

# A WARRIOR UNDEFEATABLE

## Chapter 5171

### A Warrior Undefeatable

Clutching his bleeding chest, he stared in horror as the flesh around the wound blackened and rotted at an alarming speed-the nether energy was viciously

corrosive.

Impossible. My body's this tough, and I've got the Golem Body on top of it. How can their nether energy still eat through me?

"Jared!"

Anxious cries rang out. Flaxseed rushed over with Jhaelyn, Everett, Jemina, and hundreds of Azurecloud Sect disciples in tow.

They formed a protective ring around him, grimacing at the Nether Duo hanging in midair and the nether energy rolling over the ground.

No one had expected the two old fiends to be this terrifying; in their very first exchange, they had wounded Jared.

"Protect Jared!" Flaxseed bellowed.

A hundred charms flew from his sleeve, flaring gold and fusing into a wall of light before Jared.

Jhaelyn swung her ancient sword, sending arc after arc of sword energy to smash into Granny Deadclaw's soul orbs.

"Hmph, another flock of lambs to the slaughter!"

Lord Drowned Souls whipped his chain; the scythe traced a broad arc overhead, turning netherfire into a rain of black flames that pelted the Azurecloud Sect disciples.

"Don't panic-" Everett roared, trying to steady his people.

But behind the Nether Duo, dozens of black shadows materialized-the

Underworld Shadow Guards they had brought with them.

Clad in tight black garb and ghost masks, the guards moved like wraiths. Their short blades glimmered with eerie blue light as they split into squads and surged toward the Azurecloud Sect disciples like a tide.

"Watch the poisoned blades!"

A sect elder had barely shouted the warning when a disciple's arm was sliced open. Black energy spread instantly; the young man screamed and collapsed.

Chaos exploded across the field.

The golden light from Flaxseed's charms clashed with venom-coated steel; Jhaelyn's ancient sword collided with Lord Drowned Souls' netherfire; Everett's sword light hammered against Granny Deadclaw's ghostly claws; Jemina's aura rose and fell against the sky-filling wails of the damned.

Splurt...

One core disciple of Azurecloud Sect was caught between two Shadow Guards; his longsword was snapped by their short blades, and a gash deep to the bone opened across his chest.

Another disciple rushed to help, only to take a poisoned needle in the throat. Eyes wide, he toppled into a pool of his own blood.

"Kill them all!"

Jhaelyn's eyes seemed ready to burst from their sockets, and the sword energy around her suddenly flared like a hurricane. Boosted by the ancient black blade, she charged straight into the thickest knob of Underworld Shadow Guards. Her reckless advance, however, drew Granny Deadclaw's attention. A fist-sized soul orb slammed into Jhaelyn's chest; she had no space to dodge and took the blow head-on. The impact rocked her to the core, and a spray of bright blood arced from her lips.

Everett's sword energy climbed ever higher, the blade light weaving a net that trapped several Underworld Shadow Guards at once. Just as the deadly mesh began to close, Lord Drowned Souls' chain scythe shot out and coiled around the sword's spine, locking it in place. Granny Deadclaw seized the opening and planted a palm squarely between Everett's shoulder blades. He staggered forward and coughed up a mouthful of scarlet that splattered across the rubble.

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Flaxseed pulled his final, long-cherished treasure from his sleeve—a Fivefold Thunder Charm. Golden light flashed, and five lightning pillars as thick as water barrels plummeted onto the Nether Duo. Yet the twin elders joined forces, raising a night-colored Nether

Shield that took the storm head-on; the thunderbolts hissed, flickered, and died against that impenetrable wall.

Granny Deadclaw let out a low, chilling laugh. Ten knobby fingers danced, and dozens of soul orbs screamed toward the tightest cluster of Azurecloud Sect disciples. Explosions boomed in rapid succession. Blood and torn flesh sprayed in every direction, and agonized shrieks rang through the ruins like a funeral bell.

Jared forced himself upright, swaying where he stood. The massacre unfolding before his eyes stained the shattered landscape crimson, and blood-red veins crawled across the whites of his eyes like cracks in glass.

He endured the turbulent energy raging inside him, drew a long breath, and was about to speak when Vermilion Demon Lord whispered inside his skull, "Want to use me?"

Jared nodded once. "Exactly."

"Heh-heh, that's more like it..."

At that, Vermilion Demon Lord took control of Jared's body.

The Nether Duo noticed the change at once. A savage grin flickered across their gaunt faces as they watched the youth whose eyes now burned with molten fury.

Overhead, ink-black clouds pressed lower and lower, while soul fires flickered like countless vengeful eyes, illuminating the gore-streaked ruins in a hopeless crimson.

The instant Vermilion Demon Lord's consciousness swept through Jared's four limbs like wildfire, the atmosphere itself turned wild and violent.

