

# A WARRIOR UNDEFEATABLE

## Chapter 5131 Bountiful Harvest

Traveling with Jared, the two young women were finally beginning to grow accustomed to moments like this.

At this pace and with methods this ruthless, they would never again worry about lacking resources; in fact, at this rate, they would probably conquer the entire Third Heaven before long.

Jared offered a small, almost casual smile and said, "No point keeping any of them alive-finish the job."

"Got it!"

Laughing loudly, Flaxseed charged forward like a tiger let loose among helpless sheep.

Jhaelyn and Jemina unleashed their own divine power; within moments, Barbarian City echoed with shrieks, and rivers of blood flowed through the streets.

"We of the Barbaric Clan bear you no grudge! Why must you wipe us out?" cried Troynar.

Staring at the massacre, Troynar truly could not understand why Jared insisted on annihilating their entire Barbaric Clan.

"No grudge?" Jared let out a chilly chuckle. "Your Barbaric King joined forces with Lefwald of Destiny Sect and Mdm. Cordelia of Bloodshadow Palace to steal an ancient magical item I carry. I nearly died by their hands. Had I not been strong enough, they would have succeeded long ago. They're dead now, yet I intend to see every last one of their sects erased."

Jared's words turned Troynar's face the color of ash.

Destiny Sect, Bloodshadow Palace, and their own Barbaric Clan had joined together and still failed to defeat Jared-his strength was now terrifyingly clear. Troynar slowly closed his eyes; he knew the Barbaric Clan was finished, and Destiny Sect and Bloodshadow Palace would soon follow.

Hands clasped behind his back, Jared stood atop the city wall, gazing down at the one-sided slaughter. His eyes were utterly calm, as though watching a meaningless farce.

To him, destroying a top power of Third Heaven was as easy as crushing a nest of

ants.

Such was the exhilaration that came with absolute strength-power simply felt good.

And flaunting that power felt even better...

Half an hour later, the once-raucous Barbarian City had fallen utterly silent.

Other than Jared's party, not a single soul remained alive within the walls.

Corpses and blood carpeted the ancient streets, turning the whole city into a realm of carnage.

Off to one side, Everett was on the verge of wetting himself; he hovered near Jared like a lowly attendant, terrified by the man's poise.

Remembering how he had once thought about making trouble for Jared, Everett felt his scalp tingle uncontrollably.

"Jared, all done!"

Wiping blood from his face, Flaxseed grinned broadly. "These barbarians were loaded—we found a mountain of good stuff!"

With a flourish, Jhaelyn and Jemina presented tens of thousands of item pouches to Jared. "Look,

Jared these hold tons of celestial gems and mystical herbs, plus a stack of martial arts secret scrolls!"

With a casual wave, Jared drew every pouch into one spot. A sweep of his spiritual sense brought a flicker of satisfaction to his eyes.

As one of Third Heaven's premier forces, the Barbaric Clan possessed formidable reserves: not only vast piles of celestial gems but also many rare natural treasures and

even several advanced-phase

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Wandering Immortal Realm secret scrolls.

These would prove invaluable to the Murray family and the Eighth Hall.

Since the Eighth Hall no longer enjoyed support from the Celestial Palace, they had to rely on themselves more than ever-and secret scrolls and celestial gems were essential.

"Strip this place bare," Jared ordered, sweeping his gaze across Barbarian City. "I

want every resource-treasury, celestial ore mines, everything."

After all, if the cultivators carried so many valuables, the city itself had to be hiding true treasures.

"No problem-treasure hunting's my favorite thing!"

Chuckling, Flaxseed led Jhaelyn and Jemina through the city, searching methodically.

Seeing this, Everett hurried to help, not daring to pocket even a single celestial gem for himself.

Jared, meanwhile, walked alone toward the heart of the Barbaric Clan-the Barbarian King Hall.

The hall was decorated in a rugged style: beast bones and pelts everywhere, while a faint metallic tang of blood still lingered around the central throne.

Extending his spiritual sense, Jared instantly blanketed the entire hall and quickly located the clan's true treasury.

## Chapter 5132 The Ancestor

Like a spider's web, Jared's spiritual sense threaded through the restrictions beneath the floor tiles, ultimately locking onto a yellow stone wall behind the throne.

At first glance, the wall appeared ordinary, yet ancient Barbarian runes writhed across its surface-each crimson stroke radiating a savage, archaic pressure.

With a flick of his finger, Jared unleashed a wisp of chaotic sword energy that struck the rune nexus with pinpoint precision.

Boom-

The stone wall split apart, revealing a passage that plunged into unfathomable depths.

Darkness filled the corridor, save for a distant, ghostly golden light-accompanied by thick, almost viscous spiritual energy and... the faintest ripple of a divine soul.

Eyes narrowing, Jared stepped inside. The instant his foot touched the floor, thousands of bone lamps flared to life, illuminating a circular vault with a dome three hundred meters high.

The sight was spectacular: luminous immortal crystals were embedded across every wall, lighting the vast space as brightly as midday.

