

Desolate 821

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 12: The Nature of the Sword

On this day, Ji Ning was seated within the levitating wooden study, working on his calligraphy. Every single character was filled with his surging sword-intent.

Next to him was the Flamefairy, Su Youji. She was obediently helping him grind his ink and watching as Ning wrote. Usually, the Flamefairy was a woman with a temper that was just as fiery as her name. The reason why she was being so obedient as to help him grind his ink wasn't just because she was his retainer; it was also because she wanted to spend as much time next to him as possible. That way, when Daolord Solesky came to offer Ning his advice, he might give her some off-hand advice as well.

"That Daolord is simply incredible." Whenever the Flamefairy thought of Daolord Solesky, she was filled with admiration and amazement. "He gave me a few pointers during the past three years, allowing me to get a clear picture of what I need to do to advance to the World level. Once I break through this bottleneck, I'll become a World-level expert!"

Su Youji had benefited tremendously through her association with Ning.

Daolord Solesky was a Samsara Daolord who had reached the very verge of the Daomerge. There was no one else like him in the entire Badlands Territory; even Daolord Badlands was slightly weaker than him! For her to have the chance to get advice from someone like him was truly a tremendous blessing for her! When she had to learn on her own and struggle through many wrong paths, she had still become comparable to a supreme Elder God even though she was just a Ki Refiner. These days, she was improving at an astonishing pace and was just a breath away from becoming a World-level expert herself.

Ning had made significant improvements as well. Daolord Solesky had even personally sparred with him a few times while using the sword. As a result, Ning's understanding regarding the nature of the sword was undergoing a series of fundamental changes.

If one was at a completely different level of power, one would have a different perspective on the Dao. Although World God Blackmist was a formidable figure, there was a limit to how much he understood. Although Daolord Solesky didn't really focus on the Dao of the Sword, there were certain commonalities which every single Dao shared.

"What is the sword?"

"Haha, I once heard Emperor Mirrorsnow discuss what the sword is. I felt that his words made a great deal of sense." Daolord Solesky had once said these words to Ning. "The sword is a weapon which living beings created in order to kill others! The sword has a tip, two edges, and two flat sides. It was designed to kill. In order for you to discover and understand the Dao of the Sword, you need to start with its creation and its design."

"How should the tip of the sword be used to kill?"

"How should you use a single edge of the sword to kill?"

“How should you use both edges together to kill?”

“How should you use the flat of the blade to kill?”

“When all these things are mixed together...how should you use them to kill?”

“When you meditate on the Dao, you meditate on the true essence and true nature of a thing. You should focus on simplicity, rather than complexity! If your Dao gets more and more complex, eventually you will lose yourself within it! Your Dao can appear to be complex to others, but to you it must be as clear and bright as a mirror.” Daolord Solesky had looked at Ning. “Remember this. This is very important.”

“Also – all techniques spring from the same source! If you reach a bottleneck that you cannot overcome in the Dao of the Sword, you can switch to other tasks such as calligraphy. I saw that your calligraphy isn’t bad, and you can infuse it with your Dao of the Sword. This is something that is quite different from using it to fight. However, these two things will share many commonalities, and both have their strengths with regards to helping you understand the Dao. Based on what I know, the majority of Samsara Daolords who focus on the Dao of the Sword also enjoy painting and calligraphy. I imagine there has to be a good reason for this.”

“I can also see that you have high affinity towards water, lightning, and space. Don’t discard or abandon these insights. Focus on them as well. There are commonalities between every single Dao. For example, although I’ve never focused on the Dao of the Sword, if I spent four or five days on it my mastery over the Dao of the Sword would become comparable to that of some weaker Samsara Daolords who do focus on the sword.”

Ning had felt as though a brand new gateway had just appeared before him, one which had brought him a completely new way of looking at the Dao of the Sword.

Ning had never intended to give up on water, lightning, space, or any of his other Daos. He did understand that all Daos shared certain commonalities.

As for calligraphy, he had always felt that that writing calligraphy was very pleasing and relaxing. However, only after listening to Daolord Solesky’s words did he truly understand how helpful it could be.

A new world had truly opened up before him.

“Right. Long, long ago, one of the first creatures of the primordial chaos created the very first ‘sword’. Ever since then, countless living beings have used his ‘sword’. Their techniques constantly improved until it all reached the level of a Dao unto itself that only became more and more powerful. Only then did the Dao of the Sword, a Dao feared by countless cultivators, come into existence.”

“The tip of the sword...the edge...the double edge...the flat...”

Ever since that day, the way in which Ning viewed the sword completely changed.

In the past, he had always felt that the Dao of the Sword was truly unfathomably profound, and he had dedicated himself to piously and slowly understanding all of its mysteries.

Now, Ning had a different view of the sword. Although the Dao of the Sword was indeed profound, its fundamental essence remained quite simple; it lay in the sword itself. If you could truly understand the structure of a sword, you would be able to quickly grasp the essence of the Dao of the Sword itself.

Ning now viewed the [Brightmoon] sword-art and the [Nameless] sword-art in completely different ways. He immediately began to retrofit them, making the 'Blood Drop' stance purer, the 'Soleheart' stance more ephemeral, the 'Yin-Yang' stance more chaotic, the 'Heavenbreaker' stance more dominating, and the 'Shadowless' stance slightly less unpredictable but even faster than before.

In fact, he split the Heavenbreaker stance into two different stances. The first used the edge of the sword to attack and was known as the 'Heavenbreaker Hacker'; the other used the flat of the blade to attack and was known as the 'Heavenbreaker – Eliminator'.

The power of the [Brightmoon] sword-art had suddenly increased more than twofold, just because he now had a completely different way of viewing the sword. In the distant future, Ning would understand how tremendously beneficial this new way of thinking would be for him and also feel even more gratitude towards Daolord Solesky for advising him.

"Mm." Daolord Solesky was currently seated off in the distant, leisurely sipping some wine and watching as Ji Ning worked on his calligraphy within that levitating wooden study. Daolord Solesky couldn't help but nod slowly.

"This Ji Ning really does have some talent."

The Dao was not to be transmitted casually!

It wasn't just that his guidance was incredibly valuable or precious. His avatar in Vastheaven Palace was capable of giving good guidance to every single member of Vastheaven Palace...and yet, every single cultivator had their own firm beliefs. If your guidance was very different from what they believed or what their own insights were, they would reject your guidance on an intrinsic level. Or worse; because they trusted in the Daolord and felt certain that his words had to be right, they might end up questioning their own Dao and losing their own way. That would be even worse!

Thus, each person's Dao truly was different.

It wasn't easy for a master to find a good disciple! When Ning had created his [Brightmoon] sword-art, he had already drawn the rough sketches of his own personal understanding of the Dao. When Ning had been in the Three Realms, he had proudly and foolishly believed that he could infuse the entirety of the Dao of the Sword into his five stances. What he didn't realize was that all five stances were just variations on the true essence of the sword.

He had already reached out to the true essence of the sword. He just didn't understand that he had done so.

Daolord Solesky's guidance helped him to see past his own preconceptions, allowing him to see the truth. Since this was the path he had already chosen, the guidance he was given was enormous beneficial and helped him to understand his path more clearly than before.

"Ji Ning." Daolord Solesky rose to his feet.

“Big brother.” Ning put down his brush and hurriedly walked out of the study. Elder God Wilddog was on duty, awaiting his commands.

“I am going to go to the Waveshift world now,” Daolord Solesky said. “After I leave, it’ll all be up to you.”

“Don’t worry about me, big brother. When you go to the Waveshift world, you need to be careful and stay safe.” Ning was worried as well. During the past three years, Ning had gotten a better sense of how dangerous the Waveshift world was. It was unfathomably more dangerous than the Windsource Ruins had been, and even Daolord Solesky would be in danger of dying in there.

“Ahaha! This old man plans to succeed in the Daomerge. How could I possibly let myself die in the Waveshift world?” Daolord Solesky laughed loudly, then strode away into the skies. An azure-robed figure was already waiting for him high in the air. This was Daolord Badlands’ avatar.

“Sorry for the trouble, brother Badlands,” Daolord Solesky said.

“Haha, I’ve never gone into the core regions of the Waveshift world either. Now that you are here, I can do a bit more exploring than I’ve done in the past.” Daolord Badlands’ avatar smiled.

“Let’s go.”

“Let’s.”

The two transformed into streaks of light, disappearing into the horizon.

Ning just watched them from afar. After having spent three years with Daolord Solesky, he knew that the man truly did view him as he would a brother.

“Come back alive, big brother.” Ning murmured these words softly to himself.

Daolord Solesky had said that if everything went perfectly smoothly in the Waveshift world, he would be able to return in four or five years. If he ended up trapped, it could easily be hundreds of millions of years or even a hundred chaos cycles before he managed to escape.

Ning, the Flamefairy, and Elder God Wilddog continued to live within the Badlands Court. They slowly became familiar with the other cultivators who lived here, and Ning would even spend some time dueling with other cultivators of the Dao of the Sword. One of the competitions resulted in quite a bit of hubbub, because every single Elder God and Ancestral Immortal sword-wielder of the Badlands Court ended up being defeated by Ji Ning.

It must be understood that all of them used extremely ordinary swords and very little force; it was merely a contest of Daos.

In the end, even World-level experts got interested and involved. Now that Ning had begun to understand the true essence of the sword, only World-level experts who were truly skilled in the Dao of the Sword were able to suppress him...and they were only able to suppress, not defeat. The cultivators of the Badlands Court couldn’t help but sigh to themselves, “Brother Darknorth is most likely going to become a World God through the Dao of the Sword.”

Life was relaxed but quite fulfilling. Time passed on, year after year.

Three years. Five years. Ten years. Fifty years. A hundred years.

Ning continued his quiet life here at the Badlands Court, but Daolord Solesky still had yet to return.

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 13: The Mysterious Treasure Auction

“Ji Ning.”

Ji Ning was seated atop a levitating wooden bridge, lazily fishing. A voice suddenly rang out, badly startling him. He hurriedly turned his head, realizing that an azure-robed figure had just appeared next to him.

“Ji Ning greets you, Daolord.” Ning hurriedly rose to his feet. It was Daolord Badlands! Ning’s heart clenched. After having spent more than a hundred years here at the Badlands Court, he had grown quite used to this place and become very familiar with many of its World Gods, Chaos Immortals, Elder Gods, and Ancestral Immortals. However, he had never met Daolord Badlands a second time.

He knew that Daolord Badlands rarely showed his face in the Badlands Court. Millions of years often passed without a single appearance! However, he was actually one of the more visible Daolords. Some Samsara Daolords would only reveal themselves within their own clans a single time during each chaos cycle.

When there was such an absolute disparity in power, it became hard for people to become friends and hold conversations.

“Brother Solesky asked me to pass you a message.” Daolord Badlands looked at Ning. “He probably won’t be able to make it out of there any time soon. Your return to Vastheaven Palace will be up to you.”

“He won’t be able to make it out of there any time soon?” Ning was startled. He asked nervously, “Daolord, my big brother...”

“You don’t have to worry.” Daolord Badlands smiled. “He isn’t in much danger, but both him and my avatar are going to be trapped for a while. It’ll probably take at least a million years to make it out of the formation we are currently trapped in, and there will be more dangers to come!”

Ning nodded slowly.

“Catch.” Daolord Badlands tossed a black talisman over.

Ning accepted the talisman. This talisman only had two rippling waves carved onto it. One wave looked fast while the other looked slow and calm.”

“This is the Badlands insignia,” Daolord Badlands said. “I’ve set down restrictive spells upon it, ensuring that it can only be bound once. Anyone who has the Badlands insignia is equivalent in status to a formal member of the Badlands Court. In the Badlands Territory, it’ll be of some use to you.”

“Thank you, Daolord.” Ning hurriedly expressed his gratitude.

He had naturally heard of the Badlands insignia before.

