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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 22: Treasury

The great door was sixty meters tall and completely black. It was covered with complex silver runes that emanated ripples of might.

Ji Ning and World God Dragonbinder moved to stand directly in front of the great door.

“This is my first trip to the Allgod Estate.” World God Dragonbinder let out a sigh. “Just by looking at this door, I can tell that the legends of Daolord Allgod were probably all true! How could a mere door be this complex and profound? This is just one of ten thousand treasures located within these mountains, and yet its restrictive spells are incredibly complex.”

“Let’s go in,” Ning said with a laugh.

“Right.” World God Dragonbinder nodded.

The two advanced together into the deep, dark hallway past the door.

Rumble...

Ning glanced backwards. As expected, the great door had already closed behind them.

Based on the information Ning had previously purchased, there were ten thousand mountains here and every single mountain had a treasury within it. If anyone passed through a treasury door, the door would temporarily swing shut behind them so as to bar any other cultivators from entering! If Ning and World God Dragonbinder failed in acquiring the treasures located in the treasury, the door would swing open and release the two of them.

If they successfully acquired the treasures, then the entire treasury region would crumble apart and reveal a different hallway that would grant them safe departure.

“There is light up ahead.” Ning sped up just slightly.

“There shouldn’t be any traps.” World God Dragonbinder was quite excited as well.

The two quickly reached the end of this first hallway. Before them was a spacious region that was roughly thirty kilometers in size and filled with a layer of blurry light.

“This is the treasury region.” World God Dragonbinder revealed a look of excitement. “This treasury region is still intact. That means it still holds its treasures.”

“The treasures are hard to win. Less than one in ten thousand cultivators will succeed in their attempts.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh. Although the trials were quite difficult, so long as the door remained open and a steady stream of cultivators continued to enter this place, sooner or later there would be a successful trial-taker.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

Ning and World God Dragonbinder entered the treasury region of blurry light. Both of them grew more cautious as they did so, because this place had restrictive spells which had been emplaced by Daolord Allgod. Once those spells were triggered, even Daolords might perish!

“A corpse.”

Ning stared at the very center of the treasury region. A stone coffin was located there, and a corpse could be made out inside of it. Above the stone coffin hovered a globe of light.

Thanks to their intelligence reports, both Ning and Dragonbinder knew that the light globes were where the treasures were stored! The ten thousand treasures in the mountains were all different. Some had a single powerful treasure, such as an Eternal weapon, while others had eight or nine different Dao weapons. Some even had extremely formidable techniques, forbidden arts, divine abilities, or special legacies...

In short, everything was possible.

“You try first, senior apprentice-brother Dragonbinder,” Ning said.

“Alright, I’ll try first.” Dragonbinder nodded as he strode forward. When he reached a distance of three hundred meters from the stone coffin, the globe of light expanded in size to instantly become more than three hundred meters large!

Everything within that region transformed into a blur. Ning could no longer see World God Dragonbinder at all.

“I wonder which treasury this is.” Ning waited quietly to one side. The reason he let World God Dragonbinder make the first attempt was because Dragonbinder was quite powerful! Even if Ning unleashed all of his power, he still would probably be forced to flee in the face of Dragonbinder’s power. Dragonbinder was a true master-class World God, after all, and he had some special treasures of his own. He was definitely a match for the Starlord of Fogstone and arguably even a bit more powerful.

A period of time passed, enough to boil a kettle of tea.

“Whew.” World God Dragonbinder emerged from that region of blurred space. The blurred space quickly shrank in size as the light was retracted back into the globe of light.

“Ugh.” World God Dragonbinder shook his head. “That was ridiculously hard. Way too hard! Even if I spent another chaos cycle training for it, I still wouldn’t have any chance of taking over this treasury.”

“What was the trial?”

Every single treasury had its own trials as set down by Daolord Allgod. You would only gain the contents of the treasury if you succeeded in passing the trial. Everyone had to follow the rules of the game which Daolord Allgod had set down! Perhaps some ancient powers who had become Eternal Emperors might be able to forcibly plunder a few treasures, but those figures generally disdained from acting in such a manner.

In addition, Daolord Allgod’s fame was so great that even many of those Eternal powers were afraid of him.

"It pertained to the mysteries of the Dao of Fire." World God Dragonbinder explained, "Although I'm quite talented in Fire and in Water, I'm not even close to being able to solve this trial."

"Fire?" Ning just stared.

Although he had some insights into Fire, he was still quite weak in this regard. He hadn't even mastered the Heavenly Dao of Fire! To pass Daolord Allgod's trial was quite unlikely.

Although Daolord Allgod gave trials to Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals which were easier than the trials he gave to World-level experts, Ning clearly wouldn't be able to succeed in this particular trial. If it was a trial over the Dao of the Sword, Ning would've given it a shot, but Fire?

"I'm very weak in the Dao of Fire." Ning shook his head. "I'll let one of my retainers give it a shot."

"Oh, Youji?" World God Dragonbinder grinned. It had been Flamefairy Su Youji who had informed the others that Ji Ning was heading to the Allgod Estate.

"Yes." Ning nodded, then willed her to emerge. Whoosh. An incomparably beautiful woman dressed in fiery robes appeared by his side. It was Su Youji, the Flamefairy.

"Master." Su Youji revealed a smile, then glanced at World God Dragonbinder. She said in a rather unhappy manner, "Senior Dragonbinder, you accompanied my master to this place but refused to let come out as well."

"That's because we wanted to wait until we could give you something nice, such as right now." World God Dragonbinder grinned at her.

"Something nice?" Su Youji was puzzled.

"Youji." Ning pointed at the distant light globe which hovered above that stone coffin. "We are in one of the treasury regions of the Ten Thousand Mountains of the Allgod Estate."

"A treasury? I heard that Daolord Allgod left behind ten thousand treasures." Su Youji looked at the globe of light, a heated look in her eyes. She then glanced at Ning. "Master, you let me out because...?"

"Senior apprentice-brother Dragonbinder gave it a shot but failed. The trials of this treasury pertain to the Dao of Fire," Ning explained. "You are quite skilled in the Dao of Fire. You can be considered one of the most elite Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals in this regard, and you are very close to becoming a World-level expert yourself. You might have a chance at passing this trial."

Su Youji began to grow rather excited.

She had heard others speak of this place before...

Every single trial in the Allgod Estate was incredibly difficult for World-level experts, but they were generally a bit easier for Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. However, the trials were all different in nature. A Trial of Fire would test everyone in the Dao of Fire, whereas a Trial of Lightning would test everyone in the Dao of Lightning.

"Should I give it a try?" Su Youji looked at Ning.

"Go." Ning nodded.

Su Youji eagerly and nervously walked forward towards the stone coffin. Once she reached three hundred meters of it, the globe of light once more expanded to completely encompass her within it.

“Ji Ning, do you think Youji will be able to acquire the treasures?” World God Dragonbinder asked.

“She should have at least a 20% to 30% chance,” Ning posited. After Daolord Solesky had given Su Youji some guidance, she had improved quite dramatically. She was just a hair away from becoming a World-level expert and could break through at any moment. Given how talented she was in the Dao of Fire, it was likely that she stood a very good chance.

Time continued to pass, one minute at a time.

“She’s been inside for longer than me,” World God Dragonbinder said expectantly.

“Yes.” Ning nodded. He was rather excited as well. It would be wonderful if the treasury’s contents ended up in one of their hands. If the treasures Su Youji acquired were of limited use to her but of tremendous use to World God Dragonbinder, she could trade them to him.

Whoosh. The Flamefairy suddenly emerged from that blurry region. The field of light quickly retracted and returned to the globe.

“I failed.” Su Youji looked at Ning, a hint of disappointment and helplessness in her eyes. “I was so close! Just a bit more and I would’ve succeeded. If I had just slightly deeper insights into the Dao of Fire, I would’ve succeeded. Unfortunately, when that happens I’ll probably reach the World level.”

“The Daolord’s trials must include a different component as well,” World God Dragonbinder said.

“Mm. Perhaps. Based on the records I read, less than one in ten thousand cultivators will succeed in passing one of these trials. Most likely, you have to have certain special insights into the Dao of Fire in order to succeed.” Su Youji nodded.

Ning nodded as well. “Now you two have gotten me interested. I want to give it a shot as well.”

“You, Master? But your Dao of Fire...?” Su Youji looked at Ning. She had followed Ning for some time now and knew him to be very weak in the Dao of Fire.

“I can at least give it a try, right?” Ning also knew that he was quite weak in the Dao of Fire, but he had never tried one of these trials before. He wanted to at least experience it for himself. It was quite safe; no one had ever lost their lives in the treasuries before.

Whoosh.

Ning stepped into the range of the stone coffin as well. That globe of light emitted a large wave of light and quickly encompassed a region of three hundred meters with it.

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 23: The Treasury’s Trial

Ji Ning was transported into the blurry region of light.

“Eh?” Ning stared in surprise. In front of him were a series of walls of light that protected the light globe above the coffin. There were nine walls of light in total, and each of them were covered with flowing, fiery-red runes.

“Pass through all nine restrictive spells and you shall acquire the treasure.” A booming voice rang out by Ning’s ears.

Ning was puzzled.

Where did that voice come from? Was it the voice of Daolord Allgod, or was it the voice of a treasure spirit?

“Who cares.” It didn’t really matter. All Ning needed to know was that he had to be on his best behavior in a place which had been established by a Daolord of such incredible power.

“Pass through all nine restrictive spells? How?”

Ning stared at the first light barrier and the fiery red runes flowing atop it.

“Doesn’t seem that hard.” Ning quickly came to understand how the barrier worked. He pressed his palm onto the light barrier, filling it with his Immortal energy. Because Ning had already comprehended its mysteries, he was easily able to master it and take control over it.

“Disperse.” Ning willed the light barrier to disperse. Whoosh. The first light barrier completely vanished, leaving eight more behind.

Ning once more advanced forward. The second barrier was also one covered by divine runes pertaining to the Dao of Fire, but they were clearly much more complicated. Ning just stood there, blinking several times as he stared at those runes.

“I had no idea the difference between me and Su Youji was this huge,” Ning mumbled to himself. He was both an Elder God and an Ancestral Immortal, and so he was given the exact same trial as the one Su Youji had been given. She had said that she was ‘very close’ to succeeding, which meant that she had probably made it to the final light barrier and was very close to solving it.”

“I...can’t even understand the runes on this eighth barrier.” Ning shook his head. “I really am weak in the Dao of Fire.”

Despite this setback, Ning wasn’t too disappointed.

Cultivation was a path filled with choices! If you chose to focus your efforts in areas you were skilled in, you would be able to advance much more quickly and even find it easier to break through certain bottlenecks. Ning was best suited to the Dao of the Sword. Even Lu Dongbin and Patriarch Subhuti had seen this in him all those years ago. Although Ning had made fairly quick breakthroughs in heartforce as well, heartforce remained a matter of the heart. Even after experiencing the great war that had shaken the Three Realms, Ning’s heartforce was merely at the fourth stage. His Dao of the Sword, however, had advanced quite rapidly. He was now just one step away from sixth-stage swordforce, the ‘Sword World’ level. He had even invented a first stance for his [Quintessence Sword-Intent], the ‘Blackmist’ stance, and this stance was nearly as powerful as the third stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, the ‘Great Firmament’ stance.

The power of this technique was so great that it was superior to some weaker Sword Worlds!

All Sword Immortals trained in the Dao of the Sword, but no two Sword Worlds were the same. Some were dominating, others were insidious. Even two cultivators who trained in the exact same technique would end up with their own different insights into it. As for the 'Great Firmament' stance, it would result in one of the most powerful types of Sword World.

"The Dao of the Sword is my true Dao. Fire?" Ning shook his head and laughed.

"Uh..." Ning's face suddenly went blank.

"That voice said that I had to 'pass through all nine restrictive spells'." Ning glanced at the eight light barriers remaining. "It just said 'pass through'. It didn't say how I had to pass through."

"When I bind and take control over the restrictive spells, I can disperse them and pass through them." A strange light flickered in Ning's eyes. "But...if I forcibly break through them, I would also be able to pass through."

