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[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 2: The Aeonian Kingdom

The maiden's lips curved upwards slightly as she turned to gaze in that direction in an intrigued manner.

Whoosh.

A figure suddenly appeared out of nowhere. It was the bald three-eyed man who was the First Guardian and Commander of the Castrum Divinitus – the Goldeye Golem.

“Eh?” Ning was slightly surprised when he saw the Goldeye Golem appear.

“Ji Ning, congratulations on having won the divine blood of the Eternal,” the Goldeye Golem said.

“You know my name?” Ning was rather surprised. During his conversations with World God Dragonbinder and the others atop the plaza in front of the Castrum Divinitus, Ning had never revealed his name. Any mention of his name would've occurred during their mental conversations, resulting in the likes of Fukai and Arroyo still having no idea as to exactly who Ning was.

“Nothing that occurs within the Allgod Estate can escape my eyes,” the nearby maiden said. “I heard about you from ‘Myriad Mountains’ quite some time ago. Enough. Go ahead and take a look. The Eternal blood is within that crystal globe.”

“Why is it going to me?” Ning was puzzled.

Although he was rather pleased, he was also quite calm. For most cultivators, what mattered the most was their insights into the Dao. This was what allowed them to reach higher levels of cultivation. As for treasures, they were of secondary importance! There was a limit to useful an outside source of help would be. Ning was already comparable to a master-class World God, but no amount of treasures would allow him to be comparable to a Samsara Daolord.

A Samsara Daolord who was skilled in illusions could instantly plunge Ning into an illusory world with a single glance. Ning wouldn't be able to resist it, and he wouldn't even have a chance to use any of his treasures. This was what happened when one was at a much lower level of cultivation!

“As I said,” the Goldeye Golem said, “After the trial of the Samsara Grinders comes to an end, the cultivator whose performance was the best will have a chance of acquiring the divine blood of the Eternal. You were the cultivator whose performance was the best.”

“Cultivator?” Ning blinked, then quickly understood.

“Ahaha, right! Cultivator! World-level cultivators are cultivators, but so too are Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals.” The Goldeye Golem roared with laughter. “Those two kids, Arroyo and Fukai? Hmph! How could I possibly let the Eternal blood go to them?”

“Eh?” Ning was puzzled. What was this all about.

“If it wasn't for you, then based on the rules which Master set down all those years ago, I truly would've been forced to hand the Eternal blood over to Arroyo. But since you came, me giving the blood to you

instead is still in keeping with Master's rules." The Goldeye Golem pointed towards the table. "Go open it up."

"Alright." Ning nodded, then walked over towards the table. He was quite curious as well. Both Arroyo and Fukai had an extremely large number of treasures, but they were desperate and willing to pay any price to acquire this Eternal blood. What sort of treasure was it, exactly?

The formation-spirit of the Castrum Divinitus and the Goldeye Golem exchanged glances as they watched Ning move towards the table. Both of them were smiling.

"Eternal blood." Ning walked to the table, staring at the crystal ball that was glowing with hazy light. After carefully inspecting it, he was able to tell that it was actually composed of two separate parts, an upper part and a lower part. Ning reached out to grab the crystal ball, then applied a bit of pressure to it. Whoosh! The two parts began to swivel in opposite directions. After Ning gave it a slight tug, the two parts completely separated.

In that instant...

BOOM!!!!

An utterly terrifying aura that was far beyond anything Ning could've imagined instantly blasted forth into his mind, striking against his soul and his truesoul.

Thud! Thud!

Ning's face was completely ashen as he took two heavy, stumbling steps backwards. His mind was completely blank, and the two halves of the crystal ball fell out of his hands and onto the ground with a crashing sound. However, the fist-sized globe of blood-streaked golden liquid that had been slowly flowing inside of the crystal ball continued to hover in midair. As it slowly spun and swiveled, it released an aura of utterly incomprehensible power.

Only after a long period of time passed did Ning manage to regain his faculties and recover from the sudden shock of that terrifying aura.

As soon as Ning regained his senses, he couldn't help but furiously retreat several kilometers before he was able to feel slightly less nauseous.

"Is that the divine blood of the Eternal?" Ning stared at the fist-sized globule of blood that was hovering in the air. He had never imagined that a single drop of blood essence could brim with such incredible power. He had encountered other Eternal weapons and had attuned himself to the exalted sword-aura that was located within Violetjewel's quintessence core, but this was the first time that he was completely shaking with terror.

It was his very soul that was shaking. He was utterly horrified! The aura from the blood alone had instantly caused his mind to go completely blank, rendering him completely incapable of thought.

"Right. This is the divine blood of the Eternal, the Eternal blood of Emperor Melobo," the Goldeye Golem said. "Years ago, Master was able to heavily wound Emperor Melobo, hacking off a large amount of his flesh. Master took that large amount of flesh and blood, then distilled it into this single drop of Eternal blood. This essentially represents half of the entire life force vitality of Emperor Melobo."

“Oh.” Ning nodded slowly.

“Remember. After you bring the Eternal blood out of this place, you absolutely must not open the globe.” The Goldeye Golem waved his hand, causing the two fallen halves of the crystal globe to fly into his hand. He resealed the globule of Eternal blood into the crystal ball, then locked it tightly. That terrifying aura instantly vanished. He then tossed that crystal globe, sending it flying towards Ning like a streak of light.

Ning caught it. Puzzled, he asked, “I cannot open it?”

“The members of the Aeonian Kingdom are able to sense this Eternal blood, but so long as you remain here in the Castrum Divinitus they will not dare to come and take it.” The Goldeye Golem explained, “But if you were to open the crystal globe while outside the Allgod Estate, the terrifying experts of the Aeonians will immediately pursue you upon sensing it.”

Ning was stunned. He hurriedly asked, “What is this ‘Aeonian Kingdom’?”

“Something which you weren’t meant to know about. Generally speaking, it is rare for even World-level experts to have any interactions with them. Still, once you break through to become a World God you will be an extraordinary figure. You probably should get a better sense of them now,” the Goldeye Golem said.

“Let me explain to him,” the maiden suddenly interjected.

“Fine, you explain.” The Goldeye Golem had a hint of a smile on his face.

The maiden looked at Ning. “The Endless Territories are filled with countless cultivators. Do you know what the most powerful organization in the Endless Territories is?”

“The Dao Alliance!” Ning said, then chuckled. “Senior ‘Myriad Mountains’ mentioned them to me.”

“Right. The Dao Alliance, an alliance that comprises virtually all of the cultivators of the Endless Territories.” The maiden nodded. “Cultivators are by nature unrestrained figures that like to do as they please. Why, then would they join together to form an alliance? It is precisely because there exist certain creatures which are born enemies to all cultivators.”

“Born enemies?” Ning was puzzled.

“Right.” The maiden nodded.

“As you probably know, the endless primordial chaos is filled with countless mysteries and has given birth to many unique races,” the maiden said. “Ordinary cultivators who originally started off as mortals were generally born on a chaosworld and slowly grew up there. Even natural-born Fiendgods are born from the Worldheart of a chaosworld.”

“However, there are some special types of lifeforms that are different. They were brought into being within the primordial chaos due to certain special, unique circumstances, and they have certain special abilities.”

“Then again... most of those creatures are fairly rare. In fact, some races might have just one or two representatives in all the Endless Territories. There is no way they can compete against the Dao Alliance.”

“However, there is one organization that can. We don’t know where they came from, and although they are fairly rare they number in the hundreds. Every single member of this race possesses at least the power of a Samsara Daolord,” the maiden said. “They set up the ‘Aeonian Kingdom’ and call themselves the ‘Aeonians’. Much like us, they need to engage in cultivation, but there is a major difference! If they can kill and devour other Samsara Daolords, they can grow much more powerful.”

“Devour other Samsara Daolords?” Ning was shocked.

“Right!” The maiden nodded. “Devour them, just like cultivators might devour food or fine wine. To them, Samsara Daolords are delicacies to be feasted on!”

The maiden continued, “The countless cultivators of the Aeonian Kingdom wish to grow more powerful and walk farther on their paths. The Aeonians, however, seek to devour us. Thus, we are born enemies.” The maiden’s gaze turned cold. “My master’s Dao-companion was devoured by Emperor Melobo, which was why Master went so berserk in his efforts to slay him.”

Ning’s heart shivered.

How could such creatures even exist? Creatures that could actually devour Samsara Daolords?

“As a race, the Aeonians are fairly few in number. It takes a long time for a new Eternal to be born, but they’ve been in existence for an even longer period of time. Multiple Eternal Emperors stand guard over their Aeonian Kingdom, making it so that even the Dao Alliance is unable to break into it.” The maiden laughed. “In all honesty, they don’t really matter that much. The Aeonian Kingdom is actually much weaker than the Dao Alliance, as the Dao Alliance is an alliance of all the cultivators of the Endless Territories. It has countless experts within it! The Aeonian Kingdom’s advantage lies in the fact that its members are extremely unified, with all of their experts living together in the same place. Their Aeonian Kingdom is also protected by an utterly inconceivable treasure. If it wasn’t for that treasure, they would’ve been wiped out by the Dao Alliance a long time ago.”

Ning nodded.

“The endless primordial chaos has given birth to many different races of creatures. This race, the Aeonians, rely on devouring our Samsara Daolords to grow more powerful. As a result, they are one of our most hated enemies. In truth, there are actually many types of lifeforms that are both more powerful and more numerous than the Aeonians. There are also types of lifeforms that both rarer and more individually powerful as well. They have existed for countless years and possess simply inconceivable amounts of power,” the maiden said. “However... the most powerful organization shall forever remain the Dao Alliance! The Dao Alliance has far more cultivators and its ranks are all but endless.”

Ning chuckled. It was true. The Badlands Territory was a perfect example. It was filled to the brim with cultivators; when did Ning ever see other types of lifeforms within it?

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Book 26: World Level Chapter 3: Unschooled in the Dao of the Sword

Ji Ning looked at the crystal globe in his hands, then asked, "So... what can I do with this Eternal blood?"

"This drop of Eternal blood isn't that valuable to the Dao Alliance. At most, they would use it to refine certain pills or rear certain unique bugbeasts," the maiden said. "However, it is incredibly, incredibly important to the Aeonians. This drop of Eternal blood is enough to allow any member of their race to skyrocket in power! It represents nearly half the vital essence of Emperor Melobo, after all. Almost half of his blood and flesh was used in the refining of this drop of divine blood."

"Any member of the Aeonians who knows that you are in possession of this blood will try to hunt you down and kill you," the maiden said.

Ning frowned. So it wasn't of use to him, but the Aeonian Kingdom would do anything to get it?

"Still, don't worry. The Badlands Territory is one of the fairly central regions of the Dao Alliance. The Aeonians would never dare to encroach upon this territory! At most, they would send some of their World-level pawns." The maiden continued, "To tell you the truth, both of us suspect that Fukai and Arroyo are most likely pawns of the Aeonians."

"Right. They want the Eternal blood too much, far too much. It doesn't make sense." The Goldeye Golem agreed. "The Allgod Estate has many rare treasures within it, but the only thing they care about is the Eternal blood. In addition, both of them led squads of ten World-level servants, have many treasures, and have Eternal weapons."

The Goldeye Golem shook his head. "They have so many treasures and such an extraordinary background, yet they are completely fixated on the Eternal blood and are willing to sacrifice anything to get it. This is more than enough to make us suspect that they are the running dogs of the Aeonians."

Ning nodded. Right. They had to be lackeys at the most, as true members of the Aeonians were incredibly rare and were all at least at the Samsara Daolord level.

"But of course, I have nothing more than my suspicions," the Goldeye Golem said. "In the end, they followed all of Master's rules as they made it through many dangerous regions to come to the gates of the Castrum Divinitus, then survived the trial of the Samsara Grinders. If it wasn't for you, I would've been forced to give this drop of Eternal blood to Arroyo."

"Right." Ning nodded.

"This drop of Eternal blood won't be of much use to you. Once you leave this place, hurry over to the Badlands Court," the Goldeye Golem said. "Tell Daolord Badlands that you acquired a drop of Eternal blood and that you wish to sell it to the Dao Alliance."