On the central jade platform, celestial gems were piled into a veritable mountain, their spiritual energy so thick it almost condensed into visible mist.

Scattered all about lay countless jade boxes and beast skin scrolls, and even several spiritual plants that radiated chaos aura so potent it made Jared's consciousness field quiver.

But what truly made his pupils contract was the golden divine soul floating in the deepest recess of the treasure vault.

That divine soul, roughly nine meters high, was clad in beast-bone battle armor; though its features were blurred, it exuded a supremacist majesty that looked down on all beneath the heavens, and totemic illusory shadows unique to the Barbaric Clan circled its form, every mark seeming to contain laws from the dawn of creation.

"Outsider, you dare trespass upon the Barbarian Ancestral Grounds-do you seek death!"

The divine soul's voice roared like a chorus of ten thousand beasts, making the entire vault hum and vibrate.

Jared felt an irresistible pressure crash over him—at least a hundred times stronger than Troynar's had been-and it faintly touched the threshold of the Quasi-Saint Realm.

In the blink of an eye, he activated the time nascence; his domain erupted outward, trying to suppress the foe.

Yet the divine soul merely chuckled coldly; with a casual sweep of its sleeve, a golden shockwave as solid as iron smashed into Jared's domain.

With a brittle crack, the domain shattered like glass. A dull pain blossomed in Jared's chest; the blast drove him three full steps back, and a thin ribbon of blood traced the corner of his mouth.

"An embryonic time nascence, and you flaunt it before me?"

The spectral figure strode through the air, five fingers curling into talons that tore space itself as they lunged at Jared's throat. Out of regard the difficulty of cultivation, cripple yourself and I may leave you an intact corpse."

Jared's gaze turned glacial. Chaotic spiritual energy raged through him as he summoned the Immortal-Slayer Flying Dagger, sending a streak of cyan light arrowing toward the soul's brow.

But with a lazy flick of one finger, the divine soul smacked the dagger aside; it spun back across the vault, and a hair-thin crack even marred its surface.

"Impossible..."

This strength is far beyond what I anticipated!

If a soul remnant wielded such power, what heights had the ancestor of the Barbaric Clan once reached?

He hurled technique after technique, even rousing the Chaos Bead within his consciousness field, yet the divine soul stood unmoved like an eternal sacred mountain; every counterstrike was fraught with danger.

Seeing the attacks grow ever fiercer while the spiritual energy within him was about to run dry, he bit hard on his lip and sank his mind into his consciousness field. "Mr. Vermilion, it's your turn!"

"Hahaha... Want me to possess you again?"

Vermilion Demon Lord's laughter rang out.

"No, this one's a divine soul-just come out directly," Jared replied.

Vermilion Demon Lord was currently a divine soul himself, making him the perfect match for the foe before them.

The seal inside the consciousness

field burst apart with a thunderous boom, and an ominous dark-red silhouette wreathed in

overwhelming demonic aura shot skyward the very Vermilion Demon Lord who had dwelled there for so long.

No sooner had he appeared than he became a streak of light that dove into the vault, charging straight at the golden divine soul.

"Which decrepit fossil thinks he can lay a hand on one of mine?"

Vermilion Demon Lord's figure swelled, becoming a kilometers-tall demonic colossus. Pointing at the divine soul's face, he let loose a torrent of curses. "Look at

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you neither man nor ghost! Been dead so long no one burns you funeral money anymore? Are you so broke that all you've got left is that rickety skeleton?"

## Chapter 5133 Show Some Respect

The golden divine soul plainly had not expected Jared to unleash such a foul-mouthed ruffian. It froze for an instant, then thundered, "Insolence! I am an ancestor of the Barbaric Clan-how dare a demon lord like you profane me!"

"Ancestor?"

Vermilion Demon Lord snorted and circled the soul once. Suddenly he jabbed a finger at a fissure in the armor and burst into laughter. "So that's your grand legacy? Turns out the old sow from the neighboring beast race kicked you once and cracked your armor! Tsk tsk, how humiliating. When word gets out, how will your clan ever hold their heads high again?"

The divine soul's golden light flared in fury, even the surrounding totems trembling. "Y-You-how do you know that?"

"Oh, I know plenty more!"

Eyes bulging, Vermilion Demon Lord thrust his face close, demonic aura billowing. "With behavior like yours, you call yourself an ancestor? Believe it or not, I could take a leak and drown you right here!"

"Who in the world are you?" The ancestor of the Barbaric Clan stared at him in growing dread.

"I am Vermilion Demon Lord," he announced, drawing out each syllable.

"V-Vermilion Demon Lord?"

The ancestor's eyes went round as plates.

"What, you've heard of me?" Vermilion Demon Lord asked.

"Of course! Millennia ago, you slaughtered tens of thousands of manly immortals in the Ninth Heaven battle. Who hasn't heard your name?"

The ancestor's tone turned admiring, almost flattering.

Hearing that, Vermilion Demon Lord actually looked a little embarrassed. He chuckled, "A real hero doesn't harp on past glories. Like you, I'm just a divine soul now—my physical body's long since gone. Since you know who I am, do me a favor. Let my buddy take all these treasures. Your Barbaric Clan is extinct-what use are they to a divine soul like you?"

