

A Warrior Undefeatable

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With the word "traitor" hanging over Jared's head, hostility spread through the gathering like wildfire. Eyes once clouded with confusion now blazed with murderous intent.

A barrel-chested brute, beard bristling like iron wire, stamped forward. "Who are you? And why are you ruining this?" he roared, hefting a war-axe that crashed against the stone.

Silver light rippled along the axe's edge-keen enough to promise Jared two neat halves at the slightest twitch.

"I bet he's jealous!" a swordsman in blue declared, palm resting on the hilt at his waist. "He can't stand that the Celestial Palace favors us!"

Steel whispered as the cultivator's thumb nudged his blade free by an inch, waiting only for an excuse.

Jared's brows knit, a weary sorrow tugging at the corners of his mouth. Blind fools, all of them...

"Listen to me!" Jared stepped forward, voice cutting through the uproar. "That jade scepter is laced with a hypnotic mist. The runes beneath the altar form a Soul Convergence Array. Your soul threads are being funneled into a Soul Urn hidden in that recess. Wait any longer and your very spirits will be stolen!"

His warning drowned beneath a fresh wave of shouts, curses, and the metallic scream of weapons leaving their scabbards.

"Utter nonsense! The Celestial Palace stands as the purest line of our divine blood-we would never sully it with such treachery!" The white-haired elder's eyes bulged, rage booming across the square like distant cannon fire.

"You're just scared we'll surpass you after breaking through. So you spin bedtime stories to keep us small." A young cultivator sneered, every syllable dripping with contempt.

"Enough talk! Seize him! Hand him to the Celestial Palace for judgment!" someone bellowed from deep inside the mob.

In an instant, more than a dozen frenzied cultivators lunged for Jared Chance, their robes whipping like torn banners in a storm.

The steel and jade in their hands flashed cold and hungry, loose waves of aura crackling out in jagged, desperate bursts.

Most were wandering cultivators who had languished at the same bottleneck for years. The promise of a miraculous breakthrough had gnawed away their sanity until nothing remained but hunger.

Now, Jared was the heretic blocking their promised future, and that heretic had to fall.

Flaxseed yanked a fan of defensive

charms from his sleeve and slapped his chest, runes flaring

them

across

like miniature suns Jared you'll

never reason with them. Their minds

are shackled to that breakthrough dream!"

He knew too well that obsession had sealed their ears. No truth, however earnest, could pierce greed that deep.

Jared watched the charging cultivators, a flicker of disappointment dimming his gaze.

He could shatter them like sticks-yet they were not wicked, only pitiable souls duped into a grander conspiracy.

In chasing higher realms, they had wagered everything, blind to the snare springing shut around them.

He pivoted, letting a saber whistle past and shave a single thread from his sleeve, its passing wind hot against his skin.

With a pulse of spiritual energy, he blasted another attacker's artifact from numb fingers; the glittering tool pin-wheeled away and clattered across the stone.

"Feel your own brow!" Jared shouted. "That faint sting between your eyes-that's the first tug of a soul thread being stolen!"

The only answer was a new, wilder storm of blows.

The white-haired elder flung a bronze compass skyward; its face flared open, lancing golden beams straight for Jared's heart.

Heat from those rays warped the air itself, curling it like parchment over flame. "Deceiver!" the elder spat. "Today I purge evil in Heaven's name!"

The last hint of hesitation slid from Jared's eyes. He knew these men were now chained to obsession. Save them today, and they would crawl back to the Palace tomorrow for another poisoned sermon. They were already too deep to rescue.

The Black-White Flame burst from Jared's pores and billowed outward, weaving an unseen wall.

The attackers slammed into that barrier and staggered back several steps, unharmed yet shaken, as if a mountain had exhaled against them. Anger simmered in Jared at their stubborn ignorance, but compassion stiff stayed his hand.

"Believe me or don't. It's your path now," he said, voice flat as winter stone.

The words landed cold, without ripple or warmth. In his eyes lived a sudden finality-hope extinguished, bridges quietly burned.

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"Flaxseed, we're leaving," Jared said, already turning his back on the stunned crowd.

Flaxseed froze for half a heartbeat, then the truth hit him-Jared had decided to stop fighting.

A sigh slipped past his cracked lips. He shot one last, helpless look at the cultivators still hurling curses, then shuffled backward beside Jared, melting into the shadowed edge of the Soul Convergence Altar.