There were two ways of dealing with any formation.

The first method was to understand the formation and then break it down on a technical level. This was what Ning had done with the initial light barrier, and it was the most common solution.

The second method was just to overpower it with raw force!

It didn't matter how profound a formation was if an enemy could rip it apart using raw, overwhelming power!

"Would I be able to breach a formation left behind by Daolord Allgod?" Ning mused to himself.

He pondered for a moment, then he bowed respectfully and called out, "Revered Daolord, this junior is not capable of passing through these nine barriers through mastering and dispersing them. However, this junior would like to be so bold as to attempt breaking through using raw power."

After speaking, Ning turned his gaze towards the eight light barriers.

"Break!" Ning thrust out his palm, forming a streak of light at the tip of his fingers. The streak of light had the vague form of a sword, and it was filled with Ning's azureflower mist energy. Ning even activated the Seventh Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand] in his two hands, making his fingers comparable to Dao weapons.

Boom!

As Ning struck out, the second barrier of light trembled then shattered apart.

"It broke?" Ning was overjoyed. However, he wasn't in a hurry to press the attack, instead pausing for a brief moment to see if there were any repercussions.

Nothing happened.

"It seems as though using raw power to break through the formation isn't considered a violation of the Daolord's decree."

“Let me continue.” Ning took another step forward, his right hand quickly executing the savage ‘Blood Drop’ stance as he sent it stabbing towards a light barrier. Whoosh! It struck out like a sharp sword, stabbing into the light barrier. The light barrier trembled twice, then shattered apart.

Ning laughed.

His power was nothing to joke about. With the azureflower mist energy reinforcing him, he was every bit as strong as a World God! The power of this blow was as strong as a blow from an actual World God...but of course, this was merely the seventh barrier.

“I still wonder where this ‘azureflower region’ formed by the merging of the Nine Chaos Seals came from.” Ning felt increasingly amazed by how unearthly powerful this technique was. Without it, he would at most have the body of a half-step World God. Even with Violetjewel, he would be just barely comparable to a normal World God at best. He wouldn’t even be a match for an elite World God! Now that the azureflower mist energy was reinforcing his body, he was definitely as physically strong as a World God. With Violetjewel in hand, he was able to give master-class World Gods a run for their money.

“I wonder how powerful I will be when I become a World God.” Ning fantasized about it for a moment, then returned to the matter at hand.

“Time to continue.” Ning once more struck out, attacking the sixth barrier. However, this one was clearly much harder to penetrate. Ning wasn’t able to breach it with his first strike and needed to hack at it multiple times before succeeding.

“I’ll use my sword, I guess.” Ning waved his hand, producing Violetjewel.

“Break!” He stabbed out with his sword, activating a hint of its quintessence core as he did so.

Hiss!

The sword easily stabbed straight into that barrier of light.

“Again!”

“And again!”

Ning stepped forward one step at a time. With Violetjewel in hand, his strikes were now much more powerful. This was a formation meant to test Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals. Ning naturally found it quite easy to penetrate. Even without using the Blackmist stance, he was still able to breach the seven of the nine barriers.

“The eighth barrier?” Ning once more stabbed out with his sword. This time, however, he failed.

“Hmph.” Ning solemnly held Violetjewel in his hands...then suddenly lashed out, transforming it into a bloody shadow of sword-light. Violetjewel left a streak of terrifying, bloody red light in its wake as it pierced forward. This was the power of its quintessence core! Violetjewel itself was covered in bloody light that radiated an aura of astonishing might.

[Quintessence Sword-Intent], first stance – Blackmist stance.

Whoosh!

The bloody sword-light stabbed straight through the eighth barrier, causing it to crumble.

“Just one left.” Ning didn’t hesitate at all, once more striking out with his ultimate attack. The azureflower mist energy made Ning’s sword far faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos, while the quintessence core of the sword made this Eternal weapon irresistibly sharp! It was very sharp, very powerful, and incomparably fast. This blow would’ve been able to easily shatter a chaosworld apart. Even if the Solar Star or the Lunar Star were in front of Ning, they would have been pierced through by this blow.

Boom!

When the tip of the sword slammed against the ninth barrier, the barrier began to tremble violently. Ripples shuddered over its surface as though a rock had fallen into a pool of water...and yet, it did not break.

“I’m still a bit too weak?” Ning was stunned.

His blows were now incredibly powerful thanks to his own great strength and the fact that he had an Eternal weapon.

“I told you to break!” Ning once more struck out with his most powerful killing blow. Although the ninth barrier shuddered violently, it was clear that Ning’s blows were just a bit too weak to break it.

“Eh?!” Ning frowned. This was already the most powerful sword-strike he was capable of mustering.

“I guess I’ll have to find a way to strengthen the power of that blow.” Ning immediately stepped back, moving to stand just within the three hundred meter radius of the blurry light region.

Whoosh. A pair of azure wings appeared behind Ning’s back, crackling with electric light. These were the ‘Thunderlight Wings’ which Ning had purchased during the treasure auction. The wings used lightning as their energy source and sword-light to tear through all obstructions, allowing the user to move at incredible speeds.

“Attack!”

The wings trembled, instantly sending Ning hurtling through the torn layers of space and allowing him to move at tremendous speed as he moved towards the ninth light barrier like a streak of light himself.

Cultivators needed a bit of distance to build up speed as well. Long-distance flying speed and short-distance dodging speed were two completely different things. It was extremely difficult for one to instantly unleash all of his power and speed! Three hundred meters simply wasn’t enough. Ning had to use the Thunderlight Wings to build up enough speed to surpass the limits of the Heavenly Daos. Without it, Ning would perhaps only be able to move at 60% of his normal speed.

“Break!” As Ning charged out, he once more struck forward with his Eternal weapon!

A sword’s attack speed was extremely important.

Even a pebble that moved at the speed of light could cause tremendous damage. By the same principle, a sword that moved 30% faster than it previously did could easily cause more than double the amount of damage! If Ning just struck out from point-blank distance, there was no way for him to increase the speed of his sword. Thus, he was forced to resort to the most primitive of options...fly forward at high speed and borrow from his own speed to deliver a full-force blow. This instantly allowed his sword to move 20% or 30% faster than before.

BOOM!!! Ning's terrifyingly sharp Eternal weapon struck out like a bloody blur. Although it paused momentarily, in the end it still pierced straight through the light barrier.

BANG!!!! The final light barrier disintegrated.

The light globe above the stone coffin was now within arm's reach!

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 24: Formation Spirit

Ji Ning looked at the globe of light hovering above the coffin. He couldn't help but feel slightly excited; this was a treasury left behind by Daolord Allgod, after all! He really was quite lucky to have encountered a treasury so soon after entering the Allgod Estate.

Whoosh. Ning reached out with his hand, touching the light globe with his fingers.

"Eh?" Ning's face changed. He sent his fingers through the light globe two more times, completely confused. "Nothing? There's nothing inside?"

When his fingers touched the light globe, they went straight through the globe as though the globe didn't even exist. There really was nothing inside.

Rumble...

Suddenly, a beam of light descended out of nowhere, materializing next to the stone coffin into the shape a white-robed old man.

Although Ning was quite surprised, he was able to keep calm. This was because he knew exactly how powerful the restrictive spells Daolord Allgod had left behind. It was capable of easily slaying most Daolords; if the formation wanted him dead, he had no chance of fighting back at all! However, countless cultivators throughout countless chaos cycles had ventured through these treasuries. There was no danger here whatsoever! No one had ever lost their lives while trying to gain a treasure from within a treasury.

"An Elder God?" The white-robed elder glanced at Ning. The old man emanated an aura of natural majesty and prestige, but he chuckled softly as he looked at Ning. "Can you tell me your name?"

"Darknorth." Ning looked at the elder. "Who are you, senior?"

"The formation-spirit of the Ten Thousand Mountains. My master once gave me a name, 'Myriad Mountains'," the old man said.

"Formation-spirit?" Ning was surprised.

It was quite normal for treasures to give birth to treasure-spirits. However, it was incredibly rare for powerful formations to gain sentience as well. For example, the ancient spacetime transfer arrays that were spread throughout the various territories of the primordial chaos had existed for countless chaos cycles, but Ning had never heard of any of them gaining sentience. Similarly, although some incredibly powerful formations would appear during various treasure auctions, Ning had never heard of any of them possessing sentience.

“Is it really that surprising? Master lay down three formations in total: the Ten Thousand Mountains Formation, the Fog Sea Formation, and the Allgod Estate Formation. He infused all three with his most profound insights into formations, and all three of us gained sentience.” The old man looked at Ning. “Someone on your level cannot possibly even imagine how truly powerful Master was. You might’ve met some Samsara Daolords in the past, but don’t even try to judge Master by their yardstick. They aren’t worthy! Only a Samsara Daolord who has pursued an Eternal Emperor after sending them fleeing can be discussed in the same breath as my master.”

Although countless years had passed, the spirit of this formation was still filled with the utmost of pride in his master.

“Understood.” Ning nodded.

If you boasted while having nothing to back it up, others would mock you. However, Daolord Allgod was so powerful that even Daolord Solesky was in awe of him and admitted inferiority before his prowess. Even Daolord Badlands would sigh in awe when discussing Daolord Allgod with his subordinates and juniors. Clearly, Daolord Allgod had been so awe-inspiring a figure in life that even now, after having died countless ages ago, his fame continued to resonate with later generations of cultivators.

“There’s no need for me to wax on any longer regarding how almighty Master was. Once you become a Daolord, you’ll understand,” the white-robed elder said.

“Me? A Daolord?” Ning laughed. “Why do you have such confidence in me, senior?”

“You clearly are just an Elder God, but you are capable of unleashing the power of a master-class World God.” The formation-spirit sighed. “It would be very easy for you to kill weak World Gods. An Elder God capable of easily killing most World Gods! There are very, very few monsters such as you. Many people will have a chance to encounter a Samsara Daolord in their lifetimes, but meeting a monster like you is incredibly rare.”

“Monsters like you generally are blessed with tremendous luck. Based on what I know, roughly 80% of people like you end up becoming Samsara Daolords,” the formation-spirit said.

“Oh? Eighty percent?” Ning nodded slowly.

In the Three Realms, there was a belief in ‘karmic luck’. Luck was an ephemeral, fleeting thing. No cultivator had ‘fixed’ luck, as luck could often change. For example, you might be born into an incredibly good family with your parents both being powerful Immortals or Fiendgods. Someone born into a situation like this could be said to be born into a tremendously lucky situation. However, if this person ended up becoming a silkpants wastrel who didn’t work hard in cultivation, his karmic luck would begin to decline.

Ji Ning, for example. He was reincarnated into a decent family and with the Nuwa Painting, and so it could be said that he was born with fairly decent luck. After he gained the legacy of Daoist Threelives, his karmic luck became even better.

Every single person had to fight for their own karmic luck.

However, the karmic luck of the Three Realms was quite weak compared to the overwhelming power of the primordial chaos. Ning was now fighting to gain the karmic luck of the Endless Territories! There were some World-level cultivators who would massacre the living creatures of many chaosworlds, causing great sin to accrue upon them. Daolord Allgod had once chased after and slaughtered countless great sinners, resulting in more and more karmic luck and karmic blessings being bestowed upon him. Karmic virtue and karmic sin existed in the Endless Territories...and so too did karmic luck!

In the Three Realms, three people gained the Nine Chaos Seals – Nuwa, Ji Ning, and Daoist Three Purities. All of them gained tremendous karmic luck as a result. If it wasn't for the Nine Chaos Seals, Ning wouldn't be able to easily slay weak World Gods as a mere Elder God!

"However, on the path of cultivation, either you advance forward or you slowly fall behind." The formation-spirit looked at Ning. "My master was even more monstrously talented than you are. Alas, he still failed in his Daomerge. He died and his Dao faded away. Remember to treasure every single scrap of karmic luck you come across."

"Thank you for your words of wisdom." Ning nodded.

