

A Warrior Undefeatable 5941-5950

A Warrior Undefeatable

Soon, another message came in.

A beam of sword light split the roof tiles, condensed, and spoke with Oswald's hard, distant tone. "Jared, the situation has changed. Witherbone Demon from the northwest of level twelve, Great Elder Bloodsea from the southeast, and three other reclusive old elites have all emerged. They are headed for Malevolent Path Hall."

The reports fell like iron hammers, each blow smashing deeper into every heart present, ringing with the promise of a storm none of them could yet see a path through.

The Five-Element Grand Hall, which moments ago pulsed with the soaring energy of the Five Elements, now lay under a blanket of dread. Columns of colored light still flickered overhead, yet every flicker only sharpened the silence below.

Across the pentagonal room, the Five-Branch Elders exchanged uneasy glances. Resolve had barely taken root, and already the world seemed bent on crushing it in one ruthless twist of fate.

Aurelian turned first, his steel-gray eyes settling on Jared. He waited, breath held, to see how the sect's newly anointed Elder Guardian would answer doom knocking at their doors.

"Immortality? Resurrection? What a load of rubbish!" Vermilion Demon Lord shouted, every crimson rune on his armor flaring. "We know very well that the Door of Reincarnation is nothing but a trap that devours your divine soul!"

"We know, but the others do not," Gerald replied calmly. "Or perhaps they refuse to know. When your final hour approaches, even a one-in-ten-thousand gamble feels worth every chip on the table."

Winslow let out a weary sigh. "Such is human nature-promise eternal life, whisper the return of lost loved ones, and you pierce every armor a cultivator owns."

Jared said nothing.

He walked to the latticed window and stared toward the Wailing Soul Plains. Mountains and rivers lay between, yet he could almost see the storm of power gathering there, black

as night, hungry as winter. How mad will the withered monsters become for that sliver of hope?

What carnage will a sect like the Ninefold Nether Palace unleash once it believes it can attain immortality? And of course, only someone like Malcolm can toss out bait so poisonous that armies march to swallow it of their own accord. Well played, Malcolm. Well played...

The Anti-Demon Alliance, barely born, now faced collapse from within while fiends circled outside.

Aurelian drew a slow breath, words catching in his throat. "Jared..."

Jared turned back. There was no panic in his gaze, no despair-only a calm that looked as if it had watched the board ten moves farther than anyone else.

"Mr. Metalhart and fellow Five-Branch Elders, if any of you choose to quit this alliance, I will hold no grudge. The battlefield has shifted. Pressing on may very well spell utter ruin for the Five-Element Sect," he said, voice clear enough to slice marble,

The elders jolted as though struck by unseen thunder.

Ferrum squared his shoulders, gold-thread cloak snapping. "Elder Jared, do you take us for fence-sitters? Since we have performed the Five-Element Ceremonial Salute, it means we have acknowledged you as our Elder Guardian. From that moment, we're on the same front! We rise and fall together!"

Pyre slammed his palm on the jade table, sparks leaping from his sleeve. "Exactly! Malevolent Path Hall's lies might trick those foolish old geezers, but the Five-Element Sect upholds righteousness! We will never yield or do the bidding of a monster!"

The three other elders nodded in fierce harmony.

Aurelian let out a laugh, grim and determined. "See, Jared? The Five-Element Sect has made its choice-we will not retreat. At worst... We will go down with our enemies."

Jared looked at everyone with deep regard and bowed. "Thank you."

He strode to the center of the hall, voice ringing from pillar to pillar. "In that case, let us plan-coldly, completely-how to carve a path through impossible odds and come out alive."

Meanwhile, before the Door of Reincarnation at Malevolent Path Hall, Malcolm and Morven faced one another beneath the towering bone arch, smiles warm as spring on the surface, eyes colder than the steel hidden behind their backs.

Countless petitioners packed the clearing, necks craned toward the two sovereigns who lorded over the summit of level twelve. Reverence blazed in their eyes-half worship, half frenzy.

"Morven, for you to march the entire Ninefold Nether Palace here yourself is Malevolent Path Hall's greatest blessing, Malcolm said. "With your strength beside mine, the so called:

be

Anti Demon Alliance will so owns."

reduced to a circus of petty clowns."

Morven's onyx eyes flicked past Malcolm to the cyclopean Door of Reincarnation that loomed behind him, then drifted back, calm and unreadable. "You're too kind, M. Vayne. The mysteries of the Door of Reincarnation are endless if your hall is willing to share the promise of eternal life it guards, the gain shall be ours no less than yours."

Their gazes met. Two thin smiles-one venomous, one icy-curved in unison. Bone cups touched with a brittle chime, and both drank deeply.

The instant bone met bone, a tremor rolled out of the door.

Hum!

A tidal shockwave-immense, primordial burst from the Door of Reincarnation's abyss, nothing like the greedy suction or the gray odor of death that had seeped from 4t before. It was the breath of creation itself, a power older than every

written law.

The next second, Malcolm's goblet exploded in his fist, and the liquor vanished as vapor before it reached the ground.

Malcolm spun. Gray-white pupils locked on the Door of Reincarnation, and for the first time he looked afraid.

Morven's pupils contracted to pinpoints. Ninefold Nether Demonic Aura writhed around him, then shrank inward as if it had met its natural predator.

Every follower in the field felt it too—an invisible gaze sweeping through their souls, as cold and indifferent as the heavens regarding ants. Terror started where words

end.

Someone's voice broke on a whisper. "W-What is happening?"

"It's the Door of Reincarnation... I-It's shaking!"

"It's shaking a hundred times harder than before!"

Before them rose the towering black Bone Gate, impossibly tall. Gray flames inside every skull-eye erupted, weaving in midair until they drew a titanic human outline— eyes shut-suspended against the sky.

Then, the outline opened its "eyes."

Twin vortices of spinning gray void—no pupils, no whites, only depth without end— stared outward.

Light bled from the heavens. Day itself seemed eaten by those eyes.

A voice spoke inside every soul. "I am the Lord of Reincarnation."

The declaration did not travel through the air. It was as though a billion beings whispered at once, and the foundation of the world replied ancient, majestic, unquestionable.

A Warrior Undefeatable

Malcolm dropped to one knee. Icy sweat streamed down his brow. He had kept the Door for years, yet he had never truly met the master behind it—until now.

It was only a concept, a symbol of the Laws of Reincarnation... Or so I thought.

Morven

nearly sixty millennia old and undefeated by even High Immortal Realm Level Four cultivators—stood rigid. Confronted by those eyes, even defiance refused to form.

This was oppression at the level of existence itself. No thought of resistance could survive beneath it.

Again, the voiceless voice rolled through every heart. "Why have you gathered here? State your desires."

The voice of the Lord of Reincarnation rolled across the sky like distant thunder, solemn and unhurried. Those ash-white eyes-vortices that seemed to drink in all light—drifted over the sea of cultivators below, counting every trembling soul one by

one.

For a heartbeat, the Wailing Soul Plains fell into a silence so complete it felt funereal. Then, somewhere in that ocean of fear, one desperate throat found its courage and split the hush.

"Immortality! We want immortality!"

"Resurrection! Bring my beloved back from the grave!"

"A breakthrough! I want to break through the bottleneck!"

The cries multiplied until they rose in crashing waves. Every defector dropped to both knees, foreheads pounding the soil as they worshipped the burning silhouette hanging in the heavens.

The Lord of Reincarnation remained in silence, his flame-rimmed form perfectly still.

Within those swirling eyes flickered, for the briefest instant, something that looked suspiciously like amusement.

"Your wishes are simple," he said, the words cold as winter steel. "But they demand a price."

Before the final syllable faded, he lifted a single arm forged from ghostly flame and made the faintest downward sweep.

There was no earth-shaking roar, no cataclysmic burst of force-only a soft resonance.

Buzz!

Reality itself shuddered as the laws governing the Wailing Soul Plains rewrote themselves in an instant.

Gray-white currents poured from the Door of Reincarnation like billions of hair-thin tentacles, darting forward to stab with cruel precision into the forehead of every kneeling follower.

"Ah!"

Agonized screams erupted, climbing higher until even the clouds seemed to tremble from the sound.

Each person felt a glacial force invade the very seat of the divine soul, tearing through meridians, burning flesh, remolding foundations. The pain was akin to ten thousand ants gnawing at the heart, and it didn't take long before weaker cultivators dropped into merciful unconsciousness.

Just as torment crested, the heavens detonated with three thunderous booms.

Boom!

Boom!

Boom!

Before long, bursts of breakthrough aura speared skyward like pillars of pale fire, one after another.

"I-I've done it! I've attained Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Eight! Three millennia of shackles, shattered!" a white-haired elder howled, tears streaming down his face.

"So have I! I've gone from Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Five to Level Seven!"

"My hidden wounds... Every injury I got from three hundred years ago is gone! I've recovered fully!"

"Lifespan! I've gained at least five hundred more years to live!"

