

Desolate 871

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 22: Golden Oddbat

More and more black Oddbats died as the battle progressed, resulting in the cultivators relaxing slightly. Although the situation was still quite grim, they were no longer under as much pressure as they were before.

The chubby, fat-faced youth named World God Ninehearts suddenly turned his head to stare off into the distance, his face turning pale. He immediately shouted mentally to everyone, "Watch out!"

Whoosh!

A blurry figure suddenly appeared out of nowhere next to a tall, skinny World God who was dressed in black armor. The World God was already engaged in battle, but he hurriedly chopped out with the waraxe in his hands.

Clank!

Crunch!

The illusory figure suddenly seemed to wrap itself around the World God's head. Crunch! The head was bitten clean off. Only now did the other cultivators on the vessel see that the creature which had bit off the head of the World God was a golden Oddbat. The golden Oddbat's wings were spread out and its terrifying aura had completely enveloped the entire vessel. It then swallowed down the rest of the World God's body into its tummy.

"A golden Oddbat." The faces of all the cultivators present turned ashen.

Golden Oddbats were unique, legendary creatures of the Sea of Darkness. They were the most terrifying creatures that could be found in the Sea! Silver Oddbats were comparable to transcendent World Gods, while golden Oddbats were comparable to Daolords of the First Step. Powerful Samsara Daolords were able to easily slaughter golden Oddbats, treating their body parts as valuable treasures, but World-level cultivators viewed the golden Oddbats as utter nightmares. How many World-level cultivators were able to battle against Daolords of the First Step?

Ninety-eight cultivators were still alive, but the death of that single cultivator resulted in the strength of the formation dropping by nearly 30%! If the ninety-eight cultivators worked together, they would be able to withstand that golden Oddbat. The problem was that there were nine silver Oddbats and thousands of black Oddbats attacking them as well. The cultivators present simply didn't have any excess capacity to spare right now.

"Careful, everyone! Hold on for as long as you can. Brother Ninehearts, brother Loopwise, join me in fighting against that golden Oddbat. If we let it slaughter the others, all of us are going to die." The master of the flying vessel, the bald silver-eyed World God Poisonfeather, sent a hurried mental message to the others.

World God Poisonfeather, World God Ninehearts, and World God Loopwise were the supreme World Gods on the vessel who were not tied down in combat against a silver Oddbat.

“Hurry up and go.”

“Leave the other Oddbats to us.”

“Be careful!”

The other cultivators all gritted their teeth as they fought, doing their best to hold on as long as they could.

The three supreme World Gods Poisonfeather, Ninehearts, and Loopwise all transformed into streaks of light as they flew strange towards that golden Oddbat.

The golden Oddbat watched coldly as those three powerful cultivators charged towards it. It was extremely confident in its own powers. It was capable of avoiding the three, but why would it even see the need to avoid the three?

They were merely World-level cultivators. In the golden Oddbat’s eyes, these cultivators were nothing more than tasty snacks!

“Puny cultivators...” The golden Oddbat spread wide its golden, bat-like wings as the three cultivators reached its side. Supported and empowered by the group formation, they could be considered to have just barely reached the transcendent World God level of power.

“Light.” World God Poisonfeather had a solemn look on his face. He stabbed forward with the pike in his hands, a spot of light appearing at its tip. The surrounding area was completely plunged into darkness, leaving behind only that single tip of light.

“Die.” World God Loopwise completely transformed a savage, roaring wave of blood. Flickers of saber-light could be seen flashing within this wave of blood as it surged towards the golden Oddbat.

“If you don’t die, who will?” The chubby, fat-faced youth World God Ninehearts struck out with his long spear, causing spacetime to distort and fold in on itself. It seemed as though there was no way for anyone to dodge this spear no matter what.

These three were amongst the most powerful cultivators on this vessel. Although the other cultivators were furiously defending against the onslaught of the other Oddbats, they were able to spare a little bit of attention to watch this battle. When they saw these three killer moves being unleashed, they couldn’t help but feel a hint of eagerness.

Rumble...

The golden Oddbat suddenly flapped its giant golden bat wings. As soon as its wings moved, all of the chaotic spatial waves around it suddenly turned still... and then, the golden Oddbat itself became the source of all of the spatial waves in this area. Its flapping wings began to kick up an enormous spatial tempest as the wings began to rapidly increase in size, to the point where the wings seemed large enough to cover the entire vessel.

Poisonfeather’s lance, Loopwise’s saber-light, Ninehearts’ long spear...

Boom! Boom! Boom! A series of explosions rang out.

All three World Gods were knocked flying backwards. They slammed hard into the deck of the ship, all three of them vomiting out blood.

“How can this be?”

“How can it be this powerful?”

“Three supreme World Gods, supported by our formation, aren’t even able to withstand a single strike from it?”

“How can...”

The ninety-plus cultivators instantly felt their hearts freeze and their hopes vanish. Apparently, those three supreme World Gods weren’t even close to being a match for the golden Oddbat. Most likely, all of the supreme World Gods on the vessel would have to join forces in order to have a chance! Alas, the vessel was being assaulted by nine silver Oddbats and the thousands of black Oddbats as well.

“We are finished.” Some of the cultivators began to feel despair. They couldn’t come up with any solutions for dealing with these foes.

“In terms of technique or their mastery of the Dao, those three are my equals.” Ning had watched carefully as those three had charged forward. He had actually followed right behind them, watching them test out the golden Oddbat in the hopes that he could get a sense of how powerful it truly was.

As soon as those enormous bat-wings had flapped, the three World Gods had been knocked flying backwards.

Ning frowned slightly upon seeing this. He was quickly able to come to a series of judgments. “So it really is true! Oddbats are all incredibly dumb creatures. Even golden Oddbats are only talented in the Dao of Space because of their incredible innate gifts in this Dao. Despite that, their insights are only comparable to the insights of ordinary World-level cultivators.”

Oddbats. The black Oddbats had the intelligence level of ordinary human infants, and they knew almost no combat techniques at all. They relied entirely on their innate gifts to battle.

Golden Oddbats were far more powerful, but their insights into the Dao were merely comparable to the insights of ordinary World-level cultivators. They weren’t even close to being a match for Ning and the others in this regard.

“Its insights into the Dao are quite ordinary! The problem is that it is incredibly fast and possesses overwhelming physical power.” Ning’s eyelids twitched slightly. “Its body is incredibly tough. No wonder everyone says that the corpse of a golden Oddbat is a priceless treasure. Its various parts can be used to forge Eternal weapons.”

The claws, fangs, and tail of a golden Oddbat were all comparable to Eternal weapons. Its other parts were slightly weaker but still formidable. For example, its wings were soft but resilient, while its skin was quite smooth. Its entire body was terrifyingly strong, granting it incredible speed and strength. When it had flapped its enormous wings just now, it actually hadn’t used any intricate techniques. It had relied on its overwhelming superiority in strength to send those three cultivators halfway to Hell!

“Cultivators are truly useless.” The golden Oddbat spread out its enormous wings once more as it stood there atop the flying vessel. It turned its cold, insidious gaze towards the other cultivators on the boat. All of the cultivators began to feel a sense of despair. What were they going to do? How were they supposed to stop it?

“How boring. All of you can go die now. Ahahaha...” The golden Oddbat let out an ear-piercing laugh as it suddenly pounced towards the nearest cultivator, who hurriedly beat a frantic retreat in terror.

Swish!

A blinding streak of sword-light suddenly pierced through the air towards the golden Oddbat, colliding directly against the golden Oddbat’s sharp claws.

Clang! The golden Oddbat was brought to a momentary halt.

As for Ning, he couldn’t help but stumble backwards by three steps, each step so heavy as to cause the entire vessel to tremble.

Ning’s eyes narrowed as he stared at the golden Oddbat. He was now supported by the azureflower mist energy; with its energy supporting him, the additional power granted by the formation was almost negligible. “What terrifying strength. It is far stronger than I am.”

The golden Oddbat stopped moving as it turned to stare at Ning, weighing him.

The entire vessel fell silent. All the cultivators turned to focus on this sight.

Ji Ning had manifested three heads and six arms and was wielding six swords. He and the golden Oddbat were staring at each other intently from afar.

The golden Oddbat continued to stare weighingly at Ning, then let out another one of those ear-piercing laughs. Its voice echoed throughout the surrounding void as it said, “I didn’t expect to find someone so powerful here. You should be the most powerful person on this vessel.”

“That’s brother Darknorth.”

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth!”

The other cultivators were overjoyed upon seeing this. They were stunned at the level of power which Ning had just unleashed, but they were also filled with a powerful urge and hope to stay alive!

“But it is useless. You will still die.” The golden Oddbat let out that bizarre laugh. “All the cultivators on this vessel will die!” As it laughed, it transformed into a blur as it pounced straight towards Ning.

“Kill!” Ning didn’t back down in the slightest, charging straight forward with six Violetjewels at the ready.

Ning was like a streak of light while the golden Oddbat was like an illusory blur. The two instantly collided against each other! Ning possessed astonishing speed and strength, but the golden Oddbat was superior to even Ning in these two aspects.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The two instantly clashed dozens of times. No one dared to draw near the two of them.

BOOM! An enormous explosion rang out as the golden tail and the sword-light both struck the deck of the flying vessel at the same time, knocking it askew and flipping it over. All of the cultivators and Oddbats were sent flying out of the vessel. They all hurriedly moved to avoid Ji Ning and the golden Oddbat, who had now truly begun to fight.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 23: Terror

The Dao-tree Ji Ning's Jindan chaos region was now more than ninety thousand meters tall. His Sword World was incredibly powerful, and the six Violetjewels in his hands were Eternal weapons of ridiculous power. Ning also had the azureflower mist energy reinforcing him, making his body comparable to that of a Daolord of the First Step, and yet...

BOOM!

Ning was sent staggering backwards, but his swordplay remained orderly. He stared intently at the distant golden Oddbat.

"It is simply too physically strong." Ning felt genuine amazement in his heart. "It clearly has terrible combat techniques, but it is still able to suppress me."

The golden Oddbat's wings were spread, but its gaze was turned towards the other cultivators in the distance as it watched those ninety-plus cultivators fight against its many children. The cultivators were slowly gaining the upper hand as the number of black Oddbats began to decline, causing the golden Oddbat to feel rather impatient.

"Hmph, I'll let you stay alive for a bit longer." The golden Oddbat let out an ear-piercing screech as it shot out in a solitary arc, seeking to move past Ning and assault the other cultivators.

"What?!"

"Not good!"

The ninety-plus cultivators had all been paying attention to the battle between the golden Oddbat and Ning. They were all shocked to see the golden Oddbat head their way.

They all knew how incredibly fast the golden Oddbat was. Previously, the golden Oddbat had simply been so proud and arrogant that it had stood there without moving, allowing those three World Gods to assault it. It had battled against Ning for quite some time before it began to grow impatient. It set aside its pride, intending to move around Ning and slay the other cultivators instead.

"No running!" Ning let out a loud roar as the Thunderlight Wings suddenly appeared on his back. The Thunderlight Wings fluttered slightly, causing his speed to dramatically increase.

"Halt!" A dazzling, eye-catching streak of crimson-gold lightning suddenly shot out of Ning's forehead. This streak of crimson-gold lightning moved with incredible speed, far faster than the golden Oddbat itself. The lightning furiously smote the golden Oddbat with a direct blow! This was one of the streaks of [Novessence Thunder] which Ning had mastered.

