

# A Warrior Undefeatable 5831-5840

## A Warrior Undefeatable

The final word had barely fallen when the pool erupted, hurling gouts of clotted red and shredded wraiths skyward.

Boom!

Fragments of anguished spirits shrieked as they rained down like a grotesque storm.

A towering figure, wrapped in roiling black miasma and the stench of slaughtered souls, floated upward from the broken pool and settled in mid-air. It was Soul Devourer.

He stood now, his aura nothing like the broken husk Jared had faced on level nine.

There was still a threadbare weakness at the core of his soul, yet the tide of demonic essence rolling off him dwarfed Mordain—and every foe Jared had met before.

The laws swirling around his cloak brushed a realm beyond the Heavenly Immortal threshold, hinting at some secret tier above.

Slowly, he lifted his head. Beneath the cowl, two crimson embers burned like twin blood-moons, fixing on Jared without blinking.

"At last, whelp... you have come."

Gone was the rasp; his words rang clear and icy, each syllable a hammer striking the listeners' spirits. "I have waited for this day a very, very long time."

Jared felt that crushing presence and, instead of fear, a wildfire of battle-lust flared behind his eyes.

Chaotic celestial energy thundered through his veins, the lotus of primordial fire in his core turning, petals radiating scalding resolve. Even the Dragonslayer Sword, clasped in his palm, responded with a low, eager hum.

"You've recovered quite well. Pity. You're still going to die," Jared commented calmly.

Soul Devourer threw back his head and roared with laughter, a thunder that shook the plaza tiles.

"Die? You. You're a mere Level Nine Human Immortal who stumbled into a bit of fortune and now believes himself unbeatable. When I roamed the heavens, devouring stars and their children, your ancestors had not even been born yet. Today, I will teach you what true power is... what despair tastes like."

Before the echo faded, Soul Devourer snapped his arm upward, clawing at empty air in Jared's direction.

"Soul-Devouring Claw!"

A black claw, a hundred yards across, condensed from pure soulforce and demonic essence, materialized overhead.

Faces of the damned writhed across its surface, breathing decay that could strip life from stone.

The moment it appeared, the space around Jared locked tight. With the force to crush stars, the claw descended.

The strike eclipsed any technique Mordain had ever unleashed. It brushed the doorway to an even higher realm.

Jared's gaze sharpened. All chaos essence surged to the limit. The Dragonslayer Sword flared, spilling prismatic chaos light across the square.

"Heaven-Splitting Chaos!"

With a clear shout, he swung from hip to sky, cutting against the fall.

The resulting Sword energy, honed to absolute purity, seemed able to separate the pure from the foul, to cleave the primal chaos itself. It carried Chaotic True Flame and sword intent fierce enough to unmake creation, meeting the claw head-on.

Boom!

Sword and talon hammered together, neither yielding.

Then the world tore open. A blast beyond words blossomed, an expanding storm of energy that consumed the entire Infinite Soul Hall.

The array Sheldon and his demonic

cohorts had hurriedly patched together burst apart like soggy papyrus beneath a cyclone. Flooring forged from ghost-lit iron buckled upward. Half the blood from the pool flashed into steam, and wide black fissures tore through the very air, refusing to close.

Amid the roiling haze, Jared pinwheeled backward over one hundred meters before he dug his boots in. His sword arm tingled with pins and needles, and turbulent blood hammered against his ribs.

Across the battlefield, Soul Devourer wheel

merely swayed once and settled again in midair. The enormous claw-split a moment earlier by Jared's blade quivered, knitting itself together as though mending flesh, its murderous aura undiminished.

## A Warrior Undefeatable

The gap in strength was painfully clear.

Jared's heart sank.

Moments earlier, he had poured most of his power into that strike-braiding chaotic celestial energy, Chaotic True Flame, and the annihilation edge of his sword intent. Such a blow would have sliced Mordain in two, yet against Soul Devourer, it barely survived the answering swipe and even left him reeling.

The old fiend was every bit as fearsome as the legends claimed his strength already far beyond Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Seven, and he had not yet fully healed.

Soul Devourer's cold voice rang out, laced with mockery, like a cat toying with a mice. "Hmph. Pathetic. So that was your trump card? I expected better. Now, try this! Ten-Thousand-Soul Heart Devourer!"

He flashed a hand seal, and waves of demonic aura and soul energy boiled from him.

The claw detonated, dissolving into countless thread-thin soul chains as black as ink. They hissed like a nest of vipers, shooting from every angle toward Jared— each strand sharp enough to pierce steel and venomous to the spirit. A single touch would gouge the mind from its vessel, leaving nothing but an empty shell.

Jared's pupils contracted. The Dragonslayer Sword swept in a silver gale, chaotic sword aura weaving an airtight mesh while the Chaotic Fire Lotus bloomed behind him, scattering petals of white-gold fire to shield his body.

Metal shrieked against energy—staccato clangs, sizzling burns, a deafening storm of impacts.

Most of the soul chains shattered beneath the blade or vanished within Chaotic True Flame, yet several speared through the defenses and hammered against Jared's celestial light shield.

The barrier shuddered violently. Needles of agony stabbed his consciousness; a choir of wailing phantoms seemed to rip at his ears.

He grunted, steadied his mind, and chaotic celestial energy outward, scattering the invading soul energy—but the brief struggle slowed him by a heartbeat.

"Perfect timing!"

Red light flared in Soul Devourer's eyes, and his figure vanished like a guttered flame.

An instant later, he reappeared beside Jared. A hand-scaled in onyx and wreathed in ghostfire-drifted toward Jared's back without a single sound. Cold power bored into his spine before the palm even touched him.

Jared whirled, the Dragonslayer Sword sweeping in a broad horizontal arc. Clang!

Steel screamed against demon scale, the collision rattling the cavern like thunder.

Steel met sorcery. Jared raised his Dragonslayer Sword, and the naked palm of Soul Devourer smashed into the blade, spitting white-blue sparks that hissed like live comets in the dark. The collision lit the ruined forecourt as though lightning had chosen that single slab of stone to die upon.

Force like a flood-swollen river hammered up Jared's arm. At the same instant, a colder, cannier tide of demonic essence slipped beneath his guard, gnawing at his celestial energy and needling the tender rim of his soul. Numbness crawled from fingertips to shoulder, his chest clamping beneath an invisible weight.

He staggered back—one, two, then a dozen paces—each heel chiseling a crater into ancient stone. Blood rose up his throat. A thin ribbon of blood slipped from the corner of his mouth before he could swallow pride and iron together.

Soul Devourer merely rocked on his heels, then lunged again with the ruthless momentum of a hurricane finally finding land.

"Nether Ghost Finger!"

"Soul-Capturing Demonic Melody!"