Shouts of wonder, sobs of relief, and wild laughter braided together, ringing across the plains in an unbroken chorus.

Those who had reeked of decay only moments earlier now stood reborn-withered skin plumped, gray locks turned glossy black, the stoop of age replaced by the vigor of youth.

Yet even more astounding were the old elites who had lingered for ages at Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Nine, fiends whose every breath once made lesser cultivators tremble. What happened next shattered every concept sacred.

held

A thunderclap ripped across the void. In its wake rolled a pulse so savage and vast that space itself seemed to buckle.

That shockwave burst from deep within Morven's chest. For nearly ten millennia, he had clawed at the iron wall of his own bottleneck, trapped a heartbeat short of High Immortal Realm Level Four.

Now-under a single, unseen stimulus—the barrier splintered like glass. He did not merely step across the threshold. He vaulted straight into High Immortal Realm Level Four middle phase, power roaring through veins that glowed the color of fresh magma.

Morven stared down at his hands. Black pupils widened with incredulity as he tested out his demonic techniques. Every facet of his being realm, arcane circulation, the very purity of his demonte auta, even his grasp of the laws of nature-had leapt an entire order.

"H-How is this possible?" he whispered, voice quivering, terror and awe braided so tightly they were indistinguishable.

Around him, the other Top Level Heavenly Immortal Realm Level Nine cultivators-elites once hailed as untouchable elders-did not break through the final waller each ascended half a step. They now hovered a single breath from the

High Immortal Realm, senses ringing with unbelieving joy.

It had taken only one casual sweep of an unseen hand for tens of thousands of cultivators to level up together.

In that instant, every doubt, hesitation, and hidden scheme dissolved like mist struck by the burning sun.

A dull crack echoed as knees slammed the frozen floor.

Morven dropped first, forehead thudding against the icy stone. When he spoke, fervor blazed hotter than the fava now coursing through his meridians. "Long live the Reincarnation! I-Morven

Oord of

Bloodshade of the Nimefold Nether Palace swear eternal fealty.

Command me through flame or

abyss. I shall face death a thousand

times without regret!"

The sound spread like falling dominoes. Tens of thousands collapsed in unison, their

prostrations swelling into a tidal roar that seemed ready to upend the heavens.

"We pledge eternal allegiance to the Lord of Reincarnation!"

"We will brave any danger, face a thousand deaths without hesitation!"

"Long live the Lord of Reincarnation!"

Malcolm also knelt, but the blaze in his companions' eyes never touched his own. There, only cold dread flickered.

This power had shattered every paradigm he understood. With a flick of the wrist, it had rewritten the cultivation of tens of thousands—a feat even legends of the Golden Immortal Realm might fail to match.

If a gesture held such force, what magnitude of reality hid behind the Lord of Reincarnation?

A deeper chill crawled across his spine. Within that effortless wave, Malcolm had sensed a familiar cadence—the aura of the three ashen humanoids who guarded the Reincarnation Pool—but magnified beyond comprehension.

Could a presence more terrible than those wardens stand behind them?

High above the ruined hall, the Lord of Reincarnation hovered like a living eclipse. Those eyes—twin gray-white vortices—drifted across the ocean of kneeling souls before, at last, pinning Malcolm to the stone.

In that single glance, the latter's spirit iced over. Every buried secret, each half-formed scheme, every yesterday he hoped to forget unfolded—naked, helpless—inside the entity's indifferent stare.

Before he could react, the voice of the Lord of Reincarnation echoed deep within his soul. "You have done well. Continue to harvest divine souls. When the moment is ripe, I will bestow upon you true immortality."

With those words, the blazing outline of the entity dissolved, ember by ember, into the weary sky.

The swirling eyes lingered on the world one last heartbeat, then shuttered, and the Door of Reincarnation fell silent. The blue flames inside the skull-crowned arch sank back to a sullen whisper, yet Malevolent Path Hall would never again be the same.

Tens of thousands of cultivators remained prostrate, unable or unwilling to rise. New power coursed beneath their skin; age spots vanished, flesh tightened, and tears gleamed on faces suddenly made young.

A Warrior Undefeatable

From every direction, voices rose. "The Lord of Reincarnation is real!"

"With a mere gesture, he remade heaven and earth! He's a real God!"

"We chose to follow the right person at last!"

Morven pushed himself to his feet. The sneer that had once haunted his obsidian eyes was gone, replaced by reverence so complete it looked painful.

He pivoted toward Malcolm and, with formal grace, bowed in salute.

"Mr. Vayne, from this day forward, the entire Ninefold Nether Palace answers only to the Lord of Reincarnation. Command us-through blade or flame, we will not refuse."

The other old elites-newly promoted and trembling with raw power-echoed the vow, bowing as dutiful children before a beloved teacher.

Malcolm swallowed the chill that still clawed at his heart and let a reassuring smile settle on his lips. "Fellow cultivators, you overstate my worth. Since we've all witnessed the power of the Door of Reincarnation, we are one family. Now, let us show the shortsighted what the power of reincarnation truly means."

His gray-white pupils cut toward the distant silhouette of the Five-Element Range, and a blade of winter light flashed across them.

"Issue my order. The army marches at once we will raze the Anti-Demon Alliance to dust."

"Raze the Anti-Demon Alliance!"

"Raze the Anti-Demon Alliance!"

The cries rolled across the mountains like thunder, upending the clouds themselves. Far within the Door of Reincarnation, in a silent world the color of ash, three ashen humanoids knelt before a Bone Tower that climbed past sight.

At the pinnacle, a blurred silhouette withdrew its gaze from the mortal realm and released a sigh so faint it might have been a drifting thought.

"The aura of chaos thickens with every breath of the cosmos... That variable is growing faster than we anticipated. Looks like we'll have to bring our plan forward," the shadowed figure said, his voice as calm as a blade drawn in the dark.

"Master, do you need us to take action?" the nearest ashen humanoid asked, its words clattering out like gears grinding in an empty hall.

The blurred silhouette stood silent for a beat, then gave a slow, almost ceremonial shake of the head.

"No, it's not time yet. Let the insignificant beings outside the door claw one another first. When the chaos is ripe, that will be the hour we harvest."

Pale currents coiled around the Bone Tower in a patient spiral, as though a nest of venomous serpents waited for the moment to strike.

Far away in the Five-Element Range, Jared snapped his eyes open, breath sharp as a knife through silk.

A heartbeat earlier, the nascent star anchored in his elixir field had shuddered. Unbidden, his chaotic celestial energy surged, warning of a threat vast enough to drown worlds.

He turned toward the Wailing Soul Plains. The five-coloured sigil on the back of his hand pulsed with heat, each throb an urgent drumbeat no one else could hear.

"That aura just now... Is it the true master of the Door of Reincarnation?"

Behind him, Blaine and the others had felt that same sky-rending pressure. Every face had gone the colour of old ashes.

"Jared, what was that just now?" Blaine asked.

Jared drew a long breath, anchoring the thud of his heartbeat beneath a mask of resolve.

"Time is running short for all of us."

His fingers tightened around Dragonslayer Sword. Fire-steel resolve flashed across his eyes.

"Send word—every ally, every outpost, arm yourselves now. Malevolent Path Hall's army is already on its way. At their pace, they will be at our gates inside three days." The true battle now loomed so close it pressed against the lungs of every defender. Three days-no more than the flick of a finger in a cultivator's lifetime.

Yet for the newly formed Anti-Demon Alliance hidden in the Five-Element Range, those same three days stretched into what felt like three centuries.

Blaine emptied Myriad Beast Valley of every creature still able to fight. Three thousand Ironback Earth Dragons, five thousand Gale Wolves, eight hundred Thunderwing Golden Eagles, plus hundreds of rare demon beasts, gathered into a living legion nearly ten thousand strong.

The army split into ten warbands, each commanded by an elite beastmaster. They fanned out to occupy the outer valleys, their roars rolling like distant thunder.

High atop the range, Oswald led nine hundred sword cultivators in raising the Nine-Heavens Sword Array.

Nine hundred flying blades hung suspended, their intersecting light weaving a vast net that wrapped the mountains in razor-edge brilliance.

Aurelian rallied every disciple of the Five-Element Sect. Guided by the Five-Branch Elders, they buried three thousand six hundred Five-Element Origin Stones in the roots of the range.

Once kindled, the stones would awaken a Heaven-Sealing Barrier five hundred miles wide, magnifying elemental law a hundred-fold and crushing any foe who lacked the five-element brand.

Jared stood on the central peak, eyes sweeping across the land soon to become a slaughter ground.

For those three days, he barely slept. He merely waited, sword across his knees, while dawns and dusks bled together like pages in a book he had no choice but to finish.

Deep inside Jared's elixir field, a lone nascent star turned without rest.

Each slow revolution drew threads t

of chaotic celestial energy into.

ribbons of gold, azure, vermilion, jade, and obsidian that flowed outward and etched a five-colored brand across the back of his hand.

