

# **From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft)**

## **- Chapter 351**

### **Chapter 351**

"That's the Abyssal Godblade—the legendary supreme divine weapon! My god, it's a good thing I came this time!"

"Yeah, who would've thought the four major elite families would be this generous, revealing the Abyssal Godblade to everyone?! If I'm lucky, maybe I'll be chosen by it... Maybe I'll become the sovereign of this era!"

"Please, don't kid yourself. The Abyssal Godblade is a weapon of divine rank-only the top of the top could ever be acknowledged by it. With your cultivation as a mere Martial Master, how could you possibly lift it?"

"Oh yeah? And what about you? You're a Martial Master too!"

At the Southern Shore, countless young talents of Astria's martial world were in a stir. The air buzzed with excitement.

The Abyssal Godblade was the divine sword of modern Astria, spoken of in the same breath as the ancient Sword of Aurion. But the Sword of Aurion had always been shrouded in myth, never once seen by mortal eyes.

Fifty years ago, during the martial assembly between the four major elite families, the Abyssal Godblade had been discovered here at this very shore.

Back then, the four patriarchs had tried to take the sword away, but none could pull it free, not even move it an inch. In the end, they had built a stone dais around it to conceal and protect it, keeping it hidden from the world.

Though the Abyssal Godblade was known throughout Astria's martial world, few had ever actually seen it. No one expected they'd witness its splendor that day.

Daphne and Claire exchanged a glance, their gazes locking on the sword. Claire sighed softly. "So, that's the Abyssal Godblade... truly a weapon of this age. No wonder they call it the supreme divine weapon."

The Autumnveil Blade in her hand—one of the famed swords from the Warring States Era—was already considered peerless, on par with Jesund's Demonrend. Yet even so, she could feel her own sword trembling faintly, as though oppressed by some immense power, almost bowing in submission.

That was the Abyssal Godblade-king among swords. Wherever it appeared, all blades bowed before it.

Ethan's gaze burned as he stared at it, sparks flickering deep in his eyes.

The day before, Gareth had told him that the four families had agreed to unveil the Abyssal Godblade during this martial assembly. Whoever could pull the sword free would be hailed as the sovereign of this age—the strongest of all.

Ethan wasn't particularly skilled with the sword, but pulling out the Abyssal Godblade had become his greatest ambition. If he could do it, it would mean he stood on the path to becoming the mightiest of his generation.

Even Gareth, as strong as he was, hadn't been able to make the sword budge 18 years ago. If Ethan could succeed where his father failed, with the Abyssal Godblade's power in his hands and time to master it, even the monstrous talent Jeff Ashcroft wouldn't be beyond his reach.

However, he wasn't the only one with that idea in mind. Tycen, Eira, and even Daphne all shared the same thought: if they could claim the Abyssal Godblade, they could rule the martial world and roam the earth freely.

Everyone's attention was locked on the sword—everyone except Leander, who seemed completely uninterested. He calmly poured himself another serving of refreshment, savoring it as if the entire spectacle meant nothing to him.

"Mr. Ashcroft!"

After Gareth's announcement, a figure suddenly stepped forward. Heads turned, and the crowd recognized him immediately—it was Theo of the Skycrown Sect, one of the Three Briliants and Four Beauties, second only to Claire among the young swordsmen.

He clasped his hands and spoke loudly. "Mr. Ashcroft, just to confirm you said whoever can draw the Abyssal Godblade will be its master. Does that mean anyone here may try?"

Gareth took a gander at him and nodded evenly. "That's right."

The crowd erupted again, and Theo's eyes gleamed with excitement. With a bold step, he strode to the sword and stopped before its hilt. "In that case, I'll go first- and clear the way for everyone else."

A murmur ran through the onlookers. Theo gripped the hilt of the Abyssal Godblade tightly.

"Arrrghh!" He shouted, his entire body straining as his feet sank deep into the sand. Yet, the Abyssal Godblade didn't move an inch, still embedded firmly in the stone pedestal.

"What is this?"

Unwilling to give up, Theo channeled his inner strength. His aura surged to its peak -the full power of an Elite Grandmaster-pouring into his palms as he prepared to make another attempt.

A full minute passed before Theo suddenly raised both hands and staggered back several steps, sweat already beading and rolling down his forehead.

"Hah! So much for Theo trying to steal the spotlight—ended up making a fool of himself instead!"

"Exactly! Among the Nine Geniuses, Theo doesn't even rank in the top three, and he thinks the Abyssal Godblade would acknowledge him? Fat chance!"

Whispers rippled through the crowd. Theo's face flushed red. After a brief salute toward Gareth, he slipped back into the crowd, his pride clearly stung.

The first challenger had failed.

"Well then," a new voice called out. "Since Theo's already tried, I, Kian Hart, should at least give it a shot."

Kian, another of the Three Briliants and a disciple of the Stonepeak Sect, stepped forward confidently. He placed one palm firmly on the hilt of the sword.

Three minutes later, his face had turned pale, and his shirt was drenched in sweat. With a guilty expression, he too retreated.

Another failure.

Gareth and the other three patriarchs of the elite families remained seated, calm and unbothered. Ever since they had agreed to reveal the Abyssal Godblade to the world, they had prepared themselves for the possibility that someone might one day take it away—or that no one ever could.

One after another, several among the Three Brilliants and Four Beauties stepped up to try their luck, yet each attempt ended the same way—in failure. Even a few young Elite Grandmasters who fancied themselves above the rest walked up with confidence and left defeated.

An hour passed. Out of the hundreds of young martial elites gathered, only a handful had yet to attempt—Ethan, Tycen, Eira, Daphne, and Claire.

All eyes turned toward them. To everyone present, if there was anyone left who could possibly be recognized by the Abyssal Godblade, it had to be one of these five.

At last, Tycen of the O'Brien family stepped forward. His gaze hardened, and mist began to swirl around his right hand, condensing into the shape of a massive handprint, as though a giant glove of inner strength had formed over his own. "That's the O'Brien family's secret martial art—the Perfect Hand!" someone exclaimed while many gasped in marvel.

Tycen's glowing handprint tightened, his five spectral fingers gripping the sword's hilt.

"Rise!" he growled, muscles straining as waves of power surged through him. The light from the spectral hand flared brilliantly.

A gust of energy swept across the shore, forcing several people to take a step back, their faces filled with awe. Yet Tycen's expression only grew grimmer—his face turning ashen.

He had unleashed his full power, channeling all his inner strength—but the Abyssal Godblade didn't move an inch.

"Impossible..." he muttered through clenched teeth. His inner strength burst outward once more, the sand beneath his feet collapsing under pressure, yet the sword remained completely still.

After a long struggle, Tycen finally released the hilt and lowered his head, stepping back in defeat.

"Even Tycen failed!"

A murmur of shock rippled through the spectators. Now, they finally understood why the Abyssal Godblade was so revered-it truly was a weapon beyond mortal reach. Just then, four streaks of light cut through the air as Daphne, Claire, Eira, and Ethan rose simultaneously, landing gracefully beside the stone pedestal.

The four exchanged glances. Then Eira was the first to act. Her hands swept down as threads of violet energy coiled around them, channeling inner strength into her grip. Yet she had barely begun to pull when she let go and stepped back, shaking her head.

"I can't move it," she said quietly.

Claire's eyes flickered, her sword aura awakening as her focus deepened, and the world reflected clearly in her gaze. She reached out and wrapped her hand around the hilt. After several long minutes, she sighed softly and retreated.

All eyes now turned to the final two-the Twin Stars of Highcliffe: Ethan and Daphne. They were the last hope.

From the sidelines, Gareth and Wesley leaned forward slightly, their eyes sharp with anticipation, hearts silently filled with expectation.

Daphne took a deep breath, channeling her inner strength. A faint crimson glow flickered across her hands as she pressed two fingers beneath the hilt of the Abyssal Godblade. Her fingertips trembled slightly as she guided her power upward.

A sharp hum split the air.

The Abyssal Godblade didn't move,

but the sand around it rippled as though stirred by an invisible force grains bouncing off the ground. Yet no matter how the surroundings shifted the sword itself remained unshaken anchored to the stone like an eternal pillar.

Daphne huffed in defeat, her expression calm and resigned as she withdrew her hand.

The entire Southern Shore fell silent. All the top prodigies had failed, leaving only Ethan as the final challenger.

Feeling the weight of countless eyes on him, Ethan's pulse quickened. Every other prodigy had fallen short-if he succeeded, he would become the center of the world's attention, the undisputed king of his generation.

"Abyssal Godblade," he said under his breath, voice sharp with conviction, "you were destined to be mine. I am the sovereign this world awaits."

His eyes blazed. A faint dragon-shaped shadow unfurled above his head, accompanied by the low, resonant cry of a dragon.

"The Ashcroft family's Draconic Tail Strike!"

The crowd stiffened, hearts tightening with anticipation. Ethan's five fingers curled like claws, gripping the hilt.

"Power of the dragon-rise!" The source of this content is

With a roar, he unleashed everything he had. The ground beneath him split in a violent explosion, sending waves of sand and dust flying. The blast engulfed him completely, forcing Daphne and the others to leap backward as their hearts trembled.

"Did he succeed?" someone gasped.

No one else had caused such a commotion. The moment the ground split apart, nearly everyone believed Ethan had done it—that the Abyssal Godblade had finally chosen its master.

"As expected, the Ashcroft family truly is heaven's chosen! Ethan is the rightful heir to the Abyssal Godblade!"

The younger generation murmured in awe, their faces filled with admiration and disbelief. Tycen and the others, meanwhile, looked grim and defeated. Even among the prodigies of the age, it seemed Ethan alone had been deemed worthy—or so they thought.

The sea breeze gradually cleared the lingering dust, and Ethan's figure came back into view. The crowd froze, their expressions twisting into shock. "What... How is that possible?"

Ethan himself stood motionless, face pale, eyes wide in disbelief. He had unleashed the Ashcroft family's ultimate technique, poured every ounce of inner strength into the strike—yet the Abyssal Godblade hadn't moved an inch.

He staggered back a few steps, staring at his own trembling hands, mind blank. He had always believed himself to be the chosen one, at least 60% confident he could pull the blade free. But the truth was merciless—it hadn't even acknowledged him.

"Even Ethan failed..."

A heavy silence fell. Not a single person spoke.

Gareth and the other patriarchs could only shake their heads, sighing deeply.

Eighteen years ago, no one had been able to draw the Abyssal Godblade. Now, 18 years later, even with the finest talents of Astria gathered here, the result remained unchanged.

"Could it be," Gareth murmured, looking up at the sky, "that no one in this world is fated to wield the Abyssal Godblade?"

Leander, who had been quietly

sipping his beverage all this while,

He

drained his cup and glanced up, amusement flickering in his eyes as they drifted toward the sword. Was genuinely curious—what sort of divine artifact could defy every

genius who tried to claim it?

At that moment, the long-silent Abyssal Godblade suddenly sang. The clear ring of its sword cry echoed across the beach.

Gasps erupted as a thunderous

pedestal

en

crack split the air. The sand and stones around the sword exploded outward, and a surge of blue light shot into the sky. A blinding beam pierced the heavens before collapsing into a single streak

that plummeted straight down—landing in the sand just half a foot from where Leander sat.

Every gaze snapped toward him, eyes wide.

Leander chuckled softly, utterly unruffled, and reached out to grasp the hilt. A

thunderous dragon's roar erupted, shaking the sea and sky. Waves crashed backward as the tide recoiled, spraying foam into the air.

The Abyssal Godblade the weapon that no one had been able to move-rose easily in Leander's hand. Its blade gleamed with a piercing blue light, edges so clear they were nearly transparent, brilliance radiating in all directions.

For a heartbeat, the entire shore fell silent. Not a single breath could be heard. The world itself seemed to hold still as the Abyssal Godblade finally found its master.

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A sharp, ringing note split the heavens. The Abyssal Godblade blazed with radiant blue light, its brilliance spreading across the Southern Shore. Everyone froze, eyes wide in disbelief, the entire beach falling into utter silence.

Every gaze-shocked, fearful, and awed-turned toward Leander. Even the patriarchs of the four major elite families of Highcliffe, who had been composed the whole time, could no longer hide their astonishment.

Just moments earlier, the greatest prodigies of Astria-Ethan, Daphne, Claire, and others had all stepped forward and failed to move the Abyssal Godblade. Many had begun to believe that no one in this world could draw it. Yet now, that same divine weapon, wreathed in cold blue light, had been pulled free—and by none other than a man most of them barely recognized.

All eyes were fixed on Leander. Among the crowd were the finest young martial talents of Astria, easily representing over 80% of the martial world's younger generation. Every one of them had tried and failed. Even the top prodigies-Ethan and Daphne among them-had been powerless before the sword.

So how could this young man, whom most had never even heard of, draw out the Abyssal Godblade so effortlessly?

"That guy..." Eira's eyes widened, her lips parting in shock.

Years ago, Leander had been a towering figure in Highcliffe, but time had passed. His name had faded, replaced by new prodigies like Ethan. She had never once imagined that the supreme divine weapon-the Abyssal Godblade itself—would respond to him.

Tycen's face turned red, then pale, a storm of disbelief twisting his expression. He had poured all his power into moving that sword and failed to lift it even a fraction. Yet Leander, a man he had barely regarded as a martial cultivator at all, had drawn it effortlessly.

How could someone without any cultivation possibly command the Abyssal Godblade?

Daphne and Ethan stood stunned as well, horror flashing across their faces. THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY

They knew Leander better than most. Once, he had been dazzling beyond compare — but after Gareth had stripped him of his martial power, he had fallen completely from grace. And yet, the sword that was said to bow only to the sovereign of the age now blazed brilliantly in Leander's grasp. Its glow was blinding.

For a long moment, neither of them could even process what they were seeing. Ethan, in particular, felt the world tilt beneath his feet.

He possessed twin martial powers and had trained under Gareth himself, the foremost master in Astria's martial world. His cultivation had risen swiftly, and among the younger generation, he had believed himself unmatched. To him, Leander was already a relic of the past.

This martial assembly between the four major elite families had been meant to prove his supremacy-to claim the Abyssal Godblade and confirm his destiny. Yet the truth was cruel. He had failed where Leander, stripped of power and discarded by fate, had triumphed. Nothing could have been more unthinkable.

From the iron platform where the patriarchs sat, Gareth, Teion, Jack, and Wesley all turned toward one another, their gazes meeting in silent disbelief.

They had placed their hopes in their own heirs, confident that one of them would rise to greatness. Instead, it was Leander—the least likely of all—who had drawn the divine blade and outshone every young talent present. It defied all logic.

Gareth's eyes widened as he stared at Leander. The Abyssal Godblade was a weapon of impossible might—so powerful that even he, one of Astria's greatest living masters, had never been able to stir it.