Those words shattered the ancestor's final bit of pride. It had not realized its entire clan had perished.

It looked at Vermilion Demon Lord's openly mocking, faintly menacing eyes, then at Jared's half-smiling face, and understood it had met immovable opposition.

It knew that if it refused, even this shred of its divine soul might not survive.

"Very well-the vault is yours. Only spare the foundations of our legacy. That way, when I restore my physical body, the Barbaric Clan will have a chance to rise again!"

With that, the ancestor turned into a streak of golden light and vanished into a stone stele deep within the vault, leaving not a ripple behind.

Jared watched the ancestor depart, then glanced at Vermilion Demon Lord, who stood hands on hips basking in triumph, and could not help but smile.

"Mr. Vermilion, I never imagined your name resounded so far and wide!" Jared enthused, pouring on the flattery as he addressed Vermilion Demon Lord.

"Naturally, it does. I have no equal beneath Ninth Heaven!"

Vermilion Demon Lord threw back his head and laughed, smugness gleaming in his crimson eyes.

With a mere flick of Jared's spiritual sense, Vermilion Demon Lord's divine soul was yanked back into his consciousness field in an instant.

"Damn it, couldn't you let me stay out a little longer?" Vermilion Demon Lord cursed, his voice echoing inside Jared's mind.

"I'm worried that hanging around

outside too long will damage your divine soul-if that happens we

won't be able to rebuild you a body,

and then well both be in real

trouble, Jared repfed.

Hearing that, Vermilion Demon Lord shut his mouth without another word.

Jared lifted his hand, and countless rare natural treasures, cultivation scrolls, and ancient spiritual tools whirled through the air before vanishing into his Storage Ring.

Among the haul, two items thrilled him most: a chaos Spirit Root still embedded in a jagged Chaos Stone, and a fragmentary scroll of the Barbarian Body-Refinement Manual, whose ancient aura hinted that the body-forging methods recorded upon it eclipsed those of the Ethereal Realm's Archaic Body Cultivation by unknown multiples.

"With this Body Cultivation manual, my physical body is about to become even tougher!" Jared declared, putting the scroll away before fixing his gaze on the chaos Spirit Root.

The root was clearly still alive; celestial energy pooled far thicker around it than anywhere else in the vault.

## Chapter 5134 Soul Locking Bell



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"If I plant this inside Pentacarna Tower, the tower should generate celestial energy

without end, right?" he mused.

Acting on the thought, Jared carried the Chaos Spirit Root—Chaos Stone and all

—into Pentacarna Tower.

Almost immediately, the Chaos Spirit Root began to grow before his eyes, its expansion visible to the naked gaze.

Time flowed a hundred times faster inside the tower than outside, so its growth



rate skyrocketed along with it.

Chuckling, Jared stored several celestial gems inside the tower; from now on, every session of cultivation would take place there, giving him exponentially faster progress.

Of course, as Jared's cultivation level rose, so did his appetite for resources. If only I had several more plants like the Chaos Spirit Root constantly producing celestial energy, everything would be perfect.

Leaving the treasure vault, Jared found Flaxseed and the others converging on him.

Each was laden with spoils; Everett laid out every item he had gathered, not daring to keep a single one for himself.

"I'm exhausted! You can slaughter people all day without breaking a sweat, but

the few of us are going to drop dead from hauling the loot!" Flaxseed complained,

wiping sweat from his brow.

Jared glanced at Jemina and Jhaelyn; both young women were lightly flushed—

Barbarian City was massive, and scouring it with so few hands truly was draining.

"Everett, send the signal and summon every disciple of Azurecloud Sect. There

will be plenty more scavenging ahead; the handful of you alone will never keep up."

With that, Jared tossed out more than a thousand item pouches. "These resources are yours. Do as you're told and Azurecloud Sect will secure itself a seat in Third Heaven."

"Thank you, Mr. Chance! I'm willing to be your dog if you need one!" Everett blurted, trembling with excitement.

He hurried off to send the signal, ordering his disciples to rush over at once.

"Let's get moving..." Jared said. It was time for their next destination.

Yet just as the group prepared to leave, the heavens quaked; the blood-red setting sun was swallowed by rolling clouds, and gray-black mist billowed among the crumbled walls of Barbarian King Hall.

An icy, bone-piercing chill pierced the clouds. The aura lacked the Barbarian Clan's raw savagery; instead, it was machine-precise,

murderous, as though countless  
waiting souls drifted inside the fog.

"Watch out!"

Flaxseed yanked Jhaelyn and Jemina behind him. The pointer of the compass  
at

his waist spun madly. "This isn't a spiritual energy fluctuation—it's soul fiend  
energy!"

Three shadows coalesced from the fog—ink-black humanoid figures wrapped  
in

fine white light-chains, each chain ending in a dim soul fire.

Ignoring Jared's party entirely, they strode toward the piles of Barbarian  
cultivator

corpses. Withered hands clawed at empty air.

