

A Warrior Undefeatable

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"Fire Spirit Lord, are you hurt?" Onneas asked, gentling her voice when she saw how drained the immortal looked.

The Fire Spirit Lord drew a shaky breath. "I will recover. The cost was steep-that is all."

"But the Fire Demon Lord escaped with the Soul Devourer, and they will flee to level nine. From now on, peace up there will be only a memory."

The weight of that future settled over the group, dimming every face.

No one dared imagine what vengeance those two might unleash once the Ninth Heaven lay in their grasp.

Yuliana's voice quavered. "Then... what do we do now?"

Drawing courage into his lungs, the Fire Spirit Lord said, "First, we heal. I will summon a few old allies-if any still live-to stand with us."

"Until you hold absolute power, stay clear of level nine." His words landed like a seal across their hearts.

Each person nodded. Aside from Onneas, none possessed strength to challenge that realm.

"I must depart as well," the Fire Spirit Lord murmured. "After this battle, I may need a decade—perhaps more to mend my essence."

With that he became a pillar of living flame and vanished into the sky, leaving only a fading heat in the air.

"Time to move," Onneas whispered, turning away before the chill of what lay ahead could settle into her bones.

Everyone gave a silent nod, then followed Onneas away from the ruined valley. The moment they stepped beyond the cleft in the cliffs, awe stopped them cold.

A wasteland stretched for leagues-nothing but pulverized rock and silent, ashen earth.

Chasms split the ground like bottomless scars, mountains lay in crumbled heaps, riverbeds ran dry, and the air itself tasted of burnt metal.

Above it all, thin ribbons of dull crimson and faint gold still drifted, curling through the sky like mournful streamers-lingering echoes of a battle no mortal should ever witness.

"So... this is the power ancient legends spoke of?" Aurelius whispered, his voice quivering as though the ruins themselves might answer.

Artemis turned as pale as bone. "It's... unimaginable. The leftover shockwaves alone could erase a kingdom."

Flaxseed shook his head, dread furrowing every line on his face. "Without that Dragon Bell shielding us, we'd have been vaporized before we even knew what killed us."

Yuliana stared at the desolation, terror widening her eyes. "This place... it's hell made real."

Onneas' gaze roamed the charred horizon. "If more demons descend upon level six," she murmured, "all of it might soon look exactly like this."

They returned to Celestia City. The capital had been battered during the fighting-walls scorched, towers cracked-but compared with the outer realms, it still resembled a haven.

Even so, more than half the kingdom's cultivators had fallen. The survivors would need time-years, perhaps to mend body and spirit.

"I must head back to level eight," Onneas announced once they reached the palace gates. "Whatever upheaval brews in level nine will ripple straight into the Celestial King Palace."

Aurelius bowed deeply. "Ms. Dusko, thank you for saving us. Celestia will remember your grace for as long as it stands."

Onneas' expression hardened as she faced Jared "Be on your guard. The Third Hall's master, Enaricus, wants you dead and the treasures you carry will only paint a larger target on your back. Keep them hidden, or they'll bring your grave to you."

Jared dipped his head. "Your warning is appreciated, Ms. Dusko."

Onneas began, "And about Malevolent Path Hall, they—"

Jared suddenly stiffened. "Did anyone see Stebarin of Malevolent Path Hall?"

Heads shook all around; in the chaos, none had noticed the shadowy elder slip away.

An icy knot tightened in Jared's chest. Stebarin knew far too much about the magical items he carried; if the man had escaped, danger would haunt Jared's every step.

"Avoid provoking Malevolent Path Hall," Onneas pressed on. "Their influence reaches everywhere—now even inside our own palace. The king himself loses sleep over them, and with the strength you wield today you are no match for their blades or their schemes."

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Jared stayed silent. If he steered clear of Malevolent Path Hall, who would free the captive souls of Flaxseed's kin?

Seeing the resolve in his eyes, Onneas said no more. With a flick of her sleeve, she opened a shimmering void passage. The Golden Armor Guards filed in behind her, armor glinting in the fractured sunlight.

The void passage snapped shut, and their presence was gone—leaving Celestia City unsettlingly quiet once more.

Jared stayed behind in level six, laboring beside Aurelius to raise Celestia City from its ruins, and retreating each night into the Pentacarna Tower to cultivate.

Yet with every meditation, he sensed the shadow of mightier foes; his current strength could no longer keep pace.

Whenever Artemis arrived with her Herb Sect disciples, she would guide Jared through another round of bloodline fusion.

Yuliana surrendered completely-mind, body, and destiny-claiming her place at Jared's side.

Infinides often found him tangled in silken sheets and female laughter, but the old man merely sighed; in this path, pleasure, too, was cultivation. Days blurred into weeks, weeks into months, the river of time rushing past like silver rain.