There the two men stood, motionless witnesses to the unfolding ritual, bitterness, dread, and sorrow swirling together in their chests like an untamed storm.

High on the platform, Edison allowed a triumphant grin to spread across his face.

"You all saw it, did you not? The traitor's bravado has dried up!" he shouted, voice ringing like a cracked bell. "Steady your minds-ignore him. In only a few breaths, your breakthroughs will arrive!"

With theatrical flourish, he lifted the jade scepter once more, murmuring a string of ancient syllables that tasted of honeyed poison.

Soft light poured from the scepter, oddly gentle yet laced with a hypnotic pull. Beneath the dais, the black runes stitched into the stone flickered, came alive, and began knitting their earlier fissures shut.

The cultivators who had been hurled aside by Jared's strike wavered. Doubt clouded their expressions for a heartbeat, then they closed their eyes again, sinking willingly back into Enaricus's counterfeit sermon.

Pale-blue soul threads seeped from between their brows, drifting toward the carved trough like tiny, obedient rivers.

Those glimmering strands merged in the groove, weaving a silent confession of their owners' ignorance and tragedy.

Flaxseed's teeth ground together. "Fools-utter fools," he muttered, knuckles whitening around his fists.

He simply could not fathom why men and women of cultivation would surrender their very souls for a phantom promise of advancement.

Jared watched without a flicker of emotion, eyes dark and still as winter water.

The Soul Urn Swelled, grotesque as

a pustule ready to burst. From its depths came an almost musical keening notes thick with despair and torment proof that many souls were already trapped inside. Those spirits clawed at unseen walls, voiceless screams ricocheting in a prison no living ear could truly hear.

Time crawled, The scepter's

radiance blazed brighter with every breath; the runes beneath the altar pulsed like diseased hearts. Soul threads thickened, shifting from soft blue to an ominous gray white the unmistakable hue of essence ripped from its source—each strand now tainted, foul, foretelling doom.

Thirty minutes passed. Enaricus abruptly lowered the scepter; the runes guttered and died.

The Soul Urn now loomed half as tall as a man, its surface crawling with warped spirit-marks that resembled faces contorted by endless pain. A muffled chorus of wails

reverberated across the altar colder than moonlit iron, making every onlooker's skin crawl.

"Congratulations on your breakthroughs, fellow cultivators!" Edison declared, bowing with oily courtesy. Pride—and something decidedly venomous—glittered behind his smile, as though he were examining a masterpiece of cruelty.

The crowd's eyes snapped open. Their bodies felt feather-light, inner energy marginally smoother. They truly believed a bottleneck had shattered. Drunk on this illusion, they never sensed what they had just traded away.

One young man in coarse linen threw a jubilant punch at the air. "Thank you! The barrier inside me really loosened!"

He beamed, already picturing a glorious future. His joy radiated so fiercely it was almost painful to witness.

A middle-aged cultivator burst into trembling tears. "I have lingered at the peak of the Earthly Immortal Realm for three full years—today I finally crossed! Your kindness is beyond repayment!"

He dropped to his knees with a dull thud, forehead striking the stone again and again before the gold-robed cultivator, as though he was both savior and second father.

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A chorus of grateful voices echoed across the Soul Convergence Altar. Cultivators surged toward the gold-robed cultivator, bowing and scraping as if salvation itself wore his embroidered sleeves. None of them sensed the invisible pit yawning beneath their feet, a pit dug with missing fragments of their own souls.

The Edison lifted one modest hand, pretending humility. Yet a needle-thin gleam of cruelty flickered behind his lashes.

Their spiritual flow will sour soon enough. When their strength withers and their minds go dull, they will feed my Soul Urn to the brim.

The thought curled his lips into a chill, private smile.

"Fools." The single word, low and blade-sharp, drifted from a shadowed corner. Jared's voice sliced through the false jubilation like steel through silk, every syllable ringing with disdain.

The word crashed over the altar-a clap of thunder on a clear day-shattering the veneer of harmony and leaving an uneasy hush in its wake.

Heads snapped around. Gratitude soured to hostility. Eyes that had glowed with devotion toward Edison now burned with anger at the man who had dared disturb their moment.