## Chapter 5172 Instant Overkill

Jared's aura flipped inside out. The cool edge of sword intent vanished, replaced by world-scorching demonic flame. Ebony demonic aura threaded with eerie scarlet wrapped around him, dyeing him into a devil god bathed in fire.

Color rushed into his once-pale cheeks, scarlet flames swallowed the pupils of his eyes, and a crazed smile curved across his mouth with bone-deep madness.

"What... what is that presence?" Granny Deadclaw's pupils constricted. The crushing demonic might forced her to retreat half a step, and even the glow of the soul orbs in her hands dimmed.

Lord Drowned Souls' grip on his chain trembled; compared to the black-red flames now wreathed around Jared, his netherfire looked as fragile as a candle in a hurricane.

"Ke-ke-ke... You insignificant beings dare flaunt yourselves before me?" Jared's voice no longer sounded human. It carried a choir of wailing spirits that made the air itself buzz.

He raised one hand. A pitch-black sphere blazing with vermillion flame sprang to life in his palm, warping the very space around it.

"Die!" Lord Drowned Souls roared. He wrapped his chain scythe in netherfire ten times fiercer than before, then hacked at Jared with everything he had.

Jared could not even be bothered to lift a sword. He merely pointed a single finger.

Fwoom!

The sphere expanded into a pillar of red-black fire. The instant it met the scythe, the netherfire melted like frost beneath midday sun. Power irresistible surged along the chain; Lord Drowned Souls' arm snapped with a sickening crack, and the blow hurled him through half a mountainside. He smashed into stone, spitting black blood, disbelief frozen on his face.

"Your turn, old hag." Jared licked a fleck of blood from his lips and appeared before Granny Deadclaw like a specter.

Fury and terror twisted her features. She fused ten soul orbs into a blood-red spear and thrust-only for Jared to seize it in his bare hand.

A guttural shriek tore from her throat. The power of a thousand restless spirits gnawed at Jared's palm, yet failed even to redden his skin; the demon flames burning from his flesh roasted them alive. Their screams filled the air as the spear dissolved bit by bit.

Shocked and panicked, she tried to escape, but Jared's free hand clamped around her throat.

"No! Let me go, I—I am—"

"Enough." Murderous intent flared in Jared's eyes.

Crunch!

Her skull burst like a melon, spraying dark green brain matter and black blood. The leftover soul orbs, stripped of control, detonated into a mist of gore. Her corpse dangled, limp, terror frozen in wide, lifeless eyes.

Dispatching Granny Deadclaw had taken a single heartbeat. Jared turned toward Lord Drowned Souls, who was only now dragging himself from the rubble. Jared's grin spread wider. "A moment ago, you offered me a painless death, didn't you?"

All courage fled Lord Drowned

Souls. He shook like a leaf and dared not answer. Desperation drove him to erect the strongest Nether Shield of his life, sealing himself inside a pitch-black cocoon while he spun to dive into a Nether fissure.

"Trying to run? Dream on." Jared snorted.

With a flick of his wrist, the Dragonslayer Sword flew obediently into his grasp. The demonic fire enveloped it, crimson-black veins crawling over the blade, exuding a suffocating killing aura.

His arm twitched, and a ribbon of sword flame carved through the air.

Shrrrip!

The vaunted indestructible Nether Shield tore like rotted paper, and the lingering edge of the slash bisected Lord Drowned Souls from shoulder to hip.

Before the two halves hit the ground, trailing demon fire consumed them utterly. A soul remnant tried to flee, only to be swallowed in a final, despairing hiss.

## Chapter 5173 Report Truthfully

The Nether Duo had fallen within a handful of breaths. Jared's crimson gaze now settled on the remaining Underworld Shadow Guards still entangled with the battered disciples of the Azurecloud Sect.

Pinned down by the disciples of Azurecloud Sect, the Underworld Shadow Guards had already been wavering; when they witnessed the brutal death of their two elder commanders, whatever order remained in their ranks collapsed, and their once-fluid movements turned stiff and panicked.

"You worthless b\*stards, go to hell!"

Jared vaulted skyward, the Dragonslayer Sword whirling in his grip. In an instant, the blade became a storm of crimson demonic fire, a rain of swords that swept across the battlefield as though plowing up an old field, leaving no corner untouched.

Poisoned daggers and agile footwork meant nothing before such absolute power. Wherever the flaming sword rain passed, the Underworld Shadow Guards dropped in swathes, charred to cinders before they could even cry out.

The few survivors who tried for a last-ditch ambush were blown apart by the casual flick of a demonic aura blast from Jared's palm.

Flaxseed, Jhaelyn, and the others stood rooted to the spot, staring at the figure wreathed in scarlet flame as he cut through the enemy lines like a god of slaughter, leaving a carpet of corpses in his wake. A wordless, bone-deep awe rose in every heart.

Moments ago, these foes had left them utterly helpless; now, beneath that oppressive demonic might, they looked no stronger than straw dolls.