Exactly three months had slipped away since that earth-shaking battle.

High upon the Pentacarna Tower, Jared stood motionless, eyes shut, thick ribbons of spiritual aura spiraling around him.

Three months of grinding seclusion had forced a qualitative metamorphosis within his core. Suddenly, a muffled thunder rolled from deep inside his chest. His aura erupted, yanking the surrounding essence toward him in a raging tide.

"Earthly Immortal Realm Level Five at last!" Jared whispered, disbelief and triumph knotted in his throat.

His eyes opened slowly, twin shards of starlight cutting through the dim chamber.

For these three months, he had virtually lived within the tower's shifting labyrinth of runes.

Inside, one day equaled decades in the outside world.

Had its reserves not run dry, he would have gladly lingered longer.

He knew he remained unready for level nine, and even the chaos of level eight would press him hard. "And my fire fusion technique grows ever purer," he murmured, feeling heat pulse through his veins.

He lifted his right hand; a flame of interlaced black and white trembled above his palm, gentle in appearance yet coiling with world-breaking potential.

Just then a familiar voice rippled through his consciousness.

"Kid, you finally pushed into the Earthly Immortal Realm Level Five. Well done, well done," the Vermilion Demon Lord chuckled inside his mind.

"Mr. Vermilion, you're awake?" Jared cried, delight sparking across his face.

During those three months, the Vermilion Demon Lord had slept so deeply that Jared feared something had gone terribly wrong.

"I have rested long enough.

However boy tread carefully. Your strength has grown, yes, yet it is still far from enough to challenge the true giants waiting ahead."

"I understand. The Fire Demon Lord and the Soul Devourer escaped, and Stebarin has vanished. Each of them has a dagger at my back."

"They aren't the only ones. This Pentacarna Tower alone will make countless predators circle you. Now that it is exposed, the road ahead will be brutal."

"I know," Jared said, eyes burning with resolve. "But I will never retreat. One day I'll surpass them all and claim the throne of true dominion."

Jared finished his final sentence, the echo still swirling through the stone corridors, then stepped out of the Pentacarna Tower and into the late-afternoon light

Across Celestia City, the work of resurrection moved with clockwork precision. From the top of the crimson-streaked battlements, Aurelius watched the organized chaos below, a tide of scaffolds carts, and chanting cultivators.

Three months earlier, a single cataclysm had hammered the capital flat, turning marble palaces into rubble and driving families into the roads.

Now, through relentless labor and stubborn hope, the city was stitching its grandeur back together, block by patient block.

Aurelius swept his gaze over the reborn streets, a weary but genuine smile softening the steel in his eyes.

"King Aurelius, the eastern rampart stands finished," a robed cultivator reported, fist to chest.

"Good. Tell the crews perfection is non-negotiable-no shortcuts, no excuses," Aurelius answered, his voice quiet but edged with iron.

"Yes, King Aurelius!"

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"In three relentless months, Celestia City had regained nearly eighty percent of its former splendor. Boulevards bustled again, incense drifted from market stalls, and laughter—still tentative-threaded through the crowd.

Yet beneath Aurelius' calm exterior coiled a darker thought.

The Fire Demon Lord and the Soul Devourer had fled into the shadows. They would recover. They would return. When that happened, the kingdom might face devastation all over again."

"King Aurelius, lost in thought?" a familiar voice teased from behind.

Aurelius turned. Artemis stood there, clutching a scroll of fresh reports, moonlight eyes bright against the dust-filled air.

"Nothing urgent," Aurelius replied with a measured smile. "Tell me, how fares the Herb Sect?"

"Remarkably well," Artemis said, excitement curling her voice. "Three months of bloodline fusion have boosted every disciple's strength. We've even prepared another cohort—all eager for Mr. Chance's... assistance. Their progress should soar once he guides them."

Aurelius found himself at a loss for words.

The Herb Sect had begun treating Jared like a walking fountain of sacred blood. Had the man possessed any less talent, the three-hundred-plus disciples of the Sect would have drained him dry by now.

Artemis and Yuliana, in particular, had turned the sessions into a silent contest, each refusing to yield a second of Jared's time. The rivalry left him scrambling—exhausted and perpetually in demand.

Just then, Jared stepped out of the tower's shadow, robe unfastened at the throat, eyes dulled by equal parts fatigue and determination.

Artemis' face lit up. She hurried over, whispering, "Mr. Chance, I've recruited several more disciples—each talented, each untainted. If you could just—"

"Please... let me breathe," Jared muttered, raising both hands in surrender before she could finish. "I'm running on fumes."

Aurelius interjected, "Let him rest, Artemis. The man's practically skin and bones."

"Exactly," Yuliana chimed, arriving at a brisk stride. "One man against hundreds of your demands-no wonder he's wasting away."