Crackle! Hiss! The crimson-gold lightning completely surrounded the golden Oddbat's body. The golden Oddbat was so powerful that it could completely ignore the damage caused by the crimson-gold lightning, but the lightning had a powerful restrictive effect on it. It was like a supreme World God was doing everything he could to keep his arms wrapped around it, causing the golden Oddbat's movements to be encumbered.

Ning was incredibly fast to begin with, his speed being comparable to that of ordinary Daolords. Now that he was using his Thunderlight Wings, the two were fairly close in speed. Given that golden Oddbat was being slowed down by Ning's [Novessence Thunder], Ning was immediately able to catch up.

"Damn." The golden Oddbat was enraged.

"Good!"

"Well done, brother Darknorth!"

"Fellow Daoist Darknorth truly is an admirable figure."

Shouts of delight rang out from afar, as well as some laughter.

As Ning caught up to the golden Oddbat, his six Eternal weapons struck out like six blood-colored wyrms as he furiously assaulted the creature, once more stopping it in its tracks.

"Everyone, help me out by getting rid of the other Oddbats as soon as possible," Ning called out laughingly.

"Right on!"

"These Oddbats are easy to deal with."

"Hurry up, fellow Daoists. It isn't easy for brother Darknorth to fend off the golden Oddbat!" The cultivators could now see hope, and so they did their absolute best to wipe out the remaining Oddbats.

As for Ning, he continued to battle against the golden Oddbat in single combat while using the [Novessence Thunder] to bind it. The power of that crimson-gold lightning was completely applied to the golden Oddbat's body, causing it to be slowed down slightly. Ning couldn't help but sigh in amazement at how tough its body was.

"If I were to use the Elementum Waterflame Gourd and release the lightning it holds, it would definitely release more power than my [Novessence Thunder] possesses." Ning couldn't help but secretly sigh.

"The problem is that it would just be one level of power stronger. I would at most have the upper hand but I still would find it difficult to actually kill this golden Oddbat."

The Elementum Waterflame Gourd held two types of Dao lightning. Dao lightning was capable of sweeping aside almost anyone below the Daolord level of power! However, it was only capable of wiping out master-class World Gods in one strike; it was at most just slightly stronger than the [Novessence Thunder] which Ning had put such effort into creating.

When these two types of water-attribute and fire-attribute Dao lightning joined together, they would be significantly stronger, most likely capable of slaying supreme World Gods in one blow! They were capable of heavily injuring transcendent World Gods and have a major restrictive effect on Daolords of

the First Step. Alas, the golden Oddbat was simply too physically tough, and its claws, fangs, and tail were comparable to Eternal weapons in might. Even its skin and its wings, some of its weaker body parts, were comparable to Dao weapons. It would be extremely difficult for Ning to injure it with his sword.

“In addition, the Elementum Waterflame Gourd is an important treasure. I spent five hundred and fifty thousand cubes of chaos nectar for it! If I was to use it, everyone would be able to recognize it right away. Elementum Waterflame Gourds are incredibly famous Eternal weapons. If they recognize it... once these cultivators reach the other end of the Sea of Darkness, word of it being in my possession will spread and I’ll probably be in a lot of trouble.”

Although they were currently on the same vessel, a treasure worth over half a million cubes of chaos nectar was alluring for even many Samsara Daolords, to say nothing of World-level cultivators. The reason why Ning had purchased this treasure was to use it as a killer trump card! He would only use it in dire situations, when his very life was at stake. But of course, he also had it since he would need those two types of Dao lightning when training in the second part of the [Novessence Thunder].

“Kill! Kill! Kill!”

“Ahaha, this is fun.”

“Kill them all.”

Thanks to Ning tying down the golden Oddbat, the other cultivators slowly began to gain the upper hand as more and more Oddbats perished.

“Fellow Daoist Darknorth, just hold it off for a while longer. We’ll be ready to reinforce you soon.”

“We’ll be there shortly!”

The cultivators began to pick up the pace in killing the Oddbats.

As for the golden Oddbat, it let out a furious, ear-piercing screech. After having been tied down for so long, it finally couldn’t take it any longer. It roared furiously, “Let’s go, children! Let’s go! Go!”

Boom! The golden Oddbat flapped its massive wings, creating a terrifying spatial tempest as it began to flee off into the distance.

The nine silver Oddbats and the few surviving black Oddbats all hastily fled as well, moving at incredibly fast speeds.

Ning stared as the golden Oddbat disappeared into the distance. He didn’t try to chase it. If he did, he would probably be surrounded and attacked by all of the Oddbats! In addition, these Oddbats were born and bred here in the Sea of Darkness. They knew it better than any cultivator. If Ning really did give chase, he might well be led into and trapped within a dangerous part of the Sea.

“It is over.” Ning let out a sigh of relief. Being able to force these Oddbats into retreating was already an excellent outcome. Ning’s goal was to reach Vastheaven Palace, after all. It wasn’t to kill a golden Oddbat.

Atop the flying vessel.

The cultivators had all returned to the flying vessel, which once more began to accelerate.

“Brother Darknorth, it was all thanks to you that we made it. If it wasn’t for you, we would probably all be dead.”

“Haha, I’m embarrassed to say this, but all this time I felt certain that I was one of the strongest cultivators on this vessel. Now, it seems, brother Darknorth is capable of defeating me in a single blow.”

“We actually encountered a transcendent World God on this trip, eh? This truly is a rare occasion. Come, fellow Daoist Darknorth. Let me offer you a toast!”

The vessel was filled with the sound of laughter.

Transcendent World Gods, when supported by the power of their formation, would be comparable to Daolords of the First Step. Thus, most of them felt certain that Ning was a transcendent World God. What they didn’t realize was that Ning’s own azureflower mist energy was actually far stronger than their formation, which had provided him with just a negligible amount of assistance.

Ning, of course, wouldn’t tell them the truth. This was his secret.

“Without everyone else helping out, I probably would’ve ended up dying after being encircled by the golden Oddbat and thousands of other Oddbats.” Ning also laughed as he chatted and drank with the other cultivators.

The spatial waves within the Sea of Darkness remained as savage as ever. The ninety-eight cultivators continued to fly through the Sea within their vessel, chatting, drinking, and celebrating their victory. But just at this moment...

Whoooooosh.

An enormous, pitch-black opening suddenly appeared within the spatial waves around them. The opening was over a million kilometers in size... and a head slowly began to emerge from within it.

This head was utterly enormous, at least a million kilometers in size as well. Its two eyes were like two enormous blazing suns, and it was staring right at the flying vessel.

“What?!”

“Good heavens...”

“What is...”

The carousing cultivators aboard the flying vessel all stared wide-eyed in horror, as did Ning. They could feel their truesouls quivering in terror as an incredible, indescribable sense of danger crashed down upon them. This was a warning that the Destiny Sea was sending to them...

Whoosh. The enormous head opened its mouth, causing a pitch-black corridor of spacetime to appear. All of the cultivators were instantly drawn inwards towards its mouth. Ning was the strongest cultivator present, and he tried to activate his Thunderlight Wings to escape, but even he found it impossible to shake off that sucking effect.

The entire flying vessel was swallowed into the spacetime corridor of darkness located within the creature's mouth, as were all ninety-eight cultivators.

Spacetime was in a state of absolute flux within this dark corridor. Soon, the vessel and all ninety-eight cultivators completely vanished.

The blazing, sun-sized eyes of the titanic head swept the surrounding area with a glance, then slowly shrank back into the enormous dark cavity from whence it came. That enormous dark hole then vanished as well and the Sea of Darkness once more returning to its regular appearance.

However, the ninety-eight cultivators and the flying vessel they had been in had completely vanished from the Sea of Darkness.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 24: Taken By Force

A territory located unfathomably far away from the Sea of Darkness.

An enormous rhombus-shaped gemstone was located atop a chaos star, emanating ripples of power.

"I need to get closer to it. I can still move a bit closer."

More than a hundred World-level cultivators had been gathered here atop this chaos star. Their gazes blazed as they stared at the enormous rhombus jewel that had been firmly planted into the ground off in the distance. The ripples emanating from the jewel were being transmitted straight into their minds.

"A karmic fortune has been placed before me. I have to grasp it."

"I can keep moving closer."

The World-level cultivators were like children who had just started to learn how to walk. Every single step they took was incredibly difficult, and the closer they moved to it, the more invisible pressure was applied to their very truesouls. Despite this, they continued to strive to move closer to the rhombus so that they might more clearly hear the voice that was hidden within those ripples of power.

The voice was like the voice of the Dao itself.

Whoosh.

An enormous, pitch-black hole that was over a million kilometers in size suddenly and silently opened above that chaos star. A titanic head slowly emerged from within the hole, and it stared with its two blazing sun-like eyes towards the cultivators below it.

"What the..."

The hundred-plus World-level cultivators were disturbed from their reverie. They had been consumed by delight upon encountering this tremendous karmic fortune, but they now all stared upwards in shock at the terrifying head that had just appeared. Their truesouls were all shaking in terror!

Whoosh.

The enormous head opened its lips and inhaled, an enormous pitch-black spatial corridor appearing within its mouth. The hundred-plus World-level cultivators atop the chaos star were all drawn towards it, unable to resist its power in the slightest. They were all sucked into the spatial corridor, and even the rhombus jewel that had been planted onto the star was drawn in as well.

Gulp. The enormous head shut its mouth, then retreated back into the pitch-black hole which closed behind it.

Utter stillness was left behind in its wake.

.....

The Gelian Territory. This was one of the territories located beyond the control of the Dao Alliance. The Aeonians were in control of this territory.

Two beautifully dressed major powers were striding through the chaos of space.

Spacetime twisted and distorted around them. They seemed to be moving slowly, but each step they took allowed them to travel a far greater distance than World-level cultivators travelled through teleportation.

“Gorsch, you were actually willing to let little Gorho become apprenticed to me? That means if he becomes Awakened in the future, he’ll be considered at least partially my subordinate.” A dazzling beautiful woman dressed in long green robes chuckled merrily as she spoke.

“In all my years, I’ve never seen any descendants of mine who have more potential than Little Gorho. Although he is currently just a World-level cultivator, I’ve raised him and taught him so that he is capable of battling against Daolords of the First Step. And that’s not even his limit! His greatest skill lies in the Dao of Spacetime... and you are one of the top two masters of spacetime in our entire Aeonian race. Only by apprenticing himself to you can he truly reach the greatest heights possible in the Dao of Spacetime.” The silver-haired, middle-aged man had a look of desire in his eyes.

The silver-haired man continued, “The stronger one is prior to being Awakened, the more they will benefit after their Awakening, and the more potential they will have! I’ve watched as little Gorho grew up and taught him step-by-step. It is true that as your disciple, he’ll be considered as half your subordinate... but for the sake of his future growth, I decided to let you take advantage of me.”

“You are making it sound as though I’m taking huge advantage of you.” The green-robed woman laughed. “I’ll have to spend a lot of effort in teaching him, you know?”

“There aren’t many of us Aeonians, and there are even fewer descendants with as much potential as this child. Little Gorho can Awaken himself whenever he wishes, but been intentionally suppressing himself. Don’t pretend you haven’t won the lottery by gaining a disciple of such potential,” the silver-haired man said.