None felt the contrast more sharply than Saleto. Terror shone on his face as he stared at Jared; had Jared displayed such might during their duel a moment earlier, Saleto doubted he could have withstood even a single blow.

"Cough... cough, cough..."

When the last Underworld Shadow Guard was devoured by the flames, Jared doubled over, hacking violently. This time, the fluid that spattered from his lips was not black but a thick, crimson ichor threaded with demonic energy.

The flames around him flickered unsteadily. Within his scarlet pupils, a faint clarity struggled to the surface.

"Mr. Vermilion, that was a bit much. If you keep exploding with power like that, my body's not going to make it!"

Jared grumbled at Vermilion Demon Lord inside him, utterly at a loss for words. "All right, all right-I might have overdone the showboating. My apologies!"

The moment the joking reply faded, the crimson fire in Jared's eyes receded. His knees buckled; he would have collapsed had Jhaelyn not darted in to catch him.

His face was paper-white. Though the rot on his chest wound had stopped spreading, black energy still seeped from it—Vermilion Demon Lord's power had clearly taken a toll on his mortal flesh.

"Jared! Are you okay?" Jhaelyn asked, her voice tight with worry.

He waved her concern away, then surveyed the scorched corpses and the dissipating nether energy. Feeling the churn of demonic aura and spiritual energy within him, his gaze grew complicated.

He lifted his head toward the northwest, where a bank of inky clouds had yet to disperse and

muttered, "Whoever is benet

this-our score has only just begun."

Amid the rubble, the reek of blood and scorched flesh mingled. Survivors of Azurecloud Sect looked at Jared with a mix of reverence and lingering dread.

Saleto staggered over and stared at Jared's wounded form in disbelief. "Jared, were you... possessed just now?"

Jared nodded candidly. "A friend of mine-only his divine soul-borrowed my body for a bit."

"That friend of yours, he..."

"He's from the Ninth Heaven," Jared answered.

Saleto sucked in a sharp breath.

A friend from the Ninth Heaven-no wonder even a single wisp of that divine soul could be so terrifying.

"I'll relay everything to Lady Beatra," Saleto promised. "I'll also do what i can to persuade the Celestial Palace to o treating you as an enemy."

He sighed. "My voice is small; whether it helps depends on the decision-makers up in Celestial King Palace."

merge "Still, I'll make the stakes clear let them know you have a friend even in the Ninth Heaven."

Right now, Saleto was openly courting Jared's favor.

A Ninth Heaven ally meant near-invincibility here in the Third.

"Much appreciated," Jared said with a polite bow of his head.

"Think nothing of it! A good fight breeds friendship. I have resources to spare— stay here and recover as long as you need."

Saleto's eagerness was palpable; all he wanted now was to befriend Jared, not offend him.

## Chapter 5174 Achieving A Breakthrough

Though the stench of blood still hung over the Seventh Hall's ruins, Saleto had his men clear a secluded stone chamber at once.

A rare Tranquil Emerald was set into the inner walls, muting any surge of spiritual energy-a perfect place to heal.

"Jared, these are the last three Focus Pills the Seventh Hall possesses. They work wonders for stabilizing the soul-please use them."

Saleto offered an emerald box with both hands, his deference bordering on humility.

Jhaelyn eased Jared onto a stone bench, frowning at the demonic aura still pulsing from his chest. "That demonic aura is fierce. Won't it hurt your core?"

Jared waved the concern off and stored the pills in his ring. "It's all right. Mr. Vermilion was careful. My physical body was just unable to endure his power."

He drew a fingertip across his brow; a pinpoint of gold light gleamed, and the phantom Pentacarna Tower began to revolve slowly inside him.

"I'll need a few days of seclusion. I'll leave this place in your care."

Even before he finished, a soft golden aura blossomed around him. Like a stone sinking into water, his body slipped soundlessly beneath the flagstones.

The wall with the Tranquil Emerald quivered. A shadowy, ancient tower rose from the floor and swallowed him whole.

"An independent dimension within a magical item?" Saleto gasped.

To bind a magical item's dimension to the earth veins-such mastery lay far beyond anything cultivators of the Third Heaven were thought to possess.

Inside the Pentacarna Tower, an entirely different panorama unfolded.

Countless celestial gems and pulsing spirit veins lay strewn across the inner floor, mingled with crates of mystical herbs and glittering relics-booty Jared had seized after wiping out several sects.

"Curse you, old demon," he growled, "are you trying to tear my body apart and rebuild it from scratch with such brutal force?"

Clenching his teeth, Jared circulated the Focus Technique, willing his shredded flesh to mend itself.

As the Focus Technique revolved, torrents of pristine celestial energy surged into his body, flooding every inch of him.

Three full days and nights slipped by in silence.



Outside the stone chamber, Jhaelyn, Jemina, and Flaxseed kept constant vigil, refusing to move even a step away.

