

# A Warrior Undefeatable 5881-5890

## A Warrior Undefeatable

"The lineup is settled. We move out in half an hour. Jared, you take Lyndon, Ethan, and that beast of yours to lead the way. Keep a thousand feet ahead. The moment you sense anything off, raise the alarm. Understood?" Ferdinand asked.

"Understood." Jared's reply was crisp.

Thirty minutes later, the expedition started moving toward the gorge.

Jared, Lyndon, Ethan, and Lucky took the lead toward a small path to the depths of the gorge.

Humans paved the way. It was narrow and steep enough to fit only two people shoulder to shoulder.

The farther they descended, the hotter the surroundings became.

The odor of sulfur was very pungent, while the scorching heat burned the skin.

Any ordinary human would have shriveled here in heartbeats.

For cultivators, they could withstand the heat by channeling celestial energy to shield their body.

Jared walked at the front. The chaotic celestial energy channeled inside him, protecting him from the high heat and poisonous gas. Moreover, it absorbed the fire-type spiritual energy from around.

He thought that the environment in the Flame Gorge could boost the speed to cultivate the fire technique.

"Heads up!" Lyndon's warning cracked through the heat. A longbow filled his hands, and a green arrow kissed the string.

Around the next bend, a dozen scarlet lizards clung to the rock face. Each stretched nearly three feet, scales the same rusty red as the cliff, making them all but invisible until they moved.

"Scarlet fire lizards! They live in groups and can spit poisonous fire. I'll take care of them," Lyndon said.

He drew. The green arrow hissed away, split mid-flight into three, then nine, each arrow a streak of emerald light homing for a separate target.

Wet pops echoed down the gorge as arrows punched through scale and bone. Nine scarlet fire lizards dropped to deaths.

The rest of the lizards screeched, hacking out ropes of dark-crimson fire.

Ethan roared back, twin hammers spinning. Earth-yellow light ballooned into a shield that swallowed the flames.

Lucky galloped forward and stomped the lizards into splotches.

In a few minutes, the fight was over.

Jared had never lifted a finger. He simply observed the lizards' and his companions' actions.

Lyndon's archery was quick and precise. Each shot could kill a target.

Ethan had a strong defense, and his strength was immense, suitable for performing melee attacks.

Lucky's speed and attack were incredible, on par with a cultivator at Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Six.

"All clear! Let's move on," Jared said.

The three pushed deeper, descending step by step into the gorge's blazing throat.

The further they moved, the more vicious beasts they encountered.

They faced lava worms that spat corrosive lava, shadow-fire leopards that lunged unseen from the shadows, and endless phalanxes of fire ants.

Amid this danger, Jared gradually showed his strength.

When dozens of fire ants closed around him, he pressed two fingers together to form a sweep of grey energy that flashed. Every ant that touched that energy disintegrated into ashes.

Later, he faced three lava lizards that were at Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Five. He froze the lava lizards at the spot with his chaotic celestial energy to let Lyndon and Ethan slay them.

A fire wyrm erupted from the lava river behind them. Jared pivoted and drove a single fist into its crown and broke the skull. The creature fell back into the lava river.

Awe replaced caution in Lyndon's and Ethan's eyes. Reverence followed, then outright shock.

Only now did they grasp how Jared, outwardly at Heavenly Immortal Realm Level One, had survived that perilous trial.

His power was at least at Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Eight.

A thousand feet behind Jared's group, Earthfire Pavilion's main contingent safely advanced along the path Jared had cleared.

Elliot watched as Jared defeated yet another beast, his expression souring shade by shade.

He had hoped the vicious beasts would hurt or even kill Jared.

Instead, Jared strode ahead unscathed, stealing every scrap of spotlight from the disciples.

"Damn it..." Elliot muttered, his teeth grinding.

"That was incredible! Jared defeated another beast!" Lindsay cheered whenever Jared took action. Her eyes sparkled with admiration.

"Good job, Lucky! Tear them to shreds!"

She wanted to move closer to watch Jared, but Ferdinand's curt glare rooted her in place.

"Lindsay, stay with the group. Flame Gorge is perilous. Keep watch," Ferdinand warned.

Lindsay held back her excitement, yet her gaze never left the blue-robed figure ahead.

An hour later, the group reached the gorge's middle part.

The environment got worse.

The ground lay crazed with rifts, each crack bubbling with molten lava that breathed heat into the air.

Scorch-tainted motes drifted in the haze. Cultivators' meridians would hurt if they inhaled too many motes.

Strange scarlet flora clung to the cliffs. They were flamegrass, ember vines, and earth-fire mushrooms exuding thick spiritual energy.

Yet, the flora was not the objective.

"The Flame Spirit Basin is five miles ahead. The fire-type spiritual energy is ten times denser than in other

times

places, and it's much more dangerous. Fire Bats and Lava Giant Apes reside in the basin," Lyndon explained while pointing toward an area covered with crimson mist.

Jared nodded and led the squad forward.

Yet, something happened when they almost reached the Flame Spirit Basin.

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Boom!

The ground before them rumbled. A huge crack split open, and hot lava spurted out.

Next, three giant creatures climbed out of the crack.

They were the Lava Giant Apes, formed from black rocks and lava, reaching a height of five feet.

They were at Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Seven.

The worst part was that hundreds of Fire Bats stood on each of the giant ape's shoulders.

The Fire Bats were small but had sharp fangs and wings with flames on the edges. Plus, they flew at a high speed.

Besides that, they could spit a type of spiritual fire that corroded a cultivator's celestial light shield and magical item.

"Bloody hell! Three Lava Giant Apes and an entire cloud of Fire Bats! Why are they moving together? The intel never said a word about this!" Lyndon shouted, horror bleaching the color from his face.

"We're finished. The three of us can't handle them. Signal for help now!" Ethan barked, two hammers trembling in his white-knuckled grip while sweat beaded on his brow.

Jared narrowed his eyes, studying the three Lava Giant Apes.

He caught the unnatural crimson flicker in each ape's eyes and the sluggish, puppet-like drag in their movements.

Someone's controlling these creatures.

A thousand feet behind, the Earthfire Pavilion convoy saw the scene too.

"Three Lava Giant Apes and a swarm of Fire Bats..." Ferdinand muttered, voice low and grim.

"That makes no sense. The two species never hunt together."

"Jared and the others are in danger! Send support, now!" Lindsay cried, urgency tightening her words.

She lunged forward, signaling several disciples to follow.

"Hold it!" Elliot quickly stopped her, one hand upraised.

"Lindsay, don't be reckless! We know nothing about what's ahead. Rushing in could be suicide."

"But Jared—" she began, frustration sharpening each syllable.

"They are just hired escorts," Elliot interrupted, tone iced in disdain.