With every pulse of that light, his grasp of the Law of Chaos sharpened. After merging the five elements into one, he now danced at the knife-edge between creation and oblivion, commanding a balance he had never touched before. Yet it was still not enough.

The memory of the Lord of Reincarnation, altering heaven and earth with a casual sweep of his sleeve, hung over him like a shadow too vast to escape.

"Report-!" A distant sentry's voice cracked the dawn silence.

A streak of sword light winged in and resolved into Winslow. Landing beside Jared, he pressed one palm to his heart, face drawn tight. "Qu scout have returned. Malevolent Path Hall is closing in. Their O vanguard consists of three thousand Seuf Hunters, personally led by the Soul-Devouring Puppet. The main force is three thousand disciples of the Ninefold Nether Palace, with Morven overseeing them. The rear consists of allied forces from various factions. In total, there are more than twenty thousand of them.

Malcolm is bringing up the rear."

"Twenty thousand..." Jared closed his eyes for a heartbeat. "And our side?"

"Myriad Beast Valley can field nine thousand demon beasts. The Heavenly Sword Pavilion can spare nine hundred sword cultivators, and the Five-Element Sect stands with three thousand disciples. Including the wandering cultivators who answered our call, we have fifteen thousand in total. While our numbers are not far apart, they have six High Immortal Realm cultivators, whereas we have only three. In terms of top-tier combat power, the gap is overwhelming."

Jared opened his eyes and looked toward the eastern rim of the world.

There, the sky had not darkened with night but with the tide of bodies surging over the horizon—an unbroken black mass that blotted out the newborn light of dawn.

He turned, letting his voice roll across the Five Peaks. "My friends—do you still remember why we fight?"

For one fragile moment, the mountains stood mute, as though even the wind held its breath.

"For truth!" the disciples of the Five-Element Sect answered first, their cry ringing like bronze bells between the cliffs.

The swords of Heavenly Sword Pavilion rose in flawless unison, their points piercing the cloud-banks overhead. "For justice!"

From the ridges, nine thousand demon beasts of Myriad Beast Valley hurled a thunderous roar skyward—an answer older than language itself. "For life and death!"

Jared nodded once. Dragonslayer Sword slid free of its scabbard, catching the newborn sun and scattering gold-crimson shards of light across the assembled ranks.

"Then, we fight!"

A Warrior Undefeatable

Jared felt the sun still high but losing its warmth when his inner clock marked three quarters past noon.

A tremor shivered up the mountain. Far below, the first ranks of Malevolent Path Hall spilled into view, their banners a dark bruise against the valley floor.

The column thickened until it looked like locusts devouring the land. Wherever the mass rolled, grass browned, saplings folded, and every rabbit-trail went silent, as though life itself hurried out of their path.

Rotting breath rose from the army, a swirl of grievance, death, and raw demonic hunger. The fumes smeared the sky into a greasy gray, closing over the peaks like a lid on a coffin.

At the very front drifted the Soul-Devouring Puppet. Its chalk-pale eyes moved without hurry, raking across the range. When the gaze slid over Jared's ridge, cold pinpricks needled his skin, as if the thing had tasted him already.

Behind the construct, three thousand Soul Hunters locked arms into the Soul- Seizing Grand Array. Gray-white currents surged between them, tides of starved spirits seeking flesh. The chorus of distant wails gnawed at Jared's ear even this high up.

To the left, Morven lounged inside a black war-chariot dragged by nine horned dragon corpses. Three Ghost Kings and nine Grand Nether Envoys flanked him, while disciples of the Ninefold Nether Palace knotted into the Nether Styx Formation.

Each gust from that quarter carried a hundred different screams.

On the right, a ragged coalition pressed forward—sects that had bartered conscience for favor. Among them stalked the Witherbone Demon and Great Elder Bloodsea, plus three other reclusive fiends. Their auras flashed like blades, honed by whatever bounty the Lord of Reincarnation had granted.

Dead center, Malcolm reclined upon a throne of fused bones borne by pallid porters. Nine Elders orbited him like slow moons, their breaths curling in patterns Jared could not quite read yet felt compelled to distrust.

Malcolm rolled an ashen bone pearl between his fingers. Each turn of the bead left frost on the air. The man's eyes glittered—two chips of winter—never once blinking. "Jared, come out and answer!"

The shout cracked off every slope, filled every ravine, until even the smaller birds hiding in stone crevices burst free in panic.

Jared stepped from Gold Peak's summit and let the wind lift his coat. Gerald, the Vermilion Demon Lord, Blaine, Oswald, and Aurelian fanned out behind him, an uneven crescent that still felt solid under his spine.

Two armies faced each other now. The collective intent of thousands pressed upward, a spear aimed straight at the clouds. Jared's lungs tasted iron.

He projected his voice, not raising it, merely letting it ride the mountain air. "Malcolm, you swayed the weak with lies, fed the Door of Reincarnation with innocent souls. Your ledger overflows. Heaven itself recoils."

A pause, small yet absolute.

"Today is the day that debt comes due."

Malcolm threw his head back and laughed. The sound rolled like boulders down a gorge. "Child, you dare lecture me on heaven? The Lord of Reincarnation has granted revelation. Tens of thousands under my banner have broken their shackles. That, boy, is destiny. Stand against it, and you court annihilation."

His gaze swept the range. "Five-Element Sect, Heavenly Sword Pavilion, Myriad Beast Valley—one last chance. Surrender now, hand over Jared, and the Lord may overlook past errors, may even grant you a taste of eternity. Persist..."

He let the threat hang for a breath, then finished, every syllable iced and sharp. "After today, not even your hounds will survive."

A hush settled, too thick even for wind.

Aurelian's shoulders began to shake. At first Jared thought it fear, then the older man's laughter broke loose, rough and rising.

"Morven!" Aurelian called across the no-man's-land, voice booming. "Hear that? Your master wants new pets. Should I beg for a collar, or will you fetch it over personally?"

Morven's obsidian pupils flashed murder before his face smoothed to granite. "Aurelian, the Lord's might lies beyond your comprehension. Spend what breath you have left in prayer."

Aurelian barked a single word back, tasting it like wine. "Might?"

"Come on out, coward behind the door! If you have a spine, face me with real steel!"

Heat pooled in Blaine's chest as he hurled the words; the sharp taste of iron rode his breath, daring the hidden foe to flinch.

Oswald did not bother to answer.

His fingers slid across the worn leather grip, and the muted scrape of metal left Blaine's skin prickling.

Only three inches of the blade showed, yet a chill wind leapt from it and clawed upward into the night sky.

Blaine let out a low laugh. "So that's your answer. You're all in a hurry to die."

The promise of combat spread through his veins like hot liquor, steadying his pulse instead of racing it.

Malcolm rose with deliberate ease, dust rolling from his cloak.

When the man's gray eyes found Blaine, they gleamed like stones that had never known light. "Then we kill."

"Kill!"

The single word ripped from a hundred throats at once, a pressure wave that slapped Blaine's eardrums.

The hillside itself seemed to roar back, echo stacked upon echo until sound became a solid wall.

Metal shrieked, soil burst, and the night cracked open-battle was no longer a threat but a fact.

Blaine moved first because waiting tasted like rust.

He flung an arm toward the valley mouth where his beasts seethed behind the tree line.

"Disciples of Myriad Beast Valley-send the tide! Break their vanguard!"

The command left him feeling lighter, as though the words themselves shifted the weight of the world onto his enemies.

"Roar!"

The answering cry split stone; every beast in the dark replied as one throat.

From the outer gullies of the Five-Element Range came a rising thunder that was not thunder at all.

The ground vibrated through Blaine's boots, turning bone to tuning fork.

Nine thousand beasts burst through the treeline like a dam had failed, flooding toward the three thousand Soul Hunters who barred the pass.

"Ironback Earth Dragons led the surge, each the size of a cottage and sheathed in plates of living rock.

When they charged, the world shook; Soul Hunter ranks folded like paper screens beneath those armored skulls.

Gale Wolves spun into cerulean cyclones, weaving between giants, claws peeling soul-steel as easily as bark.

Overhead, Thunderwing Golden Eagles stooped; gold lightning rained like shrapnel, every bolt punching clear through clustered shields.

In heartbeats the beast tide tore three wounds into the enemy line, raw and bleeding.

Yet the Soul Hunters were chosen for nights like this.

Their first panic cooled; formations locked together again, shields overlapping, wills braided.

Three thousand banners snapped forward as one; ghost-white runes flared and a keening note scythed across the field.

The sound had no body, yet Blaine felt it pass through his ribs like a saw.

"Aoo!"

One of the Earth Dragons shrieked, a child's cry trapped in a mountain's throat. Blood filmed the eyes of nearby beasts; confusion curdled into frenzy, and they turned on the closest hides, friend or foe.

Blaine's jaw tightened. "Lion King!"

The name cracked out like a whip, demanding order from chaos.

The Three-Headed Flame Lion King roared back; each maw breathed a different truth-fire, ice, thunder.