“Let’s make things clear from the get-go. Since he is going to be my disciple, I’m going to keep him by my side for a full chaos cycle,” the green-robed woman said. “You are not permitted to interfere.”

“Fine.” The silver-haired man assented.

The two chatted and laughed as they strolled through the void of space, quickly reaching a different chaosworld.

“Eh!?” The green-haired woman’s face tightened. A speck of golden light appeared in each of her eyes that shone down upon the surrounding region of spacetime. A solemn look on her face, she immediately said, “The spacetime in the surrounding area has been forcibly distorted.”

“Forcibly distorted?” The silver-haired man’s face tightened as well. He immediately sent out his senses to scan the entire chaosworld.

“Where’s little Gorho?”

“Why is he missing?”

The silver-haired man was stunned. “Why are even his servants... wait, even the protectors of this chaosworld are missing?” According to the rules he had set down, the protectors were absolutely forbidden from leaving without his permission as this was an incredibly important part of the territory of King Gorsch.

But now, all of the World-level cultivators had gone missing from this chaosworld, including his most cherished descendant Gorho.

“My subordinates would never leave without my permission. Someone must’ve slaughtered them or captured them.” Flames began to flicker around the silver-haired man’s body, and his eyes became filled with a murderous look. “If spacetime has been distorted here, we should be able to trace the ripples of spacetime to locate the person who did this. I’m going to kill him. I’m going to KILL HIM.”

“You can’t kill him...” The green-haired woman had an ugly look on her face.

“Eh?” The silver-haired man turned to look at her.

“I can’t find any traces at all. The person who twisted spacetime here is even stronger than me in the Dao of Spacetime,” the green-haired woman explained. “There’s no way at all for you to stop him if he chooses not to fight you.”

“Even stronger than you in the Dao of Spacetime?” The silver-haired man could hardly believe it.

“Who on earth did this?” The green-robed woman frowned. “Could it be the Dao Alliance? There’s only a few members of the Dao Alliance capable of doing such a thing, but would they really lower themselves to act against little Gorho? They wouldn’t, right...?”

.....

A blazingly hot chaos star. An enormous pitch-black hole suddenly appeared above it, followed by that gigantic head slowly emerging from within it. It opened its mouth and began to suck in the entire chaos star. The chaos star transformed into a blazing beast of fire with an aura of incredible power. Struggling to break free, it let out a furious roar: “Who are you?!”

“Time to come home, child.” The gigantic beast-head gave a simple reply, then sucked the blazing creature towards the pitch-black spatial corridor that had appeared in its mouth.

Whoosh. The blazing creature wasn't able to fight back at all. It flew closer and closer towards the spatial corridor, shrinking in size as it did before finally being completely sucked in.

The gigantic head retreated from the black hole, which quickly closed behind it.

.....

"How diverting." A human-shaped figure that was completely formed out of water was seated in the emptiness of space, staring curiously at the world around it.

Whoosh. A pitch-black hole appeared next to it, followed by the emergence of that titanic head.

"Little newborn child..."

The titanic head opened up its mouth and began to draw in the watery figure.

"Uh? Eh?" The watery humanoid figure found itself irresistibly pulled towards that spatial corridor. It watched with curiosity, not trying to fight back at all. This was because it didn't sense even the slightest bit of enmity or hostility from the seemingly terrifying creature before it.

.....

During this period of time, many powerful creatures mysteriously vanished from throughout the Endless Territories.

When Ji Ning and the other cultivators aboard the flying vessel were drawn into the spacetime corridor, they could sense space and time twisting around them. It was quite similar to the feeling of being transported through a spacetime transfer array.

"This is a spacetime transfer. Where are we being transferred to?" Ning and the other cultivators were all filled with unease. The behemoth which had sucked them in was simply too powerful.

Whoosh. Spacetime suddenly stabilized once more.

"Where are we?" Ning could now see that there were at the peak of a towering mountain. They had been teleported to this incredibly large mountain, and there were many other living beings here already. More than half were cultivators, and there had to be over a thousand cultivators gathered here.

Ning and the other ninety-seven cultivators first put away the flying vessel, then looked around cautiously.

"What is this place?"

"Fellow Daoists, where are we? How do we leave this place?" World God Xiang Lu immediately queried the cultivators who had arrived here before them.

A black-robed cultivator glanced at World God Xiang Lu, then slowly shook his head. "There's no way to leave. This mountain peak is surrounded by restrictive spells. You won't be able to take so much as a single step off of the mountain. As for the mountain itself, we aren't able to damage it in the slightest. To tell you the truth, we just got here a few hours before you did."

When Ning and the others heard this, their faces tightened slightly as pensive looks appeared in their eyes.

Right at this moment, yet another hundred-plus cultivators suddenly appeared out of nowhere. All of the cultivators looked quite lost and uneasy.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 25: The Most Powerful Kingdom

Ji Ning stared at his surroundings. Many of the cultivators who had arrived alongside him tested out the borders of the mountain peak, only to find that it was indeed surrounded by invisible restrictive spells. As for flying upwards, they were only able to fly roughly three hundred meters into the air before being unable to move another inch.

“What sort of restrictive spell is this?” Ning gave the invisible barrier in front of him a push. Even when Ning applied his azureflower mist energy, he was completely unable to budge the barrier in the slightest.

“That mysterious behemoth felt absolutely terrifying. Not even big brother Solesky or Daolord Badlands gave me a sensation of such absolute terror.” Ning was still amazed by this. Both Daolord Solesky and Daolord Badlands were extremely powerful Daolords of the Endless Territories. “Perhaps it was because the two of them were very kind towards me, which was why I didn’t sense much danger from them.”

“Master! Master!” Su Youji appeared by Ning’s side.

“Mm?” Ning looked at her.

Su Youji said urgently, “Master, I heard some of the cultivators say that they are from the Springman Territory and appeared here after being swallowed by that behemoth. Other cultivators said that they were from the Vastheaven Territory before being swallowed...”

Ning was startled.

The Springman Territory? Never heard of it.

The Vastheaven Territory? That was where he was headed towards.

They had all been swallowed by that behemoth? For a single behemoth of such terrifying power to exist in the Endless Territories was already quite impressive. Ning refuse to believe that multiple such beasts existed.

“After the behemoth swallowed us, it formed a spatial corridor within its mouth.” Ning reflected on this. “It would appear as though this mysterious behemoth is extremely, extremely skilled in the Dao of Spacetime. This might be the reason why it was able to appear within so many places in the Endless Territories in such a brief period of time.”

“Perhaps it isn’t actually that much more powerful than my big brother Solesky. It is probably just incredibly talented in spacetime.” This was what Ning told himself to console himself, but he also understood just how terrifying this creature had to be in order for it to appear in so many places at once.

It must be understood that Daolord Solesky had to physically, laboriously travel all the way from the Vastheaven Territory to the Badlands Territory, making usage of many spacetime transfer arrays on the way! The ability to effortlessly appear throughout the Endless Territories was an utterly inconceivable ability.

Ning consoled himself, telling himself that it was possible that the mysterious behemoth wasn't really that powerful. If this was the case, his chances of escaping would be a bit better. And yet, deep in his heart he knew the truth...

That the more likely possibility was that this mysterious behemoth was extremely, extremely powerful! Far more powerful than Daolord Solesky! It must be understood that Daolord Allgod was an example of someone who vastly outstripped Daolord Solesky. In fact, he had even been capable of chasing down and assaulting Eternal Emperors!

"What should I do? How should I leave this place?" Ning began to grow restless and nervous.

Was he supposed to just give up on his true body? Should he allow his clone in the Badlands Territory to once more work on rebuilding his main true body? It would be easy for him to rebuild his true body, but all of the treasures it was carrying... the six Eternal swords, the three Mirrorsnow Paintings, the Elementum Waterflame Gourd... there was no way to get them back.

"Where there is a will, there is a way." Ning decided to just wait patiently. "Since the behemoth went to the trouble of pulling us to this place, it won't just kill us for no reason."

Time flowed on, day by day.

One day, two days, three days... more and more cultivators appeared on the mountain peak, as did many other types of living creatures.

Twelve days passed in the blink of an eye.

More than thirty thousand cultivators were now present at the mountain peak, as well as many other living creatures that were usually quite rare. There were plant-based lifeforms, flame-based lifeforms, stone-based lifeforms, and more. All of them were incredibly powerful, and there were thousands of them gathered here. These were some of the rarest types of lifeforms in the Endless Territories!

"Master, it seems as though no one else is coming." Su Youji whispered softly to Ning from her position by his side.

"Yes. Half a day has gone by without any additional newcomers. I imagine we shall soon discover why we have been brought to this place." Ning continued to wait and watch patiently.

More time passed, enough to brew a kettle of tea.

Whoosh. Whoosh.

Two streaks of light suddenly appeared in the skies, moving towards the mountain peak with terrifying speed.

“What terrifying speed.” The many cultivators and other creatures on the mountain peak were all stunned. Those two streaks of light were simply too fast. Ning had previously witnessed other fast creatures such as the golden Oddbat, but there was simply no comparison!

Boom! Boom!

The two streaks of light landed onto the mountain peak, causing the entire mountain to tremble. Only now could everyone see them clearly.

It was a pair of powerful experts garbed in silver armor, one male and one female. The silver-armored man’s armor was covered with the imprint of a thunderbolt, whereas the silver-armored woman’s armor was covered with the imprint of a sword. Both emanated auras of tremendous power and majesty, causing the thirty thousand cultivators and other lifeforms to feel as though they could hardly breathe.

“Such power.” Ning could sense incredible danger radiating from the two. Although the two didn’t radiate as much danger as that mysterious behemoth, he was still certain that they could easily wipe out everyone present.

Behind each of the silver-armored duo was a pair of black-armored retainers.

The four black-armored retainers also had auras of tremendous power... and their aura was that of Samsara Daolords! Still, the auras weren’t that powerful; Ning felt as though they didn’t seem significantly stronger than the aura the golden Oddbat had.

“You have been selected by the almighty Hegemon from throughout the Endless Territories and delivered to this place. Quite a few of you possess tremendous potential.” The silver-armored man’s voice was deep, and it shook the entire mountain when he spoke. “Do not panic. For you to have been brought here, to the most powerful kingdom of the entire Endless Territories, is something of a tribulation, but it is an even greater blessing.”

When Ning and the others heard this, they all felt stunned.

Selected by the almighty Hegemon?

Was that mysterious behemoth this so-called almighty Hegemon? Ning suspected that this silver-armored man was an incredibly strong Daolord. For him to refer to someone else as an ‘almighty Hegemon’ was rather incredible. Still, when Ning thought about how that mysterious behemoth had been able to bring so many living beings from throughout the Endless Territories to this place, Ning felt that it made sense.

“The most powerful kingdom of the Endless Territories?” Ning muttered softly, “Can it be even stronger than the Aeonian Kingdom of the Aeonians?”

“Tremendous potential? Was our flying vessel captured because of me?” Ning mused to himself. He wasn’t being narcissistic; he was indeed an incredibly talented figure amongst his World-level peers. Even the amount of power he had revealed thus far was already quite shocking.

“Although you have been brought to this place, you are not yet citizens of the Brightshore Kingdom, the most powerful kingdom there is.” The silver-armored man said, “If you cannot become one of our citizens, you shall perish! If you wish to survive, you must become one of our citizens.”

“I am willing,” a cultivator immediately cried out. “I’m willing to become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom!”