Among the younger generation, he had placed his faith in Ethan, Daphne, and the other leading talents. If anyone were to draw the sword, it should have been one of them. But Leander the very man whose martial power had been destroyed and whose cultivation was gone had awakened the Abyssal Godblade instead.

The sight was something Gareth could not reconcile.

"Why?" he murmured under his breath. "It's said that only the true sovereign can draw the Abyssal Godblade. Why would it respond to Leander? Why would it choose him?"

His thoughts spun wildly, struggling to grasp the truth. Can it be that the sword still recognized Leander as bearing the destiny of a sovereign—and has chosen him as its rightful master?

The question sent chills through Gareth's spine.

After all, the Abyssal Godblade had once been wielded by Aurion, the Sun Emperor and Veyar, the God of War—two beings from ancient myth, paragons of divine might whose cultivation had reached the Transcendent Realm itself. Only those like them were worthy of mastering such a weapon.

So how could a man who had lost his martial power—a man who could no longer even practice the martial arts—possibly command the Abyssal Godblade? How could it acknowledge him at all?

After a long moment of stunned silence, the crowd erupted into chaos.

"No way! Who is that guy? Did he really just draw the Abyssal Godblade?"

"I can't believe my eyes! Even Ethan and the others couldn't make it move—so how did that man get it to leap out on its own?"

"He looks unfamiliar... definitely not one of Astria's top martial prodigies. So why can he wield the Abyssal Godblade?"

The uproar rippled across the Southern Shore, shock and confusion spreading like wildfire. Only a handful of people—Claire, Emma, and those who knew Leander's true identity—remained calm, their eyes filled with quiet certainty.

"As expected," Claire murmured, a faint smile touching her lips. "Only he is worthy of the Abyssal Godblade."

Among Astria's younger generation, Jeff Ashcroft might be the strongest under heaven, she thought, but only Leander truly bears the spirit of a sovereign.

Under the weight of countless astonished stares, Leander remained perfectly composed. He held the Abyssal Godblade across his arm, brushing two fingers lightly along its gleaming blade.

Feeling the razor-sharp chill radiating from the metal, he nodded with faint approval. "A fine sword indeed."

Even with just a touch, he could

sense its peerless sharpness—its spirit alive and watchful. Though he had never cared much for divine weapons, the Abyssal Godblade was undeniably extraordinary the most formidable weapon he had ever encountered.

Within its core, he could faintly feel a vast, ancient power pulsing—one that, if harnessed, could elevate a warrior's cultivation to the realm of the Overlords.

"Ander!" Daphne hurried toward him, eyes alight with joy. "The Abyssal Godblade has accepted you! It's a divine relic—its power might help you recover your cultivation and free you from the curse of your lost martial power!"

Her words trembled with hope. Leander's inability to practice martial arts had always weighed heavily on her heart. Now that the ancient sword itself had chosen him, she dared to believe it could restore what he had lost.

"Help me?" Leander chuckled softly, his tone calm and detached.

Then, without warning, he flung the Abyssal Godblade into the air. The blade arced gracefully before plunging back down, embedding itself deep in the sand until only the hilt remained visible.

"Ander, what are you doing?" Daphne cried, eyes wide in alarm.

Everyone else stared in stunned disbelief. The Abyssal Godblade was a divine treasure beyond measure anyone fortunate enough to claim it would be the envy

of the martial world. Even someone as powerful as Gareth coveted it.

And yet, Leander had tossed it aside as though it were nothing more than scrap metal. No one could comprehend what they had just seen.

Leander straightened, a faint smile on his lips as he turned to Daphne. "Daphne, the Abyssal Godblade may be powerful but don't need it. True strength doesn't come from wielding a divine weapon. If anything, am the greatest weapon this world has ever known."

His gaze swept across the stunned assembly, burning with quiet dominance. Then he stepped forward.

"Daphne, I made a promise to your father to claim victory in this martial assembly between the four major elite families. Watch closely."

He was about to summon the gathered contestants when his eyes suddenly flicked toward the horizon. His footsteps halted.

From the distant sea came a deep rumble, waves surging violently as if a storm had been unleashed. The water rose in towering walls that crashed toward the shore like a rolling tsunami.

Gareth and the other patriarchs turned sharply, their expressions darkening as they sensed the overwhelming power approaching. The young elites followed their gaze, fear flashing across their faces.

From atop the heaving sea, four silhouettes emerged, each radiating an aura so vast and divine it seemed to make the heavens tremble. They strode across the waves, their presence towering, godlike four figures descending upon the mortal world.

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The sea roared as the waves surged skyward and crashed toward the shore. Out of the rolling tide emerged four figures, each one walking on air, suspended above the raging sea as though gravity itself dared not touch them.

"They're walking on air... Transcendent Realm?" Wesley, Teion, and Jack all cried out in disbelief, while Gareth's eyes hardened, his expression darkening with caution.

The towering waves rushed closer, their spray catching the light like shattered glass. The young martial elites on the beach could only stare, frozen in awe, before instinctively retreating several steps. Their cultivation was strong, but nowhere near

enough to withstand the overwhelming power of nature—or of those who could command it.

Just as the waves were about to crash down upon the shore, Gareth flashed forward. With a single palm strike, he pressed his hand down toward the sea.

A colossal handprint of energy appeared before the cresting waves, and in an instant, the torrent split apart. Water surged to both sides, scattering sand and pebbles across the beach—but not a single person was harmed.

With one effortless move, Gareth had cleaved the waves in two, shielding everyone behind him. He drew back his hand and stood tall, his outfit billowing in the sea breeze as he faced the four approaching figures across the water.

Even with his calm temperament and years of cultivation, Gareth felt a deep unease. The pressure radiating from these four was suffocating.

The other three patriarchs—Teion, Jack, and Wesley—descended from the viewing platform to stand at Gareth's side. Behind them, Ethan, Daphne, and Claire followed, their eyes fixed on the sea as the four mysterious figures drew closer, their presence growing heavier with each step.

At last, the newcomers reached the shore. One of them—a man wielding a long spear—stepped forward and swept his gaze across the crowd before locking eyes with Gareth.

"So, you must be Gareth Ashcroft," the man said with a faint, mocking smile. "The rising star of the Ashcroft family, the one everyone's been talking about lately?"

Gareth's shirt billowed as he straightened, meeting the man's gaze head-on. "That's right. I'm Gareth Ashcroft. I don't know who you four are, or what brings you here across the sea—but I would like to know your purpose."

He had seen enough battles to recognize hostility when it was standing in front of him. These four had not come as guests. Even for someone of his strength, the pressure they exuded was immense.

"Purpose?" the man with metal gauntlets sneered, his tone dripping with mockery as he bared a row of sharp white teeth. "Let's just say our elders had some...

'connections' with the ancestors of your four families.

"They've long since passed, but we wanted to see for ourselves how their descendants have turned out. Whether the heirs of the four major elite families have lived up to their legacy."

Gareth's eyes narrowed. He didn't recognize their affiliations, but the tension in the air was palpable. Before he could speak again, a deep, resonant voice rolled from the treeline at the edge of the beach.

"Well, well... I never thought anyone from the War God Sanctum would still be alive after being wiped out 50 years ago—and you even dare to show your faces at our martial assembly. I must say, I am... quite surprised."

A sharp whistle of displaced air followed the words. When the crowd turned, they saw that an elderly man had appeared beside Gareth, standing with his hands clasped behind his back, calm and composed as though he had been there all along.

"Grandfather!" Eira cried in delight.

Realization rippled through the crowd—it was Anton Valence, the patriarch of the Valence family and father to Jack.

As Anton appeared, three more bursts of light streaked across the sky, descending in dazzling arcs. The air crackled with power as three figures materialized beside him, each exuding the aura of a storm contained within human form.

"Reginald Ashcroft, Raphael Florian, Corwin O'Brien!"

The names tore through the murmuring crowd like thunder. Those who knew the legends of Astria's martial world could hardly believe their eyes.

These were the old pillars of the four major elite families—their might once unmatched across the land. And now, they too stood revealed as masters of the Transcendent Realm, walking the very air as if it were solid ground.

The realization struck the crowd like lightning.

The four major elite families of Highcliffe—the most powerful clans in all Astria—had endured for more than a century without decline. Their heirs were already celebrated throughout the martial world, but no one had imagined that each family still had a living Transcendent guarding its lineage.

With that kind of strength, even a single family could sweep through every sect and faction in Astria. No wonder the four families had reigned unshaken in Highcliffe for a hundred years.

Reginald's walking stick had vanished; in its place stood a man brimming with vigor and power, his presence towering like a mountain. The energy around him pulsed like thunder beneath his skin. Fresh chapters posted on

The other elders-Raphael, Corwin, and Anton—were no less imposing. Their combined auras surged across the beach, meeting the four intruders head-on, the crashing waves themselves seeming to still between the two forces.

The storm had gathered—and the clash of the Transcendents was about to begin.

"The four major elite families truly live up to their reputation. No wonder you were able to drive our sanctum out of Astria all those years ago." The man with the long spear spoke coldly, his voice carrying an edge of icy disdain.

"War God Sanctum?"

At first, when Anton had mentioned the name, most of those present hadn't fully registered it. But now the words struck like thunder.

"They're from the War God Sanctum?!"

Gasps spread through the crowd. Daphne's eyes flashed as she looked at the four strangers standing before them, the truth dawning on her. Memories of the old stories—the buried history of the four major elite families—rose vividly in her mind. More than 50 years ago, the western powers had invaded Astria in force, their fleets and artillery battering the nation until it could barely raise its head. Alongside their armies came their martial experts, who formed an alliance of their own a powerful organization known as the War God Sanctum, created specifically to crush Astria's martial world.

The Sanctum had once been unmatched. Individually, Astria's masters were no weaker than those from the West, but the Sanctum fought as a single unit, while Astria's martial experts stood divided. One by one, they had been hunted down. Many of Astria's greatest had perished, and its martial world had nearly been annihilated beneath the Sanctum's iron heel.

It was only when the ancestors of the four major elite families rose together rallying Astria's scattered masters into a single army—that the tide finally turned. They fought for years, uniting under one banner until the War God Sanctum was shattered, its ranks slaughtered, and its survivors driven from Astria's borders. The Western powers soon fell as well, forced to retreat in defeat.

That was half a century ago. Since then, the War God Sanctum had vanished from history, its name spoken only in cautionary tales. None had imagined it would one day return let alone with four Transcendent Realm masters leading the charge.

Gareth's eyes narrowed, his expression grave. He had heard whispers of the Sanctum's terrifying might—that, in its prime, it could stand toe to toe with even the World Arbitration Office. That alone spoke volumes about how dangerous these men were.

The younger generation stood silent, their faces tense. Even they could sense it—the thick scent of blood and danger that now tainted the air. What was meant to be a martial assembly was rapidly becoming a battlefield.

Reginald's gaze turned sharp. "The War God Sanctum was crushed decades ago by our ancestors' alliance. You haven't dared set foot in Astria since. So tell me why come here now, and why at the very moment of our martial assembly?"

The blond man on the far left let out a low chuckle, his smile cutting and cruel. He raised a hand dismissively. "No need to get so tense, my friends of Astria. We come without malice. It's just that our predecessors fell to your four families' alliance, and as their successors, we're simply curious. We'd like to see whether

your bloodlines still deserve the glory they claim."

He flicked his wrist, and a pulse of sound rippled across the sea. In the distance, a column of water erupted upward as something sliced through it at astonishing speed. Within seconds, a figure came sprinting across the ocean's surface, moving so fast he seemed to skim the waves like a motorboat.

Before anyone could react, the newcomer had landed neatly beside the four Transcendents, bowing respectfully.

The blond man gestured toward him with an easy smile. "Allow me to introduce my disciple-Elkins. He has been trained under me since the

age of five. It's been 20 years now. And since today is the grand martial assembly of the four major elite families, with all your young elites gathered here... I wonder if you dare to let your so-called prodigies face him?"

Elkins took a step forward. The sand beneath his feet erupted outward as a burst of energy surged from him, sending waves ten yards high crashing into the air. His presence alone was enough to shake the shoreline.

"I've heard the four major elite families boast many young masters," Elkins said in a deep, confident voice, his words laced with inner strength. "Among them, Ethan Ashcroft and Daphne Florian—the Twin Stars of Highcliffe—are said to be the brightest of Astria's martial world. I, Elkins, have come today to see if the legends hold true."

The raw power behind his voice made several of the young cultivators flinch, their expressions tightening.

Reginald and the other elders frowned. The War God Sanctum had arrived in full force, yet none of their Transcendent masters had moved to fight. Instead, they were sending a disciple to challenge Astria's youth. It was both an insult and a trap. But tradition demanded that juniors settle matters among themselves so they had little choice.

Tycen, ever hot-tempered, couldn't stand it any longer. "You've got guts, I'll give you that! Fine—I, Tycen O'Brien, will take you on!"

He stepped forward, ready to leap onto the platform. But Elkins barely spared him a glance before shaking his head. "You're too weak to be my opponent."

Tycen froze, his fury surging. Before he could retort, Elkins raised a finger and pointed—first at Eira, then Daphne, and finally Ethan.

"You three," he said coolly, "fight me together."

The entire beach fell silent once more. Elkins—the unassuming young man from the West—was challenging not one, but three of Highcliffe's most gifted heirs at once.

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Elkins stood with his hands clasped behind his back, a faintly disdainful smile curling at his lips as he motioned lazily for Ethan and the others to come forward.

His arrogance left the young martial elites of Astria momentarily stunned before fury surged through them. Ethan, Daphne, Eira, and Tycen were the top among Astria's younger generation—each one powerful enough to stand alone.

Yet Elkins, whom none of them had even heard of before, had just declared he would take on all four at once. In all of Astria's martial world, no one had been able to best the four of them single-handedly.

"Ridiculous! We don't even need them to deal with you. I, Kian Hart of Stonepeak Sect, am more than enough!"

Before Ethan and the others could react, Kian burst forward with a roar. His sword flashed, forming a cross-shaped pattern that locked onto Elkins' vital points.

Elkins merely snorted, his expression indifferent, and threw out a casual punch.

There was a thunderous crack as his fist met the sword tip. The pure steel blade shattered into several pieces with a sharp clang, and Kian was hurled backward, coughing up blood as his body slammed into the sand and skidded across the beach before going limp.

The crowd fell silent in shock.

Kian might not have been the strongest among the younger generation, but he was still one of the Nine Geniuses—an Elite Grandmaster. Yet Elkins had crushed him with a single punch. Even Ethan or Daphne would have struggled to accomplish such a feat.

In that instant, Ethan, Daphne, Claire, and the others all felt a deep sense of gravity settle over them.