"Since they accepted the task, they should take the risk. Our disciples' lives are more valuable than theirs."

Then, he turned to Ferdinand and said, "Elder Flameheart, I suggest we stop moving forward. If Jared's group can defeat the beasts, that would be great. If they fail, they can buy us time to search for another route."

Elliot's words sounded dutiful, yet he was planning to let Jared's group become bait for the vicious beasts, so the Earthfire Pavilion could be safe.

Lindsay stared at him, aghast. "Elliot, how could you say that? They're our companions!"

"Companions?" Elliot echoed, a cold smile curving across his lips.

He let out a dismissive laugh. "Lindsay, you're naïve. They joined us because we promised to pay. The moment real danger bites, they'll be the first to bolt. Why do you take them seriously?"

He swept a cold look across the other escorts and asked, "Tell me, am I wrong?"

Silence answered him. One by one, the escorts lowered their eyes, every protest drying in their throats.

It was the truth that they came here for money. They would not risk their lives.

Ferdinand stroked his crimson beard

and said, "Elliot's right. We aim to harvest Flame Spirit Herbs Jared group accepted the task. They

should know the risk. We watch for

now. If they falter, we decide whether we aid them or retreat."

Lindsay stomped her boot, sparks of frustration flashing in her eyes.

Yet Ferdinand's word was final. Earthfire Pavilion disciples held their ground, blades half-drawn, but not one stepped forward to help Jared.

Meanwhile, Jared heard the conversation clearly. His face was calm.

Beside him, Lyndon's cheeks drained of color while Ethan's jaw clenched so hard cords bulged along his neck.

"Damn it! We're just their pawns. I shouldn't have taken this task!" Ethan spat.

Lyndon offered a crooked smile. "Too late for regrets. Mr. Chance, do we fight or run?"

Jared studied the three looming Lava Giant Apes and the cloud of shrieking Fire Bats aloft. His voice rang steady. "Both of you fall back and stay alive. I will handle them."

Lyndon's eyes widened. "You? Alone?"

Jared gave a single, unhurried nod.

He stepped forward, and gray-tinged chaotic celestial energy swirled in his body. Faced with approaching carnage, he shed the last trace of restraint.

The first Lava Giant Ape barreled in. A boulder-sized fist, blazing with molten heat, hammered toward Jared.

Jared did not dodge. He met the strike head-on, his own hand closing into a hammer of flesh and power. Fists collided.

Boom!

Cracks spider-webbed up the ape's arm, raced past its shoulder, and the entire limb burst apart in a shower of molten gravel.

The giant ape bellowed and lurched backward, pain reverberating through its titanic frame.

In a blur, Jared appeared above the staggering ape, heel descending with crushing finality.

Crack!

The giant ape's skull shattered. Its mountain-like body toppled and broke apart, cooling into a mound of dark stone and hardened lava.

It all happened in seconds. Two other Lava Giant Apes and the swirling swarm of Fire Bats still hung in stunned suspension, their bestial minds struggling to comprehend the sudden shift in the battlefield.

A furious bellow-raw, guttural, and full of molten rage-tore from one of the giant apes, the sound rolling across the scorched earth like distant thunder.

Both giant apes charged at once, pounding forward on knuckled fists. The Fire Bats shrieked and swooped down, spitting balls of corrosive spiritual fire.

Jared pressed his palms together, fingers weaving through a rapid series of sigils. "Chaotic Domain-open!"

With him at the center, the space within a radius of thirty miles suddenly distorted.

A gray, hazy mist spread out, enveloping the area. All the corrosive fireballs that entered this region abruptly slowed down, then silently dissipated like melting ice and snow.

The Fire Bats diving down from

above, upon entering the range of the gray mist, seemed to lose all sense of direction, spinning in place before plummeting one by one. Their vitality was extinguished

before they even hit the ground.

Jared combined the chaotic celestial energy with his rudimentary comprehension of space and time forming the initial prototype of the Chaotic Domain. Though it was far from perfect, it was more than sufficient to deal with these low-intelligence beasts.

The two Lava Giant Apes barreled into the grey mist, and their movements slowed down. Their movements slowed to an agonizing crawl, every swing of an arm or tightening of a fist fighting against the swampy drag of warped time.

Jared appeared beside one of the giant apes and unleashed his grey sword energy.

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Hiss!

The sword energy shot through the giant ape's head, killing it with one strike.

Seeing its companion fall, the final ape loosed a panicked grunt and lurched backward, desperate to flee.

Jared merely lifted his hand and closed his fingers in a gentle curl. The chaotic celestial energy coalesced into a vast grey palm to seize the giant ape and slammed it into the hardened ground with bone-splintering force.

Bam!

The ground trembled when the giant ape crushed down.

Lucky streaked forward, piercing straight through the giant ape's eye socket. It burst from the back of the skull in the same breath, trailing a geyser of blood as hot and viscous as fresh lava.

In that instant, the fight ended in several minutes.

Three Lava Giant Apes at Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Seven, plus several hundred Fire Bats, were dead.

Lyndon and Ethan stood gape-mouthed, forgetting even to breathe.

A thousand feet back, every disciple of Earthfire Pavilion was stunned.

Lindsay's mouth hung open, eyes rounded into perfect circles before she finally whispered, "Th-this... this is too—"

Elliot's face turned sour. His fists clenched so hard the joints crackled.

He had never imagined Jared wielding power of this magnitude.

Jared had easily defeated three vicious beasts at level seven.

This was not the prowess of a cultivator at Heavenly Immortal Realm Level One.

Ferdinand's gaze flashed, fixing on Jared as though he meant to strip every secret from him.

"A Chaotic Domain... This kid is different," he murmured.

"No wonder the spiritual crystal couldn't detect his cultivation. He possesses the chaotic energy."

Then, he looked at Elliot and said, "You have underestimated him."

"Elder, the stronger he appears, the more suspect he becomes! How could a mere wandering cultivator possess such power? He might be a spy planted by some rival force." Elliot gritted his teeth.

"We finish the mission first. Questions can wait until we are home," Ferdinand replied.

Up ahead, Jared removed his Chaotic Domain. The gray mist slowly faded.

He strode to the nearest Lava Giant Ape, crouching beside the hulking corpse for a closer look.

At the base of the ape's neck, he found a tiny crimson sigil.

The sigil was fading, but left an aura.

Jared's gaze turned cold.

The aura was similar to the cultivator from Malevolent Path Hall at the Darkwind Gorge.

"Has the Malevolent Path Hall reached here?" Jared was alarmed.

Lyndon and Ethan hurried up and asked, "Mr. Chance, are you alright?" "I'm fine," Jared said, shaking his head.

