

From Outcast to Overlord: The Unyielding Heir

Chapter 261 First Step Into Kaldia ๗ 665 Cranfordale was one of the strongest provinces , so Leander called Gale , the head of the Halloway family " Tron Sovereign ! I never imagined you'd personally call me , " Gale said , his laugh loud but clearly uneasy . When he first met Leander , the kid had barely made a ripple in the martial world . But now , not even a year later , Leander stood at the top . Finished He had built Jeff Enterprises , claimed the number one spot in Astria's rankings , and earned the title Iron Sovereign .

Even with the Halloways dominating Crestgate and stand at the peak of Mornwick , Gale knew his clan couldn't compare to Leander . " Drop the formalities . Just call me Leander , " he said . I'm calling because I need a little help . I'm heading to Cranfordale tomorrow . I plan to visit the Shire family for Old Mr. Shire's birthday . I need to bring a gift , and I figured you'd know what he likes . " " The Shire family ? " Gale's voice paused mid - thought . " You mean the Shire family ? The top military family in Cranfordale ? " " Yeah , " Leander said casually . " Is that a problem ?

" There was a long silence on the other end . Then Gale's tone dropped . " Mr. Ashcroft , they're on a whole different level . They outclass my family in every way . Old Mr. Shire spent decades in the army and once led the Thundercliff Army as a general . He commanded nearly half the nation's troops . That's why people call them the general's family . " No one worth their salt in Cranfordale would disrespect them . Even top officials

give them room . When he served , Old Mr. Shire mentored hundreds of officers who now hold positions across Cranfordale , Mornwick , and Grove .

The man is called the ' Master of Thousands ' for a reason . " You know them personally? " Even Gale was wary of that family . " Not exactly , " Leander said . " This'll be my first time meeting them . My sister Madeline is his 1/4 14:03 Wed , Oct 15

Chapter 26t First Step into Kaidia granddaughter . I'm just going with her to celebrate his birthday . " * Finished Gale collected his thoughts and spoke slowly . " Then let me give you a word of caution . " Old Mr. Shire is tough . When the new government was formed , he retired right away , but his name and power only grew stronger .

" He's stubborn . He doesn't compromise . If he likes you , he'll treat you like family . If he doesn't , he won't bother hiding his dislike . He's sharp and has no time for people who don't measure up . " If you're going there , I suggest you let them know who you really are . Don't go in there with your identity hidden . You don't want unnecessary trouble . " Gale wasn't speaking lightly . He had once gone with Old Mr. Halloway to visit the Shires . He'd only met the old man once , but that one meeting left a mark . The old man had pride in his bones . He didn't waste time on mediocrity .

Even the Halloways had been dismissed with little more than a nod . He feared that if Leander walked in without revealing who he was , the old man would think of him as nothing more than a peasant . " Reveal who I am ? " Leander gave a short laugh and shook his head . " I'm just dropping off a gift and eating a meal . That's it . I'm not there to cause waves . " Just tell me what he's into . I'll pick something decent . " Gale heard

the steady calm in Leander's voice and didn't push it . He listed off the old man's two biggest passions - fine wine and chess .

Leander wrote it down , then spent the rest of the afternoon choosing the right gift . Once everything was ready , he boarded a flight to Kaldia . He checked the schedule . After the visit , it would line up perfectly with his appointment to join Wyvern Blade as Chief Instructor . He called both Graham and Miles to explain his plans . He asked them to meet him in Kaldia when the time came . At that same moment , in the capital of Cragspire , the silence inside a villa was shattered . A man's hands shook with rage as he lifted a porcelain vase and threw it hard against the wall .

The crash echoed through the house as the priceless piece burst into shards . " That b * stard killed my son ! " he bellowed . " Leander Ashcroft ! That d * mned Mornwick punk ! " His voice bounced off the marble walls . His face was red , twisted with fury . 2/4 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Fintubed On the floor lay Elric's lifeless body , cold and bruised . A woman knelt beside him , clutching his corpse , sobbing so hard she could barely breathe . Her tears soaked her clothes . Her hands trembled as she cling to her dead son . The man's chest heaved as he stared down at Elric .

His teeth clenched so tightly it looked like he might break them . Elric hadn't been his only child , but he had been his favorite . He was smart . He had a head for business . The man had been grooming him to take over Luth Global Holdings one day . Now all of that was gone . " Maxwell ! " he shouted , his voice cracking with rage . " I don't care how you do it . I want Ashcroft dead . I want him gone from this earth , you hear me ? "

The woman lifted her tear - streaked face . Her eyes burned with hate . Her voice was raw . " I want him dead too . I want his blood .

" Maxwell's eyes turned cold as stone . He gave a hard nod , and his jaw clenched tight . Leander might've ruled over Mornwick and stood at the peak of Astria as the face of Jeff Enterprises , but Luth Global Holdings was no small player either . Maxwell wasn't about to let that man walk free . He was going to make him pay in full . " Elric , don't worry , " he muttered , voice low and rough . " I'll get justice for you . I swear . " Just minutes earlier , Maxwell had spoken to Reginald Smith of Reginald Enterprises . Both men had lost sons . Both wanted revenge .

And they had found a shared enemy - Leander Ashcroft . Now , the Smiths and the Luths , two corporate giants , were linking arms . Their goal was simple . They would drag Leander down and crush him . " Mr. Ashcroft , " Maxwell growled , the rage building in his chest . " You're not walking away from this . " At the gates of Kaldia Airport , Madeline stood by the curb in a light summer outfit . She wore large sunglasses that covered most of her face , but even with that , Leander spotted her in an instant . " Leander ! " she called out with a bright smile , waving as she walked toward him .

Leander approached with an easy stride . He had a canvas shoulder bag slung over one shoulder and looked more like a student on break than the head of a major empire . " So , are we heading to the Shire place now or waiting a bit ? " he asked casually . " Let's go now , " Madeline replied . " Grandma just called . One of my cousins is coming to pick us 3/4 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 261 Fax Stop Into kaldia up . Should be here

soon . " Leander gave a small nod and sat down beside her near the railing . " I see . " (63) 29 Finished The two chatted while they waited . A few minutes passed .

Madeline's phone rang . She answered , said a few polite words , and hung up . Not long after , a man in a pale green dress shirt walked up to them . He looked well put together -sharp jawline , neatly styled hair , and an air of quiet confidence . He smiled as he approached , every part of him neat and presentable . Beside him stood a striking young woman . Her figure was tall and graceful , her features delicate , and her expression polite . She gave a soft smile in greeting , nearly as charming as Madeline herself . " You're Madeline , right ? " the man asked .

He had seen her in the media plenty of times , but with the sunglasses , he wanted to be sure . " That's me , " Madeline replied with a friendly smile as she pulled her glasses down a bit . " You must be Joshua . " Joshua smiled and gave a small nod . " Yeah . The car's this way . " Madeline nodded and then linked her arm around Leander's without hesitation . " Let's go , Leander . " As Leander stood up , the couple's eyes locked on him . The closeness between the two didn't go unnoticed . Both of them froze for a second , their expressions shifting slightly . Send Gifts 60

verlord The Unyielding Hem Chapter 262 Sylvia , One of the Four Beauties Finished When they'd first arrived , Leander and Madeline had been seated apart on separate benches . Leander's clothes were plain except for the branded sportswear . He carried only a basic shoulder bag . It was easy to overlook him . But when Madeline slipped her arm through his , that changed everything . Joshua's eyes flickered with something

cautious . He masked it quickly , then turned to Madeline with a calm tone . " Madeline , who's this ? " Madeline gave a sweet smile , still clinging to Leander's arm .

" Joshua , this is Leander . He's my ... brother . She paused slightly on the word . Joshua blinked . " Brother ? Aunt Hazel had a son ? " Hazel had left the Shire family long ago . Joshua didn't know her well , but he had heard plenty from others . As far as he knew , Hazel had only one child - Madeline . So , where had this brother come from ? And why wasn't he a Shire ? Madeline hesitated , unsure of how to answer. Before she could say anything , Leander stepped forward with perfect timing and reached out to shake hands , his face calm . " Nice to meet you , Joshua . I'm Ms.

Shire's adopted son . " Leander rarely offered his hand first . Not even to government officials . But this was Hazel's family , and for her sake , he made the gesture . " Adopted son ? " Joshua's expression shifted again . He looked surprised , but he took Leander's hand and gave it a firm shake . " Well , nice to meet you . I guess that makes you my cousin , then . Mind if I call you Leander ? " Leander shook his head . " Not at all . " Right then , the woman beside Joshua stepped forward with a gentle smile , introducing herself . " Hi , Leander . Madeline . I'm Rhea Wallace .