She moved to Jared's side, her expression soft with concern as she steadied him by the elbow, shielding him from yet another eager petition.

"Ms. Fiala, you have clung to Mr. Chance for three straight days and nights, Artemis said, her voice as frigid as frost Aren't you afraid his body-and his patience-might finally give out?"

"And you, Artemis? Haven't you been glued to him for the exact same three days and nights?" Yuliana shot back, the violet in her eyes flaring like sparks on dry tinder.

Their words crashed together, heat meeting ice, until the courtyard rang with accusations that tumbled over one another in a rising storm.

Jared glanced at Aurelius, a silent plea flashing between them, then slipped away before the next volley of barbs could find a new target.

He hurried across marble walkways toward Flaxseed's quarters, determined to sit with the old rogue and discuss a plan for locating the Malevolent Path Hall.

But the room was empty-no smell of coffee, no cheerful snoring-only hollow silence stretching beneath the eaves.

On the low table rested a single envelope, edges still damp with sealing wax that smelled faintly of pine.

It read: "Jared, by the time you read this, I will already have left level six, bound for level seven to chase the souls of my clan. The Malevolent Path fall is trouble incarnate and refuse to drag you into that fire your strength still needs tempering. Grow stronger. When you are truly ready, we'll settle accounts together. Until then, guard your life and trust no one lightly."

The letter fell from Jared's fingers.

Gratitude, anger, worry-every flavor bled together until he could taste nothing but copper on his tongue.

"Flaxseed, you stubborn old fox!" he yelled toward the empty rafters. "Did you think abandoning me would earn my thanks? Do you have any idea how much I'll worry about you now?"

Even as the words echoed, warmth crowded his heart; the hermit alchemist remained one of the few friends who had walked with him.

from the mortal realm, through secret worlds, all the way to the heavens.

Flaxseed had lifted him more times than Jared could count, and Jared would not

-could not-let misfortune claim the man. Whatever it costs, I'll keep him safe.

Resolve locked into place like steel; he would ascend to level seven and drag

Flaxseed back alive.

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Danger on level seven outstripped anything level six could offer, but choice had already turned to necessity.

Friendship, he decided, was worth wagering his life.

"Mr. Vermilion, do you think I should follow him to level seven?" he asked the Vermilion Demon Lord, voice low but steady.

"The decision is yours," the Vermilion Demon Lord answered, words drifting like distant thunder. "Remember-level seven's perils dwarf level six. Still, with your current cultivation, you should be able to carve out a place-so long as you don't stumble into a true monster."

Jared dipped his head. "Understood."

He stood at Earthly Immortal Realm Level Five; untested in battle, yet confident he could handle a Human Immortal Realm Level Three opponent.

Most level-seven cultivators, he reckoned, topped out around Human Immortal Realm Level Five. Unless fate hurled him at a lunatic, he could survive. Read complete version only at

And should he press on to level eight, Onneas would be there—a hidden ace that let him breathe easier at the thought of skies yet higher.

Aurelius' brows knit with worry, the torchlight licking across his cheekbones as he stopped in front of Jared. "Jared, tell me straight-are you really planning to march into level seven?"

Jared drew a long breath, the resolve already burning in his eyes. "Yes. I won't stand by and let Mr. Flaxseed take that risk alone."

Aurelius lowered his voice, the weight of command seeping through every syllable. "If you've truly decided, I won't chain your feet. Just be careful. Level seven is deeper than it looks. One slip could cost everything."

Jared nodded once, the motion firm, final. "I will."

A golden light blossomed in Jared's palm, swirling into a blazing sigil that tore open a shimmering void passage-the only road to level seven.

With his present Earthly Immortal cultivation, such a doorway yielded like silk beneath a blade.

He gave Aurelius a quick, grateful wave, then stepped into the roiling passage without another glance back.

Jared hadn't dared to bid farewell to Artemis or Yuliana-both women would have anchored him with pleas, maybe chains.

Knowing them, they'd have wrung one more promise-perhaps one more secret from him before letting go.

He already felt half-drained from their last round of persuasion.

Inside the void passage, his pulse steadied. At this power, the trek to level seven should have been routine-no lurking peril worth a second thought.

Yet the instant he crossed the threshold, the surrounding space warped, folding like molten glass around his limbs.

His Earthly Immortal Realm Level Five confidence had fooled him; he had misread the void passage's fickle mood.

Midway through, a murderous swell of chaotic void currents exploded-silent lightning tearing through fabric and bone alike.

"Not good!" Jared's face blanched as he hurled every drop of power into a frantic shield.

The storm hammered him like an ocean possessed, its force sharp enough to rip worlds from their seams.

Against such cosmic fury, even an Earthly Immortal Level Five cultivator felt no larger than dust on a gale.

Blood burst from his lips in a scarlet arc.