"Bloodbane Nether Thunder!"

"Bone-Rot Poison Miasma!"

Venomous, arcane arts spilled from the demon's sleeves as casually as coins from a gambler's fist. Each attack partnered with footwork, so ghost-swift and attacks on the soul so treacherous that they crashed, against Jared from every direction, never allowing a breath of safety.

Jared answered with the chaotic celestial energy pushed to its farthest edge. The Dragonslayer Sword split into a cyclone of mirrored blades while Chaotic True Flame roared around him, knitting a seamless shield of flame that struck even as it guarded.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Crack! Crack! Crack! Sizzle! Steam and sparks whipped outward in suffocating waves.

The duel raced beyond mortal sight and lapped at the shores of disaster with every exchange.

Each clash birthed a fresh storm of force that chewed stone into dust and hurled debris toward the distant mountains.

Where a broad plaza once welcomed pilgrims, a yawning crater now smoked-an open wound on the face of the land.

## A Warrior Undefeatable

Sheldon and the other sect members had long since scurried to the far edges of the battlefield. They watched, trembling, twin fires of dread and yes-rising hope

flickering in wide eyes.

Their lord appeared, unbelievably, to hold the upper hand.

Minute by minute, the weight on Jared's shoulders grew heavier, his breaths shorter, his swings a shade slower than the instant before.

Soul Devourer's cultivation ran deep as night. His demonic essence seemed bottomless, and his veteran cunning allowed him to spear through the tiniest gap whenever Jared shifted style.

Worse, every black-green ripple of the demonic technique carried a whispering soul attack that kept scratching at Jared's mind, dulling focus, bleeding will.

The very quality of that essence was poison-part devourer, part decay-chewing at Jared's chaotic celestial energy so that his losses dwarfed the enemy's.

The Chaotic True Flame burned hot and proud, but heat alone could not erase the cliff that lay between a peak Human Immortal and a peak Heavenly Immortal. Between those two realms sprawled a gulf of essence, law, and sheer inevitability. And Soul Devourer was no ordinary Heavenly Immortal. Once, he had stood on heights even loftier, wielding laws beyond level ten's peak—knowledge now turned, merciless, upon Jared.

Pfft-blood dotted the air as Jared faltered.

A swirl of Soul-Corroding Nether Wind scraped across his shoulder. The celestial light shield shattered; flesh blackened, rotting in plain sight, while a spear of icy soul energy knifed toward his mind.

He drove the chaotic celestial energy and Chaotic True Flame inward, purging the venom, pinning the invading soul energy, but the motion cost a heartbeat-and momentum.

"Hahaha! Feeling it now, boy?" Soul Devourer's laughter rang like chains across an iron floor.

Seizing the pause, he molded the totality of his demonic essence into one colossal palm-Soul-Devouring Oblivion Palm-then brought it crashing down toward Jared's skull.

Before the ghostly palm even landed, its crushing tide of soul-pressure slammed into Jared. His spirit quaked, lungs clamped shut, every breath scraping like iron against stone.

He clenched his jaw, swung the Dragonslayer Sword across his chest, and poured every shred of chaotic celestial energy into the blade. The sword blazed, forging a shield of condensed chaos that flashed into existence between him and the descending palm.

The air detonated with a thunderous noise as the palm crashed into the newborn shield.

The shield shuddered, moaning under impossible weight; a brittle crack snapped through its surface, spider-veins of light racing outward.

The impact hurled Jared like a kite with its string cut. Blood fanned from his mouth, tracing a crimson arc before his body slammed into distant rubble, kicking up a tower of dust. He tried to rise, bones screaming, organs shifting painfully inside him. Demonic aurarioted through ruptured meridians, his chaotic power stumbled, thick as mud. The damage was serious.

I'm defeated?

Jared dragged a sleeve across his bleeding lip; his eyes still burned with razor focus, yet the truth pressed in.

Right now, I truly cannot match this old demon—not even while he remains half-recovered.

Soul Devourer drifted down from the sky, boots settling amid the wreckage. Above Jared's battered figure, twin crimson sparks flickered in his eyes—mocking, cruel, hungry.

"Well, whelp, do you still imagine you can kill me? Your fortunes, your inheritance—I find them intriguing. Hand them over, and I might let you die quickly."

Far off, Sheldon and the other cultists could no longer contain themselves; jubilation burst from their throats.

"All hail the lord—invincible! Kill him—avenge our fallen! Rip out his soul, steal his spirit!"

Jared pushed to his feet. He looked ragged, yet his spine remained unbowed.

He stared coldly at Soul Devourer

and at the cheering lackeys beyond. Terror had no place in him—only an intent and, deep arctic killingark of unbroken will

beneath it a

to fight.

"Don't celebrate too soon, old demon. Today's humiliation is etched in my bones. When I break into the Heavenly Immortal Realm, I'll be back for your mangy life."

## A Warrior Undefeatable

"Trying to flee?"

The instant Jared summoned the core of his Chaotic Fire Lotus, preparing a desperate spatial escape, Soul Devourer's icy voice exploded inside his mind like a wind from the Ninefold Hells. Space around him solidified and collapsed at once, as if he had been cast into millennial black ice. The Chaotic True flame and warp ripples he'd raised were smothered by a vaster, domineering soul force entwined with spatial law.

"Using teleportation magecraft before me? A child showing off petty tricks."

Without moving a step, Soul Devourer merely closed his five fingers toward the patch of warped air that held Jared.

"Space Prison—Soul-Devouring Cage!"

Crack!

The very air for a hundred paces around Jared seemed to seize, crushed in an unseen fist until it squealed like glass about to shatter.

From those splintering seams burst jet-black chains, forged of raw soul-energy fused with broken space. In an instant, they coiled around Jared and the chaotic true flame shielding him, sealing both in a choking mesh.

Every iron chain carried a snarling face-tormented spirits that gnashed at his aura and mind, sizzling as they chewed through Jared's celestial light shield and soul.

"Ugh!"

The backlash of his escape technique, mixed with the chains' poison, rocked him. Blood flooded his mouth and spilled unchecked across his chin.

He drove his chaotic celestial energy into the chains, hoping to snap them, yet the links only tightened, greedily drinking his strength while they did.

Even the Chaotic True Flame could manage no more than a faint red glow upon the metal, nowhere near hot enough to burn it through.

"Return to me." The Soul Devourer's voice rolled out, low and cold.

He closed his taloned fingers, then yanked back.

Whoosh!

Jared, a helpless kite on an invisible string, was ripped from the frozen pocket of space and flung across the battlefield. He struck the stone a few yards before the dark sovereign's feet, the impact spraying chips of rock and a plume of gray dust.

Coughs tore out of him, bright blood spattering the shattered ground until the stones gleamed crimson.