With this insignia in hand, not even figures like God Emperor Blacklotus would dare to touch him. Although his status as a disciple of Vastheaven Palace was even more incredible, Vastheaven Palace was too far away. Almost nobody in the Badlands Territory even knew what Vastheaven Palace was. In fact, not even many of the disciples of the Badlands Court knew about it.

Similarly, not many of the members of Vastheaven Palace had ever heard of the Badlands Court. The Daolords of each organization generally wouldn't give the other members such detailed maps, for fear that they might end up running too far away and getting lost, never to be able to make it back.

But of course, the powerful Daolords of Vastheaven Palace, the Badlands Court, and other similar organizations all knew each other. Thus, many Samsara Daolords would be unwilling to attack Ning once they realized who Ning was.

Powerful World-level experts generally weren't afraid of other World-level experts. If they weren't able to win, they would be able to flee! They only feared Samsara Daolords...and that's when having a powerful organization as a backer made all the difference.

However, you also had to understand what the relationship was between your enemy and your own organization. God Emperor Blacklotus had foolishly reported that he was the disciple of Daolord Seven Sovereigns, but what he didn't know was that Daolord Seven Sovereigns was mortal enemies with Daolord Solesky...and had been so terrified by Daolord Solesky that he had fled long ago. Blacklotus reporting his affiliation only resulted in him dying even quicker.

Time passed on, day by day.

Ning continued to live within the Badlands Court. He was in no rush to go out adventuring, because he was currently growing stronger at a break-neck pace.

The Seventh Cycle of the [Star seizing Hand] had started to take form long ago. Thanks to Daolord Solesky's guidance, it had truly come into being.

After using up a few dozen cubes worth of chaos jewels and the Heavengazer Tower, Ning had already mastered the middle portion of the [Golden Idol] as well. His body was now comparable to a top-grade Chaos treasure, the same level which World God Northrest had reached all those years ago.

These two accomplishments had been relatively simple ones.

The reason why Ning continued to live peacefully here at the Badlands Court was because he now had a completely different way of viewing the Dao of the Sword. He was improving incredibly fast and had yet to encounter a bottleneck! Generally speaking, cultivators would only go out adventuring when they had reached a bottleneck in their cultivation. Only by seeing and experiencing more things would they be able to more easily break through those bottlenecks.

"Darknorth, senior apprentice-brother Threecold is planning to pay a visit to the Azuresky Territory's Startower region and give it a go. Anyone who wants to go with him can go seek him out. Any interest?"

"The Azuresky Territory? The Startower region?"

"Yes. It's not too far away from our Badlands territory. The legends say that the Startower region was created when an ancient power tossed out a tower-shaped magic treasure and left it there in the

primordial chaos. The tower drew in energy from the primordial chaos, creating an entire region of incredible power around itself. I hear that even Samsara Daolords will visit that place in the hopes of finding and acquiring that magic tower. Unfortunately, none of them have been able to master it to date. The treasures and techniques it contains are enough to satisfy World-level experts like us. Want to go? Senior apprentice-brother Threefrost is very powerful. If we go with him, it'll be much safer."

"I don't wish to leave for now. Thank you for asking, brother Sevenscolor."

"Oh. Alright."

Immortal Sevenscolor exchanged a few more words with Ning, then departed.

Ning couldn't help but sigh to himself.

As the most powerful organization within the entire Badlands Territory, the Badlands Court was quite strict on accepting new disciples. New disciples had to be tremendously talented, and most were World-level experts. The Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who made it in were all monstrously talented, and so most of the World-level experts of the Badlands Court were able to reach the level of full mastery and become master-class World Gods.

Upon reaching this level, the next breakthrough would result in them becoming Samsara Daolords!

There were many independent World-level experts in the outside world, but only a few of them would ever reach the level of full mastery. However, the vast majority of the disciples of the Badlands Court would become master-class World Gods! Thus, all of them were filled with exuberance and valor. They wished to go out and adventure, in the process discovering their own Daos and becoming Samsara Daolords.

"Almost everyone at Fogstone had given up and had chosen to live a peaceful, comfortable life. Everyone in the Badlands Court, however, is still fighting hard for their dreams."

Ning couldn't help but sigh.

And yet, what he didn't understand was that in truth there were also some members of the Badlands Court who had fought long and hard, yet remained unable to break through and so had given up. They were tired. They had lost their energy, their passion, and so they chose to leave the Badlands Court and find another place where they would live in peace. Those who decided to remain in the Badlands Court were the ones who were filled with energy and motivation.

This was the real reason why so many members of the Badlands Court would often venture out into new places. Each time they did so, they would usually announce it to their peers and try to recruit others to go with them. If four of five of them joined forces, they would stand a much better chance of surviving their adventures! Brothers from the same organization were more unified and generally more trustworthy than outsiders, after all.

"I'm beginning to solve the riddle of the third stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, the Great Firmament stance."

“I’m improving very rapidly. When I reach a bottleneck or when I master this third stance, I’ll travel to the Allgod Estate. When I do that, I’ll let everyone in the Badlands Court know and invite some of them to accompany me,” Ning mused to himself.

The Allgod Estate...

Aside from the Windsourc Ruins, the only place in the entire Badlands Territory which had a copy of a Mirrorsnow Painting was the Allgod Estate.

A hundred and sixty-one years after Ning arrived at the Badlands Court.

“Treasure auction.”

“They are about to start a treasure auction.”

The news quickly spread throughout the entire Badlands Court, causing quite a stir.

“Master! Master!” Flamefairy Su Youji came running into the room.

“What is it?” Ning was in the middle of practicing some calligraphy and meditating on his sword-arts. He put down his quill, looking up towards Su Youji.

“I just received word of something.” Su Youji’s oval face was pink and lovely. Her eyes were very bright, and she extruded an aura of natural charm. Thus, she was quite a popular figure within the Badlands Court and made many friends. In contrast, Elder God Wilddog was always a cold, unfriendly figure. He didn’t make many friends.

“Ninety-nine years from now, the Palace Opulentia will be hosting a Treasure Auction,” Su Youji said.

“A treasure auction?” Ning’s eyes lit up.

“There will be many treasures to buy, and whoever offers the most money will take the treasures home. Many treasures which normally are never available for sale will be on display.” Su Youji was quite excited. “I heard that these auctions are only hosted ten times per chaos cycle. Each time, almost all of the World-level experts of the entire Badlands Territory will gather around it.”

“I heard that all sorts of treasure will be offered for sale, including Eternal weapons and some treasures that are even more marvelous than Eternal weapons.” Su Youji was incredibly excited. “Master, we have to go take a look.”

Ning nodded slowly.

He knew that in every single territory, including the Badlands Territory and the Vastheaven Territory, ten treasure auctions would be held during each chaos cycle! All sorts of valuable treasures would emerge for the many cultivators in that territory to bid on. These weren’t treasures that belonged to the Badlands Court or the Vastheaven Palace; rather, they were treasures delivered to this place by another mysterious organization.

The organization would send a Daolord to host each auction. Ten times per chaos cycle, the Daolord would come here to the Badlands Court and host a treasure auction. The Palace Opulentia merely loaned out their own auction grounds for this mysterious organization to use.

Any treasures that were not purchased during the auction would all be taken away at the end.

“This mysterious organization is spread throughout almost every single territory,” Ning mused to himself. “Every single territory has these auctions. Mm. I absolutely cannot miss this one. If I do, it’ll be countless years before the next one.”

“It seems I’ll need to hurry up and sell off the treasures I acquired in the Windswept Ruins. I need to prepare some money for the upcoming treasure auction.” Ning’s eyes were filled with eagerness.

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 14: The Gathering

This was a blazing hot planet. The surface of this planet was filled with lakes of lava and magma.

Whoosh. One particular lake of lava could be seen bubbling and hissing as a gigantic head could be seen slowly bobbing up and down at the banks.

Suddenly...

The giant sleeping creature opened his crimson eyes.

“Oh? Treasure auction?”

Whoosh.

This enormous creature that had been lying within the flows of lava suddenly transformed into a streak of light, flying over to the nearby shores and transforming into a handsome, barefoot man. A set of fiery red robes appeared over his body as well.

“The treasure auction for the Badlands Territory will begin ninety-two years from now?” A simian red light could be seen flickering in the man’s eyes. “Not too far away. Hmph. I’ve wandered through quite a few Daolord ruins over the past ten chaos cycles, and I finally managed to find an Eternal weapon for myself! If I sell both it and the other Eternal weapon I acquired all those years ago, I might be able to purchase a ‘Pseudo Samsara’ pill.”

“A Pseudo Samsara pill!”

“I have to get it, no matter the cost!” The handsome man gritted his teeth, then transformed into a streak of fiery light and disappeared into the heavens.

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“A treasure auction? It’ll be in the Waveshift City of the Badlands Everworld? Eighty-six years from now?” A beautiful woman dressed in elaborated white robes was seated atop a towering throne. She smiled as she spoke in a soft voice.

“Sect Mistress, you’ve been in secluded meditation this entire time and so I didn’t dare to disturb you. If you didn’t emerge by the final year, I would’ve been forced to disrupt your session. Thankfully, that wasn’t necessary.” A woman dressed in a beautiful violet robed laughed.

"I finally managed to store up three thousand cubes of chaos nectar. Hopefully, this time I'll be able to buy the treasures I need." The white-robed woman mused softly, "I'll be comparable to supreme World Gods if I succeed."

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"A treasure auction?"

"Let's go check it out and see if there's anything we can afford that would be of use to us."

"Let's go."

Three World-level experts who had entered seclusion together within a chaosworld had decided to make haste to the Badlands Everworld.

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After the Badlands Court released the news of the auction, the word quickly spread throughout the entire Badland Territory. As for the major organizations who were headquartered in Waveshift City, they naturally became the first to find out.

A short while later, this information also spread out to some of the nearby territories.

The reason why it had been announced ninety-nine years in advance was to give everyone enough time to receive word of this auction, then travel to the Badlands Everworld. Some had actually come all the way from neighboring territories.

The ancient city of Waveshift was growing more and more lively by the day.

New, unfamiliar World Gods and Chaos Immortals began to gather here. Some of them belonged to the Badlands Territory. However, the more famous World-level experts in the Badlands Territory were figures who had lost their courage and determination, choosing to live peaceful lives of luxury. Most of the figures who were still dedicated to their Dao and improving themselves spent all of their time adventuring through the primordial chaos, resulting in very few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals knowing about them.

But of course, some of the unfamiliar cultivators had come here from the neighboring territories.

"Master, when nightfall comes, the treasure auction shall begin." The skinny, grim-looking Elder God Wilddog was following behind Ning.

"What a beautiful sight." The nearby Flamefairy let out an amazed sigh.

"Yes." Ning nodded slowly.

The skies had already begun to darken. This everworld had been created by an ancient power, but it also had cycles of day and night.

The distant Palace Opulentia was a dazzling, eye-catching sight. Streams of light swirled around him, and it was the most dazzling, beautiful building located within the entire Waveshift City. Many World Gods and Chaos Immortals were currently in the process of entering the palace.

"It's usually quite rare for us to encounter a World God or Chaos Immortal, but we are swarming with them today." Ning sighed in amazement.

"Of course we are. More than half of the World-level experts of the entire Badlands Territory have arrived, as well as some from other nearby territories." Su Youji was extremely excited.

"Let's go. We should go inside as well." As Ning spoke, he led Su Youji and Elder God Wilddog into the Palace Opulentia.

The Palace Opulentia was extremely noisy today, and it had a World God and Chaos Immortal standing guard outside of it.

"Please enter, fellow Daoist."

"Please enter, fellow Daoist."

The two disciples of the Badlands Court smiled as they welcomed the guests.

As for the World Gods and Chaos Immortals who had come to take part in the treasure auction, they were all courteous as they responded to the greetings. This was the territory of the Badlands Court, after all, and Daolord Badlands' reputation in this territory and the neighboring territories was quite stunning.

"Anyone below the World level, come this way." A female attendant was leading the way for the weaker cultivators.