The burly, bearded brute jabbed a calloused finger toward Jared. "You again, snake! Our advancement is none of your concern. Can't stand to see others rise, can you?"

Jared ignored the outburst. He stared straight at Edison, his tone flat as a judge's gavel. "Hand over the Soul Urn."

The command carried no shout, yet it drilled straight into the cultivator's chest, twin spear-points of intent that made Edison's heart stumble.

The Edison's smile faltered. He spread his hands in feigned confusion. "Soul Urn? Dear friend, I have no idea-"

Even as he spoke he inched backward, fingers brushing the cool edge of a message talisman at his belt.

I must reach Master Drystan. Stall him-just long enough.

Silent prayers chased one another through his mind, begging Drystan to arrive before this storm broke.

A scoff answered him. Jared's figure dissolved, re-forming in a blur at the altar's pinnacle. In the same breath, his right hand plunged into the central recess, swift and certain, as though fate itself had sketched the motion beforehand.

Panic burst across Edison's face. Snatching open an ornate folding fan, he struck at Jared's unprotected back and shouted, "Fellow cultivators! This thief dares to fob the Celestial Palace. He will shatter your newfound cultivation Stop him-now!"

The freshly advanced crowd needed no second urging. Resentment became rage; a dozen figures leapt, weapons flashing, spiritual light sputtering like torches

in the wind. Their cultivation was ragged, but their fury raw.

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Jared did not bother to turn. Power erupted from him-immense, silent, inevitable it descended like a mountain of night, pressing upon every stone, every lung, every frightened heartbeat. Air thickened to syrup; even sound seemed to freeze.

The charging cultivators halted mid-stride, pinned as if giant nails had been driven through their shadows. Terror bloomed on their faces.

Only then did they realize the bitter truth: the spiritual energy that had moments ago felt so fluid now clotted within them, sluggish and mute.

An unseen cage of pressure bound their meridians, leaving them powerless-helpless offerings at the mouth of the abyss they had cheered into being.

"H-How can this be? My spiritual energy..." a lone cultivator stammered, one trembling hand drifting to the center of his brow.

The moment this fingertips brushed

skin, he felt it more than a needle-point sting, there was a hollow, echoing emptiness where his soul once anchored.

vacancy throbbed like an old wound reopened, raw and ice-cold. Terror flooded him. Regret slammed in after it, merciless and late-far, far too late.

Around him, the other cultivators finally registered the same truth. Joy from their so-called breakthrough drained from every face, leaving a chalky pallor and wide, hunted eyes.

They understood, at last, the abyss they had stepped into-yet had no idea how to claw back out.

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Jared ignored the rising panic behind him. His right hand lifted from the stone recess, bringing with it the half-man-tall Soul Urn.

A thread of Black-White Flame danced at his fingertip. With almost casual grace, he touched it to the vessel's clay skin.

The flame looked fragile, a candle flicker-yet power rumbled inside it like a star held in cupped palms.

Soul-engraved runes webbing the urn split apart with a brittle crack. Pale blue soul threads seeped out, drifting upward, and the instant they tasted open air, they scattered like spooked sparrows, fleeing into the distance.

They were only remnants, spirits torn from former owners, now weightless and lost, drifting on invisible currents in search of a home they would never find.

"S-Soul threads..." the white-haired elder whispered, voice quavering with disbelief.

In a single breath, he grasped the awful truth: everything Jared had warned them about was real. Their so-called advancement had been nothing more than the siphoning of their very souls.

Remorse struck him like a hammer. How could he have swallowed the golden-robed stranger's promises so easily?

"Friend, please, return our souls!" the middle-aged cultivator who had earlier wept now collapsed with a thud, forehead striking stone.

Blood soon streaked his face, yet he kept bowing, crimson drops spattering the ground in pitiful rhythm.

One after another, the other cultivators fell to their knees, tears mixing with dust. "We were wrong! Have mercy! Give our souls back!"

Their voices tangled into a single thread of despair, clinging to any chance of undoing their fatal mistake.

Jared regarded the pleading crowd without a flicker of sympathy.

The Black-White Flame unfurled again, this time enveloping the entire Soul Urn. He drew a long, steady breath and set his Heart-Focusing Sutra into motion. Read full story at [find~novel~net](#)

Within the vessel, every soul thread that once belonged to the Soul Convergence Altar's disciples unraveled, refined, then flowed like liquid silver along his finger and directly into his core.