He tried to rise, but the Soul-Devouring Cage continued to gnaw at power and will alike, reducing the simple act of standing to an agony beyond words.

"Run? Did I ever grant you leave to run?"

The Soul Devourer sauntered closer, looking down on Jared with twin pinpoints of red light that dripped mirthless cruelty. "I'm not finished playing, little one."

He lifted one foot, ghost-green soul-flames licking along the black scales, and brought it crashing toward Jared's spine.

Boom!

Bone cracked loud enough to echo.

Blood sprayed as Jared was driven into the earth, pain lancing through his vertebrae and turning the edges of his vision black.

Fragmented organs trembled under the blow, and a second geyser of blood-thick with shredded tissue-forced itself past his lips.

"Hmm? Tougher than you look." A brief flicker of surprise crossed the Soul Devourer's face, only to sharpen into an even wider, crueler grin. "Let's see how long that lasts."

He lifted his foot and brought it down again without mercy.

One stomp after another, as though crushing an insignificant ant beneath his heel.

The Soul Devourer was not relying on brute force alone. Each step carried sinister demonic energy, poisonous and corrosive, gnawing at both body and soul.

Jared's Golem Body had already shattered. The chains had eroded his chaotic immortal power, disrupting its flow, leaving him no choice but to endure the assault with sheer physical strength alone.

Yet even a body tempered by Chaotic True Flame and countless refinements had its limits. Faced with the savage onslaught of an ancient demon who had once surpassed the Heavenly Immortal Realm, his flesh began to give way.

Pain exploded through him. His back split open, bones groaning under unbearable pressure. His organs felt as though they were on the verge of collapsing, his meridians riddled with corruption as demonic power invaded relentlessly.

Agony surged through him in wave after wave. His spirit wavered, battered by wailing souls and piercing demonic echoes, teetering on the edge of collapse.

Humiliation. A humiliation unlike anything he had ever known.

Jared's eyes burned red. His teeth ground together as if about to shatter, and a low, animalistic growl tore from his throat.

Driven to desperation, Jared frantically urged the Chaotic Fire Lotus within his dantian, forcing out the last remnants of strength in a final act of resistance.

The Chaotic True Flame struggled to ignite along his body, trying to

scorch the chains and burn away the invading demonic energy. In the distance, the Dragonslayer Sword hummed anxiously but aed suppressed it with sheer force of will, binding it tightly with his divine sense. He would not allow it to move on its own and expose his final trump card.

"You still dare to resist?" Sensing the stubborn defiance within Jared and the searing heat of the Chaotic True Flame, the Soul Devourer's eyes flashed with cold impatience.

"Hopelessly stubborn," he sneered. "Then let me plunge you into true despair."

He stopped stomping. Instead, he extended a single demonic hand. In his palm, a pitch-black vortex began to form-spinning slowly, radiating a terrifying pull.

This was a demonic vortex designed to devour vitality and soul essence alike, one of the Soul Devourer's signature arts.

The vortex aligned with the crown of Jared's head and pressed down inch by inch. A horrifying suction surged forth. Jared felt his life force, his chaotic celestial energy-even his very consciousness-being dragged uncontrollably toward that abyssal vortex.

It felt as if all his life force were being drained, pulled away until nothing remained but an empty shell.

"It's over, young one. Your fate is mine now."

The Soul Devourer's voice was icy, merciless.

The shadow of death had never been so clear, so all-encompassing. Jared's consciousness wavered; his strength drained at lightning speed. Even the rotation of the Chaotic Fire Lotus slowed.

Am I really going to die here? In the hands of this demon? No! I refuse to accept this! I will not give up!

Just as Jared's awareness teetered on the brink, and the demonic vortex threatened to touch the crown of his head a piercing, authoritative shout kang jQut sharp and commanding as a bolt of thunder from the heavens, suddenly detonating over the bloodstained ruin.

"Stop!"

## **A Warrior Undefeatable**

At the same time, a blazing sword aura, crimson as blood and capable of scorching the heavens, tore through the sky like a meteor from beyond the stars. It carried a sharpness that could slice anything and a righteous brilliance that purified all evil.

With impossible speed, it descended, aiming straight for the demonic hand of Soul Devourer, pressed against Jared.

Even before it struck, the scorching sword energy and the overwhelming, majestic sword intent radiating from it caused the surrounding demonic aura to churn violently, as if confronting its natural nemesis—melting and dissipating on the spot.

Soul Devourer's expression shifted slightly. His pressing hand had no choice but to retract suddenly. With a backhand strike, he unleashed a condensed seal directly toward the crimson sword aura.

Boom!

The collision of sword aura and demonic mark erupted in an earsplitting roar, a storm of energy sweeping the battlefield once more.

But this time, the crimson sword aura proved superior. It shredded most of the demonic mark, forcing Soul Devourer to take a half-step back.

Between Jared and the ancient demon now stood a figure in a crimson sword robe, his body radiating a blazing sword intent like a living inferno. In his hand was a simple, crimson long sword. He descended like a fire god, standing firmly between the two, shielding the badly injured Jared.

It was none other than Reiner.

He had originally departed from level ten, wandering the void in search of other Chaotic Origin Flame fragments. Yet, guided by an unexplainable sense of unease and the threads of fate, his attention had been drawn instinctively to the level ten. There, he sensed the earth-shattering battle at the headquarters of the Infinite Soul Demon Sect—and the familiar, yet nearly extinguished aura of Jared.

Without hesitation, he tore through space and returned at full speed.

"Are you all right?" Reiner didn't turn, but his spiritual sense swept over Jared, detecting his grievous injuries and life-threatening condition. His eyes burned with even greater fury.

Seeing Reiner appear, Jared felt a sudden surge of relief, followed by a wave of hope and renewed confidence.

With Reiner here, this old demon would no longer be able to act unchecked.

Drawing a deep breath, Jared suppressed the coppery taste of blood in his throat. With a hoarse, cold laugh, he addressed Soul Devourer, his voice weak yet dripping with scorn and hatred. "Old demon... your time has come! With Flame-Sword Venerable here... Let's see how long you can remain arrogant!"

Soul Devourer steadied himself. His eyes scanned Reiner, sensing his Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Nine cultivation and the overwhelming purity and magnitude of his sword intent. His gaze sharpened-but then a mocking smirk curled his lips.

"So it's you, huh?" the old demon sneered, unconcealed contempt in his tone. "Not guarding your Li Fire Secret Realm, and running off here to meddle? You think you can save someone from me?"

Ling Yan's expression darkened. His crimson long sword hummed as searing sword intent erupted skyward. "You demon! Do not be so arrogant! Mr. Chance and I share a bond. With me here today, you shall not harm him! Be wise. Withdraw immediately –or do not blame me for showing no mercy with my sword!"