Lingering spirits that had not yet scattered were yanked by invisible threads,  
turning into dots of cyan light that streamed into pitch-dark gourds hanging  
from

the strangers' sleeves.

Everett's pupils shrank. Tugging Jared's sleeve, he whispered, "Mr. Chance,  
these

three are surely from the mysterious organization I told you about."

The black-clad men moved with terrifying speed; in a blink, they had  
harvested

every soul among the hundreds of corpses.

One suddenly halted, withered finger pointing toward the depths of Barbarian King

Hall's treasure vault. "Soul remnant aura detected there."

The trio slipped into the vault like shadows, ignoring the celestial gems and herbs

scattered across the floor, and stopped before the stone stele carved full of totems.

The leader produced a battered

bronze bell mottled with rust. He

gave it a gentle shake—the soft

"clink-ling" wasn't loud, yet inside

Jared's consciousness field,

Vermilion Demon Lord exploded,

"Damn it! That's the Soul-Locking

Bell—an evil tool made specifically to

bind divine souls!"

Golden runes on the stele flared violently. The Barbarian Ancestor's soul was ripped from the crevices by an unseen force, becoming a sphere of light that writhed at the bell's mouth.

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## Chapter 5135 Offending The Mysterious Organization

The black-robed man's face never changed. He flicked his wrist, the bell swallowing the light sphere until it vanished into the runes etched upon its surface.

At that instant, three pairs of pupils, black as midnight, turned toward Jared.

The leader's voice rasped like shards of ice grinding together. "Your consciousness field hides a powerful divine soul. Surrender him."

Jared's heart sank; he instinctively used the Focus Technique to shield his consciousness field.

"No," he replied, voice frigid.

"Since you refuse to comply, we'll have to take it by force." Without another word, the three formed seals. From their sleeves shot black light-cables strung with thousands of soul fires. In a blink the flames swelled, weaving into enormous Soul Fiend Nets that descended on Jared.

The shrieking wails inside the nets were so mournful that ripples spread even across the consciousness field within Jared's mind.

Three Soul Fiend Nets, woven together like overlapping spiderwebs, closed in; the lamentations of ten thousand dead souls inside them turned into tangible shock waves that hammered Jared's eardrums until they ached.

By instinct he activated the Golem Body, and brilliant golden scales surged over his skin.

Flaxseed likewise flicked out several charms in the blink of an eye, the paper charms blooming into successive shields that encircled them on all sides.

Fssh...

The moment the Soul Fiend Nets touched the light barrier, the icy, bone-piercing soul fire sizzled like snow beneath the scorching sun, crackling as it dissolved into curls of bluish smoke.

Simultaneously, Jared circulated the Focus Technique, voraciously absorbing every trace of marked aura that brushed against him.

Hell, this marked aura is pure as it gets... Jared was genuinely amazed; he had not expected the marked aura wielded by these three black-robed attackers to be so flawlessly refined.

Such pristine marked aura would do wonders for his cultivation.

The leader of the trio finally showed a hint of alarm on his withered face.

"Impossible! The soul fiend energy slays gods when it meets gods and annihilates demons when it meets demons-how can a mere mortal body like yours withstand it?"

Jared offered no answer, but an amused spark flared in his eyes.

A flame suddenly danced to life in the center of his palm, its color shifting continuously from gold to cerulean to deep crimson.

"Burn!"

The golden blaze surged forth like a crazed dragon bursting from the sea, instantly reducing the three Soul Fiend Nets to drifting ash.

Still gathering strength, the flames lunged straight at the three men in black.

The one on the right, panic-stricken, hastily unfurled a black banner etched with skulls; when the cloth billowed open, tens of thousands of ghost figures poured out beneath the glaze-like flames they lasted not even half a heartbeat before collapsing into sooty powder.

"Internal flame and a fused internal flame at that How can he possess such mastery?" the middle man shouted, even as twelve bronze nails shot from his sleeve. Twisted Soul runes crawled over the metat, linking into a miniature arcane array that rose in front of him.

But the instant the fire touched the formation, every rune along the nails shattered section by section, and scalding sparks peppered his black robes, burning hole after smoking hole through the fabric.

"Retreat!" the leader barked, deciding on the spot. The gourd at his waist exploded, releasing hundreds of razor-sharp spikes forged of condensed soul

fiend energy to cover their withdrawal.

Jared's gaze turned frigid. In a heartbeat, he condensed a seemingly unremarkable fireball-yet the surrounding air rippled under its heat.

"Trying to run?"

He hurled the orb; mid-flight it fractured into three streaks of light that slammed with surgical precision into the backs of the three fleeing figures.

The man on the left screamed as the conflagration swallowed him whole, reducing both body and soul to ash before he could even flee.

The middle attacker took a glancing blow across the waist; half his body carbonized instantly, and he stumbled into a rock wall that shattered as he disappeared into the surrounding mist.

The leader reacted fastest, raising a pitch-black shield to take the blow head-on, yet the impact still sent him reeling, spitting black blood, while most of the spirits inside his gourd scattered under the violent concussion.

"Just you wait!" he rasped venomously before vanishing into the dense fog.