Joshua's girlfriend . " " Oh , so you're my cousin - in - law , " Madeline said with a sweet laugh . Leander nodded with a polite smile . " Nice to meet you . " 1/5 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 444 Chapter 20s Selera One of the four Beauties Finished The four of them exchanged a few more greetings , then followed Joshua to the parking lot . He led them to a sleek silver Mercedes S - Class . " Alright , let's get you two to the estate , " he said

as he opened the door . With that , the engine roared to life , and the car pulled smoothly away from the airport .

As the car cruised down the highway , Joshua kept both hands on the wheel , silent and focused . Rhea , on the other hand , chatted easily with Leander and Madeline . She smiled often and asked questions that seemed light , but each one probed deeper than the last . At one point , she casually brought up the connection between Leander and Madeline . Her tone stayed friendly , but her eyes flickered with curiosity . Madeline didn't think much of it . She answered everything truthfully , without hesitation . " So ... he was a kid picked up from the mountains ?

" Rhea repeated with a calm expression . She didn't let her face change , but she took mental note of every word . Joshua said nothing . He kept his eyes on the road , but he caught every detail , storing them in the back of his mind like files in a cabinet . Aunt Hazel's adopted son ? he thought . His eyes moved to the rearview mirror . He watched Madeline laugh beside Leander and shook his head slowly . Leander , about Grandpa's seventieth birthday , this isn't your place . About thirty minutes later , the silver Mercedes turned into a sprawling estate by the River Lorenwick .

The Shire family's lakeside villa rose proudly near the water , its walls bathed in afternoon sun . It sat high and wide , looking out over the southwest like a fortress built to watch the land . At the front gate stood an ancient boulder carved with eight forceful words - ' Honor Born of Generals , A Legacy That Endures . The parking lot near the estate was already packed . Rows of luxury cars shimmered in the light , and guests moved like a steady stream through the grounds .

Most of them were Shire relatives -some by blood , some by marriage - but every one of them seemed dressed to impress . One birthday has pulled in nearly a thousand people , Leander thought as he glanced around . No wonder Ms. Shire respects her father so much . 2/5 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 761 Safi in One of the tour existics Leander was getting curious about the old man . Brighed Joshua led them toward the house . Before they reached the door , two women stepped into their path . The one on the left wore a white robe with flowing sleeves . A strand of jade beads rested against her wrist .

Her face was sharp and delicate , with a beauty so quiet it almost hurt to look at . She didn't smile , didn't blink . She felt distant - untouchable , like snow frozen high above the world . The woman beside her wore a floor - length gown that clung perfectly to her frame . Her eyes sparkled , and her features were flawless , from the arch of her brows to the soft curve of her lips . Her high heels clicked softly against the stone walkway as she moved , slow and graceful , like she owned every step . As the pair walked by , conversations died . Heads turned .

Some guests stared in admiration . Others looked away with jealousy . Joshua and Rhea stepped forward with straight backs and lowered eyes . " Martha . Ms. Sylvia . " The woman in white gave a tiny nod . Her face didn't change . The woman in the gown smiled softly , then turned her eyes toward Madeline . She lifted a hand and stepped closer . " You must be Madeline ," she said . Her voice was warm and light . " I've seen your name in the tabloids , but this is the first time we've met . I'm Martha . Let's stay in touch , okay ?

" Madeline blinked in surprise , then smiled and quickly took her hand . " Martha ... I've heard so much about you ." Martha gave a nod , then shifted her gaze to Leander . " And who's this ? " Joshua stepped in before the silence grew too long . " Martha , this is Leander . Aunt Hazel's adopted son . He came with Madeline to celebrate Grandpa's birthday . " Leander gave a quiet smile and nodded politely . " Oh ? " She gave him a quick once - over . Her eyes narrowed slightly . After a moment , a trace of disappointment flickered in her face , and she gave him a short , distant nod .

She turned to Joshua . Her voice stayed calm , but her words carried weight. " Joshua , get them settled in . Once that's done , bring Madeline to see Grandpa and Grandma . They've been waiting . " 3/5 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 262 5lvin Chine of the Four Beauties Finished Joshua answered without hesitation . Martha looked back at Madeline . " Get some rest first , then go greet your grandparents . They've been asking for you all morning . I need to welcome the rest of the guests , but we'll catch up later She smiled again , then turned and walked away with the woman in white .

She didn't say another word to Leander and didn't glance back once . Leander watched them go , then muttered under his breath , " That's Martha ? " He wasn't insulted . Just mildly curious . On the flight here , Gale had sent him a list of all the key figures in the Shire family . Martha had been right at the top . She was known as the queen of commerce in the younger generation . At twenty - one , she already managed half the Shire family's empire . Her grandfather trusted her completely .

Her name was well known across Cranfordale and had even reached other regions like Listin and Mornwick . It was said that the line of men trying to court her could stretch

from one end of the River Lorenwick to the other . Now that he'd met her in person , he had to admit she lived up to the stories , but the one who truly held his attention wasn't Martha . It was the woman in white who stood beside her . The cold that surrounded her wasn't just an attitude . It was something deeper . Her whole presence gave off a chill , like ancient ice . Every pressure point in her body had been unlocked .

Her strength was clear . She had reached the level of half - Sovereign - stronger than Claire . Stronger than Ethan . Even stronger than Daphne . " Sylvia ." Of Astria's nine martial prodigies , one name stood out . Sylvia Blake . From the Stonepeak Sect . One of the Four Beauties . 4/5 14.03 Wed , Oct 15 to Overfart The Unwielding Fren

Chapter 263 Severing Ties COLD Fineshart " Sylvia , huh ? Leander murmured to himself . " Didn't expect the Shires to have ties with the Stonepeak Sect . " He let out a small laugh and looked away . He was only a little curious . Sylvia , Ethan , Claire - no matter how high people ranked them in Astria , they were no longer in the same league as him . In the front hall of the Shire estate , Martha walked quietly beside Sylvia . She tilted her head slightly toward her old friend and spoke in a hushed tone . " Sylvia , that boy Leander - what do you think is going on between him and Madeline ?

" Sylvia's voice came cold and steady . " It's easy to see . Your famous cousin has feelings for him . And they're not sibling feelings . What she feels is the kind of bond men and women share ." Sylvia had spent most of her life inside the Stonepeak Sect , training since she was eight . She had barely stepped into the outside world . But her technique , Frozen Spring , gave her more than martial strength . It heightened her

senses . She could read people without hearing a word . And Madeline's feelings for Leander were clear the moment Sylvia looked at her .

" You're seeing what I see , " Martha said , her gaze narrowing slightly . " What's your read on Leander himself ? " Sylvia answered without pausing . " He's unremarkable . " She paused , then added , " My Frozen Spring is similar to the Silvermoon Sect's Lucent Blade . We can sense what's buried inside someone . " Take you , for example . Every time I see you , I can feel your hunger for control . It's loud . It's constant . But when I look at Leander , I feel nothing . No want . No drive . He's like a clean page . People like that are either hidden masters ... or just plain average .

" And judging by how young he is and the way he carries himself , I'd say he's just another face in the crowd . " Martha listened carefully . Then she gave a slow , heavy nod . " My cousin Madeline ... her mother left the family when she was still pregnant . She didn't have much experience with people . She probably got attached to Leander because they lived together . But you know how Grandpa thinks . He worships power . 1/5 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 263 Severing ties 63 Finished " He already arranged for Madeline to marry Sawyer Locke .

Sawyer's young , brilliant , and already known as Cranfordale's rising star in finance . Grandpa respects him . " If Grandpa hears that Madeline's in love with someone like Leander , he won't just stop it - he'll crush him . And Grandpa doesn't care about playing nice . " Leander's not related to us by blood , but he's still Aunt Hazel's adopted son . I was only two when she left , but I've never forgotten how kind she was to me . I don't want her son to show up here for the first time and get thrown to the wolves .

" Martha's voice stayed calm , but her thoughts were already ten steps ahead . She had already mapped the fallout from every angle . Sylvia didn't react . She gave a slow shake of her head . " He chose to come here . So , whatever happens next, it's his to handle . " This world isn't kind . There's no room for pity . Just strength . " And even if Old Mr. Shire treats him politely because of you , do you think Sawyer will do the same ? " Martha went quiet . Her breath caught for a moment , then she let out a low sigh . Sawyer had been drawn to Madeline for years .

