

Desolate 991

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 12: A Foundation for the Three Realms

The Three Realms. The Grand Xia world. Swallow Mountain.

Long ago, Ji Ning had removed the entire Swallow Mountain area from the Grand Xia for the sake of protecting it from the great war. Now that the calamity had come to an end, Ning had established his own major world, the Darknorth world, and had planted the Ji clan into that world.

As for Swallow Mountain of the Grand Xia? This was where Ning had grown up, and so he had rebuilt it. Autumn Leaf, Uncle White, Little Qing, and Brightmoon normally lived here.

Serpentwing Lake. Brightheart Island.

Whoosh.

Ji Ning, Ji Yichuan, and Yuchi Snow all appeared in the air above Serpentwing Lake.

"It looks just like it did all those years ago." Yichuan and his wife Snow stood there in the air, staring at the lake. "Serpentwing Lake hasn't changed at all."

"One thing that did change was that the Serpentwing monster died long ago," Ning joked by their side.

"Ning, son, what on earth has happened in recent years?" Snow looked at her son.

"I'll tell you later. Mom, Dad, look over there. Your granddaughter is coming." Ning pointed off into the distance.

A black-robed maiden was flying towards them from afar, her face covered with joy. Behind her were Autumn Leaf, Uncle White, Little Qing, Bluecliff Xiaoyu, Mu Northson, and Immortal Diancai.

"Young master."

"Senior apprentice-brother."

"Master." They each called out joyfully towards Ning.

As they flew closer, Autumn Leaf and Uncle White were stunned, especially Uncle White. He stared blankly at the two figures standing by Ning's side, and his tears suddenly came cascading downwards.

Yichuan stared back at Uncle White, then revealed a smile. "Little White."

"Big brother." Uncle White stared at Yichuan. The two were like brothers, and they had ventured through life and death by each other's sides many times. They were extremely close to each other.

"Big sister Snow." Uncle White then looked at Snow. "You... you all..."

"Master." Autumn Leaf was extremely excited as well, and she hurriedly curtsied.

"Autumn Leaf?" Snow smiled and nodded. Ning had two attendants by his side when he was young. Spring Grass had died long ago, but Autumn Leaf had been by his side this entire time.

As for Ning, he stared at the black-robed maiden and barked, "Brightmoon, get over here and pay your respects to your grandmother and grandfather!"

Brightmoon was rather stunned. She had heard of her grandparents, but had never met them before. Upon hearing Ning's orders, she immediately fell to her knees and said, "Brightmoon greets you, Grandfather and Grandmother."

"Big brother... big sister Snow... this is Brightmoon. She's the daughter of Ji Ning and Yu Wei," Uncle White immediately said.

"Our granddaughter?" Yichuan and Snow were both overjoyed. When they died, Ning had still been quite young. Who would've thought that they'd suddenly have a grandchild?

"Rise, rise!" Snow immediately lifted her granddaughter up. The more she looked at Brightmoon, the happier she felt. Brightmoon's appearance was similar to that of both Ning and Yu Wei. Although she looked more like Yu Wei, she did have some of Ning's traits as well.

"What a beautiful girl. I have such a beautiful granddaughter! Your mother must be a beauty as well. Ning, son, where's your wife? Didn't Little White say that your wife's name is Yu Wei?" Snow smiled.

Everyone suddenly fell silent.

Snow and Yuchi didn't know what was going on, but everyone else knew what had happened. Years ago, Yu Wei had been publicly killed during the wars by the black-robed Godking.

Ning responded with perfect calm, "She's gone."

Yichuan and Snow immediately understood. It seemed as though many things had happened over the years.

"Grandpa, Grandma, there seems to be many things you aren't aware of. Let me tell you." Brightmoon immediately began to warmly narrate the story to Yichuan and Snow. "Shortly after you passed away, but before my father had joined the Black-White College; that's where I'll start the story. Haha. The two of you are going to be stunned by this..."

Seeing this, Ning just stood there and watched with a smile on his face.

There was no need to hide any of his past history. Yichuan and Snow listened to their daughter, Brightmoon, narrate Ning's story. Every so often, Uncle White, Little Qing, or Xiaoyu would add in a few words as well. Even Ning's junior apprentice-brother, Mu Northson, would jump in to explain at some parts, as did Ning's master Immortal Diancai.

Yichuan and his wife Snow were completely stunned by this story. This wasn't a story; it was an absolute legend.

Although they knew that their son was a genius, how could they have imagined that their talented sword-wielding son of Swallow Mountain would become such a dazzling figure? He not only had reached parity with the highest-level Immortals and Fiendgods of the Three Realms, he had played a decisive role in ending the war! As for his current level of power, it was completely unfathomable.

They also learned about Yu Wei's death. Unfortunately, when her soul was destroyed ever her truesoul was torn apart. There was no way to revive her at present.

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A few days later, Ning held a Three Realms Banquet at Brightheart Island of Swallow Mountain. All of the top-level Immortals and Fiendgods of the Three Realms came to take part.

Of course, many of Ning's old friends came as well, such as the other members of Mount Innerheart, including Crazy Ji, Sun Wukong, and Redsnow. Even the likes of Northmont Baiwei and the Sloppy Daoist, who had been their eldest apprentice-brother at the Black-White College, had arrived. This was Ning's first time hosting such a sumptuous banquet, and at the end he even expounded upon the Dao, bringing great enlightenment to many of the Immortals and Fiendgods of the Three Realms.

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On the other side of the primordial chaos. Vastheaven Territory. Vastheaven Palace.

In the blink of an eye, more than a month passed after Ning's arrival at Vastheaven Palace. This was the day of Ning's formal welcoming banquet.

"Ji Ning! JI NING!" Daolord Solesky was hollering towards him from far away.

"Big brother?" Ning emerged from his estate, Su Youji and Pillsaint by his side. Ning smiled. "I could hear you screaming at me from far away."

"I wanted to see you a few days ago, but Pillsaint told me that you were in secluded meditation," Daolord Solesky said with a laugh.

"My big brother wished to see me?" Ning turned to glance at Pillsaint. Pillsaint hurriedly explained, "Daolord Solesky said that it was nothing important and told me not to disturb you."

Daolord Solesky nodded as well. "There is no rush, but... Ji Ning, you really did me wrong this time. You captured Daolord Blesswing, a Daolord of the Third Step of Clearwind Temple! A Daolord of the Third Step! And you captured him! How could you hide such an incredible feat from me and not tell me? If it hadn't been for brother Eastherd giving us a detailed narration a while ago, I would have had no idea whatsoever."

Ning was startled. He immediately said, "Alright, that was definitely my fault."

To be honest, Ning truly hadn't considered the capture to be a big deal. In his eyes, Clearwind Temple wasn't a threat at all. Even if Patriarch Clearwind himself came, he wouldn't be able to do anything to Vastheaven Palace itself. If things really did go south, Ning could simply use one of the deceased Hegemon's Dao-seals to just kill the man.

Ning's complete lack of concern regarding this matter was why he hadn't considered it to be relevant. With his mind completely occupied with reviving his parents, he truly had forgotten to tell Vastheaven Palace about this matter.

“It won’t be much of a problem. With my avatar here, we won’t need to fear Clearwind at all.” Daolord Solesky was rather excited. “But for you to have captured a Daolord of the Third Step... hah! I feel giddy just imagining the look on Clearwind’s face.”

“I’ve already subdued the Daolord. Big brother Solesky, you are free to deal with him as you see fit,” Ning said.

“You were the one to capture him. How can I be the one to decide?” Daolord Solesky immediately said.

“Don’t be so courteous, big brother. If you want to use this situation to squeeze and extort Clearwind Temple, feel entirely free to do so.”

Daolord Solesky shook his head. “You don’t understand what type of a man Patriarch Clearwind is. He won’t be easy to blackmail. Ah, forget it. There’s no way Clearwind will just ignore something like this. We’ll wait and see.”

Ning nodded. “Right. Big brother, there’s something I need to ask you to help me out with.”

“What is it?” Daolord Solesky asked.

“I want to collect some techniques, secret arts, and divine abilities,” Ning said. “I need all types of techniques.”

Daolord Solesky looked at Ning. “Are you planning to set up your own school?”

Ning shook his head. “No, it’s for the sake of my homeland. My homeland doesn’t have any good techniques. I want to procure some good ones for them,” Ning said.

“Vastheaven Palace has some basic techniques which can be transmitted to others without any issues,” Daolord Solesky said, “But the more powerful ones... we have our own rules about their disposition.”

Ning said, “We’ll do everything in accordance with the rules! I need all types of divine abilities, techniques, and secret arts below the Daolord level, and I’ll pay as much chaos nectar as the rules require.” Even the Dao Alliance was willing to sell its many secret arts and divine abilities, to say nothing of Vastheaven Palace. Even Daolord Allgod’s [Novessence Water] and other such techniques had ended up being sold to the Brightshore Kingdom.

Ning only needed techniques that were below the Daolord level; more profound techniques were not necessary for now. Vastheaven Palace didn’t really have that many powerful legacies either.

“Oh, below the Daolord level? That’ll be easy.” Daolord Solesky nodded. “However... over the course of countless years, Vastheaven Palace has accumulated quite a few techniques. If we were to give you everything we have, it’d cost you three million cubes of chaos nectar! I don’t want to take advantage of you; the rules are the rules. These techniques were accumulated by countless brothers over the course of countless years.”

“Alright.” Ning nodded. “Three million it is.”

Vastheaven Palace was an ancient school which dominated the nearby territories and had been around for countless chaos cycles. As a result, it had an ample supply of techniques which were below the Daolord level. This was why this place was considered a holy land for cultivation to many. Now that Ning

had purchased all of its techniques, the Three Realms' foundation had been established. Most of the cultivators in the Three Realms were merely at the Elder God or Ancestral Immortal level, after all. To reach the World level and then become a Daolord was far too difficult.

In truth, if he couldn't buy what he needed from Vastheaven Palace, he would've done so from the Dao Alliance. Only, that would be more troublesome and likely more expensive as well.

As for legacies which Daolords could use? Even Vastheaven Palace only had a very few such legacies, and they had either been left behind by its Daolords or had been acquired by them due to luck; they wouldn't be casually taught to others. They were not casually taught to others. What Ning was planning to do was to create a few legacies of his own and leave them to the Three Realms! For example, his [Brightmoon] sword-art was definitely one of the most supreme of legacies! But of course, not just anyone would be permitted to study it. The interested parties would have to go through many layers of trials before they could learn the Sword Dao which Ning had so painstakingly created.

"Using Vastheaven Palace's repository, built up over the course of countless years, to serve as the foundation of the Three Realms shall be enough." Ning felt a surge of joy in his heart.

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 13: Omega Sword Dao

"Hah! You were able to agree to three million cubes with such ease." Daolord Solesky laughed. "As expected for someone capable of capturing a Daolord of the Third Step. Your resources truly are extraordinary, eh?"

"I just had better luck than most," Ji Ning said.

"Big brother Solesky, all of our brothers have arrived and are waiting. Are you done chatting?" The Daolord Brightfish's laughter could be heard from afar.

"Patience, my brother Brightfish! We'll be there shortly." Daolord Solesky looked at Ning. "Come, come! Let us make haste. The welcoming banquet is about to commence."

The formal welcoming ceremony took place. After the ceremony ended, Ning was now considered a formal member of Vastheaven Palace. This caused Daolord Solesky, Daolord Battlemaster, and Daolord Brightfish to all feel slightly relieved. They could tell that Ning was guaranteed to be an extraordinary Daolord. Although he had a talisman of welcome, it was entirely permissible for him to change his mind prior to actually joining Vastheaven Palace.

Now that he had joined, he truly would be a lifelong friend and brother.

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Rumble...

Within the darkness of space. A shrine which was emanating ripples of strange azure power was flying at high speeds. As the energy streams surged and flowed around it, it was able to hurtle through space at astonishing speeds.

An old man dressed in handsome black robes stood within the shrine, staring silently into space. His eyes were as calm as the depths of the sea. Beneath him stood seven respectful World-level cultivators.

“He managed to capture Blesswind. This young fellow named Darknorth really is quite daring.” The black-robed elder said calmly, “He’s even more daring than Solesky.”

