

A Warrior Undefeatable

Chapter 5243 – 5245

At the final heartbeat before impact, a shadow slid between Jared and the beast —so quick it seemed birthed from smoke. A middle-aged man in rough hemp clothes, as unremarkable as any village smith, raised a single fist. There was no blinding aura, no ripple of power-only that bare knuckle kissing fur and bone. Yet the three-eyed lion screamed, as though a mountain had been dropped upon its skull.

The colossus skidded backward in terror, paws gouging troughs in the street, all murderous courage draining from its three eyes like water from shattered glass.

The brocaded youth lurched, nearly pitched from the saddle. He steadied himself, face blazing, and roared, "Who the hell are you, meddling in my affairs? Do you even know my name?"

The stranger spared him a single, disinterested glance. "Swordmaster City keeps its own laws," he said quietly. "Here, lineage buys you nothing. Run wild elsewhere if you must no one here will indulge you."

With that, he turned and melted into the crowd, vanishing so completely it felt as though the city had imagined him.

The brocaded youth's complexion flickered between scarlet and chalk. Around him, curious citizens whispered. He scoffed, forcing a smirk, and muttered to his attendants, "Ignorant provincials-what do they know?"

He patted the beast's bloody muzzle, straightened his brocaded cloak, and swaggered through the gate as though nothing had happened.

Reaching Jared, Damian reined in, letting the creature snort hot breath over the man who had not flinched. Surprise flickered when he sensed Jared's modest Wandering Immortal Realm aura.

He slipped to the ground, tapped a command sigil, and the three-eyed lion winked from sight like smoke in wind.

The brocaded youth folded his arms, curiosity momentarily eclipsing arrogance. "A mere Wandering Immortal-how did you manage to enter Swordmaster City?"

Jared met his gaze without blinking. "Did some decree bar my level from entering?"

The question disarmed Damian; he barked a laugh. "Bold spirit! Your cultivation may be low, but your nerve is iron. Tell me, why didn't you dodge my beast a moment ago?"

"Fear," Jared said with perfect seriousness. "My legs went soft-I simply couldn't move."

The brocaded youth-Damian Zill-hesitated for the barest moment, then burst into rolling laughter that echoed down the dusty road. "You're a curious one, friend! First time in Swordmaster City, I'll wager. The name's Damian, and from this day on, you're riding with me."

Flaxseed stood by, offering only a long, baffled silence.

"Save the bragging," Jared said, voice flat as polished stone.

Damian cocked his head. "You doubt me?"

Jared shrugged. "I doubt everyone until they show me something real. No point swearing fealty to a man who only loves the sound of his own stories."

Damian's grin sharpened. "Everyone under the sky knows my name-except you, it seems."

He fished out a leather pouch, flicked it open, and let its glow spill across the air- celestial gems stacked like glassy dice. "Here. One million. Take it. Spend it. When it runs short, tell me."

Jared peered inside. No bluster this time—the fortune was real, bright as a midday sun.

He's either a fool or the richest second-generation scion I'll ever meet.

Jared tucked the pouch away with practiced ease. "Buddy" The single word cost him nothing and gained him everything.

Damian slapped his shoulder, laughing louder than before. "In Swordmaster City, if anyone so much as frowns at you, speak my name. The gates of heaven will open."

With a jaunty wave, he strode toward the towering gates.

Damian's crimson cloak vanished into the crowd, the echo of his swagger lingering like aftershocks in stone.

Flaxseed watched him go. "Jared, is that man touched in the head?"

Handing out fortunes and collecting buddies-he had got to be mad.

Jared's mouth curved into the faintest smile. "Mad or not, this trip just paid for itself."

Side by side, they passed beneath the shadow of the city wall.

Inside, Jared glanced back at the gate where two duelists-blade-scarred man and frost-pale woman-still faced off, their sword intent crackling like summer lightning. Another breath and both would fall.