"Hahaha!"

Soul Devourer laughed, as though hearing the most amusing joke. "No mercy with your sword? You? If my senior brothers were here, maybe I'd be cautious. But you? An old relic guarding a secret realm for thousands of years, barely advancing in cultivation. You dare speak boldly before me?"

Demonic aura surged around him again, his immense, terrifying spiritual pressure fully unleashed, locking onto Reiner. "If you insist on seeking death, then I'll deal with you as well today! Perfect-can ever consume your soul fire of your years of sword cultivation to aid my own recovery!"

Jared's eyes widened in surprise. How did Soul Devourer know Reiner's background? That he, Lucas, and Flegel were of the same teacher? Clearly, this demon knew far more than he had expected.

Just as the tension reached its peak,

the battlefield on the verge of

erupting into war, two distinct, yet equally majestic spatial fluctuations ripple outward simultaneously, from opposite directions above the battlefield. Then, two figures appeared-one on the left, one on the right as if stepping directly from the depths of the void, descending onto the scene.

To the left stood a man wrapped in a robe that seemed woven from molten lava and black demon-fire. Handsome yet unsettling, he wore a single crimson sigil—a living flame—between his brows. Those eyes of his, smoldering scarlet, held a promise of worlds reduced to ash.

He did nothing, yet every nearby law of fire bent its knee to him, flaring and crackling in reverence. This was the Blazefire Demon Lord-Lucas.

On the right hovered a stark contrast: a plain white robe, lightly threaded with gold clouds of flame. The wearer's features were warm, almost gentle, and within his clear eyes flowed endless light and quiet warmth—as though fire itself could heal.

Around him pulsed a steady, nurturing breath that cleansed instead of consumed, the very embodiment of life within flame. He was the Fire Spirit Lord-Flegel. These two sovereigns of every blazing path across realms now appeared together—above the desolate ruins of the Infinite Soul Demon Sect.

Reiner felt his pulse stumble. Joy flickered, awe followed, and, buried beneath both, a nervous tremor he could not quite hide.

He sheathed the sword aura still raging around him, bowed with practiced respect, and said, "Greetings, Lucas, Flegel."

"Reiner, this no longer concerns you. Stand down." Lucas delivered the words like a sealed decree—cool, final, unquestionable.

Reiner's shoulders locked. His mouth opened, searching for a defense, but Lucas' indifferent, crushing gaze smothered every syllable. At last, he managed only a sigh and stepped back.

He withdrew several paces, no longer shielding Jared with his body, yet refusing to leave altogether.

Flegel offered Reiner a gentle nod. Greeting complete, his attention drifted to Jared — collapsed, chained by Soul Chains, blood pooling beneath him.

When Flegel brushed Jared's core with a flicker of divine sense and tasted the faint —but impossibly pure-Chaotic Origin Flame hiding there, a rare flash of surprise rippled through his calm eyes.

High above, the Soul Devourer felt both rulers arrive and felt his own heart plummet like iron through water.

## **A Warrior Undefeatable**

Only now did Lucas drag his gaze away from Reiner. It landed on Jared like a drawn blade. His spiritual sense slipped inside the broken body. A heartbeat later, his eyes sharpened to daggers, and a chill, murderous fury detonated around him, cutting the very air.

"Chaotic Origin Flame? Boy, why is that spark inside you? More than that—its taste matches the fragment of source-fire I left inside the Blazefire Secret Realm. Speak. Did you trespass there and steal what is mine?"

Lucas' voice was icy.

The killing intent dropped like a mountain. Bones already splintered within Jared's chest screeched anew; breath refused to draw; every heartbeat threatened to scatter.

Reiner lurched forward a half step. "Lucas, please this fault is mine. I sensed his unusual bond with flame and because he had aided our sect against the demon tide-permitted him a haven inside the Blazefire Secret Realm to heal. I could not have foreseen he would awaken the core fragment itself."

"Fool!"

Lucas' roar cracked like thunder. "Do you understand? That shard was won with blood and near death. I left it to nourish the land, to anchor the ley lines, to mark my path forward—and you let an outsider in to drain it dry? Reiner, you have disappointed me beyond measure."

Head bowed, Reiner accepted the verdict, not daring to offer even a whisper of rebuttal.

Lucas' gaze snapped back to Jared. Murder coalesced behind those crimson irises, so tangible the air seemed to curdle around him. "A gnat from the Human Immortal Realm dares reach for what is mine? Hand over the source of the Chaotic Origin Flame, and I may leave you a whole corpse. Defy me, and I will tear your soul to rags, scatter the pieces to every horizon, and bar you from rebirth for all eternity."

He thrust out one clawed hand. Midnight fire-thick, satanic, eager-wreathed his fingers, stretching into a talon big enough to pluck down a star. The infernal hand slashed toward Jared, ready to carve him open and rip the Chaotic Origin Flame straight from his heart.

"Lucas enough!"

Until that instant, the Fire Spirit Lord, Flegel, had stood silent. Now he stepped forward.

Flegel placed himself between predator and prey. Gentle white fire rose around him, soft as new snow yet boundless as the sea, its purity clashing against Lucas' black inferno.

"Yes, the stranger absorbed fragments of your source flame, but the fact that he could summon and refine the Chaotic Origin Flame is his destiny as much as yours. The origin flame belongs to no one. You left it in this secret realm without a single ward to forbid succession. That choice, whether spoken or not, amounts to silent consent. To seize it back by brute force—does that befit beings who claim higher wisdom?"

Lucas' brow tightened; irritation flashed across his blood-red eyes. "Flegel, must you always oppose me? The fragments he took are mine by right. Reclaiming what is mine is righteous, not robbery. Step aside, or do not fault me for forgetting old ties." "Old ties?" Flegel shook his head, disappointment flickering through his pale fire. "Lucas, your heart knows only conquest and darkness. Brotherhood was never more than a word to you. The boy and the Chaotic Origin Flame may well touch the Chaotic Law Fire our master sought. Shall I watch you snuff out that chance to satisfy your ego? Never."

"Then words are useless. Let strength decide." Lucas' lips twisted into a murderous smile. "Show me whether your Blazewraith Technique can still withstand my Demonflare Art after all these centuries."

His rage boiled over. Black demonic fire roared from his body, piling into the sky like a storm made of flame.

Flegel sighed, white embers rippling across his robes. "So be it. Not here—too many lives would burn in our wake."

"Lucas, will you follow me to the Endless Fire Domain and settle this there?"

"Lead the way." Lucas' answer was a snarl wrapped in a grin.

Their eyes locked once, a pact signed in flame. Space split open with a shriek. One river of onyx fire, one river of ivory fire—both blinding—shot into the rift and vanished.