One of the World-level disciples said immediately, “Patriarch, Darknorth must’ve acquired some special treasures thanks to a stroke of great luck. Daolord Blesswind said it himself, right? He was beaten by a golem which had the power of an apex Daolord of the Third Step, then captured due to a nasty trick they pulled on him. No matter what, this Darknorth is merely a World-level cultivator. He won’t be able to fight back against you at all, Patriarch.”

“Can’t be too complacent,” Patriarch Clearwind said calmly. “These strokes of great luck can sometimes involve truly earth-shattering treasures.”

He was a Daolord of the Fourth Step. Daolords of the Fourth Step were completely different from Daolords of the Third Step. To reach the fourth step meant reaching the Verge of the Daomerge, which meant that you had reached terrifying heights in a certain Dao.

The reason why he was able to feud against Daolord Solesky for so long was because he was at a similar level of power. Both Patriarch Clearwind and Daolord Solesky were extremely powerful, even amongst other Daolords of the Fourth Step. They had both experienced many dangers as well. They naturally were quite skilled in keeping themselves alive and would never underestimate any opponent.

When Heartlord Solewind had shattered that Dao-seal, he had been able to easily slay a Daolord of the Third Step. But if he had encountered Patriarch Clearwind? Forget about a Dao-seal; even if the Palace Lord of the Heart Palace struck out, if he wasn’t careful Patriarch Clearwind would probably be able to escape.

“Solesky. It’s been quite some time since I’ve sparred with him.” Azure light flickered through Patriarch Clearwind’s eyes.

Vastheaven Palace had two Daolords of the Fourth Step, while Clearwind Temple merely had one. However, these two organizations were equivalent in power. This was a testament to how formidable Patriarch Clearwind was.

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The Three Realms. Brightheart Island.

Within Ning’s study. The study was filled with rolls of jade slips. Ning casually picked up a jade slip, then infused the set of sword-arts he had developed into the jade slip.

“For Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals, less abstruse sword-arts are more appropriate.” Ning’s left hand was casually demonstrating one sword-art after another. He had perfectly joined together five Supreme Daos; in terms of creating sword-art techniques for Elder Gods or World Gods, not even the Brightshore Hegemon would necessarily be a match for Ning.

“3600 low-level techniques, 108 decent techniques, and 5 high-level sword-arts; the Yin-Yang stance, the Soleheart stance, the Blood Drop stance, the Shadowless stance, and the Heavenbreaker stance. The coremost technique shall be the perfect junction of these five types of sword-intent.”

The sword-arts which Ning had created included all types of sword-arts, including sword-arts that were more suited for women, sword-arts that were meant to be used with just one arm, sword-arts that suited those who were a bit foolish... all types of sword-arts had been created, and the creation process was actually another way for Ning to analyze and better understand the nature of the Dao of the Sword.

Every so often, he'd raise his head and stare off into the distance. He was able to see to the distant lakeshore, where Ji Yichuan was training in sword-arts himself. Next to him watched Yuchi Snow, while their granddaughter Ji Brightmoon continuously called out words of advice and guidance. Brightmoon had indeed reached a much more impressive level of expertise in the Dao of the Sword than her grandfather Yichuan, and Yichuan actually enjoyed having his granddaughter teach him.

"Haha..." As Ning watched, he couldn't help but grin. His father, his mother, and his daughter Brightmoon.

Everything was so wonderful.

Ning then turned his attention to his sword-arts, putting more sword-arts on display then recording them into jade slips.

"Eh?" Ning came to a sudden halt. Although his gaze was focused on the distant lakeshore, his heart felt like the rising sun that was appearing above the watery horizon.

"The Sword Dao. That's all there is to it. The Sword Dao is simply the Sword Dao." Ning started to laugh. "Why divide it up into so many different 'types'? Yin-Yang sword-intent, Blood Drop sword-intent, Shadowless sword-intent, Soleheart sword-intent, Heavenbreaker sword-intent... what difference does it make? They all belong to the Sword Dao. So that's how it is. The question which has puzzled me for millions of years..."

As the saying went, one who suddenly understood the Dao in the morning would be content even if he died in the evening. This was the sort of satisfaction Ning was feeling right now.

It was excitement. It was a sense of contentment. This question had bedeviled him for millions of years in the Trileaf Realm, when he first sensed that his Sword Dao had yet to reach the limit. Now, with his parents and his daughter by his side, he suddenly had a moment of epiphany as he collated all these different sword-arts.

Rumble...

A wave of strange power was surging forth, resonating with the innermost depths of Ning's soul.

Ning raised his head and stared into the skies. He could trace the sensation back to its origins. He could immediately sense that it was coming from incredibly far off within the primordial chaos. This place was so unfathomably distant that it was many times farther away than the entire size of the Endless Territories or the alternate universe. This was the place where the true prime essences of this universe lay.

That place was the place where the prime essence of the Dao of the Sword, one of the prime essences of this universe, resided.

Rumble...

One of the prime essences responsible for stabilizing this entire universe, the prime essence of the Dao of the Sword, was resonating with Ji Ning!

BOOM!

Within the Three Realms.

Ning was still within his study, but a terrifying aura of the Dao of the Sword suddenly erupted from his body. He himself was like a terrifying sword, and his every movement and motion contained the aura of the Dao of the Sword.

“Am I now the master of the Dao of the Sword?” Ning could sense that the unfathomably distant prime essence of the Dao of the Sword was resonating in tune with him. In this instant, he finally understood that this was the truly ‘supreme’ Dao of the Sword, the true apex of the Sword Dao.

This ultimate Sword Dao, this... this Omega Dao of the Sword... it didn’t have ‘multiple’ versions of itself, such as Supreme Daos did.

The Dao of the Sword, in and of itself, was a complete Dao. It could simply transform into many different things, much like how the single supreme Taiji gave birth to the duality of Yin and Yang, which gave birth to the trigrams that then gave birth to all things.

The five perfectly joined Supreme Daos which Ning had previously developed were like the trigrams; although the three lines of the trigrams were joined together perfectly, they didn’t truly represent the ultimate expression of the Dao of the Sword. Only by truly understanding the ‘single’ source would you be able to truly, completely, and perfectly understand and master the Dao of the Sword!

“This Omega Sword Dao is the true ultimate Sword Dao! Only now can I be considered a master of the Dao of the Sword.” Ning felt as though he had just undergone a complete transformation. Finally, he understood why the difference in power between those who had joined two Supreme Daos, three Supreme Daos, or even five Supreme Daos was fairly small.

It didn’t really matter how many Supreme Daos you were able to come up with... because above them was the complete and full Dao of the Sword. All types of sword-arts and all of the so-called branches... they were nothing more than parts of this true and complete Sword Dao.

“Come forth.” Ning stepped forwards. Whoosh! He instantly transformed into a streak of light which then completely disappeared as he used the Shadowless evasion skill. In an instant, he appeared in the empty space above the Three Realms.

“The Solar Star.” Ning stood there in space, staring at the enormous and scorchingly hot Solar Star off in the distance. He looked very ordinary, with his Sword Dao aura completely restrained, but that was what made him so terrifying. He was now fundamentally different from how he had been before.

“How terrifying. I’m able to tear through space without causing any disturbances at all, and I’m actually able to move ten times faster than the speed of light. Most Verge-level Daolords can only move at five times the speed of light!” Even Ning was frightened by how strong he had become. Previously, his most powerful attack had been his quadressence thunder and quadressence water, but the power of his Sword Dao now completely eclipsed both of those quadressence attacks combined.

“Now that I have comprehended my Omega Sword Dao, it is time for me to break through to become a Daolord.” Ning’s eyes were filled with blazing eagerness.

He had once felt that his chances of reviving Yu Wei were miniscule; not even Emperor Maniseal, an Eternal Emperor who had reached incredible heights in the Dao of Seals, was able to accomplish such a thing. But in the instant that he discovered and comprehended his Omega Sword Dao, he knew that his chances had just increased dramatically!

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 14: Patriarch Clearwind

Vastheaven Palace. The Darknorth Estate.

Whoosh. Ji Ning was holding a tankard of wine, and the wine within it was flowing out from the opening and into his glass.

“Master, you’ve been really relaxed lately. A while ago you were training in the sword every day. Why have you stopped?” Su Youji walked towards them from afar.

“Who says I stopped?” Ning asked. “So long as my heart holds my sword-intent within it, I am still training in swordplay. If my heart is void of sword-intent, all the physical training in the world would be useless. To you, it might look like I’m just relaxing and drinking wine, but I’m actually training right now.”

“Sophistry,” Su Youji muttered.

Ning chuckle. He really did hold his sword-intent within his heart. The awesome Sword Dao that filled his heart and his complete control over it made Ning feel intoxicated. At his current level, the World level, Ning had already advanced as far as he could. Now, what he needed to do was to become a Daolord! Only then would he be able to advance further in his Omega Sword Dao.

The Omega Sword Dao represented that the path which Ning had chosen was truly the most ultimate of paths, but he had just barely begun to tread this path. Even so, just starting on this path meant that his insights were already comparable to those of many Daolords of the Fourth Step; in some areas, he actually surpassed them!

In truth, the fact that Ning could move ten times faster than the speed of light was a testament to his skills. He didn’t have to rely on lightning-type skills or light-type skills to accomplish this; he was flying at ten times the speed of light solely through his mastery of the Sword Dao. This proved how profound a level of insight he had truly reached.

“It will be another thirty-plus years before my main body’s clone reaches this place,” Ning mused. “I suppose I’ll have to just wait.”

During the next thirty-plus years, Ning would spend his free time drinking wine and strolling about Vastheaven Palace. He would also memorize various new techniques and secret arts, so that his Primaltwin in the Three Realms would also gain access to them. Ning had spent three million cubes of chaos nectar to purchase all of Vastheaven Palace’s techniques, divine abilities, and secret arts that were below the Daolord level. This was a truly massive amount of techniques, and it would take even

Ning an extremely long period of time to memorize it all! Right now, Ning was just spending some of his free time working on memorizing the stockpile; he was planning to become a Daolord before truly memorizing them on a large scale.

Daolords were able to memorize things much more quickly than World-level cultivators were. They were on completely different levels.

“Eh?” Ning’s face suddenly tightened slightly as he lifted up a cup of wine.

“What’s wrong, Master?” Su Youji was puzzled.

“What a powerful sense of danger,” Ning murmured softly. “An enemy has come.”

“A powerful sense of danger? An enemy?” Su Youji was very puzzled. She was a Daolord, but she sensed nothing at all.

Ning rose to his feet. “Come. Let’s take a look.”

“Is there really an enemy?” Su Youji followed behind Ning, confused. However, after taking just a few steps she suddenly raised her head to stare towards the skies, stunned. “What a terrifyingly strong aura.” She couldn’t help but give a shocked glance to her master, Ji Ning. Ji Ning was merely at the World level, but he was actually able to discover this newcomer before she, a Daolord, did.

What she didn’t realize was that ever since Ning had mastered his Omega Sword Dao, a natural Sword Dao domain was around him at all times, and he was the master of this domain! So long as they were still within the reach of the ripples generated by the prime essence of the Dao of the Sword, Ning would be able to sense things around him with ease. The closer anyone moved towards him, the more powerful those sensations would be. Given Ning’s accomplishments in the Sword Dao, his sensory powers were already comparable to those of Daolords of the Fourth Step.

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Moments later, Pillsaint came charging over as well. Ning, Su Youji, and Pillsaint quickly made their way to the main hall of Vastheaven Palace. By now, Daolord Solesky and Daolord Battlemaster had both arrived.

“Ji Ning.”

“Darknorth.” Daolord Solesky and Daolord Battlemaster both called out to him.

“Did something just happen?” Ning asked as he turned to stare intently towards the skies. Vastheaven Palace’s main hall was the tallest building in the entire palace, and from this location they were able to see the limitless skies above them. Right now, a gray mass was moving towards them from the horizon, blotting out the sun and carrying an aura of such power that simply glancing at it was terrifying.

“That’s Patriarch Clearwind,” Daolord Battlemaster said. “A few days ago, I calculated through Numerancy that he would be coming. However... all we can do is sense his presence. There’s nothing else we can do.”

Daolord Solesky was quite calm. He snickered coldly, “I knew that old bastard wouldn’t just let things slide like that.”

“So he really did arrive.” Ning had a solemn look on his face as well.

“Don’t worry. At most, he’ll just rant and rave from outside. There’s no way he would dare enter Vastheaven Palace.” Daolord Solesky snickered, “Although I merely have an avatar here and do not have the full power of my true self, the formations that we’ve established here over the course of countless years will ensure that I have nothing to fear. Given that Battlemaster is also here to help out... there’s no way he would dare enter.”