As his hoarse threat faded, the clammy chill blanketing the world ebbed away, leaving only scorched earth and a pervasive reek of sulfur.

"Jared, are you hurt?" Flaxseed hurried over, worry etched across his features.

Everett, beads of cold sweat dotting his brow, kept a wary stare fixed on the direction in which the

black robed leader had vanished Those three were agents of

that

mysterious organization. We could be in serious trouble now.

"Let's leave this place first." Jared withdrew the internal flame, a slight furrow creasing his brow.

## Chapter 5136 Wager The Entire Clan

Flaxseed nodded, and the group immediately followed Jared away from the scene.

If that shadowy organization sent more people, Jared was not sure he could handle them yet, so retreat was the wisest course.

"Mr. Chance, where should we head next?" Everett asked.

"To the Destiny Sect. If I'm not mistaken, we're no more than ten thousand miles from their territory," Jared replied.

Everett nodded, "Correct. The Barbaric Clan lies roughly ten thousand miles from the Destiny Sect-we can reach it in a few days at most."

With that, Jared led the party toward the Destiny Sect. Yet after only a single day's travel, his expression suddenly changed.

"Something feels wrong up ahead..." he muttered, eyes narrowing as he stared forward.

Streaks of scarlet lightning were hammering relentlessly at a single point in the distance.

Everett took one glance and hurried to explain, "Mr. Chance, that's a scarlet lightning tribulation-someone is trying to break through from Third Heaven to Fourth Heaven. In other words, a wandering immortal is about to become an earthly immortal-an officially recognized immortal being."

Jared studied the scarlet lightning ahead. With his current strength, he too was ready to step into Fourth Heaven, yet he knew little about this particular tribulation. "Come on, let's take a look," he said.

"Mr. Chance, this lightning tribulation is unimaginably fearsome. Not everyone who heads for Fourth Heaven makes it through. If the attempt fails and those scarlet bolts rage out of control, all of us could be caught in the backlash and pay a terrible price," Everett cautioned, his voice low yet urgent as he faced Jared.

Jared answered with easy confidence, "Relax, I've subdued lightning tribulations far worse than this one." With those words, he shot forward, heading straight toward the blood-red tempest in the distance.



Seeing Jared rush ahead, Flaxseed and the others had no choice but to follow. Everett clenched his teeth and hurried after them, unwilling to fall behind.

When they were still about a hundred miles from the roiling storm, the sheer power radiating from the scarlet lightning forced them to slow. Invisible shockwaves pressed against their bodies and made each step feel as though they were walking headlong into a gale.

Rumble... Rumble... Thunder rolled across the heavens like war drums echoing over a battlefield.

A scarlet bolt of lightning slashed down from the sky, its crimson glare splitting the darkness.

At that very instant, a column of vital energy roared upward, colliding with the bolt and stopping it cold in mid-air.

Jared's eyes widened in surprise. I didn't think anyone in Third Heaven could muster strength like that!

"Focusing on the source, he spotted a cultured-looking middle-aged man beneath the storm. The man wore a pale blue robe and held a calligraphy brush in his hand. Eyes blazing with battle intent, he stared unflinchingly into the churning clouds while the blood-red lightning crackled overhead.

Behind the middle-aged man, countless top-tier cultivators sat cross-legged in a tight formation. Threads of glowing aura streamed out of every seated figure and poured continuously into the man's body. Jared immediately sensed that the middle-aged man stood at the Top Level Wandering Immortal Realm-his aura even stronger than that of the Seventh Hall overlord. What truly stunned Jared, however, was the lineup behind him: many were Wandering Immortal Realm Level Seven or Eight cultivators, and five were Level Nine. Every one

of those cultivators wore an expression of fearless resolve as they funneled their aura into the man without hesitation."

Flaxseed gaped at the scene. "What in the world are they doing?"

Everett answered solemnly, "They're using the strength of their entire clan to escort that man in his ascension to Fourth Heaven."

Jared asked in genuine curiosity, "Their entire clan? With power like his, is he still

incapable of withstanding the scarlet lightning on his own?"

Everett explained, "Reaching Top Level Wandering Immortal Realm isn't enough. To break through again, he must become an Earthly Immortal, and that can only happen in Fourth Heaven-the dimensional plane above this one. The Thirty-Six Heavens are divided into twelve planes, three heavens per plane, so the Fourth Heaven is a whole different world. The scarlet lightning doesn't judge by cultivation level alone. It also measures the toughness of one's body and the totality of one's real combat power. Very few cultivators ever succeed in ascending to the Fourth Heaven. Families that dream of producing a single Earthly Immortal sometimes stake everything-pouring the combined strength of their entire clan into one candidate. But the gamble is lethal; if the attempt fails, the whole clan pays the price."

Jared could not help sighing in awe. They're wagering their entire clan on this single moment.

## Chapter 5137 Not Worth It

Rumble... Rumble... Another scarlet bolt roared downward.

The middle-aged man's brush flared with dazzling gold. He swept it through the air, forming a golden barrier of vital energy, yet the moment the shield met the lightning, it shattered into sparks, and the bolt crashed straight through.