Once he found out she was Old Mr. Shire's granddaughter , he doubled down . His family even sent elders to propose formally . A man like that wasn't going to let another guy , especially one like Leander , get close . " I need to talk to Grandpa . He needs to hear this before it explodes . " Her eyes sharpened . She turned and walked quickly toward the garden behind the house . Sylvia stayed where she was . She closed her eyes as if to rest , but her thoughts weren't still . Leander's face flickered through her mind . Her brow creased slightly . " He doesn't have any real power ...

so why does he feel so detached from all of us ? Why does it almost feel like he's looking down on us ? " Joshua led Leander and Madeline to their rooms . They were next to each other with only a wall between them . Once they unpacked and freshened up , Madeline adjusted her appearance , letting her true features show . Her beauty returned in full - a soft , striking elegance that caught the light . She was ready to meet the grandparents she had never known . Joshua looked at Leander , opened his mouth slightly , then shut it again .

He stayed quiet and guided them to the back garden where the study was located . 2/5
14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 263 Severing Tres Finished He knocked gently on the door
. From inside , a deep voice rang out with authority . " Come in ." Joshua opened the
door and stepped aside , motioning for the two of them to enter . Leander stepped
inside and immediately saw the man sitting at the desk . He wore a sharp suit and
looked no older than fifty . His posture was rigid . His brows were thick , his eyes
piercing .

Even while seated , he gave off the presence of a man who had lived through fire and
command . His aura settled in the room like the edge of a sword , quiet but dangerous .
Leander didn't need to guess . He was looking at Clement Shire - the core of the Shire
family . The general who once led half of the Thundercliff Army . Standing behind him
was another man . He looked to be in his forties , tall and lean with a sharp gaze . His
back stayed perfectly straight . His presence said one thing : soldier . And based on
what Leander sensed , his power slightly surpassed even Clement's .

Most likely a personal guard . " Grandpa , I brought Madeline , " Joshua said
respectfully , then stepped aside . " Did you ? " Clement looked up from the military
journal on his desk . His face changed when he saw Madeline . His eyes softened . "
She looks just like her . " He set the journal aside and stood . A quiet breath escaped
him . " When I saw you on TV , I thought I was seeing Hazel again . And now that you're
standing here -it's like she's right in front of me ." He walked over and pulled a chair
beside his own . " Come , Madeline . Sit with me . Let me get a good look at you .

You must've been through so much . " Clement no longer looked like a general . He looked like a man who had missed too many years with someone he loved . " Grandpa ... " Madeline had never met him before . But the moment he called her name , something inside 3/5 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 263 Severing Ties 63 Finished her softened . Blood recognized blood . Her eyes shimmered as she stepped forward and took the seat beside him . Leander stayed standing . Clement didn't greet him . He didn't offer him a chair . He didn't even glance his way .

He kept his focus on Madeline and began to speak , his voice low . " Madeline , the truth is ... I wasn't kind enough . " Your mother got sick , badly sick . But she was stubborn like me . She never came home . Never said a word . And I ... I didn't reach out either . I let pride get in the way . I didn't know how serious it was ... " If I had , maybe things would've gone differently . " His hand trembled as he spoke . The guilt in his voice had clearly been there for years . Madeline looked at him . She could see the regret in his eyes . She reached out and gently held his hand .

" Grandpa , you don't have to blame yourself , " Madeline said gently . " When Mom was near the end , she never once held anything against you . She asked me to take care of you if I ever had the chance . She said you were always the person she looked up to the most . " Clement exhaled slowly . The sound carried the weight of years , like a door creaking open to a past he couldn't change . His gaze drifted off , and the lines on his face deepened . He and Madeline spoke for a while , quietly trading memories and small smiles , until something finally pulled at her attention .

She looked over and saw Leander still standing silently . With a bright smile , she reached for his arm and tugged him forward . " Oh , right ! Grandpa , this is Leander. Mom always treated him like her own son . He came with me today to wish you a happy birthday . " Leander took the seat beside her , but the moment he did , Clement's face changed . The softness vanished . He gave Joshua a small wave . " Madeline , your grandmother's in the garden . She's been wanting to meet you . Joshua , take her over there . " Then he looked at Leander . " You stay .

I haven't had a real conversation with someone your age in a long time . Let's talk . " Madeline didn't sense anything strange . She gave Leander a quick wink and walked off with Joshua . The door clicked softly behind them . The air inside the study shifted . The warmth left with Madeline . What remained was silence and something sharper . Clement's posture stiffened . His face turned cold and unreadable . His eyes narrowed like a hawk locking in on its prey . 4/5 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 203 Severing Tipe 17 Finished Leander sat calmly , unmoved by the sudden change .

His gaze met Clement's directly . There was no tension in his shoulders , no unease in his breath . His calm didn't break , not even for a second . Clement noticed . A small flicker of surprise passed through his eyes , followed by the faintest curve of his lips . " So , your name's Leander ? " Leander nodded politely . He stood and bowed with the traditional salute . " Hello , Old Mrs. Shire . " That bow wasn't for the old general . It was for Hazel . His face stayed steady , his expression firm but respectful . No pride . No fear . Clement watched him for a beat longer .

The boy's composure impressed him . Not many that age carried themselves like that . But Clement had met more than his share of composed young men . He had trained them , broken them , and buried some of them , too . Leander didn't intimidate him . His voice dropped , slow and weighty . " I kept you behind because I have something to say . " As Madeline's grandfather , I need to make things clear . " He gave a nod , and the silent guard stepped forward . Without a word , the man reached inside his coat and pulled out a check . The crisp paper caught the light . " One million .

" I want you to leave Madeline . Walk away , and never look back . " Send Gifts 1 < / 60
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Chapter 264 Two Paths . " I hope you'll cut ties with Madeline from now on . Leave her life completely " A check lay on the table . Clement stared at Leander , a trace of sternness in his gaze . Leander sat motionless , his expression unchanged . He picked up the cup and took a slow sip before replying calmly , " Old Mr. Shire , I'm afraid I don't follow . " Clement's eyes turned cold . His tone left no room for courtesy . " I think I made myself clear . Don't pretend you didn't understand . " He added , " I want you to end all contact with Madeline . No calls . No messages . No encounters .

I want you gone from her life - permanently . Do you understand ? " As he spoke , he watched Leander closely . Most people would have flinched at such words . But all he saw was calm indifference . " Old Mr. Shire , I understand what you're saying . What I don't understand is - why ? " Leander raised his cup again , meeting the gaze of the aging war hero across from him . " Why ? " Clement gave a cold snort . " Because I'm

her grandpa . Years ago , Hazel ignored my advice and stubbornly followed that b *
stard . It tore the family apart and left her with a hard life .

And now , Madeline's just stepping into society - I won't let history repeat itself . "

Though seated , Clement's military bearing showed in the straightness of his posture
and the authority he projected . " According to Madeline , Hazel always treated you like
her own . She even mentioned you in a letter she sent me . I once saw you as family ,
Leander - as a child of the Shire family . But after seeing the way Madeline looks at you
, I can't keep lying to myself . I won't let you hold her back . " Leander gently set his cup
down , his tone steady .

" I've always treated Madeline like a younger sister . Why would I want to hold her back
? " Clement narrowed his eyes . " That might be true from your side - but you don't
speak for Madeline . " He continued , " I won't 1/3 14.03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 264 Twe
Paths 63 Finished claim to be a master judge of character , but I've lived long enough to
know what I'm seeing . The way she looks at you is not sibling affection . It's something
else . It's romantic . Hazel made one wrong step and paid for it with her life . I won't let
Madeline walk that same path .

" Clement's gaze sharpened as he added , " Leander , I've been watching you since you
walked in . And I'll be honest - I'm impressed . You're poised , respectful , and confident
. Even sitting across from me , you don't lose your composure . " In today's generation ,
that's rare . You're just as capable as any of the top military youth in Cranfordale . But
you come from a low background . " He shook his head slowly . " You look to be around
twenty .

Many of Cranfordale's rising stars- your age or just a bit older - are already managing public companies , founding businesses , sitting as presidents or chairmen . And you ? Tell me honestly - what have you achieved ? " Clement looked him up and down , comparing him to the elite young talents he'd seen : Sawyer , the Stock Genius ; Luther Martin , son of the new nobility ; Ronald Quigley , the trade prince of Stormcairn River ; and the gifted disciples of the Stonepeak Sect . Each of them shook the region with their brilliance .