The nearby Daolord Battlemaster nodded. “In the outside world, I might not be a match for Patriarch Clearwind, but there’s nothing to fear here in Vastheaven Palace.”

Rumble...

That gray mass continued to expand and reach out from the distant horizon. The other brothers of Vastheaven Palace were beginning to notice it as well, and they all made haste to the main hall.

“What’s going on?”

“W-what’s that?”

“Big brother Solesky, who is invading Vastheaven Palace?” All of them were shocked.

“None of our brothers in Vastheaven Palace are permitted to leave this place. Wait here for my orders,” Daolord Solesky said calmly, his voice echoing within the ears of every single member of Vastheaven Palace.

“Yes.” They all assented, knowing that this wasn’t the time to be careless in their actions.

Soon, a wild gray wind with earth-shaking savagery completely covered the skies above Vastheaven Palace, blotting out the sun and making it so that there was almost no light left in the world. Vastheaven Palace became shadowed in darkness, but some of the formations covering it began to activate. Areas of light began to emerge within various parts of Vastheaven Palace, giving it a rather beautiful glow to it.

“Old man Solesky.” A shrine suddenly emerged within the endless gray wind in the skies, and an old man dressed in gaudy black robes stood in front of the main entrance to it. His voice echoed within this entire world. “You really are quite bold. You actually dared to permit those young subordinates of yours to abduct Daolord Blesswind of my Clearwind Temple. If you know what’s good for you, you shall hand him over along with those five World-level cultivators of his! If you do that, I’ll just let this matter come to an end. Otherwise... hmph!”

His cold snort echoed throughout the skies.

In Vastheaven palace.

“The rest of you should wait here,” Daolord Solesky instructed. “Battlemaster, let’s go chat with that madman.”

“Agreed.” Daolord Battlemaster nodded.

Daolord Solesky and Daolord Battlemaster instantly soared high into the skies. Thanks to the barrier formations protecting Vastheaven Palace, someone outside wouldn’t be able to see what was going on

behind the formations, but those inside Vastheaven Palace were able to clearly make out what was happening outside.

Only when Daolord Solesky and Daolord Battlemaster flew into the skies were the members of Clearwind Temple able to see them.

“Clearwind.” Daolord Solesky let out a little snicker. “Daolord Blesswind of your temple ended up being defeated by one of my World-level brothers. Neither Battlemaster nor I had anything to do with it! I’m actually quite amazed that you have the gall to come here, after one of your Daolords lost in such a pitiful fashion.”

“He did lose, but that was only because that puny little World-level cultivator relied on rare treasures and golems.” Patriarch Clearwind said angrily, “Solesky, hand over Daolord Blesswind and the others or-”

“Or what?” Daolord Solesky interrupted him, then said angrily, “Daolord Blesswind’s life is in the hands of Vastheaven Palace. I can kill him whenever I want.”

“If you want to kill him, kill him.” Patriarch Clearwind said coldly, “I’ll make sure that Vastheaven Palace pays the price for it.”

If he wasn’t able to bring Daolord Blesswind back, then it didn’t matter whether Blesswind stayed alive or not.

“What a nasty, vicious man.” Daolord Solesky snickered. “You know my true body isn’t here, which is the only reason why you had the courage to run here and show off. Hmph! If you are feeling bold, try entering Vastheaven Palace! I’ve already opened up the sealing formation; you are free to come in whenever you wish. Battlemaster, let’s go back and keep drinking our wine. Forget about this madman.”

“Agreed, big brother. Let’s go back and have some wine.” Battlemaster laughed as well.

Swoosh! Both flew back downwards.

Daolord Clearwind had an even uglier look on his face now. Vastheaven Palace had just completely ignored him... but he truly wouldn’t dare to actually barge into Vastheaven Palace! In the outside world, he would hold an advantage over Daolord Battlemaster and Daolord Solesky’s clone. In Vastheaven Palace, however, he would be completely dominated.

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Within Vastheaven Palace.

“Big brother Solesky, are we just going to let him wait there?” Ning asked.

“Forget about that madman. Let all of our brothers just drink here. Come, come! Let’s drink our wine and just wait to see what that madman will do,” Daolord Solesky said loudly.

Everyone present let out shouts of approval. The brothers of Vastheaven Palace were all quite bold figures, but they also kept a close eye on the outside. They had heard of Patriarch Clearwind’s mighty reputation for countless years, after all.

“Excellent. Excellent!” The skies echoed with Patriarch Clearwind’s enraged voice. “From this day forth, all of the cultivators of Vastheaven Palace can just forget about leaving it! I’ll kill anyone and everyone who exits it! None of the cultivators of Vastheaven Palace shall be able to re-enter this place either. I shall execute anyone who tries to enter Vastheaven Palace! If you refuse to hand over Daolord Blesswind, I’ll stay here and keep everyone trapped within Vastheaven Palace. One chaos cycle... ten chaos cycles... we’ll take it slowly!”

“Let’s wait for my true body to return. I want to see if you would dare try and surround Vastheaven Palace once that happens.” Daolord Solesky’s cold voice rang out in reply as well.

The Desolate Era

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 15: The Clone’s Return

The Vastheaven Everworld.

A fur-clad youth was flying through the skies of this place. He stared at the distant gray storm that was blotting out the sun in the distance. That was the direction of Vastheaven Palace.

“I’ve finally made it,” Ji Ning mused to himself.

The fur-clad youth was Ning’s clone, which had travelled all the way here from the Badlands Territory. Now that he knew that Patriarch Clearwind was besieging Vastheaven Palace, he changed his appearance.

“Even though Patriarch Clearwind has never seen me, he probably knows what I look like,” Ning mused.

Swoosh! The fur-clad Ning flew towards Vastheaven Palace at high speeds.

“Fellow Daoist. Fellow Daoist!” A black-robed figure suddenly appeared in the distant skies, and he used his Immortal energy to transmit his voice to Ning from afar. “The Daolords of Clearwind Temple have already surrounded Vastheaven Palace for thirty years. From the looks of things, they’ll probably be here for a very long period of time. You must not travel any further, fellow Daoist. Ugh... I personally witnessed a weak little Elder God who was instantly slain once he moved in that direction.”

“Even Elder Gods are slain?” Ning frowned.

“Anyone who dares to travel there will be slain. Not even animals or birds are permitted to enter that region.” The Chaos Immortal shook his head. “Be careful, fellow Daoist.” After speaking, he flew away.

The fur-clad Ji Ning considered this matter, then immediately began to charge downwards. As soon as he touched the ground, he instantly disappeared into thin air.

Using the Shadowless evasion skill, he began to move towards Vastheaven Palace at high speeds. For the sake of hiding his true abilities, Ning merely moved stealthily at just two times the normal speed of light.

.....

Within Vastheaven Palace.

Ji Ning, Daolord Solesky, and Daolord Battlemaster were standing before their barrier formations, staring off into the distance.

“Big brother, that clone of mine is about to arrive,” Ning said.

“In order to break through to the Daolord level, you have to merge all of your clones together to form a complete body.” Daolord Solesky shook his head and sighed. “But that madman Patriarch Clearwind has surrounded our palace. It’ll be extremely difficult for your clone to make it inside. As I see it, you should just give up that body. You’ll still be able to become a Daolord, and your strength will only be minimally impacted.”

Ning shook his head. That clone was one of the eighteen clones that had been created thanks to his [Taowu Eighteen Fiendgods]. His ‘main body’ was actually created from the merging of seventeen of those clones! If it died, his spare clone would be able to recreate the main body by remaking the other seventeen clones.

If the spare clone died, there was no way his main body would be able to rebuild it. Still... once the spare clone died, the main body would become independent and ‘complete’, but it would have an eighteenth less divine power than its maximum potential. It was true that this wouldn’t have a significant impact.

“Just wait a bit, big brother,” Ning said.

“Alright.” Daolord Solesky laughed. “I’ll eagerly await your display of power, Ji Ning.”

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Ning was flying low, very close to the ground. The sky-blotting tempest of gray wind blanketed all of Vastheaven Palace, with the shrine having descended upon the peak of a nearby mountain. Patriarch Clearwind’s Immortal energy filled the entire region, with the area around Vastheaven Palace under his complete control. Any cultivator who wished to enter or exit Vastheaven Palace would not be able to escape his detection.

“Eh?” Patriarch Clearwind opened his eyes. His gaze pierced through the walls of the shrine as he stared towards a distant region. He let out a cold smile. “Ah, a young World-level cultivator. He thinks to evade my surveillance through using an evasion skill?”

“You may perish.”

Patriarch Clearwind coldly waved a single finger.

BOOM!

A terrifying amount of natural energy instantly began to manifest, transforming into a blurry gray hand that was three million kilometers in size and which clawed downwards towards the cultivator.

Whoooooosh. The swiping motion of that giant gray blurry hand caused the entire area beneath it to be reduced to dust as an enormous gouge was torn into the earth.

Swish! Ning, however, continued to skirt across the surface of the ground. His speed had suddenly increased to four times the speed of light.

“Eh?” Patriarch Clearwind’s face tightened. “How can a World-level cultivator have such a fast evasion skill? He’s comparable to a Daolord of the Third Step.” When he had swiped out at the ground, Ning had suddenly sped up from twice the speed of light to four times the speed of light, avoiding his blow.

“Hmph.” Patriarch Clearwind had a dark look on his face as he once more launched an attack, a second claw.

That giant blurry gray hand carried even more power than before, and it also moved even faster as it swept out towards the ground. The earth trembled as mud and dirt was reduced to dust as an even larger gouge appeared within the ground.

And yet... Ning’s speed skyrocketed yet again. He now was able to move at six times the speed of light, and as a result he dodged even this second attack. By now, he was very close to Vastheaven Palace.

Swish! Patriarch Clearwind didn’t even have a chance to unleash a third strike. Ning almost instantly charged within the protective perimeter of Vastheaven Palace.

“What?!” Patriarch Clearwind shot to his feet, causing his seven World-level cultivators under his command to all be shocked. None of them even knew that a World-level cultivator was using an evasion skill; all they knew was that their Patriarch Clearwind had just clawed twice at the ground.

“He actually escaped, and that final burst of speed brought him to move at six times the speed of light? That’s faster than many Verge-level Daolords!” Patriarch Clearwind had a look of disbelief on his face. “How could a World-level cultivator be that fast? What sort of special encounters has he had!?”

If Ning was riding Chaos lightning, he would be able to move at ten times the speed of light. There were actually quite a few similar evasion skills, but they were all extremely difficult to train in. Many Verge-level Daolords didn’t have access to such evasion skills.

“Given his speed... could that have been the Darknorth fellow which Blesswind spoke of?” Patriarch Clearwind mused to himself, “But logically speaking, that World God named Darknorth should’ve reached Vastheaven Palace long ago. Could it be that Vastheaven Palace has a second World-level cultivator who moves at those speeds?”

Patriarch Clearwind was truly mystified.

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Vastheaven Palace, however, was a hubbub of celebration.

Swoosh.

The fur-clad Ning charged past the barriers of Vastheaven Palace; in doing so, he had reached a position of perfect safety. He flew straight towards the white-robed Ning, returning to his usual appearance while doing so.

“Impressive, impressive.” Daolord Solesky let out an amazed sigh. “Patriarch Clearwind struck out twice but still wasn’t able to halt your clone. That evasion skill you used at the very end... it let you move at six times the limits of the Heavenly Daos, right?”

“He was overconfident. He didn’t know about my true abilities.” Ning chuckled. He had actually been quite relaxed this entire time, and he had only been forced to move at six times the speed of light. His current limit was actually ten! However, he only needed to move as fast as was necessary to escape and safely enter Vastheaven Palace. There was no need for him to let the enemy know everything.

“If you move that fast, it won’t be an easy thing for him to kill you,” Daolord Battlemaster said.

Ning immediately said, “Big brother Solesky, big brother Battlemaster, now that my clone’s arrived I’m going to merge my clone with my main body and break through to become a Daolord.”

“Right.” Solesky and Battlemaster both turned solemn.

“You must be careful,” Solesky instructed. “Breaking through to become a Daolord of the First Step might be easy for you, but given how formidable your sword-intent is you’ll definitely become at least a Daolord of the Fourth Step. That makes it even more important for you to solidify your foundation. The Dao you develop must be sufficiently solid and stable.”