"Actually, all of the treasures here in the Ten Thousand Mountains are empty." The elderly formation-spirit looked at Ning. "I decide what treasures are to be awarded to those who pass the trials. Master left me with many treasures and decreed that I can teleport any of them into the globe of light. He certainly didn't want to be bothered with such minor matters."

Ning finally understood.

"In this treasury, I had originally intended the light globe to be filled with an idol of fire that was filled with the mysteries of the Dao of Fire." As the elderly formation-spirit spoke, he waved his hand and produced a palm-sized fiery idol. This idol had eight faces, some beautiful, some ugly, some stern. The idol was covered with countless mysterious runes.

"However..."

"Every single Elder God who wishes to try and break the treasury formations here in the Ten Thousand Islands has to have at least the power of a master-class World God. If they do, then they can succeed." The elderly formation-spirit looked at Ning. "Every single monstrously talented figure such as yourself is qualified to receive a treasure...but of course, you have to find a treasury first."

Ning nodded.

"However, each person will only have one such opportunity."

"On your very first trip here, you defeated a barrier spell through raw power. As a result, the seeds of good karma have been sown between us! However, you'll find that you will no longer be able to break through any of the other barrier spells using raw power," the elderly formation-spirit said.

“Understood.” Ning said in surprise, “But senior, you spoke of ‘sowing the seeds of good karma’. Although I feel confident in my powers, you are the formation-spirit of the Ten Thousand Mountains. Can it be that there is something you wish Darknorth to do, senior?”

The elderly formation-spirit said, “There is indeed one thing. However, I won’t force you to do it; I merely hope that you can help.”

“Please let me know what you wish me to do, senior.” Ning was puzzled.

“My master had a hated foe.” A savage light flickered through the elderly formation-spirit’s eyes, and a murderous aura permeated his voice. “Master pursued his foe for many years, spending enormous amounts of effort in his attempt to kill him. Alas, in the end he wasn’t able to do so. His foe ended up fleeing.”

Ning was stunned. “Senior, are you speaking of that Eternal Emperor he pursued?”

“Yes. The Eternal Emperor.” The formation-spirit explained, “His name was Emperor Melobo.”

“Emperor Melobo?” Ning tasted the name. The name felt foreign, alien.

“According to what Badlands told me, Emperor Melobo has already returned.” The elderly formation-spirit laughed coldly. “My master chased him all the way into the endless darkness, where he hid himself from my master’s sight. He must have returned only after learning that my master died.”

Although Ning was surprised that Daolord Badlands was apparently acquainted with the formation-spirit, he couldn’t help but instead first ask, “Senior, are you asking me to deal with this Eternal Emperor in the future?”

“I am.” The elderly formation-spirit nodded.

Ning was speechless. “Senior, you think too highly of me.”

Eternal Emperors were eternal figures who had succeeded in their Daomerge! Daolord Allgod had died countless years ago but Emperor Melobo was still alive and well.

Daolord Allgod had chased after Emperor Melobo for countless years but had been unable to slay him. In other words, there wasn’t an enormous difference in power between the two. Given how much time had passed, Emperor Melobo had to have grown more powerful.

“Haha, I’m just planting seeds to sprout in the future. I don’t expect all of them to blossom.” The elderly formation-spirit explained, “In addition, Emperor Melobo is an enemy of the entire Dao Alliance! You came here with World God Dragonbinder of the Badlands Court. Given that he trusts you, I imagine you should be a member of the Dao Alliance as well. There’s no way a monstrously talented genius like you would betray them for our enemies.”

“What is a ‘Dao Alliance’?” Ning was rather dazed now.

“An alliance which encompasses virtually all of the cultivators of the Endless Territories.” The elderly formation-spirit looked at Ning. “Daolord Badlands is a member as well, and long ago the seeds of good karma were sown between the two of us as well. Haha...of the many seeds that I have sown, his has been the most illustrious one to date. I know all the disciples of the Badlands Court. Given that you

came alongside World God Dragonbinder, you should also be a member of the Dao Alliance. Are you a member of the Badlands Court or...?"

"Vastheaven Palace," Ning said.

Daolord Solesky was on very good terms with Daolord Badlands, and they were willing to meet each other in public. This meant they were probably on the same side.

However, this 'Dao Alliance' sounded quite powerful. An alliance comprising almost all the cultivators of the Endless Territories? What an extravagant claim.

"Ah." The elderly formation-spirit nodded. "I've heard Badlands speak of Vastheaven Palace before. Yes, it is indeed part of the Dao Alliance as well. I'm not surprised you haven't heard of the Dao Alliance, as you are still too young and weak. Even amongst World Gods, 99% of them will have never heard of the Dao Alliance! Only the truly illustrious World-level experts will be accepted into the Dao Alliance, as the alliance is primarily composed of Samsara Daolords. I expect World God Dragonbinder has perhaps heard of the Dao Alliance."

"The mysteries of the Endless Territories are not for someone like you to comprehend. However, there are some dangers that are aimed at all cultivators...and Emperor Melobo is one of them." The elderly formation-spirit looked at Ning.

"But enough of that. Once you become a World-level expert, your clan or sect will inform you of some of our mysteries. In addition, my information is a bit outdated." The elderly formation-spirit nodded. "Well, then. What treasure do you want?"

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 25: The Nine Secret Arts – Secret Art of Thunder

"You've passed the trial. You deserve a treasure." The elderly formation-spirit looked at Ji Ning. "I have many treasures. Which treasure do you desire the most? If I have it, I'll give it to you."

Ning had been still musing about this 'Dao Alliance'. Upon hearing the formation-spirit's question, he turned his attention to the treasury. Hesitating slightly, he asked, "Do you have any scrolls of the Mirrorsnow Painting?"

"I do not." The elderly formation-spirit shook his head. Daolord Allgod had left behind many treasures, but the Mirrorsnow Painting was not one of them.

"Oh..." Ning continued to ponder.

What treasure? What treasure did he need? The opportunity to choose a treasure was a priceless one. Many thoughts flitted through Ning's mind. After having experienced a treasure auction, Ning now knew of many more treasures than he had in the past.

"I guess I was wrong to make that suggestion. You don't even know what treasures I have. How about this...what are you skilled in?" The formation-spirit chuckled. "Aside from the Dao of the Sword."

"I'm most skilled in the Dao of the Sword. Aside from that, I'm also skilled in lightning and in water," Ning said.

“Master’s title was ‘Allgod,’” the elderly formation-spirit explained, “Precisely because he was skilled in almost everything! Alchemy, formations...he was a master of many Daos. Unfortunately, he truly wasn’t that skilled in the Dao of the Sword. He was, however, extremely skilled in the Dao of Lightning! However, you’ll be fighting against enemies well above your level. Lightning-attribute techniques won’t be that useful to you.”

His old face wrinkled as he frowned. Clearly, he was pondering this question.

“I have it!” The formation-spirit looked at Ning, then reached out with his hand and generated a spatial ripple from his palm. Moments later, a jade slip appeared.

“This jade slip now belongs to you.” The formation-spirit passed it over to Ning, sending it floating through the air.

“Also, the treasure that was originally assigned to this treasury...” The elderly formation-spirit tossed out a second item, a fiery idol. “This is yours as well. My master once slew a vile Daolord who trained in the Dao of Fire and took this idol from him. If you were to sell it, you’d be able to sell it for one or two thousand cubes of chaos nectar. As for the jade slip, it contains a secret art which Master personally developed. Its value is incalculable. Not even the combined value of four or five Eternal weapons would be a match for it.”

Ning was shocked.

For the idol to be worth one or two thousand cubes made sense. The jade slip, however, was truly amazing.

Ning accepted the idol, then turned to look at the jade slip. The jade slip was a inky jade color, and one could see faint characters carved into the inky jade. Ning sent his coresense into it, quickly discovering that it contained a lifeblood oath.

“I swear on my very life itself that prior to becoming a Samsara Daolord, I am not to share this [Novessence Thunder] secret art with anyone else.” The lifeblood oath was quite simply worded.

Almost all techniques required lifeblood oaths to be sworn, be it treasures acquired from a treasure auction or from one’s sect.

Rumble...

As soon as Ning swore the oath, an enormous amount of information poured into his mind. Daolord Allgod had left behind an utterly amazing lightning-attribute secret art in this jade slip, and all of it was put on display for Ning.

This secret art was known as the [Novessence Thunder].

Daolord Allgod was an ancient power who was extremely skilled in alchemy, formations, artificing, and many other arts. At his level, only divine abilities and secret arts that he personally developed would be a good fit for him. Thus, he poured some of his insights into alchemy and artificing into developing secret arts that were meant to give himself greater power.

The more power, the better!

Daolord Allgod had created a total of nine mighty secret arts. These secret arts could be used at long range, allowing him to effortlessly dominate other experts on his level. In fact, he could even use them to tangle with Eternal Emperors!

As for the [Novessence Thunder], it was one of those nine mighty secret arts!

“A secret art like this can actually exist?!” Ning was boggled as he read through the information. “A secret art like this can exist?!”

This technique completely destroyed Ning’s preconceptions regarding secret arts.

Most techniques or secret arts required the wielder to have certain insights into the Dao, allowing him to use certain special technical tricks. The forbidden arts used by God Emperor Blacklotus fell into this category.

Ning’s [Nameless] sword-art was a good example. It had multiple levels, and only when one gained a high level of insight into the Dao of the Sword could one use the increasingly profound levels of the [Nameless] sword-art.

However, the [Novessence Thunder] was completely different.

It was like alchemy. When forging pills, one would gather all sorts of rare and precious ingredients, mix them together, use fire and energy to smelt them, then form them into a marvelous pill.

The [Novessence Thunder] required the wielder to harvest nine types of divine lightning, mix them together in a complicated way that was akin to alchemy, then transform them into a perfect thunder-attribute secret art.

As for the mixing process, Ning was rendered completely speechless upon reading it.

It was simply perfect. It was like a work of absolute art.

“In his hands, thunder and lightning were playthings that he could mold as he pleased. He was able to effortlessly mix various types of lightning together, joining them into an incredibly powerful secret art of thunder.” Ning was truly stunned. He had once bound a Ninehorn Lightning Serpent, and so he knew very well that lightning was intrinsically a type of force that was extremely wild and savage. Just binding and refining lightning was extremely difficult, to say nothing of using quasi-alchemical methods to mix multiple types of lightning together to form a secret art. This was truly unimaginable.

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There were two sections to the [Novessence Thunder].

The first section required the user to harvest nine specific types of chaos lightning. These nine types of chaos lightning, by themselves, weren’t even capable of killing an ordinary World God. However, once you perfectly mixed these nine types of ordinary chaos lightning together in a certain manner through this secret art, you would be able to slay master-class World Gods and suppress even supreme World Gods!

The power of this secret art completely surpassed any Eternal weapon.

The second section involved harvesting nine specific types of Dao lightning. These types of Dao lightning had to be naturally harvested and not artificially manufactured, and they were incredibly rare. When Daolord Allgod created this technique, he had been at the Verge. He had many types of divine Dao lightning to choose from, but in the end he was only able to find these nine types which were suitable. After binding and smelting them together, he instantly rose to stand at the very peak of power amongst Daolords!

However...

It was extremely difficult for a person to succeed in mastering this technique!

“This truly is an inconceivable secret art.” Ning couldn’t help but praise the technique. “I’ve never seen anything like it. So lightning can be manipulated in a way such as this?”

“For the sake of killing Emperor Melobo, Master poured all of his energy into coming up with those nine mighty secret arts. Every single one of them was so powerful as to allow any wielder to gaze down upon the other heroes of the realm. Generally speaking, even Samsara Daolords at the Verge would find it difficult to withstand these techniques. When the nine secret arts are used together, they are capable of killing almost any Samsara Daolord.” The formation-spirit was quite proud. “Although the nine secret arts weren’t able to slay Emperor Melobo, all nine of them were able to form domain-type effects that were able to completely suppress him. As a result, Emperor Melobo’s power in battle was weakened to roughly a half of his maximum power.”

Ning nodded.