The forces braided midair into a tri-colored pillar that slammed into the Soul Hunter core.

"Boom!"

Light blinded, heat peeled away the night, and for one stolen second even the wind forgot to move.

Where the pillar passed, banners burst like overripe fruit; dozens of armored figures evaporated, leaving only steaming footprints on blackened soil.

The Puppet shifted first, a subtle stiffening of its ash-colored frame that made the battlefield hush inside Blaine's chest as if the coming strike had already stolen the air.

Gray-white eyes fixed on the Three-Headed Flame Lion King, and its spear flickered-one heartbeat it grip, the next it was a streak aimed dead at the creature's central brow.

trembled in the Puppetencat.

"Your fight is with me!"

er

He launched upward, muscles screaming, and the moment his boots left the earth a slab-sized battle-axe of bleached beastbone flooded his g, heavier than

memory yet perfectly known.

Blaine met the incoming spear with a downward cleave.

Clang!

The collision rang like iron gods arguing, the shock ripping open the flesh between his thumb and forefinger and flinging him backward through brittle rock.

He slammed into a cliff face; half the wall caved before spitting him out in a cloud of dust and stone needles.

Pain blazed clear and wet, but he rolled to his feet, spat blood, and felt a grin he could not stop stretching across his bruised mouth.

"Top Level High Immortal Realm, first grade good," he panted, wiping the red smear from his jaw; the words tasted of copper and satisfaction. Without waiting for the ache in his hands to settle, he hurled himself back at the Puppet, axe sweeping wide, sparks already screaming in the air between them.

All around, the beast tide crashed against the Soul Hunters in a roar so constant it felt like the sky had turned to teeth.

Across the battlefield's boiling haze, Oswald rose into open air, boots never touching the dust, his iron sword sliding free of its scabbard with a deliberate hiss. "Heavenly Sword Pavilion disciples," his voice cut through thunder, "form the Nine Heavens Sword Array-slay the devils!"

"At once!" Nine hundred throats answered as one.

Their swords lifted, points tilting toward the storm-shredded clouds like a forest of steel yearning for lightning.

A Warrior Undefeatable

Whum!

Energy snapped into the waiting formation; the Nine Heavens Sword Array awoke like a celestial beast stretching, every rune on the pavilion blades burning silver.

Nine hundred flying swords wove a lattice a league wide, and inside that lattice sword-light condensed into a hard, silver rain that poured toward the ranks of the Ninefold Nether Palace.

"Petty tricks." Morven's laugh held no warmth.

He flung out a robed arm. "Nether Styx Formation-rise."

Three thousand disciples knelt in perfect unison, seals flashing between their fingers as black miasma coiled upward.

Above them a titanic onyx palace took shape in the clouds, its gates yawning open to vomit a tide of wailing specters that slammed headlong into the falling swords. Steel hissed against ectoplasmic flesh each impact a spray of light and shadow.

Explosions rolled across the firmament in ragged succession, louder than thunder, too many to count.

Swordlight sparked in Oswald's pupils, sharp enough to cut breath. Space folded over him. In the same heartbeat he vanished.

Cold wind slapped his cheeks when reality snapped open again—this time only ten paces before Morven's armored war cart.

"Morven, take my strike!" Oswald's roar hammered the frozen air.

He swung the iron sword in a bare, horizontal arc—no flourish, no mercy, only the terrifying purity of blade and will fused as one.

For an instant he felt nothing of himself; steel thought for him, hunted for him.

Across the blood-slicked cart, Morven's pitch-black irises narrowed. The corpse-thin lord slowly unfolded from his throne.

One skeletal finger lifted, drifting through empty air as though outlining a doorway only he could see.

"Nether Styx Finger." The murmur sounded like soil falling on a coffin lid.

Blade met bone.

All that existed between them was intent-his burning, the other's abyssal.

The sky forgot how to breathe; nothing moved, not even dust.

Edge and fingertip touched.

No ring of metal, no burst of force-only a hair-thin black seam silently spreading, carving the heavens apart.

One breath. Two. Three.

Boom!

The universe remembered its voice and screamed it.

A shockwave detonated outward, using their locked wills as its fuse.

The blast punched him back. Wind howled past as he tumbled a hundred paces before catching himself.

The iron sword quivered in his grip, a hair-thin crack crawling along its face like frost.

Copper tasted sweet at the corner of his mouth, but his eyes burned brighter. "High Immortal, fourth level-so that's all you've got!"

Morven's stare cut colder than his magic, yet disbelief flickered in that darkness. He had expected Oswald to break, not bend.

Oswald felt Jared's earlier words echo between his ribs-steady the heart, let the blade listen.

That counsel now roared through every tendon; not even Morven's abyss could drown it.

"Sword masters—always a nuisance." Morven's voice was ice grinding on stone. The words had not finished falling before Oswald lunged back into the storm, cracked sword screaming for blood.

They tore across the sky, his silver arcs clashing against coils of black miasma.

Each collision fractured another shard of firmament, starlight bleeding through the wounds.

Oswald flung every secret he had into the blade—and still it begged for more.

He felt the hot pull in his chest; sacred blood ignited, scent of iron turning sweet and dizzying.

Reason whispered that his body would soon fail, but despair was quieter than duty.

If he held anything back, Morven would erase him in three strokes.

A flicker below drew his eye-sparks blooming across the Five-Element Sect's valley.

At the center of the range, Aurelian anchored the peaks while five elders guarded the flanks and three thousand disciples held their posts.

"Five-Element Heaven-Sealing Barrier, rise!"

His fingers locked into the final seal; the tendons in his wrists burned with the strain. He forced the word out, a command more felt than heard, vibrating in his chest like iron struck.

"Enact!" The five elders answered in unison, their voices overlapping until the single syllable thundered against the inside of his skull.

A low tremor rolled up through the soles of his boots as three thousand six hundred embedded origin stones flared at once, their light stabbing upward through the earth's crust.

From each summit a different hue erupted—gold, green, indigo, crimson, umber— five spears of light spearing into the clouds before knitting together into a single, towering shell that curved over the entire range.

Pressure thickened inside the barrier; every subtle current of the elemental laws suddenly roared like a river at floodstage.

Beyond the shimmering shell, enemy cultivators who relied on foreign arts reeled; dark vapor around them stuttered, their silhouettes wobbling as if pinned to invisible weights.

Inside, his own disciples moved like trout in spring melt, their spells swelling with a strength that made the air ring.

Ferrum's shout cracked across the peaks. "Metal Branch, form the Celestial Metal Sword Array!"

A rippling metallic chorus answered;

three hundred life-bound swords burst from their sheaths, converging

overhead until they fused into

single hundred yard blade that

Swept toward the coalition ranks.

Woodric's voice followed, lower but sharper. "Wood Branch-Azurewood Cage!"

Thick emerald vines punched

through the soil, writhing around

enemy ankles; the moment they tightened, color drained from the trapped merr as the wines drank them dry. fo

At his periphery, Water, Fire, and Earth branches unleashed their own masterpieces, turning the battlefield into shifting mosaic of stearn, flame, and jagged stone.

In the span of a breath the outer slopes became an elemental inferno, and the

coalition's screams began to stack upon one another like falling timber.

A scoffing voice slid through the uproar: "A petty element barrier-this is the extent

of your bravado?"

Aurelian's stomach tightened; Malcolm had finally moved.

The warlord stepped off his grotesque bone litter, weaving a sigil before his chest, each finger arcane and unsettling.

"Reincarnation-Spellbreaker!" The words rang like a funeral bell.

Ash-colored aura poured from him, coalescing overhead into a titanic pallid hand

that crashed downward toward the barrier.

Where the palm passed, the elemental laws bent, then unraveled like threads yanked from wet paper.

"Not good." The taste of copper filled Aurelian's mouth as he poured everything he had into the barrier.

The five-hued shell shuddered violently; hairline cracks spidered across its surface. "Master Metalhart, let me help!"

Gerald vaulted into the air; with hands raised he cradled a lotus of molten gold and crimson that bloomed in his palms.

"Earthfire True Flame-Heavenburn!"

Endless Earthfire erupted from the lotus, twisting into nine crimson-gold dragons that roared upward to meet the pallid hand.

From Jared's vantage, ruthless flames butted against reincarnation aura overhead.

The sky tore into two halves—one searing gold, the other ashen and cold—an impossible banner that made his breath come shallow.

Malcolm's voice sailed across the battlefield: "Gerald... you've grown old."

A scornful curve twisted Malcolm's lip.

He raised his second hand, fingers carving another brutal seal. "Reincarnation—Soul Devourer!" The words rang like iron striking bone.

A second pallid palm condensed beside Malcolm, then plunged toward Gerald with the eagerness of a starving beast.

Gerald grunted, shoulders pitching but not folding.

He forced himself upright, and the lotus of flame around him blazed brighter, petals snapping open in defiance.

High above the valley, Gerald's Earthfire True Flame slammed again into Malcolm's reincarnation aura.