Ning nodded.

Daolords. With each step they took, they trod the line between life and death.

It was like building a tall building. Becoming a Daolord of the First Step was establishing the foundation for that building! Daolords of the second, third, and fourth steps were like adding more and more floors to that building. If the foundation wasn’t stable, the entire building might collapse! The same was true for Samsara Daolords. Each step they took they risked their lives, and quite a few Daolords ended up dying upon taking their third step. Not every Daolord would be able to reach the fourth step.

In order to build a tall tower, the most important thing of all was to have a sturdy base. As for gaining eternity? Not even the slightest error was permissible. Even the smallest of flaws would ensure that you would never be able to gain eternity!

If your foundation was small, you’d only be able to build a small wooden cabin, which was to say you would become an ordinary Daolord. Each step they took would be easier, and it would be easier for them to become Eternal Emperors. However, they would be weak.

If you had an incredibly deep foundation, you would be ready to build a massive palace atop it. Every floor would be quite difficult to construct, and to gain eternity would be even harder. However, if you succeeded you would be unfathomably stronger than your peers. This was true for Bertulu, Eastcult, Greatjoy, and the others. As for Ning, his foundation was the deepest of them all.

“Don’t worry at all, big brother.” Ning smiled, then both he and his clone both transformed into streaks of light that flew towards his distant estate as Daolord Battlemaster and Daolord Solesky both watched from behind.

“Brother Ji Ning truly has improved by an astonishing amount.” Daolord Solesky sighed. “When I first met him... I thought he was quite talented, but I never would’ve imagined that he would become as powerful as he is today. The evasion skill he used just now was very fast, but it didn’t seem to include any of his lightning or water. I have no idea what evasion skill he used, but just by relying on his sword-intent he was able to capture five World-level cultivators.”

Daolord Battlemaster nodded as well. "I tried to use Numerancy to divine his future, but I wasn't able to divine anything at all. He's too monstrously talented, even more talented than Brightfish. Calculating his future is far too difficult."

Forget about him; even the Paragon of Pills was only able to use Numerancy to get the vaguest of ideas as to how long it would be before they met again.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 16: Becoming a Daolord

Vastheaven Palace. The Darknorth Estate.

The white-robed Ji Ning and the fur-clad Ning were travelling side-by-side.

"Master." Su Youji and Pillsaint stared in astonishment.

"My clone has already returned from the Badlands Territory. It is now time for me to break through to become a Daolord as well," Ning said. "Starting right now, do not disturb me unless something very important happens."

"Understood."

Both Su Youji and Pillsaint immediately acknowledged the order. They were unable to prevent looks of excitement from appearing on their faces. As they saw it, Ji Ning truly was an incredible figure; once he broke through to become a Daolord, his status would truly skyrocket even more.

Whoosh. Whoosh. The white-robed Ning and the fur-clad Ning both moved into a private room deep within the estate.

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Within the secluded room.

Rumble...

Formations began to actiate, causing barriers of light to begin to appear around the entire Darknorth estate, preventing any outsiders from looking into it.

The white-robed Ning and the fur-clad Ning both sat in the lotus position. Both shut their eyes, then began to use the [One True Body] technique.

Whoosh. Both bodies began to emanate an aura of blurry light from their bodies, their Jindans, and their souls. They began to draw closer and closer to each other, before finally the fur-clad Ning flew straight into the white-robed Ning's body, causing the light to expand dramatically.

The two came from the same source. They were identical in soul, truesoul, and body. This was why they were able to rejoin each other and merge into one.

"Now, all eighteen of my clones have been brought together into one." The white-robed Ning opened his eyes, revealing a smile. He still remembered how he had first acquired the [Taowu Eighteen

Fiendgods] and used it to create eighteen separate clones. Now, he had managed to once more merge all eighteen clones into one! A sense of perfection and contentment came from his very truesoul, causing him to feel a bit intoxicated.

Immortal energy and divine power flooded into the azureflower mist region within his body, and it actually began to transform into more of that mist energy. For eighteen of those bodies to come together meant that his divine body had only become more powerful than it had been in the past! His divine power was also slightly purer than before as well, allowing him to endure and hold a bit more of that mist energy.

“A hundred and twenty drops.” He had accumulated a total of 120 drops of ‘water’ within the azureflower mist region. This was quite a bit more than the 108 drops he had accumulated previously.

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Within an estate located in the primordial chaos directly outside the distant Three Realms.

The black-robed Ning was seated there, next to another black-robed Ning. They simultaneously used the [One True Body] technique as well and merged to become one.

A short while later, there was only one seated black-robed Ning. His aura, however, was a bit stronger than before.

From this day forth, he would only have one true body and one Primaltwin, with no clones of either.

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“Let it begin.” Both the white-robed Ning in Vastheaven Palace and the black-robed Ning in his chaos estate nodded, their eyes filled with resolve.

Boom!

The true body and the Primaltwin, though located extremely far away from each other, made their breakthroughs simultaneously. They could even sense a strange resonance between them, and in this moment they both established a Dao that belonged to them and them alone.

Samsara Daolords walked a path of their own devising, and with each step on their Dao they trod the line between life and death.

Each time he made a breakthrough, both his true body and his Primaltwin would have to make the breakthrough at the same time! Trying to break through with just one would result in being stifled by the other; there was no way for it to succeed. Consider the ‘Daomerge’; even a Daolord of the Fourth Step who had a Primaltwin would only have one shot at the Daomerge. There was no way to simply allow the true body to fail the Daomerge, then allow the Primaltwin to use that experience to succeed.

The true body and the Primaltwin would have to face it all together, and with each step they would risk death together. This was how things worked. If you weren’t extremely determined, you would never be able to succeed.

Rumble...

The primordial chaos outside the Three Realms began to rumble and churn with unearthly power, forming a chaos whirlpool of terrifying power and inconceivable size. The ripples caused by it actually affected even the insides of the Three Realms!

“W-what...”

“What in the world?”

“What are these terrifying ripples?”

Patriarch Subhuti, Windfiend, and the other elites of the Three Realms all flew to the void above the Three Realms. They stared towards the distant place where the ripples were coming from. They could sense that the normally calm and tranquil primordial chaos was now rumbling and roaring like a dragon in flight, churning with such power that they were all utterly amazed.

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Vastheaven Palace. The Darknorth Estate was completely calm.

Although a Daolord’s aura was bursting forth from this place, the barriers which Ning had activated earlier made it so that the aura was completely blocked from escaping. As for the energy which he needed to break through from the World level to the Daolord level, Ning was able to simply generate it from the chaos jewels which he carried with him. This was a decision he had made ever since he comprehended his Omega Sword Dao.

Whooooosh.

The Jindan chaos region within his body. The Dao-tree which had been 108,000 meters tall began to draw nourishment from Ning’s insights into his Sword Dao. It quickly began to grow, and with a rumbling sound it started to expand. Although it was very slow in growing ‘taller’, it was beginning to thicken at an absolutely incredible speed.

The Dao-tree was growing thicker and thicker, but it was growing taller quite slowly.

“The deeper a Samsara Daolord’s foundation is, the thicker his Dao-tree will be. Thanks to my Omega Sword Dao, there should be very few Daolords of the First Step who are a match for me,” Ning mused. There was a fixed limit to how tall a Dao-tree could be. For example, if a Daolord of the Fourth Step trained for many years and reached the Verge, his Dao-tree would grow to become 540,000 meters tall. This was true for all Verge-level Daolords. The thickness, however, was different for each person.

As the Dao-tree grew thicker and taller, the roots would also extend deeper and deeper into the Jindan chaos region, allowing it to become more and more stable and expand even further in size.

The Dao-tree continued to grow until it reached a height of 156,000 meters tall, then finally came to a halt.

The Jindan chaos region, however, was still furiously expanding. Its aura was expanding as well, and the Jindan core at the very heart of the region was becoming increasingly mysterious and profound.

“Time to rebuild the divine body.”

The white-robed Ning sat there in the lotus position. His bones, his flesh, his sinews... they all began to be fundamentally remade and rebuilt, using the Omega Sword Dao as their core. They drew in the chaos energy, using it to remake his divine power itself. His awesome Daolord aura burst forth from his room, and the many chaos jewels in Ning's possession were being continuously used up and replenished. In truth, not even a Daolord of the Fourth Step would really use up that many chaos jewel in replenishing his divine power. To Ning, such a small amount of chaos jewels was negligible.

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"A Daolord's aura. Master is making his breakthrough." Pillsaint was nervous.

"Right, but the aura is so powerful... it is far greater than the aura we had when we made our breakthroughs." Su Youji was quite moved, but a puzzled look appeared in her eyes as she raised her head skywards. "Odd. Why isn't there any disturbance in the local primordial chaos?"

Pillsaint revealed a puzzled look as well. "Right. Is Master not using the chaos energy of the outside world?"

Only when breaking through would you be able to absorb an enormous amount of chaos energy in a very short period of time for 'free'. When you normally broke through to become a Daolord, you would make use of that free chaos energy from the outside world. Ning, however, was so filthy rich that he didn't care about that at all, and he had his own reasons for not wishing to draw upon the chaos energy of the outside world.

"Master probably has other things on his mind," Su Youji suggested.

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Just two hours later, the true body had completed its breakthrough. Given that he had an unlimited supply of chaos jewels, the breakthrough was naturally incredibly fast. As for the Primaltwin, its breakthrough would take significantly more time, as it was still furiously drawing upon the energy of the primordial chaos outside of the Three Realms.

"So this is what it is like to become a Daolord?" The white-robed Ning sat there, a smile on his face. His aura was noticeably much more powerful than it had been in the past, and it was actually on par with that of Daolord Brightfish, a Daolord of the Second Step.

Anyone who saw Ning and sensed his aura would judge him to be a Daolord of the Second Step.

In truth, this actually wasn't that impressive. All Ancient cultivators and members of the Brightshore Imperials were comparable to Daolords of the First Step when they were actually at the World level. Once they broke through, their divine bodies would be comparable to Daolords of the Third Step, and their auras would be far stronger than Ning's! As for Kilostar, who had trained in the [Thousand Bodies Sutra], he would be every bit a match for those Ancient cultivators and the Brightshore Imperials.

However, there were very, very few Ancient cultivators and Brightshore Imperials. As for cultivators who both trained in the [Thousand Bodies Sutra] and were able to break through to become Daolords? They were probably even rarer than Brightshore Imperials!

Thus, in the outside world people usually judged a person's power based on his aura.

Ning used his Omega Sword Dao to serve as the basis and core of his divine power, and had combined eighteen bodies into one; this was why he had a body comparable to a Daolord of the Second Step after making his breakthrough.

“In the future, I’ll just pretend to be a Daolord of the Second Step. In the end, my Omega Sword Dao is simply too powerful, far more powerful than the Daos of Eastcult, Greatjoy, or the others. Based on what I know, not even figures like the almighty Brightshore Hegemon or the Paragon of Pills have encountered World-level cultivators who had as unearthly a Dao as I do.”

Ning knew that in everyone’s eyes, being able to master and then join together multiple Supreme Daos meant that you were the most supreme of geniuses. And yet... he was even more powerful than the ‘most supreme of geniuses’?

If others found out about this, there might be some benefits for him, but... it would also bring quite a deal of trouble! It was better to be cautious; on the surface, being just one of those other ‘supreme geniuses’ was enough.

After making his breakthrough, Ning could sense that he had undergone an earthshaking transformation. He felt certain that thanks to his Omega Sword Dao, even as a Daolord of the First Step he would be comparable to the likes of Greatjoy and Eastcult once they became Daolords of the Second Step. There were very few Daolords of the Fourth Step who could do anything to him! This made Ning feel a sense of uncontrollable heroism and valor.

In the past, any powerful Daolord could pose a threat to him. Now... he would pose a threat to them instead!

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 17: Leaving Seclusion

The secluded room was completely silent. Ji Ning simply sat there, visualizing the insides of his body.

His reserves of Immortal energy and divine power were as deep as those of a Daolord of the Second Step. Ning’s focus, however, was on the azureflower region within his body.

“The azureflower mist energy.” This was what Ning was looking at. The azureflower region was a mist of haze. Droplets of golden water were slowly rolling together as the area emanated an aura of fog and mist. There was a total of 1111 of those golden drops! Every single drop contained far more energy than Ning’s divine power and Immortal energy combined.