Some of the cultivators who had been abducted to this place were incredibly talented monsters like Ji Ning and Gorho, but even more were ordinary cultivators. For example, most of the cultivators who had been on Ning’s vessel had wanted to take on Daolord Nihilate as master. They could tell that this mysterious Brightshore Kingdom was incredibly powerful. Most likely, joining it would be every bit as beneficial as becoming apprenticed on Daolord Nihilate.

“Not just anyone is qualified to become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom.” The silver-armored man glanced sideways at the cultivators as he spoke in a calm voice.

“There are five ways in which you can become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom. The first method and best method is to break through to become a Samsara Daolord. If you do so, you can become one of our citizens.”

Ning and the others were rendered speechless upon hearing this.

Become a Samsara Daolord?

Of the thirty thousand-plus cultivators who had been abducted to this place, not a single one was a Samsara Daolord. Breaking through to this level would be incredibly difficult.

“The second method is to be protected by one of our Samsara Daolords! Each Samsara Daolord is permitted to protect three of his or her friends, as well as take on a maximum of ten slaves,” the silver-armored man said. “If you are the friend or family member of a Samsara Daolord, you can naturally become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom as well. But of course, if you are willing to become a slave you are also permitted to continue living. Slaves are the lowest-tier members of the Brightshore Kingdom and will be assigned many labors, but at least they will be permitted to remain alive.”

Ning and the others frowned. Become slaves? Lowest-tier members of the kingdom? No one would wish for such a thing.

As for Samsara Daolords being able to protect three friends, this rule was most likely put into place because the Brightshore Kingdom understood that Samsara Daolords had people they cared about. However, Ning and the others had just arrived; how could they know any Samsara Daolords?

“The third method is the safest method. Go to the Hydragon Mountain in the Endless Territories and work there as a miner. If you can mine enough ore, you’ll be given your freedom and become one of our citizens. However, I have to warn you in advance that generally speaking, World-level cultivators will need to spend a thousand chaos cycles mining ore before they have enough.”

“Hydragon Mountain?” Gorho, unnoticed by the other cultivators, frowned slightly. “I heard Father speak of it before. Hydragon Mountain is a legendary place which is the birthplace of the extremely valuable hydragon gems. Supposedly, it has been occupied and monopolized by a mysterious organization. So that mysterious organization is actually this Brightshore Kingdom!”

The silver-armored man swept the cultivators with his gaze, a smile on his lips.

Mine for a thousand chaos cycles?

"I know that none of you are willing to laboriously mine ore for a thousand chaos cycles. However... in the future, many of you will cry and beg for the chance to go mine there." The silver-armored man said calmly, "The fourth option is simple. Survive for a thousand years in the third bugnest. If you are still alive after a thousand years, you can also become one of our citizens."

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 26: The Choice

"Survive for a thousand years?" All of the cultivators and special lifeforms atop the mountain peak were intrigued. All of them were at the World level and had been abducted to this place. To people like them, a thousand years was nothing. Ji Ning, for example, was going to spend more than six hundred years just traversing the Sea of Darkness.

If they merely had to spend a thousand years to become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom and be permitted to live in peace, everyone would be willing to do this.

However, that was assuming they were able to survive for a thousand years. From the sound of things, the third bugnest wasn't a very nice place to be.

The silver-armored man had a hint of a cold smile on his face. "It might sound easy, but I have to warn you that the third bugnest is a place which our Brightshore Kingdom uses for rearing bugbeasts. In fact, it is our third most important nest! It has many powerful bugbeasts within it, some of which are comparable to Samsara Daolords."

The silver-armored man continued, "Some of the bugbeasts there are weak, others are strong. There are even bugbeasts that are my equal in power, and all of them live within the third bugnest."

The silver-armored man laughed. "If you choose this option, the fourth option, you'll have to spend a thousand years living within the third bugnest! If you are lucky enough not to run into any powerful bugbeasts, you might be able to survive for a thousand years with ease! But if you are unlucky and end up encountering some of the stronger bugbeasts, you might die almost instantly. Based on what we've seen in the past, roughly one in ten cultivators will be able to survive option four."

Just one out of ten? The cultivators and special lifeforms atop the mountain peak all felt a sense of pressure.

Even the incredibly strong experts like Ji Ning and Gorho, as well as some of the mysterious lifeforms which possessed incredible power, immediately abandoned the notion of choosing this option.

This option required luck. They were World-level cultivators, and even the most monstrously talented of them were only capable of battling Daolords of the First Step! Bugnest three had many terrifying bugbeasts, and according to the silver-armored man some of the bugbeasts were just as strong as him! If they ran into those bugbeasts, they would most assuredly be doomed!

Truly powerful experts wouldn't be willing to accept such a luck-based outcome.

"The fifth option." A strange smile played around the silver-armored man's lips.

“Let me explain the fifth option.” The silver-armored woman spoke out coldly, her voice sharp enough that it seemed to stab into the truesouls of every single cultivator and special lifeform present. “The fifth option is to go live on the Astral Islands. All you need to do is stay alive. The opponents you encounter on the Astral Islands will all be World-level cultivators. You need to battle against them, and in the end the most talented individuals will be allowed to survive and leave.”

“Dare I ask what we will need to do on the Astral Islands?” A white-robed, incredibly handsome man who wielded a wooden staff in his hands spoke out.

The silver-armored woman glanced sideways at him then said calmly, “Once you go to the Astral Islands, you’ll be told. Simply put, your opponents shall be other World-level cultivators who were similarly abducted from throughout the Endless Territories. Only the most talented cultivators shall survive the island and be allowed to leave it! Roughly one in a hundred will survive.”

“What?”

“Only one in a hundred?”

“B-but...”

“This is crazy.”

“Everyone there is at the World level?”

All of the cultivators and special lifeforms, as well as the secret descendants of the Aeonians, were shocked upon hearing this.

In truth, Ning and the other extremely powerful figures were all leaning towards the fifth option, because in the fifth option their competition would consist solely of other World-level cultivators. They felt confident that they were far more powerful than the vast majority of their peers. They weren’t willing to risk their luck at the third bugnest... but on the other hand, it was true that the casualty rate for the fifth option was a bit too high.

Only one in a hundred would survive?

Even Ning was speechless.

Not even the Dao Alliance would dare to carry on such a competition. Every single World-level cultivator generally had masters or schools who supported them. The only reason the Brightshore Kingdom acted like this was because it had simply abducted outsiders from throughout the Endless Territories without caring about if they died or not. Only they would use such a brutal method to weed out the losers.

“Although I’m powerful, that’s just amongst my fellow cultivators. There are quite a few special lifeforms who were abducted to this place as well.” Ning’s greatest worry was having to deal with the special lifeforms. Some were weak, far weaker than cultivators even though they had some special techniques. Unfortunately, some were monstrously powerful.

Powerful special lifeforms usually were blessed with certain innate abilities that allowed them to be incredibly skilled in certain areas. For example, there were certain special lifeforms skilled in illusions who could possibly outmatch even World-level Heartforce Cultivators. It must be understood that Ning had yet to meet a single World-level Heartforce Cultivator to date!

“Just one in a hundred will survive. My opponents will consist of both the cultivators and the special lifeforms. What should I do? What should I choose?” Ning began to ponder this question.

“Five options. The first three options are very safe.” The silver-armored man and the silver-armored woman exchanged a glance. The silver-armored man said casually, “Become a Samsara Daolord, receive the protection of a Samsara Daolord, or become an eternal slave to a Samsara Daolord! Of course, you can also choose to go mining. These are all options with no risk to them.”

Very few would choose the first three options.

Becoming a Samsara Daolord wasn't something you could do just because you wanted it.

Receiving the protection of a Samsara Daolord wasn't that likely.

Become a slave? No one was willing to do such a thing. Few to no World-level cultivators would voluntarily become the slave of another. They all knew that becoming a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom would represent a tremendous blessing, but becoming a slave of the lowest caste meant that they probably would have no future prospects.

Mine for a thousand chaos cycles? That was way too long.

“The fourth option is to survive in the third bugnest for a thousand years. Roughly one in ten will survive.” The silver-armored man continued, “The fifth option is go to the Astral Islands and compete against your peers. One in a hundred will survive.”

Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh. Whoosh.

The silver-armored man waved his hand, causing four streams of light to instantly appear and partition off the mountain peak.

“Those who choose the second option, enter the first region. Those who choose the third option, enter the second region. This region is for the fourth option. This region is for the fifth option.” The silver-armored man casually pointed to each of the partitions in turn, then swept his gaze across everyone present atop the mountain. “Choose your paths.”

Everyone atop the mountain peak began to move. Many were hesitating, but the silver-armored duo didn't rush anyone. They just stood there and waited quietly.

Slowly, people began to make their choices.

A cultivator stepped into the second region. This represented a decision to go spent roughly a thousand chaos cycles in the mines. Only then would they have enough ore to become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom.”

“I'm too weak. My chances of surviving either the third bugnest or the Astral Islands are both too low.” The cultivator shook his head as he stood there.

After he made his choice, quite a few other cultivators began to make their choices as well. Most cultivators chose the third, fourth, or fifth options.

“Master, what should we do? What choice should we make?” Su Youji sent mentally.

“I’m choosing the fifth option,” Ning replied mentally. “You?”

This was the only choice Ning could make. There was no way he would choose the first three options, because he had to make it to Vastheaven Palace within a single chaos cycle! He’d only be allowed to leave after becoming a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom. There was no way Ning could waste time mining, and there was obviously no way he would be willing to become another’s slave. He also didn’t have the ability to become a Samsara Daolord right away.

As for the bugnest, that was purely a matter of luck. Ning absolutely wouldn’t leave his own destiny up to luck. In the end, he was more confident in his own abilities.

“The fifth option?” Su Youji hesitated momentarily. “Then I will choose the fifth option as well.”

“No need to push yourself that hard. This is a life-altering decision. Choose whichever option suits you the most,” Ning said.

“I choose the fifth option.” Su Youji gritted her teeth. “I know that I’m fairly weak, but with those bugbeasts you loaned me I should be able to hold my own. I’m unwilling to choose any of the other options.”

Ning nodded. As he saw it, most likely many of the cultivators would elect to choose the fifth option. Most of them would rather battle against other cultivators of the same level than to waste countless years of their life, become an eternal slave, or put everything up to luck.

Ning suddenly produced a bracelet then handed it to Su Youji. “Youji, this holds those eighteen Hellwind Golems. They won’t be of much use to me, but if you use them and your fifty-one bugbeasts you should have at least some chance of surviving this Astral Islands. I’ve already ordered the Hellwind Golems to obey you in all things. You’ll easily be able to bind them.”

“Master, they will be of help to you.” Su Youji began to grow nervous. She knew exactly how dangerous the fifth option would be, given that only one in a hundred would survive. Even special lifeforms would be taking part!

“Just take it,” Ning repeated.

Su Youji stared at the white-robed youth. At first, she had only elected to become Ji Ning’s retainer because of how monstrously talented he was. However, after the two spent more time together she slowly began to understand what type of a person Ji Ning truly was. Ji Ning looked peaceful and relaxed, but he wouldn’t readily acknowledge others. Once he did, however, he truly would treat that person as a lifelong friend.

Su Youji had always sensed that something was perpetually weighing on Ji Ning’s mind. She had tried to explore this topic but had never been able to make any progress.