These people - whether they had made a name for themselves in the martial world or were making waves in business - held significant status . Whenever Clement met them , he could see their brilliance . They radiated drive and dominance with every word and gesture , their ambition as vast as the horizon . But when he looked at Leander , all he saw was a flat plain - calm , dull , lacking highs or lows . Leander reminded him of those ancient scholars - aloof and reserved , yet lacking in real ability . One glance , and Clement could tell that Leander didn't possess any remarkable talents .

Even if he did have some hidden strengths , Leander was still just a nameless boy saved by Hazel - no parents , no background . In a world like this , lacking guidance or protection , even the most talented will struggle to succeed . Clement had once relied on his martial skills and a recommendation from his father - in - law to join the Thundercliff Army , eventually rising to become its commander .

Sawyer had the immense wealth of the Locke family behind him - a billion handed over for him to train with -earning him the title of " Stock Genius ." Even Martha , the Shire family's treasured granddaughter , only became known as the Business Queen of

Cranfordale because her dad married into the Shire family , and they entrusted her with half their fortune . Indeed , talent mattered - but what mattered more was having support , someone to rely on , a 2/3 14:03 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 264 Two Paths platform to rise from , and opportunities to prove one's worth .

Without that foundation , ambition remained nothing more than empty talk . In Clement's eyes , Leander was no more than unpolished jade - unfit for the main stage . "

Achievements ? " Leander's eyes flickered , but he only offered a faint smile . 零團
Finished To him , titles like Chairman of Jeff Enterprises , the Mornwick's Legend , or ranking first on the Astria Power Index weren't things worth boasting about . They were simply part of his life , not badges of honor . So , he said nothing . Clement misread his silence as tacit agreement . His tone turned heavier .

" Leander , since Hazel treats you like a son , technically , you should see me as your grandpa . " I was a soldier -- I don't sugarcoat things . Madeline is now a rising star in Astria , the future queen of the music industry , with Jeff Enterprises backing her . She has an unlimited future . But you ? You're still a nobody . Hardly anyone even knows your name . It's cruel , but it's the truth . " It's clear Madeline likes you , but with her fame and reach , there are countless suitors vying for her attention - each with incredible power and background .

" To be frank , just three days ago , the Locke family proposed a marriage alliance . Sawyer has feelings for Madeline . The Locke family is wealthy and influential . A marriage between our families would only bring benefits , no downsides . " I haven't accepted yet - but after my birthday , I plan to give them an answer . " I don't care how

you feel about Madeline . If you stay by her side , you'll only hold her back and stop her from reaching greater heights . That's why I want you to leave . I believe you understand . " Clement pushed the check toward Leander . " Take this .

If it's not enough , I'll give you ten times more . All I ask is that you walk away from Madeline forever . " " Of course , you also have another option . Join one of the companies under my name . Prove your value within three years , and I'll have Martha promote you directly to president . If that day comes , I won't interfere in your relationship with Madeline - no matter what it looks like . " The iron - blooded former commander of the Thundercliff Army laid two paths before Leander . Send Gifts 。 60

Chapter 265 He Will Destroy You Finster Clement's imposing presence left Leander with two choices . Then he looked at the young man , exerting invisible pressure with his gaze alone . The guard beside him stood tall and impassive , gazing downward . He had always trusted Clement's judgment without question . Leander rubbed his chin , then suddenly let out a soft chuckle . " Old Mr. Shire , I'm afraid I reject both of your proposals . " Clement's eyes narrowed slightly , only to hear Leander continue calmly , " Madeline is my sister -the only comfort Ms. Shire had left in this world .

I swore at her grave that I'd protect Madeline's happiness and well - being for the rest of my life . There's no way I'll cut ties with her . " " And as for joining the Shire family's businesses ... It means nothing to me . In a month , I'll be heading to Highcliffe University . " As his words fell , a flicker of disappointment crossed Clement's eyes . He had assumed Leander was someone who knew how to read a situation , someone who

understood when to advance and when to retreat . But Leander's response struck him as immature and frustrating . The first part , he could still accept .

But saying that attending Highcliffe made working for the Shire family meaningless was simply laughable . Highcliffe University may be the top institution in Astria - the pride of its academic world - but within the Shire family's vast business empire were countless elites from Ivy League and other top - tier universities , including dozens with PhDs , master's degrees , and even postdoctoral credentials . Even if Leander completed his studies at Highcliffe , there was no guarantee he'd land a high- level position anywhere .

Yet he chose to forgo a direct opportunity in the Shire family's vast business empire - one many would kill for - for the sake of school . To Clement , it was a complete joke . " Leander , " he said , shaking his head , " I once thought you were an unpolished diamond . Now , I see you're just a dull stone . " " Do you know how many top graduates from key universities fight for a position in our company every year ? " " And here you are , throwing that opportunity away just because of some idealistic pursuit at Highcliffe . You're stubborn , and frankly , blind to reality .

" 1/4 14:04 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 26 % He Will Destroy Ying Finished " I was planning to groom you ... even considering letting you be with Madeline someday . But now I've changed my mind . " His voice turned cold . " Since you refuse my offer , I won't help you any further . If you want to stay by Madeline's side , you'll have to face what's coming on your own . Whether you rise or fall - that's your business now . " " Tonight , the so - called ' Stock Genius ' Sawyer will also be in Kaldia . How he chooses to handle you is up to him - and up to you to deal with . " " Now go .

There's nothing more to say ." With that , Clement waved a sleeve and dismissed him .
Leander's expression didn't change . He gave Clement a slight nod and stood up . At
the door , he paused briefly . " Old Mr. Shire , every word you said to me today - I know
it came from the heart . And for that , I'm grateful ." " But let me be clear . None of it
means anything to me . " A smile tugged at the corner of his lips . His eyes glinted with
a hint of disdain . " I have no right to interfere with Madeline's feelings , and it's your
business to choose a husband for her .

But in the end , it all comes down to Madeline's own wishes . I won't let anyone force
her -or harass her . " " And as for this so - called ' Stock Genius - to me , he's just
another nobody . " " What you should be thinking about isn't how I'll deal with them - it's
whether they're smart enough not to mess with me ." With that , Leander opened the
door and walked out . Clement's gaze sharpened as he watched him leave . Only after
Leander had disappeared down the corridor did he sigh softly and shake his head .

" He's got potential , " Clement muttered , " but it's a shame - too arrogant and not
nearly capable enough . He's clearly never been tested . With that attitude , he'll never
achieve anything real ." In his eyes , Leander had no notable achievements to speak of .
Compared to the likes of Sawyer , Martha , or Ronald - the rising stars of Cranforddale -
he was still a nobody . And yet , he had the 2/4 14:04 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 265 He Will
Destroy You audacity to brush them off like they didn't matter . A Finished " What a
waste . " One of the guards beside Clement gave a slight nod .

" You gave him a real opportunity , sir . He just doesn't know how to appreciate it .
Maybe ten or twenty years from now , he'll look back on this and regret it ." Clement

waved a hand , ending the conversation . He'd seen too many young men who burned with arrogance , only to be crushed by the weight of the real world . Sooner or later , they all bowed their heads . To him , Leander was just another name . Still , as he sat in silence , the arrogance and confidence in Leander's final words lingered like a thorn . He couldn't quite understand where the boy's boldness came from .

After a moment of thought , he looked at his guard . " Abel , dig into Leander's background . I want answers - fast ." The guard gave a small nod and left , puzzled but obedient . Meanwhile , outside the study , Leander strolled through the Shire Estate . Madeline had visit her grandma in the backyard , so he wandered alone . gone to Though not as massive as a public park , the estate featured a beautifully designed courtyard , with a touch of elegance and charm . As he rounded a corner , two familiar figures appeared ahead - Martha and Sylvia . They spotted him at the same time .

Martha offered a faint smile ; Sylvia , as usual , remained icy and silent . Leander nodded in greeting and was about to walk past , but Martha stepped forward to stop him . " Leander , my grandpa already spoke to you , didn't he ? " He turned calmly and gave a nod . Martha's eyes showed a hint of apology . " My grandpa's from the Thundercliff Army . He's always been blunt and direct . If he came across too harshly , I hope you won't take it personally . " At that moment , she shifted the conversation and took on the commanding presence of Cranfordale's business queen .