“It actually evolved once again. My azureflower mist energy is far stronger than my own divine power or Immortal energy. How could it be this much stronger? This should be the power of a Daolord of the Fourth Step!” Ning was truly stunned.

The Nine Chaos Seals seemed like a very ordinary technique, but it was actually inconceivably strong.

For it to be able to convert the energy of Elder Gods and Ancestral Immortals was one thing. Even the conversion of World-level energy... fine. But it was actually able to convert even Daolord-level energy?! To this very day, Ning still wasn’t able to grasp some of the mysteries behind the conversion process.

“Who? Who created this technique, this ridiculously powerful technique? The deceased Hegemon bestowed numerous techniques, divine abilities, and secret arts upon me as well, but none of them can compare to it!” Ning was secretly stunned. Aside from his Hegemon-level sword-arts, the deceased Sword Hegemon also had numerous divine abilities and secret arts which he had passed on to Ning, and some of them were even stronger than the [Novessence Thunder]. And yet... they were all vastly inferior compared to the Nine Chaos Seals.

“The legends say that the most powerful bodies are those of the Brightshore Imperials, certain top-tier special lifeforms, Ancient cultivators, and cultivators who trained in the [Thousand Bodies Sutra],” Ning mused. “But my Nine Chaos Seals allows me to be on par with them.”

Brightshore Imperials, Ancient cultivators, elite special lifeforms, and practitioners of the [Thousand Bodies Sutra] were all incredibly talented figures; even at the World level, their bodies were comparable to the bodies of Daolords. Once they broke through to become Daolords of the First Step, their bodies would be comparable to those of Daolords of the Third Step!

Most importantly of all, they were able to execute divine abilities and unleash utterly ruinous amounts of force that were probably stronger than even Ning’s azureflower mist energy. There was no way for Ning to use his azureflower mist energy to use any divine abilities at all.

The problem was there were pitifully few Brightshore Imperials. This was why they needed the Twelve Palaces to protect them!

Ancient cultivators, top-tier special lifeforms, practitioners of the [Thousand Bodies Sutra]... all of them were pitifully few in number.

Daolord Solesky, Daolord Battlemaster, Daolord Brightfish, Pillsaint, Su Youji... when they were at the first step, they would have auras of Daolords of the First Step. Once they took their second step, they would have auras of Daolords of the Second Step. This was normal! People like Ning, who had an Omega Sword Dao and eighteen clones, were incredibly rare even amongst Daolords.

“Ancient cultivators and Brightshore Imperials who are Daolords of the First Step might be able to surpass me in power when they fully unleash all of their abilities, but I’m capable of lasting much longer in combat. In addition, the higher a level you reach, the more important the strength of the Dao you have created is.” Ning nodded slowly.

For Samsara Daolords, their Dao was their foundation. It mattered most of all.

Ning, for example, was in control of an Omega Sword Dao. Even without using any divine abilities or techniques, his sword-intent alone would be enough to easily suppress Daolords of the third Step. Thanks to this Omega Dao, he would be able to move ten times the speed of light. His Omega Dao allowed him to enter higher dimensions and move through them at truly astonishing speeds.

This was the nature of the Dao.

If you simply relied on brute force and strength, the end result would be that you would be trampled. This was why certain incredibly powerful Daolords were able to easily slay Brightshore Imperials, Ancient cultivators, and even Eternal Emperors, even though they were nothing more than ‘ordinary’ cultivators without any particularly special bodies!

“The Dao of the Sword...”

Ning was using his Omega Sword Dao to serve as the template for remaking his divine body. Once his Dao-tree stabilized, he was immediately able to vaguely visualize the upcoming path for his Omega Sword Dao.

The higher you stood, the farther you would be able to see.

Many different Sword Daos filled his mind, as did his Heavenbreaker sword-intent, his Soleheart sword-intent, his Yin-Yang sword-intent, his Blood Drop sword-intent, and his Shadowless sword-intent. Ning was beginning to get some insights and ideas into the mysteries they would hold in the future.

“No wonder they all say that going from the first step to the second step as a Daolord is the easiest step.” Ning revealed a smile. “If I was merely in control a single Supreme Dao, I’d probably break through to become a Daolord of the Second Step in just a few hundred years.”

It was very quick for Daolords to go from the first step to the second step. Even the absolute slowest of Daolords would at most take a few chaos cycles, and this would already be considered an incredibly long period of time. According to the stories, there were some who would be able to much move faster, breaking through within a thousand years. However, the later steps would be much more difficult and breaking through would be much slower.

“However, I need to first make further breakthroughs in my five Supreme Daos. Only then will I be able to develop an even more profound Omega Sword Dao.” Ning understood that his path would be a more difficult one. Others, however, would have no idea.

“I’ll stay in seclusion for ten years. Ten years from now I’ll say that I broke through to become a Daolord of the Second Step,” Ning mused.

Ten years. Under temporal acceleration, this would translate into over a thousand years. Given Ning’s level of talent, for him to break through to become a Daolord of the Second Step in roughly a thousand years wouldn’t be that surprising to others.

As a Daolord of the Second Step, for him to possess a Dao on the level of his Omega Sword Dao would make sense. If others knew that a Daolord of the First Step possessed such a terrifyingly powerful Sword Dao, news would quickly spread throughout the Endless Territories. Ning truly didn’t want to see this happen.

“In the next ten years, I need to finish mastering the [Novessence Thunder] and the [Novessence Water], as well as the protective divine ability the deceased Hegemon gave me, the [Sword Dao Body].” Ning came to his decision. Of the various divine abilities and secret arts which the deceased Hegemon had given him, the only one he could use for now was the protective divine ability.

This was because Ning had already reached the apex of power in the [Golden Idol] technique, and his body was comparable to a supreme Dao weapon. That was the highest limit possible for World-level cultivators. Only now, after becoming a Daolord, was he able to use the deceased Hegemon’s [Sword Dao Body]. When trained to the apex, it would make his divine body comparable to a supreme Eternal treasure.

Given his life would be a life surrounded by battle, if he wished to live a long life he had to be able to take a beating!

The primordial chaos was filled with all types of dangers, and one's enemies were capable of all sorts of insidious attacks. If your divine body was able to take a beating, your chances of staying alive would improve dramatically. All Daolords of the Fourth Step had extremely powerful and unfathomable techniques. These were terrifying powers gained after your personal Dao had reached an extremely high level.

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Time continued to flow on, and twelve years passed in the blink of an eye.

The Darknorth Estate. Although Pillsaint and Su Youji continued to train with their main bodies, both left incarnations there to await Ning's return.

"It's been quite some time since Master became a Daolord. Why hasn't he come out?" Pillsaint was quite puzzled. "It's been twelve years. Even Daolord Solesky has come to ask about this, but all the two of us can do is wait here like fools. Twelve years!"

"Twelve years is nothing. Your true body is using the temporal acceleration treasure inside the estate to train, right?" Su Youji said, "Even if it takes a thousand years or ten thousand years, you have no choice but to wait."

"I know, I know. I'm just mumbling to myself," Pillsaint said hurriedly. "Generally speaking, people will quickly emerge from secluded meditation after becoming Daolords. Our master has been in seclusion for far too long."

"True." Su Youji nodded. "It has been quite a while."

Suddenly...

BOOM!

An utterly terrifying Sword Dao aura suddenly surged outwards. However, the restrictive spells surrounding the Darknorth Estate prevented it from leaving the estate, making it impossible for anyone outside to notice what was going on. This Sword Dao aura was so lofty, exalted, and fierce, both Su Youji and Pillsaint couldn't help but quiver upon sensing it. Faced with this aura, they couldn't even think about resisting it; the only thing they felt was fear.

"This Sword Dao... this Sword Dao..." Both of them were completely shocked.

A period of time went past, but they remained unable to calm down. Rumble... the doors to the room swung open, and a white-robed youth who carried a black sword scabbard on his back emerged from within.

"Master." Both immediately rose to their feet.

"Master, you..." Su Youji stared at Ning and the aura around him. It seemed rather different from that of most Daolords of the First Step.

“After I became a Daolord, I suddenly gained many new insights and so I chose to train for a period of time. Who would’ve thought that I’d break through and become a Daolord of the Second Step?” Ning said.

“A Daolord of the Second Step?” Both Su Youji and Pillsaint were quite astonished.

Ning, however, felt a bit ashamed. Since he chose to hide his true power, he had to hide it from everyone; only then would he be secure. Ning’s subconscious had whispered to him repeatedly that pretending to be a Daolord of the Second Step was the best choice; only then would his path of cultivation be a safe one.

“Master... I’ve heard many say that advancing from the first step to the second step is quite fast, with some succeeding in just a thousand years, but I didn’t imagine you would be that fast as well.” Su Youji said excitedly, “Master, you truly are incredible.”

“Alright. No need to tell others about this,” Ning said. He then raised his head to stare towards the skies. With but a thought, he dispelled the formation spells surrounding the Darknorth Estate. As soon as he did so, both Daolord Solesky and Daolord Battlemaster sensed it right away.

“Ah, Ji Ning! Congratulations on making your breakthrough.” A wave of godsense swept towards him, bringing a mental chuckle with it. “Oho, this aura of yours... have you become a Daolord of the Second Step?”

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 18: The Power to Roam the Endless Territories

Just a short while later, Daolords Solesky, Battlemaster, and Brightfish all arrived at the Darknorth Estate. They stared at Ji Ning in astonishment.

“What’s with the looks on your faces?” Ning immediately asked.

“To advance from being a Daolord of the First Step to a Daolord of the Second Step within a thousand years... we’ve only heard of such things in legends.” Daolord Solesky beamed merrily as he looked at Ning. “But today, I’ve witnessed it myself. See that, Brightfish? That’s what a true ‘genius’ is.”

Daolord Brightfish looked at Ning, then nodded and grunted in assent.

Ning raised his head staring at the dark gray wind which was blotting out the skies above them. “Big brother Solesky, what are Patriarch Clearwind’s strengths and weaknesses? You’ve been feuding against him for ages; you should know better than anyone else. Please tell me everything you know.”

“His strengths and weaknesses?” Daolord Solesky looked at Ning, puzzled. “What are you planning to do?”

Ning’s copy of the Brightshore Kingdom’s star map had information regarding the Daolords in each territory, and it also had fairly detailed information on Patriarch Clearwind. Based on that information, Ning felt confident that he could give Patriarch Clearwind a run for his money! However, Daolord Solesky had been battling Patriarch Clearwind for so long that he probably had far more information than the star map did.

This was going to be a big battle. He had to prepare for it as best as he could.

“You...” The nearby Daolord Battlemaster first frowned, then stared towards Ning in shock. “You are preparing to give Patriarch Clearwind a fight?”

“What?!” Brightfish, Solesky, and even Pillsaint and Su Youji were both shocked as well.

Ning gave Daolord Battlemaster a surprised glance, then nodded. “Big brother Battlemaster’s Numerancy skills truly are formidable. Indeed. I’ve become much more powerful and wish to test myself against Patriarch Clearwind.”

“B-but you are just a new Daolord of the Second Step.” Daolord Solesky grew nervous. “How could you be so rash as to challenge Clearwind? He’s every bit a match for me. Even though Battlemaster is also at the fourth step, he’s still a level weaker than Patriarch Clearwind. Do you think you are invincible, now that you have broken through from the World level to become a Daolord of the Second Step? Ji Ning, I don’t want to criticize you, but you have to be cautious when roaming the Endless Territories. If you act this rashly, you will probably die.”

Daolord Solesky really was panicking. Had his brother gone mad?

“Big brother.” Ning didn’t try to argue with him. “Receive a blow from me.”

“Eh?” Daolord Solesky looked at Ning, then nodded. “Very well. Strike with your full power. I want to see how strong you are.”

Whoosh. Ning suddenly disappeared into thin air. Daolord Solesky had been quite calm, but now his face turned pale.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Sword-shadows formed from finger-strikes suddenly appeared everywhere and stabbed towards Daolord Solesky, every single one of them moving with incomprehensible speed.

“Fast. Too fast! H-how...” Daolord Solesky’s hands instantly transformed into two streams of water that swirled around each other, completely covering the area around him as they strove to defend against Ning’s sword-shadows. Despite that, Daolord Solesky was rendered completely off-balance and forced to take on the attacks head-on, causing waves and splashes of water to explode around him. This caused the nearby Daolord Battlemaster and Daolord Brightfish to both feel tremendous shock.

