but she had furiously fled at maximum speed. Skysouth had immediately recalled his servants. Such a high-speed chase could easily result in the activation of some hidden formation, and he wasn't willing to see the Flamefairy die like this.

And so, he had slowly chased after her.

With the Flamefairy fleeing at a fairly low speed, he wouldn't be in much danger.

In addition, since she was running in front of him while he was slowly chasing from behind, she was essentially serving as a scout for him that was helping him test and see if the area up ahead was safe or not. Where else could he possibly find a free scout like her? He needed time to tame the Flamefairy's unruly spirit anyhow.

To tame such a peerlessly beautiful Immortal woman was no easy feat. Time would be needed...but once he succeeded...

Just the thought of it made him quiver.

"Who is there?!" Elder God Skysouth suddenly put away his warship and turned to look behind himself.

The two female servants next to him were badly frightened, but the six Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals simply looked backwards with vigilance.

Behind them was a white-robed youth who was flying straight towards them, surrounded by countless golden beads that were swirling around him.

"Careful, Master." The six were shocked, as they all recognized Ji Ning. The two most powerful of them had used treasures to attack Ning faster than the speed of light, but Ning had broken through their attacks with one blow and then easily escaped.

"The Sentinel?" Elder God Skysouth smirked.

Whooooooosh! A large group of Elder Gods immediately appeared around him. These were the hundred Elder Gods which Skysouth carried with him at all times inside an estate-treasure. This represented the greatest force he could muster. When traveling through the Ruins, he often put on a show of being weak. When he actually got close to other Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, he would suddenly summon all of his subordinates.

"Kill him! Let's see if he dares to flee through this region at high speed like before!" Elder God Skysouth pointed straight towards Ning.

He was no fool. Last time, when the two had fought each other, Skysouth had quickly realized that this 'Sentinel' was a formidable expert who had the power of a truly transcendent Elder God in power. Thus, this time he immediately ordered all hundred of his Elder Gods to attack! Last time, Ning had been able to escape because they were in the swamps; this time, they were in a much more dangerous region. Logically speaking, he wouldn't dare to flee at such high speed through it.

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

The hundred Elder Gods all immediately charged towards Ning.

"Him?" The fleeing Flamefairy, Su Youji, was glancing backwards as well. She saw that Elder God Skysouth had come to a halt and had instead turned his attention towards a white-robed youth.

She recognized that youth.

Over a year ago, this youth had flown past her. However, the two had only exchanged glances, not words.

"He's in danger." In her heart, Su Youji was definitely cheering for Ji Ning. She was filled with anger and hatred towards Elder God Skysouth.

Faced with a hundred attacking Elder Gods, Ning drew a thin, slender sword. This was the flexible Dao sword he had acquired earlier. It could be used as either a soft weapon or a hard weapon, and its slenderness made it very suitable for intricate, unpredictable sword-arts.

Whoosh.

Not only did Ning not flee, he instead charged straight towards the hundred.

"He isn't fleeing?"

"He's courting death."

The hundred Elder Gods were filled with confidence. They didn't fear anyone below the World-level of power in a frontal clash. Alright, perhaps they might fear one of those legendary monsters who could defeat World-level experts despite being mere Elder Gods...but what were the chances of running into such a figure?

"Kill!" "Die!" Saber-light and axe-light flashed through the air, howling towards Ning.

Swoosh.

Ning suddenly dramatically sped up, instantly surpassing the speed of light as he shot out in a solitary arc, moving past all hundred Elder Gods. The Elder Gods wanted to hack at him with their weapons, but none of them were able to attack faster than the speed of light. They couldn't even touch the hem of Ning's clothes, to say nothing of Ning himself. Ning easily moved past them.

Swoosh. Ning flew straight towards Elder God Skysouth.

“How?! Impossible!” Elder God Skysouth was truly frightened now. There were very few experts capable of moving faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. Generally speaking, only World Gods were capable of this! The Lord of All Fiends was one of the very few exceptions. He was so ridiculously fast that even Mother Nuwa, who had just become a World God, was unable to catch up to him.

“Stop him!” Skysouth hurriedly directed his six bodyguards to defend him.

“Quick, all of you come back!” He hurriedly ordered the rest of the hundred Elder Gods to return as well.

Whoosh. Ning had arrived.

The six bodyguards all readied their various weapons and treasures, using them to attack Ning.

“Gotta hold. Gotta hold! If I can hold for just a few moments, my Elder God Formation will make it back here.” Elder God Skysouth hurriedly manifested a three-headed, six-armed form as well. Each of his six arms wielded a long hook, and he sought to use them to defend and buy himself some time.