"Master, there are so many World-level powers here!" A True Immortal was following behind an Elder God in terror. This Elder God was quite famous in their homeland, but he was currently walking forward nervously for fear of accidentally offending someone. "Just follow me." The Elder God was behaving quite obediently and he followed the female attendant into the side door.

"This treasure auction will be an extraordinary one. All of the treasures up for sale are quite extraordinary, but space is limited. Anyone below the World level has to prove that he has at least ten cubes of chaos nectar before being granted entry. I hope you can understand, fellow Daoist." Beyond the side door were two female attendants, and one of them spoke out courteously to the Elder God.

"Naturally, naturally."

"Wonderful. This way, fellow Daoist."

The Palace Opulentia kept things in perfect order.

World-level experts were allowed to enter the bidding grounds, but Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had to be tested. Otherwise, the spectators would end up squeezing out all of the actual bidders!

The white-robed Ji Ning led the fiery and dazzling Su Youji as well as the grim, icy-cold Elder God Wilddog towards the palace as well.

"Anyone below the World level, come this way." A female attendant came to greet them.

One of the two disciples of the Badlands Court stationed outside the palace noticed this sight. The Chaos Immortal immediately walked over and barked, "Step back!"

The female attendant was badly shocked. She was nothing more than a hired employee, not a real disciple of the Badlands Court.

“Brother Darknorth, why didn’t you come alongside the rest of my fellow disciples?” The Chaos Immortal laughed. This was Immortal Sevencolor, who was one of the disciples of the Badlands Court who was on the most friendly terms with Ning.

“I wanted to check the place out so I came out for a stroll. There really are a lot of World-level experts today,” Ning said with a smile.

“Yes there are. You normally would never see this many of them in one place. Only the treasure auction can possibly attract so many World-level figures from all the nearby territories. In fact, even Daolords have come.” Immortal Sevencolor lowered his voice conspiratorially when he said this.

“Oh?” Ning was surprised. Daolords?

“Darknorth, you can go straight to the third floor. That’s the place we’ve reserved for ourselves. No need to waste your time in the main hall downstairs,” Immortal Sevencolor said.

“Alright.” Ning nodded. “You can go back now. I know you are very busy today!”

“Haha.” Immortal Sevencolor chuckled, then hurriedly returned to the palace entrance. As for Ning, he led Su Youji and Elder God Wilddog into the Palace Opulentia through the main gates. This caused some of the nearby Chaos Immortals and World Gods to stare at him in a somewhat puzzled manner.

“Darknorth.”

“This way, brother Darknorth.”

There were some disciples of the Badlands Court maintaining order inside the palace as well. When they saw Ning, they immediately came to greet him.

“You can go straight to the third floor, brother Darknorth.” Ning was guided straight to the third floor which had many private rooms within it. This was where the disciples of the Badlands Court were going to stay, and Ning was given a room of his own.

Ning, Su Youji, and Elder God Wilddog entered their room. They were able to see through an enormous window to the great hall below them.

The hall below them was filled with many seats that were occupied by World Gods and Chaos Immortals, with the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals seated to the rear. There were quite a few rooms available on the second floor, but one had to spend ten cubes of chaos nectar in order to claim one. Ten cubes of chaos nectar was enough to purchase a Dao weapon. This was flat out extortion! Thus, 99% of World Gods and Chaos Immortals elected to sit in the great hall below.

A tiny fraction who truly did not wish to reveal themselves chose to sit on the second floor.

The top floor of the hall was quite spacious. A white-robed woman was seated in the lotus position, and a stick of incense had been placed next to her. The scent of the incense swirled around her, emanating a sense of utter peacefulness.

“Thousand Shadows.” Two figures walked in from outside. It was the azure-robed Daolord Badlands and his beautiful wife.

“Badlands. Little sister Yan’er.” The white-robed woman nodded slowly.

“Dracogod came as well,” Daolord Badlands said.

“Dracogod?” The seated woman frowned slightly when she heard the name, a slightly disgusted look on her face.

At this moment, a man of noble demeanor dressed in golden robes walked in. He looked very poised and had a few scales on his forehead. This was Daolord Dracogod. When he saw the white-robed woman, he smiled. “Fairy Thousand Shadows! I didn’t expect you to be the one in charge of escorting the treasures this time. If I knew, I would’ve come to help out instead of letting you go to all this trouble.”

“I wouldn’t dare to ask you to help,” the white-robed woman said calmly.

Daolord Dracogod chuckled, but a hint of ice could be seen in his smile.

Daolord Badlands and his wife exchanged a glance. There was nothing they could do. Due to a ‘dragonification fruit’, a feud had sprung up between Daolord Dracogod and Daolord Thousand Shadows. Most likely, if they were meeting anywhere else, they would already be trying to kill each other.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 15: The Treasure Auction Begins

“Fellow Daoists.” A loud laugh rang out as an azure-robed man with deer antlers on his head walked in.

“Brother Daoist Azuresky! I didn’t expect you to join this treasure auction.” Daolord Dracogod was the first to respond in a very warm fashion.

“Old brother Azuresky.” Daolord Badlands and his wife greeted him as well.

“Mm.” The antlered man smiled and nodded at Daolord Badlands and his wife, then glanced at Daolord Dracogod. Finally, he turned his gaze towards the white-robed woman. He smiled. “Thousand Shadows, I heard that you were the one responsible for escorting the treasures this time. My Azuresky Territory is pretty close to this place, so I came to come visit my old friends.”

“It has indeed been quite some time.” The white-robed female Daolord nodded slowly, a hint of a smile on her face.

This was the most powerful figure of the surrounding territories, Azuresky. Azuresky was another major power who was at the verge of the Daomerge, but his Azuresky Sect didn’t have any powerful Daolords that could help assume the mantle of leadership. Given that he still had plenty of time left, Daolord Azuresky spent most of his time slowly accumulating more power and experience, planning on attempting the Daomerge sometime in the future.

Whoosh. A gust of wind blew past, materializing into a figure.

“Little sister Thousand Shadows.” A short old man dressed in short sleeves beamed merrily and called out at her.

“Big brother Waterwind.” The white-robed woman had acted in quite an aloof manner thus far, but she now hurriedly rose to her feet and walked over towards that short old man and grabbed his hand. “Big brother Waterwind, it’s almost impossible for me to find you. The only reason I accepted this mission to the Badlands Territory was because I thought I might be able to see you. And now, I really have!”

“Ahaha, your big brother just loves to go wandering around the world,” Waterwind laughed.

“Long time no see, Waterwind.” Daolord Badlands smiled as well.

“Badlands.” Waterwind nodded.

The Badlands Territory actually held four Daolords. However, most of them rarely showed their faces, and so most Elder Gods, Ancestral Immortals, and World-level figures only knew of Daolord Badlands. They didn’t know any of the others.

The four Daolords of the Badlands Territory were Daolord Badlands, his wife, Daolord Waterwind, and Daolord Cavefloat. Daolord Cavefloat was somewhat weak, while Waterwind was extremely lazy. Waterwind had no interest in setting up his own sect whatsoever, preferring to wander the primordial chaos by himself. In terms of strength, however, he was a formidable figure who was absolutely on par with Daolord Badlands himself.

Of the five Daolords on the top level, the strongest was Daolord Azuresky. Daolord Badlands and Daolord Waterwind were ranked second, while Daolord Thousand Shadows and Daolord Dracogod were even weaker. As for Daolord Badlands’ wife, she was the weakest one of them all.

Generally speaking, not many Daolords would be drawn to any given treasure auction; it was normal for four or five to attend at most. This was because these treasure auctions were mainly meant to let World-level experts have a chance to buy some fairly rare items. However, each treasure auction would also hold a few items that would make even Daolords feel envious, which was why they would often come and see if there was anything they fancied.

“Brother Daoist Azuresky.” Daolord Dracogod behaved in an extremely friendly manner, repeatedly referring to Azuresky as as ‘brother Daoist’. This caused Waterwind to purse his lips in disdain.

If Waterwind was a solitary man who wandered as he pleased, Dracogod was the exact opposite. He curried favor with everyone around him and enjoyed making friends with the most powerful Daolords he could find! Daolord Solesky and Daolord Azuresky both were at the verge of the Daomerge and were extremely frightening figures of tremendous power.

If they failed their Daomerge, it was guaranteed that they would eventually perish. However, if they went berserk before they died, they would prove to be a terrifying foe for anyone to encounter. Who would dare antagonize someone who knew that death was coming no matter what? Not even ancient powers who had succeeded in their Daomerge and gained eternity would be willing to antagonize Daolords who had failed in their Daomerge.

Daolord Dracogod delighted in befriending the top-tier Daolords, doing everything in his power to curry favor with them. And as a result, he really did end up making quite a few friends. Generally speaking, no matter where he went, the other Daolords would give him some face. However, many solitary wanderers like Daolord Waterwind would feel very disdainful towards him.

“The treasure auction is beginning.” Daolord Thousand Shadows glanced downwards.

.....

Ji Ning, Su Youji, and Wilddog peered out through their giant window towards the great hall below them. The hall didn't look that large from the outside, but it was actually ten kilometers in size. Tens of thousands of cultivators were seated around the central auctioning platform. Most of the people present were World Gods and Chaos Immortals, with a few Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals present.

Even the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who were allowed in had to have at least ten cubes of chaos nectar in wealth. The chairs were all seated a fair distance from each other as there was ten kilometers worth of space here. But of course, all of them had such perfect vision that they could see ants crawling on the ground from ten kilometers away with absolute clarity.

“Master, it has begun.” Su Youji hurriedly pointed downwards.

“Right.” Ning looked as well.

Three female Chaos Immortals dressed in marvelous floral robes walked out to the central auction platform. Their leader was a woman whose skin looked like it had been carved out of ice, and her eyes were a steely silver color. This silver-eyed woman stood there in the center, the other two standing by her side.

“Welcome, distinguished cultivators and guests from many different territories. I shall be the one in charge of this treasure auction.” The silver-eyed woman had a smile on her face. “I imagine all of you are tired of waiting, so I won't waste any time. Let the auction begin! The rules to the auction are quite simple. Every single treasure will have a reserve price, and every bid has to be at least one cube of chaos nectar higher than the previous bid.”

“Alright. Let the first item be brought out.”

The silver-eyed woman waved her crystalline, frozen arm. Instantly, a dried yellow wooden slip appeared in her hands, then levitated into the air. It rose to a height of roughly thirty meters, so as to allow all of the cultivators a clear line of sight to it.

“This is a piece of Soulguide Wood.” The silver-eyed woman smiled. “Soulguide Wood. Once it is lit, it will completely ignite and transform into a certain type of smoke. If you completely inhale all of the smoke, you'll enter a deep slumber for a thousand years. Any cultivators whose hearts have been cast into shadow due to some event will find the shadow to be dramatically weakened and no longer pose a threat to them.”

“Soulguide Wood has a reserve price of twelve cubes of chaos nectar. Let the auction begin!”

“Fifteen cubes! The first bidder was an Elder God whose eyes were filled with desire.”

“Sixteen cubes.” A gray-robed Chaos Immortal called out calmly from a different part of the hall. The Elder God immediately gritted his teeth helplessly. The reason why he had immediately increased the bid to fifteen cubes was because he wanted to scare off any bidders...but alas, everyone knew just how valuable Soulguide Wood was. How many Elder Gods could possibly win a bidding war against World-level figures?

“Seventeen cubes.”

“Eighteen cubes.”

Ning watched as the bidding proceeded, rather surprised. “Soulguide Wood? I didn’t expect the first treasure to be such a valuable one.”

When cultivators encountered certain types of setbacks, every so often a shadow would be cast over their heart. Sometimes, the shadow would be as strong as a demonheart curse. This would constantly disturb and nag at the cultivator, worrying away at him. Even if he was able to suppress it, he wouldn’t be able to be truly at peace when meditating on the Dao, making it much more difficult for him to grow more powerful. However, Soulguide Wood would send the cultivator into a thousand-year slumber. Upon awakening, the cultivator would feel as though the shadow cast over his heart was something that had happened long, long ago. He would barely be able to remember it.