The nearby maiden nodded in agreement. "Daolord Badlands is extraordinarily powerful. Although he has yet to reach the Verge of the Daomerge, he is an impressively powerful Daolord of the Endless Territories. In Numerancy, at least, he can rank as one of the top three Daolords in all the Endless Territories. If he can advance by just one more step and reach the Verge, he'll most likely be every bit as strong as Master once was."

“As strong as Daolord Allgod was?” Ning was secretly shocked.

Daolord Badlands truly was an incredible figure. If he reached the Verge, he would be comparable to Daolord Allgod? No wonder even Daolord Solesky was so courteous to him.

“You needn’t worry that a power such as Daolord Badlands would lust after your drop of Eternal blood.” The maiden laughed. “Handing it over to him is the safest solution. If you mention it to the other Samsara Daolords of the Dao Alliance, nine out of ten would choose to simply kill you and seize it for themselves. Although this drop of Eternal blood isn’t that valuable to the Dao Alliance, they’d still be willing to pay a price of roughly two million cubes of chaos nectar to purchase it.”

“Two MILLION cubes?” Ning was rather stunned. This was like manna falling from the heavens!

Still, wealth and treasures didn’t matter that much. In the end, they were all outside sources of strength. Personal strength was what mattered the most!

“The Aeonian Kingdom would probably be willing to pay ten million cubes.” The maiden chuckled. “But there is no way the Dao Alliance would ever sell it to them. It would only result in an Aeonian expert becoming even more powerful and dangerous.”

“Two million? Ten million?” This was a simply staggering amount of wealth for Ning. Suddenly, Ning remembered his big brother Daolord Solesky telling him that he had given Daolord Badlands enough treasures to create two perfect avatars. This was all for the sake of convincing Daolord Badlands to assist him.

Ning immediately asked, “How much wealth would be needed in order for a Samsara Daolord to create a perfect avatar?”

“A perfect one?” The maiden grinned as she looked at Ning. “Most Samsara Daolords generally create simple and rather crude avatars. With each step they take, they tread the line between life and death, after all. Only after reaching an inconceivable level of power would they dare to go and create an avatar which could be described as ‘perfect’. Thus, you would probably need at least ten million cubes worth of treasure in order to create a perfect avatar! Even for Samsara Daolords who are at the Verge, this is a sum that represents all the wealth and treasures they possess.”

Finally, Ning understood. His big brother Daolord Solesky must have sold off nearly all of his possessions in order to acquire enough wealth to convince Daolord Badlands to help him. Daolord Solesky was a Palace Lord of Vastheaven Palace and had lived for countless years. This time, for the sake of his Daomerge, he had been willing to bring out almost everything he had.

“Ten million cubes is normally a sum which only Samsara Daolords at the Verge can produce,” the maiden said. “Normal, weaker Samsara Daolords generally have a network of just a few hundred thousand cubes of chaos nectar. In other words, this drop of Eternal blood is worth as much as all the combined treasures of multiple ‘ordinary’ Daolords.”

The Goldeye Golem said solemnly, “The endless primordial chaos is filled with countless hidden treasures. A single mysterious leaf might be worth millions of cubes of chaos nectar. For example, a single drop of Mirrorheart Water is worth enough to drive mad even a Samsara Daolord who is at the Verge. They’d be willing to spend ten million cubes of chaos nectar to buy such a treasure, but they

wouldn't find anyone willing to sell to them. However, all these things are illusory. Treasures are nothing more than outside sources of strength. In the end, success in cultivation requires you to rely on yourself."

Ning nodded.

When Daolord Solesky had gone to the Waveshift World, he had been searching for a special treasure. For the sake of finding that treasure, Daolord Solesky had first risked his life in the Windsorce Ruins to acquire that 'Talisman of Eternity', then paid an utterly enormous price to convince Daolord Badlands to help him out. They had then delved deep into the Waveshift World. From this, one could see that there were indeed some treasures that would drive even the most powerful of Daolords mad with desire.

"True. In the end, all treasures are nothing more than outside sources of help." The maiden sighed. "For the sake of his Daomerge, my master risked his life to find certain useful treasures and also invited many of his friends to help him out. He did everything he possibly could to prepare for his Daomerge, but in the end he still failed. However, there are legends of ancient powers who made no preparations at all. They naturally completed their Daomerge while sleeping and dreaming, winning eternity for themselves."

"In the end, cultivation is what matters the most." The maiden sighed.

Ning nodded. He had come to understand this point long ago. Honestly, everyone did, including Daolord Allgod and Daolord Solesky. However, they had reached the end of their cultivation path and were unable to advance any further. They had reached the Verge of the Daomerge but weren't confident in succeeding in it. It was only natural that they would go try and find treasures that might help them out and increase their odds of succeeding in their Daomerge.

"You now know how you should dispose of this drop of Eternal blood." The maiden pointed at the statues surrounding them. The great hall was a hundred kilometers in diameter, and its four walls were filled with thousands of statues. "Master personally carved all of these statues."

"Alchemy, artificing, formations... Master was skilled in many, many things. This is why he titled himself 'Allgod'," the maiden said. "Master even tried to train in the Dao of the Sword. For the sake of his cultivation, Master inspected the skills and sword-arts of more than five thousand World-level experts who walked the path of the Dao of the Sword. All of these World-level experts had completely different sword-arts."

The maiden continued, "After Master viewed their sword-arts, he carved these five thousand-plus statues."

"Every single statue is different and represents a different World-level cultivator's sword-arts," the maiden said. "After visualizing and mastering all of these different sword-arts and spending all this effort in carving these statues, Master's skill in the Dao of the Sword had reached the level of a new Samsara Daolord who specialized in sword-arts."

Ning was speechless upon hearing this. This sort of cultivation method was simply...

Viewing the sword-arts of more than five thousand World-level experts who trained in the Dao of the Sword? The entire Badlands Territory probably didn't hold so many experts of the sword!

After finishing his carvings, he had reached the level of a new Samsara Daolord who had ascended through the Dao of the Sword?

“Afterwards, Master gave it up. As he put it, he simply didn’t have any talent for the Dao of the Sword,” the maiden said. “Master actually spent a total of multiple chaos cycles in order to first master the sword-arts of all of those World-level experts, then carve these thousands of statues.”

Ning had indeed heard from the formation-spirit of the Ten Thousand Mountains that Daolord Allgod “wasn’t that skilled in the Dao of the Sword.” However, that was only in comparison to his other Daos. Daolord Allgod had been so incredibly skilled in other areas that he before dying, he had been able to set up a formation that frightened even Eternal Emperors. The golem he had made, the Goldeye Golem, was comparable to major powers who had reached the Verge of the Daomerge.

As for the Dao of the Sword? He was merely comparable to new Samsara Daolords who specialized in this Dao. By comparison, he truly “wasn’t that skilled in the Dao of the Sword.”

“Spend some time meditating on these statues. These five thousand-plus statues represent more than five thousand different types of sword-arts. Master often said that all Daos are linked. As a result, from these many sword-arts he ended up discovering a path that would allow someone to break through to become a Samsara Daolord,” the maiden said.

“Right.” Ning nodded, then walked over to stare at the statues. Suddenly, he turned his head and asked, “How much time do I have?”

“As much time as you want!” The maiden laughed. “You can spend one or two chaos cycles here if you wish. I trust that Fukai and Arroyo won’t wait outside the Allgod Estate for such a long period of time.”

“They are waiting outside?” Ning was slightly startled. He had already anticipated this possibility, but for it to actually occur still made him feel uneasy.

“Yes. The two of them did not wish to be given any blessings or treasures. Both of them chose to leave the Allgod Estate right away. If my prediction is correct, both are definitely waiting for you outside,” the maiden said.

Ning nodded, then laughed.

Who cared about them?

These statues represented more than five thousand different sword-arts. This was plenty to keep Ning occupied for a very, very long period of time. He would spend his time cultivating here. As for Fukai and Arroyo? They could just wait outside.

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Book 26: World Level Chapter 4: Ji Ning’s Path to the Dao of the Sword

Ji Ning said hurriedly, “Please assist me in something, seniors. Please tell my retainer, Su Youji, not to panic. She should simply wait for me patiently.”

“Sure, leave it to me.” The formation-spirit maiden laughed. “Spend as much time here as you wish. Whenever you wish to leave the Allgod Estate, just let me know and I’ll teleport both you and Su Youji

together. Oh, right. World God Dragonbinder is a member of your group, right? If he leaves on his own, he'll probably be ambushed and killed as well."

"Right." Ning nodded. "Please have World God Dragonbinder wait ten years after Su Youji and I leave. Only then should he leave."

Ning wasn't going to leave until he became a World-level expert. By then, even if World God Dragonbinder did join them he wouldn't be of that much assistance.

After making his requests, Ning walked towards one of the walls of this enormous hall. The walls were all filled with enormous sculptures that bore the likenesses of many different cultivators.

"How marvelous." Ning couldn't help but sigh in amazement as he stared at the statues.

"His sculpting skills were simply inconceivable." Every single sculpture had its own unique sword-aura. They were all completely different.

For example, the fiery idol which Ning had acquired earlier contained eight different types of Fire-attribute intent, as well as an incredibly powerful technique. As for these thousands of sculptures, every single sculpture contained a unique sword-intent. They didn't actually contain any specific sword-arts, but for an expert of the Dao of the Sword such as Ning, every single engraving and carving on those enormous statues was a sword-art.

"Explosive and dominating."

Ning stared at the sculpture before him. This sculpture had required more than ten thousand strokes of the sculptor blade in order to be created. Some of the strokes seemed rather crude and unsightly, but they slowly came together to form an increasingly marvelous whole. Clearly, as Daolord Allgod had watched this cultivator train, the Daolord had slowly gained an increasingly deeper understanding of the sword-arts involved.

"This one is ice-cold."

"Ephemeral and carefree."

"Strange and unpredictable."

"Dark and shadowy."

Ning stared at all of the surrounding sculptures, each one giving him a completely different feeling.

Ning was in no rush to meditate on them. He slowly strolled forward, carefully inspecting each statue.

This was a veritable sea of sword-arts!

Every single statue embodied a unique type of sword-art, and every single sword-art was incredibly profound. Ning was quite astute in judging these sword arts. He could tell that all of these sword-arts were at the level of a master-class World God's sword-arts. The reason why it had taken Daolord Allgod so many chaos cycles on this project was because simply finding more than five thousand master-class World Gods of the Dao of the Sword was an incredibly time-consuming process. During this process, Daolord Allgod made a breakthrough in his Dao of the Sword, rising to the level of a new Samsara

Daolord's mastery of the sword. If he hadn't made this breakthrough, he probably would've continued to hunt down more and more master-class World Gods.

Upon breaking through and finding his own path, he had understood the general direction which his own Dao of the Sword would follow.

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Outside the Allgod Estate.

Three figures were seated in the lotus position atop the clouds, their senses spread out to cover this entire chaosworld. If so much as a bug tried to fly out, they would immediately detect it.

These three were the blood-robed Arroyo, the gold-robed Fukai, and World God Boneplate.

They had immediately left the Allgod Estate, then ran into each other in the outside world. Fukai had wanted to fight with Arroyo, but Arroyo immediately began to berate him and curse at him. "You imbecile, I left the Allgod Estate before you. Would I be sitting here waiting for you if I had the Eternal blood? I would've left long ago! I didn't get the damn blood. If you don't believe me, I'll swear a lifeblood oath, alright?!"

Arroyo was willing to compromise because he wanted to make use of Fukai's strength! "That freak of an Elder God was the one to obtain the Eternal blood. If he's the cautious type, he'll probably stay inside the Allgod Estate until he becomes a World-level expert himself. He was already comparable to a master-class World God. Once he breaks through, he'll probably be as strong as I am. Fukai, the two of us will need to join forces if we want to be able to shut him down."

Fukai glowered. "Don't worry, Arroyo. If neither of us can get the Eternal blood, both of us will die. But you are overestimating that Elder God's abilities. Even if he does become a World-level expert, his sword-arts are far inferior to yours. He might have some incredibly powerful divine abilities or secret arts, but I wager he'll at most become a supreme World God."

Arroyo shook his head. "Don't underestimate him. We can't afford to make any mistakes."

"Agreed." Fukai nodded.

And so, the three of them had sat down in the clouds, setting up a permanent vigil over the entire chaosworld with their godsense.