Having fully reviewed this technique, he knew quite well that once one completely mastered the first section of the [Novessence Thunder], one would be able to unleash an awe-inspiring domain of endless lightning bolts that stretched out more than a million kilometers. This was a lightning domain! It could suppress even supreme World-level experts. Even if Ning ended up encountering an extremely powerful figure which the lightning domain couldn’t kill, it would still dramatically weaken them and ensure they would only be able to unleash half of their full power.

“Nine secret arts...” Ning couldn’t help but sigh in amazement.

“Unfortunately, Emperor Melobo still managed to escape in the end. He was simply too skilled in fleeing techniques.” The formation-spirit sighed. “Before Master died, he left all nine of his secret arts with the Dao Alliance. If you render great services unto the Dao Alliance or are able to sell them enough treasures, you’ll be able to learn all nine techniques from them. However, these secrets are far more valuable than even the ‘Pseudo Samsara pills’ which so many World-level experts lust over! Even most Samsara Daolords would love to have a chance to learn any one of these nine secret arts.”

Ning nodded.

Secret arts were incredibly powerful, but Ning also understood that mastering them could be incredibly difficult!

In this case, harvesting the nine types of lightning was just one of many difficult tasks. What really mattered was the process of perfectly alchemizing them together into a perfect blend. Actually succeeding in this required the user to be very, very skilled in multiple areas. Daolord Allgod was an

ancient power who was skilled in alchemy, formations, and more, which was why he was able to accomplish it. However, when Ning viewed the technique he had two responses. First, he felt that the technique was so beautiful it was like a perfect work of art. Then, he felt a cold chill run down his spine. Training in this technique would be incredibly hard.

“Thank goodness I have a powerful divine body. My divine power is far more robust than others at my level, as is my soul. I should still be able to succeed in this secret art,” Ning mused to himself.

“I’ve given you the secret art. I hope that, in the future, you’ll at least be able to reach Daolord Badlands’ level,” the formation-spirit said. “Alright. Now that you’ve taken the treasure from this treasury, hurry up and leave this place alongside your companions. This treasure region is about to fall apart.”

Whoosh. After speaking, the formation-spirit’s body dispersed into particles of light, then vanished. The light globe above the stone coffin also vanished, as did the region of light around the coffin.

World God Dragonbinder and Flamefairy Su Youji stared towards Ning from their original positions.

“Master.”

“Brother Ji Ning.”

The two called out to him at the same time.

Rumble...

The treasure region began to shake as one of the walls split apart, revealing a new passageway.

“This treasure region is about to crumble. We need to hurry up and leave.” Ning didn’t have a chance to explain what had just happened.

“Let’s go.” World God Dragonbinder and Su Youji both understood that time was of the essence. The three immediately moved at high speed towards that distant passageway.

Rumble...

The enormous treasury region began to completely fall apart. Boulders slammed down from the ceiling, completely burying the passageway behind them as the treasury sank down into the ground.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 26: A World-Level Retainer

Ji Ning, Su Youji, and World God Dragonbinder travelled through the new passageway and reached another part of the mountain. They all turned to glance at the collapsed treasury.

“Brother Ji Ning, congratulations! You acquired the treasures,” World God Dragonbinder said.

“You are formidable as always, Master.” Su Youji was filled with admiration for Ning.

“Brother Ji Ning, I don’t quite understand...both the Flamefairy and I attempted the trial but neither of us could retrieve the treasures. But you, brother Ji Ning...” World God Dragonbinder couldn’t help but ask this question. He knew that Ji Ning was most skilled with the sword. If the trial was a trial of the Dao of the Sword, fine. But this clearly was a trial of the Dao of Fire!

Even the Flamefairy, who was just a hair away from becoming a Chaos Immortal, was unable to pass this trial. How could Ji Ning have succeeded?

“There are certain secrets and tricks to overcoming the treasury trials which Daolord Allgod laid down.” This was the only thing Ning said in response.

World God Dragonbinder and Su Youji both understood. The answer most likely involved some of Ji Ning’s personal secrets, and so they no longer asked. Cultivators sometimes would be placed under lifeblood oaths or simply be unwilling to disclose their most powerful, life-saving techniques. Thus, in general if someone didn’t wish to discuss something, others wouldn’t force the topic.

“I did acquire a treasure from within this treasury.” Ning waved his hand, producing a palm-sized fiery idol.

“What is this?” World God Dragonbinder’s gaze turned dreamy for a moment as his attention became absorbed by this idol.

As for the Flamefairy, her response was even more exaggerated. As she stared at the fiery idol, she was completely captivated by it.

As a master-class World God, Dragonbinder was quickly able to shake off the effect and come to his senses. He looked at Ning in an admiring manner. “Brother Ji Ning, I’m surprised that you are willing to show this treasure to the two of us in such a casual fashion. This idol hides within it a fire-attribute technique of tremendous profundity. The idol itself has eight faces, with each face representing one of eight great mysteries. This is something far more valuable than a mere technique-holding jade slip. Jade slips merely contain information on a technique; if you want to understand the technique, you have to slowly meditate on it. This fiery idol, however, has eight different auras and intents that can actually guide the cultivator in the correct method to train in this technique.”

“I’ve already become a master-class World God. What I now need to do is find my own path and then follow it to become a Samsara Daolord! These techniques are useless to me, but they are of tremendous use to the Flamefairy.” World God Dragonbinder explained, “This idol has to be worth over a thousand cubes of chaos nectar. Generally speaking, a person would have to pay a hundred cubes to even be given the chance to merely ‘borrow’ this idol to look at it for a while. You truly are generous to this retainer of yours.”

“It is useless to me but useful to her. I’m naturally going to give it to her. She’s my retainer! If she becomes more powerful, that means my team will be more powerful,” Ning said with a laugh.

“Aha...” World God Dragonbinder nodded.

Different cultivators treated their retainers in different manners. Some cultivators who were on the same general level of power as their retainers would treat them as friends and equals. However, if there was an enormous disparity in power the retainers would often be treated like slaves! When Daolord Windsorce died, he even took quite a few of his disciples with him, to say nothing of his retainers.

During his time in the Badlands Court, Ning had sparred with quite a few people. His sword-arts were so profound that no Elder God or Ancestral Immortal in the Badlands Court was a match for him. From this alone, World God Dragonbinder could tell that Ji Ning was definitely comparable to a World God in

power! He had to be much more powerful than Su Youji. For him to be courteous to her was one thing, but for him to give her such a valuable legacy in such a straightforward manner was something else. This sort of behavior was fairly rare.

“Eh?” Ning turned to look at Su Youji. A look flickered through World God Dragonbinder’s eyes as he turned to look at her as well.

Su Youji had already shut her eyes and vague ripples of fire had begun to swirl around her.

“Sudden enlightenment?” World God Dragonbinder said softly.

“Yes.” Ning nodded. They were inside the Allgod Estate, a very dangerous place. Generally speaking, no one would engage in meditation here. If Su Youji was here by herself and a prajna-state of sudden enlightenment descended upon her, she would probably break it right away. She would first leave the ruins, find a safe place to stay, then re-engage in her meditations. However, in doing so she would’ve lost the benefit from this prajna-state of sudden enlightenment. Thankfully, she was alongside Ji Ning and World God Dragonbinder. She trusted that the two would protect her, and so she allowed herself to be drawn into the prajna-state.

“Come here.” Ning waved his hand, causing Su Youji to be drawn into his estate-treasure and be placed atop an island.

Ning exerted his will, causing that island to be completely separated from the rest of the estate-world. As the master of this estate-world, Ning was able to ensure that there was absolutely no way that Su Youji’s moment of enlightenment would be disturbed.

“It seems likely that the Flamefairy is going to break through to become a Chaos Immortal.” World God Dragonbinder let out an impressed sigh.

“Yes.” Ning nodded. “Youji was always quite talented. In the past, however, she never had any good teachers. Although my big brother Daolord Solesky gave her a few tips, he did so in a rather casual manner. This idol, however, has a truly systemized and complete technique within it.”

“Yes. This idol can guide someone to become a master-class World-level figure. Haha, Ji Ning...it seems you are about to acquire a World-level retainer.” World God Dragonbinder laughed.

“I can feel the pressure already.” Ning laughed as well.

“Hurry up and make your own breakthrough as well. Your sword-arts are as impressive as the sword-arts of quite a number of World-level Sword Immortals that I know,” World God Dragonbinder said.

“Mm.” Ning himself could sense that he had reached a bottleneck in the ‘Great Firmament’ stance. However, he was fairly close to making his breakthrough. The [Nameless] sword-art was an extremely profound sword-art; upon mastering this next level, he would form a Sword World that was far stronger than that of most Sword Immortals! As for Ning’s own ‘Blackmist’ stance, it was a stance that was fairly close in power to the ‘Great Firmament’ stance.

“Although I’m just a hair’s breadth away, that tiny bit of distance has prevented countless Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals from taking the next step.” Ning let out a sigh.

“True.” World God Dragonbinder couldn’t help but think about himself and the many other cultivators who were trapped as master-class World-level experts and were unable to make a breakthrough. “A single step that can be as wide as a moat that separates the heavens and the earth.”

That final step was the hardest step to take.

There were many, many master-class World-level experts. Even the Starlord of Fogstone, who had only trained for a fairly short period of time, had become a master-class World God. So had God Emperor Blackstone! But how few of them would become into Samsara Daolords?

“Let’s go view some other places,” Ning said.

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Ning and World God Dragonbinder were fairly strong, and the Ten Thousand Mountains were merely the outermost layer of the Allgod Estate. There were actually very few World-level experts here; most cultivators present were Elder Gods or Ancestral Immortals. Thus, the two were essentially able to roam through this region as they pleased. No one dared to antagonize the two of them.

In the blink of an eye, more than two years had gone by.

Given how powerful Ning and Dragonbinder were, the ‘outer region’ truly was of no challenge to them. This was especially true for World God Dragonbinder. He was an exalted master-class World God; he naturally had to enter the Fog Sea to test himself! And yet, because they needed to stand guard for the Flamefairy, he had remained by Ning’s side instead of venturing into the more dangerous Fog Sea region.

“Sorry to have troubled you, brother Dragonbinder. I’ve made you waste quite a bit of time here in the outer region.” Ning sat down on a stone as he held out a flask of wine.

“It’s just two or three years, and I’ll be able to see a new Chaos Immortal be born. No big deal at all. Uh...wow. This is good wine. Good lord, brother Ji Ning...how much money did you spend on Immortal wine?” World God Dragonbinder was guzzling wine with gusto.

“Ten cubes,” Ning said.

“Nice, nice.” World God Dragonbinder certainly wasn’t willing to spend this much money on wine.

When Ning had departed from the Windsource Ruins, he was laden down with many treasures. Thus, he chose to spend ten cubes of his wealth to purchase a great deal of fine Immortal wine. He was living in the Badlands Court and would often receive their disciples as his guests. How could he allow himself to be lacking in wine? The Immortal wine he had purchased had been created through many different valuable ingredients. Once it was consumed, it would actually help the imbiber by replenishing his Immortal ki.

Suddenly...

Rumble...

A dim sound rang out from the heavens above them.

The seated Ning and Dragonbinder both turned their heads to stare at the heavens. The vague image of a vortex of chaos energy could be seen swirling in the skies.

“We can even see the chaos vortex from within the Allgod Estate. There has to be an enormous flood of chaos energy in the outside world.” World God Dragonbinder revealed a look of delight...and his words were spot on. An utterly enormous vortex of chaos energy had formed in the skies above the Allgod Chaosworld.

“The Flamefairy should’ve begun her breakthrough,” World God Dragonbinder said. “Let everything return to the primordial chaos from whence it came. Let the Dao-seed grow and let all things be renewed...”

Ning felt eager as well.

He had received certain teachings from Daolord Solesky, and so he knew that breaking through to become a World-level expert would result a transformation on a fundamental level. When he thought of Su Youji’s transformation, he felt even more anticipation towards his own. He had the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods], the [Sole True Body], and the mysterious azureflower mist energy. This was why he was comparable to a World God despite being an Elder God.

One could imagine how enormous his transformation would be upon becoming a World God! He would be on a completely different level of power!