This was quite a marvelous treasure. Although it was comparable in value to most Dao weapons, it was incredibly rare. Normally, if a person wished to purchase this item within the Palace Opulentia, the Palace Opulentia would charge an extortionate price to help them even locate the item. The price would start off at fifty cubes at least! Sometimes, even organizations like the Badlands Court would find it difficult to acquire, making it truly expensive to purchase.

However, the prices offered at these treasure auctions were much lower.

This was the reason why even Daolords would come and take a look. They wanted to see if they could pick up something cheap.

“Thirty-two cubes. Any higher bids?” The silver-eyed woman glanced at the surrounding cultivators. “Since there are no higher bids...” As she spoke, the Soulguide Wood slowly began to float downwards. When it landed in her hand, it represented this particular bidding cycle as having been completed.

The Soulguide Wood landed in her hands.

“Very well then. The Soulguide Wood is sold at thirty-two cubes,” the silver-eyed woman said. The woman behind her immediately walked forward, accepting the Soulguide Wood and then taking it off the auction platform. She walked to the Elder God who had placed the final bid of thirty-two cubes.

Soulguide Wood was something which many Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were desperately in need of.

Generally speaking, the higher one’s level of insight into the Dao was, the more powerful their hearts were. It was very rare for World-level experts to have their hearts troubled by the demonheart, and even if they were the problem wouldn’t be resolvable through usage of Soulguide Wood. If they truly did wish to buy Soulguide Wood, they could just spend fifty cubes to buy it at a later point in time. It was

slightly cheaper now, which was why the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals present were desperate to buy it.

Many of the World-level experts had merely watched. It wasn't yet time for them to make bids.

As for Ning, he also just watched from the third floor as well. He had sold off quite a few treasures for the sake of this treasure auction, precisely because he was waiting for rare, powerful items he needed to show up!

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 16: Wings

Thanks to the time he had spent in the Badlands Court, Ji Ning understood that each treasure auction would have many treasures for sale. Treasures of every single type would be sold, and so Ning sold off the vast majority of the treasures he had acquired in the Windsorce Ruins. He had been planning on keeping the Eversnow Banner and the Rainbow Cloud World, but he ended up selling them as well.

The Eversnow Banner was quite useful. It had several sinfiends within it and could be used to trap enemies or test out dangerous regions. However, Ning deeply disliked sin treasures. He had planned on temporarily using it since he had a deficit of good treasures, but now that an abundance of treasures was coming towards him he was naturally going to sell it off to buy things he actually liked.

Although the Rainbow Cloud World was a domain-type artifact, Ning had no insights into the Dao of Mist at all. There was no way for Ning to even bind the layers of seals held within the Dao weapon and so he was only able to unleash a tiny fraction of its true power. He naturally chose to sell it as well.

The Eversnow Banner alone had been sold off for more than 150 cubes.

In short...Ning had sold off almost all of the treasures of those three World-level experts, save for the Mirrorsnow Painting and Rocky the stone titan. He had sold these treasures off to the Badlands Court, and since he was their respected guest they didn't try to make much money off of him. Ning was able to earn a total of 1580 cubes of chaos nectar. This was an enormous sum of money! However, it wouldn't be that impressive in the context of the treasure auction, and so he had to be very careful in how he spent his wealth.

"Violetjewel and the Mirrorsnow Painting are worth incredible amounts of chaos nectar, but they are very important to me." Ning continued to stare through the window towards the great hall below him.

The great hall was still filled with tens of thousands of seated cultivators.

The silver-eyed woman took out one treasure after another, arousing waves of excited discussions.

In the blink of an eye, six hours had gone past. This was nothing more than the start, as every single treasure auction would go on for nearly ten days. Between the explanation phase and the bidding phase, every single treasure would take quite a bit of time. Even after a full day of auctioning, only a few hundred treasures had been sold off.

"This treasure." The silver-eyed woman waved her hand, causing a white pair of wings to appear in her palms. The tiny, delicate little wings quickly flew into the air and began to expand in size. When it

reached a height of thirty meters, it was roughly as tall as a normal human. It emanated waves of strange ripples as it constantly phased in and out of existence.

“This is a high-grade Dao treasure known as the Voidsea Wings. It is filled with many divine runes that embody the profound mysteries of space and is suitable for cultivators who cultivate the Dao of Spacetime.” The silver-eyed woman continued, “With this set of wings, you’ll be able to fly incredibly fast. When engaged in close combat, you’ll be able to move much more agilely.”

“The Voidsea Wings have a reserve price of thirty cubes of chaos nectar. Let the bidding begin!” The silver-eyed woman called out.

“Thirty cubes.”

“Thirty-one cubes.”

“Thirty-five cubes.”

Instantly, quite a few cultivators began to fight over the treasure. Treasures that could increase one’s agility in combat were actually very important, especially since they could also be vital when fleeing from danger.

These wings could allow one to fly much faster and also made one much more agile. Although it was merely a high-grade Dao treasure, it was even more rare and valuable than most top-grade Dao weapons.

The third floor.

“Master, don’t you need treasures like this?” Su Youji asked.

“Let’s wait for a bit longer. I imagine there will be even better treasures later.” Ning frowned. He did want a set of wings, because his path was the path of close combat, but his greatest skill lay in the Dao of the Sword. Although he did have some insights into lightning, water, and space, they were significantly weaker than his insights into the Dao of the Sword.

Strictly speaking, his most powerful Dao was the Dao of the Sword, the second was the Dao of Lightning, the third was the Dao of Water, and the last one was the Dao of Space...

The divine runes that had been imprinted into those Voidsea Wings were undoubtedly quite abstruse and profound. Given his limited skill in the Dao of Space, he probably would only be able to unleash a fraction of the full power of that set of wings.

“Sixty-nine cubes. Any higher bids?” The silver-eyed woman glanced at the surrounding people as the pair of wings in the air began to slowly descend from its height of thirty meters, shrinking as it did so. Finally, it landed in her palms. “The auction is complete. The Voidsea Wings have been sold for sixty-nine cubes.”

One of the female Immortals behind her immediately took the wings and delivered them to the winning bidder.

Ning continued to watch. He had yet to make a single bid, because there was nothing that had truly excited him thus far. There was no need for him to buy a treasure that wasn't a perfect fit for him. With enough chaos nectar on hand, he would have plenty of other chances to purchase what he needed.

"If push comes to shove, I'll buy a boat-type treasure that's meant for fleeing," Ning mused to himself. "Even if I'm not as agile as I would be with those wings, my sword-arts will ensure that I have nothing to fear."

This was his backup plan.

The treasure auction continued for another two hours.

"This is the fifth set of wings to appear in this treasure auction. This is also a pair of high-grade Dao wings, and it is known as the Thunderlight Wings." The silver-eyed woman waved her hand as her voice echoed within the great hall.

"Thunderlight?"

Ning's ears twitched.

For the sake of mastering a Ninehorn Lightning Serpent, Ning had transformed his body to give it an even higher affinity for lightning than Exalted Celestial Thundergod. His improvement in the Dao of Lightning was quite fast, on the same level as his improvement in the element of water. It was second only to the Dao of the Sword.

"Is that..." Ning stared from afar as a set of azure wings appeared in the silver-eyed woman's hands. The wings appeared to spark and hum with electric light.

"Thunderlight Wings are powered by lightning and use sword-light to tear through all obstacles, allowing the wielder to move at tremendous speeds. It is highly suited for both close combat and evasive techniques. It is a perfect fit for cultivators who are skilled in both the Dao of the Sword and the Dao of Lightning," the silver-eyed woman said.

Ning shot up, his eyes gleaming as he stared through the window. "That's the one!"

The Thunderlight Wings were actually even tougher to use than the Voidsea Wings. There were quite a few cultivators who were skilled in the Dao of Space, the Dao of Lightning, and the Dao of the Sword, but fairly few who were skilled in both the sword and in lightning.

However, a treasure which was able to join together two different Daos would generally be even more astonishingly powerful than 'normal' treasures of that type.

"The Thunderlight Wings have a reserve price of thirty-six cubes of chaos nectar. Let the bidding begin," the silver-eyed woman said.

"Thirty-eight cubes."

"Forty cubes."

"Forty-five cubes."

Quite a few World Gods began to make their bids, the price rising much faster than the price for the Voidsea Wings had. Although fewer cultivators were able to use these Thunderlight Wings, there were so many World Gods present that there were multiple figures here who were skilled in both lightning and the sword. Under normal circumstances, Waveshift City didn't have many Dao treasures for sale. Wing-type Dao treasures were even rarer, and dual-affinity ones such as this almost never showed up.

"The bidding war is pretty fierce." Ning frowned slightly, then spoke out and made his first bid. "Fifty cubes!"

His voice rang out from the third floor, causing quite a few cultivators to turn their heads in his direction.

"That's the third floor."

"He must be a disciple of the Badlands Court."

"So what if he is? Fifty-two cubes!"

"Fifty-five cubes."

"Sixty cubes."

"Sixty-five cubes."

The bidding war grew increasingly intense.

"Seventy-two cubes." Ning raised the price, making his second bid. This pair of wings were extremely hard to design and quite complicated to forge. They rarely showed up in the marketplace. If he used them, his ability and his speed would both increase dramatically. Ning would not accept no for an answer!

"Seventy-three cubes."

"Seventy-four cubes."

The bidding speed began to slow down. There was a limit to how much anyone would pay for a high-grade Dao treasure; in the end, they could try to find and buy one during the next treasure auction. Waveshift City would hold ten of them each chaos cycle, after all.

"Seventy-six cubes."

Ning frowned slightly, then spoke out for a third time. "Eighty cubes!"

The entire hall fell silent. No further bids came. Eighty cubes appeared to be the ceiling. It must be understood that the stone titan Ning had acquired was itself worth merely a hundred cubes.

"Eighty cubes. Any higher bids?" The set of azure Thunderlight Wings continued to hover above the silver-eyed woman, but a moment later it began to slowly descend. Finally, it landed in her hands.

"Bidding is now closed. The Thunderlight Wings have been sold for eighty cubes."

On the third floor, Ning let out a sigh of a relief and revealed a hint of a smile. The highest possible price he was willing to pay was actually a hundred cubes of chaos nectar. Other cultivators and World-level experts had been around for a long time and were willing to wait; there were ten of these auctions each

chaos cycle, after all. They wouldn't be willing to pay too high a price. Ning, however, wasn't willing to wait. By the time the next treasure auction came around, he would probably be a World-level expert himself!

"Eighty cubes for a set of wings that are a perfect fit for me. I'm satisfied." Ning secretly celebrated.

"Congratulations, Master." Elder God Wilddog hurriedly congratulated Ning.

"Congratulations, Master. You were silent for so long, but when you found something you liked you stopped at nothing to take it." The Flamefairy smiled as well.

"We are just getting started. This was just a warmup." Ning grinned. This set of wings had only cost him eighty cubes of chaos nectar. He had prepared more than a thousand cubes for this auction, and the best treasures had yet to appear! Supposedly, there were some treasures that would cause even Samsara Daolords to grow intrigued.

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 17: Aquaflect

One treasure after another was sold off. Of course, there was also the occasional treasure which had no bidders at all.

Three days of bidding passed in the blink of an eye, with the cultivators in the hall growing increasingly excited. Increasingly unique treasures were beginning to come out, as many of the best treasures had been saved for last.

"This next treasure is a suit of armor." The silver-eyed female Immortal smiled, her voice echoing within the ears of the tens of thousands of cultivators present. "This is the most unique set of armor we have for sale in this treasure auction."

"Oh?" The eyes of quite a few people lit up as they began to listen carefully.

Ji Ning listened carefully as well.

"The most unique set of armor?" The Daolords seated at the top floor also glanced downwards towards the great hall.

"Little sister Thousand Shadows, what's so unique about this armor?" Waterwind asked curiously.