But alas, the white-robed youth had already arrived.

Sword-light flashed.

The attacks of the six bodyguards all missed. They did their best but were unable to even so much as touch Ning.

Slash! A sword suddenly stabbed at Elder God Skysouth’s throat. Because he wore a protective suit of armor, the sword wasn’t able to pierce through his throat, but...the powerful force contained within Ning’s sword was powerful enough to cause Skysouth’s body to be instantly disintegrated.

“You-...” Skysouth stared in disbelief at the white-robed Ning. How could this be? Even during their previous battle, this Sentinel had been limited to the speed of light. His sword-arts weren’t as fast as they were now either! Why was he so terrifyingly strong this time?

But of course, he had no idea that the azureflower mist energy in Ning’s body had made him both stronger and faster, allowing him to easily overpower the limits of the Heavenly Daos with his sword through raw strength. Ning’s sword-arts were profound to begin with, and this time they were significantly faster than before.

Whoosh.

Skysouth’s body completely disintegrated. How could someone like him possibly endure a head-on sword-strike by a World-level expert?

His six bodyguards, his two female servants, his hundred Elder God slaves...their eyes instantly turned dim and all signs of life vanished from their bodies. They were slaves. Long ago, their lives had become inextricably linked to the life of their master! This was a way of ensuring that slaves would truly work hard to protect their masters. If their master died, they would not be able to escape death.

“To tell you the truth, you actually had a chance at staying alive.” Ning began glancing through the treasures which Elder God Skysouth had left behind. “If you had kept those hundred Elder Gods around you at all times, I wouldn’t have been able to get you.”

World-level experts were able to move faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. How, then, would a hundred Elder Gods in a formation be able to fight back against such a foe? All other methods were suicidal; the only method was to defeat motion with stillness.

If Elder God Skysouth had ordered the hundred Elder Gods to stay around him and protect him at all times, there was no way Ning would've been able to breach such a turtle-shell defense. However, Skysouth had been so confident in his ability to defeat anyone aside from a World-level figure that he had ordered all hundred Elder Gods to attack instead. This rendered his own defenses vulnerable enough that any World-level expert would be capable of effortlessly dodging past the Elder God formation to slay him!

Skysouth couldn't really be blamed. How could he have ever imagined that Ji Ning was this strong?

"B-but..." The distant Su Youji was completely dazed by what she saw. "He flies faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos, his sword-arts are faster than the speed of light, and his blows are so powerful as to destroy an Elder God's armor-protected body. Seven Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals fought against him, but they weren't even able to touch his sword...what the hell level is this guy at?!"

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 28: The First Retainer

"He can break through the limits of the Heavenly Daos as he pleases."

"Quite a few of Elder God Skysouth's servants were supreme Elder Gods, but they were still unable to so much as touch him. They were like toddlers facing off against a giant." Su Youji was truly stunned by what she had just seen.

Prior to mastering the Nine Chaos Seals and manifesting the azureflower seal, even if Ning had Violetjewel on him he would've still had to use it to block the enemy's weapons. This time, however, he had the azureflower energy powering his body, upgrading it considerably and making it much faster in every way. His enhanced body was fast, his sword was fast, and his sword-arts were incredibly profound. This was why his enemies hadn't even been able to touch him.

"Is he a World-level expert?"

"But he clearly is an Elder God. His Elder God aura is very noticeable. I saw him just a few years ago; he definitely was an Elder God back then. There's no mistaking it at all." Su Youji's heart was shaking.

She had suddenly thought of something.

It was fairly easy for most Elder Gods to become ranked as 'standard' Elder Gods or 'elite' Elder Gods. 'Supreme' Elder Gods would be considered experts. As for 'transcendent' Elder Gods, they were truly formidable figures, and the generals of the Fogstone Army were all at that level. When they used certain weapons or certain explosive techniques, they might even be able to temporarily reach the World level of power. When Ning had first gone to Fogstone, he was just barely at the World God level of power when he used Violetjewel. However, if he had battled against a true World God, he probably would've been defeated in a single blow.

But according to the legends...

There were some true monsters who could accomplish the impossible!

They were truly invincible amongst Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals...and some of them were so terrifyingly strong as to be able to slay even World Gods and Chaos Immortals! However, less than one in a million Elder Gods would ever reach such a level of power.

"I actually ended up running this one of those legendary monsters." Su Youji grew excited.

Someone like Ning was capable of fighting against World-level experts despite merely being an Elder God and Ancestral Immortal. Once he became a World God, he would instantly become one of the most elite of World Gods!