A long period of time went by, but neither Ning nor Dragonbinder were in a rush.

Whoosh.

A peerless beauty suddenly appeared, wreathed in flames. She knelt down towards Ning and said gratefully, “Youji shall never forget the great kindness you have shown her, Master.”

“It’s good that you know the importance of repaying the kindness of others.” World God Dragonbinder nodded. There were some retainers who would begin to treat their masters with disdain once they broke through and reached a higher level of power. Once their lifeblood oaths were completed, they would immediately depart.

“You are now a World-level expert. Hurry up and rise.” Ning hurriedly held the Flamefairy to her feet. He could sense the aura of a Chaos Immortal emanating from the rings of fire that wreathed her body, and he couldn’t help but sigh.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 27: The First Mirrorsnow Painting

Ji Ning’s retainer had just become a Chaos Immortal, but he himself had yet to make a breakthrough! Still, Ning was fairly happy. At least he got a powerful assistant out of this event! However, Su Youji was a new Chaos Immortal who didn’t even have a suitable Dao weapon to use. Thus, she was actually weaker than most World-level experts; she could at most be considered to have reached the lowest benchmark of that level.

New Chaos Immortals with no suitable treasures and who hadn’t had the chance to solidify their powers were actually quite weak. Usually, they’d find a private location and spend a few thousand years in

solitary cultivation. Only when they increased in power to become comparable to normal World-level experts would they emerge from seclusion.

“Congratulations, Flamefairy. This breakthrough you just made represents a fundamental transformation,” World God Dragonbinder said with a laugh. “From this day forth, you will no longer be the same person you once were.”

Su Youji’s eyes were shining with light and her heart was filled with many emotions.

Countless scenes from the past began to flash through her mind. Thanks to the technique she created, she was a woman of absolutely stunning charm. As a result, quite a few cultivators had desired to become Dao-companions. Some of them acted properly towards her, but others had been stuck at the Elder God or Ancestral Immortal level for so long that they had lost their rationality along with their hopes of making a breakthrough. As a result, they abandoned themselves to vices and would often try to kidnap alluring woman and use them to sate their own lusts. Someone like Su Youji, who was both powerful and mesmerizing, drove these men absolutely wild.

Su Youji’s technique was special. Before becoming a World-level expert, she could not allow herself to lose her virginity. Thus, in many cases her only choice was to flee from those men rather than to submit to them. She lived quite an arduous life as a result.

“Finally...finally...” Su Youji could sense how powerful she had become. The Jindan chaos region inside her body was filled with an enormous amount of World energy, giving her a sense of absolute power and control over herself and her surroundings.

“From this day forth, I am now Chaos Immortal Su Youji.”

A Chaos Immortal would be welcomed with open arms by any of the organizations of the Badlands Court. They would be ranked as one of the most high-level figures and be given tremendous power and authority.

“Since the Flamefairy has completed her breakthrough...brother Ji Ning, let us part ways here.” World God Dragonbinder said, “I’m planning to pay a visit to the Fog Sea.”

“Thank you for everything, senior apprentice-brother Dragonbinder,” Ning said.

“A minor matter.” World God Dragonbinder smiled as he began to walk away.

Only now did Su Youji come back to her senses. She hurriedly said, “Thank you, big brother Dragonbinder.”

“I wager others would have begged for a chance to serve as your protector, little sister!” World God Dragonbinder’s voice rang out from afar as he moved further and further away from them. Soon, only Ning and Su Youji were left.

“Thank you, Master.” Su Youji was filled with gratitude.

“Oh, right.” Ning waved his hand, causing that palm-sized fiery idol to appear once more. When she saw the idol appear, Su Youji’s eyes instantly lit up. The techniques contained within this idol were a perfect fit for her. The idol had a total of eight faces, one of which was related to a charm technique. This was

the reason why she was immediately stimulated upon seeing the idol, resulting in her breaking through to become a Chaos Immortal.

Su Youji's eyes blazed with eagerness as she stared at that idol. This idol would truly be of tremendous use to her.

"Take it." Ning handed it over to her.

"B-but..." Su Youji didn't know what to say or do. She had taken part in the treasure auction as well, and thus she knew exactly how valuable a treasure like this was. It would probably start at a reserve price of roughly a thousand cubes!

"I'm giving it to you, so take it," Ning said.

"But...I..." Su Youji hesitated. In the end, this fiery idol was simply too alluring to her. She said in a low voice, "Master, just let me view it for an hour. I'll memorize the technique within it then give it back to you."

Ning shook his head. "What's the point of just memorizing the technique? This fiery idol has eight different types of conceptual intents radiating from it. It'll be of tremendous benefit to you in your cultivation. And I'm not giving it to you, I'm just letting you use it. When I want it back, you'll have to return it to me. So take it." Ning pressed the fiery idol into Su Youji's hands.

Su Youji's heart quivered as Ning took her hand into his own.

Although she had served him for quite some time, this was actually the first time they had touched.

"Alright." Su Youji nodded obediently.

"Right. I'm planning to go into the Fog Sea as well," Ning said. "Go ahead and enter the estate-world and focus on solidifying your current foundation. You've just broken through, after all."

"No need, Master." Su Youji waved her hand, causing the fiery idol to be drawn into her Jindan chaos region. "I only need to spend part of my time working on this idol. With it, I should be able to solidify my foundation in less than a century. Your golem is by my side as well; once I enter it and command it, I'll be able to unleash tremendous power from within. I won't be in any danger."

With such a detailed technique and helpful idol, her path to becoming a master-class Chaos Immortal was clear. It naturally wouldn't take her much time to solidify her foundation. If she didn't have the idol and instead had to work on her own, she probably would've needed a thousand years in order to succeed.

"Might as well." Ning nodded. Although Su Youji didn't have a Dao weapon, she did have that golem. If danger arose, she could instantly hide herself within that golem. She really wouldn't be in much danger.

"Come. Let us enter the Fog Sea."

Ning turned his head to stare off into the distance, where the vast, billowing Fog Sea could be seen. He could sense the ripples emanating from the Mirrorsnow Painting he had bound and its desire to enter the Fog Sea and reunite with the other painting there.

The Fog Sea was part of the 'inner region' of the Allgod Estate. It was far more dangerous than the Ten Thousand Mountains.

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Whoosh. Fog billowed everywhere.

Ning stood atop an earthen hill, staring off into the distance. Even at his level of visual acuity, the fog ensured that he could only see to a distance of a few hundred kilometers.

"It's up ahead." Ning pointed straight ahead. Thanks to his Mirrorsnow Painting, Ning could easily determine the location of his target. The toughest part of being in the Fog Sea was that one would be unable to find one's bearings. Anyone who spent a bit of time within it would quickly discover that they could no longer tell the directions apart. This was true even for World-level experts. But of course, if you walked in one direction for a long enough period of time, sooner or later you'd make it out of the Fog Sea.

"A lake?"

After walking forward for tens of thousands of kilometers, Ning saw a placid, almost mirror-like lake up ahead. The lake was quite wide, so vast that Ning couldn't see the other side of it. It was so still here that not even any ripples could be seen on the lake's surface. Ning did, however, get a vague sense of danger emanating from the area.

Su Youji looked towards Ning. "I sense as though this lake..."

"I sensed it as well." Ning nodded.

"Should we walk on the surface of the lake? Fly over it? Or go around it?" Su Youji waited for Ning to decide.

Ning frowned as he glanced at the great lake before them. Finally, he said, "Let's go around it."

"Right." This was Su Youji's preference as well.

The two began to circle around the lake. However, the lake truly was quite enormous. Based on how much time they spent walking around it, Ning judged that it had to be more than a hundred thousand kilometers long.

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Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh.

Ripples suddenly appeared on the surface of the formerly-still lake. Then, a golden head began to silently emerge from the waters beneath. This golden head had a pair of golden wings where a human would have ears. It stared off into the distance towards a place which Ji Ning and Su Youji had walked past just a short while ago. Some time later, the strange creature slowly sank beneath the waves once more.

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Ning and Su Youji continued their journey after going past the lake, moving with slow caution. Whenever they encountered a place they felt was dangerous, they would avoid it. This was the Fog Sea, after all. This was a terrifying place which spelled death for nearly half the World-level experts who entered it! Even though Ning had the power of a master-class World God, he still didn't dare to act rashly. In addition, his true goal was merely to find the Mirrorsnow Painting.

"We are almost there. We should be less than fifty thousand kilometers away," Ning said. He had spent more than a month in here with Su Youji and had walked more than ten million kilometers. The reason why it had taken them this long was because they had to avoid quite a few dangerous areas.

The past month had been fairly safe. They had only engaged in battle a single time when they had encountered a scorpion-shaped bugbeast that had just barely reached the World level of power. Ning had simply taken out his Pentabolt Gourd and effortlessly killed the bugbeast with a thunderblast.

"It's up ahead."

"There it is."

Ning and Su Youji had just reached a mountain. Halfway up the mountain, there was an elegant-looking palace which had three characters carved onto it: Yi River Palace.

"Yi River Palace?" Ning frowned.

"What's wrong?" Su Youji glanced at Ning, puzzled.

"This doesn't make sense." Ning frowned. The Fog Sea had quite a few dangerous locations within it. Many generations of cultivators had ventured within the Fog Sea, resulting in many of its dangerous locations being marked down. The Yi River Palace was one such location! It held valuable treasures but was also filled with tremendous danger.

According to the intelligence report which Ning had acquired from Daolord Solesky, although the Mirrorsnow Painting was in the Fog Sea it wasn't located within the Yi River Palace.

"For some reason, the Mirrorsnow Painting must've been moved from its original location into the Yi River Palace," Ning mused to himself.

Boom! Ning gave the gates to the Yi River Palace a hard shove.

Rumble...the gates slowly swung open.

"Let's go in," Ning said. "Youji, the deeper parts of the Yi River Palace are filled with tremendous danger. We can't get in too deep. Let me scout out the outer perimeter of the palace first."

"Alright." Youji nodded.

The two carefully stepped into the estate. The Yi River Palace was extremely large and it had a front hall, a main hall, an inner hall, and many side halls. According to the information Ning had, the other halls of the Yi River Palace were fairly safe, but the main hall was filled with tremendous danger. However, the main hall also had the most treasures.

“The Mirrorsnow Painting. It doesn’t seem to be in the main palace...” Ning could sense from his attunement to his own painting that this second one was actually located in a side hall.

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 28: Be Our Slaves

Ji Ning led Su Youji towards the direction of the side hall.

Whoosh.

A streak of gray fog quickly surged out from that distant side hall, moving far faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos as it poured out of the Yi River Palace.

“That thing is carrying the Mirrorsnow Painting!” Ning’s face changed. “Chase it down!”

He could sense that the Mirrorsnow Painting had originally been within the side hall, but it was now receding from him at high speed. Clearly, it was being taken away by that gray streak of mist.

Swoosh. Swoosh.

Ning and Su Youji immediately chased after it at high speed. Ning had always been extremely fast, while Su Youji was now a Chaos Immortal. Thanks to her powerful Immortal energy and the Jindan chaos region inside her body supporting her, she was now also able to easily overcome the limits of the Heavenly Daos and move just a tiny bit slower than Ning himself did. But of course, this was with Ning not using the Thunderlight Wings.

Boom! An inch-thick streak of golden light shot out of Ning’s eyes, allowing him to clearly make out the true form of that fleeing streak of gray fog.

Although it looked like gray fog, it was actually a strange beast that had a crocodilian body and a dragon-like head. Its four stubby legs propelled it forward at high speed, allowing it move faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos as gray mist emanated from its body.

“A bugbeast of some sort.”

“It most likely is one of the bugbeasts which Daolord Allgod once reared.”

Both Ning and Su Youji were able to see and identify the creature.

Many bugbeasts lived within the Fog Sea region. It must be understood that Daolord Allgod was skilled in many things, including alchemy, artificing, formations, and more. He had also reached an extremely high level of skill in the art of rearing bugbeasts. Even though he had died long ago, certain formations within the Fog Sea region continuously nurtured and gave birth to multiple generations of World-level bugbeasts.