“Let’s go.” Ning placed the bracelet in Su Youji’s hands, then strode towards the fifth option’s region. Su Youji nodded, following by his side.

More than thirty thousand cultivators and thousands of special lifeforms. Each made their own choices.

What truly surprised Ning was that twenty-three cultivators and two special lifeforms actually chose the second option. It must be understood that this was everyone’s first visit to this place. No one knew any

of the local Samsara Daolords, which meant choosing the second option represented choosing to become a slave.

“Anything really can happen, I suppose,” Ning mused.

There were benefits to becoming a slave as well. You would become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom, albeit one of the lowest-tier members, and would gain at least a modicum of access to the Brightshore Kingdom’s secrets.

The third option, mining. More than a thousand cultivators and a hundred special lifeforms chose this option.

The fourth option, surviving the bugnest. More than five thousand cultivators and two hundred special lifeforms chose this option.

The fifth option, surviving the Astral Islands. All the remaining individuals chose this option.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 27: Six Strata

Those who chose the other options were all escorted off by the four black-armored retainers. As for those who chose to attempt the Astral Islands, they were escorted by the silver-armored duo.

Actually, it wasn’t really ‘escorting’. They were simply dragged straight into an estate-treasure.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

The silver-armored man and woman flew off the mountain peak and towards a different part of the Brightshore Kingdom. They physically flew because it was impossible to teleport within the Brightshore Kingdom; flying was the only option! The flight would take quite a few days.

The eleventh day of their journey.

“Eh? I sense a disturbance.” Ji Ning and thirty thousand-plus cultivators and Aberrants were still within the estate-world. Ning could suddenly sense that his three Mirrorsnow Paintings were resonating with something far off in the distance. “Is there another Mirrorsnow Painting within the Brightshore Kingdom? I wonder if this is the one I need.”

After the silver-armored duo flew past this region, a strange alien lifeform with green reptilian skin suddenly emerged from the waters of the lake below. The creature raised his head to stare towards the skies, locating the silver-armored duo which was now billions of kilometers away. When the creature saw the silver armor, his face changed. “Was that a Mirrorsnow Painting? Those two major powers come from the Twelve Palaces. It should be carried by one of the World-level cultivators they abducted and are now escorting. Damn. I’ve already left the Astral Islands. There’s no way back.”

.....

Although Ning could sense the Mirrorsnow Painting, there was nothing he could do. In the end, they all spent more than a month and a half in the estate-world.

Whoosh.

Suddenly, all the cultivators and Aberrants were teleported out of the estate-world.

“Where am I?” Ning and the others all stared curiously at their surroundings.

Before them was an enormous dark abyss that devoured all light, making it impossible for any of them to see to the bottom of this abyss.

Directly above the abyss hovered a series of islands, each of which was merely three hundred meters or so in size. There were hundreds of thousands of these levitating islands! The dense cluster hung there in midair, continuously swiveling as they did so. Some were higher in the air than the others.

The bottom stratum held more than 99% of the islands. Ning estimated that there had to be more than three hundred thousand islands there!

The second stratum held roughly twenty thousand islands.

The third stratum held three thousand islands.

The fourth stratum held a hundred islands.

The fifth stratum held merely twelve islands.

The sixth stratum was the highest stratum, and it held only a single island!

“These are the Astral Islands.” The silver-armored man pointed at the levitating islands. “Every single Astral Island has a World-level cultivator!”

“Every one?” Ning could hear the others all murmuring. That meant more than three hundred thousand World-level cultivators were gathered here.

“The cultivators of the Astral Islands can only be promoted when they challenge cultivators on the same stratum or a higher stratum,” the silver-armored man said. “If you can gain ten consecutive victories against someone of the same level as you, you’ll be promoted to the next higher island. Win ten more times in a row, and you’ll be promoted once again. If you lose so much as a single fight... if you are lucky you will survive, but you’ll still be demoted by one level.”

Everyone’s faces turned pale.

Ning stared at the levitating islands. He finally understood what these levitating islands truly represented. The only island on the sixth stratum held a cultivator who had defeated at least ten of the cultivators on the fifth stratum before advancing to the sixth stratum. After doing so... others might challenge him, but he would have no one else to challenge.

“Dare I ask, what must we do to become citizens of the Brightshore Kingdom?” A cultivator spoke out right away.

“Don’t be impatient.” The silver-armored man smiled. “Choosing the Astral Islands was actually the best choice. Those who chose to become slaves have lost their futures, while those who went into the mines shall be there for a thousand chaos cycles. I’m amazed anyone would even consider those two choices. I really wonder what the hell they were thinking. As for those who chose the bugbeast nests... they probably doubted themselves and their level of strength, which was why they chose to test their luck.”

The silver-armored man looked at them. "All of you here, however, possess self-confidence and determination. You chose the path that has a 1% rate of survival."

The silver-armored man continued, "You'll engage in multiple duels here on the Astral Islands. If you want to become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom, the answer is actually quite a simple one. So long as you can acquire a complete legacy, you'll become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom."

"Acquire a complete legacy?" All of the cultivators and Aberrants present were puzzled.

"Right. Each time you defeat a foe on the Astral Islands, you'll gain a legacy heirloom which they possess," The silver-armored man said. "For example, a legacy created by a powerful Heartforce Cultivator might have been spread across 3600 legacy treasures. If you can gain all 3600 pieces and piece together the complete legacy, you'll be able to become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom."

"A heartforce legacy?" Everyone present, Ning included, was shaken and excited.

How could a legacy described as something created by a 'powerful Heartforce cultivator' by this mighty Daolord possibly be a simple one? It must be understood that there were a number of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals who were skilled in heartforce, but there were very few World-level cultivators of heartforce. As for Samsara Daolords who possessed heartforce? They were even more rare.

"Naturally. But of course, any such heartforce legacy would be spread across 3600 different treasures. This would be considered one of the most truly top-tier legacies. There are many other legacies that are merely spread out across a thousand legacy treasures. There are also some that are spread across five hundred or two hundred treasures. Once you reach the Astral Islands, you'll easily be able to detect which legacy treasure is located on which island, and you can go challenge the person who has what you want. But of course, that's only if you are qualified to request the duel. The sole cultivator on the sixth stratum, for example, isn't qualified to challenge anyone. He has to wait for others to challenge him.

"In short! If you can piece together a complete legacy, you can request permission to leave and become a citizen of the Brightshore Kingdom. If you piece together two complete legacies, you absolutely must depart."

The silver-armored man suddenly laughed. "But of course, you can always do what that person on the sixth stratum has done. He acquired a complete legacy, lost a few pieces of it on purpose, then won a second complete legacy, then lost a few more pieces of it... and as a result, he slowly built up a library of eight different legacies."

"What?"

"You can do that?"

Ning and the others were instantly rendered speechless.

If you pieced together one legacy, you could leave. If you pieced together two, you had to leave. There was actually a loophole?!

"The Astral Islands hold a total of ninety-nine mighty legacies, all of which are incredibly powerful." The silver-armored man laughed. "It is incredibly hard for ordinary citizens of the Brightshore Kingdom to gain access to such powerful legacies. However, ninety-nine priceless legacies are present here at the

Astral Islands. Unfortunately, they are spread across many different treasures. If you are strong enough, go forth and defeat the other cultivators and seize their treasures.”

The silver-armored man continued, “Remember this! Every day, you are only permitted to engage in a single duel. If you go a full month without a single legacy treasure to your name, you will be put to death. Thus, there’s no way you can avoid battle and just relax.”

Ning and the others immediately understood.

The losers would have their legacy treasures be seized! If they didn’t have so much as a single legacy treasure, the other cultivators wouldn’t even bother with them, resulting in them living unmolested lives. However... the Brightshore Kingdom did not wish for this to happen. If you didn’t have so much as a single legacy treasure for more than a month, you would perish!

The Brightshore Kingdom would put you to death!

The other World-level cultivators would also try to kill you!

The closer you got to acquiring a full legacy treasure set, the more difficult things would become. For example, if you had 199 legacy treasures and needed just one more, other cultivators might take an interest in you and try to kill you and take everything you had.

“Those who wish to try for the truly top-tier legacies will have an even higher chance of death. Those who go for somewhat weaker legacies will have lower casualties.” Ning understood this principle.

“This is a place of both great danger as well as great opportunity. Ninety-nine legacies! Haha, in the Endless Territories you’d risk your life countless times over without getting a chance at such a legacy. Here, every single one of you has a chance! In fact, you can do the same thing which this guy is doing?” The silver-robed man pointed at the the cultivator on the sixth level. “This one has already pieced together eight legacies. If you are strong enough, you can do the same.”

“But of course, you’ll need to be careful as well. Don’t end up dying.” The silver-armored man suddenly raised his voice. “Old fellow, create another 31091 astral islands.”

“Mm.” A deep voice rang out from within the dark abyss.

Boom! Boom! Boom! A series of stars began to suddenly arise from within that pitch-black abyss.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 28: Arrival

Ji Ning and the others flew past the various astral islands.

“Go.” The silver-armored man waved his hand, sending out an awe-inspiring blast of power that pushed at every single World-level cultivator. Even someone like Ning felt that this surge of power was nigh irresistible.

Ning followed that surge of power, allowing it to carry him forward as he flew towards the closest astral island.

“Master.” Su Youji’s voice rang out in Ning’s mind.

Ning turned to look at her.

Su Youji was far off in the distance. She had flown towards an astral island as well, but she was staring at Ning.

“Be careful,” Ning sent mentally.

“You too.” Su Youji had a look of longing in her eyes.

Ning couldn’t help but sigh mentally. There was nothing he could do. Once they had chosen to challenge the trial of the Astral Islands, every single cultivator would have to fend for themselves. There was simply no way for him to continue to protect Su Youji. He’d done everything he could. The rest was up to her now.

The various cultivators and special lifeforms all flew to their own islands, which then quickly descended to the lowest tier of islands. As for the silver-armored man and woman, the two simply watched from afar.

“Although the Hegemon didn’t grab that many people from the Endless Territories this time, he still managed to grab a few who have incredible talent and potential.” The silver-armored woman smiled.

“Mm.” The silver-armored man nodded.

The Brightshore Kingdom was one of the most mysterious and powerful organizations in the Endless Territories. It naturally had its own territory where its countless denizens dwelled, and it had its own World-level cultivators which it reared.

However, every so often the almighty Hegemon would abduct promising figures from throughout the Endless Territories. Generally speaking, he wouldn’t grab too many people, less than a hundred thousand. Compared to the vastness of the Endless Territories, this was a fairly small sum and so the other major powers were willing to tolerate his actions. Nobody wished to make an enemy of the Hegemon over something as minor as this.

“How many do you think will be able to make it onto the fifth or sixth levels?” The silver-armored woman asked.

“The fifth level? I’m guessing ten! As for the sixth... that’s hard to say. It’s possible that none of them will make it.” The silver-armored man’s gaze turned towards the very apex of the hundreds of thousands of astral islands, at that single solitary island that sat atop the sixth level. “Bertulu... I wonder which of our Twelve Palaces he will end up choosing.”

“Most likely it’ll be the Palace of the Heart or the Palace of Radiance.” The silver-armored woman sighed. “It has been a long, long time since our Brightshore Kingdom has encountered a peerless genius like him. He was originally just a rather intriguing special lifeform. Who would’ve thought that he would actually become the equal of the Ancient cultivators?”