"Let's keep moving. The sooner we reach Flame Spirit Basin, the better."

Jared paused mid-stride. He glanced over his shoulder at the Earthfire Pavilion, his eyes lingering on Elliot for a heartbeat. Without a word, he faced forward again.

Elliot felt that brief stare scrape across his nerves like a claw. A shiver slid down his spine, quickly drowned by a surge of spite. What are you looking at? Once we're back in Earthfire Pavilion, you'll beg for mercy!

The party pressed on. Since Jared had unveiled that fearsome strength of his, the journey turned effortless.

He easily defeated the vicious beasts.

Half an hour later, they arrived at Flame Spirit Basin.

The basin—a perfect circle nearly a mile across—was walled by jagged peaks on every side, broken only by a single, narrow gap that served as an entrance.

Inside, the heat hit like a physical blow. The ground was a crust of dark-red crystal that cracked beneath each footfall with a brittle, glassy snap.

At the very center simmered a lava lake roughly three hundred feet wide, its surface rolling and popping with bubbles of burning gold. In the middle of that lake sat a lone crimson island.

Upon that island swayed a patch of scarlet spiritual plants. The leaves were needle-thin, traced along the edges with veined gold, while

is of ruby light course net

through the stems in restless loops like flames.

They had found the Flame Spirit Herb.

There were around fifty Flame Spirit Herbs. Thirty of them had matured with a gold, fiery flower blooming out.

"We found them!"

Excitement rippled through the disciples.

Ferdinand's tone cut through the clamor. "Be careful. The Flame Dragon could be nearby."

He turned to

the

escorts, Jared

included, and said, "As agreed, you'll handle the defense and intercept any beast that dares approach.. disciples will harvest the herbs Complete the task to my

doubled."

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be

The escorts nodded once and fanned out to the basin's entrance and along the inner slopes, blades drawn, eyes sweeping every ridge and crevice.

Jared and the Vermilion Demon Lord chose a jutting ledge of blistered rock high above the basin.

Under Ferdinand's brisk commands, Earthfire Pavilion disciples carefully entered the basin to harvest the Flame Spirit Herbs.

Lindsay was skilled in harvesting the herbs. She moved quickly and harvested three mature Flame Spirit Herbs.

Elliot kept pace at her side, while his eyes swept the perimeter.

For a heartbeat, everything felt normal.

Then, just as the twentieth herb left its stem...

Roar!

From the depths of the lava lake came a dragon's cry so vast it seemed to shear the air itself.

The basin rumbled. Lava surged sky-high in snarling waves.

A colossal silhouette pulled free of the molten depths, rising slowly from the lava lake.

The dragon stood ten feet tall, covered with sharp-edged crimson gold scales.

Its muzzle was all fangs and menace, twin horns gleaming like forged copper, and within its eyes a tangible furnace of golden fire burned without mercy.

Draconic pressure crashed outward.

Cultivators beneath Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Seven felt their lungs seize. Even their

circulating celestial energy slowed, as though forced to slog through tår.

The Flame Dragon was at Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Nine.

"This is bad! We've awakened it!" Ferdinand's voice cracked above the roar.

"Fall back now!"

Disciples scrambled toward the exits, panic snapping at their heels.

But it was too late.

The Flame Dragon's jaws yawned wide, unleashing a torrent of gold fire spreading across three yards.

Where the flames swept, the very fabric of space writhed and warped, as if reality itself were blistering.

"Form the shield array now!" Ferdinand bellowed.

The disciples locked positions at lightning speed, igniting a scarlet barrier that barely blocked the fire.

Waves of heat pummeled the shield, its surface shuddering, dimming-clearly moments from collapse.

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"Escorts! Fight!" Elliot roared while holding the shield array intact.

However, the escorts cultivation level was lower than the Flame Dragon's. They did not dare to fight.

"Damn it! This thing is way above our pay grade!"

An escort turned to run. "I prefer my life more than money. I quit!"

Then, the other escorts followed.

They did not want to risk their lives for Earthfire Pavilion.

Facing the invincible Flame Dragon, escape was the best option.

Vermilion Demon Lord glanced at Jared and asked, "Shall we run as well?"

Jared's gaze locked on the Flame Dragon, then to the Earthfire Pavilion disciples. He saw Elliot was guarding Lindsay.

"Get to safety first," Jared said, voice calm. "Wait for me."

Vermilion Demon Lord's brow furrowed. "You want to save them? The Flame Dragon is at Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Nine! Even if you give it your all, you wouldn't defeat it!"

"I know." Jared's tone softened, yet remained firm. "But I promised to protect her."

By her he meant Lindsay.

After studying Jared for several seconds, Vermilion Demon Lord sighed. "Fine. Just stay alive. If it gets hopeless, run."

He turned to leave since the Earthfire Pavilion was none of his concern.

Down in the basin, the shield array was weakening.

Crack!

A fissure appeared on the shield.

"Elder, the shield's giving way!" a disciple cried. Blood sprayed from his lips as he collapsed.

Clenching his teeth, Ferdinand crushed a Crimson Jade Talisman between his palms.

The talisman flared, spreading a fresh red film over the broken shield, but it would last only moments.

"Elliot, take Lindsay and go! I'll handle the rest!" Ferdinand shouted.

"Elder..." Elliot hesitated, his voice tight.

"Leave now!"

Ferdinand spat a mouthful of essence blood onto the ruby set atop his staff. The gem blazed, hungry for power.

The ruby exploded in a burst of blinding light. From that radiance uncoiled a python forged entirely of living flame, rushing toward the Flame Dragon.

Elliot clenched his teeth. He caught Lindsay's wrist and yanked her close. "Lindsay, we have to move now!"

"But what about the elder..." She twisted, trying to look back toward the battlefield.

"If you hesitate, we're both dead!" Elliot hauled her toward the basin's entrance.

The flame dragon's golden eyes flicked away and pinned the fleeing pair.

Or rather, it fixed on Lindsay. Her pristine, concentrated fire spirit aura attracted the Flame Dragon.

Roar!

One molten talon shredded the fiery python. In the same breath, the dragon's tail swept sideways and hurled Ferdinand against a wall.

The dragon turned over. Its golden eyes narrowed on Lindsay, and its jaws opened wide to disgorge a second plume of golden fire.

This blast was denser, hotter-pure annihilation. Wherever it passed, the ground bubbled and slumped into fresh magma.

Elliot's face went ghost-white. Fingers slipping free of Lindsay's, he dove sideways. He abandoned her before the oncoming inferno.

"Elliot!" Shock froze her where she stood.

The tidal wave of fire barreled closer, heat stripping the moisture from the air.

Then a blue silhouette shot from the sky and planted itself between Lindsay and the incoming flames. It was Jared.