The white-robed Daolord Thousand Shadows smiled. "Just keep watching, big brother. You know the rules! No leaks are permitted regarding the treasures for sale during any treasure auction."

"Fine, let's see what this treasure is." Daolord Dracogod smiled as well.

Daolord Badlands and his wife watched curiously as well.

"Armor as precious as this is rarely seen during the various treasure auctions that have been held in these territories during recent chaos cycles. For me, at least, this is the first time I'm seeing such a precious treasure appear in an auction that I'm officiating over." The words of the silver-eyed woman

caused the cultivators present to feel even more intrigued. What was so rare and special about this armor?

“I imagine some of you have heard of this type of armor, but few of you have ever seen it.”

The silver-eyed woman waved her crystalline arm, causing a tiny suit of armor to appear in her palm. As the suit of armor floated into the air, it quickly expanded in size. The armor looked quite ordinary, but it was covered by a layer of icy frost.

“This suit of armor is known as the Frosthorn Robe.” The silver-eyed woman laughed. “It is suitable for cultivators skilled in the Dao of Water. It admittedly looks quite ordinary, and it is nothing more than a suit of top-grade Dao armor.”

“But...it has the ‘reflect damage’ property.”

“Any attacks, close range or long range, that land on this suit of armor will result in an equal amount of damage being reflected onto the attacker.”

As soon as her words came out, the entire hall exploded into a shocked clamor.

“An equal amount of damage reflected!?” All of the cultivators were stunned. So if an enemy launched a full-force attack against you, your armor would automatically cause them to suffer an attack of the exact same level of power? How would you even try to fight against someone with this armor in close combat?

“With armor like this, World Gods that are skilled in close combat can even fight back against experts at a higher level of power.”

“This is crazy.”

World Gods generally all had incredibly tough bodies as well as top-grade Dao armors protecting them. Generally speaking, even World-level opponents who were one or two classes of power above them in strength would find it difficult to annihilate them in one blow. If their opponent was not only unable to slay them in one blow but would also suffer damage reflection...even foes stronger than the armor-bearers would find actually fighting them to be a painful experience.

Ning began to grow excited as well. This was definitely a set of armor that was perfect for anyone who specialized in close combat. Ning’s own body was very tough, especially when reinforced by the azureflower mist energy. Once he became a World God, he would become even more formidable in this regard! Him acquiring this set of armor would be like a tiger being given wings.

“Aquaflect?” The Daolords on the top floor, however, were all puzzled.

“So it’s just water-element damage reflection.” Daolord Dracogod frowned. “Although aquaflect armor is fairly rare, there’s one or two for sale in every treasure auction. Daolord Thousand Shadows, your subordinate is bragging a bit too much. Why did she say that this item is something that is all but unmatched in value in treasure auctions hosted during recent chaos cycles? She even claimed that this was the first time she ever encountered such an item while hosting an auction. Is this her first time being the auction mistress?”

“Aquaflect?”

Azuresky, Waterwind, and the Badlands couple were all puzzled as well. While the World Gods were all excited, this item wasn't that exciting to Daolords like them.

"She's hosted at least a hundred treasure auctions." Daolord Thousand Shadows gave Daolord Dracogod a cold sideways glance. "If you aren't impressed, don't bid on it."

"Don't bid on it?" Daolord Dracogod was stunned. What was that supposed to mean? Was there something about this suit of armor that would attract his interest? Was this a joke? He was a venerable Daolord; all his items were of the Eternal level!

"The divine seals embedded into this armor are incomparably profound," the silver-eyed woman said in a loud voice. "It contains seven layers of seals. World-level cultivators with complete mastery over water might be able to completely bind all seven seals...and if they do so, when they put on these robes they will be able to generate a Frosthorn Domain."

"The Frosthorn Domain will span up to ten thousand kilometers."

"Any attacks launched within this domain will result in full-force damage reflection."

"The Frosthorn Robes have a reserve price of five thousand cubes of chaos nectar." The silver-eyed woman smiled. "Let the bidding begin!"

Everyone in the great hall was silent.

Five thousand?

Was this a joke?

"Why the hell is it so expensive?" Ning had been debating buying the treasure, but he was instantly stupefied by the price. Five thousand cubes? He didn't even have close to that much! And, based on what he knew, ten thousand cubes was enough to purchase an Eternal weapon!

For even the reserve price to be so high meant that this treasure was just as valuable as an Eternal weapon.

"Why the hell is it so expensive?"

"I saw a suit of aquaflect armor during the last treasure auction as well. It wasn't nearly this expensive."

"This is ridiculous."

"Even Elder God Formations start off with a reserve price of around 150 cubes during these auctions."

The tens of thousands of cultivators in the hall were all silent for a moment. Then, they started to stealthily discuss this matter amongst themselves. It must be understood that ordinary top-grade Dao weapons were only worth a few dozen cubes at most! This was the price which Ning had been given for the warblade he had sold off. The Eversnow Banner held nine sinfiends within it, which was why it went for one or two hundred cubes of chaos nectar. Even complete sets of top-grade Dao weapons would generally go for a few hundred cubes at most.

Five thousand cubes?

This was a price that would render 99% of World-level experts completely speechless.

“Ten thousand cubes!”

“Twelve thousand cubes!”

“Daolord Dracogod, I thought you weren’t impressed with it? Fifteen thousand cubes!”

A rapid-fire series of bids began to ring out from the top floor of the auction hall. Everyone, Ning included, felt an enormous sense of pressure pushing down upon them.

There were quite a few terrifyingly powerful World Gods here, including some who were stronger than even World God Northrest. This was a gathering of the majority of the World-level experts from all the nearby territories, after all. Some of them were able to afford this price, but...was it really worth it? For just a top-grade set of Dao armor?

The top floor.

“Daolord Thousand Shadows, your insights into the element of water aren’t as profound as mine. Stop fighting with me over this.” Daolord Dracogod chuckled, then called out once more, “Eighteen thousand cubes.”

“Dracogod, you brat.” Waterwind spoke out, causing Daolord Dracogod’s face to turn dark. However, Waterwind was unquestionably more powerful than him. “Stop fighting with my little sister Thousand Shadows. Although this set of top-grade Dao armor has seven seals within it, didn’t you hear that only World-level cultivators who have reached the level of full mastery over the Dao of Water are able to bind all seven seals? My little sister is definitely capable of that.”

“If I wasn’t bound by the rules of our organization, I would’ve taken this treasure away long ago. There’s no way I would’ve let it show up on the floor of the auction hall.” Daolord Thousand Shadows glanced at Daolord Dracogod. Although she was in charge of this expedition, she didn’t dare to violate any of the rules. No information regarding the treasures was to be leaked, and all treasures had to be bid in a fair fashion during the actual auction itself.

This was a rule that had existed for countless chaos cycles.

“Twenty thousand cubes.” Daolord Thousand Shadows raised the price again.

“Twenty-one thousand cubes.” Daolord Dracogod immediately countered.

“Sorry, Yan’er. Nothing I can do.” Daolord Badlands looked at his wife.

“Forget it. I rarely go out into battle anyhow.” His beautiful wife laughed.

“Frosthorn Domain...who the hell managed to create something like this?” Daolord Badlands let out a sigh. “So long as you are in the range of this domain, each time you launch an attack you’ll immediately suffer from damage reflection. It’ll only end when you stop trying to attack! Even though this domain will have less of an impact on a powerful Daolord, he’ll still see his strength whittled away by more than half as his attacks travel through it.”

Once the Frosthorn Domain appeared, it would initiate a series of counter-attacks. Daolords could use the power of the counter-attacks to whittle away at the strength of the enemy's blows. This effect alone ensured that the item would be a valuable one.

"Thirty-eight thousand cubes."

"Forty thousand cubes."

Daolord Dracogod and Daolord Thousand Shadows were completely at odds now. As Samsara Daolords, these two were neither particularly weak nor particularly strong. This was why they both desperately needed treasures like this one! As for the likes of Daolord Badlands, Azuresky, or Waterwind, any foes that might prove to be a threat to them wouldn't be threatened by a mere Frosthorn Domain.

"Fifty thousand cubes." Daolord Thousand Shadows made yet another bid.

"Damn." Daolord Dracogod's face was ashen. He had originally planned to just watch the treasure auction and see if he could pick up something cheap, and so he hadn't prepared a particularly large amount of chaos nectar. However, Daolord Thousand Shadows had been in charge of escorting this mission! Although she couldn't tell others about the treasures under her protection, she herself knew that this suit of armor was within it. Thus, she had prepared more than enough chaos nectar.

In truth, she wasn't really getting much of a bargain, as this was the 'standard' price for an item of this nature. However, as the silver-eyed auction mistress had said...this type of armor was rarely available for sell! It truly was incredibly rare! It was a fairly cheap yet extremely effective item for Daolords, perfect for Daolords of average strength such as the two of them.

In the end, the Frosthorn Robe was sold for fifty thousand cubes of chaos nectar. The many cultivators present were all stunned by this price, especially the Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.

Six more hours passed.

"This treasure is another set of armor. It is known as the Primalwater Armor, and it also has the aquaflect property." The silver-eyed woman continued, "However, this set of armor only has three seals inside of it, and so it will only generate the damage reflection property when an attack actually lands upon it. It won't generate a domain like the Frosthorn Domain we previously discussed."

As she spoke, she waved her hand and caused a suit of armor to fly out of her palm. This armor was silvery-white and looked a bit more beautiful than the Frosthorn Robe.

The suit of armor flew into the air, expanding as it flew upwards. It immediately attracted the attention of many cultivators, Ning included.

"The Primalwater Armor's reserve price is two hundred cubes of chaos nectar. Let the bidding begin!" The silver-eyed woman said.

Ning let out a sigh of relief.

This was a more 'normal' price!

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 18: Completely Broke

As soon as the silver-eyed woman stopped talking, the cultivators in the hall all began to call out, especially the World Gods. "Two hundred and twenty cubes!"

"Two hundred thirty."

"Two hundred forty!"

The price rapidly began to rise.

As for Ji Ning, he watched silently from the third floor even though he also desired this item quite badly. There were a number of World Gods in the great hall who were interested but were in no rush to make a bid. Most of the initial bidders were just trying to see if they could pick it up on the cheap, as most 'normal' top-grade Dao armors would go for at least three hundred cubes.

Top-grade Dao armor with the aquaflect property would naturally be worth much more.

"Three hundred twenty."

"Five hundred!" Suddenly, a deep voice rang out. It came from a muscular alien World God whose entire body was covered with fiery red scales, and with his growling bid the price instantly rocketed up to five hundred cubes.

The hall grew much quieter.

There were 'customary' prices for most magic treasures. Ordinary top-grade Dao armor would go for around three hundred cubes, while something like this Primalwater Armor would go for around six hundred cubes or so.

"Five hundred and ten."

"The disciples of the Badlands Court are truly impressive." Many cultivators turned to look at the third floor. During this auction, many of the disciples of the Badlands Court remained silent until they chose to make a bid, at which point they would stun everyone present. This was their territory, after all, and everyone would look at them when they bid from the third floor. They generally wanted to ensure that they would gain face from their bids.

"Six hundred cubes!" A World God seated in the great hall whose entire body was covered by a gray robe suddenly spoke out in an icy voice.

"Six hundred and ten cubes," the fire-scaled alien World God snarled.

"Six hundred and twenty cubes," the gray-robed World God bid.

The alien World God hesitated, not sure if he should continue.

"Six hundred and ninety cubes!" Ning made yet another bid.

This bid caused two other hesitating cultivators to fall silent. Ning's bid had caused them to both change their minds. Although Primalwater Armor was rare, one or two would appear during each treasure auction, and they'd generally go for around six hundred cubes. Sometimes the price would be a bit higher; other times, the price would be a bit lower. Six hundred and ninety cubes was fairly high.

“Forget it. Later I’ll go back and buy some World-level golems that can be used in a formation. They’ll cost the same amount and will be a bit more useful to me than this armor.”

“Forget it.”