“Right. The first time I saw Bertulu, I took him for an Ancient cultivator as well.” The silver-armored man let out a sigh. “What a dazzling figure! Even the Hegemon is paying attention to him. The Heart Palace

and the Radiant Palace are fighting fiercely over him in secret. Both sides hope that Bertulu will join them.”

“Unfortunately, he’s not skilled in the sword. If he was, I’d be hoping for him to join our Sword Palace.” The silver-armored woman shook her head. “Let’s go. Our mission is over.”

The two glanced a final time at the sole island on the sixth level, then transformed into twin streaks of light that quickly departed. Both of them knew that Bertulu was capable of breaking through to the Samsara Daolord level whenever he wished. Once he made his breakthrough... even though he would merely be a Daolord of the First Step, he would probably be just as strong as most Daolords of the Third Step.

If so, he would be every bit a match for the two of them. Even the Hegemon was paying attention to this peerless genius. The two of them viewed him as they would equals.

.....

Ning was walking through his quiet astral island. This island was merely three hundred meters in size, but it had a graceful little residence that was actually decorated with many unique statues. As soon as Ning had landed within this astral island, it had recognized him as its master.

“From this day forth, I’ll be staying here for quite a long period of time.”

With but a thought, Ning willed the residence to change in appearance, making it look like the houses he stayed in back when he had lived on Earth.

He pushed open the door to the home. Inside the home, there was actually a reclining sofa. Ning lay down on the sofa, then casually waved his hand, causing a golden book to appear and fly into Ning’s hands.

This golden book held records regarding the other three hundred thousand-plus islands. Every single cultivator on those islands held a piece of a legacy!

This book also contained an explanation regarding the ninety-nine precious legacies that were here.

“The number one legacy is the heartforce legacy, a legacy which was created by a Heartforce Cultivator who had reached the Verge of the Daomerge, Daolord Featherdress. This heartforce legacy is mysterious but very powerful. Every single Heartforce Cultivator stands at the very apex of power amongst cultivators of the same level. Daolord Featherdress was once the most powerful Daolord in all the Endless Territories! Alas, he failed his Daomerge. Before dying, he had slew an Eternal Emperor... and this legacy is just as valuable as the legacy of an Eternal Emperor’s! It has been separated into 3600 parts. If you gather the 3600 legacy treasures and merge them together, you shall gain access to this legacy.”

“The number three legacy...”

There was a detailed ranking of all ninety-nine legacies.

The most powerful legacies required a total of 3600 legacy treasures.

The weakest legacies merely required a hundred legacy treasures.

Although Ning was intrigued by quite a few of them, he still shook his head privately. “As expected, this is merely a place for weeding out weak World-level cultivators. The most powerful legacies of the Brightshore Kingdom are not here.”

Ninety-nine legacies in total. The Hegemon had only left behind the number two legacy. The other ninety-eight came from various Daolords. The legacies of a Daolord and the legacies of an Eternal Emperor were completely different things.

The likes of Daolord Featherwing or Daolord Allgod were incredibly powerful, capable of matching or even exceeding Eternal Emperors. However, every single Eternal Emperor was at least on their general level, and some were even more powerful.

By comparison, the four paintings and legacies of Emperor Mirrorsnow were more valuable than these ninety-nine legacies.

That number one legacy, the heartforce legacy, is quite valuable though. I imagine that one is on par with Emperor Mirrorsnow’s legacy.” Ning carefully read through the entire book.

Ning wanted sword-arts, and there were two types available. One was ranked nineteen, the other ranked seventy-three! Both had been left behind by Daolords.

“If I have the chance, I really do need to try and acquire the fourth Mirrorsnow Painting. As for these sword-arts here? I should try to use them to validate and test my own sword-arts. It should be of some benefit, at least.” Ning had long ago found his own path and understanding regarding the sword.

As Ning saw it, the more sword-arts the better. He had studied more than five thousand sword-arts in the Hall of Swords in the Allgod Estate, after all.

“Eh?” Ning’s eyes suddenly lit up.

“This one seems to be... not bad at all!” On his second careful reading, Ning’s gaze fell upon the ninth-ranked legacy.

The ninth-ranked legacy was the footwork legacy. This was a footwork technique meant for close combat which had been left behind by an unknown major power who had gained certain special insights over lightning.

At first, Ning hadn’t paid it much attention as he had focused on searching for heartforce techniques and sword-arts. However, on his second careful read-through he realized how extraordinary this ninth-ranked legacy was.

For a footwork technique to be ranked number nine was extraordinary, in and of itself. This was also a technique that was devised based on lightning. Ning trained in the [Novessence Thunder] and was fairly familiar with lightning; most likely, he would be a good fit for this footwork legacy.

“In battle, I currently rely on my sword-arts and just use my the Thunderlight Wings for support. I don’t have any actual, decent footwork techniques.” After carefully reading through the book, Ning made up his mind. His first target would be the ninth-ranked footwork technique!

.....

“A newbie?”

“So many newbies.”

As Ning and the other World-level cultivators flew towards the astral islands, the many newly created islands began to descend towards the bottom stratum of islands. This naturally attracted the attention of the hundreds of thousands of World-level cultivators who were already present.

These cultivators stood atop their own astral islands, watching from afar. Some began to scan their golden books to gain some basic insights into these newcomers. Each golden book recorded rudimentary information regarding the cultivators on each island and the legacy treasures they possessed.

“I’ll wager these newbies are carrying plenty of chaos nectar and treasures.”

“Let’s see what we can take from them.”

“Challenge issued.”

“Challenge issued.”

Many of the more powerful cultivators were intrigued. The weak ones in their group had been plundered long ago, with some having lost all their magic treasures! These newly arrived cultivators, however, would definitely have quite a few treasures on them.

Life in the Brightshore Kingdom was the same as life anywhere else. If you wanted to live, you’d need treasures.

“I need to issue a challenge right away.” There were some cultivators who were extremely powerful but who had lost their treasures to even more powerful cultivators. These people immediately began to issue challenges, as they were in desperate need of treasures! They naturally chose to go after the newcomers.

“A challenge? A challenge from the third stratum?” Ning was relaxing on his sofa, flipping through the information pertaining to the ninety-nine legacies when he suddenly received a challenge notification.

The Desolate Era

Book 26: World Level Chapter 29: The First Battle

“It seems a lot of people are interested in newcomers like myself.” Ji Ning was in no rush. Instead of answering, he continued to wait patiently as more and more challenges began to accumulate. One... two... three.. four... five...

Apparently, quite a few people were interested in challenging Ning!

In the time needed to boil a kettle of tea, Ning received one challenge from the third stratum, two challenges from the second stratum, and twelve challenges from the bottom stratum!

“A total of fifteen World-level cultivators have challenged me,” Ning mused. Per the rules of this place, each World-level cultivator could only issue one challenge each day! Ning was permitted to challenge a

different World-level cultivator as well, but if they didn't accept... Ning would have to choose from one of the fifteen challengers. He would have to accept at least one challenge.

In truth, to be challenged by so many people at once was actually quite rare. The only reason why there were so many challenges was because everyone knew that Ji Ning and the others had to be carrying many treasures on them.

Normally, it was entirely possible that days would pass between challenges!

"Who should I choose? The Astral Islands are divided up into six strata. The third stratum is neither high nor low... and there are more than three thousand cultivators on that level. I'll go with this guy." Ning's talent made him bold. Weaker new arrivals would most likely choose someone on the first floor as their first opponent.

Through the golden book, Ning willed for his opponent's message of challenge to be shattered. This represented him accepting the challenge!

There were more than three thousand islands hovering within the third stratum. Within one of those astral islands.

"He accepted? He actually accepted my challenge?" The chubby youth instantly jumped to his feet, a look of wild joy on his face. "Ahahaha, he actually accepted? This is great. It seems that things are finally turning around for me, Pillsaint. Has my luck finally arrived?"

The man known as Pillsaint was the type of person who simply couldn't hide or disguise his emotions.

"I'm a venerable master of the Dao of Alchemy, but my alchemical prowess is completely useless here. Instead, I have to battle against all these other World-level cultivators." The chubby youth muttered to himself as he walked towards a room. He pushed the door open, then entered. The walls of this room were covered with many divine runes. Upon entering the room, you would also be entering this powerful formation.

Rumble...

Space began to twist and distort, with World God Pillsaint disappearing into thin air.

.....

This island was a beautiful one that was covered with a layer of frost and snow. The entire island was completely silent.

Whoosh.

A pudgy youth suddenly appeared out of nowhere. He glanced at his surroundings, noticing that the entire island was covered with a layer of silvery snow. He was able to see everything quite clearly, and he was quite satisfied. "This battleground is a good one. The scenery is nice, at least. Way better than the last one."

"It seems my luck really is turning." World God Pillsaint lay down on the snow, half-closing his eyes as he relaxed. "I don't have many legacies left, but those damnable cultivators on the fourth level keep on coming to rob me of what I have. I hope my luck takes a turn for the better for once. Hopefully this guy

will have at least an Eternal weapon. If I can get an Eternal weapon, I'll become much more powerful and be capable of giving those fellows on the fourth level a good fight. I might even be able to acquire a complete legacy."

Previously, he had been trying to collect the ninety-sixth legacy, a legacy which was scattered across a hundred legacy treasures. He had gained a total of ninety-one pieces, but a damnable cultivator on the fourth level had issued him a challenge. Pillsaint had hurriedly issued a challenge of his own to a cultivator on the second stratum. If that cultivator had accepted, then there would've been no need for Pillsaint to battle the cultivator from the fourth stratum.

Alas, the cultivator from the second stratum had declined to do battle.

Pillsaint had no other options. He had to accept the challenge from the fourth stratum.

The results of that battle were... he lost. His legacy treasures were stripped from him! He had worked so hard for so long, but it all instantly went up in smoke. He had damn near gone mad.

Whoosh.

Space twisted once more.

Ji Ning appeared atop this icy island. As he glanced at the scenery, Ning couldn't help but smile very slightly. He also noticed the pudgy youth who was sleeping on the snowy ground not too far away from him.

Swoosh. The chubby youth rose to his feet and stared at Ning, a scorching look in his eyes. "Fellow Daoist, you have an extraordinary demeanor. I imagine you must be carrying valuable treasures."

"Yes." Ning nodded.

The chubby youth's eyes instantly lit up as he grew even more excited. "Eternal treasures?"

"Yes." Ning laughed and nodded. Hundreds of thousands of World-level cultivators were here, and most likely a good number of them held Eternal weapons. Ning couldn't bother to hide the fact that he had one of his own. A weak person who had an Eternal weapon might become a target, but Ning was strong enough that he had nothing to fear.

"Ehehe. Treasures belong to the strong, you know. It would be wasted in your hands." The pudgy youth's aura suddenly blasted forth as he manifested a total of six arms. He now wielded six black hammers in his hands. "Hurry up and hand it over, and I'll spare your life if you do."

For some reason, Ning couldn't help but have a good feeling about this pudgy youth. He almost felt as though he was looking at an infant. This pudgy youth wore his heart on his sleeve, his emotions on display for anyone to see. He didn't seem to have any evil intentions at all and appeared to be a valiant man.

However, Ning suddenly felt a twinge of fear.

