



Blades of Destiny: The Rise of the Lowest Rank

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In the grand courtyard of the Vanguard Sword Academy, the afternoon sun gleamed off hundreds of practice blades. While Lucas swung his heavy iron broadsword with perfect form, Thomas wiped sweat from his brow, struggling to lift his own lightweight training rapier under the watchful eyes of their instructors.



Sitting on the stone steps after training, Lucas pointed his wooden sword toward the massive floating citadel in the sky, talking passionately about his dream to achieve the legendary Emperor Rank. Thomas listened quietly, holding his bruised wrists and wondering if a Iron Rank student like him could ever survive the brutal war outside the academy walls.



The peaceful afternoon shattered when the sky turned a bruised purple, and the academy's ancient alarm bells began to toll frantically. High up on the watchtower, Headmaster Vane peered through his spyglass at the horizon, where a dark cloud of demonic energy was rapidly approaching.



A massive horde of horned shadow demons and rogue human fighters known as Jokos breached the outer valley gates, their weapons glowing with chaotic energy. The Vanguard students quickly drew their weapons, forming a defensive line as the terrifying invaders charged down the hills toward them.



A fierce Joko commander named Kaelen, clad in spiked obsidian armor, locked eyes with Lucas and swung a massive, dark-infused claymore. Lucas blocked the blow, but the sheer force of the higher-ranked warrior pushed him down to his knees, cracking the stone floor beneath them.



Seeing his best friend in mortal danger, Thomas forgot all his fears and charged forward, thrusting his thin rapier into the gaps of the Joko commander's armor. Though his rank was low, his precise, unexpected strike forced Kaelen to stumble backward, breaking the deadly pressure on Lucas.



Enraged by the interruption, Kaelen unleashed a wave of dark energy that blew Thomas backward into the academy library doors. Inside, amidst scattered ancient scrolls, Thomas's hand brushed against a glowing, dust-covered scabbard that seemed to resonate with his own heartbeat.



Thomas drew the hidden weapon, a slender blade shimmering with a pure azure light that completely erased his fatigue and weakness. He stepped back out into the chaotic courtyard, the mysterious sword guiding his stance as he stood side-by-side with a recovering Lucas.



Combining Lucas's immense physical power and Thomas's newfound agility, the two friends unleashed a coordinated counterattack against the Joko commander. The brilliant azure light of Thomas's sword shattered Kaelen's dark claymore, proving that even a lower-ranked swordsman could defeat a superior foe with the right bond and courage.



As the remaining demons and Jokos retreated into the dark forests, the morning sun began to rise over the damaged but victorious academy. Standing among their cheering classmates, Thomas and Lucas raised their swords together, knowing their journey to truly save this war-torn world had just begun.