A gold flash pulsed behind Jared' eyes. An invisible ripple of intent shot outward.

The duelists jolted as though struck, horror flooding their faces while their gaze locked on Jared' retreating back.

He never turned, disappearing into the river of travelers beside Flaxseed.

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Jared and Flaxseed flowed with the crowd into Swordmaster City. What met them stole breath from every lung.

Streets broad enough for caravans were paved with dark, iron-flecked stone. On either side, buildings rose like serrated blades, each storefront bearing a sign that whispered of steel-"Forging Hall," "Sword Scripture Vault," and dozens more.

Eight of every ten passersby wore a weapon at hip or across back. Even those in plain linen gave off a razor-keen aura that pricked the skin.

"Mercy," Flaxseed muttered, shoulders hunched as he fingered the charm pouch at his belt. "A walk down this avenue is enough to make a man sweat steel."

Jared scanned the endless avenues, eyes dark and steady. "First we find lodging," he said. "Then we start digging for answers."

They wandered the crowded arteries of Swordmaster City for the span of a slow-burning incense stick before a building finally commanded their halt. It was Hospitality Lodge-no mere inn but a fortress of welcome-its facade crowned by two iron greatswords crossed in perpetual challenge, each blade flashing in the late-afternoon sun.

Those colossal swords, part sculpture and part oath, projected a boisterous confidence that seemed to ask every traveler who passed beneath them whether steel, and the will behind it, still ruled their hearts.

The moment they stepped inside, a bright-eyed attendant hurried forward. "Welcome, honored sirs. Dining or lodging?"

"Lodging," Jared said, voice calm. "Two of your finest rooms."

"Right away!" The boy's quill skated across the ledger, and in the next breath he was leading them up a polished staircase toward the second floor.

Their chambers proved immaculate: fresh linen, a hint of sandalwood curling from a brazier, and wide windows overlooking the restless avenue where sword-bearing pilgrims flowed like a living river.

Flaxseed sank into the nearest chair as though it were a lifeboat, tipped the teapot straight to his lips, then exhaled a scalding sigh. "Jared, a city this obsessed with blades has to be crawling with agents from Malevolent Path Hall, don't you think?"

Jared moved to the window, eyes tracing the glitter of steel below. "Maybe," he answered. "That sect works in shadow. Even if they keep a foothold here, they won't hang banners for it. First we find a local tongue willing to whisper the truth."

A ripple of unseen pressure brushed Jared's skin; he stiffened, the motion no larger than a breath.

"What is it?" Flaxseed asked, voice dropping.

"Someone's been following us since the gate," Jared murmured. "The presence never broke off."

Flaxseed's shoulders bunched. "Damian Zill, that brocaded peacock? Or Malevolent Path hitmen?"

"Neither." Jared's gaze narrowed. "It's a woman—the white-robed swordswoman on the battlements."

Flaxseed blinked. "Because you spoiled her duel?"

"Possibly. Her sword intent is pure and her cultivation solid. Until we know her aim, we leave the hornet's nest alone."

Half an hour later the room felt smaller than a coffin. Jared fastened his cloak. "Let's stretch our legs and hunt for rumors."

Flaxseed sprang up, enthusiasm restored, and followed him down the stairs into the swirling, spice-scented chaos of the street.

They had barely turned the first corner when a figure in snow-white robes flowed from the sunlight and barred the alley with practiced grace.

It was the swordswoman from the gate. The earlier dreamlike calm had fled her features; in its place burned a cool, judging fire fixed squarely on Jared.

"Who are you, and why did you interfere with my match against Kael Windham of Sacred Sword Manor?" Her voice rang clear, each word a tempered blade.

"Merely passing through," Jared replied, unflustered. "The interruption was unintentional."

"Unintentional?" Disbelief sharpened her tone. "Your sword intent, though veiled, carries a rhythm I have never felt. State your name-explain how a wanderer wields such flawless intent."