Whoosh.

Ning’s form appeared once more standing off in the distance.

“How was it, big brother?” Ning looked at Daolord Solesky.

“Well done, my brother!” Daolord Solesky revealed a look of delight, his eyes radiating excitement as he stared at Ning. He roared with laughter, “Well done, my brother! With this stance alone, you have the power to roam the Endless Territories unimpeded. How could you be this fast? In fact, you seem to be even faster in battle!”

“It is due to the Dao which I comprehended,” Ning said.

Ning was able to move at ten times the speed of light. Other Daolords who used flying treasures or rode on lightning or light would also be able to move at ten times the speed of light, but there was a critical

difference; for them, that speed could only be obtained when they were fleeing at high speed! The speed at which they could move and dodge in confined spaces in close quarters combat was much slower. Ning, however, had launched more than sixty thousand frenzied attacks within this region in that brief moment... and he was actually able to move and dodge at the incredible speed of ten times the speed of light in battle!

This wasn't a speed one could reach thanks to treasures or external resources. It depended on the Dao you had comprehended.

Some who trained in the Dao of Lightning, the Dao of Wind, or the Dao of Light would be able to move dozens of times faster than the speed of light once they became Daolords of the Fourth Step! This was what made them so incredibly formidable in battle. But of course, people like them were incredibly rare; less than one in a hundred Daolords of the Fourth Step would have such skills. But of course, the other Daolords might be skilled in other areas.

"Formidable." Daolord Solesky was extremely impressed.

"Our big brother is right. By relying on this Sword Dao, Darknorth, you do indeed have the power to roam the Endless Territories." Daolord Battlemaster nodded in praise as well.

"Incredible." Daolord Brightfish sighed in amazement.

Solesky immediately asked, "Right, Ji Ning. When you were in the Sword Palace of the Brightshore Kingdom, you should've been given the title of 'Swordlord', right?"

"Yes." Ning nodded.

"My master became a Swordlord shortly after he entered the Sword Palace. He was one of the top-ranking ones in the Twelve Palaces, at that." Pillsaint immediately spoke up proudly.

"Hah! The Brightshore Kingdom is one of the six major powers. You've only been training for a short period of time, yet you managed to rank amongst the top World-level cultivators of the Brightshore Kingdom? No wonder you are such a monster despite having just reached the second step." Daolord Solesky nodded. "You might be a bit weaker than Patriarch Clearwind, but your speed alone guarantees that he won't be able to take you down."

As he spoke, he produced a jade slip and immediately sent it towards Ning. "Clearwind and I have battling for ages, and I know the ins and outs of virtually all his techniques. I've recorded them all down within this jade slip. Take a look!"

Ning accepted it, then immediately began to read through it carefully.

Right. This information was indeed more detailed than the information included within the Brightshore Kingdom's star map. Patriarch Clearwind truly was formidable.

"What do you think?" Daolord Solesky looked at Ning. "Still want to fight him?"

"Of course I'm going to fight him." Ning nodded. "We can't just let him continue to blockade the entrance of our Vastheaven Palace, right?"

“Good!” Daolord Solesky smiled. “Now that you are a Daolord, you are the fourth Palace Lord of Vastheaven Palace. This here is one of the central control mechanisms for our barriers and restrictive spells. If you aren’t able to overcome your foe, you can retreat within the palace.”

As he spoke, he handed over a black-gold sawtoothed disc which was covered in complicated divine runes. This thing was part of the core controls of the entire Vastheaven Palace!”

“These core controls can only be bound a single time,” Daolord Solesky said. “After you bind them, they can never be bound by others again.” This was for security reasons. If one of the Palace Lords of Vastheaven Palace died and their opponent managed to take over and bind the core controls... unacceptable! This place had been the headquarters for Vastheaven Palace for countless ages, after all.

After binding the disc, Ning could sense the many complicated and powerful formations covering all of Vastheaven Palace. Their power was indeed astonishing.

“Then I’ll head off.” Ning glanced at the others, then transformed into a streak of light that flew away.

“Be careful!” Solesky called out from behind.

Daolords Brightfish, Battlemaster, Pillsaint, and Su Youji all watched nervously.

“Big brother Battlemaster, Darknorth won’t be in any danger, will he?” Daolord Brightfish asked nervously.

“Overall, he probably isn’t a match for Clearwind. But he’s a sword cultivator! They are very skilled in battle...” Battlemaster paused.

“He might not be able to beat Clearwind, but he’ll definitely be able to keep himself safe. Let him have his fight,” Solesky said with a smile.

“Will he be able to win?” Su Youji couldn’t help but ask this question.

“It’ll be hard. Actually, there’s almost no chance of him winning.” Solesky shook his head.

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The fierce gray tempest continued to blot out the skies and the sun, causing the entire Vastheaven Palace to be cast in stifling darkness. A streak of light, however, rose up from within Vastheaven Palace. It flew out of the barrier spells, then came to a halt in midair. It was a white-robed youth who was carrying a black sheath on his back.

“Clearwind!” Ning barked out, his voice echoing and reverberating in the air, causing innumerable sword-shadows to appear.

The trillions of sword-shadows all simultaneously shot out towards the distant shrine. When the sword-shadows collided against the blurry gray storm, a series of eruptions could be heard. The blurry gray wind began to splinter and break apart, as did many of the sword-shadows. However, more and more of the sword-shadows were born as they continued to press the attack.

As for the blurry gray wind, it also continued to be remade and surge out as well. The wind was an external manifestation of Patriarch Clearwind's Dao, while Ning's sword-shadows were external manifestations of his own Omega Sword Dao.

The two Daos began to clash against each other, harder and harder.

"Eh?" This entire time, the man dressed in handsome black robes had been seated within the shrine, his eyes closed. He suddenly rose to his feet and then walked to the entrance of the shrine, where he stared downwards at the white-robed figure in midair, ensconced by those countless sword-shadows.

"So you are Darknorth?" Patriarch Clearwind immediately recognized the man.

"I am," Ning replied.

Patriarch Clearwind said, "A Daolord of the Second Step already? Or were you just pretending to be at the World level earlier? Hmph. I will admit that your Sword Dao is extraordinary, and it's impressive that a weak Daolord of the Second Step like you could have such an incredible Sword Dao. If you choose to pit yourself against me, however... then you truly are overestimating your capabilities."

"Let's cut the crap. Eat my sword!" The distant Ning let out a furious bellow. Clang! A Northbow sword immediately flew out from the black scabbard on his back.

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 19: Battling Patriarch Clearwind

Ensnared by trillions of sword-shadows, the mid-air Ji Ning manifested three heads and six arms, with each of his six hands gripping that single Northbow sword.

"Kill!" Ning raised his Northbow sword up high, the swords emanating auras of incomparable dominance and power. He then unleashed a single furious chop directly towards his opponent.

It was like the Northbow sword was cutting an utterly massive yet extremely neat chasm through space. Sword-light immediately filled those chasm, almost instantly chopping directly towards Patriarch Clearwind. The power of this strike suddenly exploded, as though it a volcano that had been building towards an eruption suddenly erupted in an instant.

Ning was using his Omega Sword Dao – Heavenbreaker! The Omega Sword Dao could be gentle or savage, insidious or dominating. It was all up to his personal decision. Once the many mysteries of the Dao of the Sword were truly merged together, they instantly exploded in power.

Ning had chosen to fight head on with his first strike, which was why he had merely used a single sword. For such a wild, furious strike, a single sword was actually better. The deceased Hegemon himself had used that single dark blue greatsword! This was because when the power of six arms were completely focused upon a single sword, it would give that sword even more dominating power.

"Hmph." Patriarch Clearwind remained as calm and unflappable as the winds. He simply narrowed his eyes and snorted, then produced a seemingly slender yet incredibly sharp longsword in his hands. He didn't understand much regarding the Dao of the Sword, but to him using swords or sabers really didn't

make much of a difference. The slenderness and incredible sharpness of this sword was just highly suited to his own Dao.

“Scram!” Patriarch Clearwind struck out with the longsword in his hands. If one strictly viewed this from the standpoint of the Dao of the Sword, this truly was a rather unsightly stance. But when the longsword in his hands struck out, it instantly began to roar like an endless tempest howling angrily through the lands.

The volcanic eruption from the Northbow sword clashed against the howling, gale-like slender sword. Two surges of terrifying, earth-rending power collided together.

“What?!” Patriarch Clearwind revealed a shocked look. He had actually been knocked backwards by that attack!

An utterly terrifying shockwave spread out in every direction, and space itself rippled as though a black wave had spread across its watery surface. Mountain ranges were instantly reduced to dust, while Vastheaven Palace’s barriers managed to withstand this shockwave. As for Patriarch Clearwind’s shrine, it was actually sent tumbling through the air, and the seven World-level cultivators within it were all filled with horror.

“Master!”

“Patriarch!”

They all stared nervously towards the outside world.

Ning had taken just a single step backwards, while Patriarch Clearwind had been knocked flying. However, the latter quickly found his footing, then turned to stare icily towards Ning. This was the first time he truly viewed Ning as a worthy opponent. “What a dominating Sword Dao. I never would’ve imagined that a Daolord of the Second Step would be able to threaten me.”

Patriarch Clearwind was truly stunned. Although he had delivered just a casual blow, it was still a blow from a Daolord of the Fourth Step. How was it that he had actually lost that exchange?

“You aren’t bad either,” Ning snorted coldly.

“Excellent. Receive another blow from my sword, then.” Patriarch Clearwind’s body transformed, becoming as blurry as the wind as the slender sword in his hand struck out again, once more bringing that terrifying, enraged stormy howl.

As for Ning, he once more valiant and confidently gripped his sword with all six hands, moving forward to welcome the blow head on.

BOOM!

This frontal collision caused a shockwave that was even more terrifying than the previous one, but this time the one knocked backwards was Ji Ning.

“As expected, he’s stronger than me in a frontal clash.” Ning’s face tightened slightly as he was sent flying backwards, and he was only able to come to a halt just before crashing into the barriers around

Vastheaven Palace. "However... this strike is roughly on the same technical level as the one that came before it; it was just several times stronger. He probably used some sort of a divine ability."

Ning's azureflower mist energy gave him the energy level of a Daolord of the Fourth Step, but he wasn't able to use any divine abilities. Now that his opponent was, he was at an immediate disadvantage! This was one of the problems of fighting those who were at a higher level than you. Fortunately, Ning was using a lifeblood weapon; otherwise, he would've lost even more disastrously. Ever since he had used his Omega Sword Dao to reform the quintessence cores inside his lifeblood weapons, they had grown significantly more powerful.

"You actually managed to block. Hmph." Patriarch Clearwind's face tightened slightly as he narrowed his eyes, then leapt forwards to charge towards Ning once more.

"Haha, is this really all you have?" Ning laughed loudly as five more swords came flying out from the scabbard on his back, landing in his other five hands.

Six hands, six swords. All six were lifeblood weapons!

"Let's fight." Ning stood there in the air, instantly charging to appear in front of Patriarch Clearwind.

"Die." Patriarch Clearwind chopped out with the slender sword in his hands, his stances sometimes soft but sometimes ferocious. At all times, it embodied the essence of the wind itself, and it possessed truly incredible power.

Ning, however, had six swords and many different stances available. Some were extremely inscrutable and mysterious, while others seemed to form terrifying black holes that had folded layers of terrifying spatial power. Previously, Ning had to use all six swords together to achieve this effect with his Soleheart stance, but now that he had his Omega Sword Dao he was able to infuse all of those mysteries with but a single sword. It looked like a black hole, but it also seemed to contain some of the mysteries of the Shadowless stance, the Heavenbreaker stance, and other stances.

It was a battle of six swords against one, and Ning's sword-arts truly were frightening. For now, Patriarch Clearwind was unable to do anything to Ning.

"You are quite impressive. For you to be able to force me to show my divine abilities... you should feel proud of yourself." Patriarch Clearwind let out a cold snort, then instantly manifested a total of six arms as well as five slender swords.

Six arms, six swords. Once me, he charged straight towards Ning.

"Not good." Ning's defenses were breached in a single exchange. The enemy's attack was simply too overwhelming. This man was clearly quite a bit stronger than him.

"It seems I really can't just fight against him head-on." Ning now understand the difference in power between the two of them. Earlier, he used all six arms to wield a single sword while using his most physically powerful strike, but he had still been overcome. With this foe now using six swords as well... there was no way he could win in a head-on fight.