After becoming a World God, one's soul and divine power would join together and be able to detect distant ripples of power through something known as 'godsense'. Chaos Immortals had something similar called chaosense, but the two were essentially the same. However, if one's heartforce was able to break through to the sixth level then one would truly have incredibly scanning abilities that could catch anyone offguard!

These three were all extremely formidable figures. It must be understood that even the Daofathers of the Three Realms were capable of scanning the entire Three Realms with their senses. These three mighty World Gods naturally found it quite easy to keep a constant vigil over an entire chaosworld. In fact, they were also capable of completely locking down the space around the chaosworld and making it so that no one would be able to teleport out of it.

“Once he comes out, he dies!” Arroyo’s eyes were filled with the crashing waves of a bloody sea.

“Kill him.” Fukai’s face was cold as well.

Either Ji Ning died or the two of them died! There were no other options!

Time passed on, day by day, but Ji Ning did not come out. As for the three World Gods, they waited like a trio of patient hunters, not growing restless at all.

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Within the Castrum Divinitus. Inside the Hall of Swords.

Ning was still slowly strolling through the hall, staring at each and every sculpture.

More than five thousand sword-arts, with no two sword-arts alike!

Ning was completely spellbound by what he saw. He felt as though he was swimming within a sea of knowledge. It was all too stunning. Ning had never felt this stunned before, not even when he had seen the many sword-arts which World God Northrest had created.

All of those sword-arts had been the product of a single cultivator, after all. These sword-arts were created by more than five thousand different cultivators. This was a completely different situation!

Every single cultivator had their own special insights into the Dao. They might create many sword-arts, but in the end the sword-arts they created would belong within a single overarching system. However, these thousands of cultivators were all completely different individuals with completely different backgrounds, thoughts, insights, and sword-arts. This truly was an all-encompassing selection of sword-arts.

“Long, long ago... before the weapon known as the ‘sword’ even existed... a creature picked up a long, flat piece of metal and used it as a weapon. Slowly, certain mysteries and insights were developed for the application of this weapon, this ‘sword’. The first sword-arts began to be created, and over time it was qualified to be described as a Dao of its own, the Dao of the Sword...

“Countless years have gone past since then. The trillions of cultivators of the Endless Territories have passed down many generations of legacies, resulting in the Dao of the Sword becoming increasingly profound. Multiple Samsara Daolords have found their own paths within it, and deep within the primordial chaos there lies a place which holds the true essence of the sword...

“But in the end... all of it stems from this single, seemingly simple weapon – the sword.”

Ever since that day long ago when Ning’s understanding of the sword had changed, the entire Dao of the Sword had changed in his eyes.

Through these thousands of sword-arts, Ning could see how all the different sword-arts advanced from simplicity to complexity and profundity. The carvings which Daolord Allgod had created represented himself and how he slowly learned more and more about the start. His earliest carvings were rather crude, but his later ones became quite marvelous. This made it even easier for Ning to understand and analyze them.

“So the tip of the sword can actually be used like this? That means ‘Blood Drop’ stance can be redefined in many new ways...

“So my ‘Shadowless’ stance isn’t sufficiently shadowless. This... this stance right here is what ‘shadowless’ truly means!”

Ning looked at one sword-art after another.

Everyone specialized in something different. Some sword-arts had truly reached the pinnacle in certain areas and exceeded Ning’s wildest imaginations. For example, Ning’s ‘Blood Drop’ stance could be described as a particularly ferocious and fast technique, but in this hall Ning saw at least a hundred different sword-arts that truly struck with the speed and strength of a celestial comet. These sword-arts were truly, incomparably dazzling.

This process of breaking down and comprehending the fundamental underpinnings of so many sword-arts resulted in Ning’s own insights rising at an incredible pace. Prior to this, Ning had reached a bottleneck in his attempts to master the third stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, the ‘Great Firmament’ stance. However, as Ning’s insights into the sword continued to rise, he slowly but naturally came to grasp and completely understand this stance. He broke through! He was now completely capable of advancing to the World level.

However... Ning did not!

He was completely intoxicated and mesmerized by this sea of swords. He didn’t want to let himself grow distracted.

He continued to mentally disassemble and inspect every single sword-art.

Slowly, a great tree began to take form within Ning’s mind. This great tree was the ‘true nature of the sword’, and it started off with more than five thousand branches, each branch symbolizing a specific type of sword-art.

As Ning’s insights continued to develop, some of the branches began to cluster together and grow into large boughs.

This was a truly priceless experience, an enormous bit of good fortune.

In fact, as far as Ning was concerned this experience was far more valuable to him than the Eternal blood. The Eternal blood was nothing more than a source of outside help, but these thousands of sculptures would help him grow more personally powerful. The unsightly markings left atop the sculptures were especially helpful, because Daolord Allgod had personally left those markings as he had studied the Dao of the Sword. Thus, the first ones were fairly simple and allowed Ning to dissect them in a fairly easy fashion. If everything was incredibly profound and abstruse, there would’ve been no way for Ning to analyze them.

The great tree in Ning’s mind which represent the Dao of the Sword began to grow larger and larger. More and more of the various branches began to congregate together and merge into large boughs. The branches began to grow fewer and fewer in number, from several thousand to several hundred, then to one hundred, then to a few dozen...”

Ning's mastery of the sword was constantly rising without him even being aware of it.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 5: The Fourth Stance of the [Nameless] Sword-Art

Time flowed on.

A fiery-robed maiden was seated in the lotus position next to a bubbling river of lava. It was Flamefairy Su Youji, who was meditating within the Castrum Divinitus on the karmic fortune she had been blessed with.

Su Youji stared in front of her, where a lotus was slowly swiveling within the bed of lava.

"This place is indeed a blessed place for anyone seeking to meditate on the Dao of Fire." Su Youji frowned slightly. "However, no matter how hard I try I am unable to make any further improvements whatsoever. Ugh. According to what the formation-spirit of Castrum Divinitus said, Master is currently meditating as well. I wonder how long he will take. It has already been more than three thousand years!"

Right.

Su Youji had been in the Castrum Divinitus for more than a thousand years already.

After spending a bit of time firming up her foundation, she had gained the power of an ordinary World-level cultivator. After spending nearly three thousand years meditating in this location, a blessed place for meditating on the Dao of Fire, Su Youji had advanced to become comparable to an elite World-level cultivator.

It must be understood that although Daolord Allgod was not skilled in the Dao of the Sword, he was incredibly talented in the Dao of Lightning, the Dao of Fire, and many other Daos. Su Youji had benefited greatly from her exposure to this place.

"I suppose I'll just have to keep waiting." Su Youji had no other options.

.....

"It's been three thousand years, but he still hasn't come out." Arroyo, Fukai, and Boneplate were still quietly keeping a watch over the entire chaosworld from their position above the clouds.

Fukai had a gloomy look on his face. "I imagine that this freak of an Elder God suspects something, which is why he insists on delaying and remaining within the Allgod Estate. However, breaking through to become a World God isn't an easy feat, even for a freak like him. Three thousand years? It is entirely possible that he might spend thirty thousand years or three hundred thousand years without making a breakthrough."

"Cut the crap and just keep waiting," Arroyo said coldly.

Both of them felt tremendous pressure, and this pressure caused their hearts to become filled with an intense desire to kill.

“All of those old bastards want to acquire the divine blood of the Eternal, but none of them dare to come in person. All they dare to do is send World-level experts like us for it.” Fukai was rather resentful.

“Right. They even made acquiring the Eternal blood part of our Awakening test.” Arroyo shook his head. “This is the Badlands Territory, and Daolord Badlands is one of the most skilled Numerancy experts of the entire Endless Territories. If any of those old bastards dared to enter the Badlands Territory, Daolord Badlands would probably be able to divine it right away.”

“Right.” Fukai nodded. Daolord Badlands was a very frightening person indeed.

The Endless Territories was an incredibly vast place. Not even Daolord Allgod would’ve dared to claim that he was the most powerful Daolord of the Endless Territories. Daolord Badlands, however, was ranked as one of the top three Numerancy experts of this entire realm! Numerancy experts like him would easily be able to predict and calculate when danger was coming without even needing to leave the safety of his own home. The Aeonians were the hated foes of the entire Dao Alliance. If any Aeonian dared to enter this place, he would find it almost impossible to avoid the Numerancy divinations of Daolord Badlands.

In addition, this was one of the central regions of the Dao Alliance. Once the Aeonian’s presence was discovered, there would be no way for him to escape.

This was why Aeonians, as a race, generally tried to avoid the terrifying members of the Dao Alliance whose Numerancy skills made them virtually omniscient. Only the truly terrifying members of their race who were comparable to Daolord Allgod in his prime would dare to trespass through places like this.

“We have no one to blame but ourselves for not being able to Awaken ourselves,” Fukai sent mentally. “If we were able to become true Samsara Daolords on our own, Awakening to become true members of the Aeonian race, we wouldn’t have to risk our lives to pass this trial in such a manner.”

“Mm.” Arroyo nodded.

The two of them could rely on Pseudo Samsara Pills to make their breakthrough, but if they did so they would have almost no potential for any future breakthroughs. There would be no way for them to truly Awaken, nor would they be acknowledged as members of the Aeonian race.

They had to rely on themselves.

The alternate option was to have the Aeonian Kingdom help them Awaken, but an enormous price would need to be paid. Thus, the Aeonian Kingdom had given them a test. They were to bring back the Eternal blood of Emperor Melobo, and if they succeeded the Aeonian Kingdom would help one of them Awaken! The Eternal blood wasn’t that important to the Dao Alliance, but it was incredibly important to the Aeonian Kingdom, enough so that they would be willing to pay the price necessary to help one of their descendants Awaken.

Many of their descendants had done everything they could to fight over this mission. In the end, it had been Fukai and Arroyo who had managed to succeed in having it assigned to them.

According to the orders given by the Aeonian Kingdom, if they succeeded in acquiring the Eternal blood their status would skyrocket, and they would be Awakened to become true members of the Aeonian race.

But if they failed... they would die!

“Fukai, as per the lifeblood oath we swore all those years ago, once that freak of an Elder God appears we’ll have to work together to seize the Eternal blood from him. Once we acquire it, we’ll fight to the death. The survivor will take the Eternal blood back to the Aeonian Kingdom.” Arroyo looked at Fukai.

“Naturally.” Fukai felt quite confident as well. In a true life-and-death battle, he would unleash every single ability he had to offer. He truly didn’t fear anyone below the Samsara Daolord level of power.

“Three thousand years is nothing. Even if we wait thirty thousand years or three hundred thousand years, it would be worth it.” A cold light flashed through Arroyo’s eyes.

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Arroyo and Fukai waited impatiently on the outside. From the inside, Su Youji was left to speculate on how long she would have to wait for her master.

Ning, however, was completely absorbed within that sea of sword-arts.

He had never experienced something like this before!

Never in his entire life had he felt so confident in his own sword-arts.

Whoosh.

Ning appeared out of nowhere within the hall, then turned to stare at the thousands of sculptures on the four walls. At the very center of the hall there was a large pagoda-shaped tower. This was the Heavengazer Tower of Radiance.

Ning had spent almost every minute of every day meditating within the Heavengazer Tower, as he knew that completely dissecting and mastering these thousands of different sword-arts would require an incredibly long period of time. He naturally was going to make use of the Heavengazer Tower’s time compression abilities.

“I’ve finally finished meditating on every single sculpture, and I’ve reached my limit for now.” Ning waved his hand, putting aside the Heavengazer Tower.

Ning was filled with boundless vigor and excitement. As he stared at the surrounding statues, he bowed slightly and said, “Thank you, senior Allgod. If it wasn’t for you collecting all these sword-arts, how could I, Ji Ning, possibly have gained sudden enlightenment today?”

Ning was being quite modest in describing himself as having ‘gained sudden enlightenment’ today. There was nothing sudden about the hard work he had put in.

As a saying on Earth went, comparisons can be deadly. What were the strengths and weaknesses of a sword-art? An amateur wouldn’t be able to tell just by looking at it. Only by completely dissecting these sword-arts and carefully comparing them to each other would you slowly discover that while this sword-art was exceedingly profound in this area, it had certain flaws in other areas.

Why was it strong?

Why was it weak?