"If I miss an opportunity like this, I'll regret it for the rest of my life." Su Youji quickly came to her decision.

All this seemed to happen in slow motion, but in truth it happened in an instant.

After slaying Skysouth, Ning waved his hand and caused the corpses of thousand Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals to be swept into his storage treasure. After putting them away, he said, "I'll find a suitable burial ground for some of these corpses in this estate-world. The deceased figures had all died on their own paths of Immortal cultivation; Ning would rather bury them than allow their corpses to remain there in the air. He wanted to build a special graveyard for Immortals and Fiendgods here, so as to constantly remind himself that his path was a perilous one that required the utmost of caution.

"Fellow Daoist!" The distant fiery-robed Flamefairy immediately flew towards him.

Ning turned his head to glance at her, immediately recognizing her. He had encountered her a few years ago when he had first entered this region. He nodded slightly. "It seems we truly do have a bit of fate connecting us."

"Indeed." Su Youji said curiously, "Don't you recognize me?"

"You are...?" Ning looked at her.

Ning had only purchased a single star map, one which primarily explained the various major organizations located within the Badlands Territory. It focused on the World-level experts as well as a few incredibly powerful Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. As for the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who spent most of their time roaming and adventuring, there was very little information regarding them. This was why Ning wasn't able to immediately recognize figures such as Elder God Skysouth.

Hellsword had belonged to one of the local organization; he was simply out on a brief adventure. This was why Ning recognized him.

"My name is Su Youji. Most people refer to me as the 'Flamefairy'," Su Youji said.

"You can simply address me as Sunrise," Ning said.

“Oh.” Su Youji looked at Ning, her eyes shining. “Fellow Daoist Sunrise, would you be willing to accept me as your retainer?”

“Retainer?” Ning was startled for a moment before understanding that the Flamefairy must have seen him slay Elder God Skysouth. He had long ago heard that some extremely powerful Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would have other such figures be willing to serve them as retainers. However, it was incredibly rare for someone to voluntarily offer to join someone in such a fashion!

“I’m a Ki Refiner but I am comparable to a supreme Elder God,” Su Youji said hurriedly. “I’ve trained for less than a million years and stand a chance of becoming a World-level expert.”

A retainer who had a chance of becoming a World-level expert was completely different from one who did not.

“Oh?” Ning carefully scrutinized Su Youji.

He did indeed wish to acquire some retainers; in fact, if he wasn’t able to find enough, he would go and purchase some slaves. Although he was now very powerful, even World-level experts had need of an army of cultivators, to say nothing of him. An army of a thousand Elder Gods in a formation could very well slay even a World-level figure! However, this was mostly dependent on the strength of the combination formation as well as sturdy Immortal estates that could resist outside attacks.

This allowed them to both attack or retreat in relatively safety. Who wouldn’t want such an army?

However, a formation that could use a thousand Elder Gods or a thousand Ancestral Immortals wasn’t easily acquired. Even if Ning did manage to acquire one, he would need a number of commanders who had reached very high levels of comprehension in the Dao.

“A Ki Refiner?” Ning looked at Su Youji. “Attack me using your most powerful techniques. If I find you acceptable, you may be my retainer.”

“Alright.” Su Youji’s eyes lit up. “Be careful.”

“Go!” Su Youji raised her milky-white hand, pointing towards Ning with a finger as red light flashed in her eyes.

BOOM!!! Nine streaks of fiery red light simultaneously shot out around her. If one carefully inspected them, one would see that every single stream of fiery red light was actually formed from an enormous number of fiery blades. These nine streams of fiery red light joined together into a perfect whole, coming to form a beautiful, nine-tailed bird. The bird’s entire body blazed with flames as it charged straight towards Ning.

It had an aura of tremendous power and incomparable dominance.

“She’s merely an Ancestral Immortal, yet she has such tremendous power. And I have the feeling...that this technique hasn’t revealed its full power yet.” Ning instantly understood that the Flamefairy had been telling the truth. She did indeed possess a high level of insight; in this regard, she was probably comparable to transcendent Elder Gods in power. However, because she was a Ki Refiner and didn’t have access to any powerful divine abilities, in battle she was merely comparable to a supreme Elder God.

Ning stretched out with his right hand. It increased dramatically in length, transforming to become dozens of meters in size as his palm became as crystalline as jade.

BOOM!

The nine-tailed firebird slammed directly against Ning's palm. Countless sparks of fiery light appeared on the surface of Ning's palm, but in the end the firebird was completely destroyed while Ning's palm was completely undamaged.

"I wasn't even able to shake him." Su Youji was secretly shocked by what she saw. "So he's this powerful, even in terms of just raw strength?"