Each day, Saletto stopped in to check on Jared, piling the room waist-high with spiritual medicines; he even surrendered the Frostjade Marrow he had guarded for years.

"Jhaelyn, do you think something's gone wrong with Jared?"

Jemina rubbed her palms together, worry clouding her entire face.

She still could not shake the memory of Jared's demonic god form, the doomsday pressure that had left her shivering through every night since.

Staring at the tightly shut stone door, Jhaelyn answered, her gaze rock-steady, "He isn't the sort who goes down easily."

Even so, the fists she kept clenched at her sides were already slick with cold sweat.

Meanwhile, deep inside the Pentacarna Tower, Jared was undergoing a total rebirth.

Crack!

An invisible shackle seemed to snap; the violet-gold energy inside him tripled at once, and the shockwave roared straight to the tower's peak.

The barrier of Wandering Immortal Realm Level Five shattered with a bang, surging power rampaging through his channels before settling in his core-his strength had leaped by an order of magnitude.

He was now at the Wandering Immortal Realm Level Six!

Jared slowly opened his eyes; a streak of violet-gold light flashed across them and vanished.

He spread his fingers. A ribbon of

violet-gold danced at his tips and

the instant it touched open air, tiny ripples quivered through the surrounding space. For

"So this is the power of a Wandering Immortal Realm Level Six cultivator?" he muttered the words, savoring a fullness he had never before experienced.

The wounds the demonic aura had gnawed open were now scabbed and gone, leaving only faint scars wrapped in violet-gold warmth.

Most of the celestial gems piled around the tower had dimmed to ash, their purpose fulfilled.

Jared rose, stretched, and a volley of crisp pops rang from his bones; every muscle brimmed with explosive might.

The power of a Level Six Wandering Immortal inside Jared was now enough to contend with an Earthly Immortal.

## Chapter 5175 Dual Cultivation

"Mr. Vermilion, thank you for everything this time," Jared said softly.

After a pause, the lazy voice of Vermilion Demon Lord drifted through his mind, "Kid, don't celebrate yet. Those two geezers were just flunkies. Any organization that can field men like that must have far older monsters behind them. With your current cultivation, you'd better keep running when they show up."

Jared's lips curved. "Run? That word has never existed in my dictionary."

"Yeah, right! If I hadn't stepped in these past few times, you'd already be fertilizer."

Vermilion Demon Lord had no qualms about exposing him.

Jared flushed, then turned into a ray of golden light, bursting out of the tower and landing inside the stone chamber.

"Jared!" Jhaelyn charged forward as the door swung wide. The moment she saw him radiating vigor, her held-up heart finally dropped, yet her eyes still brimmed red. "You scared me half to death!"

Jemina barreled in right after; the two young women hugged Jared tight, heedless of anyone watching.

For days, they had lived in dread-dread that his wounds might claim him.

Saleto hurried in next. Sensing the aura of a Level Six Wandering Immortal rolling off Jared, his eyes nearly fell from their sockets. "Just a few days... and you achieved a breakthrough?"

Each Level in the Wandering Immortal Realm was a sky-high hurdle. Ordinary cultivators might spend a decade and still fail to touch that threshold, yet Jared had vaulted two Levels while gravely injured. The speed upended everything Saleto believed about cultivation.

Jared only smiled and offered no explanation. "Thank you for looking after things, Mr. Saletto."

A year outside equaled a century inside the Pentacarna Tower. Though Jared had spent only three days, nearly a full year had flowed for him within.

Feeling waves of power coursing through him, he looked at Jhaelyn and Jemina, and his eyes immediately softened.

He had noticed the moment he broke through: though the girls said nothing, fatigue shadowed their brows, and their spiritual energy flow was sluggish.

They were clearly nursing hidden injuries from the clash with the Underworld Shadow Guards, yet they forced themselves to appear fine so he would not worry.

"You two, come here," Jared beckoned, his tone brooking no refusal yet brimming with concern.

Jhaelyn and Jemina exchanged a glance and obediently stepped in front of him. Jemina instinctively tried to hide the bruise on her wrist, but Jared caught her hand in one swift motion.

"This little injury-were you planning to keep it from me?"

His fingertip glided over the purplish mark, still laced with the Underworld Shadow Guard's icy poison. "And Jhaelyn, the spiritual knot in your elixir field-did you think I wouldn't notice?"

Jhaelyn's cheeks warmed. "It's nothing serious, a few days' rest will fix it."

"No," Jared said.

Jared shook his head. A soft golden

radiance blossomed in his palm,

wrapping both women in gentle warmth. He murmured, "The negative energy in your meridians has sunk too deep; ordinary pills can't purge it anymore."

merge "I'll guide it out with my Golden Dragon Bloodline and, while I'm at it..."

He paused, watching their cheeks flush scarlet in an instant, then chuckled. "I'll borrow the method of dual cultivation to help stabilize your cultivation levels."