When Elkins had first dashed across the waves, he hadn't even displayed his full strength. Now, after seeing him cripple Kian with one effortless strike, the pressure was palpable. There was no doubt—Elkins' cultivation had already reached the level of a Martial Sovereign.

High above, the four War God Sanctum Transcendents hovered midair, confidence gleaming in their eyes. They clearly had every faith in Elkins.

"Come on!"

Elkins flicked a hand toward them after sending Kian flying, as though swatting a fly, taunting the rest without a hint of concern.

"You b\*stard!"

Tycen's gaze darkened. He slid a foot sideways and thrust his palm forward. His inner strength surged, forming a massive, nearly tangible imprint that roared toward Elkins the O'Brien family's famed technique, the Perfect Hand.

Elkins quirked a brow, unbothered, and met it with another casual punch.

A burst of force exploded in midair. The perfect palm imprint shattered as Elkins' fist tore straight through it. The residual energy didn't fade—it howled like a storm as it crashed toward Tycen. Shocked, Tycen crossed his arms in front of him to block.

A sickening crack sounded. Tycen's forearms snapped under the impact, and the violent energy churned through his body, making his insides twist. He spat blood and staggered backward.

Even so, he barely managed to stay on his feet. But before he could catch his breath, a sharp whistle split the air. Elkins was already on him again, moving like lightning. In the blink of an eye, he appeared at Tycen's side, another fist descending with lethal intent. Tycen's eyes widened in panic—he had no way to defend himself.

Just as Elkins' fist was about to crush him, four streams of force shot toward Elkins from different directions, all aimed at his vital points.

Elkins grunted and instantly abandoned the attack, stomping down hard as he sprang backward, widening the distance between himself and his attackers.

Ethan, Daphne, Eira, and Claire now stood shoulder to shoulder before Tycen, staring coldly at Elkins—their combined strike just now had saved Tycen's life.

Teion, watching his son nearly die, roared and started forward to join the fight. But a sudden blast of energy swept across the sand in front of him, gouging a deep pit and cutting him off.

"Need you interfere in a duel between the younger generation? Well, the four major elite families are starting to look awfully desperate."

Teion spun around. The one who had just attacked was the man wielding a long spear. And now, with a flick of his hand, the man sent another surge of power spiraling through the air, crashing down toward Teion like a bolt of lightning.

Teion turned grave instantly. Though he was half a step into the Pre-Transcendent Realm, against a true Transcendent Realm opponent, he was nothing but an ant—and he knew he couldn't possibly withstand that blow.

"Hurgh!"

Just then, Corwin flicked his sleeve, releasing a streak of blazing energy that met the crimson-and-black blast from his opponent head-on. The two forces collided with a thunderous boom, sending waves surging wildly across the Southern Shore as though the entire coastline might collapse beneath the impact.

"Looks like you old men can't hold yourselves back anymore," a tall man with metal gauntlets sneered. "Fine, then we'll keep you company!"

He slammed his fists together, releasing a ring of raw energy before clasping both hands to form a massive hammer that came crashing down toward Reginald.

"The War God Sanctum is still as despicable as ever!" Reginald's gaze turned cold as he lifted his palm. A colossal dragon shadow—more than 30 feet long—coiled upward from

his arm. With a flick of its tail, it collided against the falling hammer, shaking the heavens.

At the same time, Anton and Raphael, both Transcendent Realm masters, lunged into the fray—one against the blond man, the other against the silent, black-eyed fighter.

In an instant, eight Transcendent Realm masters were locked in battle, their powers colliding like raging storms over the sea near the Southern Shore.

From below, Gareth narrowed his eyes as he watched the chaotic clash. He carefully studied the battlefield, looking for an opening among the four War God Sanctum Transcendents.

Though he was the youngest among his peers, his cultivation was no weaker than any of theirs. If he entered the fray at the right moment, he could turn the tide.

Then it came a brief gap behind the man with the metal gauntlets. After exchanging a fierce blow with Reginald, the man staggered back half a step. Gareth seized the chance, his body shooting upward like a streak of light. His palms glimmered faintly with the roar of dragons as he aimed a deadly strike at the man's exposed back.

But before he could land the blow, a beam of black light shot through the sky—faster than Gareth's own movement and slammed into him midair.

Forced to abort his strike, Gareth gathered his vitality in an instant and swung his arms to counter.

The explosion that followed shook

the heavens. The force of the collision sent Gareth flying backward tumbling through the air as shockwaves rippled from his feet with every desperate step he took to regain balance. After seven such steps, he finally steadied himself, his chest heaving.

The sudden intervention drew the attention of everyone on the battlefield. Reginald, Corwin, and the other Transcendents all turned their eyes skyward just as a deep, commanding voice echoed from above.

"Ganging up on one man? The Arbitration Office doesn't approve of such cowardice."

As the voice faded, five figures descended through the clouds. Their auras were dense and steady, their presence overwhelming.

The one leading them had long black hair and a beard, his face sharp and stern with distinctly Western features. The black light that had struck Gareth returned to his hand, revealing itself as a long whip crafted entirely from bone. Official source is

"The Arbitration Office?"

Reginald and the other three elders immediately broke off from their fight with the War God Sanctum Transcendents, turning to face the newcomers. Their expressions hardened with realization.

It had already taken everything they had to hold back the four Transcendents. Now, five more from the Arbitration Office had appeared and from their formation, it was clear they stood on the same side. That meant nine Transcendent Realm masters against four.

And worse still, the ones who had just arrived radiated an even stronger pressure. The four from the War God Sanctum were only Kindling Transcendents, but these five from the Arbitration Office were clearly Ember Transcendents—one entire rank

higher.

The black-haired man holding the bone whip was the strongest of them all; his aura was vast and unfathomable, deeper than the sea itself.

Such an overwhelming lineup-nine Transcendents united against the four major elite families—had never once appeared in all of Astria's history.

A chill ran down Reginald's spine as a thought struck him like lightning. Could this be the calamity the Celestial Mirror foretold the Ashcroft family's destined disaster? he thought.

Ethan, Daphne, and the others stood frozen, their faces pale and tense. Elkins, however, grinned wickedly. "This is it—the end of your so-called four great families. Enjoy your last moments while you still can."

As he spoke, his shirt tore apart under the surge of power from within. Muscles bulged, veins pulsed, and his aura doubled in intensity, shaking the air itself. Shadows rolled across the Southern Shore, and countless young martial artists from Astria instinctively wanted to flee.

In the O'Brien family's ranks, Aurora sat beside Rodrick. She had come at

his invitation, hoping to witness the grandeur of the martial assembly. Between the four major elite families, in her wildest dreams had she expected such a deadly confrontation to unfold before her eyes.

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Seeing the grim expressions on Reginald, Gareth, and even Ethan, Aurora could tell that the situation was dire—so dire that even the four major elite families might not be able to handle it. Anxiety churned in her chest.

Then her gaze drifted toward a quiet figure sitting nearby Leander.

While chaos engulfed the beach, Leander calmly lifted his cup, his expression utterly serene, as though none of it concerned him. In that stillness, Aurora saw not fear or tension, but composure—an almost otherworldly calm.

She remembered the stories of his youth—how Leander had once been the legend of Highcliffe, the number one among their generation. Her heart skipped a beat, a strange thought flashing through her mind. Could it be... that he has everything under control?

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## Chapter 355

Aurora had been watching Leander for a long while. She couldn't explain why, but even though he had never shown off in front of others—his only known feat being that time at Maplebrook Axis when he single-handedly took on over a dozen opponents—he seemed entirely different from the rest.

Compared to Ethan, Daphne, and the others who could shatter mountains with a flick of their wrists, Leander's quiet restraint should have made him seem ordinary. Yet somehow, she felt that beneath that calm exterior, he carried a sense of unshakable steadiness—a commanding presence that belonged only to those who stood above all others.

She recalled how the Abyssal Godblade, which none of the other prodigies had been able to lift, had responded only to him. The memory made her heart jolt again, sweeping away the earlier gloom from her face and replacing it with a spark of anticipation.

Perhaps this former legend of Highcliffe will once again shock the world.

...

High in the sky, the five figures from the Arbitration Office floated down and took their place before the four from the War God Sanctum, who cupped their fists respectfully. "Our deepest thanks to the Elite Arbitrators of the Arbitration Office for coming to our aid. We are truly grateful for your support."

The five from the Arbitration Office merely nodded in acknowledgment. Then the man with the bone whip stepped forward and swept his gaze over Reginald and the others.

"Allow me to introduce myself. I am Greed, an Elite Arbitrator of the Arbitration Office. The four beside me hold the same title. We have come at the invitation of the War God Sanctum to meet the so-called four major elite families of Highcliffe."

As he spoke, the bone whip in his hand gleamed with a dull, black light. His expression was utterly calm-neither anger nor amusement, just cold authority.

"Our purpose today is not to make enemies. We've come to offer you a choice-to give you a way forward. I want the four major elite families to join the Arbitration Office and serve under our command."

His voice wasn't loud, but its resonance made the waves tremble and the sand lift from the ground.

The expressions of Reginald and the others hardened immediately. Corwin, the most direct of them, was the first to speak, his tone sharp and resolute. "You expect us to become the Arbitration Office's lapdogs? Absolutely not! Don't forget where you stand-this is Astria, not the West!"

A former soldier, Corwin's words carried the weight of iron. "The Arbitration Office may be one of the strongest organizations in the world, but no matter how powerful you are, you're still beneath the nation itself. The four major elite families stand with Astria's government. I dare you to try and lay a hand on us!"

Greed gave a short, derisive laugh. "There's nothing in this world the Arbitration Office dares not do. And as for your nation-so what? Both world wars were set in motion by us. The shape of this world changes at our command. Do you really think we'd hesitate to crush four elite families?"

His voice turned cold as ice. "You can all see how things stand. There are nine Transcendents on our side-four from the War God Sanctum and five from the Arbitration Office.

"You, on the other hand, have barely five, and at the lowest Kindling level. If we fight, we both know how it will end. The four major elite families have only one option: surrender to the Arbitration Office. Otherwise, this entire Southern Shore will be drenched in your blood.

"Those who follow us will thrive-those who resist will die."

A chill swept through the beach. The younger generation of martial artists all drew sharp breaths as the full realization hit them—this was not a confrontation but an execution.

Everyone's face went pale. Against such overwhelming power, they had no chance. One more Transcendent alone could tilt the balance; four more meant annihilation.

Teion, Jack, and Wesley-men who had long stood at the top of Astria's martial world—felt the same weight of despair. Even they could do nothing against forces like this.

Reginald met Anton's and Corwin's eyes. The three exchanged a silent look before speaking in unison, their voices ringing across the battlefield.

"The four major elite families will never bow to anyone!"

Their words echoed with the pride of generations. Decades ago, their ancestors had joined forces to form the Martial World Coalition, defeating the War God Sanctum and defending Astria's honor. How could they now yield to foreign oppressors-to dark powers that sought to twist the world's balance?

"Is that so?" Greed's lips curved into a cold, cruel smile. "Well then, I'll gladly send you on your way."

He raised a hand. The four Ember Transcendents beside him stepped forward as one, each exuding an overwhelming pressure that seemed to warp the air itself.

"Kill them all," Greed said flatly. "No one on this shore leaves alive."

A violent roar filled the air as four

blazing auras swept across the beach. The Elite Arbitrators lunged toward Reginald and the other patriarchs, while Gareth found himself surrounded by the four Transcendents of the War God Sanctum, their combined force closing in on him like a tightening noose.

Greed stood off to the side with his bone whip coiled in his arms, watching the chaos unfold below. On the beach, Elkins suddenly erupted with force, charging straight toward Ethan and the other young elites.

The Southern Shore descended into turmoil as the battle broke out in full.

Power clashed and surged across the field, stirring up waves of sand and air. Elkins' aura rose higher and higher until it reached the

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Intermediate Sovereign level, bordering on the Advanced. Even

with six opponents Ethan Daphne, Eira, Claire, Emma, and S Theo-joining forces against him, they were pushed back again and again.

Seeing the battlefield spiral into chaos, Aurora's instincts suddenly flared. Without thinking, she ran to

Leander's side. Despite the violent

energy raging all around them being next to him filled her with a strange sense of calm-as if even if the

heavens collapsed, he alone could hold them up.

"What are you doing here?" Leander glanced at her, his tone faintly detached.

"I feel safest next to you," Aurora replied without hesitation, her eyes bright and clear.

"Do you?" Leander quirked a brow, shaking his head with a small, helpless smile.

Since arriving in Highcliffe, he had never revealed his true strength to anyone. Yet somehow, this woman had sensed something others couldn't. He had to admit—women's intuition was terrifyingly sharp.

Up ahead, the two weakest among them-Theo and Emma-were suddenly struck on the shoulder by Elkins' blow. Blood sprayed from their lips as they staggered back.

Claire and Daphne moved in like twin butterflies, their steps light as they tried to restrict Elkins' movement, but his inner strength was far too overwhelming. With a single sweeping palm, he sent both women flying, their bodies trembling from the shock.

Eira followed next, narrowly avoiding a punch that still forced her several steps back. Then Ethan leapt high into the air, his palm gathering dragon shadows as he struck downward with all his might.

"Hmph, parlor tricks," Elkins sneered, making no attempt to dodge. His left shoulder jerked upward, colliding with Ethan's palm.

The impact echoed like thunder. The brutal wave of energy traveled straight up Ethan's arm. Though he had reached the Martial Sovereign level, he still couldn't withstand Elkins' overwhelming might.

He was blasted backward more than ten yards, landing only a few feet from where Leander stood. One hand pressed against the ground as he tried to rise, but before he could, another mouthful of blood spilled out. For more chapters visit [find-novel.net](http://find-novel.net)

That earlier collision had carried both open and hidden power—and now, the hidden force exploded inside him, ravaging his internal organs.

Daphne and the others were also shaken, their breathing unsteady, unable to channel their strength.

Elkins swept his gaze around, the faintest smirk tugging at his lips. "So these are Astria's so-called prodigies? Pathetic."

He shook his head in open disdain. "All this talk of peerless geniuses, unrivaled talents... yet all I see are a bunch of overhyped nobodies."

Rage burned in Ethan's chest. He tried to push himself up, but before he could, a hand pressed lightly on his shoulder. Startled, he looked up—and met Leander's profound eyes.

Ethan froze in disbelief, unable to speak. Even Elkins paused, frowning slightly at the sight of the quiet young man who had just risen to his feet. "Ander?" Daphne called out softly, her voice laced with worry. She feared Elkins might strike at him next. Eira quickly stepped forward, placing herself between Leander and Elkins. Meanwhile, Claire and Emma exchanged a look, exhaling in quiet relief. "He's finally going to step in."