They snapped at the hand that tried to save them, so why should I rescue them now?

His aura thickened visibly-dense, dark, and formidable-while the twin-colored fire around him blazed higher, crackling like miniature suns.

"Y-You can't stop! Those are our souls!" one cultivator howled, eyes bloodshot. He lunged, but Jared's sheer spiritual pressure punched him to the ground and held him there like an iron mountain

He writhed-arms, shoulders, even fingertips straining-yet could not lift a single inch beneath the crushing weight.

"You can't do this! We admit our fault!" another cultivator screamed, voice shredding into hopeless echo.

Tears burst from the man's eyes and streaked down his soot-stained cheeks.

A few paces away, Jared stood motionless, pulling strand after strand of soul energy into the waiting maw of the Soul Urn.

They might have spotted the plot, yet lust for a "breakthrough" blinded them. They even turned their blades on Jared, and now their misery was of their own making.

A flicker of pity stirred in him, but disappointment weighed far heavier.

"You monster! I'll hound you, even in death!" the burly, bearded cultivator roared. He glared as though he could flay Jared alive, yet not a single muscle obeyed him.

Jared's eyes turned arctic. One casual flick of his finger released a spark.

The spark unfurled into a dragon of living flame, its coils swallowing the bearded man in a single rushing breath. No scream had time to form; the body collapsed into a lonely mound of ash.

The chamber fell silent. Every

remaining cultivator trembled, lips sealed by raw, urgent fear. In that instant, they understood-this was no soft hearted savior but a man who killed as decisively as he breathed.

Jared closed his palm. The Black-White Flame winked out, and more than half the soul energy inside the Soul Urn was already his.

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"Because ignorance misled you, I spare your lives today," Jared said, voice calm yet ringing with unarguable command. "But the fragments of soul you lost-those were your own choice. Blame no one else."

Though softly spoken, his words pressed down like iron.

Some lowered their eyes in shame, others smoldered with helpless anger, and a few simply stared, hollow.

All remembered how they had mocked his warnings and attacked him side by side.

Jared turned toward Edison and lowered his hand. Invisible force hammered the man to his knees, pinning him to the stone floor.

"W-What are you doing? I'm from the Sixth Hall! Harm me, and Mr. Hexford will hunt you down," Edison sputtered.

Jared's laugh was cold and thin. "Mr. Hexford? He's nothing. Even if he wished to spare me, I would never spare him. I came to level seven for his head."

Hearing that, the gold-robed cultivator's face drained of every trace of hope.

Jared glanced over his shoulder. "Flaxseed, time to leave."

"And this fellow?" Flaxseed asked, tipping his chin at the pinned man.

"Leave him be. Once we step out, others will collect the debt." Jared's tone made the matter final.

With that, Jared turned and walked away, boots echoing in the stunned hush.

He was certain the half-souled cultivators behind him would soon vent their fury on the true culprit.

Flaxseed understood, nodded, and followed, leaving the Soul Convergence Altar behind them.

Those that remained sank to the ground-some seated, some sprawled each face etched with despair and bitter, gnawing regret.

They had gambled everything-years of study, every drop of willpower-on a shimmering mirage they called a breakthrough, only to shatter their own future. No one else could be blamed for the wreckage now filling their hearts.

The moment Jared and Flaxseed strode off, the battered cultivators swung as one, pitching all their rage onto the tone gold-robed cultivator who had lured them into this disaster. A single piercing scream-ragged, endless ripped from his throat.

Farther down the corridor, Jared and Flaxseed caught that shriek. Neither spared it a glance. Their footsteps stayed calm, but the echo behind them sounded like a soul being peeled away from flesh.

Level Seven, a jagged peak crouched beneath starless skies like a hidden beast's lair, its crags whispering threats no wind dared carry.

Deep within, the council meeting room of Sixth Hall pulsed like that beast's heart - every beat tight with suppressed fury.

Drystan occupied the throne-like seat at the head. His towering frame radiated authority so cold it numbed rather than burned.

Between massive fingers, he rolled a milk-white charm. Candlelight danced across its surface, casting secret runes that pulsed softly, as though breathing.

Flames wavered along the walls, restless sprites splashing shadows over Drystan's features, sharpening the predatory curve of his smile.