"D-D-Dual cultivation!" Jemina jerked her hand back as though scalded, her ears burning crimson. "Jared, that's... that's too-"

Jhaelyn lowered her gaze; long lashes quivered while her fingers twisted the hem of her robe, yet she did not flatly refuse.

After all, Jared had mentioned dual cultivation in front of so many people—it was mortifying beyond words.

Off to the side, Flaxseed gave a loud snicker, folding his arms with open mischief. "Come on, Jared—if you want to get cozy with the ladies, just say so. We're all men here; nobody's footing anybody."

"You know nothing." Jared shot back

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with a laugh. Their frosty energy clashes with my Golden Dragon Bloodline. Only through dual cultivation can I guide it out completely. Besides, they've fought life and death beside me. Helping

them rise in power—isn't that the least I can do?"

Flaxseed cackled. "Fair point! Then hurry up—I'll stand guard outside and make sure no one barges in!"

## Chapter 5176 Sore All Over

Jemina wished the ground would swallow her whole; never had she felt such unbearable embarrassment.

Jhaelyn drew a deep breath, lifted her eyes to Jared, and though shy, she spoke with steady resolve. "If it helps everyone... I'm willing."

Seeing Jhaelyn agree, Jemina bit her lip and gave a tiny nod, burying her head even lower.

Jared said no more. One fingertip traced the center of his brow, and golden light from the Pentacarna Tower flared, enveloping all three of them.

By the time Flaxseed's laughter faded, they were standing in the tower's inner hall.

The spiritual energy here was a hundred times denser than outside. Celestial gems littered the floor, glowing softly, and a bed in the center was layered with a millennium-old warm emerald that nourished the soul on its own.

"Don't be afraid."

Jared clasped their hands, warmth from the Golden Dragon Bloodline pouring through his palm. "Relax your minds. Let your spiritual energy follow mine." Eyes closed, the women felt that golden warmth flow slowly into their bodies.

At first they tensed, but when the stream touched the hidden injuries in their meridians, a delicious numbness spread, and their bodies gradually relaxed.

Jared sat cross-legged, placing them on either side with his palms gently pressed to their elixir fields.

He activated the Focus Technique, stirring the nascence power of the Golden Dragon Bloodline, weaving two slender golden threads that slipped into each

woman.

Where the gold threads passed, the frosty energy melted like snow beneath spring sun, releasing a faint sizzling sound.

Both women let out muffled groans as waves of warmth blossomed in their elixir fields, and their once-blocked spiritual energy roared through their meridians.

"Now!" Jared whispered, guiding their auras to merge with his own Golden Dragon Bloodline.

In a heartbeat, the three silhouettes were cocooned in gold; dragons coiled within the light, flowers blooming between them.

Dual cultivation was never mere taking, but a harmony of energies.

Jared's bold and vigorous Golden Dragon Bloodline neutralized their inner frost, while their refined spiritual energy streamed back into him, tempering the restless edge of his recent breakthrough.

Inside the Pentacarna Tower, an hour outside became several days within.

Jared finally rose and slipped back into his clothes. Guiding two partners at once

had been no burden at all to his present strength.

As the golden cocoon dissolved, Jhaelyn and Jemina opened their eyes. Spiritual light danced in their pupils, and the aura of Level Six Wandering Immortals rolled from their forms.

The bruise on Jemina's wrist had vanished, her skin now smooth.

The fatigue between Jhaelyn's brows was gone, her cold elegance softened by a newly nourished glow.

"I... I actually advanced?" Jemina stared at her own hands, marveling at the surge of strength inside her.

Jhaelyn clenched her fist, sensing the bottleneck that had plagued her shatter completely; her energy now flowed ten times smoother than before.

Jared withdrew his palms with a grin. Though a fair bit of Golden Dragon nascence power had been spent, it now felt even purer. "See? I wasn't just taking advantage, right?"

Jemina's cheeks reddened; she shot him a playful glare, unaware of how bewitching that glance was.

Jhaelyn stepped forward and hooked her arm through his, voice trembling ever so slightly. "You nearly wore us out—we're still sore all over."

Jared patted the back of her hand, gaze gentle. "A little rest and you'll be fine."

The three shared a laugh, earlier shyness now forged into quiet rapport.

When they stepped out of the Pentacarna Tower again, Flaxseed sensed their new aura and his eyes bulged.

"Holy smokes! Level Six Wandering Immortals?"

He rubbed his eyes, circling the two women in awe. "Jared, your healing skills are outrageous—cured the illness and yanked their realm up a notch? Be honest, did those days inside drain you dry?"

## Chapter 5177 So Incredible

Jemina's face flamed anew, and she ducked behind Jhaelyn.

Jhaelyn scolded softly, "Mr. Flaxseed, stop teasing!"