"Kid, you've still got a long way to go," Leander said, smiling faintly at Ethan. "I told you before—no matter where we are, I'm always your big brother." Ethan blinked, utterly confused by his words. Then, before anyone could react, Leander lifted his palm slightly and made a small grasping motion toward Elkins. There was a single deafening bang before a spray of blood exploded into the air. The entire battlefield fell silent—every soul frozen in shock.

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## Chapter 356

With a deafening bang, Elkins—the man who had nearly swept through all of Astria's top young elites—suddenly exploded into a mist of blood before everyone's eyes. It happened so abruptly, without warning, as if the heavens themselves had crushed him.

Ethan, Daphne, Eira, and even the badly wounded Tycen turned toward the source in shock. Leander stood there with one hand still clenched in midair, his eyes calm and distant as starlight, his expression utterly unmoved like a man who had simply crushed an insect.

"Leander?" Ethan's face shifted between disbelief and awe, his voice trembling.

Only those who had fought Elkins understood how terrifying his strength truly was. Even with Ethan's current power at the Martial Sovereign level, he had been far beneath him. Elkins had reached the Intermediate Sovereign stage—perhaps even nearing the Advanced level—and alone could have crushed the Nine Geniuses of Astria.

Yet now, in an instant, he had been reduced to blood mist by a single motion from Leander's hand.

Ethan refused to believe what he had just seen. He could take Elkins dying at the hands of anyone else, but Leander? The same man who had once been stripped of his martial powers and cast out of the Ashcroft family? The same man everyone—including Ethan himself—had thought doomed to die in exile?

When Leander had reappeared in Highcliffe years later, Ethan had been overjoyed, but deep down, he believed his elder brother's glory belonged to the past. A man who had lost his martial power couldn't possibly wield true power again.

Yet now, with Elkins' blood still raining down, Ethan finally understood how wrong he had been. And for the first time, he understood what Leander had meant when he said, "No matter where we are, I'm always your big brother."

Daphne's eyes flickered wildly, disbelief, wonder, and joy chasing each other across her face.

Since their reunion, Leander had never once revealed his strength to her. She had touched him more than once—yet never felt even a trace of martial energy within him. She had thought his brilliance had faded, that he had fallen from the heavens and become someone she needed to protect.

But now, as Elkins' body burst apart in a crimson haze, she realized how wrong she had been. Leander was still Leander-the man who once stood above them all.

Eira and Tycen could only stare in stunned silence.

Nine years ago, Leander had already dominated Highcliffe, but back then, he had only been a ten-year-old boy. Though he had outshone every young genius in Highcliffe, the difference between them hadn't been insurmountable.

They hadn't known his martial power had been destroyed, but even assuming his talent remained, they thought at best he might still be slightly stronger than them. Now, however, to see him kill Elkins with a single move-it was as though he stood ten realms above them.

Only Claire and Emma saw the truth. However powerful Elkins might have been, he was still merely a Martial Sovereign. Someone like that could never hope to survive against the undefeated Iron Sovereign-a man who had slain even Ember Transcendents.

"Ander... your martial power... It's still there?!" Daphne hurried forward, her voice trembling with disbelief and hope.

Leander's lips curved in a faint smile as he reached out to gently brush a strand of hair from her face. "Dani, don't assume that losing my martial power means I lost my strength. To me, martial power or not, it makes no difference. In this world, I will never lose to anyone."

As his voice faded, he lifted one hand and flicked his fingers lightly. Two streaks of blue light shot forth, sinking into the crowns of Ethan's and Daphne's heads, flowing through their meridians and straight into their cores.

Ethan had been gravely injured by Elkins' hidden energy, but at that moment, he felt a warm current spreading from his core, coursing through every meridian and bone. His wounds began healing at an astonishing pace, the pain melting away as his strength returned.

Daphne, too, felt her disrupted inner flow stabilize completely. Her energy smoothed out, surging back to its peak condition. Both of them were stunned. Daphne opened her mouth, wanting to ask Leander something, but before she could speak, a thunderous explosion shook the sky.

A figure came tumbling backward-it was Corwin. He crashed through the air, his outfit fluttering violently before he barely managed to steady himself. His opponent, an Ember Transcendent from the Arbitration Office, stood unharmed, his power calm and vast like the sea.

Corwin was strong-his cultivation

infinitely close to the Ember Original content can be found at

Transcendent level—but he had not yet crossed that threshold. Holding out this long was already remarkable. His opponent hadn't even used his full strength, yet that single palm strike to Corwin's chest sent a surge of innate vitality crashing through him. Even after channeling all his energy to resist, Corwin was heavily injured, his aura fading fast.

Another dull impact followed. Anton was stomped straight into the ocean by another Ember Transcendent. The water erupted upward in a towering column more than 30 feet high.

Then came a streak of crimson across the sky—Raphael took a hit to the shoulder from yet another opponent. The force pierced through his defenses, breaking his vitality barrier and sending energy tearing into his organs. He spat blood and fell onto the sand with a dull thud.

Among the four elders, Reginald was the strongest. But even his power fell short before an Ember Transcendent.

His foe pushed forward with both palms, forming a massive handprint of energy, Reginald met it head-on his own strength surging—but the gap between them was too vast. The overwhelming power numbed his arms, sent his blood boiling and hurled him out of the sky. His body crashed onto the beach, carving a long trench more than ten meters across.

Meanwhile, Gareth was besieged by the four Kindling Transcendents from the War God Sanctum. Though he fought with all he had, his strength was barely enough to hold the line.

As the fight dragged on, his enemies began to overwhelm him. The man wearing metal gauntlets seized an opening and slammed a fist into Gareth's ribs. Blood spattered through the air as Gareth coughed violently, his body twisting before he fell from midair. The once-invincible Grandmaster of Astria was left bloodied and breathless.

In one night, all five Transcendent Realm masters of the four major elite families were defeated. Reginald, Gareth, and the other patriarchs all suffered heavy injuries. Their auras flickered weakly, their battle power nearly gone.

Nearby, Wesley, Teion, and Jack—the current heads of their respective families—could only stand rooted in place, watching helplessly. Before opponents of this level, even they had no right to speak.

"Hahaha!" The man wielding a long

spear floated high above the sea, pointing his weapon downward as his laughter boomed across the

shore Back then, the four major elite families formed the Martial World Coalition and forced our War God Sanctum out of Astra-how glorious that must have felt! But tell me, did you ever imagine this day would come?"

Murder gleamed in his eyes, cold and savage. "Today, you all will vanish from history. Gareth, once Astria's number one grandmaster and the brightest of your generation, you'll be the first to die!"

He spun the spear in his hand and hurled it forward. The air split with a violent hiss as the weapon tore across the sky, moving so fast that even the naked eye couldn't follow. In a heartbeat, it was already within feet of Gareth's chest.

Gareth's gaze hardened. He gathered what little strength he had left, preparing to take the hit head-on if he had to. But before he could, a shadow flickered between him and the spear—a figure appearing like a ghost.

The spear's deadly momentum stopped dead in midair. A slender, pale hand had caught it cleanly by the shaft, holding it motionless.

The entire battlefield froze.

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## Chapter 357

"Hm?!"

Reginald, Gareth, and the others all froze, their gazes sharp with disbelief. Even the several Transcendents hovering in midair looked visibly astonished.

By their senses, there were only a handful in the entire Southern Shore capable of matching them-Reginald, Gareth, Anton, Corwin, and Raphael. Yet now, someone had actually intercepted that full-force strike meant to kill Gareth.

"Leander?"

Both Gareth's and Reginald's expressions twisted in shock. Neither of them had imagined that the person who stepped in to block that nearly fatal blow would be the

very "disgrace" they had cast out of their family—the one whose martial power had been abolished.

Leander stood in midair, gripping a spear in one hand. His fingers tightened slightly, and with a crisp snap, the weapon broke cleanly in two. His voice rang out, cold and even. "I may not be fond of the Ashcroft family, but you foreign b\*stards think you can kill Astrian warriors on Astrian soil? You'll have to get through me first."

The next second, his arm trembled once more. The two halves of the broken spear suddenly reversed direction and shot back—faster and deadlier than before—straight toward the man who had thrown it. Updates are released by

"What—"

The man's eyes widened. The attack came too quickly, giving him no time to react. All he could do was channel every ounce of his innate vitality in defense.

A sharp tear echoed through the air. The fractured spear halves pierced through his protective aura from both sides, driving clean through his shoulders and bursting out in twin sprays of blood. He coughed up a mouthful of crimson and was sent hurtling backward, arms ruined, before three others rushed to catch him mid-air and barely managed to stop his fall.

Everyone stared, dumbstruck. Even the five members of the Arbitration Office wore expressions of disbelief, their composure shaken.

From a distance, Daphne, Ethan, and the others could only gape in astonishment.

Earlier, Leander had obliterated Elkins in a single move—an act so shocking that even then they'd barely managed to process it. But now he had casually taken the full-force strike of a Transcendent and crippled his opponent with one effortless counter.

It completely shattered their understanding of what Leander was capable of.

Since when had there been anyone among Astria's younger generation who could actually fight a Transcendent head-on?

Ethan's eyes flickered. His heart pounded violently. On the Astria Power Index, there was said to be one man who had already slain two Transcendents—one of them an Ember Transcendent. And that man also bore the surname Ashcroft.

Could it be...

He gasped, his gaze locking on Leander. Beside him, Daphne and Eira seemed to come to the same realization, their faces turning pale.

At that moment, the truth was finally spoken aloud.

Greed, who had yet to make a move, stepped forward from the sky, his eyes fixed on Leander. "So that's who you are. No wonder you were able to injure a Kindling Transcendent in an instant. The infamous Iron Sovereign himself has arrived."

As an Elite Arbitrator of the Arbitration Office, Greed had access to certain classified information. He knew well of Leander the man who had once slain members of the Office itself and stood openly against them.

"The Iron Sovereign?!"

Reginald, Gareth, Raphael, and the rest of Astria's martial elite stood frozen where they were. Even the prodigies of the four major elite families, including Ethan and Daphne, stared at Leander in stunned silence.

Countless eyes—awed, reverent, and disbelieving—fell upon him as though witnessing the descent of a legend.

The young man who had just crushed a Transcendent with a single strike was none other than Jeff Ashcroft—the undefeated Iron Sovereign, ranked first on the Astria Power Index, and the unrivaled star of recent years.

"This... this can't be."

Gareth's expression shifted rapidly, disbelief plain in his eyes. He had been the one who personally ordered Leander's martial power crushed years ago, the one who had cast him out of the family. He knew better than anyone what that punishment meant a lifetime severed from martial arts.

And now they were telling him that very same Leander was the Iron Sovereign, a man even the four major elite families could only look up to? That defied all logic, all reason—more impossible than any unsolved mystery of the world.

Ethan stood there blankly. The moment the words "Iron Sovereign" reached his ears, his mind went completely blank.

Jeff Ashcroft had always been Ethan's greatest nightmare. Every ounce of pride, every title he had once claimed as his own, had been stripped away by Jeff. For years, Ethan believed himself to be the undisputed strongest of his generation—but the moment Jeff emerged, that illusion was shattered.

Jeff's brilliance had dragged him down from the pedestal he thought was unshakable, and even his father, the man Ethan had always regarded as invincible, had been forced to bow beneath Jeff's might.

He had imagined this day countless times-meeting Jeff face to face. He had often wondered what the legendary man truly looked like in person. But never, not once, had he dreamed that the "disgraced brother" he'd long dismissed as obsolete, the one he thought buried in the dust of the past, would turn out to be him—the Iron Sovereign who dominated all of Astria.

While Ethan stood frozen in disbelief, Daphne's heart pounded wildly, her eyes filled with joy and awe. "He really didn't lie to me. He's never once fallen from grace!"

Tears welled up in her eyes. Once, she had believed the man she loved had fallen, that he needed her to

stand by him and protect what little remained of his pride. But now

Leander

Jeff Ashcroft himself had

proven her Wrong with the most astonishing truth of all. He was still

standing at the very peak,

untouchable and unmatched.

"That shameless b\*stard," Eira spat under her breath, though she couldn't hide the shock shining in her eyes. Her gaze locked tightly onto Leander, unwilling to look away for even a second.

The four Transcendents of the War God Sanctum all wore grim, shaken expressions. Even though they came from the West, they had heard countless tales of the Iron Sovereign.

As arrogant as they were, none could deny that Jeff stood among the strongest beings alive—and in a one-on-one fight, not one of them could claim to be his equal.

The entire Southern Shore was in uproar. Dressed plainly and standing with calm indifference, Leander cast a sidelong glance at Greed. "The Arbitration Office really doesn't know when to quit, huh? Always sticking your nose where it doesn't belong. I killed seven of you last time—are you hoping I'll make it 14 today?"

Though he faced nine Transcendents alone, Leander's aura didn't falter for an instant. If anything, his presence grew heavier, pressing down on everyone present until even the air trembled. That kind of composure and dominance left the entire crowd in awe.

"Hmph!" Greed snorted coldly through his nose. "Jeff Ashcroft, your arrogance knows no bounds. Don't think that killing a few Transcendents and seven of our lowest-ranking Arbitrators makes you invincible.

"We came here to deal with the four major elite families—but since you're here, we might as well settle our score too! You slaughtered seven of our people and disgraced the Arbitration Office. As Elite Arbitrators, it's our duty to make you pay. I'd like to see whether the so-called Iron Sovereign is truly as 'undefeated' as they say!"

At that, Greed cracked his bone whip through the air. A massive wave split apart, cleaving a path nearly 300 feet wide.

The four Ember Transcendents beside him, together with the four Kindling Transcendents of the War God Sanctum, exchanged brief glances—and then, with a chorus of sonic booms, all eight shot toward Leander in unison.

Eight radiant forces streaked across the heavens, each one glowing with a different color, weaving into a blinding web that seemed to collapse the very sky toward Leander.

Seeing that, Reginald and the other Transcendents on the Astrian side surged to their feet, preparing to rush forward and share some of the burden.

But before they could take a single step, Leander moved. With a swift sweep of his finger, a cutting gust tore across the ground. A massive trench, tens of feet long, split the earth cleanly between them, severing their path.

Without turning around, Leander's voice rang cold and resolute. "When I fight, I don't need anyone interfering. Step across that line and you're my enemy." The words struck like thunder. Reginald and the others froze in place, unable to comprehend why Leander would refuse their help.

Around the Southern Shore, countless spectators stood stunned, all wondering if he was truly planning on taking all nine Transcendents by himself.

Leander paid no attention to their fear or doubt. He took one step forward, his palm lifting slightly, and an invisible surge of power rose from the ground. The eight converging strikes froze mid-air, suspended by sheer force of will.

"It's been a while since coming to Highcliffe that I've had a proper fight," he said, his tone calm but edged with amusement. "Today, I'll make an exception—and have a little fun with you."