Pain ripped through his torso; it felt as though his lungs and liver had traded places under the pressure.

The Dragon Bell shot from his

The Doding him with gold light,

sleeve,

yet even the Pentacarna Tower rattled violently, ready to break apart.

"Hold tight boy! That's a full-blown

void storm!" the Vermilion Demone

Lord barked inside his skull, tone heavier than Jared had ever heard

The ancient voice quivered with rare, solemn dread.

Jared clenched his teeth until blood touched enamel, fighting to keep his thoughts from splintering.

He was a toy skiff on a wrathful sea, spun powerless toward some unseen horizon.

Time, distance—every measure he trusted—vanished. He had no idea how long he tumbled, nor where the torrent aimed him.

When awareness finally returned, he lay flat on a stretch of desolate earth, dust caking his lips.

"Where... am I?" he whispered, voice ragged.

Slowly he pushed up, eyes sweeping the barren waste in stunned confusion.

He unleashed his divine sense—only to recoil in disbelief at what he read.

This world held not a whisper of celestial energy. Only the thinner pulse of ordinary spiritual energy stirred the air.

Impossible. How could this be? This isn't the Celestial Realm at all—Have I somehow been thrown back into the Ethereal Realm?

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Yet even as the idea crossed Jared's racing mind, he forced himself to dismiss it.

The scene before him bore no resemblance to the Ethereal Realm he remembered.

He rose unsteadily to his feet and found himself standing inside a colossal canyon, its shadowed maw stretching farther than his eyes could track.

Both walls of that ravine were riddled with countless mine shafts-tiny, gaping wounds that climbed the cliffs like infected pores.

Down on the canyon floor, innumerable silhouettes moved in grim, mechanical rhythm.

When Jared's vision sharpened, his pupils contracted hard enough to hurt.

Human cultivators and beast race cultivators alike toiled there, their clothes little more than tatters, their skin crosshatched with scars-many missing fingers, limbs, or hope.

Armed with nothing but crude chisels and blunt hammers, they hacked at rock that looked hard enough to bleed sparks.

The sun blazed overhead, flooding the canyon with unbearable heat, yet not one laborer was granted a moment's rest.

Exhaustion and despair were written across every face. Sweat, mingled with blood, slid from their chins onto the searing stone and vanished in angry bursts of steam.

"Move! Faster-move, you worthless slugs!"

A Demonic Cultivator overseer in black armor cracked a whip across the back of a frail, gray-haired human, the lash loud as lightning in the heat-thick air.

The old man's howl tore through the canyon as he crumpled, gravel biting into his knees.

Terrified to linger, he scrambled up at once and swung his pick anew, every breath a plea for mercy he knew would never come.

"Lazy old geezer! You dare slack off?" the

sneered and lashed him

again, each stripe blooming crimson through his ragged shirt.

Blood soaked the cloth in seconds, but the victim merely clenched his jaw and endured in silence.

He would rather swallow pain than invite a punishment even crueler.

Not far away, a young beast-race miner slowed, his strength spent and his strokes feeble.

Another overseer charged over and kicked the youth onto the dust-caked ground. "Useless cur! Can't even dig a handful of ore-why keep you alive?"

He raised a spiked club, its iron studs already black with old blood, ready to crush bone and hope in a single swing.

"No-please, don't kill him!"

A human woman threw herself over the fallen beast race youth, using her own body as a frail shield.

"Oh? You want to protect him that badly? Then die together!" the Demonic Cultivator snarled, lips curling into a savage grin.

Rage, hot and sudden, surged through Jared's chest like wildfire seeking air.

He had never imagined that in this world such brutal, soulless slavery could still exist.

These Demonic Cultivators were nothing short of monstrous.

"You miserable beasts!"

Ice flashed behind Jared's eyes. In that instant, the canyon air felt sharpened, like every stray breath might slice a throat.

Ahead, where the canyon narrowed to a ragged throat, a row of impossibly tall structures clawed at the sky.

Each tower rose hundreds of yards

high, forged in the likeness of an

alchemist's cauldron yet swollen to titanic scale. Their bronze-black walls used from

exhaling heat that shimmered

across the valley floor.

Conveyor platforms rumbled

ceaselessly Pale spiritual stones

poured in by the thousands, vanishing beneath glowing lids. Moments later they emerged transmuted into flawless celestial gems that dazzled like newborn stars.

"What—" Jared's voice caught in his throat. "They're refining spiritual stones into celestial gems?"

Realization hammered home.

So this world lacks celestial energy, yet these Demonic Cultivators have forged a way to create it.

Where in all realms have I landed? How did the chaotic void currents fling me into a place this twisted?

Unease seeped beneath the anger, coiling tight around his ribs.

Down below, a Demonic

Cultivator muscles roped, wolf-tooth club glinting-stalked toward a wounded beast race cultivator and the human woman shielding him.