How could he possibly treat any World-level cultivator as he would a child? For Ning to feel kindly disposed to him without even realizing it... it was possible that this was because this cultivator truly was a good man, but it was also possible that he had trained in some sort of mesmerizing technique.

“Then let’s see what you have.” Ning held a Violetjewel in each of his two hands. Here on the Astral Islands, even a battle against someone weaker had to be taken seriously.

Although two swords wasn’t the full extent of Ning’s power, it was enough for Ning to generate a truly airtight defense.

“Eat a hammer!” The pudgy youth charged forwards, the great warhammer in his hands transforming into a streak of light that caused space to collapse in on itself. The power of this blow was so great that even Ning couldn’t help but feel speechless.

A supreme World God? It seemed he was actually more than just that!

BOOM! Ning released a seemingly simple sword-strike that struck directly against the great warhammer that was slamming down towards him. Warhammers were weapons well-suited for heavy smashing blows, and to use sword-arts in a head-on clash against a warhammer was indeed a foolish decision. However, Ning held tremendous confidence in his own strength. It was highly unlikely that he would find anyone in the World level who could overcome him in raw physical power... and if Ning DID encounter some a powerful freak that was even stronger than him, Ning would run away as fast as he could.

As expected, this casual strike from Ning was enough to send his opponent staggering backwards.

“How can this be?!” A dazed look appeared on the pudgy youth’s face as he stared at Ning. “I just wanted to fight a newbie. Why the hell did I run into such a strong one?”

“No way. I don’t believe this.” The pudgy youth once more charged forwards, his six warhammers shattering the heavens as they came smashing down towards Ning once more.

Ning couldn’t help but sigh upon seeing this.

His opponent was most likely a supreme World God, and his awe-inspiring hammer-arts were mighty and difficult to defend against. However, there was a flaw to this type of an attack, which used overwhelming raw power and space itself to crush down upon one’s foes. The flaw was... if your foe could withstand your attacks, you would be finished.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Ning showed no mercy at all, striking out three times in quick succession. The first strike knocked the youth backwards, the second caused him to stumble as he frantically defended. When Pillsaint fell down to the ground, a huge crater appeared in the ground beneath him.

When Ning’s third sword slammed into the opponent, the pudgy youth vomited out a mouthful of blood.

“Give up?” Ning pointed at his foe with his sword.

“You are way too strong. Even on the fourth floor, only those freaks who once made it to the fifth floor would be a match for you.” The pudgy youth lay there within his crater, somewhat dazed. “Why is my luck so shitty? More than thirty thousand newbies, and I have to pick a freak who is strong enough to make it to the fifth stratum.”

Ning was intrigued upon hearing this. He didn’t know how strong the various experts on the Astral Islands were, but his opponent had clearly been here for quite some time and knew many things.

“There’s only a few freaks like him, but I just had to run into one.” The pudgy youth shook his head, then looked at Ning. He said hurriedly, “Can you please not take away my warhammers? They are just Dao weapons.”

“Dao weapons?” Ning was secretly surprised. The youth had been able to unleash the power of a supreme World God while using mere Dao weapons? This fellow was incredibly strong, much more powerful than God Emperor Blacklotus had been! If he was using an Eternal weapon... didn’t that mean he would have the power of a transcendent World God?

“I’m telling the truth. See for yourself!” The pudgy youth said hurriedly, “You can send out your divine sense and scan any of the treasures I’m carrying inside of me. Ugh, I’ve been robbed of all of my chaos nectar. All I have left are these six hammers...”

Although he had encountered a few people who were slightly stronger than him, they generally wouldn’t go too far. If they did, World God Pillsaint would’ve gone all-out. To kill a powerful World God was a very difficult feat; normally, the only option for doing so was to exhaust his store of divine power.

Divine power needed a fairly long period of time in order to recover. However, on the Astral Islands it was possible that one would receive a challenge every single day. If you lost your power, you might well fall victim to the schemes of another.

Thus, unless there was an overwhelming disparity in power, these cultivators generally wouldn’t force their foes to go all-out. That was of no benefit to them.

However, Ning was capable of easily slaying his opponent. The difference in power between the two truly was quite great. His foe was merely a supreme World God, whereas Ning was comparable to a Daolord of the First Step.

“All I have are these six hammers.” The pudgy youth stared at Ning. He really was worried that Ning would take those hammers away from him.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 30: Three Months

If Ji Ning wished to take his warhammers by force, he would be dramatically weakened. Although he could still go abuse other cultivators on the first stratum and steal a few Dao weapons from them, he had brought those six warhammers with him from the outside world. They were very suitable weapons for him, and it would be quite hard for him to find similarly suitable weapons on those weaker cultivators.

“Are you serious...” Ning swept the man with his godsense. The man didn’t resist at all, allowing Ning to scan him with ease.

“You don’t even have a single bottle of chaos nectar or a single chaos jewel.” Ning shook his head.

“I used to! They took everything from me.” The pudgy youth shook his head. “Nothing I could do. They were stronger than me. I’m just happy I was able to keep my six warhammers. I used to have an Eternal treasure, but that was taken from me as well.”

As he spoke, he looked at Ning in a rather anxious, beseeching manner. "Can you leave my six warhammers alone? Please?"

"Don't worry. I have no interest in those six warhammers whatsoever," Ning chuckled. "I just want to ask you a few questions. Also, you have to give me that sword-arts legacy you are holding."

"Take it." The pudgy youth immediately tossed a sword-shaped talisman over towards Ning. This was one of the legacy treasures that formed the seventy-third ranked legacy, the sword-arts legacy. Although it was merely ranked seventy-three, it was still divided up into 108 different legacy treasures. You had to acquire the full set in order to gain access to it.

Seeing that Ning didn't intend to kill him, the pudgy youth hurriedly said, "Ask me whatever you wish. I, Pillsaint, will tell you everything you want to know."

"Your name is Pillsaint?" Ning asked.

"Yes, Pillsaint. This is the Daoist title which my master gave me. My master is skilled in alchemy, as am I. Who would've thought that I would be this unlucky? A Daolord had asked me to go help him refine some pills, but halfway on the trip back I was abducted to this place by a different Samsara Daolord, as were the ten World-level cultivators who the first Daolord had sent to invite me." Pillsaint had a resigned look on his face as he spoke.

Ning was shocked upon hearing this. Skilled in Alchemy?

This fellow was capable of unleashing the power of a supreme World God when using mere Dao weapons... and he was actually a master of alchemy? A Daolord had asked him to go refine pills for him? That meant his skill in alchemy had to be incredibly high. Ning knew that the skilled alchemists and pill-refiners of the Endless Territories were incredibly respected.

"Ugh, but so what if I'm good at alchemy? The Brightshore Kingdom doesn't give a damn about me. All I can do is stay here and duel other World-level cultivators." World God Pillsaint said resignedly, "I'm skilled in controlling the empty void of space and am physically strong, but that's just because those are necessary components of pillforging. Right now, all I can do is use my warhammers to battle against other World-level cultivators."

Ning could tell that this World God Pillsaint had to be extremely skilled in the arts of alchemy and had an even more skilled alchemy master. In the outside world, not even ordinary Samsara Daolords would go offend someone of his status.

If Ning could, he would try to find a chance to help this man out. If World God Pillsaint was able to leave this place in the future, Ning could ask him or even his master to help him refine any special pills that he needed.

"Mm. In the future, I'll need to acquire a few extra legacies. If I find any that I don't need, I can just lose a set to him on purpose," Ning mused.

The only legacies Ning himself were interested at present were the sword-arts legacy and the footwork legacy. As for the top-ranked heartforce legacy, Ning was interested in that as well.

Still, the rules were that those who acquired a complete legacy could leave, but those who acquired two were required to leave.

Thus, if Ning wanted to acquire several different legacies, he would have to lose a few battles on purpose and let his opponents acquire those legacies! Ning was definitely planning on helping out Su Youji, but if he had the chance he would also help this World God Pillsaint as well.

“I wonder which astral island Youji is now on.” There was nothing Ning could do. Only after battling someone could he find out exactly which island a specific cultivator was on. He wanted to help her out, but he currently could not. Only in the future would he be able to try to come up with a way of locating her.

“I ask you this,” Ning said, “Roughly how strong are the cultivators on each island?”

“That’s hard to say, because even the first stratum might hold a few freakishly strong individuals.” World God Pillsaint glanced at Ning, then said hurriedly, “I can just give you a rough estimate of how strong everyone is.”

Ning nodded.

“The astral islands on the first stratum generally hold master-class World-level cultivators as well as a few even weaker cultivators.

“The second stratum holds more formidable cultivators. Some have unique treasures or techniques, such as special spells or powerful golems. Others have reached at least the supreme World-level of power.

“The third stratum is generally where most supreme World-level cultivators reside, or those who possess extremely special techniques. I’m a supreme World God myself, and I’m very physically strong. I’m capable of forcing my opponents to face my attacks head-on, which is my position within the third stratum is quite secure.

“The fourth stratum is generally filled with transcendent World-level cultivators, as well as some of the freakishly strong figures who belonged to the fifth stratum but who were temporarily beaten down by other cultivators from that stratum.

“The fifth stratum... everyone capable of standing securely within that stratum is an utter monster. Most of them probably have the power of Daolords of the First Step, and many have very unique skills and abilities. Who knows what special skills or trump cards they have up their sleeves? All I know is that I’ve never run into them before. There are only twelve individuals total on the fifth stratum. Eight are special lifeforms while four are cultivators.”

Ning was secretly shocked upon hearing this.

The twelve on the fifth stratum all had the power of Daolords of the First Step? How terrifying. Still, most were special lifeforms. There were certain powerful races that were born with tremendous advantages over normal cultivators!

“There’s only a single cultivator on the sixth stratum. I hear that his name is Bertulu, and that he’s an absolutely freakishly strong figure.” The pudgy youth shook his head. “What a freak! He’s a special

lifeform as well. Not even those other freaks on the fifth stratum can beat him. He truly is unfathomably strong.”

“Bertulu?” Ning silently memorized this name.

“Fortunately, there is a rule in the Astral Islands that anyone who makes it to the fifth level will be protected, even if they are temporarily knocked down to a lower level. That’s why the only reason why Bertulu hasn’t completely demolished all of the other freaks.” World God Pillsaint shook his head and sighed.

Ning understood the purpose of this rule. The Astral Islands existed in order to help the Brightshore Kingdom select some of the most powerful World-level cultivators to join its ranks. The three hundred thousand-plus cultivators within the Astral Islands right now included many powerful cultivators which the Brightshore Kingdom had abducted from the outside world, but it also held many cultivators which had emerged from the Brightshore Kingdom’s own territory. Ordinary World-level cultivators simply couldn’t compare to them.

Given how many powerful World-level cultivators were amongst the three hundred thousand, for a few absolute monsters to emerge was normal.

Generally speaking, anyone who could make it to the fifth stratum was a freak in some way. Any such person would be protected by the Astral Islands. Even if other cultivators defeated them, they would at most be permitted to take away their opponents’ legacy treasures. It was forbidden to kill them! It was also forbidden to seize any of their other, personal treasures!

But of course, this was just a minor form of protection. Although the Brightshore Kingdom was intrigued by these monsters, it wouldn’t necessarily go crazy over them. This was because although they were monsters now, they wouldn’t necessarily be monstrously powerful Daolords in the future.

In the Allgod Estate, the formation-spirit of the Ten Thousand Mountains had encountered quite a few freakishly talented figures over countless eons, but the only truly formidable figure to emerge was Daolord Badlands.