Only the shredded Heavenly Law, vibrating with savage fire intent, remained to prove that two supreme beings had just stood upon this soil.

People stared at the torn sky in numb disbelief. They really left to fight in another world—leaving this battlefield in ruins behind them.

The abrupt turn left every soul present frozen, minds blank, breaths caught.

First shock, then glee twisted across the face of the Soul Devourer. His grin widened until it threatened to split his skull.

The two greatest variables—his only genuine threats had just departed this realm. Fortune, it seemed, loved the wicked.

He turned, ever so slowly, toward Jared, who hung half-dead in chains, confusion and pain still etched on his blood-spattered face. Scarlet light danced in the Soul Devourer's eyes-playful, cruel, hungry.

"Tsk, tsk, tsk... Little one, did you catch all that?"

"Even the mighty Fire Demon Lord had to slice you open just to steal your flame. The Fire Spirit Lord? He never cared about you at all-he only needed an excuse to fight his own senior brother. They have both vanished now tell me little mortal, who is left in this

im bold enough

to pull you back from the edge of

death?"

Soul Devourer's gaze drifted toward Reiner, the Flame-Sword Venerable. The look was a serrated blade-cold, deliberate, pressing for blood. Reiner's face stiffened under the weight of that silent taunt.

"Flame-Sword Venerable," the

demon crooned, savoring every

syllable, "your senior ordered you to mind your own business, and your second senior brother turned tail and ran. Do you still plan to meddle matters that will cost you your life?"

The question dripped with challenge, each word a spark striking tinder, daring Reiner to ignite.

Reiner's knuckles drained of color as he clenched his scarlet sword. Tremors in the blade caught the smoky light, scattering crimson shards across the battlefield.

He stole a glance at Jared-broken, bleeding, barely breathing-then heard Lucas' cold decree echoing like iron doors slamming shut, and recalled Flegets departing eyes, urging him to choose for himself. Bitterness pooled at the base of his tongue.

Under Soul Devourer's crushing stare, Reiner's fingers loosened. The sword sank toward the dirt. His internal struggle collapsed into one long, helpless sigh.

He looked at Jared once more and gave the faintest shake of his head-so small it might have been a quiver of wind.

Then he turned. A streak of red sword-light split the heavens, and the man who might have been salvation vanished beyond the clouds.

Reiner was gone, too. Hope shattered, falling like glass into the dust.

## A Warrior Undefeatable

Jared lay on the ground as life seeped from him in slow, deliberate threads. Soul Devourer's triumphant face loomed closer, the demon's grin carved of jagged stone and sharpened hunger. From the distance came the frenzied cheers of Sheldon and the other fiends-savage roars that beat against Jared's skull like war drums-until the cold spread from his chest to his heart.

Is this how it ends-dying under an empty sky, forgotten in the dirt?

A roar of unwillingness and resentment sparked behind his ribs, burning hotter than any flame he had ever summoned.

Despair followed, a black tide threatening to drown that spark before it could breathe.

Anger surged next-red, blinding, alive-slamming against bone like a caged beast.

All those emotions tangled, combusting within him like poison set ablaze, screaming for release.

Do I still have a trump card?

The Dragonslayer Sword? It lay somewhere in the dust, as battered as its master.

The Chaotic Fire Lotus? Its embers flickered weakly, smothered by Soul Devourer's overwhelming aura.

Against a foe whose strength had all but returned to its terrible peak, those relics seemed like children's toys.

No!

There is still one more weapon!

Buried deep beneath marrow, beneath memory-slumbered his Golden Dragon Bloodline that coiled around his chaotic essence, patient, ancient, waiting for its master's desperate call.

It was the gift his father had placed in his veins: sovereign power drawn from dragons older than mountains and storms.

That blood had saved him on level seven, then again on level nine-unrivaled miracles that bent the rules of worlds.

Yet since reaching the lofty level ten, the dragon within had slept, lulled by higher cultivation and tempted into silence by the allure of the Chaotic Origin Flame.

Now-boxed in by death, stripped of flame and strength-Jared's unyielding spirit clawed at that buried core. The dragon blood felt his summons. It stirred, then burst awake with a thunderous roar that rattled the chambers of his heart.

A roar burst from the depths of Jared's soul—a savage, ancient cry that seemed to tear through every age at once. It did not pass his lips. Instead, the sound detonated across the laws of creation themselves, shaking the very spirit of every living thing. Then, the world cracked open. A thunder like colliding worlds rolled outward, and from Jared's heart surged a storm of blood-force so vast it felt capable of propping up heaven and flattening eternity.

That flood carried the raw scent of chaos, laced with a breath of supreme dragon's power. In an instant, it struck the Soul Chains coiled around him. The chains- unscathed even by primal true-flame—melted like frost beneath noon sun, snapping, shattering, vanishing into gray ash.

The same torrent washed over his ruined flesh. Wounds knitted, bones fused, and organs bloomed anew. Rotten muscle sloughed away, replaced by skin so smooth it gleamed like jade, faint images of dragon-scales sliding beneath its surface.

Deep inside, the unyielding wall of the Human Immortal Realm Level Nine began to splinter. A hairline crack whispered through dantian, meridians, even soul.

Another crack followed. And another. Fractures webbed everywhere, thin as spider silk yet unstoppable.

Outside, the skies changed. Swirling demon clouds that had smothered the Soul Devourer's citadel were swept aside by an unseen hand, in their place blossomed rainbow celestial clouds. Within those clouds, dragon shadows wove, and sacred tones echoed white pure spiritual energy, summoned from every quarter, spiraled toward Jared—a whirlpool vast enough to drink the sky.

He was pushing into the Heavenly Immortal Realm. And he was doing it in a death trap—forcing a breakthrough by igniting his blood.

"What?"

The confident smirk on Soul Devourer's face froze instantly, replaced by pure shock and disbelief.

He felt it—the terrifying bloodline pressure suddenly erupting from Jared, a force so overwhelming it made his very soul shiver.

The heavens themselves seemed to respond: strange cosmic phenomena, surging spiritual tides...

This was unmistakably a breakthrough into the Heavenly Immortal Realm—but not just any breakthrough. It was the rare, extraordinary kind, fueled by a foundation so solid that the heavens themselves seemed to celebrate.

Impossible! This kid... He was spent, on the brink of collapse. How could he possibly break through now? And that bloodline... It's terrifying!

Even Soul Devourer, who had devoured countless powerful beings over his long life -felt an unfamiliar, instinctive hesitation. A flicker of deep, primal caution.

"Stop him! He must not break through!"

The demon snapped to action. All mockery and restraint vanished. He formed hand seals, releasing every ounce of demonic energy and soul power he possessed. One of his deadliest techniques surged forward. "Soul-Devouring Heavenfall!"