Every collision shot a concussion downward, splintering the ridgelines like dried timber.

While their fury rattled the clouds, Jared kept still.

He stood at the razor edge of Gold Peak, eyes shut, spine loose, as though he were letting some unseen clock finish its count.

Heat prickled along the five-colored sigil stamped across the back of his right hand.

Deep inside his core, the Origin Star wheeled faster and faster, a silent forge at full bellows.

Jared let his mind stretch outward, following every restless current the battle had birthed.

He tasted sparks of fury, coils of hunger, and the raw iron note of pain circling the field.

Somewhere beneath the roar, a single joint in the chaos clicked into place, waiting to be broken.

The word surfaced, solid and cold: Now.

His eyes snapped open.

Five hues whirled across the irises, braided themselves together, then collapsed into a single veil of storm-gray.

And he saw.

The puppet driving Blaine back jerked in hard, mechanical rhythms.

Before each lunge, a pinprick twitch in its aura betrayed the angle of the blow.

Elsewhere Morven's poison-dark art slithered around Oswald's blinding sword light.

The blade still scorched the shadows, but Jared felt its heat gutter; ten strikes more and it would fail.

Gerald's Earthfire roared bright, yet Malcolm's reincarnation haze crept endlessly back, like tide swallowing a torch.

Time, Jared sensed, would bleed the elder dry.

Below, the Five-Element Barrier crumpled at its edges under the pounding of those ancient monsters-Witherbone, Bloodsea, and their kin.

A few more breaths and cracks would spider all the way through.

On the surface the battle felt even, yet every thread Jared followed ended in the same chill: his side was slipping.

Something had to snap before the next heartbeat.

The first link to shatter was the puppet.

Jared moved.

One step, and his body blurred into a smear of stormy light, shooting straight for the circle where Blaine wrestled the puppet.

A Warrior Undefeatable

Blaine shouted, "Jared, my young friend, be careful!"

He caught the shift first-the puppet's ash-gray eyes flicked away from Blaine and locked onto him. The black spear shivered in its grip, then darted straight for the center of his forehead.

No flourish, no tell-only murderous precision, the kind forged for battlefields not arenas.

He had spent the last heartbeat begging for that lunge.

"Chaos Evolution-Return of the Five Elements."

The Dragonslayer Sword stayed silent at his hip; instead, his hands folded before his chest, fingers weaving a seal so intricate it burned behind his eyes.

Light bubbled up inside him-gold, green, indigo, crimson, ochre-five colors racing along his veins, converging between his palms until they compressed into a single murky bead.

He recognized the weight of it at once-the Five-Element Unification Pearl, humming like a newborn world.

The instant the pearl surfaced, the charging spear jerked as though yanked by invisible chains.

Its tip hovered three inches from his skin and quivered, unable to close the distance while the reincarnation aura threading the shaft bled into the pearl and vanished.

"Your strength comes from reincarnation," he murmured, eyes fixed on the puppet's hollow stare. "But even reincarnation was born out of chaos."

He lifted his right hand, fingers curling as if seizing something no one else could

see.

The pearl detonated into five torrents of color that snapped around the puppet's limbs, neck, and midsection, knotting tight like living fetters.

"Chaos... strip away."

At the whispered verdict, the reincarnation sigils etched across the puppet's gray scales flickered violently, as though the carving itself screamed.

Then the battlefield forgot to breathe.

A translucent veil unfurled from the center of the puppet's brow, spilling cold light like a projector coming to life.

Within that screen, Jared watched a younger Soul Devourer hurled through a stone gate, assaulted by three gray figures that peeled mind from flesh and rebuilt the remainder as a shell.

The cruelty of the process-ripping soul, erasing will, forging a new body-flared in unbearable clarity, every second tattooed into his sight.

"No... avert your eyes!"

Malcolm lunged to block the image, but Gerald's molten chains coiled around him and dragged him back.

The projection refused to fade.

It continued past the forging—showing the puppet submerged in a dark pool among countless others, each one rising and sinking like discarded weapons awaiting deployment.

Finally, the helpless construct was handed to Malcolm, no thoughts left, only reflexes honed for slaughter.

There had never been immortality here, no resurrection-only theft, dissection, and remaking.

The phantom image snapped dark, leaving only the battlefield roar and the Soul-Devouring Puppet staring into space.

Gray-white spirals churned behind its empty pupils, tightening until, for one horrid heartbeat, something like pain twitched across the dead face.

Jared felt the hair on his arms prickle; that wasn't programmed reflex—it was memory, clawing upward, then collapsing as unseen chains yanked it down.

A heartbeat only, yet enough to rip the lie wide open.

Across the torn plain, every cultivator who had pledged themselves to the Malevolent Path Hall saw that flicker of agony.

Silence fell harder than any war-drum.

For a breath and another, nothing moved—no spell, no scream.

"T-That was the Soul Devourer?!"

"They turned him into a puppet?!"

"So immortality means turning us into that?!"

The first tremor of panic rippled through the ranks like frost racing over steel.

Eyes that moments ago burned with zeal now shimmered with doubt, fear, and a dawning, murderous fury.

"He lied to us! The Door of Reincarnation never granted life everlasting—it's a trap!" "We were fools—cheated!"

The cry spread like plague fog, swallowing order wherever it touched.

"Hold the line—steady!" Witherbone Demon bellowed, but the command reached no ears willing to obey.

Pockets of soldiers broke away, some fleeing, others whirling to drive their blades into the bewildered Soul Hunters beside them.

The coalition's formation disintegrated into a storm of clashing agendas.

"Now!" Jared's voice cut through the uproar like a thrown knife. "Counterattack!"

The word echoed back from thousands of throats, raw, hungry, united.

A surge of bright resolve washed over Jared's side, electric and undeniable. Blaine seized the opening.

His Three-Headed Flame Lion King roared, hurling three fused beams of crimson, gold, and blue that battered the Soul-Devouring Puppet backward.

Without missing a beat, Blaine swung into the cluster of Soul Hunters, Beastbone Battle Axe carving gore from bone.

Oswald's sword intent flared, a silent howl that multiplied his plain iron blade into a storm of mirrored edges.

Morven stumbled under the thousand-fold assault, retreating step after desperate step.

Aurelian poured everything into the Five-Element Barrier.

Five ribbons of light arced overhead, sealing the panicked deserters within a dome that rained relentless elemental fury on their pursuers.

Gerald, bleeding from a split pauldron, detonated a scarlet fire-lotus that hurled Malcolm a hundred yards away.

Nine lesser dragons of flame spiraled together, forging a single leviathan that tore through the enemy ranks in howling delight.

Jared tightened his grip on the spear, the moment he'd prepared for finally within reach.

Jared left the Soul-Devouring Puppet drifting behind him and pivoted toward the upper sky.

Far above the Vermilion Demon

Lord

towerised brutal blows with the

towering Fiend Ghost King, one of the Ninefold Nether Palaces three dreaded commanders

The demon lord's courage held, but the clash of High-Immortal strength had already carved exhaustion into every motion.

Cracks webbed across his armor, dark blood sizzled through dulling fire, and Jared could taste the moment slipping away.

"Mr. Vermilion, fall back." Jared's voice threaded through the chaos, quieter than thunder yet impossible to ignore.

The demon lord's shoulders hitched. "Kid, those three ancient wraiths aren't something you just shoo away..."

"Leave them to me." The certainty left no room for bargain.

He stepped once, and the step folded distance; in the next blink he stood at the fight's molten center, air still rippling behind him.

Facing him loomed the Fiend Ghost King—a two-story mass of emerald flesh and tusks, brandishing a bone hammer big enough to flatten a hill. "Another morsel come to die." The wraith's laugh rattled like chains in a well.

He hurled the white-bone hammer downward, the sky shrieking around the blow. Jared did not bother to draw his sword; the gesture felt unnecessary, almost vulgar. He raised his right hand instead.

Five colored filaments flared across the back of it, converging in his palm where the Five-Element Unification Pearl pulsed into being once more.

This time the pearl's heart churned with a thin spiral of ashen haze—something new, something hungry.

Softly, he named the technique: "Return of the Five Elements, second tier."

He flicked the sphere forward with a motion gentle enough to dismiss dust from his sleeve.

The pearl arced in a comet's curve, painting the air in five muted hues before kissing the descending hammer.

No thunder followed, no shockwave; instead the hammer simply began to unmake itself.

Metal, bone, and malice turned liquid-thin, then vaped away faster than snow beneath a forge's breath.

In the blink it took Jared to exhale, the decay raced up the haft toward the wraith's colossal arm.

"No!" The Fiend Ghost King shrieked, trying to release the handle, but time itself refused to give him that mercy.

The pearl lung like a disease of light, advancing along sinew and et shadow wherever it passed, flesh

Obed to gray dust that scattered

on a wind only it could feel.

Three breaths later, the mighty High-Immortal wraith was gone-body, hatred, even spirit erased without a trace.

Silence rolled across the battlefield, raw and sudden.