Jared reached out his arms while releasing the chaotic celestial energy, turning it into a grey swirl.

The golden fire slammed into the spiral and vanished, as though it had plunged into the ocean's deepest trench.

The dragon's flame still punched through. Jared staggered back three steps, a thin ribbon of blood tracing the corner of his mouth before he

planted his heel and steadied

"Jared!" Relief and terror tangled in Lindsay's cry.

"Stand behind me." His tone left no room for debate.

He wiped the blood away, eyes locked on the hovering Flame Dragon, shoulders tight with coiled resolve.

The power at Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Nine was indeed terrifying.

He had poured every drop of power into that last defense and still got hurt. Furious that its flames had failed, the Flame Dragon rose fully from the lava lake, wings blotting out the meager sky.

Its gaze swept over Jared. Confusion flashed for a heartbeat that so small a creature had defied its breath.

Confusion curdled into rage. Dragon's power flooded the basin. The temperature spiked until distant rocks sweated sparks.

"Jared, run!" Lindsay's voice trembled. "You can't win. Get out while you can!" Jared said nothing.

Facing the Flame Dragon head on was not a wise decision. Although the chaotic celestial energy was powerful, his cultivation level was lower than the dragon. If he dragged on, they would die. '

There was only one way remained. Jared thought of his Golden Dragon Bloodline.

Among the Draconians, lineage ruled all. The Flame Dragon did not have a noble bloodline, while Jared's bloodline was the Golden Dragon.

If he activated his Golden Dragon Bloodline, he could suppress the Flame Dragon to escape.

However, his identity would be revealed.

If someone knew his Golden Dragon Bloodline, it would invite trouble.

His gaze flicked to Lindsay, pale and trembling behind him, then to Ferdinand, crumpled in the distance

Farther off, Elliot hovered at the rim of the basin, looking back.

He breathed through clenched teeth and muttered, "No time to second-guess."

He drew a deep breath and made the decision.

His fingers wove an ancient seal. Blood surged, roaring through his arteries until every heartbeat sounded like a drum of war.

A guttural bellow tore from the sky-raw, hungry, miles deep.

The Flame Dragon dove down toward Jared.

Before its claws reached him, the pressure cracked the ground and rocks.

Lindsay shut her eyes.

Death, however, remained a step short. She opened her eyes and witnessed a sight that would follow her to the grave.

Jared stood and lifted his head to roar. It was a dragon's roar, majestic and powerful.

After the roar, gold light burst from him.

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The gold light was pure and holy, which seemed able to scour every inch of darkness from creation.

Within it coiled the translucent shape of a Golden Dragon, head lifted, eyes vast as sun and moon, surveying every soul below.

The dragon's power was a hundred times greater than the Flame Dragon's.

It came from the suppression of a king toward the peasants.

Mid-dive, the Flame Dragon froze as though lightning pinned its wings. Terror-and something close to reverence-widened its eyes.

The Flame Dragon let out a pleading roar and started trembling.

A strict hierarchy existed among the Draconians. The Golden Dragon was the leader of the dragons.

The Flame Dragon did not dare to fight back.

Even though it was at Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Nine, its bloodline was only at the Middle Tier. Facing the Golden Dragon Bloodline, the Flame Dragon was terrified.

Jared seized the opening. He strode forward, and the Golden Dragon flowed with him, each step amplifying the dragon's power.

He pointed at the Flame Dragon and uttered the ancient Draconian, "Back off!"

The words were as if an imperial edict had been issued, carrying the power that brooked no doubt or defiance.

A guttural, wounded cry tore from the Flame Dragon's throat. Its vast body recoiled, scale by scale, until it slipped back into the Lava Lake.

The dragon's eyes fixed on Jared, filled with confusion and reverence. In the end, it vanished into the lava.

The peril was over.

Jared withdrew the bloodline power. The Golden Dragon faded. Color drained from his face, and his knees threatened to fold. Unleashing the Golden Dragon Bloodline had drained nearly a third of his life force and celestial energy.

"Jared!" Lindsay hurried to steady him, her crimson eyes wide with worry. "Are you all right?"

"I'm fine," he panted. "I have only suppressed the Flame Dragon. It could return soon. Bring along Elder Flameheart and leave!"

Lindsay dashed to Ferdinand's side. Though unconscious and grievously wounded, he still breathed.

She slid a crimson pill past his lips, then looked toward the basin's rim where Elliot stood frozen. "Elliot, help me!"

As if waking from a dream, Elliot hurried over, supporting Ferdinand with Lindsay while casting Jared a look filled with awe, jealousy, fear, and murderous rage.

He realized Jared had the Golden Dragon Bloodline.

No wonder he was so powerful. No wonder Lindsay favored him.

I need to get rid of him. If not, my status in the Earthfire Pavilion will drop and Her Highness will fall for him.

Yet Elliot's face wore only gratitude. "Mr. Chance, you saved us. Earthfire Pavilion will remember this."

Jared met his gaze and replied, "Let's escape first. Thanks can wait."

They supported the unconscious Ferdinand and left the Flame Spirit Basin quickly.

Along the way, Lindsay clutched Jared's arm, eyes shining with unshed tears. "Thank you, Jared. Without you, I would have..."

"You're welcome, Your Highness," Jared replied calmly.

"Since I accepted the mission, I will protect Your Highness."

Lindsay's gaze lingered on Jared's face. A surge of conflicting emotions rippled through her chest.

Moments earlier, Jared protected

her from the Flame Dragon by

Vel

unleashing his Golden Dragon

Bloodline. The scene ad embedded

in her mind.

He was like a god to the rescue.

"What was that just now?" Lindsay was unable to hold back her curiosity.

"It's just my trump card. Your Highness, please keep this a secret. I don't want to invite trouble," Jared quickly answered.

Lindsay blinked, then nodded. "I understand. You have my word. No one will hear of it from me. Elliot, you should also not tell anyone."

Elliot managed a stiff smile. "Of course. Mr. Chance is the Earthfire Pavilion's savior.

I won't put him in danger."

Yet, the thought of eliminating Jared grew stronger.

Later, they reunited with Vermilion Demon Lord, Lyndon, Ethan, and the others.

The escorts had escaped except Lyndon and Ethan.

Seeing them alive, Vermilion Demon

Lod in relief. "Good, y

t dragon's rear w

heard...

Dise the Power of Bloodline?

you

Jared nodded. "It was a desperate measure."

Vermilion Demon Lord flicked a glance toward Elliot and asked through telepathy,

"Did he see what you did?"

"He did," Jared admitted.

"That's bad. I doubt he'll keep the secret," Vermillion Demon Lord said.

"We'll see what we can do," Jared answered, letting the matter rest where it lay.