Above his head, a massive black void took shape, an abyss capable of swallowing the world itself. Its pull radiated death and annihilation, aiming to engulf the immobile Jared at the critical moment of his breakthrough.

But at the very instant the black vortex descended, a roar sounded.

Jared's eyes snapped open. They were no longer human eyes. Golden vertical pupils burned with chaotic flames, cold, commanding, and disdainful-like a divine dragon soaring through the heavens, looking down on mere ants below.

An aura far stronger than before erupted from him, a terrifying force ten times greater than anything he had shown before. This was no longer simple Human Immortal

of

power-it carried the authority heaven and earth, the majesty dragon, and the raw essence of chaos: true Heavenly Immortal power.

He had done it. On the edge of life and death, his indomitable will had awakened his bloodline, shattering the wall of the Heavenly Immortal realm and stepping into a

new tier of existence: Heavenly Immortal Level One.

Though only a beginner in this realm, the transformation in his power, his nascent control over cosmic law, and the terrifying combination of his bloodline and Chaotic True Flame made his actual

strength skyrocket to an unimaginable height. Facing the

devouring black vortex of

Soul-Devouring Heavenfall, Jared

didn't even draw his sword.

He simply raised his right hand, forming a fist.

Upon it, the three supreme forces-chaotic celestial energy, Chaotic True Flame, and his bloodline-fused perfectly into one. Then, he struck the sky itself. "Chaotic Dragonfire Rupture!"

A punch surged outward, chaotic yet golden, filled with countless miniature dragon silhouettes and flaming runes.

Where it passed, space shattered, laws of the heavens recoiled. The so-called world-consuming Soul Devouring Heavenfall void was nothing but paper before it, exploding and vanishing in a roar of creation and destruction.

The momentum did not stop. The fist hurtled straight at the Soul Devourer, whose face was frozen in shock, utterly unprepared for what struck next.

## A Warrior Undefeatable

"Not good!" Soul Devourer's pupils contracted sharply. Hastily, he formed layer upon layer of shields and protective soul barriers.

Boom!

Jared's fist slammed into the shield.

Layer after layer of the shield shattered. The soul light rippled violently. The old demon let out a muffled grunt, his body flying back hundreds of yards before he barely stabilized. A streak of black blood ran from his mouth, and his aura wavered in subtle disorder.

The look he gave Jared was a mixture of utter shock, deep caution, and a trace of fear he could hardly name.

This kid... after breaking through the Heavenly Immortal realm, how could his power surge so drastically?

The force within that punch alone subtly threatened his current state. And that ancient, noble bloodline pressure made him profoundly uncomfortable.

Jared slowly rose from the crater. Most of his injuries had already healed. Beneath his shredded robes, fresh, pale skin shimmered, faint dragon-scale patterns interlaced with the glow of the Chaotic True Flame

He moved his neck with a soft crack, and his golden vertical pupils locked coldly on Soul Devourer.

"Old demon... Now, it's my turn."

His words were calm, but carried a murderous intent and confidence colder than ever before.

Soul Devourer's face darkened.

He gauged Jared's rapidly stabilizing and rising aura, feeling the subtle tremor in his own demonic energy and soul—the faint shiver triggered by the young man's dragon bloodline.

Should I continue fighting?

In his current state, against a newly-broken-through, momentum-filled Chen Ping, who wielded strange dragon might and Chaos Flame, victory was uncertain—he could even lose outright.

He was Soul Devourer, an ancient demon who had survived countless millennia. Calculating risks and seizing opportunities was second nature.

"Kid, you're lucky."

Through gritted teeth, the old demon spat out the words, eyes filled with resentment and malice. "I didn't expect you to possess such a bloodline... and to break through mid-battle. I'll remember this humiliation today!"

He spun sharply, bellowing at the others in the distance, "Retreat! Everyone, fall back into the depths of the headquarters! Activate the final defenses!"

Without another moment's hesitation, he became a black shadow and tore through space, vanishing into level eleven.

He had chosen to retreat decisively, temporarily avoiding the clash. Clearly, he realized that on level ten, facing a newly broken-through, momentum-filled Jared, he could not guarantee victory. It was safer to regroup in a more resource-rich, higher-level world, recover fully—and return later to exact revenge.

Jared watched Soul Devourer vanish. He didn't immediately pursue. Having just broken through, his realm still needed stabilization, and his strength needed time to adapt. Chasing blindly into level eleven would be unwise.

His gaze slowly swept over the other disciples of the Infinite Soul Demon Sect below, now in chaos and despair after the master's retreat.

"The old demon has fled." Jared's voice rang like a death knell to every disciple.

"Then you... will bear my wrath in his stead."

What followed was a one-sided, bloody purge.

Having just reached the Heavenly Immortal realm, Jared's power had leapt qualitatively. Facing the remaining disciples who were at most Level Six or Seven and were already demoralized-he was like a tiger among sheep.

His Chaotic Dragon Flame Fist tore through all before it. Each swing of the Dragon-Slaying Sword claimed countless lives. Chaos True Fire reduced magical buildings and seals to molten ruins.

He showed no mercy.

.n

and

For a sect that had repeatedly schemed against him, slaughtered the Myriad Beasts Sect, besieged the Mystic Sky Sword Sect, and allied with Soul Devourer only total annihilation would honor the dead and purge this poison from level ten.

Sheldon tried to rally his remaining loyalists behind ancient headquarters defenses. But against Jared's terrifying attacks-imbued with dragon power and Chaotic True Flame all defenses were like paper.

In the end, Sheldon himself was struck down by Jared's sword. His soul consumed and purified by Chaotic True Flame, body and spirit utterly destroyed.

When the last resisting elder fell

amidst the ruins, the Infinite Soul Demon Sect headquarters had become a desolate wasteland. Smoke billowed flames roared the air thick with blood and burnt stench-life no longer lingered.

Standing amid the ruins, Jared used his spiritual sense to scan the destroyed sect.

He methodically gathered spoils-mountains of spiritual stones and demon crystals; high-grade magical materials and ores; and most importantly, the sect's millennia-accumulated treasury.

Every valuable resource, lawful or demonic, he collected and stored in his storage ring. These resources would be critical for stabilizing his new realm, further increasing his strength, and preparing for ventures into higher worlds.

When the last gem vanished into silver light he lifted his gaze to the horizon.

Reiner had long since vanished, his blazing sword-arc nothing but memory. Somewhere among distant heavens, Lucas and Flegel still clashed, their duel spilling into other realms—outcomes unknown, destinies unresolved.

Grudges that had poisoned level ten were, for the moment, extinguished. Yet danger never sleeps. The Soul Devourer had slipped away toward level eleven, its shadow already rising as Jared's next quarry.