When Ning had killed Elder God Skysouth, he had focused on speed and sword-arts. This time, he revealed his terrifying raw strength.

"Mm." Ning looked at Su Youji and nodded. "Very well. I'll accept you as my retainer. Here's an oathstone. Take a look for yourself."

There were two types of retainer relationships.

The first type of relationship was like the one between Saber and Godfiend Witherspike. His status had been nearly identical to that of his master's. In this type of relationship, both the master and the retainer would swear lifeblood oaths; only then would the two trust each other. But of course, the master's lifeblood oath would be much looser.

The second type of retainer involved a relationship like the one between Daolord Windsourc and some of his World Gods. Those World Gods had chosen to serve him in the hopes that he would provide them with guidance and tutelage. They naturally had a much lower status than him. All of them had to swear lifeblood oaths to Daolord Windsourc, but the Daolord naturally would never swear one to them. Whenever he was in the mood, he would occasionally impart them with a bit of guidance. That would be enough to make those World Gods delirious with joy.

The relationship between Ning and Su Youji belonged to the first type.

Su Youji feared just one thing...that Ji Ning would force himself upon her. Her [Libertine Dream] technique was one which required her to be a virgin until the day she became a World God. Given how strong Ning was, if he wanted to force himself upon her there was no way she'd be able to fight back.

When Ning heard Su Youji's request, he felt absolutely speechless. Still, in the end he just chuckled and swore the oath.

"Youji greets you, Master." After the two swore their lifeblood oaths, the relationship between them had changed permanently. Su Youji beamed at Ning as she bowed, her smile filled with endless charm.

Ning nodded and smiled as well. "You are the very first retainer I've ever accepted."

"You'll definitely accept more and more in the future, Master." Su Youji's eyes were shining with light. "But I'll always be your first."

"Let's go. We're going to leave the Ruins," Ning said. "Oh, right. My true Daoist name is 'Darknorth'. 'Sunrise' is just a Daoist name I'm temporarily using."

“As you wish, Master.” Su Youji followed by Ning’s side, but in her heart she was mumbling to herself, “Darknorth? Darknorth?”

The two travelled more than ten thousand kilometers through the mountain range before finally reaching a region where the skies were filled with mist.

“Let’s go.”

Swoosh. Swoosh.

The two immediately soared into the skies, flying into the mist. They then disappeared into thin air.

The Windsource Ruins were perpetually shrouded in clouds and mist. Whenever you found a place in the dangerous areas or in the swamps where you could see the mist, all you had to do was fly into the mist and you would be able to leave! This was something everyone knew about the Windsource Ruins.

The Eastcalm Mountains. The Sunrise Courtyard.

Two streaks of light descended upon the courtyard.

“This is my residence,” Ning said.

“You live here on the Windsource Chaosworld, Master?” Su Youji was surprised.

“Right. I’m a Sentinel of Fogstone,” Ning said. He couldn’t help but let out a sigh. He had spent quite a few years wandering the Ruins, but Elder God Mountain Eater and the other soldiers stationed here had never sought him out. Ning had ordered that they were to immediately contact him if the forces of God Emperor Blacklotus invaded. Once they shattered the message talisman which Ning had given them, Ning would immediately know what had happened and would return from the Ruins.

Still, it made sense. He had spent a hundred years in training without any attacks occurring. This most recent adventure had only lasted a few years.

“Choose a place for yourself to live in,” Ning instructed.

“Yes, Master.” Su Youji turned her head to glance at a nearby room, then pointed towards it and said, “Then I’ll live right over here.”

Ning nodded, then retired to his own private rooms. He began to carefully inspect the treasures he had acquired during this journey through the Ruins. He had acquired quite a few treasures, as well as several storage-type treasures which he hadn’t even had the chance to inspect carefully yet.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 29: Reaping the Rewards

Half a day later.

Ji Ning was seated by himself at the highest point on the mountain where the Sunrise Courtyard was located. He was staring at the vast skies, the chains of mountains, and the distant plains.

“I really made a killing this time!” Ning let out a blissful sigh.

Ning had already bound all of the treasures he had acquired in the Ruins, including the storage treasures. He had also completely finished sorting through the items in the storage treasures as well. There had indeed been a number of unexpected surprises for Ning, such as a Chaos-level estate-treasure which Ning suspected was originally owned by a World-level expert!

This was because this estate-treasure actually had a pair of Dao weapons within it! It also had a star map and a jade slip containing information regarding the Windsource Ruins, both of which seemed to be far better than what an Ancestral Immortal or Elder God should be capable of acquiring.