Jared burst into hearty laughter, slinging an arm around each woman's shoulders. "Curious? Find yourself a willing partner and try it—you'll see soon enough."

Flaxseed stroked his chin, eyes shining with anticipation. "You know, that sounds like an excellent plan..."

From his post at a respectful distance, Saleto watched the three of them chatting and beaming at one another, then shook his head in mild bafflement. "What a shame," he muttered, "Jared's overall strength is impressive, but when it comes to dual cultivation, he's still a little green. Barely an hour, and he's already spent!"

Jared heard that and could only stare, speechless.

Flaxseed burst into boisterous laughter. "You don't get it, Mr. Saleto. Inside the Pentacarna Tower, time flows differently—one year outside equals a hundred years inside. To you, it's been one short hour, but our Jared in there has been at it for several days."

merge "If my guess is right, those two young ladies are probably sore all over and swollen by now..."

"What? He's that formidable?" Saleto gaped, utterly astounded.

Jhaelyn and Jemina dropped their heads, faces scarlet; only they knew whether anything was actually swollen.

At a mysterious region of the Third Heaven.

Here, daylight never reaches. Viscous black mists pool like liquid night, so dense that even sunlight would be throttled before it found a way through.

Deep within that gloom, a palace of bleached bones hung in midair. Over its gate, three words were painted in congealed blood—Malevolent Path Hall—filling the air with a nauseating, rusty stench.

Upon the highest seat sat a figure wrapped head-to-toe in a billowing black cloak.

Nine gray-black soul banners revolved around him. On each banner, countless warped human faces shrieked in agony; every swing of the fabric stole another few degrees of warmth from the hall.

This was Grand Elder Dioz of the Malevolent Path Hall.

The Nether Duo's soul lamps had gone dark, and even the Underworld Shadow Guards had been wiped out.

For Dioz, the blow was enormous.

As Grand Elder and acting commander of this outpost, he didn't know how he was supposed to explain this to the organization.

Worst of all, the token Ghostmask held had been lost—that was a treasure the Malevolent Path Hall prized above all else.

Once each token absorbed enough wandering souls, it could unlock the star chart to Skyfall Grotto, leading them to the legendary place.

To harvest those souls, the Hall had sent Dioz, the Nether Duo, Ghostmask, and the others into the Third Heaven, carving out a domain and reaping souls everywhere they went.

Who could have foreseen the token would be lost and Ghostmask and the Nether Duo butchered? If word

reached the higher-ups in the Malevolent Path Hall, a hundred lives would not spare him.

"Useless-every last one of you!" he roared.

The shout cracked the stone columns of the meeting hall into spider-web fissures.

Twelve underworld Shadow Guards dropped to one knee, foreheads pressed to the floor, bodies shaking so hard they scarcely dared breathe.

Before Dioz, on an emerald desk, lay two dull, lifeless soul orbs the Nether Duo's soul orbs-now shattered, retaining only the faintest ripple of spiritual energy.

"The Nether Duo served me for three hundred years, and their cultivation

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is at the Top Level Wandering Immortal Realm. Even faced with an EarthlyImmortal, they could have held out for a spet vet a mere

Third-Heaven brat killed them?"

His voice scraped like nails over glass. "Investigate! I want every detail-who exactly is this Jared?"

A stooped elder wobbled forward.

"Grand Elder Dioz, we have learned the youth is named Jared Chance He appeared near Azurecloud Sect only days ago, advancing at frightening speed White only a Level Three Wandering Immortal, he slew a Level Five opponent."

"As for the Nether Duo's demise," the elder added, "their last message suggested... Jared was possessed by an exceedingly powerful divine soul."

## Chapter 5178 Malevolent Path Hall



"Divine-soul possession?" Dioz's pupils shrank beneath the hood; the nine soul banners quaked violently. "Could he be a descendant of some ancient cultivator?" "Reports say the soul claims to hail from the Ninth Heaven."

"The Ninth Heaven?"

He shot to his feet. Black mist raged from him, and the blood pool beneath the floor heaved like a storm-tossed sea. "No wonder the Nether Duo died so miserably-someone from the Ninth Heaven had meddled!"

The Underworld Shadow Guards turned ashen, flattening themselves against the floor.

Never had they seen Dioz lose composure; the words "Ninth Heaven" carried a terror all their own.

Dioz drew a long breath, beating back his shock.

He seated himself again, fingers drumming the desk. "Someone from the Ninth Heaven... Hmph. Who cares if that divine soul is from the Ninth Heaven-kill our people, and they pay in blood."

merge "We fear no one, not even a living cultivator from the Ninth Heaven, let alone just his divine soul!"

That declaration laid bare the Hall's confidence: they would challenge even a cultivator from the Ninth Heaven.

After all, without formidable strength, they could never hope to seize Skyfall Grotto and defend it.

"Grand Elder Dioz, Jared is convalescing in the Seventh Hall, and Mr. Saletto seems inclined to shield him..."