He drew a deep breath. New power-pure, incandescent power of the Heavenly Immortal Realm-roared through his veins. Determination flashed in his eyes like flint against steel.

"Level eleven... Soul Devourer... Chaotic Origin Flame... I'm coming for you." Jared's voice was low, but it carried the weight of prophecy.

A dragon wrought of raw chaos unfurled around him. In a single thunderous heartbeat, he launched skyward, the draconic silhouette tearing through the cloudline and vanishing beyond level ten's rim.

He would need a place of perfect solitude-somewhere to lock this newborn strength into bone and marrow, absorb the spoils he carried, and chart a path toward realms larger, higher, and infinitely more perilous.

Moments after Jared's departure, another figure stepped onto the scorched battlefield, cloak snapping in the heat-warped air.

"Strange... His aura led me here, yet he's gone."

He surveyed the ruins-brows drawn into a faint crease—then turned. Weathered features caught the dying firelight: it was indeed the Vermilion Demon Lord, a legend who rarely left his own dominion.

He had crossed level ten in pursuit of Jared, tracked the young Immortal's energy to this very spot, only to arrive seconds too late.

# A Warrior Undefeatable

Far from war-torn lands, deep inside a hidden valley where spirit-mist draped emerald cliffs, silence reigned.

Jared sat cross-legged beside a luminous spring, faint ripples casting silver rings across the water. A veil of soft chaotic radiance circled him, and beneath that light coiled a slumbering dragon's aura-subtle yet sovereign.

High above, the rainbow celestial clouds summoned by his breakthrough had already scattered. The valley, once shaken by celestial phenomena, now lay calm, though within his body the storm had only begun.

The Heavenly Immortal Realm was not a mere increase of strength; it was an elevation of existence itself. Life-essence refined to near divinity, senses tuned to the whisper of cosmic law.

Within his elixir field, a sea of chaotic immortal force expanded endlessly. At its heart, the Chaotic Fire Lotus intertwined with a filament of draconic energy, weaving a core of power both unbreakable and inexhaustible.

Beneath the silent drizzle of starlight, the change had been absolute. Jared's spirit and flesh had marched together through the crucible of a breakthrough, every cell and every stray thought purified, compressed, then reborn. His spiritual sense now could scour thousands of miles, and the body that contained it felt as unyielding as any high-grade defensive artifact-metal and miracle interlaced.

For a heartbeat, he floated inside that newborn stillness, mapping every hidden filament of Heavenly Law that now answered to him.

Then, a tremor, thin yet insistent, shivered across the valley floor.

Somewhere beyond the cliffs, the concealment wards he had tossed up in passing began to ripple, not with malice but with a cautious, measured probing-as though someone were knocking on a door they were terrified to break. A summons murmured beneath the vibration.

Jared frowned, waking up from his meditation. His golden slit pupils flashed into existence, then folded back into ordinary gray as he let his mind surge outward like a tide.

What he found waiting at the entrance stole a rare flicker of surprise from him.

Standing just inside the moon-bleached mist was a figure he had never expected to see on the Tenth Heaven: the Vermilion Demon Lord.

The man's dark-red robe, all embroidered storm-cloud sigils, hung looser than Jared remembered. Exhaustion and an ancient sorrow pressed around his eyes, and yet he made no attempt to force the barrier. Instead he bled tiny threads of demonic essence against the array-testing, pleading, anything but hostile.

"Sir?" Jared's voice slipped through the formation like wind through reeds, puzzled and calm. "What brings you to level ten?"

He lifted a palm, dispersed the seal at the mouth of the gorge, and a clear path yawned open.

Relief sparked in the Demon Lord's eyes. He hurried down the stone corridor, saw Jared seated by the spring, and quickened again, boots scraping rock in his haste.

"Jared, it is you!"

Emotion cracked the man's usually steady baritone; gratitude, exhaustion, and something like hope bled together. "I have searched these endless skies for days, chasing only the faint scent of your dragon's power and the scars of an old battle. At last, I found this valley."

Jared rose, gestured toward a flat slab of green stone, and pressed a cup of spirit- spring tea into the Demon Lord's hands. Steam drifted between them, gentle and bright.

"You should be guarding the woman you love on level nine," he said softly. "Crossing the realm wall is no small gamble. What has happened?"

The question was genuine; Jared knew the Vermilion Demon Lord's roots ran deep

in that lower sky-roots twined around the crystal coffin of a woman whose resurrection he awaited as one awaits dawn.

The cup trembled in the visitor's grip. He inhaled once, ragged, eyes shining with pain and desperate appeal.

"I come to beg," he managed, voice roughening. "I have nowhere else. It is for Selene ... for Selene alone."

"Selene?" Jared's breath caught.

The name rang inside him like a bell.

"Yes," the Demon Lord whispered.

Grief deepened the lines on his face. "I believed her body would rest untouched until the faint chance of revival arrived."

"But these past days a quiet decay has crept in—minute, almost invisible, yet I can feel life fleeing and death seeping through every pore."

His fingers clamped around Jared's arm with startling strength. "You know better than any-body is the house of soul, the root of rebirth. If it rots, the future perishes with it!"

"If the flesh continues to rot and the soul is gone for good, then the very last thread of revival will wither away-perhaps forever. I... I refuse to watch that happen to Selene."

Vermilion's voice broke, the words

scraping out of him like gravel.

Breath caught in his throat, ragged

and thin, as though sorrow itself were throttling the life from his lungs. He pictured the woman here loved her body once radiant yet now wasting in a crystal coffin-flesh turning to dust, hope turning to emptiness. The image clawed at him until his knees all but

buckled.

Jared's jaw tightened, the weight of Vermilion's terror settling across his own shoulders.

He knew little of necromantic resurrection, yet even he understood that without an intact body no miracle could bridge death's abyss. For a man of Vermilion's stature to unravel like this, the situation had to be desperate indeed.

"Tell me what you need," Jared said, voice low but steady. "Is there some relic, some method that can preserve her body until you find a way to bring her back?"

Hope flickered in Vermilion's

crimson eyes as he gave a fervent nod. "I scoured every ancient record I could lay my hands on and found a single prescription-the Ninefold Body Refinement Pill. It will not raise the dead, but it locks a body's vitality in place seats away decay, and even feeds the flesh a trace of nourishment. It buys the time we so desperately lack. Yet every ingredient is a rarity beyond measure. Three chief components cannot be found on this plane at all. They lie in realms above-level ten, eleven, twelve."

Vermilion drew a weather-worn device from his robe and pressed it into Jared's palm.

"Everything is listed here-especially the core trio: the Thousand-Year Frostblood Lotus of level ten, Jadeheart Marrow from level eleven, and the Nine-Orifice Divine Soul Herb from level twelve Omit even one, and the pill is worthless."