The star map included records of the Badlands Territory and five nearby territories, with the Badlands Territory having the most detailed markings. Every Elder God and Ancestral Immortal who had even the slightest bit of renown was recorded down within this star map, including even the newer ones like Su Youji the Flamefairy. Generally speaking, only World-level experts could acquire star maps of such detail which covered such a vast expanse.

And that jade slip! The World-level expert who originally owned it must have sought out a great deal of information regarding the Windsource Ruins, as the jade slip contained detailed records of the Ruins, describing the outermost swamp region, the outer region, the inner region, and the core region.

The outer region was the dangerous area where Ning had encountered Su Youji. It was a place where Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals often ventured through.

The inner region included the Hundred Streams of the Windsource. Many of the World-level servants of Daolord Windsource had been stationed in the inner region and had died there as well. The inner region was far more dangerous than the outer region.

The core region was the place where Daolord Windsource had lived. Not even Daolord Badlands or Waterwind had dared to venture too deeply into that place.

“If we add in these two Dao weapons I found in that estate-treasure, I now have a total of five Dao weapons.” Ning was absolutely delighted.

Elder God Skysouth had left quite a few things behind after he died. The most precious item he had left behind was his Elder God Formation, but he had also left behind over a hundred Chaos treasures. Alas, he didn’t even have a single Dao weapon.

What Ning didn’t know was that Elder God Skysouth had actually found a Dao weapon many years ago. Knowing himself to be too weak to make proper use of it, Skysouth feared that other Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals would just take it from him! Thus, he instead sold the Dao weapon, using the proceeds to purchase many Elder God slaves as well as an Elder God Formation. Instantly, he became virtually invincible against anyone weaker than a World-level expert.

“Five Dao weapons, one Elder God Formation, and over three hundred Chaos treasures.” Ning nodded to himself. These were the main proceeds of this adventure.

“Five Dao weapons, with that warblade being the most valuable of the five. It should be considered a top-grade Dao weapon and is most likely worth roughly fifty cubes of chaos nectar.” Ning continued to quietly calculate mentally. “The other four all combined are probably worth fifty cubes as well! An Elder God Formation meant for a hundred Elder Gods is probably worth roughly ten cubes. As for the three

hundred Chaos treasures, some are high-quality while some are low-quality. They are probably worth roughly ten bottles of chaos nectar on average, for a total of around ten cubes.”

“All combined...they should be worth more than a hundred cubes!”

Ning sighed in amazement.

A single cube of chaos nectar was equivalent to a thousand bottles! A hundred cubes...that was comparable to the total networth of an ordinary World-level expert!

This was what made adventuring in these places so alluring!

Just the tiniest part of the fortune left behind in the ruins of a deceased Daolord was comparable to the networth of an ordinary World God!

And yet, the danger level in such a place was similarly high. As soon as Ning had entered the Ruins, he had been beset by dangers. He had damn near died when the windbeasts had chased after him. The only reason why he was able to safely return to the ‘outer region’ was because he had stupid good luck, resulting in him finding and entering that private estate.

To safely leave the inner region was incredibly difficult. Only around half of the World Gods who entered the place would be able to leave alive.

But for those who did manage to leave...almost every single one of them returned with great rewards.

“So many treasures...this should be enough to repair my sword, Violetjewel,” Ning mused to himself. Even if he used up all of the treasures, Ning wouldn’t feel any heartache. This was because Violetjewel was a weapon that had a quintessence core!

“Master.” The fiery-robed Su Youji walked out. As she looked at the seated white-robed youth, she felt quite happy.

She had been pursued by Elder God Skysouth for so long. Whenever she thought of his ugly smile and his demand for her to become his pleasure-companion, she felt extremely repulsed. When she looked at the seated Ning, she could sense the distance between the two of them.

There were many cultivators who tried to befriend her and move closer to her, hoping that they would have the chance to enjoy ‘the joy of fish when entering the sea’. But Ning, however, only gave her a feeling of distance. Clearly, he didn’t wish to be too intimate with her.

“Oh?” Ning turned his head to look at her. “Right. If you aren’t busy, accompany me on a trip to Fogstone.”

“Fogstone?” Su Youji was startled for a moment, then smiled beautifully. “Alright. When?”

“Right now,” Ning said.

Ning deeply desired to completely repair Violetjewel and restore it to its full level of power. According to the books he had read as well as the notes left behind by World God Northrest, weapons that had quintessence cores were incredibly marvelous. They surpassed all ordinary weapons and stood at a completely different level of existence.

Immortal cultivators of Ning's level focused on attuning to certain essences, such as how Ning was attuning to the prime essence of the sword in the hopes of reaching a higher level of skill with it.