Terror and despair filled the eyes of the cultivators behind him. They understood all too well that a single failure would doom every one of them.

While the thunder rolled closer, the middle-aged man drew a deep breath. In the blink of an eye, his entire form transformed into a streak of blinding light.

He was going to meet the lightning head-on, using nothing but his own flesh and blood.

For his family, for his clan, he had to succeed-failure was not an option.

Boom! The radiant streak tore the descending bolt apart, and hope briefly rekindled in the onlookers' eyes.

Yet that hope lasted only a heartbeat before countless more scarlet bolts gathered.

Roaring in defiance, the middle-aged man brandished his brush again and again, each swing unleashing golden light that formed temporary barriers to shield his clan members below.

Personal defeat did not frighten him; what terrified him was dragging his entire clan into destruction.

The lightning bolts multiplied, and the middle-aged man's aura began to weaken visibly.

Below, his clan members poured every last drop of their aura into him, refusing to let his strength fade.

Some coughed blood, collapsed, and died from sheer exhaustion.

After more than a dozen additional bolts, the middle-aged man's aura continued to plummet.

"This... perhaps this is simply the fate of our Worryfree Clan!" someone cried, voice hoarse and hopeless.

"Clan leader, enough... let it end..." another member muttered, having burned through a lifetime of cultivation. The moment he spoke, he fell lifeless to the ground.

As the middle-aged man watched clan member after clan member perish, he let out a muted sigh, and the light in his eyes dimmed with sorrow and helpless resignation.

If they failed now, their entire clan would be wiped from existence. To wager the lives of every last member of the Worryfree Clan on a single bid to birth an Earthly Immortal-was it truly worth so steep a price? At this moment, the middle-aged clan leader felt utterly lost, his heart drowning in a fog of doubt and regret.

Yet as his gaze roved across the battlefield of scarlet lightning, it happened to alight on Jared. The young stranger stood beneath the crimson bolts with unruffled e

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composure, his expression serene, not the faintest trace of fear upon his face.

"Sir, would you be willing to help me break through this scarlet lightning tribulation?" the clan leader asked.

Jared merely shook his head. I don't even know whether I can survive this tribulation myself-how could I possibly help him?

The middle-aged man's brows

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knitted. Jared's cultivation was only at the Wandering Immortal Realme Level Five, yet somehow, the clan leader sensed that the youth possessed extraordinary power; otherwise, even a Top Level Wandering Immortal would have blanched the instant those crimson bolts appeared.

"All clan members, hear my order-hand over your item pouches!" the leader shouted.

More than ten thousand clansmen, ignorant of their clan leader's intent yet trusting him implicitly, obediently removed the pouches tied at their waists.

With a single sweep of his palm, those myriad pouches streaked through the air and piled up before Jared.

"Take every resource inside and help me overcome the scarlet lightning tribulation!" the clan leader pleaded, anxiety thick in his tone.

Without outside assistance, he had no chance; if he perished, the entire Worryfree Clan would be dragged into extinction with him.

Jared glanced once at the mountain of pouches, then gave another quiet shake of his head.

Risk my life for a pile of trinkets? Not worth it, he thought.

The clan leader's frown deepened, yet he spoke again. "Sir, if you cannot help me overcome the lightning, then at least rescue a handful of my clansmen so the Worryfree Clan does not disappear completely."

As soon as he finished, he flicked his sleeve and several dozen young men and women rose into the air, landing before Jared.

Jared eyed the terrified youths with interest. "And how do you know I can shield them from the scarlet bolts?"

"A feeling," the clan leader answered simply. "Even if you fail and my clan is extinguished, I will not blame you. Those item pouches will still be yours."

## Chapter 5138 Burning Himself

Jared chuckled and said to the clan leader, "If all your people die, those pouches will end up mine whether I lift a finger or not. Do you imagine your corpses could stop me?"

The clan leader froze, speechless; if every last clansman perished, their

possessions would indeed belong to whoever survived-Jared had no incentive at all to help.

"Help us if you will, forget it if you won't-we're not afraid of death!" a young man in a white robe snapped, glaring at Jared with clear displeasure.

He stood among the chosen youths, and despite his young age, his cultivation level was already at the Wandering Immortal Realm Level Eight-an exceptional talent by any measure.

Jared swept his gaze across the group; every one of them belonged to the younger generation, prodigies brimming with monstrous potential.

So that's his plan-to preserve a spark for the clan's future, Jared mused.

"Mind your manners!" A young woman stepped forward, her face a shade pale, yet her eyes steady. "My apologies, friend," she said to Jared, voice calm. "Whether you assist us or not is entirely your right."

Turning to her fellows, she declared, "Perhaps this is simply the fate of the Worryfree Clan. Accept it and fight alongside the clan leader!"

"Fight we shall!" the gathered youths cried in unison.

Resolved, they prepared to rush back to the clan leader's side and face the scarlet lightning together.

The clan leader let out a long sigh, helpless. He had hoped these youngsters would carry the clan's embers into the future; now it seemed the Worryfree Clan might vanish from history altogether.