His eyes twinkled as a faint smirk curved his lips. The fighting spirit burning within him flared to life once more.

After a month of silence, the Iron Sovereign had awakened on the Southern Shore.

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## Chapter 358

Leander stood alone at the very front of the Southern Shore. Behind him, a deep trench stretched for dozens of feet, cleanly dividing him from the rest of Astria's martial experts.

Gareth, Reginald, and the others stood less than ten yards behind him, but not one of them dared to step forward. They could only watch, stunned and silent.

From the moment Leander had risen to fame, no matter how many enemies stood before him, he had always fought alone and this time was no exception. The line he had drawn in the sand was not just a boundary but a declaration. None of them dared cross it.

"Leander!"

Daphne's heart twisted in her chest. Though the truth of his identity had filled her with both shock and pride, now all she could feel was fear. No matter how powerful his legend, no matter how many Transcendents he had slain before, there were nine of them there right then.

Even for someone like him, that seemed impossible.

Ethan and the others exchanged uneasy looks, silently agreeing that Leander was being too confident for his own good by refusing anyone's help.

But Claire's eyes twinkled, recalling that day at Silvermoon Sect, when Leander had crushed the Laughing Monk of West Ridge with effortless grace. Her heart beat faster despite herself.

Could he do it again? Could he overturn the impossible once more—against nine Transcendents this time?

"Jeff Ashcroft," a man wearing metal gauntlets sneered. "The rumors say you're arrogant beyond belief. Seeing you today, I'd say those rumors were an understatement. You may be Astria's so-called grandmaster, but thinking you can take on nine Transcendents alone? Keep dreaming."

He stomped down hard, the air itself exploding beneath his feet. Waves surged up around him, drawn by the force of his punch until a massive column of water coiled upward into the sky. The gathered power struck like a tidal wave, roaring toward Leander with enough strength to make the ground tremble.

Leander's eyes were cold, but a faint, crooked smile tugged at the corner of his lips. With a single motion of his arm, he seized the air.

Slash!

The raging waters split cleanly down the middle as though a giant invisible sword had cleaved them apart. The divided waves met an unseen barrier and reversed, surging back in a furious crash.

"What-"

The man with the gauntlets froze. The backlash hit him like a hammer, forcing him backward.

Just as he steadied himself, a dark blur shot through the spray-Leander, breaking through the water like a spear.

Before he could react, a fist filled his vision. His eyes widened in horror as his instincts screamed in warning. For the first time since ascending to the Transcendent Realm, he felt true, imminent death.

"Ahhh!"

He roared and poured every ounce of his innate vitality into his right fist, meeting the attack head-on. It was the strongest punch he had ever thrown—stronger even than anything his realm should have allowed. But when their fists collided, the result was instant.

The reinforced gauntlets-crafted from rare materials, forged over months of work and strengthened layer by layer-shattered completely the moment they met Leander's hand. Bone followed next, every inch of his arm crushed into powder by the sheer, brutal force.

"Gah-"

The impact blasted through his chest, shaking his organs apart. He coughed up blood mixed with fragments of flesh. Before he could even retreat, Leander's hand shot forward, clamping tightly around his other wrist.

"You're the first," Leander said plainly. His palm pressed lightly against the man's chest.

A dull boom echoed through the air. The man's eyes dimmed instantly, life draining from them as his body went limp. One gentle strike—yet every organ inside him had been annihilated.

A Kindling Transcendent was dead, his life snuffed out in the blink of an eye.

The corpse plummeted from the sky, crashing into the waves below. The crowd on the beach stared in stunned silence.

They had heard the stories of the Iron Sovereign's strength, but none had ever witnessed it with their own eyes—until now. Leander had ended a Transcendent's life in less than ten seconds. The shock of it hit them harder than the crashing surf.

Gareth, Reginald, and the others exchanged uneasy glances, faces pale. They were all of the same realm as the fallen man—yet he had died like a child in Leander's hands. And that could only mean one thing: if Leander wished it, they could all be next.

"Who's next?"

Leander's calm voice rolled across the Southern Shore as his cold gaze swept over the remaining enemies. One had already fallen, and yet his tone was as indifferent as if he'd merely swatted a fly.

"Insolent fool!"

The three surviving Transcendents from the War God Sanctum roared in fury. Though fear flickered in their hearts, pride refused to let them retreat. With a synchronized burst of power, they lunged toward Leander, surrounding him in a deadly triangle.

The spearman among them, still injured from Leander's earlier strike, was clearly weaker, so the other two led the assault.

"Hand of Judgment!"

The blond man pressed his palms together into a strange, intricate seal before thrusting them forward. A massive spectral hand, glowing with divine light and inscribed with golden runes, formed above him and came crashing down toward Leander like the wrath of heaven itself.

"Venom Gaze!"

The black-eyed man—silent until now—opened his eyes wide. A dark green light burst forth, carrying a sickly, poisonous aura as it streaked toward Leander like twin beams of death.

"Skybreaker!"

The spearman thrust his weapon with both hands, breaking through the air with a crack of displaced sound. A spear of pure energy shot forth, aimed straight at Leander's forehead.

Three attacks each a killing move-came from three directions, converging at once. Yet Leander didn't move. He stood perfectly still as the combined force of nine Transcendent realms bore down on him.

Then, just as the attacks were about to reach him, his voice rang low and clear. "Break."

The three attacks shattered instantly, as though striking invisible walls of air. The energy collapsed into nothingness, dissolving before it could even touch him. It was as if Leander existed in another plane entirely, unreachable to those around him.

"What?!" The three Transcendents gasped. And then Leander moved.

With a violent burst of energy beneath his feet, the air exploded, propelling him forward faster than the speed of sound. The shockwave ripped through the sky with a deafening boom.

Before the wounded spearman could react, Leander's fist struck the top of his skull. A wet crack split the air. Blood mist burst outward. The man's head shattered like glass, and his body fell limply from the sky—another Transcendent dead in an instant.

"Second."

Leander's words were quiet, almost conversational, as he drew back his hand and turned his gaze toward the blond man.

"No... no!"

The blond man's composure broke. Terror filled his eyes as he darted backward, retreating at full speed, desperate to escape. But Leander was faster-far faster. Moving at

Speed, he blurred

forward, his icy eyes locking on the man like a predator closing in for the kill.

"Jeff Ashcroft, don't you dare!"

At last, the Arbitration Office made its move. One of the Ember Transcendents stepped forward, his palm surging with power as he struck out toward Leander's back. The blow carried such force that it dwarfed even the blond man's strongest

attack.

Leander didn't even glance back. He simply extended one finger. A streak of compressed wind burst forth, piercing the palm strike cleanly in two as if popping a balloon. The energy dissipated harmlessly, leaving the Ember Transcendent frozen in disbelief.

Meanwhile, Leander closed the distance in an instant. His leg came down like a hammer.

Boom!

The blond man was sent crashing from the sky, slamming into the ocean with an explosion of blood and water that shot several meters high.

"Now, the fourth."

Leander's tone remained as calm as ever as he twisted in midair, his body arcing gracefully before plunging toward his final target—the black-eyed man.

Though his face stayed expressionless, the terror in the black-eyed man's gaze betrayed him. He waved his arms rapidly summoning thick clouds of mist that swirled around him, obscuring his form. His aura vanished within it, hidden, impossible to pinpoint.

Leander stepped into the mist, his expression unmoved. He drew his right arm back, then drove his fist forward in a single decisive motion.

A wet burst answered him.

Pfffft!

A crimson jet erupted from the fog as the black-eyed man was punched clean through the chest, his heart obliterated by the impact. His body fell lifelessly into the waves below.

In less than five minutes, all four War God Sanctum Transcendents perished. For original chapters go to

The beach fell utterly silent. The only sounds left were the crash of waves-and the steady, unshaken breath of the Iron Sovereign.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 359

The sound of crashing waves echoed across the silent Southern Shore. No one spoke. The only rhythm that remained was the sea breaking against the rocks.

Gareth and Reginald stared blankly at Leander, unable to look away. They had always considered themselves among Astria's most powerful, but before Leander's godlike display-slaughtering Transcendents as though they were insects—they felt utterly insignificant.

All around, the young elites of Astria's martial world stood frozen, their faces pale with awe and disbelief. Only now did they truly understand why Jeff Ashcroft had reigned supreme over Astria, why Leander was known as the Iron Sovereign. With such overwhelming power, who in the entire nation could stand against him?

Leander stood calmly atop the waves, his posture relaxed and unhurried. Having slain four Transcendents in mere moments, he looked down at his own hand, flexing his fingers with a faint smile. "So this is the strength I possess now?"

He clenched his fist lightly. This was his first real battle since stepping into the Transcendent Realm. In the past, when fighting those of lower rank, he had relied on the Devourer's Ninefold Path to drain their vitality or unleashed the Devourer Form to overpower them.

But now that he had crossed the threshold into true transcendence, the likes of Kindling Transcendents no longer even registered as threats.

Above him, the four Ember Transcendents from the Arbitration Office watched with grim faces. Even Greed the calmest among them had his eyes narrowed, his expression dark.

Leander raised his gaze, meeting theirs. His tone was steady and quiet, yet it carried a cold finality. "The War God Sanctum has been dealt with. That leaves only you from the Arbitration Office."

Greed's bone whip trembled faintly in his hand, though he still didn't attack. Instead, he chuckled coldly. "Jeff Ashcroft, you truly live up to your reputation. The Arbitration Office has long marked you as a prime target for recruitment, but it seems we underestimated you. Killing four Kindling Transcendents in succession... it seems our evaluation of your strength needs revising."

Dark light rippled beneath his feet, casting an ominous shadow across the ocean's surface. With a sharp flick of his wrist, Greed barked an order. "Brothers! Jeff Ashcroft has humiliated the Arbitration Office once before. As Elite Arbitrators, it's our duty to restore that honor. Show him the true power of the Arbitration Office—form the array!"

At his command, the four Ember Transcendents spread out, taking their positions in four directions. Their palms opened simultaneously, each emitting a thick stream of crimson energy that shot outward and linked with the others.

In moments, a vast red square took shape in the sky, with Leander trapped at its center. The crimson lines pulsed and multiplied-four became eight, eight became 16, 16 became 32—until within seconds, the entire sky blazed red.

From the shore, it looked as though a giant cocoon of glowing scarlet threads had formed in midair, wrapping Leander inside.

Greed smirked, his tone dripping with arrogance. "You stood by and let them complete the formation without lifting a finger. I can't decide whether to admire your confidence or mock your stupidity.

"Had you attacked before the array was finished, you might have had a slim chance of breaking it. But now? It's far too late. Even a Blaze Transcendent wouldn't dare claim they could destroy this formation once it's complete."

He raised a hand toward the glowing cocoon. "This is the Dragonbane Formation. Every crimson strand saps power from whatever it touches. Once it entangles you, your vitality will be sealed, your energy suppressed. Not even a dragon could escape its grasp.

"Few have ever even seen this array in action—and today, we'll use it to capture Astria's so-called dragon and bring him back to the Arbitration Office for judgment!"

As his words fell, the crimson web began to writhe and constrict, thousands of glowing lines tightening like living serpents. The sky turned blood-red, the light reflecting off the ocean below.

Within the shrinking formation, Leander stood calm and unmoving, but from every angle, red lines closed in, leaving him no visible path to escape.

"Sh\*t!"

Down below, Gareth and the others cried out in alarm. They could see the Dragonbane Formation collapsing inward, its threads binding tighter and tighter around Leander's figure. Their hearts pounded with dread.

The Southern Ocean burned crimson under the storm of power, as if the sky itself had been set ablaze.

The power of a formation might not count as one's personal strength, yet once completed, its might boundless. That was why Sean Judie, though only an Elite Martial Sovereign, could stand on equal footing with Gareth Ashcroft, Grayson Shire, and Maximilian Morgan-Royce.

Once a formation was activated,  
those trapped within it found escape  
nearly impossible. Even if their  
power surpassed that of the array's creators, they would still struggle to break free.  
Their energy would be  
drained little by  
little by little until they were  
spent and helpless. That was the  
terror of formations—the invisible  
prisons that devoured all resistance.

"This won't do. We have to help him," Gareth said grimly, exchanging a glance with Reginald. "If we strike at the four outside and disrupt their control, Leander can break free from the formation!"

Father and son leapt forward together, but before they could even rise from the ground, a powerful palm strike slammed into the earth before them, blasting open a crater and halting their advance.

Everyone's faces tensed as they looked up. Greed stood above them, bone whip in hand, shaking his head with a mocking smile. "I advise you not to act rashly. Our opponent now is Jeff Ashcroft. But if you're in such a hurry to die, I don't mind sending you on your way first."

He hadn't even unleashed his full strength, yet Reginald and the others could already feel the crushing depth of his power—vast and suffocating, like an endless sea. If Greed truly wished to kill them, it would take him less than a breath.

Hovering in midair, Greed's very presence kept them in place. Even though Gareth and Reginald were desperate to help, they could do nothing but grit their teeth and watch in helpless frustration.

"Ander!" Daphne cried out, tears filling her eyes as guilt and fear tore at her heart. She hated herself for being so powerless, unable to bear even a fraction of his burden.

"Leander!" Ethan shouted hoarsely. No matter how deeply Leander's existence had once shadowed him, this moment burned with unity—they all stood against the same enemy, and none of them wanted Astria's Iron Sovereign to fall.

Above them, the crimson threads of the Dragonbane Formation tightened completely. The last gap vanished as the entire cocoon sealed shut, trapping Leander inside a closed dimension of red light.

"Hmph. The so-called Iron Sovereign is nothing but a braggart," one of the Ember Transcendents sneered. "Under the Arbitration Office, every legend and every master falls the same. Even the Dragon Emperor himself was once forced into hiding by our Twelve High Arbitrators. What chance does some upstart have?" **THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY**

The others smirked in agreement. Once the Dragonbane Formation sealed fully, it became a cage of death. No one inside could move freely their vitality gradually drained away until they were left powerless. Unless Leander had already reached the level of an Infernal Crown Transcendent, breaking the array was nothing more than a fool's dream.

Then...

A low rumble swept through the air. From within the cocoon, a flash of fiery red erupted—brighter, fiercer, and hotter than the crimson threads themselves.

In an instant, tongues of flame raced outward from the center, igniting the lines of the formation one after another. The fire traveled swiftly along the threads, tracing them all the way to the four Ember Transcendents' palms.

"What—" They froze, flooding their bodies with innate vitality in an attempt to extinguish the flames. But the more energy they poured in, the more violently the fire burned. It flared like a living storm, devouring everything in its path until the sky itself seemed to catch fire.

Whoosh!

Thousands of red lines blazed at once, igniting the heavens like a festival of fireworks, brilliant and dazzling beyond imagination. And then came the thunderous boom.