However, Violetjewel had such an essence within it! This quintessence core was the most valuable part of Violetjewel. The stories regarding weapons like Violetjewel were simply too obscure and mystical; Ning wanted to see it for himself!

Ning and Su Youji flew together within his ship, departing from the Windsourc Chaosworld and heading towards Fogstone.

Fogstone.

Last time Ning had come to this place, he had been an outsider. This time, he was a general of the Fogstone Army. He was considered one of them and there was no need for someone to guide him around.

"Greetings, seniors. What sort of treasures might you need?"

They were within an enormous hall inside an island. This hall was filled with many beautiful maids, with one being on the True Immortal level. When she sensed Ji Ning and Su Youji's auras, she immediately became extremely hospitable. This place was extremely important. It was the central location for people to sell treasures to Fogstone. Because it was located in the heart of Fogstone, the forces of Fogstone didn't really worry about anyone causing trouble here.

Ning waved his hand, producing his general's insignia.

"General?" The violet-robed female True Immortal's attitude became even more respectful.

"How many treasure fragments do you have here?" Ning asked.

To repair Violetjewel, he would need Five Elements essence.

The cheapest way to acquire Five Elements essence was to purchase treasure fragments from already-destroyed treasures. A more expensive solution would be to purchase undamaged ingredients, while the most extravagant way was to purchase undamaged artifacts and treasures.

"Treasure fragments?" The violet-robed female wouldn't dare to lie to one of Fogstone's generals. She immediately said, "There aren't many cultivators who need treasure fragments. Most who purchase them do so to extract Five Elements essence from them to repair other treasures. As a result, our entire stockpile is worth less than a cube of chaos nectar. However, this should be more than enough to repair a Dao weapon."

The violet-robed woman was privately guessing that this general was intent on repairing a Dao weapon.

"Less than a cube?" Ning was no longer the ignorant child he had been when he was in the Three Realms. A treasure with a quintessence core that had been almost completely wrecked internally would require an enormous amount of Five Elements essence if one wanted to repair it. If he was to purchase raw ingredients rather than treasure fragments, even a hundred cubes of chaos nectar might not be enough.

Purchasing treasure fragments was a better path to success.

“That’s it...?” Ning frowned, but this was as he had expected. Fogstone only had nine World-level experts. Why would it see the need to store so many treasure fragments here?

“Let’s go.” Ning led Su Youji away.

He wasn’t worried about openly asking for treasure fragments here on Fogstone. Everyone on their side was bound by a lifeblood oath preventing fratricide. This was one of the reasons why Ning had chosen to come to Fogstone.

“It seems I’ll have to pay a visit to the Badlands Everworld if I wish to acquire enough treasure fragments to repair Violetjewel,” Ning mused silently to himself. “I can be a bit more relaxed here on Fogstone, but I’ll have to be careful when I’m in the Badlands Everworld. If I’m too arrogant and end up catching the wrong person’s attention, I can very well die.”

Although Ning was going to be vigilant, he wasn’t scared.

“Youji.”

The two were within a flying warship that soared through the space outside Fogstone. Ning said to the nearby Su Youji, “I’m preparing to pay a visit to the Badlands Everworld.”

“I’ll go wherever you go, Master.” Su Youji laughed. “And I’ve visited the Badlands Everworld before. I’m quite familiar with the place. Although I was just there once, I have to admit that it truly is a remarkable and marvelous place. Many cultivators reside there, and even the most powerful organization of the Badlands Territory, Badlands Court, is located there.

“Mm.” Ning nodded.

The flying warship continued to advance through space towards the distant Sevenwater Star. From there, they would be able to make use of a spacetime transfer array that would send them directly to the Badlands Everworld!

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 24: The Starlord of Fogstone Chapter 30: First Visit to an Everworld

Sevenwater Star was a long distance away from the planet of Fogstone. After reaching it, they had to wait for another year before the spacetime transfer array was activated. Thus, it took them two years before they were able to reach the Badlands Everworld. This was actually quite a short period of time, and the reason why the transfer happened so quickly was because the Badlands Everworld was a fairly high-traffic location. The Badlands Everworld was the center of the entire Badlands Territory and held the most powerful organizations in the region.

Whoosh.

Ji Ning and the other cultivators appeared within the spacetime transfer array. As for Flamefairy Su Youji, Ning had naturally been stored her away into his estate-world.

“So this is the Badlands Everworld?” Ning walked out of the array, staring at the vast world that had appeared before him. He waved his hand, causing Su Youji to appear next to him.