Quite a few World Gods began to talk themselves down from joining the bidding. This was an enormous sum of money, after all. The combined treasures which Ning had initially acquired from Immortal Origination and Immortal Bloodpool in the Windsource Ruins weren’t worth as much as this single suit of armor. The only reason why Ning was able to afford it was because World God Cavecry had left behind some nice treasures as well.

“Six hundred and ninety cubes. Any higher bids?” The silver-eyed woman spoke out as the suit of armor began to descend towards her palm. Finally, it came to a rest. “This suit of Primalwater Armor has been sold. The bidding is over.”

“Whew.” Ning let out a sigh of relief, sitting down and picking up a glass of wine. He took a small sip of it. Just now, he had been so nervous that he had jumped to his feet. He knew very well that the only reason why he had so much chaos nectar was thanks to Daolord Solesky. If it wasn’t for him, who knew how long it would’ve taken for Ning to acquire so much wealth?

“Congratulations, Master.” Elder God Wilddog spoke out.

“I imagine there aren’t many World Gods who can afford a treasure like this,” Su Youji said.

Ning chuckled.

Strictly speaking, for now, this suit of armor wouldn’t be as helpful to him as seven hundred cubes worth of bugbeasts or golems. For example, Ning could’ve purchased thirty-six sinfiends like the ones he had sold off! Generally speaking, most World-level experts would purchase quite a few bugbeasts or sets of golems.

Golems were magic treasures that could be deployed in formations, after all. An entire set of five or six golems in a formation would prove to be extraordinarily powerful.

“Fellow Daoist.” A soft voice rang out from outside.

“Come in,” Ning said.

Creeeeak. The door swung open and a woman walked in holding the suit of armor. Smiling, she said, “Primalwater Armor, six hundred and ninety cubes.”

“Right.” Ning tossed out a storage treasure.

The woman accepted it, glanced at it, then placed the suit of armor on the table and departed.

Ning reached out to gently stroke the suit of silver armor, filling it with his divine power. He was able to bind it quite easily. Whoosh. The armor instantly appeared over his body, while the set of high-grade Dao armor Ning had previously been wearing was put away.

“I have Violetjewel as my weapon and the Primalwater Armor as my armor. For agility and evasion, I have the Thunderlight Wings.” Ning nodded slowly to himself. “Given my sword-arts have improved

during this period of time I spent at the Badlands Court...I'll wager only master-class World Gods are capable of suppressing me in might."

Ning had already used up nearly half of his chaos nectar. He was in no rush to make any further bids.

The treasure auction continued to proceed day by day, and many new marvelous items appeared. Ning's horizons were truly broadened. Only now did he understand how many treasures the Endless Territories possessed! The World-level experts he had previously encountered, such as God Emperor Blacklotus, were actually nothing more than failures. Truly powerful cultivators would be able to wield their treasures to absolutely devastating effect.

On the seventh day of the treasure auction, Ning purchased yet another treasure. A Pentabolt Gourd!

The Pentabolt Gourd was filled with five different types of divine chaos lightning. In truth, a single one of those five types of lightning was enough to utterly devastate anyone below the World level of power, but against World Gods and Chaos Immortals it wouldn't be of much use. The Pentabolt Gourd, however, mixed all five types of chaos lightning together. It was enough to threaten the lives of weaker World-level experts, and even powerful ones would be entangled and ensnared by them.

"The Pentabolt Gourd can be used to launch group attacks. Even if I can't kill my foes, I can slow them down." Ning nodded to himself.

Ning had spent a total of 180 cubes to purchase the Pentabolt Gourd.

The eighth day of the treasure auction.

"This next treasure is a set of three golems." The silver-eyed woman waved her hand, causing three fiery golems to appear in her palms before slowly levitating into the air. "However, these golems are unlike ordinary golems! They don't have any treasure spirits within them, but they do have a compartment which a cultivator can enter and control them through."

"When these three golems come together into a formation, their defensive powers will increase exponentially."

"This set of golems has a reserve price of three hundred cubes. Let the bidding begin!" The silver-eyed woman said.

Instantly, quite a few cultivators began to make their bids.

These golems that could hold cultivators inside them were very popular amongst Chaos Immortals. Chaos Immortals had fragile bodies, but when they were inside golems they would be fairly safe! In addition, golems that fought on their own usually did so in clumsy ways. Cultivators had much higher levels of insight into the Dao; when they personally commanded a golem, it was only natural for the golem to be capable of much greater power.

However, there was a weakness!

Ning's own stone titan golem was able to fight alongside him; the two were able to surround and pincer-attack a foe together. If Ning was to enter a golem, the fight would turn into a one-on-one fight.

"Three hundred and sixty cubes."

“Three hundred and seventy cubes.”

Ning was rather nervous. Twelve hours ago, a set of five similar golems had appeared. Ning had made multiple bids, but in the end the price had risen to over eight hundred cubes. Ning only had roughly six hundred cubes left!

“I have to win this time,” Ning mused to himself. If he let his powerful Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals control these three golems, they would actually be a bit more powerful than the stone titan was. Ning would then have much more resources at his disposal if he encountered dangerous situations when adventuring.

Originally, Ning had been planning on buying a Minor Thousand Elder Gods Formation.

At this treasure auction, around two hundred cubes would be enough to procure one of these formations! As for the thousand Elder God slaves needed to operate it, they could be purchased for a hundred cubes. Three hundred cubes would translate into an army of Elder God slaves who were able to join together into a formation. However, by comparison the set of three golems was even more attractive to Ning, even though they were somewhat more expensive.

“Five hundred cubes.”

“Five hundred and ten cubes.”

The price continued to rise.

“Six hundred cubes!” Ning said. He only had a bit over six hundred cubes left.

A momentary silence.

The silver-eyed woman glanced at the people nearby, then said, “Six hundred cubes of chaos nectar. Any higher bids?” The three golems began to slowly descend from midair.

“Six hundred and ten cubes!” Suddenly, a green-robed Chaos Immortal located in the corner of the hall gritted his teeth and placed a bid.

“Six hundred and twenty cubes!” Ning almost immediately raised his bid once more.

The green-robed Chaos Immortal raised his head to glance at Ning. He didn’t say a thing.

The silver-eyed woman continued to ask for more bidders as the three golems began their descent. Finally, they landed in her palm. “This set of golems has been sold for six hundred and twenty cubes! The bidding is complete.”

Ning was standing at the window, staring down towards the great hall. He broke out into a grin.

It was enough.

Daolord Solesky wouldn’t be around to help him out. Ning would go out adventuring by himself, and he had spent all of his chaos nectar to buy what he needed. He had acquired enough from this treasure auction.

“I’m completely broke now.” Ning sat down to simply watch. This treasure auction would no longer mean much to him.

The Desolate Era

Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 19: Pseudo Samsara Pill

Ji Ning had also acquired a certain amount of chaos nectar and chaos jewels from the corpses of the three deceased World-level experts of the Windsorce Realms. As a result, Ning still had roughly fifty cubes worth of chaos nectar left. However, such a small amount wouldn’t be enough to purchase any truly powerful items at this auction. It was better to hold onto them for now. If he ended up being heavily injured, he could use the chaos nectar to heal himself and save his life! This wouldn’t pose any burden to him and the healing effect would be quite quick.

The only things he really had to worry about were strange toxins, curse-spells from major powers, or attacks that caused the truesoul to crumble. It was hard to use chaos nectar to heal damage inflicted to the truesoul, but almost all other types of injuries could be healed.

“Everyone, there are only nine treasures left in this treasure auction.”

On the ninth day of the treasure auction, the mood in the hall noticeably grew more exuberant. The past few treasures had all sold for more than a thousand cubes or had been listed with such a high reserve price that over half of them hadn’t been sold. They were simply too expensive! Only someone truly in desperate need of them would purchase them.

“The first of the final nine is an Eternal weapon, a greataxe-type weapon. This is a weapon suitable for Earth-attribute cultivators to use. This weapon possesses tremendous power and the quintessence core within it is so strong that we rank this weapon as high-grade.” The silver-eyed woman produced a small black hatchet in her hands. As it rose into the air, it quickly expanded in size as it began to emanate waves of overpowering majesty, causing all of the cultivators in the great hall to feel a sense of tremendous pressure.

“This is an Eternal weapon, the ‘Three Extinctions Axe’. The reserve price is fifty thousand cubes. Let the bidding begin!”

All of the cultivators were silent. Even the Daolords on the top floor were silent.

And so...

No bids were placed.

It wasn’t that there was anything wrong with the treasure. It was that it was just too expensive! It was beyond what the vast majority of World-level cultivators could afford...and quite frankly, most World-level cultivators had no need of such a high quality Eternal weapon. They wouldn’t even be able to unleash much of its power! It was quite unlikely for a World-level cultivator to be able to unleash the full force of a high-grade Eternal weapon.

Thus, even the most powerful of World-level cultivators generally preferred to use low-grade Eternal weapons. Power only mattered if you could actually command it and wield it! If you couldn’t, what good would it do you?

“The second of the final nine...” The silver-eyed woman didn’t seem surprised.

During each treasure auction, the final nine treasures would be truly fine specimens that were worth at least ten thousand cubes of chaos nectar. Thus, there were rarely any bidders on them.

This time, there were bids on the fifth and sixth treasures, but the bids all came from the top floor.

The fifth treasure was a drop of blood that was the size of a man’s head. It glimmered with azure light and radiated with an aura of tremendous power. The silver-eyed woman simply described it as being a drop of essence-blood from a Chaos Godbeast, giving no further information about it. In the end, it was purchased by Daolord Waterwind for a price of 83,000 cubes!

The sixth treasure was a stone statue. The silver-eyed woman had given even less information about it: “This stone statue is filled with boundless mysteries. The reserve price is 80,000 cubes. Let the bidding begin.” In the end, Daolord Azuresky had purchased it at the reserve price.

The seventh treasure...no bids.

The eighth treasure...still no bids.

“Alright. We have now come to the final treasure of this treasure auction.” As the silver-eyed woman’s words came out, the atmosphere in the great hall began to change. The tension was so palpable and thick, you could cut it with a knife.

The eyes of all the cultivators had lit up. In fact, some were unable to even breathe.

“Can it be true...?”

Su Youji and Elder God Wilddog stared unblinkingly at the great hall below. Ning did the same.

“You won’t be disappointed.” The silver-eyed woman smiled. “The final treasure up for sale in this treasure auction...is a single Pseudo Samsara pill!”

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“It really is a Pseudo Samsara pill!?” A white-haired woman in a room on the second floor had an utterly terrifying look in her eyes.

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“What a wonderful coincidence. I just acquired a large amount of chaos nectar, and the very first treasure auction I go to has a Pseudo Samsara pill for sale. I have to have it.” In another room on the second floor, a handsome man dressed in fiery red robes had a similarly terrifying look of lust in his eyes.

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“Please don’t fight me over it. Please don’t fight me over it. Gotta have it. Gotta have it.” A wild-haired youth was muttering these words feverishly to himself, a look of madness in his eyes.

.....

“A Pseudo Samsara pill.” The silver-eyed woman smiled as she swept the entire great hall with her gaze. “I imagine all of you know what it does. Let me remind everyone of the rules pertaining to this pill! Only

those who have reached the level of full mastery as World-level experts can use Pseudo Samsara pills. This pill shall guide cultivators into finding their own Dao, letting them break through their bottleneck and become a Samsara Daolord.”

“What?! It allows World Gods to become Samsara Daolords?!?”

“A single pill?”

“The path of cultivation is an incredibly arduous one. How could a single pill have such monstrous power?” The cultivators hearing about Pseudo Samsara pills for the first time, especially the Elder Gods and the Ancestral Immortals, were utterly speechless.

Ji Ning, Su Youji, and Elder God Wilddog sighed in amazement from their room on the third floor. During the time they spent at the Badlands Court, they had learned that there was a very small chance that the final item for sale during each treasure auction would be a Pseudo Samsara pill! However, this truly was quite rare; less than one in a thousand treasure auctions would feature a Pseudo Samsara pill.