The giant red cocoon shattered in a blinding explosion, and from its heart emerged

a burning hand, massive and blazing, reaching outward like the head of a fire giant consuming the sky.

"What-

The four Ember Transcendents' faces twisted in horror, while Greed's expression darkened, his composure finally cracking.

From within the inferno, a figure stepped forward slowly. Flames danced wildly around him, swirling in joy as though greeting their master.

Leander's palm lifted slightly, fingers curling into a fist. A faint, wicked smile curved his lips. "Flamebreaker-Detonate."

The instant he spoke, the bodies of the four Ember Transcendents flared bright red — then burst apart like exploding stars.

High above the Southern Ocean, four bursts of fire bloomed against the night sky — terrifying yet breathtakingly beautiful.

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## Chapter 360

Four bursts of fire exploded in the sky above the Southern Shore, dazzling and brilliant. Though dusk was approaching and the world was cloaked in shadow, the heavens blazed crimson as a sea of flames rolled through the air.

"What terrifying power!"

Reginald and Gareth exchanged glances, their eyes wide with disbelief. Every move Leander made seemed effortless, almost casual, yet each step and every strike left another Transcendent Realm expert dead.

First, it had been the four Kindling Transcendents from the War God Sanctum; now, the four Ember Transcendents from the Arbitration Office had also burst apart into flames, dying in eerie unison. Throughout Astria's history of martial supremacy, no one had ever reached such a level.

"So, this is Leander's true strength?" Ethan whispered, his heart sinking with bitter defeat.

He had thought Leander's era was long over—that the once peerless prodigy who had dominated Highcliffe had already become a relic of history. Yet now, he realized that Leander stood taller than ever, his gaze reaching further than it had nine years ago.

"I knew it," Daphne murmured softly, her eyes shining with joy and emotion. "Even if you lost your martial power, nothing could ever bring you down. You can do anything you set your mind to."

Leander had once said he would stand at the pinnacle of his generation, becoming a guiding force for all others. And now, he had done it more completely than anyone could have imagined. He had surpassed not only the younger generation but even veterans like Gareth and Reginald, leaving them far behind.

"That b\*stard... Nine years apart, and he's become this strong?" Eira's bright eyes shimmered with awe.

Back then, Leander had already outshone every young talent in Highcliffe, but the gap had still been within sight.

Now, she and the others were still struggling to reach the Martial Sovereign Realm – barely able to stand against an Intermediate Martial Sovereign like Elkins, even when fighting together—while Leander was slaying Transcendents as easily as killing flies.

The distance between them was no longer just vast; it was unimaginable.

Tycen drew in a sharp breath, chills running through him as he recalled that night he had once dared to raise a hand against Leander. If Ethan and Daphne hadn't intervened at the time, what would have become of him?

Aurora stood frozen in place, her heart trembling. She had expected Leander to surprise her, but this was beyond surprise—it was shock.

Though she knew little about martial arts, she could still tell who stood above whom. Leander had appeared only moments ago, yet he had single-handedly crushed eight powerful opponents, fighting nine alone as easily as wind scattering leaves.

His fearless, unstoppable presence—his very bearing—made her heart race uncontrollably. This was what true greatness looked like. Compared to him, men like Tycen or Ethan seemed laughably insignificant, their brilliance dimmed into nothing. The patriarchs of the other three major elite families were all stunned, their expressions complicated. They couldn't help but wonder what kind of training the Ashcrofts had put Leander through during those nine lost years.

Only Wesley stood motionless, his face pale with confusion.

Others might not know Leander's past, but he did he knew every detail. Leander had been stripped of his martial power at ten and cast out of the Ashcroft family. If not for that, Wesley would never have stood before him and told him he wasn't worthy of Daphne.

But now, Leander's overwhelming, almost divine display shattered every doubt and every trace of contempt Wesley had ever held.

As he recalled the words he had once thrown at Leander, a shiver ran through his body. If even the Iron Sovereign—the man who stood unmatched under heaven—wasn't good enough for his daughter, then who in this world possibly could be?

...

The sea of fire danced across the

fire

sky, and the four Ember

Transcendents exploded one after another leaving only Greed

standing. Holding his bone whel.ne

he

stood several dozen yards away from Leander, his gaze fixed on the shifting inferno before him, eyes dark and calculating.

Even someone as powerful as him had to admit this was the first time he had ever witnessed such terrifying flames. The sheer destructive force was unlike anything he had seen in all his years.

He was certain that if he had been caught in that blazing inferno like the four before him, his end would have been just as miserable.

"Jeff Ashcroft, you truly live up to your reputation as the most gifted martial prodigy in Astria's history," Greed said coldly, a thin smile curling on his lips. "Interesting."

Though the flames under Leander's control were daunting, they hadn't reached the point of instilling fear in him.

Leander clenched his fist. "The other eight trash are already gone. Now, it's your turn."

As his fingers tightened, the fiery sea vanished from the sky, leaving nothing but heat ripples in the air.

His Dragonfire was a double-edged weapon. It could burn anything it touched, igniting even the faintest trace of energy and unleashing devastation on a massive scale. But its one weakness-speed-made it difficult to strike agile or cautious opponents.

The only reason the four Ember Transcendents had been obliterated earlier was that they had activated the Dragonbane Formation. The Dragonfire had followed the flow of their formation lines, invading their bodies and consuming them from within. Back atop Glidewing Mountain, Grayson had met the same fate because he had used the Skybound Strike—unwittingly opening himself to the flame's reach. But against an opponent like Greed, fast and cunning, the Dragonfire was far less effective.

Seeing Leander withdraw the

flames, the wariness in Greed's eyes faded. The bone whip in his hand

hissed through the air stirring met

clouds and wind in its wake. "Ashcroft, you've already made the Arbitration Office suffer some heavy

losses. Impressive. But it ends

here—I'll deal with you myself."

With a sharp crack, Greed lashed out.

The whip struck down like a bolt of lightning, and the entire beach trembled under the impact. The sea roared and rose, the surface splitting open as waves surged upward ten yards high, spreading outward for nearly a hundred meters. Everyone watching froze, faces pale with disbelief. A single strike had split the sea wide open. What kind of power was this?

"A Blaze Transcendent..." Reginald murmured, his throat tightening.

The Transcendent experts of the four major elite families all turned grim, silent in shock. A Blaze Transcendent—such a powerhouse hadn't appeared in almost fifty years.

The waves thundered toward the shore, carrying an unstoppable force that could swallow the entire Southern Shore in an instant. Anyone below the Transcendent Realm would be obliterated.

As the gale howled around him, Leander's gaze sharpened. He stepped forward.

The first step landed at the very edge of the Southern Shore. His foot struck the surface of the sea. The second step brought him ten yards closer and when his foot came down again, it was like the fall of a giant Water erupted upward, sand and coral blasting into the sky as the ocean floor cracked under his heel.

Then came the third step—he leapt high into the air like a soaring falcon, twisting in midair as he unleashed a sweeping kick. Fresh chapters posted on "Tempest Sweep!"

With a thunderous boom, the leg strike tore through the air, a horizontal surge of power slicing forward to collide head-on with the towering hundred-meter wave. The sky and sea shuddered at the impact.

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## Chapter 361

The roar of the ocean shook the Southern coast, rattling the air like thunder that would never end.

Leander swung his leg in a wide arc, the strike sharp as steel.

The blast tore across a hundred yards and smashed straight into a towering wave that rose like a wall of water, dark and merciless.

The ground shook. The crash boomed so loud that the land itself seemed to freeze. The massive wave stopped in midair as if it had struck an unseen wall.

Greed gave a cold laugh, his voice dripping with scorn. "Jeff, you really believe you can protect all of them? You actually think you can hold this back?"

He thrust out his palm. Another mountain of water surged up from the sea.

The second wave slammed into the first, two monstrous tides colliding together. Their power piled like crashing mountains, the air itself trembling from the force.

Leander's kick shattered under the weight. The merged waves rolled forward, pressing down on the shore like the hand of a god.

Screams broke out from the crowd. Faces turned white as the tide bore down, endless and towering, dragging earth and stone into its pull. It looked like a flood that could swallow the entire world.

If that wave struck, hundreds of men and women on the shore would be swept away. Only those in the Transcendent Realm would cling to life.

This was the fearsome power of a Blaze Stage Transcendent. It was might beyond reason.

The colossal wall of water roared closer, yet Leander did not stir. His calm face did not crack, his eyes unshaken, even as his strike lay in ruin. He stood steady against a tide that could erase nations.

The ocean's fury closed in, shaking the coast to its core. At last, Leander raised his right arm. His fingers curled into a tight fist.

"Trinity Strike Technique, Seal of Heavens!"

He drove his fist straight into the heart of the wave. The strike was plain, yet flawless, perfect in its rhythm and power.

It did not break through. Instead, its energy spread out from the center, bursting within the water itself.

The wave split apart from the inside. A wall of force spread across its body, splitting the tide as blue light blazed out. The sea was caught in that glow, bound as if by chains of fire and lightning.

Greed's sneer froze. His voice cracked in disbelief. "What?"

Leander's muscles bulged, his arm glowing brighter as the light surged around him.

Then came the blast. A thunderclap tore the heavens.

The wave shattered into a storm of water pillars, each one spraying into the sky like a spear. They rained down on Greed with crushing force.

Leander had compressed the ocean with a single punch until it broke apart, crushed into fragments of water and light.

Greed's eyes narrowed as the torrent tore toward him. His pride faltered for a breath.

"Hmph!"

He spun his whip in a tight circle, shaping a shield of pure innate vitality around him. The crashing water smashed against it in heavy blows.

The shield held. One by one, the pillars burst against it.

Then came the final strike.

The last column exploded, and through the spray came a sudden gale. A bare fist ripped through the air. No energy cloaked it. It was only flesh and bone, yet it carried force enough to shatter the sky.

It slammed into Greed's shield.

The sound of shattering glass cut through the chaos. His barrier broke apart in a storm of cracks.

The fist did not slow. It drove straight for his chest.

Greed's eyes turned hard. He had never known fear. Not as a Blaze Stage Transcendent.

Power roared through his body. He yanked his arm back, filled it with innate vitality, and threw his own fist forward.

The world broke apart around them. Blasts of energy rippled around them, spreading far and wide.

The sea beneath both fighters sank, as though the earth itself was pulling the waters down into its depths. Waves collapsed into the sea, hollowing a vast crater in the ocean.

Fish and sea beasts were ripped into shreds. Birds burst mid-flight into clouds of red mist.

The echo of the collision rolled across the horizon.

Both men flew apart. Leander stepped through the air three times. Each step sent ripples through the void until he steadied himself.

Greed's body tore a white scar across the sky, more than a hundred feet long. His final three steps struck like anvils. Each stomp blasted water into violent sprays as he pushed the force down into the ocean itself.

Gasps spread through the crowd. A Blaze Stage Transcendent stood unmatched under the Infernal Crown. Yet here, Leander had taken the advantage.

Leander lifted his fist again. His knuckles cracked sharp as iron in the silence. "Is this all the Blaze Stage can do?"

Greed's face turned dark. His heart pounded with disbelief. This man... How can he be this strong? [READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT](#)

He had thought Leander's limits ended at Blaze Stage, but the truth now stared back at him. It was horror coming to life.

That last strike had been nothing but raw muscle, untouched by energy. Even so, it had almost broken him. His arm still tingled with numbness, And he faced that fist with one of his own that was filled with innate vitality.

If Leander fused that raw power with innate vitality, the result would be unbearable. Greed's eyes grew sharp. His body shot upward. His whip spun wild in his grip.

"Soulasher!"

The bone lash shrieked as it spun, the sound tearing through the air. It slashed downward in a frenzy, falling toward Leander like death's own hand.

The whip tore through the sky like a blade, its strike sharp enough to split the air itself. Where the lash cut, a black line no wider than a thumb carved the void apart as though the heavens had been sliced in two.

This was Greed's feared technique, the one that had earned him his name. Years ago, when he had stood only at the Kindling Stage, he had unleashed this strike and killed six peers in a single heartbeat. That one moment had sealed his rise and crowned him as an elite Arbitrator.

Now, his strength had reached the Blaze Stage. The move he released locked down the air for hundreds of feet. No space was left untouched.

Its power was absolute. Even the barrier of an Ember Stage Transcendent would shatter like brittle glass before it.

Below, Reginald and the others stiffened with fear. Even at such distance, they could feel the force. The pressure pressed down on their bones and promised nothing but ruin.

The lash came for Leander.

He did not move aside. He pressed off the ground with his back foot, his body shooting forward like a streak of lightning.

The whip landed against his chest. Fabric ripped apart, threads snapping one by one. His skin, however, remained untouched. Not a mark, not even a bruise.

Greed's face twisted in shock. "What?"

Leander's right hand shot forward.

His fingers closed tight around the end of the whip.

The crowd let out a collective cry.

That weapon was no ordinary lash.

Even without energy, it could tear into flesh and grind bone to dust. With Greed's innate vitality burning, through it, the whip could shear through steel, split towers in half, and slice tanks apart like toys.

Yet Leander had stopped it with his bare hand.

Leander's gaze was cold, his voice steady. "I'll kill a Blaze Stage Transcendent today."

He pulled.

The force surged down the whip, dragging Greed off balance. Leander's fist, hard and pale as polished stone, swung straight toward his chest.

The punch was fast. It was merciless.

Greed barely had time to lift an arm to block.

The impact rang out like cannon fire. Blood sprayed from his mouth. His body blasted backward, carving a glowing scar through the air.

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## Chapter 362

The sky lit as sparks flared where he tore across the atmosphere.

His retreat stretched hundreds of feet. The whip snapped in two.

He caught himself with a palm strike against the air and managed to hover. But his eyes burned with disbelief.

The Soulasher, his weapon, was said to cut even souls. That was a myth, but the truth was enough. It could break steel, bring down buildings, and crush armor with ease.

Yet Leander had caught it in his hand, broken it, and hurt him with nothing but raw flesh.

Greed's voice shook with fury. "D\*mn it! The Arbitration Office judged him wrong. Jeff belongs in SS-level, maybe even SSS. Whoever said he was only S-level was a fool!"

Rage seethed through his chest.

The Arbitrators had come at the call of the War God Sanctum. Five elites had been sent to wipe out the four great houses. Four of them stood at Ember Stage. One at Blaze. That was Greed.

The plan was simple. Crush the families. Slaughter the young elites of Astria. It was meant to be easy. But Leander had appeared.

At first, his presence had startled them, but Greed had believed his side still held the strength to win.

That belief was gone. Eight had already fallen. Now even he was bleeding. One man had destroyed them all.

The air split with another shriek.