After dissecting all of those sword-arts, Ning had gained certain yardsticks which he could use to judge the qualities of various sword-arts. Slowly, he gained an increasingly deeper level insight into the Dao of the Sword. In fact, Ning now had a complete, systemic view of the Dao of the Sword that belonged to him and him alone.

These thousands of sword-arts could be divided up into several general categories. In the end, Ning had divided those five thousand-plus sword-arts into twelve primary categories. After ascertaining that his judgments were correct, Ning suddenly felt as though wide panorama had opened up before him. He almost felt as though no sword-arts were too mysterious for him to understand! Even if there were some which were so profound that he would not be able to understand them at present, if he was given enough time he would thoroughly master it!

This self-confidence came into being after he had finished visualizing these thousands of sword-arts.

“Let me test it all out using the [Nameless] sword-art and Violetjewel’s quintessence core.” Ning smiled slightly. In recent years, he hadn’t spent any time truly focusing on the [Nameless] sword-art. At most, he would just turn a small part of his attention to it when he learned something that would be relevant for it. Despite that, he had still long ago mastered the third stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, the ‘Great Firmament’ stance.

“The fourth stance of the [Nameless] sword-art – ‘Horizon’s End’. Quite profound, really.”

Ning quickly began to work on dissecting this sword-art, starting from the basic essence of the sword and then slowly working up to mentally executing the technique.

He spent a total of twelve hours on it.

“So that’s how it works. The creator of this sword-art truly was an incredible figure. This fourth stance is far more profound than those thousands of sword-arts I just finished analyzing.” Ning sighed softly in amazement. Still, he knew that although those thousands of sword-arts weren’t particularly profound in comparison, they had still served to help broaden his horizons and let him get a deeper understanding of the true nature of the sword.

It had only taken him twelve short hours for him to master the fourth stance of the [Nameless] sword-art.

“The fifth stance, then?” Ning began to meditate on the fifth stance, but a short while later he gave it up. “Even World God Northrest himself was only able to master the fifth stance. During the past three thousand years, I’ve been meditating in seclusion but haven’t gained any practical combat experience.”

Violetjewel suddenly appeared in Ning’s hands. “I suppose I should take a look at my sword’s quintessence core.”

Ning carefully attuned himself to the savage, murderous, yet exalted sword-intent that lay hidden within Violetjewel’s quintessence core. In the past, it was extremely hard for him to attune to it, but it was now noticeably easier. It took him a full day before he felt as though he could no longer make any further improvements or gain a better understanding of it... but the insights he did gain were more than enough.

Soon, Ning began to develop a new sword-stance of his own.

“This stance shall be the second stance of the [Quintessence Sword-Intent]. Since I developed it here in the Allgod Estate, let it be named the Allgod stance,” Ning murmured softly.

In his heart, Ning felt a hint of gratitude.

If it hadn't been for Daolord Allgod spending many chaos cycles of hard work in watching master-class World Gods train in the Dao of the Sword, then laboriously carve these thousands of sculptures, how could Ning have been able to gain such tremendous enlightenment in such a short period of time?

But of course, this was also because Ning's own understanding of the sword was a pure one that guided him straight to the true essence of the sword. There might be many other experts of the Dao of the Sword who had more profound insights than Ning, but when they saw these statues they would probably say, “I have my own path already. These differ from my Dao of the Sword.”

“Haha... I had planned on leaving this place after becoming a World God, but I didn't expect that this place would be far more valuable to me than the drop of Eternal blood.” Ning let out a heartfelt laugh. Not only had he mastered the third stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, he had even mastered the fourth stance. The third stance was all that was needed to become a World God!

These past three thousand years had been a truly transformative period of time for Ning.

His sword had now truly gained a soul of its own.

He had established a firm foundation for becoming a peerless expert in the Dao of the Sword in the future.

“Mm. Time to break through to the World level.” Ning sat down in the lotus position, calming his heart and soul.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 6: Breakthrough, World Level!

BOOM!!!

The heavens shook and the earth quaked as the chaos energy in the area began to oscillate wildly.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Two figures suddenly appeared in the plaza before the Castrum Divinitus. It was the bald three-eyed man and the formation-spirit maiden. Both raised their heads to stare deep into the castle.

“What a torrent of chaos energy.” The maiden let out a sigh. “This is causing a far greater disturbance than is usually seen when a cultivator breaks through to the World level.”

“You can't compare Ji Ning to ordinary World-level cultivators,” the three-eyed man said.

It must be understood that they were located within the Allgod Estate, but they were still able to see the chaos energy surging violently. One could imagine how huge the disturbance outside was! When the Flamefairy had made her breakthrough, the disturbance had been much smaller.

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“A breakthrough? It must be Ji Ning of Vastheaven Palace.” The formation-spirit of the Ten Thousand Mountains appeared at the top of a mountain peak in white robes. He raised his head to stare at the chaos energy pulsating through the skies.

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“The chaos energy seems to be shaking quite violently.” Even though Su Youji was located within the Castrum Divinitus, she could still sense that something was happening. “Did someone make a breakthrough? Was it Master?”

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Outside the Allgod Estate. The disturbance in the rest of the chaosworld was far greater than the disturbance within the estate itself. An utterly enormous chaos vortex had appeared high above the chaosworld, covering the entirety of the skies. Just looking at it would cause one’s heartrate to speed up.

“What a huge event.” The blood-robed Arroyo, the gold-robed Fukai, and World God Boneplate all raised their heads to stare coldly at the skies.

“That freak of an Elder God must have made his breakthrough,” Fukai growled.

“Most likely. Good. Now that he’s made his breakthrough, he’ll be coming out soon.” Cold light flashed through Arroyo’s eyes. “He lives up to being an Elder God who can battle master-class World Gods to a standstill. Look at the size of that thing! He has to be close to being on par with me by now.”

“Right.” Fukai nodded as well.

Both had extraordinary backgrounds and were extraordinarily talented. When they had made their breakthroughs, they had caused similarly shocking disturbances to the local flow of chaos energy.

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The Castrum Divinitus. Within the Hall of Swords.

Ning was seated in the lotus position, an endless torrent of chaos energy swirling around him and into his body.

Rumble...

Within his Jindan region. This had previously been a beautiful, peaceful place, filled with islands that floated within a sea of elemental energy. However... everything was now being destroyed and returned to the primordial chaos from whence they came.

The entire Jindan region had been reduced to a region of utter chaos.

“Sword-seed!”

A seed had appeared out of nowhere. This seed was a sword-seed that would naturally form once one reached the fifth stage of swordforce, the ‘Sword God’ stage. Generally speaking, it would be extremely hard to see it with the naked eye. However, now that the entire region had been reduced to primordial chaos it was now much more noticeable.

The entire region of chaos energy swirled around the sword-seed. It was the center of the entire region.

“The sixth stage of swordforce – Sword World!” A voice echoed throughout this world of chaos.

Whoosh....

This seed surrounded by sword-ki began to expand and transform. It slowly began to split open, allowing a sapling to emerge from its shell. Soon, the sword-seed had completely transformed into a small tree that was growing at an incredible pace. Its many branches began to furiously extend outwards as Ning poured his insights regarding the Dao of the Sword into it, nourishing it and allowing this tree which represented his Dao of the Sword to grow nonstop.

Rumble...

The tree continued to grow at an incredible pace, becoming thirty meters tall. Three hundred. Nine hundred. Eighteen hundred. Three thousand...

Ning’s insights into the Dao of the Sword were simply astonishing. As a result, his Dao-tree was growing to a similarly astonishing size.

Ordinary trees allowed the ground they were rooted in to be stable, while a Dao-tree would allow a Chaos Immortal’s Jindan chaos region to be stable. The presence of the Dao-tree would allow the Jindan chaos region to continuously grow and expand.

This Dao-tree represented a cultivator’s insights into the Dao!

Ning’s path was the Dao of the Sword, and so this tree was a tree which represented the Dao of the Sword! Of course, in the future Ning’s Jindan chaos region could give birth to other Dao-trees as well, ones which embodied the Daos of Water or Lightning. However, at present Ning clearly was not sufficiently enlightened with regards to these Daos. His other Daos were not at the World level yet. He might be able to form Dao-seeds, but there was no way for them to bloom and grow into trees.

The height of a Dao-tree represented a cultivator’s level of insights into a Dao.

Normal cultivators who had just broken through to become World-level cultivators would generally just have Dao-trees that were around a thousand meters tall! Only after stabilizing their foundation would their Dao-tree grow to become three thousand meters tall.

A Dao-tree of three thousand meters meant that one had become a ‘normal’ World-level cultivator.

A Dao-tree of thirty thousand meters meant that one was comparable to elite World-level cultivators.

A Dao-tree of 108,000 meters meant that one had reached the level of full mastery as a World-level cultivator.

For World-level cultivators, Dao-trees growing to 108,000 meters was the maximum possible limit. No World-level cultivator’s Dao-tree could ever grow any higher. Only if one found one’s own Dao and underwent a fundamental transformation would this limit be breached, allowing the Dao-tree to grow even taller and thicker. This was the level of the Samsara Daolord.

Rumble...

This Dao-tree became an increasingly towering presence within this region of primordial chaos, sprouting more and more leaves and branches. Every single branch represented a different sword-art which Ning had mastered. Because Ning had created many sword-arts of his own and had mastered thousands of sword-arts in the Hall of Swords, his Dao-tree was filled with leafy foliage.

15,000 meters... 24,000 meters... 30,000 meters...

The Dao-tree continued to grow.

It contained all of Ning's insights into the Dao of the Sword, and it clearly had an incredible foundation. When it reached 63,000 meters, it finally came to a halt and stopped growing taller, but its leaves and branches continued to stretch out in every direction.

It had three branches that were particularly thick. These three boughs represented the [Nameless] sword-art, the [Quintessence Sword-Intent], and the [Brightmoon] sword-art.

The bough that represented the [Nameless] sword-art emanated a boundless yet calm sword-intent.

The bough that represented the [Quintessence Sword-Intent] radiated an aura of savagery and violence.

As for the bough which represented the [Brightmoon] sword-art, it seemed to represent the vastness of the void itself, making it impossible for others to fully comprehend it.

"63,000 meters? It seems my insights into the Dao of the Sword are superior to that of most elite World-level cultivators, but is still quite a distance away from the level of full mastery." Ning understood that in cultivation, the latter stages were always the hardest ones. Still, he wasn't too far away from the level of full mastery.

"My insights into the Dao are somewhat inferior to the insights of master-class World Gods... but no matter how profound your insights are, what really matters is your ability to apply them."

It was common for two master-class World Gods to execute sword-arts that were worlds apart in power.

Ning had mastered the fourth stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, the 'Horizon's Edge', as well as the second stance of the [Quintessence Sword-Intent], the 'Allgod' stance. On a technical level, he was on par with the Starlord of Fogstone or God Emperor Blacklotus. Those two had been roughly on par with each other in terms of technique; Blacklotus' advantage primarily came from the fact that he had an Eternal weapon.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The entire chaos region began to furiously expand, devouring more and more chaos energy from the outside world.

At a time like this, having a first tier, second tier, or third tier Jindan no longer made any difference. Upon becoming a Chaos Immortal, everything would return to the primordial chaos from whence all things arose.

Generally speaking, most Chaos Immortals would have a chaos region of a certain predetermined size. As their insights expanded and their Dao-tree grew, the chaos region would naturally grow as well.

Because Ning had fused seventeen clones together, his heartforce and his Jindan regions were qualitatively superior to that of most cultivators, resulting in a larger chaos region. The Chaos Immortal energy he could draw upon would also be purer than that of most cultivators.

Training in a technique that allowed one to have many different clones then merging them together would indeed result in one becoming a significantly more powerful cultivator.

Ning had 'merely' merged seventeen clones, and so he hadn't become too ridiculously powerful.

Techniques like the [Thousand Bodies Sutra] allowed for the creation of a thousand clones. Once all those clones were merged together, one would be enhanced to a ridiculous level. Those who had successfully trained in the [Thousand Bodies Sutra] then broke through to become World Gods would have bodies that were comparable to the bodies of Samsara Daolords! This was proof of how truly incredible this technique was. Because Ning's own body was merely formed from seventeen different clones, his body was merely strengthened by a single small level.