No one wished to linger. They left Flame Gorge hurriedly.

Luckily, the Flame Dragon did not follow them out. On their way back, they did not encounter vicious beasts.

Two hours later, they left the Flame Gorge and returned to safety.

Ferdinand woke up after Lindsay healed him. He was badly injured, but managed to survive.

Ferdinand looked at Jared with a complex expression. "Mr. Chance, thank you for saving us. The Earthfire Pavilion owes you big time."

Jared shook his head and replied, "Elder, I accepted the mission. Saving you was simply part of the work."

"No, this is different." Ferdinand's gaze fixed on Jared.

"The Flame Dragon is at Top Level Nine. You saved us from it. This is way beyond the escort's job scope."

He paused, then continued, "Rest

assured, young man. The Earthfire Pavilion will reward you

handsomely. You can choose three

treasures from our vault. I'll also help you search for the Jadebeart Marrow

Such a promise weighed more than any coin the Pavilion had ever minted.

Jared bowed and said, "Thank you, Elder."

Elliot kept his head lowered. Darkness flashed in his eyes.

He secretly used a message talisman to inform the Malevolent Path Hall.

He told them that Jared had the Golden Dragon Bloodline and might be injured from fighting the Flame Dragon. He also gave them Jared's current location.

When he looked up again, his smile was warm. "Mr. Chance, we owe you. Once we reach the Earthfire Pavilion, my father will see your heroism properly rewarded!"

Lindsay added, voice bright as crackling tinder, "Yes! I'll demand Father shower you with gifts!"

Jared answered with a calm nod. "I appreciate it, but first we move. The Flame Dragon may rethink its mercy at any moment."

"Agreed," Ferdinand said, forcing himself upright. "Let's head back to Crimson Flame City!"

They moved once more, but the atmosphere was different.

At first, Jared was looked down upon.

Now, he had become the Earthfire Pavilion's savior.

Lindsay hovered at his side, never more than an arm's length away. She tended to Jared's needs, and her eyes showed affection.

Elliot was calm, but his murderous intent was intense.

Vermilion Demon Lord was wary of him and reminded Jared to be watchful.

Jared, meanwhile, breathed slowly to recover his body while planning his next step.

He had revealed his Golden Dragon Bloodline. Although only Elliot and Lindsay saw it, he did not trust Elliot.

The Malevolent Path Hall was after him. He should improve his strength as soon as possible.

Moreover, he needed the Earthfire Pavilion's help to locate the Jadeheart Marrow. The convoy headed for the Flame Gorge exit.

Far behind, deep within the lava lake, the Flame Dragon opened its eyes. Confusion filled its gaze, then changed to reverence.

It rumbled low, the sound trembling stone. Beneath the growl hid a note of— submission.

Elsewhere, outside the Flame Gorge, several dark-robed figures appeared. The man leading the group was Bennett from the Malevolent Path Hall.

His red eyes traced the convoy's dust with a crooked smile. "Golden Dragon Bloodline... What an unexpected treasure. Bonefiend, is the array ready?"

Bonefiend, wrapped head to toe in jagged white spikes, cackled. "No worries. I have set the Almighty Soul Devourer. When they reach the outside of Flame Gorge, they can't escape."

"Excellent," Bennett replied.

He licked his lips. "Spread the word. This time, I shall extract the Golden Dragon Bloodline myself. Such nourishment is too rare to waste."

Danger was lurking in Jared's group.

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A hundred miles on, Jared and the others had reached the Dragonfall Ravine.

The cliffs were riddled with  
honeycomb hollows said to have

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been drenched in dragon blood ages ago, the stain refusing to fade even after  
ten millennia. fo

Only a single passage wound through the ravine-barely nine feet wide,  
twisting like

a serpent and lit by grudging shards of sunlight.

A faint odor of decay clung to the air, stark against the Blaze Region's usual  
scent of flames and life.

"Move! We need to get past Dragonfall Ravine soon!"

Ferdinand still looked pale even though he had taken a pill.

"The negative energy is dense here. We shouldn't stay for long," he ordered.

At the warning, the Earthfire Pavilion disciples lashed their Crimson Flame  
Steeds.

Jared and Vermilion Demon Lord flew in the air, guarding the convoy.

Since leaving the Flame Gorge, an uneasy tug had gnawed at Jared's gut.

The surroundings were eerily quiet. Dragonfall Ravine was infamous for its  
negative

energy, yet even here, vicious beasts normally prowled.

Aside from the sounds of the wheels rolling and footsteps, the rest was dead  
silence.

"Something's not right. The negative

energy is

too dense. My

technique is reacting to it,"

Demon Lord said through telepathy:

Jared nodded. He activated the chaotic celestial energy to expand his senses.

He could sense that the holes in the cliff walls were filled with a weak aura.

The aura belonged to Demonic Cultivators, not vicious beasts.

"Ambush! Prepare to battle!" Jared informed everyone through telepathy.

The next instance, a creepy laugh echoed from all sides.

"Hahaha! You're quick! But too late!"

Then every hole within the cliff walls erupted in sickly green light, hundreds upon hundreds igniting at once.

Each light was a pair of eyes.

Hundreds of black-robed figures jumped out of the holes and filled the cliff walls.

They wore the signature robes of Malevolent Path Hall, faces hidden behind demon masks, twisted weapons gleaming in their grasp.

Worse still the instant they

appeared, the ground, the cliffs, even the air pulsed with the same ghastly green runes igniting everywhere at once. .

The runes formed a colossal array covering the Dragonfall Ravine.

"Almighty Soul Devourer-activate!"

The creepy voice appeared again. The entrance and exit of the ravine were blocked

with a ten-foot green barrier.

Numerous malicious spirits crawled out of the runes and started screaming. The negative energy caused the temperature to drop vigorously.

## A Warrior Undefeatable

"Malevolent Path Hall!"

Ferdinand's face drained of color. "How did you track our every move?"

A coarse, mocking laugh rolled across the ravine. "Ferdinand, you can pose that question to the Ferryman himself once you're dead."

At the summit of the cliff, a lone figure began to appear. It was Bennett.

Blood mist covered his body. His crimson eyes stared at Jared.

"So you're Jared Chance?" Bennett licked his lips with greed.

"The Golden Dragon Bloodline is a heavenly treasure. I'm taking it today!"

"Kill everyone except Jared! I want him alive!" Bennett waved his hand.

"Kill them!"

More than a thousand demonic cultivators shrieked as one.

They rushed toward the convoy together with the malicious spirits from the array.

"Defensive array!" Ferdinand barked, driving his staff into the ground so hard the earth rang.

"Earth Fire Mystic Array!"

The remaining ten disciples quickly formed an array. A red shield appeared to protect the three carriages.