But of course, Bertulu was so incredibly, freakishly talented that even the most powerful kingdom in all the Endless Territories, the Brightshore Kingdom, rarely encountered his equal. He had already found his path and was capable of becoming a Samsara Daolord whenever he wished. The way they treated him was naturally different.

“It seems that I should be strong enough to make it to the fifth stratum,” Ning mused. “Only by making it to the fifth stratum will I be protected.”

Although Ning was confident in his abilities, he wasn’t confident in his abilities to defeat Bertulu of the sixth stratum. Bertulu had to have acquired the number one legacy, the heartforce legacy, a long time ago. Cultivators skilled in heartforce were quite terrifying to fight, and Ning wasn’t confident in his ability to withstand him.

“I need to seize every moment. The more time passes, the more variables might appear.”

After this first battle, Ning began to accept one challenge after another. He kept a low-profile as he duelled other cultivators on the first stratum. Some challenged him, others he challenged.

There were also times when no one challenged him and the person he challenged refused. In that case, he had no choice but to wait and rest for a day.

And so, just like that...

Ning ended up spending twelve days before advancing to the second stratum.

After spending another twenty-six days, he advanced to the third stratum.

After spending another fifty-one days, he advanced to the fourth stratum.

Ning didn't encounter any of the freaks who had previously made it to the fifth stratum. Since everyone who had been on the fifth stratum was under protection, it was very rare for other World-level cultivators to challenge them. Thus, those freaks generally spent most of their time meditating on the powerful legacies they had acquired. It was entirely possible for them to spend a century in meditation. Ning's sudden rise to power did attract the attention of two 'protected' World-level cultivators, but those two didn't move to challenge him. Instead, they watched quietly.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 26: World Level Chapter 31: Full Mastery

Ji Ning took things slowly and steadily. He began to challenge the other cultivators on the fourth level. Out of an abundance of caution, Ning didn't challenge anyone who had made it to the fifth stratum in the past. Ning's plan was to wait until he himself made it to the fifth stratum before challenging them.

Here in the Brightshore Kingdom, a single mistake could result in a cascade of errors. There were many freakishly strong cultivators in the Endless Territories who had ended up perishing midway through their journeys. If he was too arrogant, he would probably join them.

Every single opponent on the fourth stratum was incredibly strong, at least as strong as a transcendent World God. They all had their own special skills, and Ning would spend time after each battle meditating on his experiences.

Within one of the astral islands levitating within the fourth stratum.

There was a strange building here that looked round from the outside but was box-shaped on the inside. This was the finest temporal acceleration treasure which Ning had acquired from Arroyo, a treasure which was far better than the Heavengazer Tower. It could easily maintain a rate of time that was fifty times faster than normal, and if you were willing to use up your Immortal energy it could go up to two hundred times the normal rate! But of course, this would use up an absolutely astonishing amount of energy.

Ning was currently maintaining a rate equivalent to a hundred times the normal rate of time. He was reflecting on his previous battle and the new insights it had brought him, using them to perfect his sword-arts. That last battle had been his sixth battle on the fourth stratum, and he had won it as he had all his previous battles!

Rumble...

While meditating on his sword-arts, Ning was in constant resonance with the infinitely distant prime essence of the sword.

The prime essence of the sword was one of the true essences and sources of the endless primordial chaos. It was where the Dao of the Sword itself originated from! It constantly emanated mysterious ripples pertaining to the Dao of the Sword, allowing cultivators to understand more of itself.

“After cultivating for more than a hundred thousand years, I finally understand.” Ning suddenly smiled.

Rumble...

The towering Dao-tree within his Jindan chaos region had already reached a height of more than 105,000 meters tall. In this instant it once more grew upwards, reaching a height of precisely 108,000 meters tall!

In this moment, power began to flow throughout his entire Jindan chaos region, causing it to become even more stable than before.

Boom! Ning’s divine body suddenly transformed into a large number of godgems. Chaos energy flowed through him and transformed into more and more godgems, causing a total of 36,000 godgems to emerge and hover in midair. Moments later, they reconverged to form a single figure, Ji Ning’s figure.

“I’ve seen through and comprehended all the foundational insights regarding the Dao of the Sword. Finally, I have reached the level of full mastery.” Ning was in a superb mood today.

Although it seemed as though Ning had only been cultivating for a few thousand years, if you factored in all the temporal acceleration he had spent more than a hundred thousand years meditating on the Dao of the Sword! When he had emerged from the Allgod Estate, his Dao-tree had already been more than sixty thousand meters tall. He had then engaged in many battles as well as repeatedly dueled the three experts of the sword in the Mirrorsnow Paintings, resulting in Ning’s Dao-tree quickly growing to become more than ninety thousand meters high.

He had spent hundreds of years battling in the Sea of Darkness as well. Although he had spent less than half a year in this place, the temporal acceleration meant that dozens of years had gone past for Ning. In addition, Ning had been battling against all sorts of powerful World-level cultivators. Thanks to all of these factors, he had finally understood some of the fundamental principles of the prime essence of the sword.

In that instant, he finally understood why it was that this level as known as the level of ‘full mastery’ and why World Gods at this level were referred to as ‘master-class’ World Gods.

“Full mastery of the World level... so this is nothing more than the outermost level of understanding the prime essence of the sword.” Ning couldn’t help but sigh.

The prime essence of the sword...

From it originated the entire Dao of the Sword within the endless primordial chaos. It was naturally unfathomable and profound, and many of its most profound mysteries were actually hidden within the prime essence itself. There was no way to even sense those mysteries, much less meditate on them.

Only the outermost mysteries of the Dao of the Sword which emanated from it like a halo could be meditated on. In recent years, Ning had merely been meditating on those outermost mysteries.

Every single World-level cultivator of the Dao of the Sword would strive hard to comprehend these mysteries. And now... Ning had gained a complete understanding of this outermost layer of the prime essence of the sword!

From this day forth, his Dao-tree would be 108,00 meters tall and his godgems would be 36,000 in number!

From this day forth...

The prime essence of the sword within the endless primordial chaos would no longer be of any use to Ning, because there was no way he could meditate on any of the mysteries that were contained deeper inside of it. Forget about Ji Ning; not even Samsara Daolords or Eternal Emperors were capable of entering the prime essence heart of the endless primordial chaos. This place was the very core of the entire primordial chaos, a place which cultivators could not possibly enter.

In truth, it wasn't just the Dao of the Sword that existed in that place. All Daos originated from that place!

The prime essence of metal, wood, water, fire, earth, lightning, light, slaughter, the saber, the sword... all prime essences radiated some of its outermost mysteries, allowing cultivators to train in them, but held their deeper mysteries inside of themselves. There was no way those mysteries could be cultivated in at all.

Thus, no matter what path you trained it, you would at most be able to reach the level of full mastery in a fairly easy manner.

Once you gained full mastery...

Your insights would come to an end. You had gained full mastery of what there was to master.

If you wanted to make any further advancements, you would have to rely solely on yourself! In the past, you would be able to continue to attune to the prime essence of a Dao. Now, however, you would have no one to rely on but yourself. You would have to find a unique path belonging to yourself, creating your own Dao out of nowhere and use it to step into the Samsara Daolord level.

Because this Dao would be a completely self-created Dao, this was an incredibly dangerous prospect. The Dao you created might be a heterodox Dao that was wrong. That Dao might allow you to step onto the Samsara Daolord level, but it was entirely possible that soon after embarking on this path your Dao would suddenly crumble, causing you to perish.

This was the reason why it was said that with each step, Samsara Daolords tread the line between life and death! Every single step they took, they would create an ever-deeper level of the Dao for themselves. If the Dao you created was an erroneous Dao, then once you attempted to use it to improve yourself your divine power and truesoul would become to collapse. You would perish.

With each step, they tread the line between life and death. Some would finally reach the Verge of the Daomerge, becoming incredibly powerful figures even amongst their Samsara Daolord fellows. Daolord Solesky was one good example. If his Daomerge succeeded, it meant that his Dao was a perfect one which could gain true eternity. Their path would allow them to live forever within the primordial chaos, with the ravages of time no longer having any effect upon them!

But of course, some of those Daolords on the Verge had incorrect Daos. That did not, however, mean that they were weak. There were some Verge-level Daolords who were capable of battling Eternal Emperors, even though they themselves would never reach that level.

“I previously was able to advance at a rapid pace. Now that I have reached the level of full mastery, I’ll have to find my own path for myself.” Ning understood exactly how difficult it would be for him to find a path that would let him enter the Samsara Daolord level.

.....

An astral island on the fifth stratum.

“My dear Wildgloom, in the Twelve Palaces our Palace of Thunder is ranked as one of the top palaces. You are quite talented in the Dao of Thunder. If you join our Thunder Palace, your future prospects will definitely be limitless.” An old man dressed in azure armor chortled as he spoke.

Seated facing him was a tall, muscular metallic creature whose entire body was formed by strange metals and wreathed in lightning.

World God Wildgloom was a special lifeform who was born with great power over lightning. He had now reached an incredible level in the Dao of Thunder. Once he became a Samsara Daolord, he would reach even more astonishing heights.

“I can train in thunder in any of the Twelve Palaces of Brightshore.” Wildgloom’s voice was slightly jarring to the ear. “Senior Flameflow, please give me some more time to think this matter through.”

“No rush, no rush.” The azure-armored elder nodded and smiled.

Anyone capable of residing permanently on the fifth stratum was more than strong enough to easily acquire a complete legacy. They could’ve left the astral islands long ago, but most of them were in no rush. There were legacies here, as well as powerful opponents for them to battle against. Most importantly, they still had to decide which palace they were going to join.

The Twelve Palaces of Brightshore were all incredibly powerful, but the best palace would always be the one which suited them the most. They had to decide what their future path would be before deciding on which palace they would join.

“You have my message-talisman. Once you decide, just break it and I’ll come find you.” The silver-armored elder smiled as he rose to his feet. “I won’t disturb you any further.”

World God Wildgloom hurriedly rose to his feet to send his guest off. Although this person had come to invite him, he was still a Samsara Daolord. He was not, however, one of those black-armored Daolords. Those black-armored Daolords were the weakest Daolords.

Whoosh.

The azure-armored Daolord, Daolord Flameflow, flew out of this astral island. He pulled out an enormous book and began to casually flip through it. The members of the Twelve Palaces were permitted to go through the information which the kingdom possessed regarding all of the World-level cultivators here.

“Eh? This fellow has been here less than half a year, but he’s made it to the fourth stratum already? He’s also defeated six consecutive foes on the fourth stratum? He’s undefeated thus far?” As Daolord Flameflow flipped through the pages of the book, he couldn’t help be startled by something he read.

If someone defeated ten foes in a row on the fourth stratum, that person would be promoted to the fifth stratum. This man had defeated six foes in a row without being defeated a single time. Given this, it was very likely that he would make it to the fifth stratum in the future.

“Skilled in both the sword as well as lightning? His skill in lightning alone allows him to suppress his foes, and he is quite talented in the Dao of Thunder? This guy looks like he would be a great fit for my Thunder Palace. Mm, I should go take a look.” The azure-armored elder quickly decided to go visit this astral island on the fourth stratum. He quickly began to stride through the air as he walked towards that island.

This was, of course, the astral island which Ning was residing on.