" His words may have been tough , but they came from a place of concern . Ultimately , the choice is yours - so choose wisely ." 3/4 14:04 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 265 He Will Destroy You 零 Finished " Madeline may not carry the last name Shire , but like me ,

she's considered a grandchild of the Shire family . Because of how much Grandpa loved her mom - and the guilt he carries - he treats Madeline as his own . That's why he'll never let her repeat her mom's mistakes . " " I hope that after this birthday party , you'll start keeping your distance . " Leander chuckled to himself .

The Shire family really did speak with one voice . " Is that a warning ? " he asked , smiling faintly at her . " Not a warning , " Martha replied . " A reminder . " She added , " Also , tonight , Madeline's future fiancé - Sawyer - will be in Kaldia . He reserved the Regal Suite at the Waterfront Court . He's hosting a private gathering for our family and some of the most elite young professionals in the area . It'll be a very exclusive crowd . " " Madeline , as part of our family , will definitely be there . And given her connection to Sawyer , she'll probably be the center of attention .

" Leander's expression didn't change . A faint smile tugged at the corner of his mouth . " Oh ? Good for her . So what ? " Martha's eyes narrowed . " I suggest you don't go . " " If Sawyer picks up on how Madeline feels about you ... " " He'll destroy you . " Send Gifts

Chapter 266 A True Hero " Destroy me ? " 63 Finished Leander didn't show much of a reaction when he heard it - just lifted his gaze slightly , as if he found the whole thing mildly amusing . " Do you think I'm joking with you ? " Martha's tone sharpened , her eyes narrowing . " Sawyer , the so - called ' Stock Genius ' of Cranfordale ? He is cocky as hell . He's got a big ego and a high opinion of himself - but no one can deny his skill . " " He's used to being the smartest one in the room , totally arrogant , and he doesn't give a d * mn about anyone else - except Madeline .

She's the one soft spot he's got . " " If he catches wind of her being even a little flirty with you ? Trust me , with the kind of ego he's packing , he'll go full psycho mode . He'll see you as a threat and won't stop until he crushes you . " Martha kindly reminded , " The Locke family is just as powerful as the Shire family . Sawyer's dad , Bradley Locke , isn't just the richest man in Cranfordale - he runs half the city . Billions in assets , multiple private fleets , and total control over the Everflow River Valley .

" " Do you seriously think you can go toe - to - toe with Sawyer and the Locke family ? " " So please , don't show up at the party tonight . In fact , it'd be best if Sawyer doesn't even know you exist . No need to paint a target on your back . " Martha meant every word . She was being real - looking out for him . She genuinely cared about Leander and didn't want him at the birthday celebration - risking a clash with the petty and vindictive Sawyer . Even she , who could handle just about anyone , found dealing with Sawyer a massive headache .

Standing nearby , Sylvia flicked her eyes over to Leander , curious to see how he'd take it . But Leander only smiled faintly , giving Martha a small nod . " Appreciate the heads - up ." Then , without another word , he turned and walked away . Watching his figure disappear , Martha let out a soft sigh . " Sylvia , was I too cruel ? " 1/4 14:04 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 266 A True Hero Finished Sylvia's gaze was cold , unapologetic . " Martha , that wasn't cruel . That was the truth . Sugarcoating it would've been cruel .

" " If he had walked into that party blind , got targeted by Sawyer , and ended up wrecked ? That would've been a whole different level of cruel . " " He and Madeline live in two completely different worlds . Forcing it will only end in heartbreak . I think even he

knows that ." Sylvia , the sharp - tongued prodigy from the Stonepeak Sect , spoke with the kind of blunt honesty that hit hard and left no room for argument . Martha couldn't help but admire her clarity .

Still , seeing her friend a little too concerned about Leander , Sylvia rolled her eyes and teased with a smirk , " Speaking of love lives , you're 22 already , and your cousin Madeline's just 18. She's already got a marriage lined up , thanks to Old Mr. Shire . So , what about you ? All these years , and still no one is good enough for you ? " Hearing Sylvia's teasing , Martha's cheeks turned slightly red . At twenty - two , she'd lost count of how many of Cranfordale's most eligible bachelors had come knocking at the Shire family's door , hoping to marry her and take her home .

Among them were heirs to the city's wealthiest families , sons of high - ranking officials , and young men from powerful , prestigious lineages . But not a single one had caught her eye - and every proposal had been turned away by Clement at her request .

Because of her business acumen and strong personality , Clement had always respected her wishes - so to this day , she still hadn't found a suitable candidate for marriage . Seeing Martha's expression , Sylvia grew serious . " In my opinion , the ' Stock Genius , ' Sawyer , has business talent that rivals yours .

You two are a perfect match ! " " Why hasn't Old Mr. Shire considered pairing you with Sawyer ? If the two of you joined forces , what enterprise in all of Cranfordale could possibly compete with you ? " Martha simply shook her head . Clement had indeed discussed this with her before , but in the end, she had rejected the idea . In her eyes , even the so - called " Stock Genius " Sawyer , hailed as the top young master in all of

Kaldia , still fell far short of her ideal husband . " Sylvia , the kind of man I'm looking for is a true hero among men - someone who stands above the rest !

" " Sawyer , Ronald , and the others may be dominant in Cranfordale , but in all of Astria , they're merely first - class at best . If not for their family backgrounds , their status wouldn't even be 214 14:04 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 260 A True Hero Finished worth mentioning . With their capabilities , they're nowhere near the standard I have for a husband ! " Faced with Martha's firm words , Sylvia could only shake her head helplessly . " Yes , Ms. Stevens . You have high standards . Rich boys like Sawyer and Ronald lean entirely on their families . No wonder they're not good enough for you .

" Martha's bright eyes sparkled , and she suddenly smiled . " What about you , Sylvia ? Where's that hero Jeff Ashcroft you're always going on about ? Have you met him yet ? " At the mention of Jeff , the ever - composed Sylvia actually blushed slightly and shook her head . " He's truly a man blessed by the universe , a hero in every sense of the word . He always seems out of reach . I've admired him for a long time , but I've yet to see him in person . " She continued , " Not long ago , I met Claire from the Silvermoon Sect . She once had a brief encounter with Jeff .

And with all of Claire's pride , she still described him as ' a peerless hero , unmatched in grace and strength . That alone says he's even greater than the rumors . If I ever got the chance to meet him , to witness his brilliance for myself , I'd consider that moment enough to make life worthwhile . " Martha's eyes lit up as she listened to her close friend's soft musings , and her heart stirred as well . Sylvia was the most outstanding

disciple the Stonepeak Sect had produced in nearly 50 years- brilliant in talent and sharp in judgment .

At only 21 , she was already being viewed as a future successor of the sect . Many of the male disciples, despite their own talents , couldn't compare to her , and she had long been recognized as a leader among her generation . Martha had seen firsthand how even the likes of Ronald and Sawyer - figures who usually dominated every scene - would lower their pride and show deference to Sylvia . That was the weight Sylvia carried , along with the powerful Stonepeak Sect backing her .

Someone like Sylvia , with a vision likely even broader than hers , never showed much interest when big - name heirs or so - called prodigies were mentioned - she'd usually just brush them off with a passing remark , barely reacting . But whenever Jeff's name came up , her eyes would light up , gleaming with excitement and admiration . Curious , Martha teased , " From everything you've said , now I really want to meet this Jeff ! " " You'll have to introduce me to him someday . If he's really as incredible as you say ... maybe I'll fall for him too .

Then I'd have to compete with you for him , wouldn't I ? " 3/4 P THOM Send Gifts

Chapter 267 Clement Was Shocked #nished Leander sat beside the garden of the Shire Estate , his gaze fixed on the lush grass , eyes deep and contemplative . " Sawyer ? " He murmured softly . Before arriving in Cranfordale , Frankie had already briefed him extensively on the city's major families . The so - called Locke family did have some real

strength . The Locke family , once a second - rate family from a small town under Kaldia's jurisdiction , had risen thanks to one man - Bradley .

Born a commoner , he boldly stepped into the business world during the 1980s and 1990s , making his first fortune through sheer grit . With that initial success , he went on to establish several shipyards and docks , diving into the import - export business . Thanks to his sharp vision and decisive moves , his enterprises expanded rapidly , eventually covering the entire Stormcairn River region . The operations formed an interconnected network that laid the foundation for Locke Trading Co.