Leander rushed forward again, his body moving like a jet, a roar of pressure trailing in his wake. [READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT](#)

"Take another punch!"

His fist drove forward, plain and unadorned. There was no innate vitality, no glow. Only flesh, only strength.

Greed had no time left.

He crossed his arms, bracing with all he had.

The punch crashed down. The force exploded, tearing through his guard as if it were paper.

A groan tore from his chest.

His body shot down like a cannon shell and slammed into the ocean.

The sea erupted upward.

Waves towered high as he vanished beneath the surface.

Leander stood above the waves, fists clenched, gaze hard as stone. He looked like a god of war, untouchable and unyielding. Every eye on the shore turned toward him with awe and dread.

"One man just crushed nine Transcendent Realms?"

Reginald's aged face trembled, his hand shaking as he stared.

"The Dragon Emperor of his age would falter before this."

Daphne's lips curved into a proud smile, her eyes shining with fierce devotion. This was the man she chose. This was Ander, her beloved.

Though she had never cared whether Leander ruled over his peers or towered above the world, the truth remained. Every girl longed for her hero. Every woman wished the man she loved would stand unmatched, a champion no force could bring down.

Ethan's eyes trembled. His proud head dipped low for the very first time before his generation.

"That's Leander for you."

The words slipped from his lips like a confession. A bitter smile tugged at his mouth. He bore twin martial powers in his body, yet even so, to reach where Leander stood now would take him ten long years, maybe more. And by then, where would Leander stand?

He already knew the answer. He would spend his entire life chasing that shadow. To catch it or even surpass it would take a miracle far greater than fate could give.

Leander stood straight, his figure tall against the sky. His feet pressed against the void. His eyes held no pride and no fear.

Greed had been struck twice and beaten down. Yet he was still a Blaze Stage Transcendent. Death would not claim him so easily.

The sea burst upward with a violent crash.

Greed erupted from the waves, drenched and staggering, his entire frame dripping with brine.

A Martial Sovereign could walk in

water without ever getting wet. Gathering Vitality into a Barrier was something they could do easily Greed's soaked body told its own story He had poured everything into his defense.

Leander's strike had drained him bare.

"Jeff!"

His roar cracked the sky. His eyes blazed like fire, as if he could rip Leander apart with nothing but his stare.

Since he entered the Transcendent Realm, he had never once suffered such disgrace. Yet today, his humiliation came at the hands of a man barely twenty, a youth of Astria.

Leander opened his hands wide. A mocking smile played across his lips.

"You swore you'd win back the Arbitration Office's pride?

"This is the best you've got?"

Greed's chest heaved with fury. But he did not strike. Fear chained him in place. Leander's strength was beyond reason. He felt it clear. The young man's realm had only just stepped into Transcendence, yet his power swelled stronger and greater than his own. That truth clawed at his mind.

Greed's lips curled into a cold grin.

"Jeff, I'll give you this. One on one, I can't beat you.

"But today, no matter how strong you are, you'll still die here!"

Leander's eyes narrowed. His voice dropped flat. "Is that so?"

Greed's hand snapped open. A crystal of green gleamed in his palm.

"That's a comms crystal!"

Reginald's face drained pale. The others froze. They felt the pulse of power locked inside it. Such a tool could belong only to a Transcendent.

Some of them already had soul power. Soulpower could pinpoint their location. Then they would just need to inject it with some innate vitality Break it, and a signal would blaze across the world Allies tied to

it would feel it's call. They would

come at once. That was the crystal's purpose.

Murmurs spread through the crowd. Greed was not finished. He had a card left to play.

A sharp crack rang through the air.

Greed crushed the stone to dust.

Two streams of light rose above his head, twisting into phantom shapes before fading away.

Leander's eyes shifted to the horizon.

Two black specks grew against the line of the sea. They swelled larger, rushing closer until the sky itself seemed to bend around them. In less than a minute, two towering figures stood above the waves.

One wore a robe traced with thunder. His hair shone gold, his eyes blazed blue. Lightning arced between his pupils, sparks alive with power. Clouds churned above him. The sea below heaved in answer to his presence.

The other gripped a blade from Jesund. His beard was white, his face smooth and free of age. His eyes glimmered like drawn steel. The waves split beneath his feet, parted by the force of his aura alone.

The weight of their arrival crushed the air. Compared to them, Greed seemed a dim flame before a raging storm.

Leander's face did not change. Yet Reginald, Anton, and the others froze. Their breath turned shallow. Their faces drained white.

They knew. These were legends. They'd seen many people in their long, long lives.

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## Chapter 363

"Dad, who are they?"

Gareth's voice cracked with strain.

His eyes fixed on Reginald, desperate for an answer. He was strong, but he was younger. He did not know who they were.

Reginald's pupils shrank. His tone grew heavy. THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY

"The man in the thunder robe is Ares. Forty years ago, the world named him the King of Thunder.

"The one with the Jesund blade is Enderman Briggs-Higgins. Tsaric was his student. He was the Sword Master of Jesund, a titan of his era. He once drew a single blade that stopped Mount Fellstone's eruption.

"Both of them stepped onto the International Combat Units list ten years ago. Both are still counted among the strongest alive."

Gareth's face twisted. His chest rose hard and fast.

"The International Combat Units?"

He had never reached that list. But even he knew its meaning.

Every fighter, every sorcerer, every metahuman alive longed for it. That list stood above all others. Even the Astria Power Index paled beside it. It was the crown of crowns in their world.

The Astria Power Index was released by the Divine Loom, the most trusted voice in Astria's martial world. It appeared once every twenty-five years.

The International Combat Units was something far different. It was compiled by the hidden master behind the Global Warrior Network.

No one knew if that figure was a man or a group, but the list they created every ten years was final. The world accepted it without question.

The list named only twenty. Each was a giant, a living storm. To step onto it was to rise above nations, to stand as a weapon feared by armies. Ten years ago, Ares, the King of Thunder, had held fifteenth. Enderman, the great master of the sword, had held fourteenth.

Their rankings seemed low, but that was an illusion. Out of countless fighters across the earth, only twenty had made it. Those twenty were gods among mortals.

Now both of those names had come, summoned by Greed. Leander had been in control. In a heartbeat, the ground shifted.

Ares looked at Leander once, then turned to Greed with a sneer.

"Greed, you're supposed to be one of the Arbitration Office's best. And yet you can't even crush four houses? Do you really need us to carry your weight?"

Enderman let out a cold laugh. "So the Arbitration Office has slipped. Standards must be low if you're what they call elite."

Greed flushed red. He didn't dare fire back. He forced a bitter smile. "I gave it everything. But the four houses had a protector. That man is Jeff. I need you both to kill him."

"Jeff?"

The two turned together, their eyes locking on Leander.

Enderman's gaze cut across him like a blade. His voice dropped heavy.

"So you're Jeff. You killed my disciple on Glidewing Mountain. I have waited for this day. At last, I will see you face to face."

Ares' eyes lit with hunger. His mouth curved into a grin.

"Jeff, the rumors about you spread farther than those about the Dragon Emperor. Astria calls you its strongest. I wanted to meet you. I never thought it would be like this."

Their words carried no fear. They spoke down to him, like elders to a reckless youth. To them, Leander was still new. His name burned bright, but they had walked through decades of battle.

They had bled on battlefields. They had torn empires apart. Their names were carved in fire and steel.

They had earned their place on the list of twenty with scars and blood.

To them, Leander was still climbing.

Leander's gaze slid over them, cold as ice. A faint smile touched his lips.

Ares and Enderman shared a glance. Enderman's tone softened, though pride rang in every word.

"Jeff, we rarely bother to share our  
names. But you  
have earned that  
right. Your fame rose faster than  
anyone's. At your age, even together,  
we never shone so bright."

"I am Enderman Briggs-Higgins. Ten years ago, I stood on the International Combat  
Units. Tsaric was my disciple."

Ares followed, his voice ringing like thunder.

"My name is Ares. In the West, they call me the King of Thunder."

They stood tall, expecting awe.

Expecting him to bow in respect et

Not many earned the right to their names, especially not through their own mouths, face to face

Leander raised a hand. His face did not change.

"You don't need to say your names. I don't care who you are."

Their eyes darkened. Irritation flashed across their faces.

Leander's voice stayed level, every word sharp. "The only thing that matters is this.

Do you want to live, or do you want to die?

"If you want to live, then leave. Go as far from here as you can.

"If you want to die, then stand with him. I'll kill you both together."

The air went still.

Gasps tore from the crowd.

Ares and Enderman were names etched into history. Ten years ago, they were already giants. Now their power was greater still. Yet Leander stood before them, fearless. His words struck harder than blades.

Even Daphne and the others who trusted him most felt their hearts clench.

They had seen him beat Greed. They had seen him rise like fire. But now he stood before two titans. And still, he did not bend.

Ares' eyes flared with lightning. His smile was gone.

"Jeff, I could have spared you. I might have dragged you alive to the Arbitration Office.

"But your arrogance burned that away."

"Now you face judgment. Thunder will fall on you until nothing is left."

Enderman's sword intent roared out, sharp enough to cut the air. His eyes burned with killing light.

"Jeff, my blade Hellbringer has stayed clean for ten years. Today, it drinks your blood."

The verdict was spoken.

They would take Leander's life.

Greed's eyes blazed wild. He clutched a sphere in his fist and crushed it. Shards scattered as light poured into him. His aura surged higher, fiercer, brighter. "Jeff, I told you before. No matter how strong you are, you die here today!"

"Doomlight!"

The three of them stood together, their power rising like a storm. The sky cracked. The sea split. Waves climbed high as mountains. Their presence smothered the world.

Leander stood alone, a single figure against the tide. He looked like a lone ship on a raging ocean, ready to be torn apart.

And then he laughed. The sound thundered across the sky. It struck every heart.

The laughter faded. His smile vanished. He raised one finger. His voice cut through the chaos. "This fight will end immediately.

"Devourer Form. Open."

For the first time since stepping into the Transcendent Realm, Leander unleashed the Devourer within him.

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## Chapter 364

The Blaze Stage Transcendent Realm and the Infernal Crown Transcendent Realm were divided by a vast gulf. Between them stood one smaller stage, the Burning Stage Transcendent Realm.

Greed remained at Blaze Stage. Enderman and Ares, names carved into the International Combat Units, had already stepped into the Burning Stage.

It was not the Infernal Crown. Yet it carried terror and awe.

The two of them stood tall on the ocean, feet planted firm on rolling waves, their heads pressing against the heavens. The air shuddered around them. Their power bent the horizon.

Greed had swallowed Doomlight. His aura surged like firestorms and smoke. His flesh sealed, his bones knit. His strength leapt higher than before.

Three great figures rose above the Southern Ocean. Their shadow blanketed the shore.

Greed's eyes gleamed with cruel light. His voice lashed across the sea.

"Jeff, you think you can end this in a single instant? That doesn't make you bold. That makes you a fool."

He had admitted defeat when fighting alone. That was why he crushed the comms crystal. That was why he summoned Enderman and Ares. They were legends of the International Combat Units. Together, they could rival even the Infernal Crown. Leander had not reached that level. He could not endure them.

Leander's lips curled into a cold grin.

He spoke no words. His fist lifted and tore forward.

Hundreds of yards split between them, yet his strike carved the air apart. No flame. No light. No flourish. But the space ahead ripped open as if an invisible tunnel had been punched through the world.

"What?"

Greed's eyes widened. His fists rose. He hammered forward to block the rushing force.

The blow struck him.

The sea roared beneath the impact. His body shook as if split apart. His organs twisted, his blood surged.

His arms screamed as bones snapped like brittle wood. His body was hurled back step after step until he skidded across the ocean's surface.

"This is impossible!"

Blood sprayed from his mouth. Shreds of torn flesh spilled with it. His arms hung useless, broken clean through.

His stare locked on Leander. His face twisted with disbelief.

That punch had looked plain. It carried no sign of skill. Yet its weight fell like a mountain. It crashed like a flood.

He had taken Doomlight. His power should have neared Ares and Enderman. Yet he could not block a single blow.

Enderman and Ares both stiffened. Their faces darkened. Even they had not expected this.

Ares' voice cracked the air. "He's not your regular foe, this boy. Forget pride. We strike now and finish him."

Enderman gave a curt nod.

"Fine."

His eyes flared. Sword light burst into the world.

With a single blink, a blade of energy screamed down, slashing toward Leander.

Years before, Tsaric had turned his body into a sword to unleash one strike strong enough to rival a Transcendent. Now Enderman, with nothing but the flicker of his gaze, sent out a strike greater still.

The sky shrieked.

The sound of the blade tearing air echoed across the waves.

The strike came down, aimed for Leander's skull.

Leander gave a short, mocking snort.

His finger lifted. He tapped the blade as it fell.

The strike shattered.

It burst into a storm of silver shards that scattered into light.

The glow had barely died when thunder cracked the sky apart.

A streak of lightning whipped forward, thin as a finger. With every yard, it swelled larger. It spread until it was as wide as a hand. Then it grew into a violet arc thick as a tree trunk, screaming toward Leander's chest.

Reginald's face went pale. His voice shook.

"They said Ares could command lightning itself. They said he could bend thunder at will. That's why he's called the King of Thunder. And it's true."

Metal, wood, water, fire, earth, wind, thunder, light, and darkness. The elements themselves. Among the elements, fire and thunder reigned supreme in terms of offensive capabilities.

Ares could wield thunder itself. His strength surpassed most of his peers.

The sky split open in a blaze of light. Three colossal bolts thundered down together, aimed straight at Leander.

The air hissed with static. Space warped. The ocean writhed like a beast beneath the power.

Leander did not flinch. His eyes stayed calm. Check latest chapters at [find-novel.net](http://find-novel.net)

His fist lifted once more. Blue sparks pulsed on his knuckles. The Devourer Form was open.

He swung. The air collapsed.

Winds spun into twin spirals, twisting into dragon-shaped whirlwinds.

The bolts slammed into the storm.

They broke. They splintered into a thousand shards of lightning, each fragment burning out to ash in the whirlwinds Leander's fist had summoned.

"To fight three at once and still not fall behind?"

The people lining the shores of the Southern Ocean went pale. They had believed that once Ares and Enderman arrived, with Greed burning with Doomlight's power, Leander would be smothered without mercy.

But what they saw ripped that belief apart. Leander had already crushed Greed with one punch. He had brushed off Ares and Enderman as if they were nothing, their deeper gave way to a trembling spack of hope.

despair

Ares' face tightened. His voice shook with disbelief.

"Jeff, how do you hold such strength? Even my lightning shatters before you?"

His eyes flicked to Enderman. The same shock stared back at him. Leander's grin spread, cold and sharp. His voice rang out like steel. "I've had enough of this game."

His foot slammed against the sea.