“Can you feel it?” When Su Youji appeared, she smiled as she looked at Ning.

“Yes...”

Ning nodded slowly. “What an odd feeling.”

Ning was now powerful enough to easily destroy most chaosworlds. However, the Badlands Everworld gave Ning an impression of exalted majesty, a sense of all-encompassing grace that was completely ineffable.

“I really can’t fly here.” Ning tried to fly but couldn’t, no matter what he did.

“How marvelous. This place is exactly as the legends said it is. Supposedly, the skies have been completely sealed in the Badlands Everworld. There really is no way to fly through the air here.” Each time Ning tried to fly into the air, a strange, unfathomable sort of law seemed to exert its power upon him, making it impossible for him to fly.

According to the legends, when each everworld was first created by their powerful creators, certain Laws would be set down.

For example, there might be a ‘flamebane’. This meant that all fire-attribute types of power would be completely unusable within that everworld.

Or for another example, there might be a ‘swordbane’. This meant that even the most formidable of experts in the Dao of the Sword would find themselves unable to summon the energy of the true essence of the sword. In fact, they wouldn’t even be able to draw their swords!

There could be some other special Laws as well. So long as the creator of the everworld set down that rule, all others who came to the everworld would be forced to follow it.

One of the Laws of the Badlands Everworld was its ‘skybane’. No living creatures were able to fly here, not even winged creatures like birds! Nothing and no one could fly in this world.

Of course, if you were incredibly powerful, you might be capable of resisting this law. Daolord Badlands, for example, might be strong enough to force his way into the air...but of course, that was just conjecture. No one had ever seen Daolord Badlands flying about within the Badlands Everworld. The only reason why people thought he might be capable of disobeying the Law was because everyone here felt the utmost of respect for Daolord Badlands’ abilities! However, it was also equally possible that not even the Daolord was capable of flying here.

As for others?

No World-level expert was capable of overcoming a local Law, to say nothing of an Ancestral Immortal or Elder God.

“Still, the everworld is a very comfortable place,” Ning said softly. “This world is incredibly deep and dense. It feels as though it embraces all visitors with warmth and kindness, bringing peace to their hearts.”

“This is a reason why so many cultivators like to live here within the Badlands Everworld and why so many organizations want to take this place over. However, only the most powerful organization of all, the Badlands Court, is qualified to rule this place!” Su Youji said.

“Come. Let us go find Waveshift City.” Ning immediately strode forward.

The two walked shoulder-to-shoulder as they advanced at tremendous speed.

Waveshift City was the largest, most bustling city of the Badlands Everworld. It was indescribably old, and it had existed ever since the Badlands Everworld itself had first come into being! Naturally, this made it far older than the so-called Badlands Court, which had merely destroyed the previous occupant of this everworld, took it over, and changed its name to be the ‘Badlands Everworld’.

Waveshift City was quite close to the spacetime transfer array.

Ning and the Flamefairy merely had to walk for roughly an hour before arriving at the base of the mountains around Waveshift City.

“Quite high.” Ning raised his head to stare upwards.

This was a mountain that was a million kilometers tall, its peaks wreathed in white clouds and crowned with an enormous city. Waveshift City.

“Let’s hike up the mountain,” Ning chuckled. “It’s been a long time since I’ve gone hiking.”

“We have to walk our way up step by step. I feel just like a mortal.” Su Youji grinned as well.

The mountain path was a sinuous one that coiled around the mountain peak, slowly guiding travelers upwards. If Ning was able to fly, he would’ve flown straight up to the peak of the mountain. Instead, he now had to slowly hike up one step at a time. Within the everworld, flight simply didn’t work.

“This everworld is truly vast, far larger than any chaosworld.” As Ning hiked up the mountain, he couldn’t help but let out a sigh. “I hear that the everworld has many ancient ruins located inside it.”

“Yes.” Su Youji nodded. “I heard there are more than ten.”

There were more than ten ancient ruins within the Badlands Everworld which had never been fully conquered! This was because the Badlands Everworld was simply far too vast.

“Here we are.” Su Youji pointed towards their front.

The mountain peak itself was just a few hundred kilometers around, but it held up an enormous city that spanned hundreds of thousands of kilometers. The city almost looked as though it was hanging precariously in the air, ready to tip at a moment’s notice. Ning and Youji followed the mountain path forward, walking towards the gates.

The walls of the city were engraved with two words ‘Wave’ ‘Shift’.

“Waveshift...” Ning raised his head to look at those two words, sensing the incredibly arcane ripples emanating from within them.