"Time to die!" he snarled, hefting the spiked club overhead, eager to paint the ravine red.

"Enough!"

The single word cracked like thunder, ricocheting from wall to wall until even the furnaces seemed to flinch.

Every hand froze mid-strike. Faces turned.

There, amid drifting ash, stood a young man in a white robe, gaze colder than mountain ice-Jared, immovable, commanding.

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"Who in blazes are you?" the club-wielding Demonic Cultivator barked. "This is Obsidian Stone Sect's territory. Strays are not welcome."

Jared ignored him. He looked instead at the fallen beast race cultivator and the woman crouched beside him, both trembling beneath bruises.

"Are either of you hurt?" His voice softened, a steady hand extended through the dust.

The woman lifted her head. For a heartbeat, astonishment outshone her fear-no one defied the sect out here.

"W-We're okay. Thank you, sir." Her words wavered, yet urgency flared behind them. "But please, leave now! These people from Obsidian Stone Sect are merciless. They'll tear you apart!"

"Tear me apart?" Jared's laugh was quiet, razor-thin. "They haven't earned that privilege."

He turned, white sleeve whispering across the grit, eyes locking on the ring of Demonic Cultivators. Heatless fury rolled off him like a silent storm.

"You cowards tormenting weaker cultivators-today, you pay in full." Fresh chapters posted on Find_Novel(.)net

The Demonic Cultivator hefted a spiked iron club over one shoulder, his eyes burning red beneath a mane of tangled hair. "You little whelp-are you courting death? Dare you insult Obsidian Stone Sect? I'll teach you what true fear feels like!"

Roaring the last word, he lunged across the quarry floor, the club slicing the dusty air with a mournful whistle that promised broken bones.

At once, the other Demonic Cultivators swarmed forward, eager to impress the nearby enforcer. Their boots pounded the rock in unison, sealing every avenue of escape around Jared.

Jared's mouth curved into a lazy, razor-thin smile that told the universe how little any of this mattered.

Most of these Demonic Cultivators were in the Immortal Realm, a level considered an expert in the realm powered by spiritual energy.

Yet compared with Jared, who stood firmly in Earthly Immortal Realm, they were less than insects crawling across a giant's palm.

Jared did not bother to lift an arm. He did not summon a protective aura. He simply stood motionless, letting the iron club slam into his chest.

The impact rang out like a cracked bell-and the weapon exploded into glittering powder that drifted down his tunic like gray snow.

Staring at the stump of wood and twisted metal in his hands, the Demonic Cultivator gasped, "W-What... Who are you?"

You are not worthy of the answer. Jared's voice was soft as falling ash. He spat-just a single contemptuous fleck of breath.

That breath became a mountain of unspoken power. Before the

Demonic Cultivator could blink, his body turned to mist and vanished, leaving nothing not even a ghostly echo-behind.

Silence rippled outward. Even the wind seemed to pause, stunned by the sudden erasure of flesh and soul.

Another Demonic Cultivator, face drained of color, managed a shaky shout. "What sorcery is this? How dare you slay a warrior of Obsidian Stone Sect!"

He swung an arm in frantic command. "All of you-together! End him!"

A dozen figures leaped, weapons blazing with black energy, forming a jagged ring that crashed toward Jared like closing jaws.

"Quiet." Jared flicked his wrist as though brushing away an invisible speck.

A gale screamed into existence, lifting the Demonic Cultivators off their feet. While they were still- airborne, their bodies shredded into ribbons of black smoke that the wind carried into nothingness.

Not a shard of bone, not a single wandering soul remained.

"H-How can this be?"

"His strength... It's impossible!"

The enslaved cultivators-once

resigned to chains-stood frozen

eyes wide, hopes they had buried now sparking back to life at the sight of Jared's power.

The Demonic Cultivator who had ordered the assault trembled so hard his club rattled against the stones. Ten warriors had not even grazed Jared's sleeve.

"W-Who are you?" he whispered, every syllable shivering as if spoken through teeth made of glass.

Jared gave no answer. He advanced one slow, measured step at a time, boots scraping over shattered stone, every footfall a promise.

"Tell me why do you enslave these cultivators? Why turn ordinary spiritual stone into celestial gems?" His voice struck the air like frost.

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"I... I don't know. I-I only stand guard," the Demonic Cultivator stammered, chains clinking against his armor as his whole body shook.

"Savior, that wretch knows nothing," cried a middle-aged cultivator in a ragged gray tunic as he hurried forward. "Only Obsidian Stone Sect's elders keep such secrets. He is a mere pawn."

"Oh!" Jared flicked his wrist. Black fire swallowed the Demonic Cultivator; before a scream could form, it unraveled into a ribbon of smoke and was gone.

"Thank you for rescuing us."