"The Seventh Hall?" Dioz sneered. The screaming faces on the banners keened in harmony. "A self-proclaimed celestial clan-just a fallen branch of the Celestial Palace-dares meddle in my affairs? Pass my order: summon the Eight Shadow Pavilion Devotees and the Twelve Blood Guards. I shall visit the Seventh Hall in person."

He had just dismissed not only the Celestial Palace, but the entire celestial clan.

"Wh-what?" the stooped elder blurted, horrified. "Grand Elder Dioz, you will go yourself?"

Each of the Eight Shadow Pavilion Devotees had half a foot in the Earthly Immortal Realm; the Twelve Blood Guards had tempered their bodies with blood essence, so their

might was on par with Top Level Wandering Immortals. Such a force could raze the whole Third

Heaven-yet Dioz meant to unleash it on one young man.

A glint of merciless resolve flickered in Dioz's eyes. "A youth who can host a Ninth Heaven divine soul is no ordinary person."

merge "If we don't crush him before his wings fill out, he'll become a catastrophe. Besides..."

His hand brushed the broken soul orbs. The chill in his voice bit like steel. "Someone must settle the scores for the Nether Duo-and Ghostmask."

"But Grand Elder Dioz, what about the Celestial Palace...?" the grey-robed aide stammered.

"The Celestial Palace?" Dioz let out a derisive snort. "That so-called palace has splintered into ten petty halls-those overlords can't even stand the sight of one another. Do

woulds

you really think any of them wo

dare poke their noses into

Malevolent Path Hall's business?"

"Give the Seventh Hall Overlord a choice," Dioz said, each word as cold as iron.

"Hand Jared over-or be reduced to ash alongside him."

"Yes, sir!" The old attendant dared not argue further. He bowed low, then hurried out of the council chamber.

Dioz rose in a slow, almost

ceremonial motion. His black cloak billowed although no wind stirred. The nine soul banners revolved around him, releasing a suffocating pressure Jared a divine soul fram the Ninth Heaven..." His voice was low, dangerous. "I want to see exactly how powerful that soul is."

The moment the last syllable fell, his body dissolved into black smoke and vanished from the hall.

The Eight Shadow Pavilion Devotees and Twelve Blood Guards followed close behind. Countless dark silhouettes swept forward like a plague of locusts, racing straight toward the Seventh Hall.

Due to Darkwind Abyss, the already-gloomy sky grew even darker, as though announcing an approaching blood-soaked storm.

Inside the Seventh Hall's stone chamber, the air was so tense it felt liquid.

Saleto clutched the communication device from Malevolent Path Hall. His hand trembled; his face was the color of paper. "Malevolent Path Hall... they've gone mad!"

merge "Who would've thought the people Jared killed belonged to them..."

## Chapter 5179 Cannot Run Anymore

"What exactly is the Malevolent Path Hall?" Jared asked, genuinely puzzled.

"It's an organization-one that collects the souls of the dead. I never dreamed they'd descend to the Third Heaven," Saleto answered, his shock plain to see.

His words left Jared certain that the mysterious group Everett had mentioned was indeed Malevolent Path Hall.

"Are they powerful?" Jared pressed.

"Very. They've existed for several thousand years, gathering wandering souls wherever large numbers of cultivators die-battlefields, sect massacres, you name it."

merge "I even heard that during a sect war in the Ninth Heaven-more than ten thousand dead-their people showed up."

Saleto spoke in a shaken whisper.

"Oh?" Jared's brow furrowed. "That means their strength must surpass even the Ninth Heaven."

"Of course. They appear everywhere, yet they never join fights—only harvest souls. No one knows what they do with them," Saleto said.

merge "And now they've clashed with you for reasons we still don't understand."

Saleto could make no sense of it.

Jared, however, understood perfectly: Malevolent Path Hall wanted Vermilion Demon Lord's divine soul; when he refused, they attacked.

Just then, a memory of the token flickered through Jared's mind. If those people scoured the realms for souls, the token was probably connected.

He almost asked Saleto about it, then thought better of revealing he carried the token. Better to stay silent.

"What message did they send you?" Flaxseed's tone was grave.

Saleto's voice shook. "Dioz-their Grand Elder-is coming here himself. He says either we surrender you, or he levels the entire Seventh Hall."

He drew a ragged breath. "He's bringing the Eight Shadow Pavilion

Devotees and the Twelve

Guards.

Twelve Blood

Even if every sect in the

Third Heaven joined forces, We

might not stop that army."

Jared's fingers brushed the hilt of the Dragonslayer Sword. His gaze was calm— too calm. "Looks like they're truly desperate."

"Jared, maybe you should leave first," Jhaelyn blurted. "The Third Heaven is vast. If you hide, they might never find you."