Spiritual sense poured from Jared and into the device. Schematics of the pill

bloomed in his mind: properties, habitats, planetary alignments. Each herb read like a distant legend.

Those three primary medicines only gestated in brutal, near-mythic locales and demanded impossibly strict conditions before ripening.

## A Warrior Undefeatable

"The Thousand-Year Frostblood Lotus springs from the Blood-Soul Frostpool buried beneath the Eternal Ice Plains at the pole of level ten. It drinks a thousand years of frozen venom and subterranean lifeblood, flowering for only three days each century."

"The Jadeheart Marrow dripped once in ten millennia from the molten crystal veins at the pit of level eleven's Infernal Lava Abyss, tempered by the purest earthfire and soil spirits; it anchors body and soul alike."

"The Nine-Orifice Divine Soul Herb sprouted only inside spectral caverns or dreambound labyrinths of level twelve, each blade opening nine tiny vents that breathe raw soul force—an unrivaled tonic for the spirit."

Any one of those treasures could launch wars. To seek all three was to wade into a storm of blood.

Vermilion was a stranger on level ten, his power merely middling here. Alone, he would be swallowed before he ever glimpsed the first bloom.

Jared met the demon lord's expectant gaze. "You want me to hunt these ingredients."

"Exactly."

Vermilion bent forward, urgency carving new lines into his ageless face. "I know it is a task fit for legends. I have no other path. Selene is running out of time. Help me, and I swear on my heart-demon-through fire, steel, or void, I will serve at your side. Every resource I possess will be yours if it means winning her a single breath of tomorrow."

The mighty lord who once commanded storms of war started to kneel in humble supplication. Jared grabbed him by the shoulders before his knees could touch stone, lifting him with quiet strength. "There's no need for that."

Jared felt a quiet reverence stir in his chest whenever he recalled the bond between the Vermilion Demon Lord and Selene Moonridge—a love so fierce it dared to bridge the chasm between light and darkness, between righteous creed and forbidden path.

More than once, the Demon Lord had stepped from the shadows to shield Jared when blades closed in, and hope ran thin. By any measure—gratitude, honor, or the simple debt of one soul to another—Jared knew he must answer the call now placed before him, whatever the cost.

"My friend, spare me the formalities," Jared said, voice low yet unwavering as he turned toward the crimson-armored figure. "The bond between us is worth more than flesh or bone. If shattering my own body is the price, so be it—I will help you."

He paused, drawing a thoughtful breath. "That said, my knowledge of level ten is far from complete—especially when it comes to the ancient, world-born treasures we need."

A spark lit behind his eyes. "But there is someone, perhaps, who can guide us along the trail."

The Demon Lord leaned forward, tension sharpened by hope. "Who might that be?" "Linden Cloudridge, Sect Master of the Mystic Sky Sword Sect," Jared replied. "The Sword Sect's roots run deeper than any other order on level ten. They have chronicled every valley, every relic, every whispered secret. That includes the Eternal Ice Plains where the Thousand-Year Frostblood Lotus is said to bloom."

The Demon Lord's hard features eased into an eager smile, then tightened again with a flicker of unease. "That is great news—yet I remain a demonic cultivator. If I stride unannounced into their sacred mountain, they may answer with steel."

Jared waved the concern away. "No harm will come. Mr. Cloudridge is no narrow-minded zealot, and I recently helped his sect escape annihilation. My name still carries weight at his gate. Let us leave at once—speed is everything."

Although wounds still throbbed beneath Jared's robes, his realm had stabilized, his blood harmonized. A swirl of silver light unfurled from his sleeve wrapping the Demon Lord beside him. In the next heartbeat they shot into the sky—a streaking mote of brilliance—racing toward the serrated peaks of the Myriad Sword Mountains where the Mystic Sky Sword Sect awaited.

Days later, the sect's stronghold emerged beneath them: terraces scarred by recent war yet throbbing with new life. Broken parapets had been braced with fresh stone and the great defensive array shimmered once more, faint but growing stronger—like a heart relearning its rhythm after a near-fatal blow.

Jared and the Vermilion Demon Lord descended toward the main gate. Sentinels stiffened instantly, hands flying to hilts—until they recognized the man who had stood between their order and ruin. Awe replaced alarm; every guard bowed low, then hurried off to announce his return.

Moments later, Linden himself crossed the threshold. Bandages peeked from beneath his robes, and his complexion remained pale, yet delight warmed his eye "Sir Chance, to see you unharmed—it lifts a burden from my soul."

"Your safety gladdens us all," he added, offering a respectful nod.

His gaze slid to the silent figure at Jared's side—dark aura coiling like dusk. "And this fellow traveler?"

"Mr. Cloudridge, allow me to present Vermilion," Jared said, choosing the simplest of the Demon Lord's many titles. "An old ally from level nine. We come seeking knowledge, not conflict and I would ask it of you personally."

Though Linden's instincts pricked at the aura of a demonic cultivator, Jared's word was bond enough. He inclined his head. "An honor, Vermilion. Whatever Sir Chance requests, I shall share without reservation."

The three stepped into the grand hall, each settling upon carved wooden seats that faced one another beneath soaring rafters.

Jared spoke plainly of the pill, of the Thousand-Year Frostblood Lotus buried in the Eternal Ice Plains, setting a device upon the table—its surface etched with the full alchemical recipe.

Linden's expression turned somber. He lifted the device, eyes flicking over the stark description of the Thousand-Year Frostblood Lotus, a crease forming between his brows as the weight of the task settled upon him.

His voice uncoiled across the council chamber like a blade drawn in slow ceremony. "The Thousand-Year Frostblood Lotus—yes, Mystic Sky Sword Sect records confirm its existence."

He stroked his silver beard, every movement measured, eyes half-lidded in recollection. "Scripture states the flower can be found only in the very heart of the Eternal Ice Plains, rooted deep within the Blood-Soul Frostpool." Linden paused, allowing the image to settle: a wasteland locked in everlasting winter, gales sharp enough to flay bone. "The plains are one of the level ten's infamous dead zones. For ordinary Heavenly-Immortal cultivators, setting foot there is to wager nine lives against one."

His tone darkened. "The pool itself is worse—water cold enough to numb the soul, laced with a toxin that corrodes spirit and mind alike. Some say a beast older than language sleeps beneath those crimson depths."

He turned to Vermilion, his expression grave. "My friend, reaching the Thousand-Year Frostblood Lotus borders on folly. The bloom opens once every hundred years and fades almost immediately. Miss the moment, and the journey ends empty-handed."

Linden's brow tightened. "Three centuries ago, a Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Eight cultivator ventured there. He stumbled back half-dead-no lotus, his foundation shattered."