The gray-robed cultivator bowed so deeply his forehead almost touched the rubble, gratitude shining in his weary eyes.

Jared waved off the bow, eyes sweeping the trembling prisoners. "Buddy, I have a few questions."

"Savior, go on. Whatever I know, I will answer honestly."

"What realm is this, and why are so many human and beast race cultivators forced to mine for spiritual stones under demon lash?" Jared asked.

The man sighed, pain carving lines across his face. "This is Cardinal Realm, a realm steeped in spiritual energy. We once housed three races-human, beast, and demon. Skirmishes flared, yet balance always returned."

"What destroyed that balance?" Jared pressed.

"It began a hundred years ago." Fear flashed in the man's eyes. "A Celestial Immortal descended without warning. With a gesture, he could tear mountains apart. He sided with the demons and crushed every human and beast rebellion. Since then, the demons have driven us like cattle, forcing us to mine spiritual stone and using the Celestial Immortal's method-refine it into celestial gems. The Celestial Immortal hungers for those gems, so quarries now scar the whole Cardinal Realm."

"Why didn't you keep fighting? Was no great power left?" Jared asked, brows knitting.

"We fought," the man said, bitterness twisting his lips. "Our strongest patriarchs joined forces, yet the Celestial Immortal felled them like wheat. After that, our strength was gone."

He rolled up his sleeve to expose a black rune. "The demons branded us with slave seals. One rebellious thought, and it feels like ten thousand ants eating the heart."

Jared studied the mark, icy light flickering in his eyes.

Even at a glance, he felt the rune's wicked pulse-an enchantment forged to strangle the very mind.

"And you mean to endure this slavery forever?" Jared's voice dropped, dark and steady.

"What choice do we have? Rebellion is certain death; obedience lets us breathe a little longer. And if we disobey, the demons swear they will slaughter every last member of our families."

Jared tilted his chin toward the man in tattered robes, his voice calm yet edged with curiosity. "That Celestial Immortal who descended from the heavens what cultivation level does he truly stand upon?"

The cultivator, hair streaked with ash and fear, shook his head. "No one knows, This content belongs to

Sir. We only know this-across the whole Cardinal Realm, no soul can withstand even a single flick of his sleeve."

Jared's gaze sharpened, the air seeming to hush around him. "And where might this Celestial Immortal be hiding now?"

A spark of anticipation brightened his dark eyes. He longed to witness the Celestial Immortal's secrets, especially the mysterious craft that smelted mere spiritual stones into radiant celestial gems.

"He appears only on occasion," the captive whispered. "Sometimes he materializes inside Obsidian Stone Sect Headquarters, seizes

wagon loads of celestial.gems, then vanishes again. In his absence, the sect leader oversees our quarries. As for the Celestial Immortal's present whereabouts—I cannot say."

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Jared folded his arms. "Tell me, then-how strong is the sect leader of Obsidian Stone Sect?"

Terror flickered across the man's face. "They say he stands at the Top Level Immortal Realm, one breath away from the celestial realm. He even wields the immortal techniques the Celestial Immortal granted him. His strength is unfathomable."

Top Level Immortal Realm? I've seen stray mutts in level six with a fiercer bite. A quiet laugh rippled through Jared's chest.

He rested a gentle hand on the man's shoulder. "Find shelter for now. Once I erase Obsidian Stone Sect from the map, the chains that bind you will snap, and freedom will be yours."

The captive shook his head in despair. "We cannot leave these grounds. The moment we cross the boundary, the slave seals awaken-turning life into a torment worse than death."

Jared offered an easy smile. "Seals are merely knots. I am rather good at untying knots."

"But... Benefactor, t-those seals came from the Celestial Immortal himself," the man stammered. "It's hard to remove them."

Jared answered with silence. His fingertips brushed the man's forearm. The glowing rune branded there guttered out like a candle in the wind.

Soft incantations rolled from Jared's lips. Ribbons of golden script spiraled through the air, then streamed into every prisoner present.

One by one, the slave seals disintegrated, falling away like dust from ancient chains. Realization struck. Dozens fell to their knees, foreheads hammering the dirt in frantic gratitude.

With a simple lift of his palm, Jared summoned a gentle force. The captives floated upright, unable to resist even if they had wished.

They stared at him-eyes wide, throats tight with dawning hope and aching envy.

"I-Is this the might of an Immortal?" someone whispered, voice trembling.

Bright wonder flared in every gaze, as though new suns had risen inside their hearts.

Over at Obsidian Stone Sect Headquarters, deep within a lavish great hall, Marius Blackstone, the sect leader, sat cross-legged atop a mountain-sized Ebony Demon Crystal. His eyes snapped open, suspicion cutting through their crimson sheen.

"Hm? What trickery is this?"

A frown carved across his scarred face. He felt it clearly-the slave seals he had branded upon every quarry slave had vanished in an instant.