Whoosh.

Ning could sense that the entirety of his Jindan region had been converted into primordial chaos. His Dao-tree was more than sixty thousand meters tall, and it was able to stabilize the entire region. A large amount of Chaos Immortal energy had taken form as well.

"This feels wonderful." Ning could sense his soul rapidly increasing in power thanks to it being nourished by his Chaos Immortal energy.

"Mmmm. I've already made my breakthrough as a Ki Refiner. Time to break through as a Fiendgod Body Refiner as well."

Ning was now at such an incredibly high level of insight that he was able to easily sense that every single cell in his body was filled with an urgent desire to transform and become stronger.

Boom!

.....

Things had just started to calm down in the outside world, and the flow of chaos energy had finally started to stabilize. All of a sudden, the chaos energy began to pulsate wildly once more as an enormous amount of it was drawn into the Allgod Estate.

"Eh?"

"Is that..."

The faces of Arroyo, Fukai, and Boneplate all tightened.

"It seems he simultaneously made his breakthrough as a Ki Refiner and as a Fiendgod Body Refiner," Arroyo said coldly. Ki Refiners generally found it somewhat easier to make their breakthroughs, while Fiendgod Body Refiners found it a bit more difficult. Arroyo himself had first broken through to become a Chaos Immortal, then spent ten thousand more years in training before breaking through to become a World God as well. Ning simply had too high a level of insight into the Dao, which was why he was able to easily break through as both a Chaos Immortal and as a World God.

“So what if he did? He still has to die.” Fukai’s eyes were filled with a murderous look. Since Ji Ning had made his breakthrough, he was sure to come out soon.

The Desolate Era

Book 26: World Level Chapter 7: Leaving the Castrum Divinitus

With the Sword World serving as his core, Ji Ning began to remold his divine power.

His divine power began to undergo a fundamental change, transforming him into a higher level of existence.

Boom!

Ning’s entire body suddenly burst apart, then instantly solidified into a total of a hundred jewels. These were jewels formed from divine power – godgems! A flood of chaos energy surrounded these jewels, causing more and more godgems to rapidly form.

The Dao-tree was the core of a Chaos Immortal.

The godgems formed the core of a World God.

But of course, if one was a dual refiner one would have both types of cores.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! One godgem after another continued to coalesce. Every single godgem had to be infused with sufficient insights regarding the Dao of the Sword, but the insights within each jewel had to be different. Thus, the more insights into the Dao of the Sword you had, the more godgems you would create.

Newly ascended cultivators who broke through would be able to generate a few hundred godgems.

Cultivators who had stabilized their foundations would generally have a thousand godgems and be ‘standard’ World Gods.

Upon gaining a total of ten thousand godgems, one would be at the level of an elite World God.

At thirty-six thousand gems, one would have reached full mastery as a World God.

In the end, Ning formed a total of exactly 21,192 godgems. This was quite comparable to the height of his Dao-tree, and was what Ning had expected. Thanks to the fact that he had fused seventeen clones together, the divine power contained within his godgems was slightly purer than the divine power ‘ordinary’ World Gods had.

“Condense!”

The twenty-one thousand godgems that were scattered throughout the area instantly began to surge to a central location, joining together into a human figure that had the form of a white-robed youth.

“While I’m making my breakthrough, I have an unlimited amount of chaos energy at my disposal. I need to hurry up and use it to fill up my azureflower region.” The azureflower seal appeared on Ning’s forehead as he sent his senses into the azureflower region within his sea of consciousness.

A single azure flower was fluttering within his sea of consciousness. It now looked even more dazzlingly beautiful than it had before.

Within this azure flower was the vast azureflower region. As Ning poured his divine power and his Immortal energy into it, both were absorbed and converted into that misty energy. The power of the mist took Ning's breath away; it was now unfathomably more powerful than it had been when he had been an Elder God.

A short while later, the mist condensed to form a single liquid drop. Ning could now sense a slight pressure weighing down upon his azureflower region.

When he had been an Elder God, he had only been able to manifest a maximum of thirty-six drops of this azureflower liquid.

"I wonder how many I'll be able to manifest now." Ning continued to condense more and more drops of azureflower liquid, pouring all of his divine power and Immortal energy into the azureflower region as he furiously drew upon the chaos energy of the outside world.

When one was making a breakthrough, one would have the ability to directly draw upon virtually limitless amounts of chaos energy! The cultivator making the breakthrough would be able to swallow as much of it as he could handle. When he could no longer absorb any more, everything would naturally come to an end.

"What is taking so long?"

"How can Ji Ning be absorbing so much chaos energy?"

Su Youji, Dragonbinder, the formation-spirits of the Allgod Estate, Arroyo, Fukai... all of them were uniformly stunned at the amount of time Ji Ning was spending in absorbing chaos energy.

However, what they didn't realize was that the chaos energy was entering Ning's body at an unprecedented rate. He had actually absorbed far more of it than they had imagined.

108 drops!

This was the new limit, the maximum number of azureflower drops which the azureflower region could hold. Every single drop of 'water' contained an utterly overwhelming amount of energy; Ning had to use up nearly his entire reserve of divine power and Immortal energy in order to create a single drop. In other words, the amount of energy the azureflower region had just absorbed was a hundred times as much energy Ning would've 'normally' absorbed after breaking through to become a World-level cultivator!

But of course, there were some cultivators who deliberately slowed down the energy absorption process when they made their breakthroughs, so as to get a better feeling for the overall process. Thus, while Ji Ning was furiously absorbing as much chaos energy as he could, Su Youji and the others all merely thought that he was just taking a long time. They didn't truly understand how much chaos energy he had sucked in.

"This feeling..."

Ning stood there within the Hall of Swords, a stunned look on his face. He lightly balled his fist together. BOOM! He could sense that he had enough power in his fingers to effortlessly crush a chaos star to pieces.

“This is ridiculous. How can this azureflower mist energy be so powerful?”

Ning had merged seventeen of the clones created by the [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods]. Now that he had broken through become a World God, he had the power of a half-step Daolord. And yet, when Ning activated the power of the azureflower mist energy his body underwent an utterly earthshaking transformation.

When the power of the azureflower mist energy filled his body, his body greedily drank it all in like a parched land drinking in the rain after a long drought. The azureflower mist energy filled him with vitality and life energy, giving his entire body such a terrifying amount of strength that Ning himself was frightened by it.

“With the azureflower mist energy reinforcing my body, I should be as fast as a Samsara Daolord,” Ning mused. “Where did these Nine Chaos Seals come from? They are ridiculously powerful!”

This technique was not only of great benefit to Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, it was of just as much benefit to World-level cultivators. This technique was simply unearthly. Someone who had mastered the [Thousand Bodies Sutra] would have a body comparable to a newly ascended Samsara Daolord... and Ning’s azureflower seal was just as marvelously effective as that sutra!

“Daoist Three Purities said that he found it within the primordial chaos. It seems that I should send my Primaltwin to wander through the primordial chaos surrounding the Three Realms. I wonder if I can find the original Nine Chaos Seal.” Ning had a feeling that these nine ridiculously powerful chaos seals had to have extraordinary backgrounds. His Primaltwin was already located in the primordial chaos outside the Three Realms and had nothing to do. He might as well send it out exploring.

In the instant that he made his breakthrough, his Primaltwin had also made its breakthrough. It now was also supported and reinforced by azureflower mist energy, giving it a level of power that was extremely close to that of Ning’s true body. Its only weakness lay in the fact that it didn’t have an Eternal weapon.

“I can’t get too cocky though. The endless primordial chaos is filled with many mysteries. The [Thousand Bodies Sutra], the Nine Chaos Seals... although such incredibly powerful techniques are very rare, they still exist. I was lucky enough to acquire one but I can’t let myself become too arrogant. As the saying goes, there’s always a taller mountain somewhere. Daolord Allgod was someone who was capable of slaying Eternal Emperors!” Ning quickly calmed down and quelled his excited emotions.

There were too many freakishly powerful figures in the endless primordial chaos. Hell, the entire race of Aeonians actually devoured Samsara Daolords for sustenance! As for Daolord Badlands, he was the number three Numerancy expert of the entire Endless Territories.

There were many might figures of simply incredible power. Ning might have a bit of power now, but compared to them he still wasn’t qualified to behave in a prideful, arrogant manner.

Hiss. Pop. A pool of lava bubbled and boiled, and next to it sat Su Youji. The Flamefairy was still waiting.

“That should’ve been Master making his breakthrough. He should be coming out soon, right?” Su Youji was waiting eagerly.

“Su Youji.” A figure suddenly appeared, materializing directly above the lava. It was the nearly-nude, barefoot maiden. “Come, it is time to leave.”

“Was it Master who made the breakthrough?” Su Youji asked.

“Yes.” The maiden nodded.

Space twisted and distorted around her as she was forcibly teleported away once more.

“Eh?” Everything around her became blurred and distorted. By the time it all came back into focus, Su Youji realized that she had returned to the great plaza in front of the Castrum Divinitus, the one which had held the trial of the Samsara Grinders.

“Master.” Su Youji immediately saw the white-robed youth who stood nearby.

Ning was just standing there, a sword on his back and an mighty aura of tremendous power radiating from his body. This was the aura of a World God.

“Congratulations, Master!” Su Youji said delightedly, “The Allgod Estate truly was a blessed place for the two of us. We both broke through to the World level here.”

“Yes, it truly was a blessed place.” Ning couldn’t help but think back to the Hall of Swords and its thousands of sword-arts. That place truly had been of tremendous assistance to him.

“Senior.” Ning looked at the nearby formation-spirit maiden. Although the formation-spirit didn’t have a cultivation base, it had lived for far longer than even many Samsara Daolords had. Here within the Allgod Estate, it could probably wipe out most Samsara Daolords with ease. For him to respectfully address the spirit as ‘senior’ was just proper.

“Please send me and Su Youji to the Grove of Monoliths within the Fog Sea,” Ning said.

“You are going to go to the Fog Sea first?” The maiden was puzzled.

“Yes.” Ning nodded.

“Mm. You might as well go solidify your foundation in the Fog Sea, I suppose.” The maiden nodded. “Go ahead.” After speaking, she waved a finger and caused space to twist and distort around Ji Ning and Su Youji. It was like a whirlpool had formed around them, swallowing them up and causing them to disappear.

.....

Mist billowed everywhere. This was the Fog Sea region of the Allgod Estate.

A series of spatial waves suddenly rippled out from a desolate patch of land, followed by Ji Ning and Su Youji appearing out of nowhere.

“Mm.” Ning could clearly sense the ripples generated by the nearby Mirrorsnow Painting. He couldn’t help but laugh. “That bugbeast is still hiding within the Grove of Monoliths. It has been several thousand years, but he remains hidden there.”

The Grove of Monoliths was a dangerous place, but Ning no longer feared it. The main reason he had come to the Allgod Estate was to acquire the Mirrorsnow Painting, after all!

“You scared that bugbeast witless, Master. If it hadn’t been for World God Foxblaze and his friend accosting us, the bugbeast probably would’ve died long ago. It knows we have a method to track it, so of course it is unwilling to leave the Grove,” Su Youji said.

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Book 26: World Level Chapter 8: The Battle in the Grove of Monoliths

“Come, let’s go to the Grove of Monoliths.” Ji Ning laughed as he began to walk towards the Grove.

“Are we really going there, Master?” Su Youji was rather worried. She had started to grow a bit nervous as soon as she had heard Ning ask the formation-spirit girl to teleport them straight to the Fog Sea. The Grove was one of the truly dangerous parts of the Fog Sea, and even supreme World Gods would only have a decent chance at best to escape from that place alive. It truly was a deadly place to venture into.

“Yes.” Ning glanced at Su Youji, then smiled. “But you won’t be needed for this battle. Just go into the estate-world when the battle begins. If you stay by my side, I’ll be distracted because I would need to protect you.”

Ning’s words were quite simply and ordinary, but Su Youji could sense the absolute self-confidence and the absolute dominance inherent in those words.

Her master had just broken through to become a World God, yet already possessed such incredible faith in himself?

Su Youji nodded slowly. “Alright. I’ll listen to you, Master. I still hope that you’ll be careful in your journey through the Grove.” She stared very carefully at Ning as she spoke, trying to find some clues from his aura regarding his current level of strength. Ning’s aura was that of a World God’s, but it didn’t seem as though there had been any other major changes.