After relocating to Kaldia , Bradley gradually climbed to the top , becoming the richest man in Cranfordale . With Bradley at the helm , the Locke family had developed steadily for over a decade . By now , they had become a major force in the import - export sector , wielding both wealth and power . In all of Cranfordale , only the Shire family could barely surpass them . But that wasn't what concerned Leander . What truly caught his attention was Clement's intent to betroth Madeline to Sawyer . If Sawyer had both talent and character , Leander would have gladly given his blessing .

Yet from what Martha said , Sawyer was narrow - minded and vindictive . If something displeased him , he wouldn't let it go - he'd dig into it and might even try to destroy him just because Madeline got too close . A man like that , petty and lacking grace , was definitely not husband material . If Madeline married him , her future would be all too easy to predict . Clement said he chose a husband for Madeline to prevent her from repeating Hazel's mistakes . But in Leander's eyes , marrying her off to Sawyer would be steering her down the very same path .

He had only come to the Shire family to offer birthday wishes to Clement , not to stir up trouble . But now that he knew what was going on , he couldn't just sit on his hands . As he pondered , his phone rang - it was Madeline . 1/4 14:04 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 267 Clement Was Shocked Finished " Leander , where are you ? Martha invited me to a party for Kaldia's young elites . It's my first time visiting the Shire family , and I'd like to spend some time with my cousins - it wouldn't feel right to turn them down . Can you come with me ? " Madeline's voice came through clearly on the other end .

" Sure . Wait for me at the gate - I'll be right there . " Leander agreed without hesitation . After hanging up , a faint smirk tugged at the corner of his lips . " Sawyer , huh ? Let's see if Cranfordale's so - called ' Stock Genius ' is really worthy of Madeline . " At the entrance of the Shire Estate , Leander stepped out to find Madeline standing beside a BMW 5 Series . Joshua , Martha , Rhea , Sylvia , and several unfamiliar young people stood with her . " Leander , you're here ! " As always , Madeline slipped her arm through his with a smile . Joshua and the others stayed quiet .

But the young men and women who didn't recognize Leander were clearly caught off guard . Their expressions shifted subtly as they silently tried to figure out who he was . " Yeah , let's go . Where are we headed ? " Leander nodded , his gaze sweeping over the group . " To the Waterfront Court in the development zone ! " Martha stepped forward , her tone a touch colder . The moment she saw Leander appear , her face visibly darkened . " Madeline , you ride with Joshua and Rhea in one car . I'll go with Sylvia and Leander in another .

The rest can take the third car - this way , it won't be too cramped and the seating's balanced ." Her words left no room for negotiation . As soon as she finished speaking , the still - groggy Madeline was already pulled into Joshua's Mercedes by Rhea and taken away first . Leander , meanwhile , got into a BMW 5 Series with Sylvia and Martha . He assumed Sylvia would take the front passenger seat , but instead , she headed straight to the back and sat beside him . The ride was quiet . Martha drove with a stern face , saying nothing .

Sylvia's expression was cold , and she too remained silent . Leander didn't mind at all - he leaned back , hands behind his head , and looked out the window with a calm , relaxed air . The silence filled the car , but when Sylvia noticed Leander gazing peacefully outside , her eyes flickered , and she blushed slightly . She was undeniably stunning - on par with Claire , and with Daphne of the Twin Stars of Highcliffe .

Ranked third on the Astria beauty list , she was the kind of woman most men would bend over backward to impress . Even Ethan , who had crossed paths with her before , couldn't help but sneak glances . But Leander acted like she was invisible - completely unfazed . After a while , Sylvia finally broke the silence . " Did you not hear what Martha told you earlier ? " she asked coolly , not bothering to address him by name . Leander turned his head calmly , eyes clear . " You mean about Sawyer ? " Sylvia's gaze sharpened . " Who else would I be talking about ?

Martha already warned you not to come along , yet here you are . Do you seriously think Sawyer's a good guy ? " At that , Martha gave a cold snort from the driver's seat ,

clearly displeased . She thought Leander had gotten the message , but apparently , he'd decided to tag along anyway . Leander let out a quiet laugh and turned his gaze back to the window . " She warned me out of kindness , and I thanked her . But let's be honest - someone like Sawyer doesn't have what it takes to make me back off. I'm just going to see for myself whether he's worthy of being Madeline's husband .

" Before Sylvia could respond , Martha snapped , " Leander , do you even know your place ? You're Aunt Hazel's adopted son - at best , Madeline's brother in name . What gives you the right to meddle in her future ? That's something only my grandpa has the authority to decide ! " She questioned , " Do you think you're qualified to evaluate Sawyer ? Do you think your opinion actually matters ? " But Leander stayed calm , a faint smile on his lips . " I promised Ms. Shire that I'd see Madeline's future through to the end - and that includes personally verifying the man she's going to marry .

Whether I'm qualified or not isn't for you to decide . Even if Old Mr. Shire were standing in front of me , I'd say the same thing . " His tone was steady , unshaken - neither arrogant nor humble . The quiet conviction in his voice 3/4 14:04 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 7 Clement Was Zincked left both Martha and Sylvia momentarily stunned . #Fintent A beat passed before they turned their heads away , no longer bothering to respond . In their eyes , this arrogant and clueless kid wasn't even worth arguing with . " If you're so desperate to throw yourself into the fire , suit yourself .

I won't waste my breath . " Martha held her head high , refocused on the road , and returned to her usual cold , untouchable demeanor . Meanwhile , four hours had already passed since Leander's meeting with Clement . In Clement's study , a stack of

documents on Leander was spread across the desk . After a quick scan , his eyes suddenly froze . " What ? How is this possible ? " Send Gifts 60 (

Chapter 268 Sawyer Locke " How is this possible ? " " Leander is actually the Mornwick's Legend and the chairman of Jeff Enterprises ? " Finished In front of Clement lay documents he never imagined he'd see - enough to make him exclaim in disbelief . Although Leander's background had always been somewhat mysterious , he had shown his face a few times in the past . With the Shire family's resources , it was still possible to trace fragments . of his identity . Now , seeing Leander's true status , Clement felt his chest tighten . He found it hard to collect himself .

It was unimaginable that the modest , seemingly ordinary young man was actually the formidable leader of Mornwick - and the secretive chairman behind Jeff Enterprises , the most powerful pharmaceutical empire in all of Astria . His gaze froze as he sat in silence for a long while , trying to process the truth . At last , he rose and sent guards to find Leander . After inquiring at the Shire Estate , they returned with an update - Leander had already left with Martha and the others . " He went to the development zone ? To the Waterfront Court booked by Sawyer ?

" When Clement heard the report , his expression immediately darkened . This gathering had been arranged by Sawyer himself - and knowing Sawyer's personality , Clement understood the risk . A clash between him and Leander was not just possible , but likely . When Cranfordale's top young heir crossed paths with Mornwick's most powerful figure , a fierce confrontation was inevitable . " Old Mr. Shire , should we

inform them ? " the guard asked cautiously . " No need , " Clement said after a slight pause , waving his hand . " Let the young people handle their own affairs .

I'd like to see for myself what this so - called Mornwick's Legend is really capable of ." His eyes gleamed with wisdom , as though he could already see the storm to come . 1/4 wed , UCT TO Chapter At Nawy Locke Finishert In the development zone , Leander , Martha , and Sylvia finally arrived at the Waterfront Court . This newly opened club was one of the crown jewels of the Kaldia development project - nearly sixty percent of its funding had come from Bradley . Half of this district was his strategic playground . The most luxurious private room at Waterfront Court was the Regal Suite .

Martha walked ahead , and every staff member they passed bowed respectfully to her - it was clear she was a regular guest here . " Let's go straight up . Madeline and the others are already in the Regal Suite , " Martha mentioned coolly to Leander . He nodded and followed behind the two women . Along the way , they passed a number of elegantly dressed women , each one striking in appearance - but Leander didn't spare them a glance , as if they were invisible . When they reached the door of the Regal Suite , Martha didn't enter immediately . Instead , she paused and looked at him .

" Think carefully , Leander . Once you step inside , whatever happens next - you're on your own . No one's going to step in to help you ." She was , of course , referring to Sawyer . Crossing that door meant confronting him head - on . Leander only smiled and shrugged , unconcerned . Seeing him being calm , she shook her head with a sigh and pushed the door open . Inside the private room , over a dozen people were already seated - many of them familiar faces , the same young men and women who had

traveled earlier with the Shire family . Only two individuals stood out as strangers to Leander .