"Impossible," he hissed, a chill gnawing at his certainty.

Marius sat alone in the vast council chamber, a place carved from flawless slabs of obsidian that

reflected torchlight like pools of net

blackwater. The restriction sigils that monitored every quarry @nder his rule were normally etched in fire across his mind glowing threads he could tug at will. Now, one after another, those threads winked out.

He clenched the arms of his throne. The Celestial Immortal himself had taught him these bindings. Even Marius, with all his power, had had to

burn days of essence to relea net

them one at a time. Yet they had vanished together as though a single breath had blown out a forest of candles.

Is the Celestial Immortal angry with me? The thought flashed through him like ice, and his heart lurched.

Panic clawed up his spine. He reached for the crystal embedded in the armrest—his direct line to the overseer of Quarry No. 7—but only silence answered. Again. Again. The crystal remained black, mute, and cold.

"No!" he growled, springing to his feet. Color drained from his face. "Something has gone terribly wrong at the quarry!"

He strode to the arched doorway and called, "Guards! Someone, to me-now!"

An elder in a flowing black robe hurried in, bowing so low his beard brushed the polished floor. This was Maurice Shadowmere, Grand Elder of Obsidian Stone Sect and second only to Marius himself, his cultivation level already at Immortal Realm Level Nine.

"Maurice, take a squad and fly to Quarry No. 7," Marius ordered, his voice low and hard. "Every restriction there dissolved at once, and the overseer is unreachable."

"What?" Maurice straightened in shock. "All of them gone? Impossible. A slave revolt, perhaps?"

Marius shook his head. "Unlikely. Those slave seals are vicious-no one breaks them without outside help. And even free, the laborers could never match our sect's strength."

"Then who could have done this?" Maurice asked, brows knitting.

A grim light settled in Marius' eyes. "Someone has slipped into Cardinal Realm, and they are no weakling. Take the elite of the Enforcement Squad discover what happened, but if you face an enemy you cannot match, do not fight. Break off and report at once."

A Warrior Undefeatable

"Understood!" Maurice answered, his tone as sharp as clashing steel.

"Wait." Marius lifted a hand. From the shimmering space of his storage ring, he produced a flat black message token and pressed it into the elder's palm. "If trouble exceeds your grasp, crush this. I will come at once."

"My thanks, Mr. Blackstone," Maurice said, tucking the token away as though it were fragile glass.

Moments later, Maurice summoned twenty hand-picked Enforcement Squad disciples, each a middle-phase Immortal Realm cultivator.

"Listen well," he instructed, voice carrying over the rush of gathering wind. "Quarry No. 7 has fallen silent. We fly immediately to investigate. Any suspicious intruder you meet-eliminate without hesitation."

"Yes!" the Enforcement Squad disciples roared in unison.

A gust of spiritual force erupted, and the team streaked toward the distant horizon. In the blink of an eye, they were little more than glints of silver vanishing into the clouds.

Deep within the rugged gorge of Quarry No. 7, Jared stood at the very center of the excavation, surrounded by men and women whose shackles had only moments ago fallen away.

"Benefactor, we cannot thank you enough," the middle-aged cultivator said, voice quavering with raw emotion. "Without your intervention, we might have to suffer here forever."

He had barely brushed the dust from his sleeves when the quarry's newly liberated cultivators crowded toward him, gratitude shining so bright in their eyes it almost eclipsed the hard-edged sunlight bouncing off the shattered stone.

"Enough formalities," Jared said, flicking his fingers as though brushing away a cobweb. "I simply couldn't stomach the way those Demonic Cultivators treated you."

The middle-aged cultivator bowed until his forehead nearly kissed the gravel. "Benefactor, your grace will live with us for as long as we draw breath."

Jared gave a small, companionable smile. "And you are?"

He straightened, palm over heart. "I'm Quincy Lee, once an elder of the alliance of the human race."

"Quincy Lee," Jared repeated, tasting the syllables. "Good name. Tell me, do you know where Obsidian Stone Sect Headquarters hides?"

"It crowns a mountain far from here,"

sa

Quincy said quickly. "It is ringed by guards and a barrier that the Celestial Immortal himself etched into the air. Ordinary folk can't even approach the gate."

Jared gave a low chuckle. "A barrier? Barriers are decoration, nothing more."

Above them, the sky split with a sharp, whistling roar-like iron spears tearing the wind.

Quincy Lee's face drained of color. "Obsidian Stone Sect people are here!"

All heads snapped upward; on the distant blue, a swarm of black dots arrowed toward the quarry.

Jared brushed a speck of grit from

his

much

"I must have made too

ise tearing down their little

seal Good-now they spare me the

tup."

"Sir, they've brought half the sect. The one in front is Maurice Shadowmere-the grand elder—and he's terrifyingly strong."