Oh. One change was that Ning seemed calmer than before. Even though he was in a dangerous place, he seemed completely calm and unflappable.

“Master, why are you carrying that sword on your back?” Su Youji suddenly noticed the biggest difference. In the past, Ning would instantly materialize his sword when entering combat. He never kept it on his back before.

“I’m training,” Ning said.

“Training?” Su Youji was puzzled. How could carrying a sword on your back be considered training? Still, she didn’t ask any more questions.

Ning was carrying the Eternal weapon ‘Violetjewel’ on his back. By staying in contact with it at all times, he was able to better familiarize himself and attune himself to the quintessence sword-intent hidden within the sword’s core at all times. He was attuned to it every day and every night

It must be understood that if a mortal carried a blade with him at all times to the point of holding it when sleeping, that mortal would also be able to develop an extremely terrifying saber-art.

Habits such as this were quite important. Ning wanted to be attuned to the quintessence sword-intent at all times, as this would allow him to comprehend it more quickly.

Right now, Violetjewel was the strongest weapon which Ning had!

The fourth stance of the [Nameless] sword-art, 'Horizon's Edge', was on the same level as the second stance of the [Quintessence Sword-Intent], the 'Allgod' stance. If Ning used a different sword to execute these two stances, they would be on par with each other in power. However, because the Allgod stance was developed based on the quintessence sword-intent within Violetjewel, it would be much stronger when Ning actually used Violetjewel and its quintessence core. When Ning used Violetjewel to execute the two stances the difference was actually quite great, with the Allgod stance capable of unleashing several times as much power.

"You have to be able to protect yourself on your path of cultivation. Otherwise, you'll die an early death. I've now gained insight into both the [Nameless] sword-art and the [Quintessence Sword-Intent]. For now, I should favor the [Quintessence Sword-Intent]. It will let me unleash greater power in battle for now." Although Ning was able to estimate how strong he had become, he didn't know exactly how strong that was.

Only through battle would he be able to truly ascertain how strong he had grown.

"The Grove of Monoliths..." Ning stared towards a distant, fog-shrouded monolith that had been planted into the ground.

"Stay prepared. Have Blacksun and Wilddog do the same. All three of you should be ready to be summoned by me at a moment's notice," Ning said.

"Yes, Master. Be careful, Master." Su Youji had a worried look on her face.

Ning chuckled, then waved his hand and collected her into his estate-world. He then turned and headed off by himself towards the Grove of Monoliths, a small smile playing on his lips.

Enormous monoliths were planted throughout the Grove of Monoliths, with tens thousand of them having been planted in total. Quite a few of them had powerful bugbeasts coiling atop them.

As for Ning, he strolled into the Grove as though he was entering his own private garden.

An avian beast with bright red claws was currently coiled around the top of a giant monolith that was a few hundred kilometers away from Ning. The creature's eyes were shut in slumber, and every so often a few streams of fire would flick out from its nostrils as it exhaled, with the streams of fire swirling around an area of a hundred meters. As Ning moved towards the creature, he could sense it open its eyes. Its two eyes were filled with a cold, murderous look in them as it stared at the human cultivator who had trespassed on its territory.

"An Outsider..." The flying beast let out a low growl. "Die."

Its black wings suddenly spread out as it shot forth like a dazzling streak of electric light, moving far faster than the limits of the Heavenly Daos. This avian creature was actually quite formidable, far more

so than the crocodilian creature Ning had fought and pursued for the sword-ki painting. This creature had the power of an elite World God, giving it tremendous confidence in its abilities to deal with most Outsiders.

Even if it encountered someone stronger than it, it felt that it would at most be slightly suppressed. Once the battle went on for an extended period of time, other bugbeasts would soon begin to arrive. By then, the Outsider cultivator would have to choose between fleeing or dying.

“KREE.” An ugly screeching sound rang out from the winged creature’s mouth as its enormous bright red claws ripped towards Ning. As for its black wings, it swept them towards Ning’s head.

Ning continued to walk forward in a very calm manner. Why wouldn’t he be calm? Even when he was an Elder God, he wouldn’t have feared a bugbeast like this, much less now.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Spatial ripples spread out from those giant claws as they tore through the air and struck with power comparable to that of Rocky’s.

Finally, Ning moved.

Slash!

Ning’s arms suddenly stretched out to become many dozens of meters long, and his fingers chopped out like the edges of a sharp blade. He used his hand to stab directly into the avian creature’s brain, then pulled his hand back. A huge hole had appeared in the avian beast’s head, with the insides of its skull completely destroyed. Life fled from its eyes and it died on the spot.

Although bugbeasts were born and bred for combat and possessed incredibly powerful bodies, they had their own weak spots as well.

A dull look of amazement could still be seen in the creature’s now-lifeless eyes as its corpse fell from the skies, kicking up a storm of dust as it slammed into the ground.

Ning gave it a glance.

“Horizon’s Edge. This truly is a formidable technique created by an ancient power. It really is formidable!” Ning couldn’t help but mentally praise the technique. Just now, he had used his fingers to simulate the strikes of a sword. Because of his Seventh Cycle of the [Starseizing Hand], his two hands were now comparable to Dao weapons. Bugbeasts like these weren’t worthy of him drawing his true weapons.

The Horizon’s Edge technique could be summarized in one word – fast!

As soon as the sword struck, it would instantly be able to reach the very edges of the horizon! This is what was meant by the name, ‘Horizon’s Edge’. Ji Ning had simply struck out with his right hand, but the avian beast was given no chance to dodge or block whatsoever. The azureflower mist energy had given Ning incredible speed and power to begin with, and when he matched it with the Horizon’s Edge technique, he was able to strike even faster. Even bugbeasts with incredibly powerful bodies such as the avian creature would be unable to dodge it in time.

“AROOO!”

“GWRAAAAR!”

“KILL THE INVADER!”

“KILL THE OUTSIDER!”

The ripples generated by this sudden battle quickly spread out to cover the entire ten thousand kilometers of the Grove of Monoliths, causing the bugbeasts all began to furiously converge upon this location. This was the most terrifying aspect of the Grove! Formidable World-level cultivators could deal with these bugbeasts one or two at a time, but when they surrounded you and converged upon you in such a manner, you would have no choice but to flee even if you had the power of a supreme World God.

“Interesting. I’ll use you all to test myself out and see how powerful I have become.” Ning continued to stroll forwards, moving towards the direction of the crocodilian beast.

More and more bugbeasts began to appear within his field of vision. Some had enormous scaled wings, some crawled through the ground like centipedes, some were plant-type creatures with green leaves, while some looked almost humanoid and jogged across the land. All of them had auras of incredible power, but none of them were in a rush to immediately charge towards Ning. Instead, they continued to gather in number in the area around him. Ten of them. Twenty of them. Thirty of them...

They circled around Ning but didn’t attack.

“How crafty. Even though bugbeasts are stupid creatures, the ones who can survive to reach the World level are all quite crafty.” Ning chuckled as he glanced at the thirty-plus bugbeasts who had already arrived. All of these powerful creatures were staring intently at Ning, who remained as placid as a calm pool of water.

“Kill.”

“Kill him!”

Finally, they moved. A total of thirty-nine bugbeasts had arrived by now, and one of them was a towering humanoid bugbeast whose entire body was covered with sharp spikes. As it let out a furious howl, the other thirty-eight bugbeasts instantly began to charge straight for Ning.

Ning just stood there without moving, allowing these thirty-nine bugbeasts to attack him en masse.

Whoosh.

Suddenly, Ning stretched his hand out. His palms transformed in size, looking almost like utterly enormous palm-leaf fans that were filled with enough power to easily crush any chaosworld to bits. When he struck out with these titanic palms, the very skies themselves seemed to grow dim. At Ning’s current level of mastery, every single strike was filled with inconceivably profound mysteries and insights. He sent a palm smashing towards the head of the first creature to arrive, a fast-moving four-legged unicorn-like beast. BOOM! The four-legged unicorn’s head caved in so deep that it was pressed down through the neck into its chest. It died on the spot.

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Book 26: World Level Chapter 9: We Meet Again

The many bugbeasts began to swarm around Ji Ning. Some blasted streaks of energy from their mouths, while the bugbeast that was covered with green leaves suddenly sprouted many branches as it charged into close combat range.

It must be understood that during the trial of the Samsara Grinders, only master-class World Gods were capable of successfully fighting those many weak (but berserk) World-level golden warriors to a standstill. These bugbeasts, however, were far stronger than those golden warriors had been, with a small number actually being comparable to master-class World Gods themselves. One bad strike could knock you to the ground, and you would instantly be entangled by vines, branches, tails, and other flexible weapons. After that happened, you would be dead.

Swish.

A cruel shadow suddenly streaked out. Ning's fingers had pierced straight through the skull of a centipede-like bugbeast! The strike was simply too fast. As soon as Ning's fingers had moved, they had gone straight through the enemy's defenses.

Boom!

Ning's palms suddenly expanded to become enormous in size, and he furiously chopped down with the edge of his palm like a hatchet! The power of his blow smashed an airborne winged bugbeast directly into the ground, its body shattering apart into countless pieces.

Swish!

Ning's hands looked almost crystalline as they transformed into streaks of blade-light that lashed out, chopping straight through the head of the savage, humanoid-shaped creature that was completely covered with spikes.

It was a massacre. Ning's two hands were weapons of mass destruction, and the more he killed the more excited he became. He suddenly manifested the [Three Heads, Six Arms] technique and began to slaughter any bugbeasts who dared to move close to him.

"I've been having a wonderful nap for the past chaos cycle. Why has it taken all of you so long to deal with this invader? Why is he still not dead?" A turtle-shaped bugbeast slowly flew towards Ning from afar, but moments later it came to a sudden halt as its beady little eyes widened. It could see that there were now more than eighty bugbeasts gathered in the area.

The area was littered with shattered corpses. Normally, bugbeasts loved to devour the corpses of other bugbeasts, but right now no one was even thinking of doing such a thing.

All of them had been terrified by the slaughter.

More than fifty bugbeasts had been slain, and that white-robed sword-bearing youth continued to hold the complete upper hand in the battle as he continued to slay even more.

"Run away!"

Finally, the first bugbeast broke ranks and began to flee. Instantly, the teetering morale of the remaining bugbeasts shattered. They had only dared to continue the fight because of so many others being present, but they now lost all their courage and began to flee in every which way.

“He’s freaking terrifying. He killed more than half of them!” The turtle was so frightened that he immediately turned tail and fled.

“Ahahaha...” Ning suddenly transformed into a shadowy blur, his speed reaching incredible heights as his six arms savagely struck out in every direction. In the blink of an eye, more than ten more bugbeasts fell to the ground, dead. In the end, only eight of the bugbeasts that had surrounded Ning were lucky enough to escape with their lives.

Ning let out a laugh.

That had felt good.

He had utterly dominated them and massacred them, in the process getting a better understanding of his current level of power. During the trial of the Samsara Grinders, he had been able to easily defeat those golden-armored warriors, and he was now able to slaughter these bugbeasts with a similar degree of ease, including those master-class ones. They were like infants before him, easily slain by a casual blow.

This level of power completely and vastly surpassed that of a ‘supreme’ World God’s. Even if God Emperor Blacklotus came back to life, Ning would be able to easily defeat and slay him without even using Violetjewel.

“Everyone kept on talking about how strong those bugbeasts are, but I’m much stronger than them. Even if I completely rely on raw brute force alone, I’ve reached the Samsara Daolord threshold of power. My sword-arts, however, can allow me to better unleash my true power.” The reason why Ning was able to butcher these bugbeasts so easily was because he had the azureflower mist energy strengthening him as well as a terrifyingly strong divine body.

“Arroyo made certain breakthroughs on the Samsara Grinder and is now a transcendent World God. He probably has just barely reached the Samsara Daolord threshold of power as well. However, he can only reach that level when he unleashes his complete, full power in his strikes. Any random blow I unleash when using [Three Heads, Six Arms] is probably somewhat stronger than his full-force blows. If I was to use my Eternal weapon, Violetjewel... I think the power of my strikes would be enough to threaten even actual Samsara Daolords,” Ning mused.