The shield was dimmer than before since the fight with the Flame Dragon and Ferdinand was badly injured. The Earthfire Pavilion was not in good shape.

Jared, Vermilion Demon Lord, and the remaining escorts gathered outside the red shield, bracing for the first impact.

A raspy cackle cut the wind. "A nobody dares to stop me?"

Three enforcers at Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Seven attacked Jared. One wielded a bone staff, one had a Blood Cry Sword, and one held a Ghost Flag.

The bone staff unleashed thousands of bone spikes.

The Blood Cry Sword sliced through the air.

The Ghost Flag waved to summon a dozens of malicious spirits.

Jared's gaze turned cold, and he took out his Dragonslayer Sword. Clank!

A chaotic sword energy shot toward the sky.

The grey sword energy crushed the bone spikes, Blood Cry Sword, and the malicious spirits.

The three enforcers from the Malevolent Path Hall cried in agony and collapsed. One of them had his shoulder severed by the sword energy and lost an arm. Blood spurted from the wound.

"A marvelous sword! It will be mine, too!" Bennett's eyes flashed in excitement.

He decided to attack.

He turned into a crimson phantom and traveled through a few hundred yards. A huge blood hand formed on the sky and rushed toward Jared.

It was an attack from a cultivator at the Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Eight.

Jared countered the attack with the Dragonslayer Sword. The grey sword energy clashed with the huge blood hand.

Boom!

A terrifying energy burst outward. Several cultivators from the Malevolent Path Hall was hit badly. They spat blood from their mouth.

Jared staggered back seven steps. He swallowed back the blood that was rising from his stomach.

Bennett retreated three steps, surprise flickering across his face. "You withstand my strike even wounded? No wonder Blackwind Gorge fell to you."

His smile sharpened. "But this is where your story ends."

He wove an intricate seal. "Endless Blood Sea! Ten Thousand Ghosts, converge!"

Blood mist roared from his body, flooding half the ravine until the place ran red.

Within the crimson tide, countless ghastly faces surfaced, screaming, then surged toward Jared in a single, ravenous wave.

This was Bennett's most famous attack, Blood Ghost Domain. The blood would corrode the flesh, while the ghosts would devour the soul.

Jared drew one steady breath. Hiding his bloodline any further was suicide.

His fingers pointed toward the center of his brows. "Dragon Soul awakens!"

Roar!

The dragon's roar did not come from Jared's body, but from the Dragonslayer Sword.

Dragonslayer quivered so violently

that the steel itself seemed to breathe. Ancient dragon runes crawled across the blade like molten gold, then peeled away as a

motten

five-clawed golden dragon tore free.

It was smaller than the one Jared

had summoned before yet still crowned with unmistakable dragon's power.

The Dragonslayer Sword had slain dragons, so the dragon souls remained in the sword.

The dragon souls were awakened by the Golden Dragon Bloodline, boosting the power.

The Golden Dragon coiled above Jared's head, jaws yawning wide. A torrent of gold dragon breath burst outward and slammed into the onrushing crimson ocean. The hiss sliced through the ravine.

The dragon breath clashed with the blood sea emitting sharp noises and blood mist.

The ghosts vanished when they touched the dragon breath.

"What? You still can summon the Golden Dragon!"

Bennett was shocked.

Jared offered no answer. He slashed with the Dragonslayer Sword. "Dragonslayer—Starbreaker!"

The golden dragon soul, combined with the sword energy, turned into a hundred yards of golden grey sword energy and fore through the blood sea toward Bennett.

Bennett bellowed and formed a blood shield before him.

Clank!

The metal clanking sound echoed through the ravine. A deep crackle

formed on the blood shield Bennett flew back while blood trickled from his lips. He was badly injured.

However, Jared was not any better.

After summoning the Golden Dragon twice, his celestial energy was depleted massively.

His face was very pale. His hand gripping the sword trembled.

"Jared, are you okay?"

Lindsay saw everything and was worried.

She tried to leave the red shield, but Elliot grabbed her tightly. "Lindsay, no!" he hissed. "Stay here! The outside's a slaughterhouse!"

"But Jared-" She fought his grip.

"He's powerful enough," Elliot shot back, tightening his hold. "He'll find a way."

Even as he spoke, a flicker of sinister delight crossed Elliot's eyes. If Jared died here, his hands would stay clean.

## **A Warrior Undefeatable**

Across the battlefield, chaos multiplied.

The Vermilion Demon Lord unleashed his hundred-foot demonic form. It had three heads and six arms. Each arm held a demonic weapon. He fought Bonefiend.

Meanwhile, Lyndon and Ethan fought with the cultivators of Malevolent Path Hall.

Each arrow from Lyndon killed one enemy. Ethan wielded his hammers to smash the enemies into pulp.

Unfortunately, there were too many members of the Malevolent Path Hall. Lyndon and Ethan were covered with wounds, bleeding non-stop.

Earthfire Pavilion red shield was weakening after countless attacks from Malevolent Path Hall and the spirits. The shield was covered with cracks.

"Elder, we can't hold much longer!"

A disciple coughed up blood and collapsed. The shield dimmed again.

Ferdinand ground his teeth, crushed a red device, and sent a red flare to the sky to call for help. However, they were far from Crimson Flame City. Reinforcements needed time to reach them.

"Stand your ground!" Ferdinand roared. "We can't die here!"

The reality was harsh.

Crack!

The Earth Fire Mystic Array eventually broke.

The cultivators of Malevolent Path Hall and hundreds of malicious spirits rushed toward the disciples.

Painful cries filled the air.

Three disciples were killed while another two disciples' consciousness field was attacked and became lifeless.

Two enforcers from the Malevolent Path Hall noticed Lindsay's status. They tried to catch her alive.

"Your Highness, watch out!"

Elliot stood before Lindsay and attacked the two enforcers with his crimson sword.

His movements looked weird because his sword never harmed the enemies, while the two enforcers did not hurt him.

He always found the right opening to dodge the attacks.

Jared noticed the scene and felt suspicious.

He had no time to dig for answers. Bennett had already shaken off the last exchange and charged again, murderous aura rolling toward Jared like a black tide.

"You surprise me, boy," Bennett rasped, wiping dark blood from the corner of his mouth. "But the game ends here. Almighty Soul Devourer-full power!"

He flung both arms to the sky and began chanting spells.

The green light shone brighter, and the runes started burning in fire.

A green light orb appeared at the center of the array filled with ghost faces.

"Ghost King of Devouring, arise!" Bennett spat a mouthful of blood and vanished into the light orb.

Roar!

The light orb burst with a deafening crack, and from its blazing debris stepped a ghost king—ten stories high, three snarling faces, six arms, each tusked jaw frozen in a snarl.