One of them , a man in his early twenties wearing a checkered shirt , had strong arms and a booming voice . He was currently playing dice with a club girl , laughing loudly and dominating the room with his rough , uninhibited energy . The others present , in contrast , were more reserved . They greeted the man with nods and polite smiles , their demeanor cautious . His authority was clear - even when he raised his voice , no one dared to challenge him . Next to him sat another young man wearing gold - rimmed glasses and a blue designer short- sleeved shirt .

With a warm smile and refined air , he came off as approachable . Many in the room were 2/4 14:04 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 768 Sawyer Locke Finished toasting him , and while others were chugging their drinks , he only took polite sips - yet no one showed the slightest dissatisfaction . As soon as he sat down , he exuded a commanding presence - like a king at court - matching the rough young man's energy without the slightest hint of inferiority . Among the dozen or so people in the room , it was clear these two were the center of attention . Their status spoke for itself .

Madeline , Joshua , and Rhea had already arrived and were seated near the young man in gold- rimmed glasses . He was chatting easily with Madeline , his tone warm and familiar . Leander didn't need to ask - at a single glance , he knew this had to be Sawyer Locke , the man hailed as Cranfordale's " Stock Genius . " The moment Martha and the others stepped through the door , both Sawyer and the rougher young man turned their

heads and rose almost simultaneously . " Martha , and Ms. Blake - what an honor . Truly rare to see you both here . " Gone was the earlier aloofness .

Both men greeted Martha and Sylvia with unexpected politeness . Though they were dominant figures among Cranfordale's young elites , Martha was the rising star of the city's business world - someone even they had to treat as a peer . As for Sylvia , she was a prodigy of the Stonepeak Sect and its future heir ; her status was untouchable . Even the older generation would greet her with deference . " Mr. Locke , Mr. Quigley , we don't have to stand on ceremony , do we ? " Sylvia gave them only a slight nod , while Martha smiled lightly and teased , clearly quite familiar with the two .

" Haha , Martha , you're still as sharp as ever . Come , have a seat ! " They laughed heartily . Among everyone present , only Martha and Sylvia could command that kind of respect. The two women stepped forward , Leander trailing silently behind them , clearly not intending to greet the two young men . " Wait ." The man in glasses stopped Leander , his smile freezing as a cold glint flickered in his eyes . He reached out and blocked Leander's path .

The private room was full of people who either knew Sawyer well or were eager to win his favor 3/4 14:04 Wed Oct 15 -including a few younger members of the Shire family . Before Leander and the others even arrived , they had already let him know that a young man named Leander was coming to Kaldia with Madeline . The two seemed unusually close , their relationship clearly ambiguous Sawyer knew Leander was traveling with Martha and Sylvia , so he'd been waiting , curious to see just what kind of

guy this so - called mystery man really was - the one who might be edging in on Madeline .

He had expected Leander to be a worthy rival , someone he might actually take seriously - bur the moment he laid eyes on him , he was thoroughly disappointed . As he blocked Leander's path , a mocking smile curled at the corner of his lips . " Allow me to introduce myself - Sawyer Locke . I'm the one who arranged this party tonight . " You're a stranger here . If you want to step into my space , don't you think it's only polite to greet the host first ? " A ripple ran through the room . Several people exchanged knowing looks , some even smirking with malice .

Everyone knew Sawyer was about to put on a show . He was ready to make his move .

Send Gifts 60

Frein Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir Chapter 269 You Want to Shake Hands with Me ? 4706) Finished Sawyer stepped in front of Leander , blocking his path . The young man in the checkered shirt beside him wore a faint smile , but there was nothing friendly about it . The atmosphere in the private room shifted instantly . Everyone except Madeline , Joshua , and Martha was already looking at Leander with pity . Madeline might've been the only one in the room who didn't know Sawyer had already proposed marriage to the Shire family .

Everyone knew exactly what kind of man Sawyer was - the most powerful young master in all of Cranfordale . When he wanted something , he took it , no matter the cost .

Though Madeline might not have been his in name , to Sawyer , she was already his . And Leander's closeness to her was like dancing on the edge of a blade . Challenging Sawyer over a woman ? In all of Cranfordale , there wasn't a single young man bold or strong enough to try it . Martha and Sylvia watched in silence .

Martha had planned to step in out of respect for Madeline , but Leander hadn't shown the slightest concern from the start . That made her think twice . Now , she just wanted to see how he'd handle it . Leander stopped and turned to face Sawyer without saying a word . It looked like Sawyer's presence had completely shut him down . " Mr. Locke , what are you doing ? " Madeline had met Sawyer a few times - just enough to be considered acquainted . When she saw him giving Leander a hard time , she immediately stood up and stepped between them . " This is my friend , Leander . He came with me .

Why are you stopping him from taking a seat ? " Her tone sharpened , irritation flashing in her eyes as she stood up for Leander . Leander stood quietly behind her , neither stepping forward nor backing away . It was as if he expected Madeline to take the heat for him . The sight made Martha shake her head in disappointment . For someone who had talked so boldly earlier and acted like Sawyer was nothing , Martha had assumed Leander had at least some strength to back it up . Even if he couldn't beat Sawyer , he should've had the backbone to stand his ground . But now ?

After all that posturing , when Sawyer was finally face - to - face with him , Leander was hiding behind Madeline and letting her take the fall . Martha couldn't help but feel a wave of

1/4 14:05 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 8 You Want to Shake Hands with Met

contempt . Z () Flushent Joshua and Rhea exchanged a look , both clearly displeased . They'd had a decent opinion of Leander before , but now he seemed like nothing more than a coward . Seeing how fiercely Madeline stood up for Leander , Sawyer kept his expression neutral , but his rage was boiling over beneath that calm facade .

He'd been hooked by Madeline's flawless , untouched beauty the first time he saw her perform on TV . Despite his packed schedule , he'd flown out three times just to catch her performances , all in hopes of getting close to her . They'd known each other for a few months now , but Madeline had kept him at arm's length the whole time . They'd never even been alone together . And now ? She was openly shielding Leander in front of him . Jealousy surged in Sawyer like wildfire . Still , he was too polished to let it show . Instead , the guy in the checkered shirt stepped up and broke the silence .

" Madeline , I think you've misunderstood Sawyer , " he said with a seemingly polite smile . " He's not trying to stop your friend from sitting . This is Sawyer's event , after all . If he wants to join us , the least he can do is introduce himself and let everyone know who he is . Don't you agree ? " Then , he turned to Leander , casually rubbed his nose , and extended a hand . " Ronald Quigley . I'd say just about everyone in Cranfordale knows the name . " If you're going to sit at our table , getting to know each other first doesn't seem like too much to ask , right ?

" His hand hung in the air , his smile lingering , but the challenge in his eyes was unmistakable . Ronald and Sawyer were the top two among Cranfordale's young elite . They were also childhood friends , as close as brothers . Wherever one went , the other was never far behind . He knew exactly what Sawyer had planned for Leander , and he

was more than happy to stir the pot . To him , dealing with a guy like Leander was no different than stepping on an ant . " That guy ... honestly , kind of pathetic . " A member of the Shire family snorted , leaning toward his companion .

" Madeline really wasn't thinking when she brought him here . Now that both Mr. Locke and Mr. Quigley are gunning 2/4 18:05 Wed Oct 15 fingind for him . let's see how they plan to clean up this mess At first glance , Ronald's outstretched hand seemed polite , but anyone who knew him could tell it was anything but friendly . " Exactly Everyone knows what kind of temper Mr. Locke has . And that guy dares to go up against him over a woman ? He's practically asking for it , sneered a heavily made - up woman in a daring dress , her eyes flashing with jealousy as she shot a glance at Madeline .

" Leander ... I told you not to come , but you wouldn't listen . Now look at the mess you've walked into . Martha's lashes fluttered as she breathed out a quiet sigh . Just as she finally made up her mind to step in and smooth things over , Leander spoke . " You want to shake hands with me ? " He glanced at Ronald , an unreadable smile playing on his lips . Ronald's arms were thick with muscle , his hands unusually large . It was clear he'd trained his body to brutal effect - his grip alone could easily crush an ordinary man's hand .