“GRWAAAR!” The graymist beast let out a howl. Its body suddenly split into nine different pieces, each of which began to flee towards a different direction.

“Don’t even think about fleeing!” Ning roared. He pulled out a giant gourd with his left hand, immediately uncorking it.

Rumble...

Countless thunderbolts blasted out from within the gourd, instantly covering the entire region but centering around the area which included the nine streaks of gray mist that were beginning to flee. The [Ninehorn Lightning Serpent] technique was limited to the speed of the Heavenly Daos, but this Pentabolt Gourd which Ning had purchased during the treasure auction contained five different types of chaos lightning, each of which was able to effortlessly breach the speed of light. They all moved much faster than Ning himself.

The five types of lightning crackled throughout the area and thundered around the gray mist.

“EEEEEE! An ear-piercing, soul-piercing cry.

Eight of the nine streaks of gray mist instantly vanished. The remaining streak of gray mist quickly began to expand in size, its scaly crocodilian body beginning to emerge as well. The beast’s body was resisting the attacks of these five types of chaos lightning, and it turned to glare at Ning, its grayish-white eyes filled with rage.

“Hand over that sword-ki diagram and I’ll spare your life,” Ning sent mentally.

“You’ll never catch me.” The creature’s gravelly voice rang out in Ning’s mind.

Swish.

The scaly crocodilian creature once more transformed into mist. This time, the misty gray aura surrounding it brightened dramatically as it began to fly off into the distance at a speed which rendered Ning speechless. Even if he used his Thunderlight Wings, he still wouldn’t be able to catch up to it. His only choice was to use the Pentabolt Gourd to release those five streaks of chaos lightning to slow the creature down...and yet, although the creature seemed to be weakened by the lightning it didn’t slow down in the slightest.

“We can’t catch up to it, Master.” Su Youji was worried. The bugbeast had already flown out of the range of the five types of lightning. This place was quite dangerous, and Ning didn’t dare to let the lightning reach out to a much greater distance, for fear of accidentally striking and irritating other powerful bugbeasts.

“I can sense that it’s been injured.” Ning chuckled. The final blasts of lightning had injured the creature. Although it had managed to escape, its aura had been noticeably weakened.

“It won’t be able to escape me.” Ning could continuously sense the exact location of the Mirrorsnow Painting. So long as the creature remained within the Allgod Estate, Ning would still be able to sense its location.

A short while later.

“It is up ahead. It isn’t moving,” Ning sent.

Soon, Ning and Su Youji saw the creature. It was a crocodilian bugbeast with black scales, and it was resting as it lay atop a giant boulder. It instantly noticed Ning’s arrival and immediately transformed into an aura of gray mist as it once more began to flee.

Bugbeasts were artificially created lifeforms. They had tremendous strength and certain special gifts, and they used these advantages when they fought. However, they didn’t have divine power or Immortal

energy. Thus, they were unable to bind magic treasures to themselves. In other words, the bugbeast hadn't been able to bind the sword-ki painting and thus couldn't sense Ning's location.

Boom! Ning didn't have enough time to chase after the creature. He instead once more pulled out the Pentabolt Gourd and released those five types of chaos lightning to attack.

The aura of the fleeing streak of gray mist began to noticeably weaken yet again.

Swoosh. Swoosh.

Ning and Su Youji continued their chase.

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"I can sense ripples coming from over there."

"There's a battle happening nearby."

Two men who were seated in the lotus position rose to their feet. One was dressed in golden robes while the other was dressed in black robes. Both had dark, swarthy skin, and their faces were covered with green floral tattoos. Both emanated auras of tremendous power as well. One was a World God, the other a Chaos Immortal.

"Let's go take a look." The two exchanged a glance, then quietly began to move towards the direction of the ripples.

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"It is still fleeing." Ning and Su Youji continued their pursuit of the bugbeast. By now, the bugbeast could tell that the two cultivators probably had a way to track it and so it continued to frantically run as fast as it could.

"It's moving farther and farther away." Ning was worried. "The bugbeast knows the Fog Sea much better than us. It'll probably end up hiding itself within a dangerous location. We have to catch up to it soon. If too much time passes, we'll be in trouble."

"HALT!" Suddenly, an icy shout rang out from afar and blasted into the ears of Ning and Su Youji.

"Eh?"

Ning and Su Youji had been flying at high speed. Both frowned and turned to look at the two figures which had appeared behind them. These two figures both emanated auras of power and savagery.

"Master." Su Youji's face tightened as she sent a quick mental message. "I know these two. One is known as World God Foxblaze while the other is Chaos Immortal Foxbold. The two belong to the same race and are extremely savage."

"Oho, isn't this Flamefairy Su Youji?" Chaos Immortal Foxbold was dressed in golden robes, and his eyes lit up when he saw the Flamefairy. "You actually broke through to become a Chaos Immortal! I hadn't heard the news. It must be recent. Huh. Come to think of it, a short while ago the chaos energy within the Allgod Estate was in a state of great turmoil. Was that when you made your breakthrough?"

“Su Youji?” The black-robed World God Foxblaze’s eyes lit up as well. “Oho, what a rare treat...”

Su Youji was a peerless beauty of tremendous charm. After becoming a Chaos Immortal, her aura and demeanor had only grown more graceful. Both of these World-level experts felt a certain itchiness in their hearts when they saw her.

“Please make way! We are busy,” Su Youji barked.

“Make way? Su Youji, you just recently became a World-level expert. Instead of finding a safe place to stabilize your foundation, you instead came here to the Fog Sea. You are lucky that it was the two of us who found you.” World God Foxblaze laughed coldly. “It would be simplicity itself for us to kill you, but we’ll give you a chance to stay alive.”

Newly ascended World-level experts were very weak, especially Chaos Immortals. Chaos Immortals had fairly weak bodies; when they first made their breakthrough, they could be considered as having just barely reached the World-level threshold of power. Although World God Foxblaze and his friend weren’t that powerful, they had still been alive for a very long period of time. It would indeed be quite easy for them to slay a newly ascended Chaos Immortal.

“Right, right. We’ll give you a chance to live.” Chaos Immortal Foxbold stared appraising at Su Youji, licking his lips. “It’s simple. You simply need to swear a lifeblood oath to be our slave.”

“Slave?” A layer of frost appeared on Su Youji’s face.

“Don’t worry. You are a World-level expert as well; we won’t make things too hard for you. After you become our slave, all you’ll have to do is engage in ‘dual cultivation’ with us every so often. Dual cultivation is a source of great joy, as you’ll soon come to know.” World God Foxblaze’s eyes grew colder. “But if you refuse, today is the day you die.”

“All we ask is that you engage in ‘dual cultivation’ with us. You’ll have a much higher position than all the rest of our slaves,” Chaos Immortal Foxbold agreed.

The two had many women, but female Chaos Immortals of such peerless beauty and charm were incredibly rare. Most importantly of all, Su Youji had just recently become a Chaos Immortal. She was still very weak and would be easily captured.

Both of their gazes were fixed upon Su Youji.

As for Ji Ning?

He was merely an Elder God. The two completely ignored him!

“The two of you are going a bit too far.” Ning’s voice rang out. He didn’t want to fight as that would distract him from chasing after the fleeing bugbeast.

“World-level experts are speaking. How dare you interrupt us, you ant?” World God Foxblaze looked at Ning, a lofty look in his eyes. He naturally felt complete contempt towards a mere Elder God like Ning.

“Puny Elder God, how dare you speak so rashly before us? I was planning to simply enslave you as well. I suppose I might as well just kill you instead.” Chaos Immortal Foxbold glanced at Ning as well, a similar look of arrogance in his gaze. He, too, felt as though he was speaking to an ant.

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 29: Slaying World-Level Experts

An island within Ji Ning's estate world.

"Wild Dog. Blacksun." A booming voice echoed across the great island. Elder God Wilddog and Elder God Blacksun had been seated amongst their fellow Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, eating and chatting, but now the two immediately rose to their feet. They called out in unison, "Master."

"Take control of your golems and await my signal."

"Yes, Master."

Elder God Wilddog and Elder God Blacksun simultaneously transformed into two tall, muscular black golems. Previously, the golems had been fiery red in color, but they had been cosmetically altered and recolored to black in order to conceal their true power. Once you bound a golem, you could completely withdraw and suppress its aura of power. In fact, golems with spirits controlling them such as Rocky were almost like living creatures. Rocky was able to completely suppress his own aura and transform into a boulder that not even Ning would be able to detect.

The two black golems stood there at the edges of the island, awaiting Ning's summons.

"We're about to enter combat."

"Yes. We've been waiting forever for a real battle like this. All we were doing prior to this was nothing more than sparring."

Both were filled with an eagerness to do battle. The golems they commanded filled them with tremendous self-confidence. It must be understood that Ning had to spend more than six hundred cubes of chaos nectar to purchase these three golems...and that was at the discounted treasure auction price. Normally, each of these three golems would go for significantly more than two hundred cubes of chaos nectar. Each of the three were individually more powerful than Rocky, and they were able to join together in a formation as well.

The outside world. The Fog Sea region of the Allgod Estate.

World God Foxblaze and Chaos Immortal Foxbold both glanced disdainfully at Ning, ignoring him after mocking him. In their eyes, he truly was nothing more than an ant-like presence. They were on a completely different level of power; why would they pay him any heed?

Their gazes turned once more to Flamefairy Su Youji. World God Foxblaze spoke out: "Su Youji, if you wish to live a long life, you have to learn when to compromise. We won't make your lifeblood oath too harsh."

"All you have to do is serve us in dual cultivation. It'll be fun." Chaos Immortal Foxbold truly looked forward to enjoying the pleasing company of this truly ravishing female Chaos Immortal. He never thought that a chance like this would come so quickly.

The two alternated between threatening her and persuading her. They wouldn't be able to overpower her and force her to serve them; even if they did manage to capture her, she would be able to effortlessly self-detonate herself. It must be understood that even slaves could easily choose to self-detonate themselves. Thus, while an owner could oppress and coerce their slaves, they still had ensure that their slaves weren't driven to utter despair. Otherwise, their slaves could choose to be disobedient. When Daolord Windsource had commanded his slaves to accompany him into death, many of them had cursed and railed at him for his actions. Alas, all they could do was curse, nothing else.

"Come here."

"Come, Su Youji." The two stared hungrily at the Flamefairy.

Su Youji's face was so cold, it looked as though it was covered by a layer of frost. She sent to the nearby Ning, "Master, what should we do?"

"Since they insist on dying...then let's just go ahead and spend a little bit of time to get rid of them." Ning glanced at the two World-level figures. "Kill them!"

To be honest, Ning truly didn't wish to get into this fight. Killing World-level experts wasn't a simple task. World God Foxblaze was an elite World God while Chaos Immortal Foxbold was merely an ordinary one. Ning was completely capable of slaying the two of them, but it would still take him quite a bit of time. This was why he had been hoping he could talk the two of them into getting out of his way.

"We can hunt down the bugbeast later. Given that I can sense its location, I'm sure it'll hide somewhere it feels is very safe." The more Ning thought about it, the angrier he became.

"Fine." Su Youji suddenly clenched her teeth and said aloud, "Show me your lifeblood oath."

"Ahahaha, that's more like it!"

"Good, good, good! What a fine beauty you are. Don't worry. We couldn't bear to mistreat you."

World God Foxblaze and Chaos Immortal Foxbold were delighted upon hearing her words. Just like that, a lovely female Chaos Immortal had fallen into their clutches. What a stroke of great luck! World God Foxblaze waved his hand, causing a golden pearl to fly out. "This is my oathstone. Take a good luck, my pretty. If there's anything you don't like, we can change it."

"Ehehe." Chaos Immortal Foxbold felt more and more excited. This was better than finding an entire stash of valuable treasures. They never would've even imagined in their wildest dreams that such a female slave would fall into their clutches.

"I simply can't believe how lucky we are. As soon as Su Youji broke through to become a Chaos Immortal, she ran into the two of us." Both of them were filled with eagerness. They could already visualize the fantastic scenes of the two of them cavorting with her, causing their hearts to blaze with lust.