All six eyes flared open at once. The green light swept across the crowd. The cultivators felt their souls were leaving their bodies.

This was the ultimate attack of the Almighty Soul Devourer—an eldritch technique that forged a Ghost King from ten thousand ghosts, designed to assault nothing but the soul.

Even a cultivator at Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Nine would suffer grievous wounds the instant that baleful gaze locked onto the soul.

The Ghost King raised all six arms together, unleashing six green rays that speared toward Jared.

Bennett was aiming to destroy Jared's soul.

Jared's face drained of all color.

In that desperate heartbeat, the Dragon Bell hanging on his chest flew free on its own, spinning above his crown.

Clang!

Golden light rolled from the bell, shielding Jared.

Within that light, the faint silhouette of a dragon coiled and wove, weaving a barrier for his soul.

The six green rays slammed into the golden ward. Light exploded, blinding and wild, yet the barrier held.

The Dragon Bell shuddered so violently that thin cracks appeared on the surface. "Another treasure? Very well! They're all mine!" Bennett snarled with greed.

He activated the array to fire more green rays toward Jared.

Shielded by the Dragon Bell, Jared withstood the attacks, yet his face grew chalk-white. Blood trickled from his orifices. The barrier deflected the green beams but their brute force still slammed straight into his consciousness field, sending shockwaves.

Across the field, Vermilion Demon Lord was cornered by Bonefiend and three Malevolent Path Hall enforcers. His demon form was pitted and cracked in a dozen places.

Lyndon had used every arrow, and his bow snapped. The demonic cultivators all stabbed him. He activated the explosive talismans to kill the enemies before he died.

Ethan, drenched in blood, fought on with shattered hammers until Bonefiend drove a bone spear straight through his heart. He died standing, defiant.

There were only five disciples left at the Earthfire Pavilion, heavily wounded. Dozens of the Malevolent Path Hall members surrounded them.

Ferdinand fought with three enforcers. Although he managed to kill one, the other two stabbed his chest, causing two deep wounds.

Lindsay, shielded by Elliot, was unharmed, but she cried seeing her people fall.

Despair draped the battlefield like a winter shroud.

"Jared..... it seems this place will be our grave." Vermilion Demon Lord's feeble voice reached him through telepathy.

Jared ground his teeth, staring at the fallen companions, the heavily wounded Ferdinand, and the sobbing Lindsay.

I can't die here. I have promises to fulfill. I have enemies to kill!

A guttural scream-ragged and deafening-ripped from Jared, echoing into the sky.

He felt the very last drops of life source and celestial energy ignite inside him,

roaring through his veins like a flood of molten stars.

He gripped the Dragonslayer Sword while forming a seal with another hand. He muttered the ancient Draconian, "By my blood, awaken the dration's sout. By my life, unbar the gate of heaven! Forbidden Technique-Dragonblood\_Inferno!" Cóntent

Jared obtained this forbidden technique from the Golden Dragon Bloodline, which required him to use his blood essence and life source in exchange for immense power in a short time.

As the chant continued, golden fire erupted around him. It was a true fire that

burned from his Golden Dragon's blood essence.

## A Warrior Undefeatable

"Break!"

Both hands locked around Dragonslayer's hilt. The sword and the true fire formed a golden red sword energy that slashed toward the Ghost King and Bennett.

The attack used up all of his energy.

The Ghost King raised all six arms, desperate to ward off the descending sword energy.

The sound sizzled through the night like fat on a griddle.

The golden red sword energy split the Ghost King into half and also slashed Bennett.

Terror flashed across Bennett's face. He flung himself backward and hurled three sinister relics into the air.

Boom!

The three relics were destroyed. They managed to weakened the sword energy.

Slash!

The sword energy still caused a deep wound from Bennett's shoulder to the abdomen.

He flew back and hit the cliff wall crying in pain.

The Almighty Soul Devourer weakened after Bennett was badly injured.

"Now!" Jared roared, voice raw and cracking. "Everyone move!"

Summoning the last ember of strength, Jared lunged at the weakest part of the green light shield and sliced it with the Dragonslayer Sword.

A brittle crack rang out. The light shield split open, forming a gap three yards wide.

"Move!" Jared yelled over his shoulder.

Vermilion Demon Lord was the first to react. He returned to human form, grabbed Ferdinand, and rushed toward the gap.

The remaining five disciples guarded Lindsay and ran.

Elliot hesitated for a second and followed them.

"Stop them!" Bonefiend roared.

Dozens of cultivators from the Malevolent Path Hall surged toward the gap, desperate to close it.

"Back off!" Jared bellowed.

He stood before the gap, covered in blood.

His hands each held the Dragonslayer Sword and the Dragon Bell. Even though he was weak, his defiant gaze stunned the demonic cultivators.

The Dragon Bell rang again. The sound wave hit the cultivators of the Malevolent Path Hall, and they flew back spitting blood.

He killed each enemy with the Dragonslayer Sword to buy time for his companions to cross the gap.

The enemies fell one by one, while Jared's body was covered with wounds. His left shoulder had a bone spike pierced through. His abdomen had a sliced wound. His back was hit by three demonic weapons, but he never stepped back.

"Jared!" Lindsay sobbed.

Tears streaked down her cheeks as she lurched toward him, desperate to turn back. "Go! Run!" Jared yelled without looking back.

Gritting his teeth, Vermilion Demon Lord seized Lindsay by the wrist and dragged her through the gap. Elliot and the other disciples poured after them.

The instant the last figure slipped free, Jared's legs finally buckled. He dropped to one knee, bracing himself on Dragonslayer Sword.

Bonefiend's gravel-rough voice slashed across the battlefield. "Kill him!"

The surviving members of Malevolent Path Hall hurled themselves forward in a single, desperate wave.

Jared watched them come. A thin, icy grin tugged at the corner of his blood-streaked mouth.

He still had one final card to play.

"Explode!"

He activated the remaining true fire in his body.

Boom!

A cyclone of gold flames burst outward from Jared's body, flooding the scene in a heartbeat.

Dozens of charging enemies vanished into the flames. They were reduced to ashes before a scream could form.

The golden flame managed to reach Bonefiend. He screamed in agony while half of his body was burned to a crisp.

The shockwave picked Jared up like a rag doll, hurled him through the closing gap, and slammed him onto the stony mountain road beyond.

"Jared!" Lindsay's cry cracked with terror.

She dropped to her knees and pulled his limp, blood-soaked form against her chest as tears streamed unchecked.

Vermilion Demon Lord knelt beside them, pressed two fingers to Jared's neck, and finally exhaled. "He's alive, but hanging by a thread. We treat him now, or we lose him."