Saleto nodded quickly. "Live to fight another day. Their power is overwhelming- there's no need to meet them head-on."

merge "As long as you aren't here, they'll have no reason to hurt me. I still have the Celestial Palace behind me, the entire celestial race."

Jared slowly shook his head and looked northwest.

At some point, inky clouds had swallowed that stretch of sky. Lightning flickered within, and a crushing aura hurtled closer by the second.

"We can't run," he said quietly. "If Dioz dares come in person, the Worldlock Net is already spread. Besides..."

He

flashard of killing intent,

flashing in his eyes. "I don't leave my troubles for others. They're

Let them come-be wai

me.

Outside the Seventh Hall, a howling came from the Darkwind Abyss. Gritty wind lashed the blue-slate tiles with sharp cracks, a drummer beating out death.

Inside, Saleto's voice quivered beyond control. The communication device had already been ground to dust in his fist, the grit sifting through his fingers.

Jhaelyn clutched Jemina's hand so tightly that both sets of knuckles blanched. Even Flaxseed, forcing cam kept glancing toward the caver mouth, Adam's apple bobbing.

Hands clasped behind his back, Jared stood at the stone door. His gaze pierced the thick rock to the roiling black clouds beyond.

Spiritual energy coiled around him like a crouching beast-still on the surface, but ready to spring.

Inside its sheath, the Dragonslayer Sword hummed, sensing the battle to come. A faint golden glow bled along the blade.

## Chapter 518o One Strike

"They're here."

Jared's voice was soft, yet it detonated in every ear like thunder.

Even before the echo faded, the entire Seventh Hall shuddered violently, as though a thousand cavalry horses pounded the ground.

A shriek of air split the night. Outside, countless black figures fell like a torrential rain, blanketing the Seventh Hall and sealing every exit.

Hovering above them all, a single black-robed man-Dioz-floated in mid-air, nine soul banners snapping in the wind behind him.

The faces sewn into the soul-banner screamed with gathering frenzy, rot and fresh blood blending into a visible gray shockwave that surged straight toward the Seventh Hall.

"Jared, crawl out here and die!"

Dioz's voice sliced across the plaza like a wind from hell, so cold and venomous it bit to the bone. In an instant, the blue-gray flagstones glazed with thick white frost, and the few hardy spiritual plants that had forced their way through the cracks shriveled to dust.

The Seventh Hall's Mountain Defense Formation flared wildly beneath the pressure, filaments of light cracking its surface until it looked ready to shatter at any moment.

Inside, low-ranked disciples had already collapsed, trembling too hard even to lift their heads.

Saleto turned chalk-white and edged instinctively toward Jared, voice cracking with tears. "J-Jared, that... that's Dioz Underwood-an Earthly Immortal! We-" Jared cut him off with a look as sharp as steel. "Back away. This fight is mine." He stepped outside; the stone doors boomed shut behind him.

High above the plaza, Dioz peered down, a cruel smile curving beneath his black cloak. "You? A Level Six Wandering Immortal ant dares murder members of my Malevolent Path Hall?"

The Eight Shadow Pavilion Devotees and Twelve Blood Guards fanned out into a half-moon, sealing Jared inside their ring.

Each Shadow Pavilion Devotee exuded the heavy aura of one foot already in the Earthly Immortal Realm, while the Blood Guards boiled with bloodlust, eyes crimson like beasts scenting prey.

Jared's tone was casual. "Dioz, is it?"

He spared no more words. Fingers twitching, he drew the Dragonslayer Sword; a column of dazzling gold slashed the clouds apart. "The

Nether Duo and Ghostmask died by

mixi

hand you want reverige, come get it."

"Insolent brat!"

A towering Shadow Pavilion Devotee roared, conjuring a huge bone hammer bristling with reversed

spikes and ng of decayet

me ferry you to the graver

Before the words died, he vaulted skyward, hammer falling with mountain-crushing force; the air imploded into a shrieking vacuum.

Jared did not retreat. Sword whirling into a blossoming arc, he sent tidal waves of golden sword energy crashing into the hammer.

Clang-!

Thunder cracked. Light flared where the sword energy met the bone hammer, the shockwave flinging nearby Underworld Shadow Guards like leaves and gouging a crater dozens of meters across the plaza.

The Shadow Pavilion Devotee staggered back, palms split and bleeding, disbelief twisting his face. "How can you possibly-"

He never finished. Jared ghosted forward; a single thrust punched the Dragonslayer Sword through his throat.

Squelch!

Blood sprayed. The Shadow Pavilion Devotee crumpled, eyes still frozen in shock even as life left him.

One strike.

With a single strike, Jared had slain a man half a step into the Earthly Immortal Realm.

Silence swallowed the plaza; even the wind dared not stir.

The smile on Dioz's face froze, pupils contracting beneath the hood.

The Twelve Blood Guards and the remaining seven Shadow Pavilion Devotees looked thunder-struck, terror written clear across their faces.