However, he would only be able to threaten a Samsara Daolord who had just recently made his breakthrough. True Samsara Daolords who had been Fiendgod Body Refiners would have divine bodies that were just as strong as Ning’s, and they would generally have both Eternal weapons and more profound insights into the Dao! Given that they had other secret arts and divine abilities of their own... Ning was still some distance away from being able to battle them.

However, it was an indisputable fact that if Ning struck out with his sword, even Samsara Daolords would have to take his strike seriously.

“Flee.”

“Flee!”

The remaining bugbeasts in the Grove began to disperse and flee.

As for Ning, he could sense where the crocodilian creature was and the direction it was fleeing towards. Ning quickly advanced towards its direction, and on the way he was able to see quite a few magic treasures and weapons scattered throughout the grove. These were the spoils of war which the bugbeasts had taken from cultivators they had slain! Ning went ahead and collected them as he advanced through the Grove.

“That crocodile is still fleeing?” Ning’s speed suddenly skyrocketed.

Boom!

His speed instantly reached a terrifying new level as he blasted through the skies above the Grove. He almost instantly caught up with the blindly fleeing crocodilian bugbeast, which had been fleeing at its own top speed. “Who the hell was that invader, and why is he so strong? Everyone else is fleeing, so I guess I should flee as well. Right, right.” The crocodilian bugbeast hadn’t taken part in the fight, but it had begun to flee when the other creatures had fled.

Swoosh! Ning suddenly appeared directly in front of the crocodile.

The crocodile came to a halt, shocked. It stared in utter terror at the white-robed youth who had just appeared in front of him. It recognized this youth! Years ago, this youth had pursued him so tightly that he had nowhere else to flee but the Grove. However, back then the youth’s aura had been fairly weak; he had merely been an Elder God at that time. His aura was now much more powerful.

“He chased me through the Grove. Is he the one who wrecked it?” The crocodilian bugbeast was utterly terrified. Bugbeasts were sentient creatures and thus were capable of fear. Even in the Grove, it had merely been one of the weaker creatures present. How could it dare to battle against Ning now?

“Spare me, spare me!” As soon as Ning appeared before the creature, it hurriedly called out for mercy.

Ning blinked. He wasn’t in a hurry to attack. “It knows to ask for mercy at a time like this? Interesting.”

This was the first time that Ning had encountered a bugbeast which begged for mercy.

“Hand over your treasures,” Ning instructed. “If you hold back so much as a single item... don’t blame me for not having given you a chance.”

“Y-y-yes!” The crocodile’s entire body transformed into a stream of gray mist, and one treasure after another began to fly out of that misty region. Dao weapons, strange claws, scales, a scroll, Chaos treasures... a small pile of treasures appeared next to it.

“Everything I have is right here. I didn’t hold anything back.” The crocodile reformed and hurriedly spoke to Ning in an ingratiating manner.

Ning’s eyes lit up. The claws and those scales were the spoils of war the crocodilian creature had acquired from defeating other bugbeasts. Ning didn’t really care about them. However, that scroll emanated an aura of sword-ki that was particularly striking, and the fact that it was resonating with his own Mirrorsnow Painting told Ning that it had to be the item he was looking for.

Ning waved his hand, pulling the scroll over towards himself. He opened up the scroll to take a look. It was the painting of a palace.

“Man, these paintings really are ugly,” Ning muttered to himself, but he had a smile on his face. He put the painting away.

“Four paintings in each set. I now have the first and the third paintings in this set.” Ning turned away and flew back towards the Grove of Monoliths. The crocodilian creature nervously watched as Ning left before it frantically turned to flee once more, its four stubby legs moving furiously as it once more transformed into a streak of mist.

Ning had slain most of the bugbeasts in the Grove of Monoliths, and quite a few of them were in possession of valuable treasures they had acquired as spoils of war. Ning naturally was planning to collect it all.

Six days later, Ning emerged from the Fog Sea and returned to the Ten Thousand Mountains.

“It is time to leave.” Ning turned back to glance at the fog, sighing mentally.

He still remembered quite clearly the scene of him entering Undermoon Lake for the first time. Back then, Ning had merely been an Emyrean God and had viewed World God Northrest as a figure of utterly overwhelming power. Now, Ning was at an even higher level of power than World God Northrest had ever reached. There were very, very few individuals below the Samsara Daolord level of power who were a match for Ning.

“But I’m still far from being strong enough to reverse the flow of spacetime and bring her back to life.” Ning shook his head, then walked out of the mountains.

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The outside world.

Clouds were drifting high up in the skies. The blood-robed Arroyo, the gold-robed Fukai, and World God Boneplate were silently seated atop the clouds, continuously scanning this entire chaosworld with their godsense. They had completely suppressed their auras, and they looked like three hungry wolves who were preparing to pounce upon their prey. For now, their claws and their fangs remained hidden as they continued to quietly wait.

They were waiting for Ji Ning to emerge!

Rumble...

Suddenly, there was a spatial ripple.

Arroyo, Fukai, and Boneplate simultaneously turned to look towards a direction off in the distance. Even though they were millions of kilometers away, they were capable of seeing with great clarity a white-robed youth who had a sword on his back materialize in the air above the Allgod Estate. It was that freak of an Elder God whom they had been awaiting for so long.

“Eh?” Ning could sense their godsense and so he spread his own godsense out as well. As he did so, he also turned to look in their direction, and he immediately saw those three distant figures seated in the lotus position above the clouds.

In that moment, their gazes intersected in midair!

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Book 26: World Level Chapter 10: Hellwind Golems

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The three mighty World Gods flew through the air like three meteors, moving straight for Ji Ning at high speed. Although they were millions of kilometers away, they were able to arrive right next to Ning in a single breath's worth of time.

"Bold." Arroyo looked at Ning.

"You seem quite confident." Fukai's eyes were narrowed as he stared in a cold, weighing manner at Ning.

As for World God Boneplate, he quietly stood next to Arroyo.

Ning himself had reached the speed of a Samsara Daolord. Ning could tell at a glance that although these three were quite fast, he would be able to easily shake off any pursuit by them without even needing to use his Thunderlight Wings. Although the surrounding space had been locked down, preventing any teleportation, Ning's speed alone ensured that he could attack whenever he wished and leave whenever he wished. The initiative was with him.

Arroyo and Fukai never would've imagined that Ji Ning would vastly surpass them in speed as soon as he became a World God. For now, they were both filled with tremendous confidence.

"Hand over the Eternal blood," Arroyo said. "We're willing to trade treasures for it."

Fukai stared intently at Ning as well.

This was part of their agreed-upon plan. They wanted to first try and get Ji Ning to voluntarily hand over the Eternal blood. If they were able to acquire it by simply buying it from him instead of fighting for it, that would be ideal. They had many treasures and they didn't fear anyone below the Samsara Daolord level, but they weren't completely confident that they would be able to slay Ji Ning!

If Ji Ning completely focused on escaping... Arroyo and Fukai weren't certain if they would be able to catch him and bar his path.

But of course... if Ji Ning was unwilling to hand the blood over, the only option would be to kill him!

"You are willing to use treasures to trade for the Eternal blood?" Ning swept them with his gaze. "And what do you have to offer?" Ning couldn't even be bothered to deny he had the blood. No one here was an idiot, after all. They all knew the truth.

"We have treasures that are worth tens of thousands of cubes of chaos nectar. We're willing to use it to trade for your Eternal blood. You should be satisfied by this price." Fukai frowned.

"Ahahah... how generous!" Ning laughed.

"You are forcing us to fight." The killing intent within Arroyo's eyes began to strengthen. In the end, they were still just World-level cultivators. Although they had many treasures, for them to be able to produce

tens of thousands of cubes worth was already quite impressive. What, were they supposed to hand over their Eternal weapons as well? Only a fool would be willing to hand over his trump card treasures.

“Cut the crap, you running dogs of the Aeonians.” Ning’s face turned cold as he snapped at them.

The faces of both Fukai and Arroyo tightened.

“You are the running dog of the Aeonians!” Arroyo immediately snapped back.

“What, we’re members of the Aeonians just because we want the Eternal blood?” Fukai laughed coldly. “Not even the formation-spirit of the Allgod Estate would dare to claim that we are Aeonians. You, however, are quite audacious. How dare you sully us with such wild rumors!”

Neither of them would admit it, not even if it cost them their lives.

True Aeonians were all at least at the Samsara Daolord level of power, and they had auras that were completely different from the auras of normal Samsara Daolords. They could be recognized at a glance. However, the descendants and progeny of true Aeonians looked just like ordinary cultivators did. So long as they were not Awakened, there was no way to recognize them and there was nothing special about them.

Aeonians were mortal enemies of the Dao Alliance! Thus, any Aeonian slave who dared enter the territory of the Dao alliance would immediately be surrounded and attacked by all parties, once it was verified that they were indeed servants of the Aeonians. They were the common enemies of all cultivators!

As for Daolord Allgod, he absolutely detested the Aeonians. If the members of the Allgod Estate felt certain that Arroyo and Fukai were Aeonians, the Goldeye Golem and the other formation-spirits would’ve immediately attacked them and killed them. However, because there was no way to prove it, they had to follow the instructions left behind by Daolord Allgod prior to his death.

“The two of us were simply coerced by others to acquire this Eternal blood, that’s all.” Arroyo said coldly, “Hurry up and hand the Eternal blood over. Otherwise, today will be the day you die.”

“Oh? Will it?” Light suddenly flashed from Ning’s hands as sharp, icy sword swords suddenly appeared within them. This was a set of Dao weapons which Ning had acquired from the Grove of Monoliths, and it was one of the many Dao weapons he had plundered from that place.

This set of Dao weapons included six swords in total, each of which was a top-grade Dao weapon. They were incredibly sharp and perfectly suited for cultivators of the Dao of Water. These swords all seemed to be created from freezing cold ice, and thus Ning had decided to simply name them the ‘Frostice Swords’.

Ning believed that the six Frostice Swords were most likely weapons that had belonged to World-level cultivators. Of the Dao weapons Ning had found within the Grove, these six swords were the treasures which Ning liked the most. Not just anyone would be worthy of forcing Ning to use his Eternal weapon, after all. On the other hand, Ning wasn’t arrogant enough to try to fight Arroyo and Fukai barehanded either.

The faces of Arroyo and Fukai instantly turned cold and forbidding as well.

“Kill!” A fierce light flashed through Arroyo’s eyes as a total of eighteen golden golems appeared around him, each of which emanated with an aura of incredible power.

“Kill him!” Arroyo roared.

“Kill.”

“Kill.”

The eighteen golden golems suddenly transformed into a giant black-and-white tornado that moved incredibly fast as it charged towards Ning. The gigantic black-and-white tornado began to cause all sorts of strange phenomena in the surrounding area.

“There were actually eighteen of them?” Ning was rather startled, as Arroyo had merely used nine of the golems when he was fighting in the Samsara Grinders. Now, it appeared obvious that Arroyo had been limited by the rules of the trials back then. There were actually eighteen golems in total, nine of them Yang-aligned and nine of them Yin-aligned. When they joined together, they were able to cause tremendous disruptions to the surrounding fabric of space. In addition, each golem had the power of a master-class World God. Upon joining together into a formation, they were strengthened and would each have close to the power of a supreme World God.

When all eighteen of them fought together, they would be able to easily kill most supreme World Gods!

“Father bestowed this set of Hellwind Golems upon me. They are invincible against anyone below the Samsara Daolord level of power. Even though I’ve broken through to transcend past the supreme World God level of power, I’d still find it quite hard to battle these Hellwind Golems.” Arroyo was extremely confident in his golems.

“Careful!” Fukai suddenly shouted loudly.

“What?!” Arroyo turned pale.

Ning had manifested six arms and was wielding six of those Frostice Swords. He transformed into a white blur and was able to easily charge out of the encirclement of those eighteen golden golems, then charged straight towards Arroyo who was located the closest to him. In doing so, he clashed with two of the golems and actually knocked both of them flying backwards!

Ning’s eyes were filled with an utterly terrifying sword-intent and killing intent.

Arroyo held those two enormous scimitars in his hands, a dark look on his face. “What marvelous sword-arts.” He had to admit that in terms of intricacy, his saber-arts were inferior to Ji Ning’s sword-arts. Still, it made sense. Swords were more nimble and agile weapons than sabers to begin with. Sabers were weapons that focused on dominance and raw power. They were two completely different weapons.