Swoosh.

Ning suddenly vanished into thin air.

“Eh?!” Patriarch Clearwind was momentarily stunned. His white eyebrows shot up in surprise as he swept the area with both his gaze and his godsense, only to discover that someone was circling him at absolutely terrifying speeds.

Sword-light shone once more. Clang! Patriarch Clearwind immediately moved to dodge.

Moments later, hundreds and thousands of streaks of sword-light began to light up. Ning struck simply far too fast, and his dodging speed was incredibly fast as well, so fast that there was nothing Patriarch Clearwind could do. If your advantage in combat speed and agility reached a point where you were dramatically superior to your opponent, you could attack your opponent freely without your opponent being able to fight back.

“How can he be this fast? How can he be this fast in actual combat?!” Patriarch Clearwind was completely stunned.

To be able to move at ten times the speed of light in combat was extremely rare. He never would’ve imagined meeting someone capable of it who was merely a Daolord of the Second Step.

“Where the hell did this freak come from? He must be one of those freaks who has mastered and joined together multiple Supreme Daos... and his Daos must be as freakishly strong as he himself is!” For the first time, Patriarch Clearwind was beginning to view Ning as a true equal, not just as a worthy opponent.

“Darknorth!” Surrounded by Ning’s attacks, Patriarch Clearwind used his six arms to defend in an almost whirlwind-like manner. He called out in a cold and deep voice, “You are indeed a worthy opponent for me. Unfortunately... in the end, you are just a Daolord of the Second Step. Have a taste of my [Six Winds] secret art!”

As his voice echoed in the skies...

Rumble...

Patriarch Clearwind’s long, handsome black robes began to flutter as a series of gales sprang up. There were six types of wind; azure wind, red wind, blue wind, violet wind, white wind, and black wind. The six furious gales immediately began to erupt after appearing, filling the skies as they swept towards Ning. As Patriarch Clearwind saw it, even if he was unable to kill Ning, he’d still be able to shut him down and make it so that he wouldn’t be able to move so quickly.

Seeing this, Ning came to a halt in midair. “Clearwind, parlor tricks like this really won’t cut it.” Ning’s body instantly began to emit streaks of electric light. The lightning was dark-gold in color, so dark as to be almost black with just a few flickers of gold within. At the same time, he also unleash a turgid stream of water that was completely icy-white in color. As soon as it appeared, it emanated an aura of coldness that caused even space itself to freeze.

Septessence thunder, and septessence water!

“Go!” Ning’s gaze turned cold as the dark-golden lightning thundered downwards apocalyptically and the infinitely cold stream of water froze all within its path. Even worse, they swirled and coiled about each other, forming an utterly terrifying and enormous vortex-world. This was the power of the Yin-Yang

Sword Domain of Ning's new Omega Sword Dao when used in the form of a lightning-water domain. It was at least ten times stronger than merely using septessence thunder and septessence water normally.

The dark lightning-water domain seemed to be capable of breaking apart everything within its range. As soon as it clashed against the six types of wind, the six types of wind emanated terrifying howls of rage as it began to splinter apart. Clearly, it was actually weaker!

"What?!" Patriarch Clearwind's face finally turned pale.

Within Vastheaven Palace.

Daolords Solesky, Battlemaster, Brightfish, Pillsaint, and Su Youji had been watching this entire time. All of them were stunned as well.

This battle involved utterly ruinous levels of power, and both sides were using nearly apocalyptic techniques. Patriarch Clearwind had long been a famous figure. Who would've thought that Ji Ning would actually be able to fight him to a standstill?!

"Darknorth's lightning-water sword domain was actually able to break apart that madman's [Six Winds] secret art." Daolord Solesky sighed in amazement. "Oh, this is really, really impressive. I thought that he would definitely be at a disadvantage in this fight, and would have to rely on his speed to keep himself alive. Now, it seems as though the difference in combat power between the two of them isn't that great, and he even has an advantage in terms of secret arts. It won't be easy for that madman to win this fight. He'll probably have to unleash his desperation attacks if he wants to win."

"He's actually able to find Clearwind to a standstill." Daolord Battlemaster sighed in amazement as well.

"Master." Su Youji's eyes were shining with excitement as she watched this fight.

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Book 29: Daolord Chapter 20: The Hegemon's Armor

A terrifying vortex-world of lightning and water filled the skies, emanating an aura of absolute annihilation as it swirled around Patriarch Clearwind.

"How could his secret arts be this strong? He's merely a Daolord of the Second Step. What type of unearthly, shocking legacy did he manage to uncover?" Patriarch Clearwind was truly stunned. His divine body began to turn blurry as gusts of wind began to swirl around him, striving to ablate the crushing power of the septessence thunder and septessence water.

"Kill!" Ning transformed into a streak of light as he once more charged towards Patriarch Clearwind.

"Hmph. You think a minor secret art like that is enough to deal with me?" Patriarch Clearwind let out an angry roar. Although he was being suppressed by the water-lightning domain, the furious winds surrounding him made it so that the lightning and water found it difficult to actually strike against him.

Given Patriarch Clearwind's power, most likely only the full novessence thunder and novessence water would be enough to injure him. But of course, Ning had never planned on using his sword-intent domain alone to injure his foe. What he wanted to do was to use it to suppress and bind his foe, making his foe slower and allowing himself to further maximize his advantage in speed.

“Die.” Ning stood there within the awesome domain of lightning and water... then suddenly vanished without a trace.

One streak after another of terrifying sword-light began to appear and attack Patriarch Clearwind. Some of the sword-light possessed terrifying penetrative powers, some were unfathomable and mysterious. Given that Ning already had an absolute advantage in terms of speed, for a time Patriarch Clearwind found himself stifled quite miserably. All he could do was rely on his six arms to defend as best as he could.

“You young brat!” Patriarch Clearwind’s eyes suddenly shone with azure light, and the power of the howling gale surrounding him instantly increased, making it so that the lightning and the water were completely unable to penetrate his defenses.

“Not good.” Daolord Battlemaster, watching from within the distant Vastheaven Palace, couldn’t help but narrow his eyes.

“The madman’s starting to use his killer attacks.” Daolord Solesky had a solemn look on his face as well. “Brother Ji Ning was able to force this madman into using this attack far sooner than I had expected. Still... brother Ji Ning is incredibly fast. If he chooses to retreat, there’s nothing which Clearwind can do to him. Clearwind can’t maintain his berserk state forever; it uses up far too much divine power.”

“Master isn’t retreating?!” Su Youji was panicking.

“Ah?!” Daolord Brightfish and Daolord Battlemaster began to panic as well.

“That jade slip I gave him contained detailed information on Clearwind’s killer attack. He should’ve been able to recognize it right away!” Daolord Solesky was frantic as well. The battle in the heavens between these two mighty figures was absolutely terrifying; his avatar alone would not be able to make it there in time to help out, nor did it have the strength to.

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“Die.” Patriarch Clearwind’s eyes were ice cold, and all six slender swords in his hands simultaneously chopped out in a deceptively simple stance. Once this strike was unleashed, it seemed as though the world itself was falling apart.

The wind howled furiously as countless gales buffeted Ning, completely smashing through the lightning-water domain of sword-intent, which was incapable of stopping them in the slightest. The difference in power was glaring and overwhelming.

It was this killer technique which allowed Patriarch Clearwind to be famous throughout the Endless Territories. Without it, he was just a fairly strong Daolord of the Fourth Step. With it, he was capable of threatening the lives of the vast majority of other Daolords of the Fourth Step! The reason why Daolord Battlemaster did not take part in this battle was precisely because he was worried about being killed by this attack.

Ning was entirely capable of retreating from it at high speeds! Battlemaster, however, didn’t have Ning’s speed.

This sort of killer technique was actually a type of forbidden art which used up an absolutely shocking amount of divine power.

“He isn’t fleeing from it?” Patriarch Clearwind’s eyes grew even colder.

Clang!

Ning valiantly struck out with all six swords in a defensive posture, using the mysteries of the Soleheart stance of his Omega Sword Dao to form a domain of absolute darkness around him.

BOOM!!!!

The terrifying winds blew through his defenses as though they were paper, destroying all in their path. They slammed straight into and through the dark domain around Ning, instantly shattering this abyssal domain apart and then smashing directly against the true body of Ning behind the domain.

“No!” Back in Vastheaven Palace, Su Youji revealed a look of panic in her eyes.

“What?! Why?!” Solesky couldn’t believe it. He refused to believe that Ning would act in such a suicidal fashion. He knew how deadly this killer attack was. Why didn’t he dodge it?

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Boom!!!

The terrifying blow landed directly against Ning, but the ancient cuirass of armor Ning was wearing was covered in many layers of countless divine runes. When the concussive power of the blow slammed into the armor, much of it was immediately absorbed and ablated, with some of the power actually being transformed into energy that was then thrust back against the blow, weakening it even further. The actual process would be quite complicated to describe, but by the time the power of the blow made it through this suit of armor, it had less than one thousandth of its original power. That remaining amount of power was spread evenly throughout Ning’s entire body, and it caused him a negligible amount of damage.

“This suit of Hegemon armor truly is extraordinary.” Ning was filled with joy. The deceased Hegemon of the Dao of the Sword was naturally an expert in close combat. His most important treasure was naturally that dark blue greatsword, but his second most important treasure was that suit of armor.

The Paragon of Pills had poured all of her blood, sweat, and tears in crafting this suit of armor for the man she loved. It had no special properties at all. It must be understood that most powerful armors had various special properties, such as reflecting damage onto attackers or even containing powerful secret arts. The Hegemon’s armor, however, was very simple. It had only one property – defense!

Virtually all attacks would be reduced to a thousandth of their original power. Perhaps a Hegemon’s attack would do better, but even then it would only have a hundredth of its normal power.

Thanks to this suit of armor, the Sword Hegemon’s body had been completely undamaged!

Ning had chosen to forcibly endure that killing blow precisely because he felt confident in the armor. But of course, even if he didn’t have it he still wouldn’t have been afraid, as he had already trained in the Hegemon’s protective divine ability, the [Sword Dao Body], for over a thousand years. His body was

already comparable to a low-grade Eternal weapon. If he wanted to keep training, he'd need to use certain treasures.

To go from being a top-grade Dao weapon to being a low-grade Eternal weapon seemed like a minor improvement, but there was a qualitative difference between Eternal weapons and Dao weapons. For example, Patriarch Clearwind was able to destroy top-grade Dao weapons, but he wasn't able to cause any damage to low-grade Eternal weapons.

He had the Hegemon's armor protecting him on the outside, and a mighty protective divine ability on the inside! How could Patriarch Clearwind possibly injure him?

Boom! When the attack landed against him, he couldn't help but be knocked flying back. It was only thanks to the power of his lightning-water domain of sword-intent that he was able to stabilize himself and come to a halt.

"Pretty strong." Ning revealed a smile and a praising nod.

"Y-you..." Patriarch Clearwind's smirk suddenly froze as he stared at Ning in disbelief. "How are you..."

Even if Darknorth didn't die, he should've at least been heavily injured.

"Your killer technique's not strong enough. You don't have nearly the power you would need if you want to kill me." Ning shook his head. Even without the Hegemon's armor, his divine body's toughness vastly surpassed that of most Daolords of the Fourth Step. Ning had already paid a steep price to fully master the [Golden Idol] technique, making his body comparable to top-grade Dao weapons. To learn another divine ability that could further upgrade his body and make it comparable to an Eternal weapon, even a low-grade one, was quite difficult. The cost of such an ability would be staggering high, making it so that not even the vast majority of Daolords of the Fourth Step would be able to learn any such technique.

Upon mastering the [Sword Dao Body], your body would become comparable to a supreme Eternal weapon!

This was the Hegemon's own divine ability, after all. The only reason he had been so selfless as to give it to others was because he was dead! Someone still alive like Emperor Mirrorsnow or the almighty Brightshore Hegemon would always keep a few trump cards hidden for their own private usage when transmitting legacies to others.

"I-I... I'm impressed." Patriarch Clearwind suddenly waved his hand, causing the distant shrine to suddenly fly towards him. He then flew straight into the shrine.

"Eh?" Ning was startled. The battle was over, just like that?

Still, there was nothing Ning could do. He could leave if he wanted, but since Patriarch Clearwind was actually stronger than him, Clearwind was similarly able to leave as he pleased.