Jared smiled, thin and cold. "Maurice Shadowmere? At Immortal Realm Level Nine, he's still a child playing with wooden swords."

Moments later, Maurice descended with his enforcers, their robes thrashing like dark banners above the quarry pit.

They hovered there, staring, mouths half-open, as though the scene below were a mural they could not make sense of.

Where shackled slaves once toiled, free men now stood tall; of their Demonic Cultivators, not a single figure remained.

"W-What happened here?" Maurice growled, brow knitting.

His gaze swept the crowd and locked on Jared-the only unfamiliar face.

"Who are you? Why have you invaded our territory?" The question cracked like ice. Maurice unleashed, his aura, a black tide meant to crush the stranger's spine where he stood.

Yet Jared did not so much as blink; the pressure broke against him like waves against a cliff.

A Warrior Undefeatable

"Who I am is irrelevant. What matters is that, as of this moment, every soul here walks free," Jared answered.

"Insolent cur!" Maurice thundered. "Do you realize whose domain this is? Obsidian Stone Sect rules these grounds. Your defiance is a death wish!"

"Death wish?" Jared answered with a single, contemptuous laugh that seemed to thud off every wall. "You think a pack of half-trained rejects can threaten me?"

One of the enforcers stammered, outrage hitching in his throat. "Y-You arrogant fool!"

Maurice let a dark smile twist across his face. "Since talk won't teach you respect, perhaps a little blood will."

Pebbles rattled underfoot when Maurice stepped forward, every movement promising violence the way thunder promises rain.

Jared raised one palm. "Hold it."

He met Maurice's gaze without blinking. "Before we trade blows, I have a few questions—a courtesy I doubt you deserve, yet I'll offer it anyway."

Maurice scoffed, chin tilting high. "What makes you think you've earned the right to question me?"

Jared's reply was quiet, so calm it chilled the air. "Because I can kill every soul here, and you know it."

A bead of sweat traced Maurice's temple; the aura radiating from Jared felt like a drawn blade pressed to his throat.

Maurice swallowed hard. "W-Who exactly are you?" The bravado in his tone buckled into wary respect.

"I'm Jared Chance," he said, voice steady as leveled granite. "Tell me who is the Celestial Immortal that descended from the celestial realm, and why does he order you to forge spiritual stones into celestial gems?"

Color drained from Maurice's cheeks. "H-How do you even know that being exists?"

A faint smile touched Jared's lips. "So I was right. Answer the question." Maurice's eyes flickered with calculation, as though weighing the terror of the Celestial Immortal against the danger standing before him.

Jared's smile vanished. "What's wrong-tongue tied? Or are you simply afraid that once you speak, your so-called Celestial Immortal will snuff you out?"

Maurice's complexion curdled further; fear clawed at the edges of his composure.

"Talk," Jared said, his tone dropping to an arctic hush. "Or prepare to die here and

now."

An enforcer could bear no more. "Grand Elder, why waste breath? Let's butcher him!"

Howling, he lunged, a demonic sword cleaving the air toward Jared's skull.

"Fool." Jared's snort was almost bored. He flicked his wrist as though brushing aside dust.

Invisible force slammed the

charging enforcer across the hall Bones snapped like dry twigs before

his body bit the flagstones and shrank no farther. Breathless silence followed.

Every spectator froze, horror widening their eyes. No one had imagined Jared's power ran that deep-until now.

Maurice's voice quivered. "W-What cultivation level have you reached?"

Tremors coursed through his limbs; the aura around Jared battered his courage like a gale against a tattered flag.

"My cultivation level is irrelevant," Jared replied, turning slightly so torchlight rimmed his silhouette in gold. "Only two paths lie before you: answer me, or die."

Maurice's face hardened to an

ashen mask. For the first time in his long life, he realized he was standing before an enemy he

defeat your question that importatcalls himself Immortal Lord Nimbus. He ordered us to refine common

Lanswer never

spiritual stones into celestial gems, never saying why. He simply gives the order, then shows up from time to time and hauls the gems away."

Jared frowned, tasting the unfamiliar title. "Immortal Lord Nimbus?" he echoed, certain he had never heard that name uttered in any realm.

He realized that celestial realm cultivators loved parading through the lower realms with grandiose titles Immortal Lord, Demon Emperor-yet their actual strength rarely matched their bragging.

The moment the thought drifted through him, a gruff, amused voice boomed inside his skull.

"Brat, are you mocking me?" Vermilion Demon Lord's tone crackled across Jared's mind like distant thunder, thick with prickly displeasure.

Startled, Jared muttered a mental apology. "Mr. Vermilion, I was just thinking aloud-no offense meant."

Vermilion Demon Lord chuckled. "Hmph! Titles are currency on the road. In a low-level realm, forging a glorious one is half the battle."