Arroyo was still completely confident in his saber-arts. Those saber-arts had allowed him to transcend past the supreme World God level of power, after all!

“Die.” As Ning charged towards him, Arroyo suddenly chopped out with both of his enormous scimitars, unleashing two streaks of blade-light.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Two criss-crossing streaks of blood-red light appeared in the air, filled with auras of absolute dominance. They hacked straight towards Ning with an aura of simply terrifying power.

“Soleheart stance.” A black hole suddenly appeared in the skies, and both of those two terrifying streaks of saber-light were drawn into the black hole, the power of the black hole completely dispersing the two attacks.

Ning was simply too strong now. His sword-arts were clearly inferior to his foe’s saber-arts, and Ning was clearly using just Dao weapons while his foe was wielding a pair of Eternal weapons, but Ning had the benefit of possessing as much physical strength as ordinary Samsara Daolords did. This was what allowed Ning’s Soleheart stance to take these two streaks of saber-light head-on.

Whoosh! Ning borrowed momentum from the shockwave of the clashing attacks, shooting straight towards World God Boneplate who was standing quite close to Arroyo.

“Careful!” Arroyo’s face tightened.

Although Ji Ning was already quite freakishly strong as an Elder God, Arroyo truly had not imagined that Ning would become THIS powerful as soon as he became a World God. Just like that, the freak of an Elder God had become a transcendent World God as well? Alas, it seemed as though this newly ascended World God was indeed just as powerful as Arroyo himself.

In their original plans, World God Boneplate actually served a special purpose. However, given how powerful Ji Ning actually was, World God Boneplate was now of limited use in this battle. The problem was that everything had simply happened far too quickly. World God Boneplate simply didn’t have a chance to hide, and Ning’s own speed was far faster than Boneplate’s.

“No!” World God Boneplate was badly shocked as well.

Slash! Sword-light flashed as it pierced through the skies and pierced through Boneplate’s forehead. Ning yanked his sword downwards, causing World God Boneplate’s body to be bisected into two halves. Despite that, Boneplate hadn’t died yet.

“Get over here.” A rope suddenly appeared out of nowhere and twisted itself around Boneplate.

Ning was actually quite surprised by what had just happened. He mused silently to himself, “He didn’t even have a suit of Dao armor? His protective divine ability was quite weak as well.” Ning actually hadn’t expect his strike to go straight through the man’s body. If the man had been wearing a suit of Dao armor or had learned a half-decent protective divine ability, not even someone as strong as Ning wouldn’t been able to slice through his body with such ease.

Alas, Arroyo had quite a few servants and Boneplate was one of the weaker ones. Thus, he wasn’t given access to many decent treasures.

“Shit.” A look of fury could be seen on Arroyo’s face. Although Boneplate was originally one of his weaker slaves, right now he was his only remaining slave.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 11: When He’s Ill, Go For the Kill!

Arroyo was enraged, but Fukai was shocked.

Arroyo was quite powerful. When he exchanged blows against Ji Ning, the difference in power between the two wasn't that great. However, Fukai was merely a supreme World God and was much weaker by comparison. A shocked, angry look was now on Fukai's face. "How could this be happening? How could this freak of an Elder God be so powerful after breaking through to the World level? It appears as though even Arroyo is slightly inferior to him! Those eighteen Hellwind Golems aren't able to stop him at all."

"Come out." Fukai immediately produced his jade green globe.

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh...

One tiny jade green globe after another began to fly out of the first one. As they flew out, they quickly increased in size and began to release enormous, powerful bugbeasts. These bugbeasts all had auras of tremendous might and had the power of master-class World Gods. More than fifty of the bugbeasts appeared in the blink of an eye.

Even Ning was rather surprised upon seeing this. "What a fellow!"

Arroyo was a tough cookie. Apparently Fukai was no pushover either! It must be understood that although the Grove of Monoliths had held over a hundred bugbeasts, the number that had truly reached the master class could be counted on one hand.

Now, over fifty such master-class World God bugbeasts had appeared before Ning. Even supreme World Gods would be forced to flee or perish before such an onslaught of bugbeasts. Most likely, even Arroyo would be put into a very tough situation.

"On one side, we have a eighteen golems that are part of a set. On the other side, we have over fifty bugbeasts that are master-class World Gods in power."

Ning suddenly grinned. "Excellent. What fine treasures for the picking." Ning wasn't worried in the slightest.

"Kill him!"

Fukai pointed at Ning from afar and howled angrily, "Kill!"

"Kill."

The awe-inspiring army of bugbeasts charged towards Ning at the same time, their auras blasting outwards.

As for the eighteen Hellwind Golems, they surrounded Ning and furiously began to assault him once more. A look of delight appeared on Arroyo's face when he saw this. "Fukai finally pulled out his bugbeasts. When they work together alongside my golems, they should be more than strong enough to trap this freak."

Fukai's father was a member of the Aeonian Kingdom who specialized in rearing bugbeasts for them. Arroyo's father was also an Aeonian, but his skill lay in the art of golems.

Fukai and Arroyo were both considered Aeonian descendants. In fact, both were two of the most outstanding descendants of the Aeonian race.

It must be understood, however, that the price to forcibly Awaken any descendant of the Aeonian race was a staggeringly high one, so high that not even the Aeonian Kingdom could pay it with impunity. This was why they repeatedly sent their descendants to take on these danger-filled challenges!

Both sets parents would do everything they could to ensure that their progeny would win the chance to be Awakened, and thus they had each prepared special killer weapons as well.

Fukai's killer weapon was his horde of bugbeasts. Arroyo's killer weapon was his powerful formation of Hellwind Golems.

"That really is a lot of bugbeasts." A pair of wings suddenly appeared on Ning's back, flashing with electric light. It was the Thunderlight Wings! Ning's insights into the Dao of Lightning were now higher than before, with his insights into the Dao of the Sword having improved even more dramatically. As soon as he activated his wings they allowed him to stab through the air like a sharp sword, moving much faster than before.

Swoosh!

Ning was already quite fast to begin with. Now, he was being assisted by the Thunderlight Wings! He left behind a beautiful, solitary streak of light in the skies as he easily evaded both the fifty-five bugbeasts as well as the nearby Hellwind Golems.

And then... he charged straight towards Fukai!

"What?!" Fukai's face turned pale.

"How is he this fast?" The smile froze on Arroyo's face as he saw this. Ji Ning was too fast, far faster than the two had imagined! It must be understood that although these bugbeasts had the power of master-class World Gods, they were quite lacking in terms of technique. They had incredibly powerful bodies, and a number of incredibly fast avian bugbeasts were amongst their ranks, but Ji Ning was even faster!

This was because Ning's raw speed and strength were both comparable to that of newly ascended Samsara Daolords! This was a completely different level of power. Now that he had activated the Thunderlight Wings, the Hellwind Golems and the bugbeasts were only able to stare in a daze.

If they couldn't keep up with him, there was nothing they could do to him!

"Careful, Fukai!" Arroyo sent frantically. Although they had started out as rivals, Ji Ning was simply too formidable a foe. If Fukai died, his bugbeasts would lose their master. In fact, it was entirely possible that both they and the jade green globe would fall into Ji Ning's hands!

"Go!" Fukai willed it.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Three more bugbeasts appeared. These three bugbeasts were all incredibly muscular and covered with golden fur. Fukai then produced a metallic plate that was covered with many golden runes. He poured his Immortal energy into this Dao-seal, activating it.

Rumble...

A globe of golden light that was thirty meters long suddenly appeared, covering Fukai within it.

“Stop him!” Fukai ordered his three bugbeasts, then turned tail and began to flee.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The three bugbeasts were almost instantly knocked flying as a streak of lightning snaked past them towards the fleeing Fukai.

Prior to this, Ning had actively dodged past the many bugbeasts and golems. However, since there were now just three bugbeasts Ning didn't even want to bother avoiding them. In fact, if he wanted to he could've quickly killed all three of them. As Ning saw it, however, if he could kill Fukai and seize the jade green globe then all of these bugbeasts would fall under his control.

“I'll be owning these bugbeasts shortly. I can't bear to kill them.” Ning was clearly filled with confidence.

“He's too fast.” Although Fukai was fleeing in terror towards Arroyo's direction, Ning was quickly able to catch up to him. Fukai turned his head to look back at Ning, a horrified look on his face.

“BREAK!”

A streak of sword-light came hammering down upon him.

[Quintessence Sword-Intent], second stance – Allgod stance!

The Allgod stance and the Horizon's End were attacks of equal power when Ning was using other weapons. Only when Ning used Violetjewel was there a significant difference in power between the two.

The Horizon's Edge technique focused on speed. As for the Allgod stance, it focused on explosive and furious power!

It was as though an enraged dreadwyrms had appeared in the skies, slamming down with tremendous, earth-rending force towards the golden globe of light around Fukai. The golden globe of light shuddered and turned slightly dimmer, but Fukai was able to borrow from the momentum of the strike to flee even more quickly.

“I wasn't able to break through?” Ning frowned slightly when he saw this.

“What?! He was able to consume 20% of the power of my Dao-seal with just one blow?” Fukai shuddered in his heart. “My Dao-seal is capable of withstanding a full-strength blow from a Samsara Daolord, yet a newly ascended World God was actually able to destroy 20% of its energy with one strike.”

As Fukai was fleeing in terror, Arroyo was flying straight towards him. “Leave him to me. Use your bugbeasts to help me tie this freak down.”

“Alright.” Fukai understood that they had to work together in perfect unison if they wanted to kill this terrifying freak. Given how fast Ji Ning was, if he wanted to flee he would've fled long ago. Clearly, he felt absolute confident in his chances to win.

Ning watched as the many bugbeasts and golems surged towards him. As for Arroyo, he charged straight towards Ning with both giant scimitars held at the ready.

“That all you have?” Ning manifested [Three Heads, Six Arms], wielding a sword in each of his six arms.

“Kill!”

Every streak of sword-light that shot out was filled with terrifying levels of power and moved at incredible speed. Arroyo was immediately driven to the defensive. He did his best to block the attacks with his two scimitars, but he still forced into a rather ungainly position.

It must be understood that every single sword-strike Ning delivered was slightly stronger than Arroyo’s strikes. The thing was, Ning had six swords while Arroyo merely had two scimitars. As the saying goes, it is hard for two fists to defend against six hands! Arroyo found it extremely hard to defend against the attacks, and his saber-light continuously surrounded him as he completely focused on defending against the oncoming streaks of sword-light. He wasn’t able to fight back at all.

“Quick, quick, quick!” Arroyo frantically ordered his Hellwind Golems to hurry up.

“Move faster, Fukai!” Arroyo was yelling at Fukai as well.

He truly had begun to panic. As the saying went, if you focused exclusively on defense you would eventually lose. He felt as though he was walking on a tightrope, treading the fine line between life and death. Ning’s swords were simply too fast, and Arroyo felt as though he might slip up and fail at any moment.

Slash!

Just before the Hellwind Golems and the bugbeasts arrived, Ning finally managed to land a streak of sword-light against Arroyo’s waist. Arroyo instantly turned pale as he was knocked backwards by the force of that blow.

Boom! Boom! Boom! As the saying went, when he’s ill, go for the kill!

When experts fought, victory or defeat could be determined by the slightest of things.

Ning already held the upper hand to begin with, and he was so fast that his foes wouldn’t have any chance to recover from any mistakes. He sent out several furious sword-strikes on succession, each one landing directly against Arroyo. Arroyo was like a moth that had been swept into the raging waves of the sea, completely unable to resist whatsoever.

“N-n-no...!” Arroyo furiously did his best to fight back, but his two scimitars had been completely suppressed to the point that he wasn’t even able to chop out with them. Just at this moment, a black serpent suddenly appeared.

Generally speaking in a duel of experts, when one person was at a disadvantage that person would immediately flee.

Alas...

Arroyo wasn’t as fast as Ning. There was no way he would be able to escape.

The black rope quickly slithered forward like a viper, wrapping itself around Arroyo’s body. It quickly bound Arroyo up tightly, causing a look of despair to appear on his face.

He was finished!