Even the falling ash seemed to pause, unsure what sound dared follow.

Every gaze snapped toward Jared. In his open palm, the Five-Element Unification Pearl turned in slow, deliberate orbits ribbons of color layering until they resembled a silent storm.

A Warrior Undefeatable

"What... what kind of sorcery is that?" The question ripped from Morven; the night-black whirl of his pupils shuddered with naked fear.

"Chaotic celestial energy—" Malcolm's voice cracked, "—it can smother

reincarnation aura this completely?" Ash color crawled across his face, draining every hint of defiance.

Jared closed his fingers; the pearl winked out of sight beneath his sleeve. When he lifted his head, the two remaining Ghost Kings found themselves under the full, unblinking weight of his stare.

A tremor ran through their spectral armor. Without meaning to, both retreated a single step, as if the gravel between them and Jared had turned molten.

"Cowards!" Morven roared, the word cracking like a whip. He lunged, intent on finishing what his subordinates could not.

"Morven, your quarrel is with me." Oswald's sword slid between them again, its edge humming the promise of injury.

Jared had already turned away, attention drifting toward the battlefield's far rim.

There, the Witherbone Demon and the Great Elder Bloodsea hammered the Five-Element Barrier, each strike scattering cracks like frantic lightning. The weave of elements wobbled, minutes from collapse.

"Let's finish this." Jared's breath left him in a low promise.

He drew a long breath; deep inside, the spinning Origin Star accelerated until it was nothing but a silver blur.

Chaotic celestial energy, five-element power, Golden Dragon blood, even the searing Earthfire True Flame—every current braided into one unstoppable torrent.

His hands rose, wrists steady, fingers weaving a seal so intricate even the air seemed to hesitate, waiting to understand the pattern.

Within that lattice flickered the birth of worlds—mountains rising, seas drying, civilizations blinking out and in again—an entire cycle playing behind his knuckles.

"Chaos... Genesis."

The words crashed outward. Skies, soil, even sound itself bent, battlefield laws rewritten on the spot.

This was no tidy permission like those granted by the Lord of Reincarnation; it was a deeper intrusion, a ripping up and re-coding of existence.

From Jared's center, a hundred-mile circle ignited. Reincarnation aura, Ninefold Nether Demonic Aura, soul mist, and death chill unraveled, threads falling away into nothing.

In their place, five-element power, sword intent, even beast-soul strength flared brighter, sharpening every allied blade and claw.

"Impossible!" Malcolm's scream carried raw panic. "You're only in the Heavenly Immortal Realm—how can you twist reality like this?"

"The Heavenly Immortal label is a distraction," Jared said, voice steady but edged with fatigue. "Real strength comes from understanding the Dao itself."

"You, Morven, all of you kneeling to the Door of Reincarnation your so-called Dao is counterfeit, a palace raised on theft and lies."

"Today," Jared said, letting each syllable fall like a warning drum, "I'll let you all see... what the true Way really is!"

The battlefield noise slipped into the background of his hearing; inside his chest, only a single, steady note of purpose remained.

Jared slammed his palms together, fingers folding into the pattern that lived in his bones.

Power surged up his arms, hot, granular, as though the very grains of reality were grinding against his skin.

The clap of his seal detonated throughout the sky, a shattering roar that made even the clouds blanch.

Daylight lurched, draining into bruised purples and sick greens, as if the horizon itself had forgotten how to breathe.

The instant his knuckles kissed, a second concussion punched outward, bigger than sound-something ancient enough to bruise the marrow of space.

It was not a blast, he realized, but a chord-heavy, newborn, the kind that might have rung across the first morning when nothing yet had a name.

The note carried a will too old for language, and every creature within reach felt it press against the wet underside of their souls.

Space around him shrugged, then twisted, as though the battlefield were clay on an invisible potter's wheel spinning out of control.

Hills bent; banners warped; a hundred-mile ring sagged toward him, ready to be remade.

Rifts veined the air-jagged, black, innumerable.

From each wound bled a thick, pewter mist, the raw, first-draft substance of creation itself.

It smelled of metal and rain that has never touched ground.

Unlike the pale reincarnation aura Jared had battled before, this current sank with the weight of molten lead.

It moved slowly, viscous as fresh pitch, yet its passage growled like a river in flood.

Wherever the mist flowed, seconds stretched thin.

Light bent inward, swallowed, leaving only the dim, coppery glow of ending days.

The whole field took on the hush of a doomed winter morning.

Faces across the line blanched; even through the storm Jared could feel their pulses buckle.

Instinct, older than thought, told every living thing to crawl away or die.

The reincarnation aura evaporated like frost under noon sun; the Ninefold Nether Demonic Aura boiled off in frantic curls.

Every crooked art they trusted crumbled, sand castles meeting the tide of origin. "Fall back, now!" a voice shrieked, cracking with animal terror.

Witherbone Demon screeched, skin splitting into a storm of ivory shards that scattered like startled birds.

Each splinter carried a wisp of his spirit, racing for any crack in reality's wall.

Jared caught the desperation in that technique; it reeked of decades burned in an instant.

The shards fled, but even they trembled under the mist.

Great Elder Bloodsea chose sheer violence: half his torso burst, releasing a crimson vapor the size of a cathedral nave.

Ghost-voices wailed inside the fog as it spun itself into a desperate escape route.

In a heartbeat the blood cloud winked out, leaving only a foul, wet smear smeared across the torn sky.

The slower, the weaker-there was no mercy waiting for them.

Closest were the Soul Hunters; their soul-forged armor peeled away in silvery flakes the moment the mist brushed it.

Under the vanishing plates, flesh

eret

shriveled to paper, then to ash; many were gone before their minds

gathered enough horror to scream

The Ninefold Nether Palace disciples fared no better; their yin-laden aura ripped free like cloth in a storm.

Without that balance, meridians snapped, mouths filled with blood, and bodies collapsed where they stood.

Some ignited outright, black fire blooming from within, reducing them to charred husks in the span of three breaths.

Scattered cultivators and minor sect

warriors broke next; their ragioner

arts offered no shelter, and the primal mist erased them as casually as the tide erases footprints.

The sky over the ridge turned red as shredded armor, bone, and raw flesh arced past Morven like bloody hail.

Every scream felt sharpened, personal, as though each throat belonged to him.

One pulse of Jared's chaotic surge had shattered nearly a third of the Malevolent Path Hall coalition before Morven even blinked.

Five, maybe six thousand bodies hit the dirt in the same heartbeat.

The ones still breathing staggered, clutching wounds that poured more doubt than blood.

Their terror soaked the air, and it curdled Morven's own resolve.

The question tore through Morven's skull: what kind of power could do that?

For the first time, the black mirrors of his eyes betrayed him, widening with a dread he could not leash.

The Ninefold Nether Demonic Aura he wore like iron now buckled under Jared's swirling chaos, fine cracks veining the surface.

Deep inside, the core threads of the

Ninefold Nether Demonic

.né

Technique-threads he had spun for tens of millennia quivered, loosening

The notion alone made his centuries of arrogance tilt toward panic.

Impossible should have been a thought for lesser beings, yet the word pounded behind his teeth.

He had ruled level twelve for thousands upon thousands of years, carving legends into its darkest strata.

Not even the death match with a Level Four High Immortal had threatened his roots

the way this swirling madness just had.

The chaotic torrent was not merely force; it gnawed at the concept of him, unweaving the very path he walked.

A Warrior Undefeatable

Across the shattered field, Malcolm looked already half dead, his gray-green skin now the hue of cold ash.

His skeletal fingers dug into the armrests of the bone litter, knuckles bleaching with strain.

As keeper of the Door of Reincarnation, Malcolm understood the shape of power better than scripture.

What poured from Jared was the antithesis of every cycle he commanded.

Chaos met reincarnation the way blazing noon meets shadowed midnight-and chaos sat the throne.

"Chaotic celestial energy," Malcolm spat, "the ultimate predator of reincarnation power."

"Quit hoarding your strength, Morven. If we don't tear him apart right now, when he matures we'll all be ashes-every realm, every sky!"

The plea slammed into Morven's hesitation, cracking it like thin ice.

He had flinched at the idea of alliance for longer than he could justify.

Resolve gathered, cold and metallic.

Nearly sixty millennia weighed on his bones; the sand in his hourglass was a stingy whisper now.

Every hope for endless life knelt at Malcolm's Door of Reincarnation.

If Jared walked away, that door would slam shut forever, and Morven's story would end in dust.

"Fine." The word left him like a drawn blade.

He threw a hard nod toward Malcolm; darkness boiled inside his pupils, hungry for finality.

"Then we erase the brat. Completely."

For the first time, the two pinnacles of the High Immortal Realm stood shoulder to shoulder.

Morven raised his arm, and the torn night screamed forward at his command.

Morven's fingers braided in front of his chest, faster than Jared's eye could track. Each new knot of bone and tendon birthed a syllable so old it felt bruised by time.