"Jared Chance," he said, steady as a metronome. "What skill I have came from stumbling in the dark-nothing more."

Her gaze swept him from head to heel, noting the modest aura of a mere Wandering Immortal. "You expect me to believe someone at your level forged that intent? Am I a child?"

Before her last syllable faded, she moved. The blade in her hand burst into a streak of white lightning, its murderous edge lunging straight for Jared's heart as the alley rang with the cry of awakened steel.

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Steel flashed-so quick, so ruthless-that the air itself shrieked as the blade lunged for Jared's chest. Flaxseed's face drained of color. "Watch it!" he cried. Jared's eyes narrowed to a single point of focus. Power surged through his veins, and in a heartbeat the Dragonslayer Sword leapt into his grip. He pivoted, meeting the oncoming strike head-on. The collision rang through the street like church bells at dawn.

Twin swords locked, spraying a shockwave that rippled over storefronts and set every hanging sign buzzing. Jared tasted iron in the back of his throat; numbing force crawled up his arm and shoved him two paces backward. The white-robed woman—Lyra Snowdon-also staggered a step, surprise flickering behind her steady gaze.

"Your sword technique..." Lyra studied the black blade and the simple arc Jared had just carved through space. Wonder widened her eyes. "That was the Sword Sect's Flowing-Cloud Form, wasn't it? Even unfinished, its rhythm is unmistakable."

She recognized it? I only copied a few moves from the ruins back on level three. The revelation struck Jared harder than the clash of steel.

"I've never heard of any Sword Sect," Jared said, lowering the Dragonslayer Sword yet keeping his weight poised to spring. "What you saw is something I developed on my own."

Lyra shook her head, midnight hair swaying like a blade of its own. "Impossible. The essence of the Sword Sect lives in that strike. I could never mistake it. Who are you, really? Were you trained by the Sect?"

Jared held her stare and offered only silence, unwilling to claim a lineage long turned to dust.

"My name is Lyra Snowdon," she said more gently. "I'm a disciple of the fallen Sword Sect. If you bear that legacy, then we are family, not enemies-there's no need to fight."

"I told you—I'm no disciple." Jared's brow furrowed. "So what is it you want from me?"

"The truth," Lyra answered, eyes fixed on him like twin crescent moons. "Sword Sect was annihilated in level three, and only a handful of us survived the ascent. Very few outside those ranks could wield our art. Where did you learn it?"

So she did rise from level three. Jared exhaled. "I found a ruined gate on that level, and practiced a few patterns etched on the walls. I didn't know it belonged to your Sect until this moment."

A shadow of sorrow crossed Lyra's face. "Then that ruin was once our mountain stronghold. Strange fate-that someone would still glean strength from its ashes." "Your gift for the sword is remarkable," she went on. "Rank means little, yet your understanding runs deep. That last strike held a purity even I struggle to reach." Jared blinked, caught off guard by praise from a stranger who had tried to skewer him moments earlier.

"Since destiny led you to our techniques, you share a bond with the Sword Sect." Lyra's tone brightened. "You seem new to Swordmaster City. I'm on my way to meet an elder-our steward in this city. Come with me. He'll want to see you, and you may find guidance you never knew you needed."

Jared's eyes narrowed, a spark of calculation flaring behind them. If he followed Lyra Snowdon to meet the Sword Sect's contact, he might unearth precious scraps of intelligence-perhaps even a clue to Malevolent Path Hall's whereabouts.

"Very well," he said with an easy nod. "We've only just reached Swordmaster City ourselves and could use a reliable guide."

At Jared's agreement, Flaxseed, still muddled by the exchange yet trusting his friend's instinct, fell in step beside them.

They threaded through the humming avenue, and Jared angled his head toward Lyra. "That swordsman you crossed blades with at the gate-Kael Windham of Sacred Sword Manor-do the two of you share some old score I should know about?"