"Wait." Jared's voice cut through the tumult.

Hope flared in the clan leader's eyes, while Flaxseed tugged worriedly at Jared's sleeve. "Jared, think it through. That scarlet lightning tribulation is terrifying-can you really protect them?"

"Shield the entire clan? Impossible. But these few dozen? I can at least try," Jared replied.

"Sir, you truly will help us?" the clan leader asked, hope shining in every syllable. "Not help—a transaction," Jared corrected, then stepped forward, crossing into the very heart of the lightning-wracked zone.

He raised his palm skyward; a column of golden radiance surged upward, expanding instantly into a shimmering shield that encircled the gathered youths.

Seeing the barrier form, the clan leader's lips curved in quiet relief; the hesitation in his eyes was gone.

Scarlet bolts crashed down one after another. The clan leader's vital energy rattled beneath their might, growing thin and illusory, while the rest of the clan had already reached the final moments.

They had no strength left at all; all they could do was stare in helpless horror while the lightning tribulation thundered down, a deafening

strike after another snatching away life after life in bloody sheets of destruction.

Only moments ago they had believed that, by uniting the power of their entire Worryfree Clan, they would be able to fend off the scarlet lightning and help their clan leader reach the Fourth Heaven breaking through to the Earthly Immortal Realm.

Now, however, they finally understood how childishly simple that hope had been.

Inside Jared's body, wave upon wave of energy erupted, surging outward to sustain the lustrous golden shield wrapped around him and the people nearest him.

Every seething arc of lightning crashed against that radiant barrier, yet not a single crack appeared the shield held firm, refusing to let the furious power pass.

From within the shelter, dozens of cultivators stared out, eyes widened and voices hoarse, as their own clansmen shrieked and fell, their lives harvested by the ravenous storm.

"What are you doing? Hurry up-save them!" the white-robed young man bellowed, panic and fury twisting his features.

He swung toward Jared, convinced that if only Jared would expand the barrier, more of their people could be rescued.

Jared paid him no heed; he was pouring every shred of focus into withstanding the lightning's relentless assault.

Just then, a young woman shot the white-robed man a fierce glare and hissed, "Shut your mouth."

Out beyond the shield, the middle-aged clan leader watched his clansmen vanish beneath the lightning's crimson light and finally let go of all resistance.

"Aaaargh!" he roared, and in the next instant, his entire body ignited like a living torch.

"Clan leader!" the survivors beneath Jared's golden shield cried out; tears streamed down their faces while grief ripped through their chests.

## Chapter 5139 Ungrateful Youth

The middle-aged man was reduced to ash, and every last clansman outside the barrier was consumed by the lightning tribulation.

No one knew how long it took before the final rumble of thunder faded; when silence fell, it was the suffocating stillness of a grave.

Corpses lay strewn across the ground, the air thick with the sickly stench of blood.

Jared withdrew the golden shield. His face had gone paper-white, his breathing unsteady-saving those few dozen survivors had drained nearly all of his strength, and he had possessed nowhere near the power required to rescue the rest.

"Why? Why didn't you save our clan leader? You could have!" the white-robed youth snarled, fixing Jared with a gaze that burned with accusation.

Flaxseed and the others rushed over; without a word, Flaxseed swung his palm across the youth's cheek.

"Remember this-if he can save you, he can just as easily kill you," Flaxseed growled, then turned to steady Jared. "You all right?"

"I'll live," Jared replied, though a sudden crease etched itself between his brows. His eyes sharpened, fixed on the far horizon. "They're coming."

"Move!" Flaxseed sensed it too. He seized Jared's arm, and in a blink, the two of them were gone, the rest of their party vanishing close behind.

The surviving cultivators of the Worryfree Clan hurried after them in desperate silence.

No sooner had they fled than three black-robed figures appeared amid the field of corpses. Taking in the carnage, each of them broke into a satisfied smile before setting to work, methodically harvesting the lingering souls from the dead.

Jared's group did not stop until they had put several thousand miles between themselves and the scene of death.

Jared doubled over, panting; he had not even had a chance to replenish the power he had spent, and now the punishing flight had wrung his body nearly dry.

"Clearly, my physical body still needs serious work," he muttered between ragged breaths. "Otherwise I'll never be able to withstand such a scarlet lightning tribulation long enough to reach the Fourth Heaven."

Deciding then and there, he resolved to seize the remaining fragments of the Barbarian Body-Refinement Manual and forge a sturdier physique. His cultivation had advanced too quickly of late, and his body-tempering had lagged behind; repeated possessions by Vermilion Demon Lord had left him battered inside and out. He had to reinforce his physical body-soon.

The young woman approached, her voice gentle yet earnest. "Thank you. You saved our lives."

The white-robed man scoffed.

"Thank him? He took every resource we owned before he lifted a finger. It was a transaction, nothing more. No gratitude required. Besides, he could have saved the clan leader yet he chose to stand by. Compassion? He's never heard of it."

"Shut your mouth," the young woman roared, her fury spilling over.

Jared's eyes turned frosty as he regarded the youth. With a casual flick of his wrist, he emptied a cluster of item pouches onto the ground.