However, this was virtually the only chance World-level cultivators would have to purchase one of the these pills. They were never sold on the ordinary market. They only ever appeared during the treasure auction!

This was one of the reasons why so many World-level cultivators from neighboring territories had hastened here upon hearing that a treasure auction was going to be held soon.

When master-class World-level experts used the Pseudo Samsara pill, they would have a better than 99% chance of becoming Samsara Daolords. It was all but guaranteed.

“So pills like this really do exist. When I first heard of them, I really couldn’t believe it,” Ning murmured softly to himself.

“The endless primordial chaos is filled with endless possibilities.” Su Youji was uncharacteristically quiet.

“This is a pill that would drive any World God mad with lust,” Elder God Wilddog muttered.

Ning nodded slowly.

As for the Daolords on the top floor, they were actually sighing in a rather disappointed way.

“Pseudo Samsara pills. I wonder what that Eternal Emperor was even thinking? To be skilled in the Dao of Alchemy is one thing, but why does he have to spend so much of his time making these Pseudo Samsara pills?” Azure sky shook his head and chuckled. “Pseudo Samsara pills are ruinous things. If you rely on one to become a Samsara Daolord, it is almost guaranteed that you will forever be stuck at the first step. Even if you have absolutely incredible luck, you would at most reach the second step. That will be a hard limit. Samsara Daolords move between life and death with each step. Weak Daolords like them will never have a chance of improving ever again. If they keep their head down, nothing bad will happen to them, but if they get too uppity...”

“The second step? I’ve never personally encountered anyone who used a Pseudo Samsara pill who could reach the second step.” Waterwind shook his head.

“Look at the two of you go.” Daolord Badlands laughed. “Yes, you feel disdain towards those pills, but the vast majority of World-level experts never stood a chance of becoming Samsara Daolords to begin with. They don’t care how far they can progress after becoming Samsara Daolords; just becoming a Samsara Daolord is enough to satisfy them.”

The silver-eyed auction mistress continued, “Let me warn everyone once more of the Pseudo Samsara pill’s flaw. If you rely on it to become a Samsara Daolord, it’ll be very, very hard for you to make any further improvements afterwards.”

Flaw?

Who cared? Without it, most of them would never even be able to reach the Samsara Daolord to begin with.

“The reserve price is a hundred thousand cubes of chaos nectar. Let the bidding begin!” The silver-eyed woman announced.

“A hundred thousand cubes!” Instantly, a hoarse voice rang out from a room on the second floor.

“A hundred and ten thousand cubes!” An icy voice rang out from another nearby room.

“No...no...” The gray-robed, triangle-pupiled old man in the first room had a look of resentment and grief in his eyes. He didn’t have that much chaos nectar, just a hundred thousand cubes. He had gone to all of the treasure auctions in the surrounding territories after amassing this fortune, and on this trip, his third, he encountered a Pseudo Samsara pill. He made a bid at the reserve price, hoping no one would fight him for it, but...

Everyone who wanted a Pseudo Samsara pill knew exactly how much it was worth. Thus, whenever a treasure auction was being held, all the interested experts from the dozens of nearby territories would all hasten to the auction location.

This was one of the true reasons why treasure auctions were publicly announced ninety-nine years in advance.

The price continued to rise.

“A hundred and fifty thousand cubes!”

Each time one of these pills appeared, the price would be driven to a staggering level. Most Eternal weapons were worth just ten thousand cubes, while high-quality ones might be worth thirty or forty thousand cubes. Top-grade ones would generally go for around a hundred thousand cubes, and there were indeed some extremely powerful World-level experts who were capable of purchasing one or two of them. However, many of them saved their money instead...all for the sake of being able to afford a Pseudo Samsara pill!

Ning couldn’t help but sigh. Only someone who had been driven to despair would go so berserk over a pill.

God Emperor Blacklotus had an Eternal weapon, but it was merely a low-grade one that was worth twenty thousand cubes. He had no chance of getting a Pseudo Samsara pill at all, as they would usually go for more than 160,000 cubes during the treasure auctions.

“168,000 cubes. Any higher bids?” The silver-eyed woman spoke out. “Then...the bidding for the Pseudo Samsara pill...is over!”

Her final words came out very slowly as she scanned the crowd for any more bids. This was the only treasure which they didn’t take out to physically show the cultivators present.

“Ahahahah! It’s mine! MINE! Ahahahahah!” Frenzied laughter rang out from the second floor. The bidders for the pseudo Samsara Pill had all been located on the second floor, choosing to hide their identities from the masses.

“I finally have it.” The handsome, fiery-robed man had a look of excitement in his eyes. “I’ll train to become a Samsara Daolord right here in Waveshift City. I have ten thousand cubes of chaos nectar left. I can even buy a weak Eternal weapon for myself to use!”

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 20: [Quintessence Sword-Intent] – The First Stance

The treasure auction had come to an end!

After having experienced that great battle against God Emperor Blacklotus, Ji Ning had felt as though he now knew something of how the world worked...but now, he realized how truly vast the universe really was. There were many terrifying World-level experts skilled in formations or bugbeasts who could easily destroy him, to say nothing of Samsara Daolords.

“Let’s follow the plan.” Ning led Su Youji and Elder God Wilddog to move towards the other disciples of the Badlands Court. They jested and chatted amongst themselves as they headed back to the Court.

Swoosh.

Swoosh.

Swoosh.

Azuresky, Dracogod, Thousand Shadows, and Waterwind all began to depart as well. Azuresky and Thousand Shadows soared into the skies and left, while Dracogod was forced to use his legs to physically walk out of Waveshift City.

“Hmph.” Daolord Dracogod glanced coldly at Waterwind and Thousand Shadows as they soared into the skies. Thousand Shadows didn’t actually have the power to fly on this everworld by herself; it was Waterwind who was helping her do this.

“Thousand Shadows...that bitch. Hmph. All she can do is flatter and cozen up to Waterwind and the others. When the chance comes, I’ll slaughter you myself.” Daolord Dracogod then quickly hid the killing intent that had appeared in his eyes. He had given himself the name ‘Dracogod’, and getting a ‘dragonification fruit’ was an incredibly important part of his cultivation path. Alas, it had been seized by Daolord Thousand Shadows all those years ago.

He had many friends, true. But Daolord Thousand Shadows also had many friends of her own.

Daolord Dracogod deeply desired to kill Daolord Thousand Shadows. Alas, she was his equal in strength.

“She ruined my karmic luck! One day...” Daolord Dracogod strode through the land, quickly arriving at the spacetime transfer array and departing from the Badlands Territory.

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The Badlands Court. Within a quiet room inside the Water Curtain Home.

The Heavengazer Tower was located next to a prayer mat. Within the tower there was a golden leaf, which was itself an estate-world treasure.

Within the estate-world.

Whooooooosh. Waves gently lapped at the beach, caressing the sands before slowly retreating into the sea once more.

A white-robed Ning was seated on the beach in the lotus position, a blood-colored sword resting over his knees. He kept Violetjewel with him at all times so that he could be in constant communion with the sword’s quintessence core and the exalted sword-intent within it. As a result, Ning’s sword-arts were beginning to increasingly align with the core’s murderous intent.

The [Nameless] sword-art...

Although it only had seven stances, Ning could tell from these seven stances that the creator of the sword-art had to be at least at the same level as the creator of Violetjewel. Both were definitely peerless powers who were skilled in the Dao of the Sword.

The sword-intent of Violetjewel’s quintessence core was just as exalted as the sword-intent of the [Nameless] sword-art, even though these were two completely different interpretations of the Dao of the Sword.

“I’ll meditate on both paths.” Ning lowered his head to look at the blood-colored sword resting across his knees. “In the future, I’ll definitely become a Samsara Daolord as well. I’ll have to find my own path.”

The [Nameless] sword-art’s path wasn’t his path.

Nor was Violetjewel’s quintessence core’s path his path.

Every single Daolord had to find a completely unique path that belonged to them alone. In the Endless Territories, there were no creatures who had souls or memories that were absolutely identical. By this same principle, no two Daolords could ever have exactly the same Daos. Even if both walked the path of the Dao of the Sword, their paths still would not be identical.

“The [Nameless] sword-art’s strength lies in its balance! Its very first stance, the ‘Heartsword’ stance, is a testament to this,” Ning mused to himself. “Although Violetjewel doesn’t have an actual sword-art connected to it, it does have an exalted sword-intent that I can meditate on. From this, I can tell that its greatest strength lies in its offensive attack power!”

This estate-world was more than a million kilometers in size. It was a top-grade Chaos treasure which had originally belonged to Immortal Origination and was the sturdiest estate-treasure Ning had access to. He usually had his servants and retainers live within this estate-world, and it even had many other living beings who flourished within it.

Ning continued to meditate on the sword by the beach, occasionally striding across the waves to stand upon the surface of the ocean as he trained.

Sword-light flew everywhere with wild abandon, causing the waves around them to be annihilated.

Day by day...

Year by year...

Ning continued his research into the [Nameless] sword-art and Violetjewel's quintessence core. Every so often, he'd take a break and instead turn to researching the Daos of Water, Lightning, and Space. Sometimes he'd even go strolling about the world of ordinary mortals who lived within this treasure. The living beings in this world were divided up amongst six continents and many islands, and each continent held an enormous number of individuals. They even had their own various religions, with the most powerful figures having just barely reached the Pure Yang True Immortal level.

Two hundred years passed in the blink of an eye.

Atop an island in the sea.

"Flamefairy, we're bored senseless in this estate-world."

"Right! Flamefairy, when will Master lead us out into the outside world?"

Eleven Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were seated in a disorderly fashion, eating and drinking together. The most prominent figure within their ranks was Flamefairy Su Youji.

Ning generally kept the Flamefairy and Elder God Wilddog by his side. He had released many Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals from the prisonworld. Some had chosen to be stationed on the Windsorce Chaosworld, while nine of them had chosen to follow Ning in his adventures. They normally were stationed here within this estate-world.

"How should I know?" Flamefairy Su Youji pointed towards a distant, small island located far away in the depths of the ocean. "Master is living right there on that island, but neither I nor Wilddog would dare to go there and disturb him without being summoned. When Master wants to come to us, he will. Let's just keep waiting."

"Ugh."

"No choice but to wait."

These Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals truly were quite bored. They all had their own estate-worlds, and they had already spent countless ages in the prisonworld diverting themselves by living amongst the mortals of their own estate-worlds. What they really wanted was action and excitement.

BOOM!

Suddenly, a terrifying wave of power swept over from afar.

"What?!" Su Youji, Elder God Wilddog, and the other nine Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals simultaneously rose to their feet. They turned to stare towards that distant island.

Whoosh.

A bloody streak of sword-light soared into the skies, spreading out into a rippling wave of power that caused all of them to quake.

“This wave...” Su Youji was the strongest of the eleven, but even she was so terrified that her heart quailed.

“What’s going on?” The more powerful figures who lived on the six continents and many islands of this estate-world all turned to stare at the same location! Although they couldn’t see anything physically, they could sense an utterly exalted and supremely terrifying sword-intent rising towards the heavens. Although the sword-intent was limited to this estate-world, all of the living creatures within it felt that it was something that was truly supreme and beyond all other power.

After this day, quite a few new Sword Immortals began to arise from within this estate-world. In fact, quite a few of its citizens began to sail off into the seas in search of the source of that sword-intent. Alas, they were never able to find it.

“Master is coming.” Su Youji and the other ten all stared off into the distance.

A white-robed youth was striding across the waves, an ordinary-looking blood-colored sword on his back. He soon arrived at their island.

“Greetings, Master.” Su Youji and the other ten all bowed respectfully.

“Mm.” Ning nodded.

“We’ve spent five hundred years here at the Badlands Court,” Ning said. “My sword-arts have now reached a bottleneck. It is time for us to go out adventuring.”

Five hundred years in the Badlands Court actually translated into more than ten thousand years within this estate-world.

“Master, just now...?” Su Youji’s eyes were shining.

“I developed a sword-stance.” Ning chuckled.