Ning was standing next to Su Youji. His eyes suddenly turned cold.

"Attack!"

His voice echoed within his estate-world as a black gourd suddenly appeared in front of him. The black gourd vomited out countless streaks of lightning, completely filling the region with five types of chaos lightning that surrounded and attacked Chaos Immortal Foxbold and World God Foxblaze.

“Shit!” The two blanched as they saw this happen. Chaos Immortal Foxbold’s robes instantly glowed with light, forming a protective barrier around him. Alas, the five types of chaos lightning were simply too powerful, causing the barrier to completely shatter as they crashed straight through it and against Foxbold.

A series of flying daggers had also appeared around Chaos Immortal Foxbold, but they were only able to deflect part of the lightning. The rest of the lightning crashed directly against his body.

Boom! An ugly look was on Chaos Immortal Foxbold’s face as he vomited out a mouthful of blood. He sent frantically, “Save me, big brother!”

“Shit. That’s one powerful lightning treasure.” World God Foxblaze instantly was both enraged and unnerved. “Hold on for a short while. I’ll capture Su Youji and take that gourd of hers.”

The gourd was hovering in front of Ning, who was standing right next to Su Youji. Thus, both of the enemies believed the gourd to belong to Su Youji.

The five types of lightning continued to furiously attack the two World-level experts. However, World God Foxblaze was quite a powerful figure, and he was dressed in a suit of low-grade Dao armor. His divine body was completely capable of withstanding the attacks from these five types of divine lightning.

Swish!

World God Foxblaze transformed into a streak of light, flying towards Su Youji with a furious look in his eyes.

Right at this moment...

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Three golems suddenly appeared out of nowhere. One was Rocky the stone titan, while the other two were pitch-black golems. These three golems simultaneously charged towards Chaos Immortal Foxbold from three separate directions! World God Foxblaze was sprinting straight towards Ji Ning and Su Youji and so wasn’t able to turn in time, allowing all three golems to charge straight past him and towards Chaos Immortal Foxbold.

“They are fast!” World God Foxblaze’s face changed.

“Save me, big brother!” Chaos Immortal Foxbold was shocked as well. When he saw those three golems speeding towards him, he immediately understood that they were definitely World-level golems. He was utterly terrified and quickly sent out a distress call. It must be understood that he merely had the power of an ordinary World-level expert and was merely a Chaos Immortal. He had already been driven to distraction and unnerved by the five types of divine lightning that filled every inch of this area.

And now three golems were charging towards him as well? What was he supposed to do?

“Die.” The black golem controlled by Elder God Blacksun struck out with a massive fist, sending an enormously powerful punch towards Chaos Immortal Foxbold.

“Kill.” Elder God Wilddog delivered a vicious kick towards him.

“GRWAAAR!” Rocky sent two furious palm-blows towards him as well.

The five types of lightning in the surrounding area continued to furiously assault Chaos Immortal Foxbold as well. As for World God Foxblaze, he had charged towards Ji Ning and Su Youji at maximum speed and was completely unable to make it back in time to save Foxbold.

“NO!!!”

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Golems had an innate advantage in raw strength to begin with, with less than one in a thousand World Gods being comparable to World-level golems in strength. The only way you could beat a golem was by suppressing them with your superior insights into the Dao, but Chaos Immortal Foxbold had already been completely shut down by Ning’s Pentabolt Gourd attack. All he could do was scream repeatedly as he tried to use his blade barrier to block the attacks. “NOOOOO!”

BOOM!!!!

Chaos Immortal Foxbold was reduced to dust.

“What?!” World God Foxblaze had been charging towards Ning and Su Youji, but upon seeing this he blanched. “Those golems are way too powerful. Those are no ordinary golems! Each of them has to be worth at least a hundred cubes of chaos nectar.”

Whoosh! Right at this moment, Su Youji transformed into a black golem as well. World God Foxblaze was now quite close to her and she didn’t dare fight him in close combat.

“What?!” Upon seeing Su Youji transform into a black golem, World God Foxblaze felt as though his heart had been gripped by icy fingers. Four golems? He could tell that every single one of those golems was probably comparable to him in strength. If the four joined forces, they would completely dominated him.

“Time to leave.” World God Foxblaze no longer had any interest in tangling with Su Youji. He transformed into a streak of light, beginning to flee.

Whoosh. A pair of lightning wings suddenly appeared on Ning’s back. The wings fluttered slightly, sending Ning flying out at tremendous speed. Although World God Foxblaze also flew fairly quickly, the five types of lightning slowed him down somewhat.

“Eh?” World God Foxblaze stared at the figure who had suddenly appeared before him.

The white-robed youth stood there, his Thunderlight Wings spread wide and a blood-red sword in his hands. The youth stared at Foxblaze coldly. “You won’t be able to escape!”

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 30: Willing to be Enslaved

World God Foxblaze was astonished by the speed of this white-robed youth, and he was able to tell right away that the Thunderlight Wings on Ning's back were quite extraordinary. However, he wasn't afraid; rather, he was delighted. If he killed this Elder God, then this extraordinary treasure would become his, right? He didn't even consider the possibility that he might not be able to defeat this Elder God. Even the most monstrously talented Elder Gods would at most be comparable to ordinary World Gods...and he was an elite one!

"Puny Elder God, you overestimate your abilities. Die!" World God Foxblaze drew out a curved scimitar, then used it to chop towards Ning. It was like a streak of crescent moonlight had suddenly struck out.

Ning showed no mercy at all, immediately using his most powerful attack with his most powerful weapon, the Eternal weapon Violetjewel. He delivered a powerful, furious overhead chop with Violetjewel, his weapon moving far faster than the speed of light. As Violetjewel struck out in a cruel blur, Ning also activated as much of its quintessence core as he could, giving his weapon an utterly terrifying amount of power.

At this moment in time, Violetjewel was so incredibly sharp and powerful that even an ordinary mortal who casually brandished it would unleash a blast of sword-ki that could easily chop a mountain apart. But of course, there was no way that a mortal would ever come into possession of a weapon such as this.

BOOM!

Violetjewel's sword-light clashed head-on against the crescent moon of saber-light.

The crescent moon of saber-light was blasted apart, while World God Foxblaze was knocked flying backwards. He stared at the midair figure of Ning, his eyes absolutely huge and filled with disbelief. How was this possible? How? He was an exalted World God who had been alive and training for countless years and had reached the 'elite' level. How could he possibly be at a completely disadvantage in this fight?

There was least a full level's worth of difference between him and his foe!

This Elder God actually had the power of a master-class World God? How was this possible? How could anyone be this much of a freak? Even if this Elder God was wielding an Eternal weapon, it should've been impossible for him to be this powerful.

BOOM! The terrifying force of Ning's blow had knocked World God Foxblaze flying backwards, and the five types of lightning in the area continued to furiously hammer down against his body. Foxblaze's situation was growing more dire by the moment.

"Kill."

"Kill."

The three black golems and the stone titan quickly charged towards World God Foxblaze. Su Youji's black golem was already quite close to Ning, and so it was the first to arrive and strike at him.

Whoosh! The black golem's fierce claws lashed out with dominating power, leaving a cruel fiery blur behind in the air as the golem struck at Foxblaze.

Bang! Although Foxblaze frantically lifted up his scimitar to block, he was knocked backwards yet again. Although he was actually roughly on par with the black golems, he had been completely knocked off his game by Ning's attack. That first failure was causing a cascade of problems for him, and the entire situation was extremely grim.

"Die!" Elder God Wilddog and Elder God Blacksun's golems arrived and began to attack, as did the stone titan Rocky.

"Hmph." Ning charged towards Foxblaze as well, leaving a trail of dazzling electric light in the air behind him.

Foxblaze was completely trapped!

Although the four golems were somewhat inferior to him in technique and skill, they were superior to him in power and speed. He was able to deal with one of them but four was simply too much. The worst thing was, the white-robed Elder God he had thought to be the weakest cultivator present was actually the most terrifying figure of them all!

He was a terrifying Elder God who had the power of a master-class World God! These types of Elder Gods only existed in legends!

"Four golems, five types of divine lightning, those electric wings...I was wrong. I was completely wrong from the start! How could Su Youji possibly afford treasures such as these? They most likely all belong to that white-robed Elder God! Su Youji is merely his servant as well!"

"N-n-no...I can't just die here..."

"I can't!"

Although World God Foxblaze felt regret and self-pity for being driven to such dire straits, he also felt a powerful urge to stay alive.

"Transform!" World God Foxblaze instantly transformed to gain a total of six arms, each of which was now wielding a scimitar. His aura grew slightly more powerful as well, and even his eyes began to turn red. Clearly, he was now in an utterly berserk state.

The only way for him to survive was for him to go all out!

"KILL!" He immediately charged towards the stone titan, because he could tell right away that all three black golems were identical and belonged to a single set. He could sense that they were arrayed together into a formation and so he naturally chose to go against the stone titan instead.

"Stop him, rocky." Ning immediately sent a mental message over.

"Don't worry, Master. My talents lie in tying down foes." Rocky's palms suddenly expanded dramatically in size as his stony body suddenly began to flow like a liquid.

BOOM! World God Foxblaze exchanged blows with Rocky, the force of the collision causing a few ripples to appear on the liquid-like surface of Rocky's body. However, Rocky himself didn't take so much as a single step back.

“What?!” World God Foxblaze was shocked.

As for the three black golems, they once more charged towards him and attacked him.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The four mighty golems surrounded and assaulted this solitary World God.

World God Foxblaze still refused to give up. Although blows were raining down upon him, he had a set of Dao armor and a tough divine body. World Gods weren't easily killed, and he continued to do his best to find a way to survive this assault. Alas, the three black golems moved together in perfect unison, giving him no chance to flee whatsoever.

“N-no...”

“Give up!” Right at this moment, Ning arrived. He struck out with Violetjewel, sending that terrifying streak of bloody sword-light towards Foxblaze once more.

“NO!” World God Foxblaze truly felt despair now.

BOOM! The sword-blow knocked him flying once more... and then, with a series of booms, two of the black golems smashed him into the ground.

If he was a World God who specialized in defense, he wouldn't have been taken down so quickly. He would've been able to keep fighting for a somewhat longer period of time. Ji Ning, for example, had the Heartsword stance that gave him perfect control over his defensive sword-arts.

But of course, the Dao of the Sword was an offensive Dao that had tremendous advantages in close combat! Although World God Foxblaze used the scimitar, his specialty lay in a Dao of the Wind. This gave him certain advantages in speed and power in close combat, but once he lost the upper hand he would quickly be defeated.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Once Foxblaze was knocked down to the ground, the four golems began to rain a wild storm of blows upon his body.

As for Ning, he stood there to one side, not taking part in this. The blow he had just delivered was the final straw that had broken the camel's back. World God Foxblaze would no longer have any chance of turning the tables on his attackers.

“Go.” Ning willed a long rope to suddenly appear next to him. The rope agilely slithered through the air like a serpent, quickly tying up the completely beaten World God Foxblaze and rendering him securely and completely incapacitated.

A look of utter despair was in Foxblaze's eyes.

“Come.” Ning turned his head to glance backwards. The black gourd that had been spewing endless streams of lightning quickly flew towards Ning, coming to a halt within his hands.

Ning held the black gourd with one hand as he stared downwards at the tied and bound Foxblaze.

“It really...really...” When Foxblaze saw the black gourd fly to Ning, he couldn't help but mumble to himself, “The gourd really does belong to him.”

“Master, this Foxblaze fellow was much harder to deal with than Foxbold,” Su Youji said with a laugh.

“He insisted on setting off on a path of no return. He has no one to blame for his death but himself,” Elder God Wilddog growled.

“Spare me. Spare me!”

World God Foxblaze was completely trussed up. He stared at Ning. “Spare me and I’ll give you all my treasures.”

“You idiot. Do you really take us for a fool? After we kill you, all of your treasures will be ours regardless.” Su Youji let out a cold laugh. Towards outsiders, she remained as ill-tempered and explosive as ever before.