Moments earlier, he had received word from Edison. Everything at the Soul Convergence Altar was proceeding perfectly.

That message-brimming with pride-boasted that the Soul Urn already held nearly one thousand soul threads. In a few more days, it would be delivered to Malevolent Path Hall in exchange for favors bought only in darkness. Dryſtan had tasted the reward in advance-promotion, prestige, power-and the taste curled his lips in unconscious delight.

Elsewhere in the treasury, mountains of celestial gems waited. Once he handed those treasures to Third Hall's Enaricus, his ascent inside the Celestial Palace would be all but sealed.

But fate delights in ambush. A

message talisman, cracked and spiraling like a dying comet, darted through the doors. It burst

mid-air paper shredding into. embers white a voice ragged With terror, fluttered through the smoke, half-formed, half-lost.

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"Mr. Hexford... disaster... the Soul Urn... stolen... the gold-robed master-" The

words were severed, throttled by silence. Ash drifted down like gray snow, settling across the marble floor as though mourning what was still to come.

Drystan's easy smile vanished. Eyes bulged wide as shields. He slammed the desk; oak detonated beneath his palm, splinters spraying like shrapnel.

A torrent of spiritual power erupted, rolling through the chamber in crushing waves. Cultivators toppled, faces drained chalk-white, dropping to their knees without a breath to spare. He paced-one thunderous step, then another-boots drumming a war-beat against stone. Each stride bled fury. In his glare burned a promise to set the world itself alight.

The Soul Urn was no mere vessel; it was the keystone in a pact between Sixth Hall and the Malevolent Path Hall, a clandestine engine that minted profit from lingering souls.

Its loss would not only enrage that formidable ally but also derail the grand design entrusted by Enaricus.

Drystan knew Enaricus' methods—swift, merciless, and fond of sending warnings no one survived to recount. If this scheme failed, even Drystan might perish without understanding how the blade found his heart.

In the vast, brooding corridors of the Celestial King Palace, court intrigue simmered like oil above a hidden flame. Onneas of the Fourth Hall wielded greater influence, his every word buoyed by the Celestial King's silent backing.

Enaricus had been forced into shadowy alliance with the ruthless Malevolent Path Hall, trading favors for strength simply to keep his footing within the ever-shifting hierarchy.

Now the Soul Urn lay in shards. If the Malevolent Path Hall chose to sever ties in the wake of that disaster, every delicate balance Enaricus had brokered would collapse overnight.

Drystan drew a breath so deep his chest trembled. Rage thundered within him— an unsteady volcano barely capped by sheer will—yet he forced it down, jaw locked, eyes blazing.

He wheeled toward the doors and barked, "Find the one who dared violate Celestial Palace property in Blackwind City! If you return empty-handed, do not bother returning at all."

The shout rolled out like summer thunder, rattling pillars and courage alike.

"Yes, sir!" dozens of cultivators answered at once. They scattered down the marble steps in frantic haste, each man moving as though a hungry beast snapped at his heels.

Barely thirty minutes later, a cultivator who had gone to scout stumbled back through the archway, breath ragged, robes clinging with cold sweat.

His face was paper-white, legs so weak he crawled the final yards across polished stone before collapsing in a kneel at Drystan's feet.

"S-Sir... we discovered the culprit. It was... someone who calls himself Jared Chance." The name quivered in the man's throat.

"Jared Chance?" Drystan echoed, disbelief slicing through his anger.

For an instant, his pupils shrank. Memories flooded back-this was the rebel who had crossed the Celestial Palace at every turn. How is he even alive? Drystan wondered, panic prickling beneath his skin.

Only weeks ago, Jared had been hounded across level six by the Soul Devourer. Drystan knew nothing of Fire Sprit Lordslast-minute rescue and the ignorance made the revelation hit harder.

"You are certain he destroyed the Soul Urn?" Drystan's voice, usually iron-steady, trembled with incredulity.

"Certain, sir!" The scout nodded so violently it might have broken his own neck. "Witnesses matched his description, and he declared his name aloud before the slaughter began."

"He not only shattered the urn," the

man continued, "he consumed every trapped soul, sealed Mr. Hews' cultivation, and let the duped

cultivators tear, Mr Hews apart with their own teeth.

Cold dread speared up Drystan's spine. He swayed, clutching an armrest to keep from collapsing as icy sweat filmed his brow.

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