Alas, it wasn’t the Great Firmament stance!

He had long ago reached a bottleneck in the [Nameless] sword-art. In recent years, Ning had turned most of his efforts towards understanding the quintessence core of Violetjewel. Today, he had developed a sword-art that had an incredibly powerful offensive potential. Ning called it the first stance of his [Sword Quintessence] – Blackmist stance!

“World God Blackmist...” Ning couldn’t help but sigh to himself.

He would never be able to forget how he met this man after he had left the Three Realms. He would never be able to forget the sight of World God Blackmist slowly transforming into a statue. He had named this stance the ‘Blackmist’ stance in order to memorialize this deceased World God.

The creation of the Blackmist stance was the final result of the ten thousand years of hard work and effort Ning had spent within this estate-world!

“In terms of killing power, this stance should be quite close to the power of the ‘Great Firmament’ stance of the [Nameless] sword-art. Because I based it off Violetjewel’s quintessence core, it’ll actually make it easier for me to summon some of the core’s power.” Just now, Ning had tested that stance out. He was now able to summon more than ten times as much power from Violetjewel’s quintessence core, and the power of his strike was definitely comparable to that of a master-class World God’s strike.

Thanks to the azureflower mist energy strengthening his divine body, his body was comparable to a World God’s body.

His sword-arts were comparable to an elite World God’s techniques.

With the ‘Blackmist’ stance activating a good amount of his Eternal weapon’s quintessence core...Ning was now qualified to battle against master-class World Gods.

“It’ll be hard for me to improve my sword-arts any further just by sitting here and studying on my own. It is time for me to leave this place.” Ning glanced at Su Youji and the others, then instructed, “Youji, Wilddog, Blacksun, the three of you shall follow me.”

“Yes.” The Flamefairy and Wilddog were quite calm, but Elder God Blacksun was absolutely overjoyed.

Whoosh.

Ning led the three in departing from this place.

Ning had purchased those three mighty golems during the treasure auction. One was meant for the Flamefairy while the other was meant for Wilddog. As for the third, Ning had chosen to let Elder God Blacksun to command it. Elder God Blacksun was one of the most powerful Elder God retainers Ning had under his command, and he was also a bit more honest and obedient than the others. Ning preferred subordinates who were able to follow orders.

“Youji.” They had returned to the Water Curtain Home inside the Badlands Court. “You can go and pay some visits to your friends in the Badlands Court. You can tell them that I am heading out towards the Allgod Estate.”

“The Allgod Estate?” Su Youji was startled.

“Yes.” Ning nodded.

“Alright. I’ll make sure the entire Badlands Court knows.” Su Youji laughed delightedly. She had far more friends here than Ning did, which was only natural; a woman of such charm and beauty would naturally be welcomed wherever she went.

“Also...I’m planning for us to leave three months from now,” Ning said.

“Understood.” Su Youji nodded.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 21: Allgod Estate

Three months later.

A white-robed youth and a fat man whose eyes brimmed with flames were striding shoulder-to-shoulder across the surface of a lake, advancing across the waves as they departed from the Badlands Court.

“Brother Ji Ning, you picked something of a bad time.” The pudgy man chatted to Ning as they continued their journey forwards. “Quite a few people came back to the Badlands Court to take part in the treasure auction, but once it ended all of them quickly headed out to go adventuring. If you had spread the word right after the treasure auction that you had chosen to head to the Allgod Estate, at least four or five World-level experts would’ve chosen to go with you. But you instead chose to wait for more than two hundred years!”

The pudgy man chuckled. “Most of the people who wanted to go out already have.”

This pudgy man was quite an amiable fellow, even though he looked rather ugly due to the jagged scars and tattoos that lined his face. His eyes brimmed with flames, and his skin was suffused with a faint red color as well. Even when he was smiling, he still looked quite frightening.

“I still have you, senior apprentice-brother Dragonbinder.” Ning laughed.

“I purchased a treasure during the auction and spent a bit of time binding it. I was just about to head out anyhow. Our timing was perfect,” the pudgy man said.

The two moved across the ground, their bodies flickering like illusions as they advanced nonstop.

Ning had waited three months for word of his journey to spread, but only a single member of the Badlands Court had chosen to journey with him – the pudgy fellow next to him, World God Dragonbinder!

They entered the spacetime transfer array and left the Badlands Everworld. They then boarded a flying ship, flew for several months, then finally reached the Allgod Estate.

The Allgod Chaosworld was an oceanic world. There were two great continents and a vast ocean that covered everything else. One continent held countless living beings while the other held the Allgod Estate.

Whoosh.

A cloud was floating through the skies. Ning and the pudgy man were standing atop the cloud, staring down at the vast world before them. They could vaguely make out the outlines of a towering edifice far off in the distance. That distant sight was enough to cause both Ning and World God Dragonbinder to feel breathless, as though they were staring upwards at something supreme.

“The Allgod Estate!” The pudgy man’s eyes blazed with fire as he stared at the great edifice. He said in a low voice, “Brother Ji Ning, we’ve been fairly relaxed on the way over. Now that we are about enter the Allgod Estate, though...I want to make a few things clear to you! Once we go in, we need to do exactly as we discussed. You can’t act rashly! If you do, then I’ll have to part ways with you.”

“Acting rashly in a place like this is suicide. Don’t worry, senior apprentice-brother Dragonbinder,” Ning said.

“Good.” The pudgy man nodded. In truth, he felt certain that Ning wouldn’t be so foolish. At the same time, he knew that unexpected things would sometimes happen! As a member of the Badlands Court,

he was naturally quite a talented figure. He hadn't trained for very long, but he had already become a master-class World God. If he was to lose his life due to an act of foolishness on the part of Ji Ning, how lamentable that would be!

"The Allgod Estate was created by Daolord Allgod," the pudgy man said. "Daolord Allgod was an incredibly powerful Daolord. Although he failed his Daomerge, based on what I've learned I believe that he was a thousand times more powerful than other Daolords who were on the Verge of the Daomerge."

"That much more powerful?" Ning was shocked. A thousand times?

This was insane!

Daolord Solesky himself had admitted that he was vastly inferior to Daolord Allgod. However, Ning didn't understand exactly how much more powerful Daolord Allgod had been. Even now, he could hardly believe what World God Dragonbinder was telling him. The difference in power was simply too great! If this was true, then it meant that Daolord Allgod had the power to easily slay other Daolords who were at the Verge.

"I'm not exaggerating. Although he failed his Daomerge, he once attacked and chased after an Eternal Emperor who had successfully completed his Daomerge. He pursued the man for multiple chaos cycles, and to this very day no one knows what happened to that Eternal Emperor." The pudgy man looked at Ning.

"He was really that powerful?!" Ning felt rather stunned. He only spent a brief period of time by Daolord Solesky's side and had spent most of his time at the Badlands Court in seclusion. Thus, he knew very little information regarding these mysterious, powerful figures. However, World God Dragonbinder was a true disciple of the Badlands Court who often conversed with his fellow cultivators. He knew quite a bit of 'secret' information.

"It is true. I once discussed this with our eldest disciple at the Court." World God Dragonbinder let out a sigh. "And...you should know that Daolords generally are afraid to try to enter the Allgod Estate."

The Allgod Estate was an extremely strange place.

30% of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals were able to survive it, 50% of World-level experts were able to survive it, but...of the Daolords who dared to enter it, less than 10% would be able to emerge! This was an incredibly high casualty rate, making it so that not many Daolords dared to even attempt it.

"He was simply way too powerful!" World God Dragonbinder looked at Ning and smiled. "Although he's a bit ruthless towards other Daolords, he's quite benevolent towards World-level experts, Elder Gods, and Ancestral Immortals. He left behind more than ten thousand treasuries at the 'Ten Thousand Mountains' alone! Come, it is time for us to enter."

"Alright." Ning smiled as well.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

As the two simultaneously charged downwards, they suddenly encountered a region of twisted space. Moments later, both of them vanished.

Ning could sense space twisting around him. Moments later, he reappeared in the air with World God Dragonbinder next to him.

“How beautiful.” Ning saw a long, winding series of majestic mountains located in front of him. The mountains were all interconnected and seemed to form a long, sinuous coiling dragon.

“The Ten Thousand Mountains of the Allgod Estate,” World God Dragonbinder said softly.

“Right.” Ning stared at them from afar as well.

There were countless mountains before them. At the end of the mountains there was a region of endless mist...and beyond the ‘endless’ mist there was an utterly dazzling, eye-catching estate of vast proportions. This estate was simply too vast. Even though they were very far away, they could still make out its details quite clearly.

“I can sense it...” Ning could sense the Mirrorsnow Painting within his Jindan region was calling out joyfully, having sensed a faint resonance nearby.

“It should be up ahead. According to what big brother Solesky said, it should be within the center of the Fog Sea.” Ning stared at the endless Fog Sea located past the great mountains.

The outermost layer of the Allgod Estate consisted of the Ten Thousand Mountains. There were exactly ten thousand mountains in this region!

The second layer was the Fog Sea!

The core region was the actual, towering edifice known as the Castrum Divinitus.

“Brother Ji Ning.” World God Dragonbinder looked at Ning. “Let’s try out the Ten Thousand Mountains first. After that, I’ll go to the Fog Sea by myself. You shouldn’t go there; it is far too dangerous a place for you.”

“Alright.” Ning nodded.

He had come here mainly because he wanted to acquire the Mirrorsnow Painting. Since the painting was located within the Fog Sea, he naturally had to enter it! However, he knew that World God Dragonbinder was looking out for his best interests. According to what the vast majority of cultivators had experienced, although Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals had a good chance of surviving the mountain region, they would almost certainly die upon entering the Fog Sea.

However, World-level experts stood a very good chance of surviving the Fog Sea.

“Let’s go,” World God Dragonbinder said.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

The two flew through the air towards the nearest mountain.

Based on what past cultivators had discovered, there were two fairly safe paths that could be followed through the Ten Thousand Mountains.

After the two landed atop the mountain, they began to advance through its forests. Watery waves spread out in constant ripples around them as they kept a close eye on their surroundings.

They travelled through one mountain after another.

They travelled cautiously and didn't move too quickly. More than ten days passed in the blink of an eye, and they saw a number of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals on their journey. However, all of them were so frightened upon seeing Ning and Dragonbinder that they immediately fled. Naturally, the two of them paid these minor figures no heed.

"Ji Ning, did you know? Every single mountain here holds the grave of a World-level expert," World God Dragonbinder said.

"I've heard." Ning nodded. "According to the stories, after Daolord Allgod failed his Daomerge he began to wander through the Endless Territories as he searched for cultivators who had committed many grave sins. More than ten thousand World-level experts died by his hand! Every single mountain is the rest spot for at least one of those evil cultivators.

"My guess is that Daolord Allgod wanted to kill as many sinners as he could to accumulate more karmic virtue, hoping that he might be able to find a way to survive." World God Dragonbinder sighed. "But once you fail your Daomerge, your death becomes an inevitability. Many powerful experts have tried using various methods to stay alive...but alas, all of those efforts came to naught."

The two continued to walk while chatting.

"Eh?"

"Eh?"

Ning and World God Dragonbinder both came to a halt. They raised their head to stare off into the distance. The forest here was blocking their vision, but they were able to see a half-opened door that was covered with some divine runes and inscriptions.

"Is that the treasury?" Ning and Dragonbinder exchanged a curious glance.

Every single mountain of the Ten Thousand Mountains held the corpse of a sinful cultivator as well as a treasury! This meant that there were ten thousand treasuries here...but the treasuries were tightly guarded and not easily accessed. This mountain, however, had a great gateway carved into it, and the runes covering the gateway were even more profound than the ones used to forge Dao weapons. Clearly, this had to be a treasury!

"Let's go in and take a look," Dragonbinder sent mentally. "We've found the treasury, but we won't necessarily be able to take it with us. Plus, the 'real' treasury might be inside there."

"Alright. Let's go." Ning carefully scrutinized the great door as well."