He glanced back at Dragonfall Ravine. The shattered green light shield's gap was closing, and the stunned enemies dared not chase after them.

Bennett and Bonefiend were heavily injured. The Malevolent Path Hall had lost the will to attack.

"Move before they catch up on us!" Vermilion Demon Lord snapped.

He slung Jared across his back. An Earthfire Pavilion disciple lifted the barely conscious Ferdinand, and the battered survivors fled into the night.

Avoiding every main road, they plunged into the shadowed forest, taking a long route to Crimson Flame City.

Grief and silence pressed on them.

Of the twenty-plus who had set out, only nine remained: Jared, Vermilion Demon Lord, Ferdinand, Lindsay, Elliot, and four injured disciples.

Everyone else had fallen.

Lindsay fed Jared healing pills, channeling gentle streams of celestial energy into his wounds while her tears refused to stop.

Elliot was filled with jealousy and rage. He went silent when he saw Lindsay's sad and weary gaze.

Days later, they finally reached Crimson Flame City's gates and went straight into Earthfire Pavilion.

The members were in an uproar after hearing about the ambush.

Ignatius Flameheart, head of the

Earthfire Pavilion, was enraged when he saw the teary Lindsay the heavily wounded Ferdinand, and the fallen disciples.

"Explain! How did Malevolent Path Hall track you and ambush you at the Dragonfall Ravine?" Ignatius yelled.

His aura suppressed the survivors.

Ferdinand woke up after an

emergency rescue. "Mr. Ignatius The incident was strange. The Malevolent Rath Halls ambush was... so precise... as if they knew our route..."

Ignatius's gaze cut across the crowd. "Did our people tell them our location?"

Uneasy eyes flicked from face to face while the question coiled through every mind.

The Malevolent Path Hall knew the Earthfire convoy's location and the time they left Flame Gorge.

Moreover, they even set an enormous array at the Dragonfall Ravine to trap them. There must be a traitor among them.

## A Warrior Undefeatable

Elliot stepped forward, dropped to one knee, and said, "Mr. Ignatius, I think the traitor might be among the escorts we have hired. We don't know their background. They would do anything for money. Moreover, our people were the only ones to survive. Most of the escorts were dead."

Lindsay snapped her head up and glared at Elliot. "What do you mean? Jared is also an escort. He almost died trying to save us! Are you suspecting him?"

"Lindsay, you misunderstand me. I'm not talking about Mr. Chance. I know what he did for us, but the other escorts I'm not so sure of. For instance, Lyndon and Ethan might be the traitors, so they died to hide their real identities. Oh, Vermilion is a demonic cultivator. He might have connections with the Malevolent Path Hall," Elliot explained.

He was trying to shift the blame to someone else

Lindsay's whole frame quivered. "You-"

"You can suspect me, but you're the most suspicious among us," Vermilion Demon Lord retorted.

Elliot's brows knitted together. "What are you suggesting?"

"That ambush was too precise. Only Earthfire Pavilion's higher-ups knew the retreat route. And "

Ignatius leaned forward. "And what?"

"And," Vermilion Demon Lord continued, "I noticed during the fight that the Malevolent Path Hall avoided Elliot. They didn't attack him frequently. As for Elliot, his attacks were slow, more like doing a show."

Silence dropped over the hall.

Every gaze swung to Elliot.

Color drained from Elliot's cheeks, then rushed back in a crimson wave of anger. "Lies! Me? A traitor? I'm loyal to Earthfire Pavilion. I pledge to protect Princess Lindsay. These wounds prove it! Mr. Ignatius, Vermillion is framing me!"

Lindsay faltered. In the chaos of battle, she had only focused on Ferdinand and Jared.

She did not notice Elliot's actions.

Ignatius stared at Elliot, then turned his gaze toward the unconscious Jared. He said, "I'll investigate this matter myself. Before the truth is revealed, no one is allowed to leave Earthfire Pavilion. Elliot, you rest first. Lindsay, you stay and tell me the whole incident. Everyone, go to rest."

"Yes, Mr. Ignatius!"

Elliot shot Vermilion Demon Lord a glare and turned to leave.

Carrying Jared across his back, Vermilion Demon Lord followed a disciple to a quiet chamber.

Once the heavy door thudded shut, Vermilion set up a soundproof spell. He looked at Jared and sighed. "Kid, you've gone too far this time. You almost died."

Vermilion felt guilty since Jared approached the Earthfire Pavilion because of him. Vermilion drew out several precious healing pills, slipped them past Jared's cracked lips, and steered their power with a steady pulse of energy.

Jared was heavily wounded. His meridians were badly severed.

Without his strong foundation and the Golden Dragon Bloodline, he might have died.

Jared was unconscious for three days.

When his eyelids finally fluttered open, he found Vermilion seated beside him, unmoving, eyes rimmed red from sleepless watch.

"Awake at last?" Vermilion exhaled, shoulders easing. "How do you feel?"

Jared tried to answer, but pain roared through every joint. His throat felt scorched, and no sound would come.

"Stay still. Your injuries are grave," Vermilion warned.

He helped Jared sit, tipped a wooden cup against his cracked lips. "We're back inside Earthfire Pavilion, safe for the moment. Yet..."

After two shallow gulps, Jared forced words past his ravaged voice box. "How long have I been unconscious?"

"Three days and three nights," Vermilion answered.

Jared's brow tightened. "That long? Then we must leave the Earthfire Pavilion at once and find a hidden place where I can heal in peace."

He planned to find a secluded place to heal in the Pentacarna Tower, which could save time.

Three days would grant twelve months of focused recovery in the Pentacarna Tower.

Within that span his shattered body would knit itself whole.

In the reality, he needed at least a few months to recover.

"We can't," Vermilion said, shaking his head. "Ignatius has forbidden anyone to leave until the traitor is discovered."

He went on to explain Ignatius' growing suspicion that someone within the Earthfire Pavilion had told the enemy about their location.

Jared frowned, fingers clenching the blanket. It is strange. How did the

Malevolent Path Hall know exactl

where we would retreat after

harvesting the Flame Spirit Herb?"

Vermilion Demon Lord spread his hands. "If we leave now, we'll look guilty. Innocent or not, we become the traitors in their eyes."

Jared fell silent and finally nodded, accepting the cornered truth.

He felt the weak celestial energy and wounded meridians in his body. "F we stayed here, my wounds would need months to heal," he said with a bitter smile.

"Months?" Vermilion's brows knit even tighter.

"Bennett may be wounded, but

Malevolent Path Hall commandet

vast strength Stronger members will come after you long before those months pass."

"I know," Jared whispered, eyes hardening with stubborn fire. "That's why I need to find a way to recover quickly."

While they were talking, they heard someone outside the room.