"Which one of these belongs to you?" he asked, his tone cold as winter steel.

Jared turned toward the slender young man dressed from head to toe in immaculate white and asked in a level voice, "Well? Speak up."

"I..." The white-robed youth's lips parted, yet no sound beyond that single syllable emerged; whatever words he had meant to say died in his throat.

Seeing the tension spike, the young woman hurried forward and bowed to Jared, blurting an apology, "Sir, please don't be offended. He can't seem to control



is mouth

Jared paid the woman no attention whatsoever. His gaze remained locked on the young man as he demanded Which of these is your item pouch? Point it out-and take it back this instant."

The youth swallowed. With a tentative wave of his palm, an item pouch streaked through the air and landed neatly in his grasp.

Clutching the pouch to his chest, he declared, "This one belongs to me!"

"Good," Jared answered, his tone turning glacial. "You have your property, so I owe you nothing. Remember, I saved your life; now I'm taking it back."

The youth froze, then shouted in panic, "What are you trying to do?"

"Sir, he knows he was wrong. Please—" The woman tried again to intercede, voice quavering as she stepped between them.

Jared's arm swept sideways. The Dragonslayer Sword coalesced out of thin air, and a blinding arc of steel-white light burst forward.

The white-clad youth had no chance to dodge. In the blink of an eye, his head was severed; it tumbled to the ground while a dark fountain of blood sprayed the dirt.

## Chapter 5140 Random Nobodies

The dozens of cultivators standing nearby stared at the rolling head in mute horror, then swung furious eyes toward Jared.

Several of them started forward, intent on revenge, but the same woman threw herself in their path, arms outstretched.

"No one moves!" she shouted. "He brought this on himself. Our savior did nothing wrong."

Jared's cold gaze swept across the crowd. "I saved every one of your lives-I can reclaim them whenever I please. If you're so eager to die, feel free to take back your own item pouches."

His words struck harder than any sword stroke; every cultivator lowered his head and fell silent, none daring to lift a hand. They had witnessed his power firsthand and knew all too well what defiance would cost.

The woman forced a smile as she tried to mollify him. "Sir, we're grateful beyond words that you saved us. If someone among us failed to repay kindness and even dared lecture you on morality, he deserved what he got. May I ask your name— and would you allow us to follow you?"

She understood all too well that the handful of Worryfree Clan survivors could never rebuild their clan alone; without a patron, they would likely be hunted down one by one. Jared was the strongest, most reliable pillar she could hope to cling to.

But Jared had already seen through her calculations. With a dismissive snort, he said, "Look after yourselves. From this moment on, we owe each other nothing." Turning on his heel, he strode away with Flaxseed and the others at his side.

The woman could only watch Jared's fading silhouette, sighing helplessly before leading her remaining clansmen in the opposite direction. Whether the Worryfree Clan would ever rise again, none of them could say.

Jared and his companions covered another thousand miles, then chose a secluded ravine. There, he asked Flaxseed and the rest to keep guard while he entered the Pentacarna Tower to recuperate. In his current state, he knew he could not yet annihilate the Destiny Sect.

Inside the tower, Jared immersed himself in healing. Thanks to the troves of resources seized from the Barbaric Clan and the Worryfree Clan, he had no shortage of resources to burn through.

While his wounds knitted, he also practiced the Barbarian Body-Refinement Manual, feeling its brutal yet effective tempering force scour every inch of muscle and bone.

Time became meaningless. When he finally opened his eyes, a faint halo of light curled around his limbs. He inhaled, amazed at how much tougher-how much denser—his flesh had become. This manual truly is a treasure.

With each increment of physical strength, his overall power climbed even higher.

Exiting the Pentacarna Tower, Jared glanced up at the sky and asked, "Mr. Flaxseed, how long was I inside?"

"Barely three days," Flaxseed replied.

Jared nodded; three days outside equaled nearly a full year of cultivation within the tower.

Jhaelyn and Jemina hurried over, worry etched across their faces. "Jared, are you fully recovered?"

He smiled. "I'm fine. Let's keep moving-Destiny Sect awaits."

With Everett leading the way, the party headed straight for Destiny Peak.

Perched atop sheer cliffs, Destiny Sect was forever veiled by drifting celestial mist. Its mountain gate, an arch hewn from ten-thousand-year glacier ice, bore six archa

characters proclaiming, "Destiny's Legacy, Evergreen Through The Ages," radiating an unquestionable majesty.

When Jared's group reached the flat expanse known as Inquiry Terrace at the foot of the peak, two disciples in ivory robes barred their path.

"State your business," one of them demanded. "No outsiders are allowed to trespass on Destiny Sect grounds."

The leader among the two sneered sideways at Jared, his eyes raking over every inch of the stranger as though weighing him on some private scale.

Sensing that Jared's aura was

completely restrained and that no frightening fluctuation of power leaked from him, the disciple's tone immediately took on a note.

contempt: "The Destiny Sect is a big sect. We do not welcome riffraff or random nobodies. If you have not been invited, get out-now."