"What, you are planning to leave?" The midair Ning asked.

"Not just yet. I think it's time for us to have a good chat," Patriarch Clearwind said from within his shrine. He had been thoroughly intimidated by Ning's absolutely overwhelming speed. If he stayed hidden with his shrine and relied on its formations, there would be nothing Ning could do to him.

“Solesky! Battlemaster!” Patriarch Clearwind called out loudly, his voice echoing within the skies. “We can have a chat now.”

The furious gray storm had long ago vanished. Ning dispelled his lightning-water domain of sword-intent as well, and the skies became calm and sunny once more.

“Haha, you madman! So you are finally willing to talk?” Two streaks of light flew out from Vastheaven Palace. They were Daolord Solesky and Daolord Battlemaster. Daolord Solesky snickered, “Didn’t you say you were going to besiege Vastheaven Palace for one or ten chaos cycles? Why do you want to talk now? What makes you think I want to talk to you? You really are overestimating your own importance.”

“That was all my fault,” Patriarch Clearwind said. “Solesky, my friend, please don’t take offense.”

Daolord Solesky’s eyes bulged out, and Daolord Battlemaster was stunned as well. Even Ning was dazed.

The man was voluntarily admitting fault? He was even addressing Solesky as ‘my friend’?

“Ahaha! It’s rare for you to bow your head to anyone, you madman. But the two of us have been tussling for so long... for you to suddenly address me as ‘my friend’ sends chills up my spine.” Daolord Solesky glanced mockingly at Patriarch Clearwind. “You can’t kill my brother Ji Ning, but he can’t do anything to you either. Are you lowering your head in order to ransom back that Daolord of the Third Step of yours?”

“Ransoming him back is part of it,” Patriarch Clearwind said from within his shrine. “More importantly, I wish for our two sides to reconcile. Let us wipe away all our old grievances with a single handshake and never be enemies again. If you wish to attach any conditions, my friend, you can just go ahead and name them.”

Patriarch Clearwind knew exactly what he was doing.

He didn’t fear Battlemaster. He didn’t fear Solesky. He did, however, fear this Darknorth fellow! Darknorth was already incredibly powerful as a Daolord of the Second Step; there was nothing Clearwind could do to him. Once Darknorth reached the third step or the fourth step... given the feud between the two sides, that would probably be the way when Clearwind Temple would be wiped out. The best decision was for him to immediately resolve this feud, no matter what price had to be paid.

[The Desolate Era](#)

Book 29: Daolord Chapter 21: Avatar

“Name any conditions we want?” Solesky and Battlemaster exchanged a glance, mirth in their eyes.

“The old madman’s finally bowed his head. We’ve been fighting for tens of thousands of chaos cycles. Now, he’s finally bowed his head.” Solesky couldn’t help but sigh. He had been tussling with Clearwind for many years now, and both were famous, respected figures who were unwilling to concede to the other. Since they were enemies, Vastheaven Palace and Clearwind Temple naturally became mortal enemies as well, and the struggle had gone on for tens of thousands of chaos cycles.

To bow the head represented the loss of face as well as the loss of many treasures.

“It is all because of Darknorth.” Battlemaster glanced at the nearby Ji Ning.

“Solesky, my friend... to tell you the truth, do you think I would ever lower my head to you?” The distant Patriarch Clearwind, still within his shrine, shook his head. “Absolutely impossible. However, your Vastheaven Palace has gained yet another fine brother! Although I’m not worried about this Darknorth at present, he’s still just a Daolord of the Second Step. Soon, he’ll surpass me, and your Vastheaven Palace shall become famous throughout the Endless Territories alongside him.”

Solesky and Battlemaster both laughed. In the future, Vastheaven Palace would be guarded by a truly unearthly Daolord, one who would most likely be able to kill even Eternal Emperors! It was obvious that Ning had that type of potential.

However... Clearwind, Solesky, and Battlemaster had no idea that Ning was actually even more terrifying than they thought him to be. In truth, Ning was nothing more than a Daolord of the First Step!

“You praise me too much,” Ning said.

“Not at all. I’m just telling the truth,” Patriarch Clearwind said, then looked towards Solesky. “Go ahead, Solesky. Tell me what you want.”

“Clearwind, if you want to resolve the enmities between us, I don’t mind,” Solesky said. “But I do have three conditions.”

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The negotiations between Vastheaven Palace and Clearwind Temple went on for over half a day. Daolord Solesky’s initial requests had been truly excessive; even if Patriarch Clearwind had sold off all his possessions, it still wouldn’t be enough.

This was how haggling worked. One side asked for a sky-high price, the other side would counter with a dirt-low offer.

In the end, Patriarch Clearwind paid reparations of twenty million cubes worth of treasure. The feud between the two was thus brought to an end, and the Daolords of both sides swore lifeblood oaths not to cause trouble for each other again.

So long as the Daolords did not fight, the squabbles between their World-level cultivators, Elder Gods, and Ancestral Immortals were nothing more than minor matters.

But of course, Ning also squeezed all of Daolord Blesswind’s treasures out of him, extorting almost every last drop of chaos nectar from the man. In the end, the poor fellow had to swear a lifeblood oath swearing that he really had less than a cube of chaos nectar’s worth of treasure left! Only then did Ning allowe Daolord Blesswind and the other captives to be sent back.

Within Vastheaven Palace. Ji Ning, Solesky, Battlemaster, and Brightfish had all gathered together. They were drinking Immortal wine and were chatting together.

“Hah! Just twenty million cubes.” Daolord Solesky shook his head. “I was planning to at least hit him for fifty million! I know he has an extremely valuable life-saving treasure; that treasure alone is worth fifty million. I blame Battlemaster! You kept on telling me to back off. Otherwise, there’s no way I would’ve let him off the hook that easily.”

“You were being too hard on him.” Daolord Battlemaster sipped some wine from the cup in his hands. “He’s just wary of Darknorth’s future potential, but in truth there’s nothing we can do to him right now. If you pushed him too far, he could just begin to evacuate Clearwind Temple and make it impossible for us to find him... and he might scheme in secret against us to take revenge. That would be nothing but trouble.”

“To him, that life-saving treasure is more important than Clearwind Temple itself.” Daolord Battlemaster sighed. “He only acquired it after experiencing countless dangers over the course of many years. You want him to hand it over? He’d rather you wipe out Clearwind Temple.”

Solesky coughed a few times.

Powerful cultivators would usually expend their wealth on creating secret arts or powerful magic treasures. It was very rare for them to actually trade those things away to others! For example, the treasures which Daolord Solesky and Daolord Clearwind had, all combined, were definitely worth over a hundred million cubes each. The problem was that the actual amount of ‘liquid’ wealth they had was much less, as some of those treasures they needed for combat.

Ning’s six lifeblood weapons, his Hegemon armor, and his Hegemon Dao-seals... they too would not be traded to others.

“It was all thanks to Ji Ning.” Solesky looked at Ning. “Ji Ning, take the twenty million.” As he spoke, he sent a storage treasure flying towards Ning.

“No way.” Ning was badly shocked. How could he accept all this?

“You are just a Daolord of the Second Step. You’ll need more treasures in the future. Just take it,” Daolord Solesky urged, but Ning steadfastly refused.

The nearby Battlemaster said, “Brother Darknorth, you are a brand new Daolord. You’ll need to spend money to create an avatar for yourself. A perfect avatar will cost roughly ten million cubes, all by itself. You’ll need to spend money in other areas as well. Just take it.”

Ning could tell that saying no was not an option. He said, “Then I’ll take half for now. If you keep pressing me, I won’t take anything.”

“Haha! Fine, fine, fine.” Solesky shook his head. “We won’t press you, alright? Brother Brightfish, you are also a Daolord of the Second Step. Take five million! Battlemaster, the rest is yours.”

“Big brother?” Battlemaster immediately protested.

“This isn’t necessary, big brother. You can’t do this,” Daolord Brightfish immediately said.

“My true body is in the Waveshift world. Once I gain what I need from it, I will immediately begin my Daomerge.” Daolord Solesky shook his head. “It doesn’t matter if I succeed or if I fail in my Daomerge; either way, more treasure will be useless to me.”

Ning, Battlemaster, and Brightfish all felt their hearts grow heavy.

Solesky had lived far longer than the rest of them. He was preparing for his Daomerge, and everyone knew that this virtually spelled a death sentence! Far, far too few were able to succeed in this process.

“Come, come! Have some more wine. Now that Vastheaven Palace has Darknorth as a member, I can face my Daomerge with much more confidence.” Daolord Solesky laughed loudly. “And today, my old enemy finally bowed his head before me. What an absolutely wonderful feeling! This feels better than gaining any amount of treasures.”

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For now, Ning elected to remain within his Darknorth Estate and quietly train inside it.

Ning had earned a total of thirteen million cubes worth of treasure from Patriarch Clearwind and Daolord Blesswind. Ten million would be used to purchase suitable materials for the creation of a perfect avatar for himself!

Within an estate-world.

Whooooooosh. This was a world of icy darkness, a world where a freezing wind howled through the skies. The icy wind filling the estate-world came from a black cave, and deep within the cave there was an ice-locked figure. Next to that figure sat a white-robed youth in the lotus position. The white-robed figure’s entire body was emanating an unearthly level of power that was being poured into the ice-locked figure.

Time slowly flowed on.

Crack! Crack! Crack! The layers of ice around the figure began to crack apart.

Boom! The ice shattered, allowing the formerly ice-bound figure to fly out. His body was completely nude, and he emanated an aura of endless ice and cold. His appearance was identical to Ji Ning’s. Moments later, a layer of golden clothing appeared on his body.

The golden-robed Ning and the white-robed Ning glanced at each other.

“Mm. My avatar has finally taken form. It now has a tenth of my full power. The rest will be a matter of time.” The white-robed Ning nodded slightly, then smiled. “Fellow Daoist Avatar, I’ll have to trouble you to stay in Vastheaven Palace for now.”

“I’ll naturally follow your requests, true body.” This was the golden-robed Ning’s response.

In truth, the two shared the same memories and thoughts. This was nothing more than a bit of an amusing diversion for Ning.

His avatar contained the same Dao as he himself used. However... it didn’t have the azureflower seal! Ning had tested out his avatar. It could use most divine abilities and secret arts, but it was unable to train in the Nine Chaos Seals no matter what!

“When my avatar uses the Hegemon’s divine ability, it is capable of incredible power as well. The only problem is, it can’t sustain it for too long.” Ning shook his head. “Well, since my avatar has been formed, it is time for me to leave Vastheaven Palace.”

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Ning went to meet with Daolord Solesky in private.

“Leaving Vastheaven Palace? When are you planning to go?” Daolord Solesky wasn’t surprised.

“No point in wasting time. I’ll leave tomorrow.” Ning smiled.

Daolord Solesky nodded. “You are going to be going through a period of explosive growth. This is indeed the best time for you to go out adventuring! But when you are adventuring, you must be cautious, especially of Daolords of the Fourth Step. Don’t underestimate any Daolord of the Fourth Step; one of them might have an ability or Dao that perfectly counters yours.”

“Understood.” Ning nodded. The only reason why he had gone out to fight Patriarch Clearwind was because he had a clear understanding of the man’s powers. In the outside world, he would have to be far more cautious.

There were Daolords who could move even faster than ten times the speed of light, after all.

“Big brother, there is one thing I wish to trouble you about,” Ning said.

“We’re brothers. No need to stand on ceremony. Just tell me what you need,” Daolord Solesky said.

“I wish to go to a Sacred City of the Dao Alliance,” Ning said.

The Dao Alliance was the strongest of the six major powers in the Endless Territories. 99% of the territories were controlled by the Dao Alliance. Its only weakness was that it was not tightly governed and was a very loose organization, with many of the ancient, reclusive powers within it being figures with strange dispositions. If the Dao Alliance was truly unified and stood together, there was no way the other five organizations could possibly compete against it.

The Dao Alliance was absolutely unfathomable. Treasures, divine abilities, secret arts... the Dao Alliance was supreme in every area. Over the courses of countless years, many figures like Emperor Heartsword and Daolord Allgod had left behind their legacies to the Dao Alliance.

“Makes sense. We are Palace Lords of Vastheaven Palace, which means we are members of the Dao Alliance.” Daolord Solesky nodded. “You really should go to the Dao Alliance to check things out.”