The handshake might look like a simple gesture of courtesy , but Ronald's fingers were already coiled , ready to crush Leander's hand and humiliate him the moment they made contact . Maybe even cripple him . Most people would've backed off , but Leander didn't so much as flinch . Instead , he sneered and extended his hand . " Someone like you doesn't even deserve a handshake from me . But since you're so eager ... I'll play

along . " With that , their palms met . " Huh ! " The moment their hands met , a flicker of smug satisfaction crossed Sawyer's face .

Ronald's grin twisted into something more savage as his grip tightened , clearly intent on crushing . He had trained in body strengthening techniques since childhood under a renowned master . Though he lacked inner strength cultivation , his sheer brute strength was frightening . He could crush a glass with one hand like it was nothing . Hurting Leander's hand should've been a piece of cake . But after he applied pressure , the cry of pain he was waiting for never came . Leander's 3/4 14:05 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 269
you Want to Shake Hands with Me ?

Finished expression remained completely unfazed , while to Ronald , it felt like he was gripping a block of unyielding stone , No matter how much force he used , Leander's hand didn't budge . Ronald's face even turned red from the effort , but Leander stood there as if nothing were happening . The others hadn't caught on yet . They exchanged puzzled glances , wondering why the handshake was dragging on . Only Sawyer sensed that something was off . " You've already thrown in everything you've got , haven't you ? " Leander said , amusement flickering in his eyes . " Well then ...

I guess it's my turn . " Then , he tightened his grip - just a little . Crack ! A sharp pop echoed in the room as Ronald's knuckles shattered , followed by a blood - curdling scream . In an instant , the room exploded into chaos ! Send Gifts 60

Chapter 270 None of You Deserve Her Ahhh ! 200 #finished Ronald's scream ripped through the room , freezing everyone in stunned silence . No one had the faintest idea what had just happened . Just moments ago , Ronald had swaggered up to Leander with a handshake . Those who knew him well could see exactly what he was trying to pull . When Leander accepted , everyone thought he was walking straight into trouble . Ronald was supposed to have the upper hand - but why was he the one howling in pain ? His face was twisted in pain , eyes wide with disbelief .

He'd gone all in on that handshake , but Leander hadn't even flinched . Then , with just a slight squeeze , Leander made Ronald feel every finger joint in his right hand shatter . Ronald had spent years mastering body - strengthening techniques . Years of relentless training had forged his body into a weapon . His physical conditioning was pushed to the brink of human potential , and his strength rivaled that of professional athletes . But now , standing before Leander , he might as well have been a toddler trying to wrestle a mountain . " You b * stard ! What the hell are you doing ?!

" When Sawyer saw the look on Ronald's face , he knew instantly that Ronald had taken a serious hit . Fury surged through him as he shouted , his eyes locked on Leander , burning with deadly intent . Leander let go , his expression as calm as ever . All eyes snapped to Ronald's right hand . His fingers were grotesquely twisted , broken at unnatural angles like they'd been crushed in an industrial press , " What the ... " Martha , Sylvia , and Joshua all stared in shock . Leander had actually laid hands on Ronald - and he hadn't held back . No one could believe it . How had he done it ?

And how did he even dare ? After all , Ronald wasn't just some random thug . He was one of Cranfordale's young elite , on par with Sawyer . His father , Michael Quigley , was a fourth - tier officer in the Cranfordale Military Command . Not the highest rank , but he held real power and commanded hundreds of troops . Even Bradley , the wealthiest man in Cranfordale , wouldn't dare claim to outrank him . 1/4 14:05 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 220 None of You Deserve Her & C Finished Michael was notoriously protective of his son .

Years ago , when Ronald got into a fight with a young heir from another province , both sides walked away bloodied . But Michael had shown up with a full squad of armed soldiers and forced the heir to apologize on Ronald's doorstep . Ronald had even gotten to beat him down himself . And now Leander had the nerve to lay such a heavy hand on Ronald ? That was practically suicide . If Michael caught wind of it , he'd come storming in with an army .

If fully armed troops came bearing down , there was only one person in all of Kaldia who could save Leander : Clement , the retired commander of the Thundercliff Army . " How dare you hurt me ?! " Ronald had always relied on brute strength to throw his weight around , bullying others like he owned the world . Backed by his father's power , he roamed Cranfordale like a tyrant . But now , Leander had crushed his entire hand into a mangled mess . Humiliation and rage boiled in his gut . " What makes you think I wouldn't ? " Leander slipped one hand into his pocket and sneered .

" You were the one who offered the handshake . Loaded your fingers with strength , ready to crush mine the second I took it . Am I wrong ? " " Too bad . You're just too

weak . " Leander added . At that moment , everyone finally understood - Ronald had tried to sneak in an attack during the handshake , but he simply wasn't strong enough for Leander . That was why his right hand ended up crushed . " You knew I was going to attack you ? " Ronald's eyes widened with fury . He hadn't expected Leander to read him so easily .

With a roar , he grabbed a nearby chair with his left hand and swung it at Leander's head . Even though Leander had crushed his hand , that was only because of Ronald's inferior strength . This time , he attacked with speed and aggression , certain that this blow would leave Leander bloodied and broken . After all , picking fights was nothing new to Ronald in Cranfordale . In over twenty years of his life , he'd never backed down from anyone . It all happened in a flash . No one in the room had time to react - except Sylvia , a half- Sovereign .

Everyone thought Leander was done for until he calmly reached out and caught the chair mid- 2/4 14:05 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 270 Name of You Deserve ther swing , his grip as firm as a steel vice . W Finitiha With barely a flick of his wrist , he ripped the chair from Ronald's grasp and swung it in a brutal arc . The heavy metal frame slammed sideways into Ronald's chest . Bones shattered on impact . Ronald was hurled backward along with the chair , slamming into the wall hard enough to leave a half - inch - deep dent .

Ronald crumpled to the ground , blood streaming from his face - completely unconscious . The room fell into stunned silence . No one expected that seemingly well - mannered young man to strike with such ruthless precision . In less than two minutes ,

Ronald's hand had been crushed , and now he'd been hurled into a wall with a chair , his bones shattered who knew how badly . The raw violence Leander unleashed sent a chill through the room . Ronald wasn't just some nobody . Aside from Sawyer , Martha , and Sylvia , he was the most formidable figure in the room .

Just moments ago , some of them had even been amused by Leander's misfortune . But now , after watching him tear through Ronald like he was nothing , none of them dared imagine what it would be like to end up on the receiving end . Sylvia and Martha exchanged glances , the shock in each other's eyes unmistakable . Before they walked into the room , they had worried Leander wouldn't be able to handle the pressure from Ronald and Sawyer . But he had dealt with it in the most ruthless way possible . The " Stock Genius " Sawyer narrowed his eyes , finally snapping out of his stunned daze .

His face twisted with rage as he pointed at Leander . " Do you have any idea what you've done ? Do you even know who he is ? " You've got guts , hurting him like that . I swear , you're not leaving Cranfordale alive ." A flash of madness flickered in Sawyer's eyes . He had only meant to humiliate Leander today and ruin him slowly over time . He hadn't expected Leander to cripple Ronald on the spot . But now , he didn't need to lift a finger . Ronald's father , Michael , would make sure Leander never walked again . " This city , this world - I come and go as I please .

No one decides that for me , " Leander said coolly . " I don't care who he is . " " So , you are the one asking the Shire family for Madeline's hand ? " His gaze drifted lazily to Sawyer , eyes devoid of emotion . 3/4 14:05 Wed , Oct 15 Chapter 210 None of You Deserve Her CD ** Finished " What ? " Madeline's eyes widened . No one had told her

anything about that . Across from them , Sawyer's gaze sharpened as he met Leander's stare head - on , doing his best to hold his ground . " That's right . Madeline is the Shire family's granddaughter .

What business is it of yours if I propose to Old Mr. Shire ? " he said , steadying his voice . " What business is it of mine ? " Leander gave a mocking smile . " I used to think you , Sawyer Locke , were the most promising young man in Cranfordale- talented , capable , a real standout . If Madeline ended up with someone like you , she'd be well taken care of . " " But now that I've seen you in person , you're nothing but a petty , cunning coward . Madeline has a good heart . What makes you think you deserve her ? " He stepped forward , slowly raising a finger to point .

" Go back and tell your billionaire father to mind his own business . And stop trying to get involved with Madeline ! " " You want to marry my sister ? " He scoffed , " You ? Or your whole d * mn Locke family ? None of you deserves her ! " Send Gifts 60 。 ΔIA

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Did You Make A Mistake ?