Those ripples were simply too hard to lock down. Just trying made Ning feel tired and extremely uncomfortable. The difference in power was simply too great. Ning quickly tried to give up attuning to those ripples, but was unable to break free from the endless might that radiated out from those two words.

“Urgh.” Ning vomited out a mouthful of blood before finally coming back to his senses.

“Master, don’t you know that you must not stare at those two words?” The Flamefairy asked.

“I know, but I still wanted to take a look. I won’t die just because I looked at them, right?” Ning laughed. “They truly are incredible. Those two words made me vomit up blood just because I looked at them. I wasn’t able to glean any insight into them at all, just a feeling that they are unfathomably profound.” According to the legends, even World Gods who stared at those two words would vomit up blood, to say nothing of someone like Ji Ning.

Generally speaking, if you took over an everworld you would change its name.

The Badlands Court had taken over this everworld and had thus renamed it to be the ‘Badlands Everworld’. However, they hadn’t changed the name of the most prosperous city of this everworld, precisely because those two words ‘Wave’ ‘Shift’ were completely inviolable. Those two words served as the core of the entire city and possessed utterly supreme power. So long as those two words remained on the walls, all other cultivators would continue to call this place ‘Waveshift City’, no matter who tried to change its name.

Thus, there were many cultivators who suspected that when the Badlands Everworld was first established a long, long time ago, its original name might’ve been the Waveshift Everworld.

“No one knows who wrote those two words.” The Flamefairy let out a sigh. “That person might well be more powerful than even Daolord Badlands.”

“Mm.” Ning nodded.

It made sense.

There were differences in power even amongst Daolords. Didn’t Daolord Windsorce have a Daolord amongst his retainers?

Ning’s heart began to beat slightly faster as he thought about that ancient, powerful figure. A few moments later, he turned and entered Waveshift City alongside Su Youji. Waveshift City was an incredibly prosperous city, and it had one simple rule: All combat within city limits was forbidden! Anyone who violated this rule would instantly suffer automatic attacks from the formations protecting Waveshift City.

“What a bustling place.” As Ning walked through the wide streets, he could see Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals everywhere. As for True Gods and True Immortals, there was a ridiculous number of them located here.

“I would imagine that almost half of the cultivators of the entire Badlands Territory are gathered here,” Su Youji said. “Waveshift City even holds more than a thousand World-level experts!”

Ning nodded. This was a place of power and safety. No one would dare to attack you here.

However, once you left the city, no one would care if you lived or you died.

“Is that the Palace of Ten Thousand Treasures?” Ning stared off into the distance. Far away, at the ends of the street, there lay an utterly enormous palace that glowed with absolutely breathtaking light. The entire palace emanated many ripples of power, each of which represented the presence of a Dao weapon. The ripples which the palace were intentionally radiating out numbered over a hundred.

“Yes, that’s the Palace of Ten Thousand Treasures. It holds more treasures within it than any other place within Waveshift City. Here, you can buy whatever treasures you desire! You can have Dao weapons custom made for you, or even be able to purchase one of those legendary treasures with a quintessence core inside of it. So long as you are willing to pay the price, you can buy anything...but of course, the price of such a weapon would be truly terrifying.” Su Youji let out a sigh.

Nind nodded. He knew that the master of this Palace was actually Daolord Badlands himself!

Daolord Badlands could capture a few dozen World Gods, then enslave them and sell them off, but they still wouldn’t be as valuable as a single treasure with a quintessence core. The price of such a treasure was unimaginable, enough to drive even a World God completely mad.

“What do you plan to buy or sell, Master? You can do it all here. This place is extremely safe, and the Palace will never reveal your secrets,” the Flamefairy sent mentally.

“I know.” But in his heart, Ning silently muttered to himself – Bullshit.

Yes, the Palace was an extremely safe place where he could sell off his Dao weapons to acquire a hundred cubes of chaos nectar; the Palace wouldn’t really care much about it. But if he was to directly purchase ‘treasure fragments’ from them in large quantity, everyone would be able to guess that Ning had a treasure which required significant amounts of Five Elements essence to repair!

Daolord Badlands had an exalted status here; there was naturally no way he could possibly switch positions and decide to come here to run the shop. The ones in charge of this place were most likely World Gods or Chaos Immortals...and Violetjewel was a treasure that would attract attention from any World-level expert, some of whom would actually stare at Ning from afar.

There was no such thing as the old nonsense saying about ‘one’s word is priceless’. Everything had a price to it; the only question was how high. A magic treasure that had a quintessence core was valuable enough that many Elder Gods and Chaos Immortals would be willing to sacrifice anything, face included, to acquire it.

“I have to spend a little bit of thought on this,” Ning mused to himself.