The sound crawled out of some Ninefold Nether pit, thick with rancor and tomb-cold silence; gooseflesh prickled up Jared's scalp before he could brace.

"Ninefold... Nether Styx... open!" Morven's shout cracked the air like iron splitting stone.

Space behind him ruptured—no light, no bottom, just a jagged mouth that inhaled color from the sky.

From that wound poured the screams of a million orphaned souls, and with them a blast of Ninefold Nether Demonic Aura that frothed upward, thickening, searching for a shape.

One serpentine shadow hardened, then another, until nine in all coiled above the battlefield like newly forged chains.

They stretched longer than city towers, every scale a black mirror washed in metallic glare.

Fanged maws gaped; in the hollows where eyes should rest, green ghost-fire burned with patient hunger.

Jared felt them think-nine cold intellects braided to Morven's will, each radiating a power that rivaled the strongest celestial lords he had ever faced.

"Ninefold Nether Demon Dragon: Devour the Heavens!" Morven's voice tore at Jared's eardrums.

The nine beasts answered in unison; their roar became a physical wave that hammered the mountains below into sliding rubble.

Claws shredded air from every flank, venomous breath scorched escape paths, and the nine trajectories laced themselves into a living Ninefold Nether Sky-Locking Array that tightened around Jared's chest like iron twine.

A heartbeat earlier, Jared had watched only Morven; now Malcolm stepped forward, eyes glossy with resolve.

Without forming seals, Malcolm bit through his own tongue and spat a clot of almost black blood that hissed in the open air.

The globs hung, dark red shading into pitch, each drop reeking of the grave— corrosion born of years serving the Door of Reincarnation.

Mid-air, the blood twisted, folded, and resolved into a palm-sized rune veined with impossible patterns.

The moment the sigil solidified, every thread of reincarnation aura on the field vibrated and funneled toward it in wordless devotion.

"By my blood, I summon the Door of Reincarnation—bind their souls, erase their fate!" Malcolm rasped, slamming the rune upward.

A detonation answered, louder than thought.

High above, a three-hundred-foot phantom gate of bone gathered like a storm cloud taking shape.

It looked cruelly solid, more real, more merciless, than the true doorway Jared had glimpsed once in nightmare.

Columns and panels were nothing but pressed skulls; ghost-white flames licked the sockets and grinned through the seams.

Thick chains coiled the frame, their ends yoking writhing soul-shadows-warriors the Door had swallowed but not yet digested.

The enormous gate eased ajar, exposing a breath-width slit.

Beyond the crack waited no radiant paradise, only depthless dark eager to swallow everything with it.

Darkness pressed in, thick as ink.

Out of it, pale arms spilled forward, hundreds, maybe thousands, stretching and clawing like a tidal wave aimed straight at Jared.

He caught their differences only when they drew closer—some were thick as marble columns, others thin as winter branches yet every one reeked of damp graves a stench that curled inside his lungs,

The claws scraped against one another, a shrill grind of nails on bone. The sound chased a shudder up his spine while the mass kept crawling toward him fury and

sorrow driven by Malcolm

cruel

summons.

Even before the tide reached him, he felt the second assault

descend one attack colder than moonless winter, the other heavier. than a sealed tomb, both intent on ending everything warm or living inside him.

He stayed motionless in midair.

The stillness was not calm; it was the tight coil of a bowstring waiting to release.

Below, Gerald met the other elders' eyes. Without a word, they hurled their gathered force into Jared's back, the impact blooming through his ribs like a second heartbeat.

The borrowed power ignited the righteous aura inside him. It rose fast, blistering, and his flesh swelled until the seams of his robe strained.

He understood the math: alone, he would break under Morven and Malcolm's combined weight. Knowing it did not invite fear, only urgency.

That urgency became a silent agreement. The elders poured everything they had, trusting his chaotic celestial aura to anchor their gamble and muzzle the lurking darkness.

Jared lifted his right hand. The five-color sigil on the back flared, stabbing light through the gloom.

Gold, wood, water, fire, earth-five-element power raced through the lines, funneling into his palm until it knotted into a pearl no larger than a pigeon's egg.

He felt at once that the pearl had changed.

The separate colors were gone, replaced by a single, swirling gray that hinted at storms before stars ever learned to shine.

Closer inspection revealed filaments running across the surface. In those tiny currents, worlds were born, burned, and begun again.

An ancient breath leaked from the sphere, older than anything that still dared to remember its name.

A Warrior Undefeatable

"Chaos... Return to the Void, second stage: Origins Return."

He whispered the name as though afraid to wake it, then nudged the pearl forward with a touch gentler than a farewell.

The sphere traced a dull gray arc. It looked leisurely, almost slow-motion, yet in the blink that followed it was nose-to-nose with nine oncoming demon dragons and the forest of pale arms.

Every watcher would spend a lifetime trying to forget what happened next—and fail.

The instant pearl touched scale, time lost its grip. Breath, wind, sound, all paused mid-beat.

The dragons froze mid-lunge, mouths fixed in permanent snarl, as if some unseen hand had pressed a finger to the world's pulse.

From each tail tip, decay began. Scales unraveled, muscle turned to dust, bodies peeling apart into raw motes of demonic vapor.

There was no noise, only certainty, the sense that a higher rule had stepped in to correct an error—that these monsters were never meant to be here and were now being escorted home.

Roar!

The final protest tore out, already dissolving into nothingness before the echo could form.

The nine demon dragons writhed in the torrent; ghost-blue fire jittered in their eyes as they howled.

Every spasm only drew the chaos tighter, stripping scales, muscle, then shape.

By the third heartbeat they disintegrated into drifting black motes that the gale scattered.

Beyond them, the pallid arms that had clawed from the phantom Door of Reincarnation touched the same current.

Skin hissed, bone steamed, and the limbs vanished like frost in noon sun.

What hung behind was no vapor of water but strands of ashen mist—the Reincarnation Marks, soul-brands ripped clean.

The scraps drifted a moment, then curved toward the Chaos Return-to-Void Pearl resting against Jared's blood-slick palm.

Each thread sank through its surface; the gem flared brighter, while the door's phantom outline dimmed like a lantern starved of oil.

"No!" Morven's scream tore through the storm, shrill enough to rattle Jared's teeth.

Jared watched the warlord's crimson pupils bulge, then bleed.

The nine dragons had been forged from Morven's own divided soul; with each one extinguished another rent opened inside him.

Now nine wounds yawned at once.

Black gore jetted from Morven's eyes, ears, every pore, and the surrounding demon mist convulsed as his aura collapsed by a third.

Malcolm fared little better.

The phantom Door was welded to his spirit; chaos gnawed along the link like a saw of ice and iron.

Worse, as each Reincarnation Mark vanished into Jared's pearl, Malcolm felt the lock he held over the Door slipping grain by grain.

Panic flickered across his face—only the Lord of Reincarnation should wield that power. Why could this mortal?

Yet triumph tasted of rust on Jared's tongue.

Invoking the second stage of Chaos Origin-Return to the Void had felt like unhooking a dam; now the current rushed backward through him.

Deep in his core, the newborn Origin Star dimmed by the breath, hairline cracks spidering across its surface.

Pain followed each crack, bright and immediate, harder to swallow than any blade.

The pearl did not let him rest; it drank the shredded grudges and death-stench of a thousand ghosts, then forced the brew through his veins.

Chaos suppressed the venom, but each turn of that alchemy burned stores of focus and qi he could scarcely spare.

Blood threaded from the corners of his mouth, his eyes, even the slight hollows of his ears, spotting the back of his hand.

The world reeled, but he clutched the pearl tighter, refusing to loosen his claim.

He parted his lips, but the breath that scraped in felt like lava dragging across torn lungs.

Every inhale seared, every exhale ripped deeper, as though his organs were being basted directly over flame.

His right hand clamped around the Dragonslayer Sword, yet the blade still shivered because his knuckles could no longer hold steady.

The split skin between thumb and forefinger gaped open, letting blood crawl down the hilt and drip from his wrist like rain.

The borrowed strength of Gerald and the others still hummed inside him, a scaffolding of foreign power propping up bones that should have collapsed.

Even so, Morven and Malcolm's combined blow had smashed into that makeshift frame, and the impact now rebounded inward, hunting for marrow and soul alike.

His own life-force buckled under the ricochet, twisting against him like a dislocated joint.

He had tempered this body in magma and thunder, yet the edges of his vision flickered, warning that even that durability now approached its limit.

One more crack, and everything—muscle, will, breath—would shatter.

He ground molars against each other until iron taste filled his mouth; quitting remained the one luxury he refused to afford.

Somewhere beneath the roaring pain he remembered the simple truth: if he collapsed now, the last hope of this battlefield would crumple with him.

Enduring a moment could redraw the entire war; failure would cement the slaughter already staining the ground.

A raw surge of defiance shot up his throat.

"Now-Counterattack!"

The words tore free, shredded by pain, yet carried so sharply that even the far ridges seemed to echo them.