“I-I...” World God Foxblaze stared wildly at Ning, then gritted his teeth. “I’m willing to be your retainer.”

“No need.” Ning shook his head.

“No. No!” World God Foxblaze took a deep breath. “I’m willing to be your slave! Your slave! I, World God Foxblaze, am willing to be your slave!”

“Master?” Su Youji, Elder God Wilddog, and Elder God Blacksun all turned to look at Ning.

“My slave? You honor me too much. I’m not interested, and so... it’s best you simply die.” Ning lifted up his black gourd, then activated it with a thought. A powerful sucking power suddenly emerged from it and was applied to World God Foxblaze.

Foxblaze was instantly sucked towards the gourd, shrinking as he flew towards the gourd’s opening.

“No... you... can’t possibly...”

He was in a state of utter disbelief. Someone actually refused to accept him, an exalted World God, as a slave? A moment later, he was drawn into the Pentabolt Gourd. A few moments after that a rope flew out from the gourd, then Ning resealed it.

Trapped within the Pentabolt Gourd, Foxblaze would suffer perpetual attacks from those five types of lightning. Sooner or later, his divine power would run out and he would be ground into dust.

“Why, Master? He was a World God, after all.” Su Youji and the others looked curiously at Ning.

“I wanted to kill him, so I did.” Ning’s response was quite calm.

A World God? What of it?

He didn’t like people with Foxblaze’s character. He’d feel uncomfortable having the man around, and a mere elite World God wouldn’t be of much use to him anyhow. Any of his four golems was comparable to Foxblaze in power, after all.

As for selling him off into slavery? He wouldn’t be worth nearly as much as a golem. Golems were absolutely loyal to their masters, after all. Foxblaze would most likely go for just a hundred cubes of chaos nectar at most, but the problem was that he knew how strong Ji Ning actually was. For now, Ning wished to keep his true power a secret.

He wouldn't worry about the information leaking after he became a World God, and wouldn't have minded selling Foxblaze off at that time... but who knew how long that would take? And by then, would he care about a petty hundred cubes of chaos nectar.

"Might as well kill him. I feel more comfortable doing that." High-level cultivators had to follow their own hearts and their own paths to begin with.

"At my current level of power, killing elite World Gods still requires a bit of effort." Ning reflected on this recent fight. "Without the four golems helping out, things probably wouldn't be so easy."

Thanks to the four golems, he had been able to kill an elite World God in a fairly short period of time.

"Wild Dog, Blacksun, go back and get some rest. Await my orders," Ning instructed.

"Yes," both Elder Gods said respectfully, their eyes filled with blazing eagerness.

What a show of utter dominance.

They had almost instantly slain a Chaos Immortal and a World God. The World God had begged to be enslaved, but their master didn't even want to bother with enslaving him. This was true dominance! Their master truly was far too powerful. How mighty would he become when he actually reached the World level?

Whoosh. After Rocky, Elder God Wilddog, and Elder God Blacksun were all transported back into the estate-world, Ning turned to look towards Su Youji. "Youji, let's get back to our hunt for that bugbeast."

"Right." Su Youji nodded as well.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Relying on his attunement to the Mirrorsnow Painting, Ning quickly led Su Youji towards the location of the second painting.

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Book 25: Novessence Thunder Chapter 31: Grove of Monoliths

Ji Ning led Su Youji forward, using his attunement to the painting to sense where they should go.

The bugbeast had already come to a halt, causing Ning to feel quite uneasy. Although most bugbeasts were fairly dumb, World-level bugbeasts were both powerful and rather clever. Since this one knew that Ning had a way to track it, for it to come to a halt could only mean that it had found a place it felt was very safe.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

Ning and Su Youji flew past one mountain peak after another, shrouded by mist. Every so often they could thread their way past forests or deep gorges. They advanced with great caution and deliberation, and as a result spent nearly an hour before they reached their destination. The bugbeasts had come to a halt, after all; it didn't matter too much if they were moving a bit slower than before.

"It should be up ahead." Ning was standing atop a towering, jagged boulder as he mentally conversed with the fiery-robed Su Youji.

"Let's take it slow," Ning sent mentally.

He was the vanguard and Su Youji was the rearguard.

The two began to move even more slowly than before. Thanks to the mist which permeated this region, Ning was only able to see to a distance of a few hundred kilometers. As he slowly drew closer and closer to the destination, he could sense a terrifyingly powerful aura suddenly sweep towards them from afar. Both Ning and Su Youji blanched at the power of this aura.

“Where are we?” Suddenly, Ning saw something up ahead.

A few hundred kilometers up ahead, there was a single giant monolith that was roughly three hundred meters tall and surrounded by mist.

“The Grove of Monoliths?” Su Youji’s face tightened. “Master, this seems to be the Grove of Monoliths.”

“Let’s move a bit closer and check it out,” Ning replied. His heart clenched as they slowly moved closer and closer to the monolith. Soon, they were roughly ten kilometers away from the first monolith and were able to see a second monolith of similar size and shape that had been embedded into the ground.

This second monolith had a red-winged beast that lay coiled atop it which emanated an aura of tremendous savagery.

Ning frowned. They continued to advance, keeping a careful distance from the creature. One monolith after another entered their field of vision, each of which was roughly three hundred meters tall. The monoliths had all been planted deeply into the ground, and many of them had terrifying bugbeasts that lay coiled on top of them. Other monoliths were surrounded by magic treasures and weapons which had auras of tremendous power. Most of them were Dao-level weapons or treasures.

“Master...” Su Youji grew increasingly nervous. This was a terrifyingly dangerous part of the Fog Sea, the ‘Grove of Monoliths’.

“Withdraw.” Ning finally gave the order.

The two carefully, quietly, and rapidly retreated from this location, only coming to a halt after they entered a nearby copse of trees.

“It actually went into hiding within the Grove of Monoliths.” Ning frowned.

“This is all the fault of World God Foxblaze and Chaos Immortal Foxbold. They delayed us at a critical moment! Otherwise, we probably would’ve been able to catch up to that heavily injured bugbeast.” The Flamefairy couldn’t help but feel quite upset by this. She knew exactly how much her master needed that sword-ki painting, and it now seemed evident that the painting would be unobtainable.

Ning wasn’t in a very good mood right now.

He had felt rather exuberant after slaying World God Foxblaze and Chaos Immortal Foxbold, as this was the first time he had personally slain a World-level expert, and two of them at that! However, Ning now felt rather resentful at all this.

“They ruined everything!” Ning gritted his teeth.

“What should I do? What should my next plan of action be?” Ning began to ponder.

The Ten Thousand Mountains was the outer region of this world.

The Fog Sea was part of the inner region.

The Fog Sea had many dangerous areas within it, and the Grove of Monoliths was definitely ranked as one of the deadliest locations. Based on the experiences of the many cultivators who had adventured into it, this was a region that took up roughly ten thousand kilometers of space, and within this region there were many enormous monoliths that had been inserted into the ground.

For some unknown reason, bugbeasts were highly attracted to these monoliths. Thus, bugbeasts would often rest within the Grove of Monoliths, with dozens of them nesting in this region at any given time. All of these bugbeasts were World-level creatures. Bugbeasts were fairly unintelligent and did not understand the mysteries of the Dao. They had to rely on their physical strength and their innate gifts to fight, and so most of them only had the power of ordinary World Gods! A minority were comparable to elite World Gods and a tiny number of them were comparable to master-class World Gods.

Alas, they did have one advantage: they existed in overwhelmingly large numbers. The Grove of Monoliths often had around a hundred World-level bugbeasts within it at any given moment in time. There were simply too many of them! If any cultivator dared to trespass within the Grove, that cultivator would immediately suffer the attacks of every single bugbeast there! As more time passed, bugbeasts from other areas would also hurry to the Grove to reinforce their fellows, causing the situation to grow increasingly dangerous!

The Grove of Monoliths was definitely a place of incredible danger. Only supreme World Gods would be able to survive in that place, but if they were unlucky enough to encounter particularly powerful bugbeasts they might still perish!

“The Grove of Monoliths is too dangerous.” Su Youji looked at Ning. “Master, according the information we acquired regarding the Allgod Estate, only supreme World Gods have a chance of surviving a trip into the Grove of Monoliths. If we go in there, we’d probably be doomed.”

“Mm.” Ning nodded. “It’s true. We have no hope of surviving that place. I knew that damned bugbeast would pick a troublesome place to hide.” Ning continued to ponder on this matter but could find no solutions.

The place was simply too dangerous.

All bugbeasts had a fetish for collecting magic treasures. Although they couldn’t use them, they viewed those items as their spoils of combat. Thus, the hundred-plus bugbeasts in the Grove of Monoliths had a correspondingly enormous hoard of magic treasures of inestimable value.

Alas, no one dared to go and try to take the treasure from them. Even supreme World Gods only stood a fairly small chance of surviving that place. Who would dare to risk their lives in such a rash way?

“It seems I’ll have to wait for my own breakthrough to the World level. Perhaps then I’ll have a chance,” Ning mused. He was already comparable to a master-class World God; after he actually broke through to the World level, he would definitely become much more powerful than before.

As for exactly how much more powerful he could become, even Ning himself wasn’t sure. This was because the main reason he was so powerful was because of the azureflower region inside of him. It

was currently of tremendous help to him, but would it continue to be effective after he reached the World level? There was no way for Ning to find out in advance.

“Let’s leave,” Ning said.

“Leave?” Su Youji looked at Ning.

“Yes. We have no choice but to give up for now!” Ning turned his head to give the distant Grove of Monoliths a final look. “The Grove of Monoliths isn’t a place which I can challenge. Not now, at least. Let’s go explore some other areas. Perhaps, after a period of time passes, that bugbeast will voluntarily depart from the Grove.”

Voluntarily leave the Grove? Even Ning himself knew that he was just daydreaming. The graymist creature had nearly lost its life. It probably would stay hidden within the Grove for a long period of time before leaving. It wouldn’t be surprising if it stayed there for at least a million years!

“Right, right. Maybe it’ll come out later,” Su Youji said supportively.

Time flowed on.

In the blink of an eye, more than five months had passed since the two had slain Foxblaze and Foxbold.

Within the core region of the Allgod Estate, the Castrum Divinitus itself.

Whoooooooooosh.

The towering estate was an utterly dazzling sight to behold, emanating an aura of light that seemingly stretched off into infinity. Although the Allgod Estate took up nearly half of this entire chaosworld, the Castrum Divinitus itself was so high that it could be seen from the very ends of the world.

This was an utterly enormous castle that spanned trillions of kilometers! This was a place which spelled doom for even Samsara Daolords! A place none dared to enter rashly!

“We’re just one step away. Just one step.”

In front of the towering castle was an enormous plaza, and before the plaza were a flight of stairs. However, there were 108,000 steps to this flight of stairs.

Two squads of cultivators were advancing up the stairs. One squad had four World-level experts and was led by a small, skinny, blood-robed youth. This skinny youth had blood-red eyebrows, and his eyes seemed like a deep, bottomless sea of blood. Anyone who looked at him would be seized by uncontrollable fear.

The blood-robed youth walked at the head of his squad, and behind him were three World Gods with auras of tremendous power. These three World Gods all treated the youth with tremendous respect.

“Fukai! Ahahaha. You brought ten World-level servants in, but only two of them remain.” The blood-robed youth let out an ear-piercing laugh. “I think you should just surrender and commit suicide.”

“Surrender? To you?” The leader of the other squad was a golden-robed youth, and behind him were two World-level experts of tremendous power.

The golden-robed youth laughed coldly as he cast the other youth a sidelong glance. "Arroyo, you brought in ten as well but you only have three left. You aren't that much better off."

"I still have one more than you. One more servant means my chances are better," the blood-robed youth snickered. His bloodsea eyes were overflowing with a desire to kill, and he didn't disguise his intent at all as he glared at the golden-robed youth.

These two squads advanced simultaneously up the stairs, neither squad pausing to rest.

Soon, they finished the 108,000 steps and reached the very top of the stairs, arriving at the great plaza.

Both squads raised their heads to stare at the enormous castle before them, a castle so great that they could barely see the top of it clearly.