The maelstrom he had unleashed still whipped across the field, but he kept a thin leash on it, herding the worst turbulence toward the Malevolent Path Hall line.

His own allies staggered within the crosswinds, yet none were torn apart; that compromise had cost him more strength than the enemy would ever know.

Now, as his cry knifed through smoke, a wave of answering fury rose from every friendly throat, shaking the air and telling him he was not alone.

Somewhere to his right Blaine, slick with blood and missing an arm,

bellowed, "Myriad Beast Valle

disciples tighten the Cole-slaughter the stragglers! Make the dead proud!"

The shout shook despite the gap at Blaine's shoulder where an arm should have been; white bone glittered through the torn stump like quartz in dark earth.

Blaine did not flinch, eyes burning a wet, furious red as he swung a slab of beastbone shaped into an axe larger than a door, hurling a guttural roar at the sky.

Beside him lumbered the Three-Headed Flame Lion King, each shoulder laced with clawed rifts; two of its three faces were half flayed, teeth grinning out of exposed skull.

Yet the monster inhaled, and its

triple throats released a blast so loud the air turned solid; dozens of

Soul Hunters ahead clutched ears as

blood spurted from eyes and

hostrils.

A second, shorter roar followed, raw and triumphant, hammering Jared's ribs like a

drum.

Roused by the Lion King, more than five thousand surviving beasts answered in a single, thunderous cry and flooded forward, a living river aimed at the crumbling enemy ranks.

He watched the surge; desperation had burned into mindless ferocity—no creature

in that tide cared if its own veins emptied so long as teeth reached flesh.

At the spearpoint of the charge, hulking earth-scaled dragons hunched their armored spines and slammed into the Soul Hunters' Soul-Seizing Grand Array like living battering rams.

Each collision rattled the plateau; plates split, blood geysered, yet the dragons kept driving, tearing open a breach wide enough for the frenzy behind them.

Sleek wolves, faster than thought, flickered through the gap as streaks of blue-green, scattering sparks when claws met enemy barriers.

They no longer sought clean kills; instead, they shredded protective energy, snapped tendons, and left every victim screaming, a stumbling obstacle for the next predator.

Above, golden eagles with lightning

still dancing on their wings stooped in silence, talons hooking into armor, bodies, anything, lifting prey skyward only to drop it into the chaos.

For a heartbeat the sky seemed to weep bodies; the chorus of falling screams

braided with the metallic stink rising from the ground.

A Warrior Undefeatable

Oswald felt the air catch in his chest; heat rose through the cold as he drew breath past blood-flecked teeth.

"Heavenly Sword Pavilion disciples, heed me. Nine Heavens Sword Array-slay the fiends, purge the wicked! If the swords live, we live; if the swords die, we die!"

The shout left his throat like shattered ice, yet beneath the chill he felt magma pushing upward, hungry for daylight.

For years discipline had been his skin; now rage peeled it away, and the world narrowed to red mist and moving targets.

The battered iron sword in his grip no longer remembered its original color; layer after layer of enemy blood had dried to a dull garnet crust.

Fine cracks webbed the blade-souvenirs from his last clash with Morven-but when he tested the edge it still whispered of death.

A wall of voices surged behind him, nine hundred throats fused into one resolve. "If the swords live, we live! If the swords die, we die!"

Order dissolved into lethal flexibility; trios and quints peeled away, each forging a pocket-sized Demon-Slaying Sword Array meant to cut like surgical steel.

Every flash of metal produced a bloom of scarlet, brief and obscene against the storm-gray sky.

Heavenly Sword Pavilion had always prized offense, but with death already accepted the cultivators fought as though the next heartbeat was theft.

A single thrust often ended with steel buried between brows; a downward arc sent heads spinning free-clean, unquestioning finality.

Across the shattered plain another roar rose, rough with desperation.

"Five-Element Sect disciples, seal the heavens, crush all sorcery! Today we fight until none remain!"

Oswald recognized Aurelian's normally silken tone; now it scraped like stone on stone, every syllable soaked in resolve.

The sect master bit through his own tongue; three spurts of vital blood splattered the nexus stone that anchored their barrier.

Light erupted-five hues braided together, searing Oswald's retinas even through blinking tears.

The once-flickering dome steadied, then ballooned outward, swallowing more of the Malevolent Path Hall ranks in prismatic walls.

Inside that cage, elemental law thickened until every breath tasted of metal, sap, brine, smoke, and loam all at once.

Blades, spears, and chains of pure alloy corkscrewed through the air, converging on foes like a grinding whirlwind.

Emerald vines erupted, lashing ankles and wrists, their thorns sweating a numbness that crawled toward the heart.

A tidal wall slammed forward; beneath the churn waited countless ice lances poised to skewer anything dragged under.

Overhead, towers of flame blossomed, each petal veined with runic sparks that detonated on contact.

Ground buckled and subsided, forming pits that swallowed legions while jagged ridges rose like instant tombstones.

With the three great sects now weaving carnage beside Jared's reality-rending strike, the battle's tide snapped the other way.

He watched the coalition's front line falter, their eyes wide, blades trembling—fear had replaced every promise they had marched in with.

The ancient opportunists who had pledged loyalty scattered first, vanishing behind smoke and spatial tears, loyalty dissolving faster than their dreams of eternal life.

Jared felt the soil beneath the ruins pulse, as if hollow.

The realization landed with a cold thud—Witherbone Demon must have laced the ground with those disgusting Bone-Burrowing Passages long before today.

A brittle crack tore the air; half of Witherbone Demon's skeleton burst into pale shrapnel.

The shards drilled downward faster than worms fleeing daylight, leaving only a sour aftersmell where his torso had been.

A wet suction snap yanked Jared's gaze aside.

Great Elder Bloodsea clamped a disciple in each fist; their faces collapsed as crimson threads spiraled from skin to his greedy lungs.

Satiated, he blurred into a razor line of red and shot beyond the horizon.

Terror spread like spilled oil.

The remaining recluses abandoned pretense one dissolved into wind, another blew apart a treasure for cover, a third torched his own years and fled on forbidden wings.

Without their elders, the field scattered like monkeys from a felled tree.

Within the span of a dozen breaths, more than half of Malevolent Path Hall's fighters were gone.

The coalition had marched in over twenty thousand strong.

Now fewer than ten thousand dragged wounded bodies through churned mud, courage leached from every eye.

Relief barely formed before the world twitched.

"Boom!" The detonation roared from the field's exact center, too vast to belong to mortal hands.

The Chaos Return-to-Void Pearl in Jared's grip quivered like a heart about to arrest. An unseen hammer slammed him sideways.

He careened hundreds of yards before smashing into the ground, blood spraying in hot arcs from his mouth.

He had forced the pearl to gorge on too many Reincarnation Marks and toxins; now the strain screamed through its core.

Hairline cracks webbed across its shell, each fissure glowing with harsh ash-gray light.

Then the pearl came apart.

Raw chaos erupted, a flood without banks.

It was not an attack, merely power that had lost every chain.

Whatever the torrent touched—stone, spirit, space—shredded into first principles.

A ten-mile circle vanished as though erased by an invisible thumb.

Hundreds of duelists inside that ring left no bodies, no ash, not even a rumor of being.

The ground was shaved thirty feet lower, exposing charred basalt.

Air tore free, birthing a brief, glassy vacuum.

Twisted light jittered through the void, painting it with wrong colors.

"Puh—" Blood clawed up Jared's throat.

He slammed into a mountainside; granite buckled, forming a Jared-shaped cavity nine yards deep.

He dragged himself free; every movement made his bones creak like rotten timbers.

He felt his chest tear wider with every breath; the wound had grown to the size of a spread hand, raw bone glinting through shredded flesh.

The skin along the edges had turned a ghastly ash, the leftover chaotic force nibbling at each living cell like cold, patient fire.

Blood streamed out in steady ribbons, soaking his right side until it clung to him like a second, crimson robe.

Deeper still, everything lay smashed

and misplaced organs shoved

aside, channels tipped, the faint light of his Origin Star cracked and

flickering toward blackout

The reserve of chaotic celestial energy that once buoyed him now sputtered like a lamp in rain; even hovering in the air was beyond him.

"Jared, my young friend!" Gerald's roar battered his ears, dragging his fogging thoughts back to the battlefield.

Beyond the blur of his lashes, Jared

caught Malcolm's charcoal

silhouette locking Gerald in place, twin blades of shadow stitching the elder to the fight.

Even wounded, Malcolm moved with vicious certainty; compared to Jared, the man looked almost whole, each step pulsing with lethal intent.

"Morven, do not let him breathe! If the boy survives today, he will gut us tomorrow!" Malcolm barked, murderous resolve splashing from his eyes.

Morven wiped black blood from his lips, his midnight pupils boiling with the same hunger.

The annihilation of his nine life-bound demon dragons had ripped through his soul, leaving his cultivation sagging by nearly a third.

Only Jared's death could balance that scale. The thought rang in Morven's skull with the clarity of a prayer.