The air ripped open. Wind screamed around Ares and Enderman. They could not follow it. By the time they realized, dread filled their eyes as they turned.

"Greed, look out!"

It was too late. Greed's body was wrecked. His arms dangled, shattered. His organs burned. He could not lift a hand.

A fist filled his sight. It swelled larger, closer, heavier, until it was all he could see.

"No-"

The cry broke apart. The fist caved his skull. Blood and bone burst across the sky like storm rain.

His body collapsed. Leander caught the corpse in one hand. He flung it into the abyss of the ocean like refuse, then turned. His gaze, cold as winter, speared Enderman.

"Sh\*t!"

Enderman froze. Fear swallowed him whole. For the first time in his life, death's shadow loomed over him.

Light flared across his body. His aura split the heavens. Sword energy carved upward in a storm, tearing air apart.

Everything within a hundred feet around him howled with blade force. Anything that neared would be shredded into dust.

He had seen Greed die without even a breath of resistance. Now Leander's killing intent bore down on him. His heart raced. His soul braced.

Leander's voice whispered like ice.

"Useless."

His body blurred. He was gone. No eye caught him. Not Ares. Not Enderman. Only the crash of detonations thundered across the sea.

Enderman's eyes widened as his sword storm dissolved. A fist split through his chest. It tore out his back in a spray of blood. His heart

was crushed to pulp. His gaze

dimmed to nothing.

The strike shattered Hellbringer, the blade that had followed him across decades of battle. The shards fell with him.

His last words trembled from his lips. "This... can't be..."

Silence swallowed him.

Leander pulled his fist free. Enderman's corpse and the fragments of his sword splashed into the sea. He turned toward Ares. His finger rose, steady and merciless. "I told you. This fight ends immediately."

The color drained from Ares' face. Confidence fled. Terror ruled him.

The shore was silent. Every onlooker held their breath.

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## Chapter 365

Two strikes. Two deaths. A Blaze Stage. A Burning Stage. Both ended like insects. That was the terrifying power Leander held.

Leander spread his hand. His fingers were long and white, smooth like carved stone. Yet the force coiled within them promised ruin. Even Ares' body quaked.

Greed was worthless. Enderman had been his peer. To kill him in a single blow should have been impossible.

Yet Leander had done it. And he killed two before anyone could blink. Fear was coiling his heart. If that fist had aimed at him instead, Ares knew his fate would have been no different.

Leander's gaze pierced him. His voice rolled like thunder breaking mountains.

"Everyone else is gone. Now it's your turn."

Ares, master of the International Combat Units, took a faltering step back. His heart pounded like a drum. His will crumbled.

He cursed himself. If he had known Leander was this monster, he never would have answered the Arbitration Office. No reward, no gain, no promise was worth this.

"Sovereign Ashcroft!"

He shot back across the sea, widening the gap. He cupped his fists and bowed. A strained smile bent his lips.

"Enderman and I came because Greed once bound us by favor. We owed him. That is why we stood here today.

"But I have no quarrel with you. Greed is dead. Enderman too. Let this be finished.

"I, Ares, give my word. I leave now. I will never step into Astria again. I only ask for your grace. Will you accept it?"

Gasps broke out across the shore.

Ethan's chest shuddered. Awe carved through him.

Ares, a man of the International Combat Units, bowed and begged for peace. He could not imagine the fear Leander could strike into these men's hearts.

Aurora's eyes burned with light. Her heart hammered against her chest. She could not look away from Leander.

She had never believed she could fall. Yet now, she could not deny it. She had never imagined a man like him could exist.

She locked her decision deep inside. No matter the shame, no matter the cost, when this war ended, she would throw herself at Leander. She swore she would not let even one chance slip past her fingers.

Claire shook her head with a heavy sigh. In her eyes, Leander's legend had not ended. It was still alive, burning brighter than ever before.

Reginald, Anton, and the other masters of the families all let out long breaths of relief.

Ares bowing to Leander meant the shadow over the Four Families had finally lifted. Leander had become their deliverer.

With only a single word from him, Ares would flee, and the battle at the Southern Ocean would close.

But Leander's voice cut through the silence. "You want to build ties with me? You think you even qualify?"

Every heart froze. All had believed it would end there, but his words rang cold as steel.

His voice deepened. "I gave you your choice earlier. I asked if you wanted life or death. You made your decision.

"My word is iron. I said I would kill you. That means you must die.

"Now you shall die!"

His body vanished the instant he spoke.

"D\*mn it!"

Ares cursed, but he had no breath left for anything more. The second Leander disappeared, cold air knifed into him. The weight of death pressed down, smothering him in terror.

A fist cut the air. It looked simple. It looked plain. But it was locked on his heart.

The strike landed.

Ares' body cracked apart like glass. The punch ripped straight through his chest, and his figure shattered in midair.

"Hm?"

Leander's eyes narrowed. The moment his fist passed through, he felt it. Something was wrong.

The body was not real. His blow had smashed nothing more than a shadow. Fragments broke into arcs of lightning and vanished into the sea air.

"A phantom?" The source of this content is

Reginald and the others stiffened. Their faces sank. Even under that kind of pressure, Ares had conjured a thunder-born shadow to take the hit it was proof of why he ranked among the strongest of the O International Combat Units.

From the horizon, mocking laughter rolled back across the waves.

"Jeff, did my phantom trick you?"

Ares' voice turned cruel. "What you gave me today, I'll never forgive. From now on, you are my sworn enemy. Wherever I can bring you pain, I will be there.

"You cannot catch me. Your speed is fast, but I am hundreds of yards ahead. I've used Thunderstride. You will never reach me."

"Farewell, Jeff. We will meet again."

His words drifted away. His figure shrank into a black speck against the sea and then was gone.

The families sank into silence. Leander had claimed overwhelming victory, but Ares had slipped away.

Ares might never face Leander again head-on. But in the shadows, his danger would linger. He could strike the families without warning, and no one could guard against it.

Leander's face held no ripple. He stared across the endless water, lost in thought.

"Ander!"

Daphne's voice rose from the shore. She ran forward and shouted up at him. Her call pulled him back.

He reached toward her, grinning wide.

"Dani, let me settle Ares first. Then I'll come to you."

Gasps broke out all across the crowd. Ares was already beyond sight, far across the sea. How could Leander strike him down now?

But before the question could spread, Leander lifted his arms. One hand before him, one hand behind. His stance shaped a bow.

Flames burst from his palms.

They climbed and stretched, molding into a longbow made of fire.

His left hand gripped the blazing frame. His right hand pulled back the burning string. A fiery arrow took form, glowing brighter with every heartbeat.

"Dragonfire, Soulchaser."

His low voice rolled like thunder. His fingers let go.

The bowstring snapped. The arrow of fire screamed into the sky.

The crowd saw only a streak of burning light. It cut across the horizon and vanished in an instant, but its heat lingered as it chased its prey.

Miles away, Ares tore through the waves, wrapped in lightning. His speed carved scars across the sea.

"D\*mn you, Jeff! You forced me to burn my cultivation. I had to use the phantom to dodge that killing strike! When heal, gather my army storm Astra. I'll kill you!"

But his words caught. His body froze. A blaze surged at his back. It was already there.

"What-"

He turned, but too late. The arrow ripped through space. It pierced his chest and blasted out his back in a flood of fire.

His breath broke. "No... way..."

The King of Thunder stiffened in disbelief. His eyes widened. Flame erupted from his chest and swept over him. His entire body turned into a roaring pyre.

Above the restless sea, a burning fireball hung in the air. No screams came. No cry of pain followed. Only a silence so strange it pressed down on every heart. At last, the fire dimmed and thinned into smoke, drifting high until the sky swallowed it whole.

Four Kindling Stage Transcendents. Four Ember Stage Transcendents. One Blaze Stage Transcendent. Two Burning Stage Transcendents.

All had been wiped out.

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## Chapter 366

On the horizon, fire burst and bloomed over the sea. The people gathered at the Southern Ocean shore stared in confusion. None of them understood what had just happened.

Leander walked across the waves as if they were solid ground. The longbow of fire in his hands flickered once, then vanished. With a single step forward, his body appeared on the beach. Daphne was already there, waiting for him.

"Ander!"

She rushed to him and clung to his arm. Her eyes fell on the two long tears across his chest. Her fingers, trembling, brushed over the fabric.

The battle she had seen had left her breathless. Leander had stood against the world alone. He had crushed every Transcendent who rose before him. His strength and dominance were carved into her soul. She could not push the image away.

Even with her proud heart, her emotions surged beyond control. She lifted herself on her toes and pressed a fierce kiss to his lips.

Leander's grin broke wide. He ran his hand gently across her hair.

"I have kept the promise I made long ago."

Daphne nodded again and again. He had once sworn to become the king of his generation. Yet now, he had gone far beyond that. Even the ancient masters had fallen before him. Even the Arbitration Office. Even the War God Sanctum itself had been swept aside.

This man was a true pillar of the world.

For a moment, they stood close, but from behind them, the old master of the Ouyang family strode forward. He bent low with his hands clasped.

"Thank you, Sovereign, for protecting my family. This grace is eternal."

As Corwin's voice fell, Anton and Raphael stepped up as well. They bowed with deep respect.

"Thank you, Sovereign!"

Their clansmen followed, one by one, voicing their thanks. But the Ashcroft family stood silent. The weight of their stillness was heavy.

Reginald and Gareth had not yet recovered from the truth they had seen.

When Leander had first returned with Lydia, they had felt relief. He was alive.

Reginald had even lowered his pride to speak an apology.

But it had only been guilt. They had never believed a man stripped of martial power could bring them honor.

They had only wanted him to return to the family name. Nothing more.

Now their world had been shattered. The Iron Sovereign Jeff, the one who had shaken all four families, was Leander. Their imaginations had been broken beyond repair.

Leander raised a hand. His voice rang clear and cold. "You don't need to thank me. I never fought for the sake of your families. These outsiders had the gall to trample Astria as if it had no defenders. I cut them down because I refused to watch."

To him, the lives of most of them held no weight. Only Ethan and Daphne mattered. His gaze slid and locked onto Gareth.

"Gareth. Once you called me the curse of the Ashcroft family. You stripped away my martial power. You cast me out. And now here I stand. Any thoughts?"

A sharp smile tugged at his lips. "Maybe I should thank you. If you hadn't destroyed me, I might never have walked this path. I might never have reached this strength."

His eyes flared bright. His words fell like thunder.

"Nine years ago, you threw me into the mountains. I swore I would rise higher than the Ashcroft family. Back then, you sneered. But now? Do you still find it amusing?"

The crowd erupted with gasps. The truth fell over them like lightning.

The Iron Sovereign, ranked first on the Astria Power Index, had once been an outcast from the Ashcroft family. And Gareth had been the one who crippled him.

Could it be true? Had Leander climbed to this height with no martial power at all?

Breath caught in every throat. Martial power was the foundation of warriors. Without it, a man was nothing.

Yet Leander had shattered that law. He wasn't just talented. He was beyond understanding.

Leander's cold stare swept over Reginald and Gareth. His laughter cracked sharp.

"You once named me a curse. You claimed would bring the Ashcroft family ruin. But when ruin came,

was the one who saved you Tell me, is that not the cruelest irony of all?"

The two men stood frozen, unable to speak. At last, Gareth lifted his head. His voice shook as he bowed from afar.

"Leander... I was wrong." [IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT](#)

He moved to kneel, but a pale hand stopped him, firm and steady. He could not bend.

He looked up and met Leander's blazing eyes.

"You are the head of the Ashcroft family. You may no longer be my father, but you were in the past. I cannot accept your bow."

His voice struck like a bell. "What I want you to understand today is this. I have surpassed you."

Once, Gareth had been the measure of greatness in Leander's eyes. That measure had been shattered and left behind.

The air shook without warning.

From Reginald's sleeve, power erupted. Waves of force rippled outward.

His face twisted. A beam of light burst free and shot into the sky. Blue crystal light glimmered in the dusk, spreading across the shore.

All eyes rose together. Hanging above them was an ancient bronze mirror, glowing like a star.

"Celestial Mirror... why would it awaken now?"

Reginald and Gareth looked at one another. Their eyes shook with disbelief.

The ancient bronze mirror hanging in the sky was the Ashcroft family's greatest treasure. It was the Celestial Mirror, the relic said to glimpse the future.

The mirror woke only once every ten years. Nine years ago, it had opened its light. By all rules, another year should have passed before it stirred again. Yet now it blazed in the heavens, shining stronger than ever before.

A deep hum rolled out.

Waves recoiled and crashed backward as their power spread. The masters of the four great families stood frozen, awe filling their faces.

They had heard whispers of this artifact but had never laid eyes upon it. Today, the truth was before them.

Leander stood unshaken. His face showed no wonder as he stared at the radiant glow.

"Good. Very good."

The mirror spoke. Its voice thundered over the beach and struck every heart.

Some artifacts were said to hold spirit. A few gained will of their own after countless years. But none here had ever seen a relic speak.

"Leander, son of the Ashcroft

house," the voice roared. "Nine years

you endured. You were broken and burned. You rose again from the fire. are reborn.  
Good. Very good."

Leander's lips curved into a sharp smile. His laugh came cold and bitter.

"So this is the Ashcroft family's pride. The famed Celestial Mirror."

His gaze cut sharp, his words heavy as steel.

"Nine years ago, you gave one decree. Because of you, I was cast out. My martial power was torn from me. I was thrown away like garbage.

"Now you stand before me, and I will ask you myself. Why did you command them to destroy me? Why did you tell them to drive me from my family?"

Flames coiled on his palm. Dragonfire hissed and twisted, eager for release.

"If your answer fails to satisfy me, I will burn you to ashes."

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## Chapter 367

Leander lifted his hand toward the blazing mirror. His eyes burned with fury.

For nine long years, he had survived the impossible. He had clawed his way through storms and fire. Each day had been agony. Each night had been a battle to live.

He had faced floods, erupting volcanoes, thunder that split the sky, and tornadoes that ripped the land. Every disaster had nearly ended him. Every trial had forced him past death's edge.

All of it came from one sentence spoken by this mirror.

Even now, after nine years, he would demand the reason.

The Celestial Mirror pulsed brighter. Its blue glow poured into the air.

"Leander, still your fury."

Light spilled down like a rain of sparks. Crystals fell to the shore and gathered together. They shaped the figure of an old man in white robes. His body was faint, but his stance was tall and unyielding.

"I am the soul of the Celestial Mirror," the figure said. His smile was calm. His voice carried weight.

"The reasons you seek will be revealed here and now."

At once, Reginald and Gareth lowered their heads. Their faces showed deep respect.

Ethan, Mira, and the younger Ashcroft heirs fell to their knees.

The mirror had been their family's faith for generations. It was sacred to them. Only Leander stood tall, his brow hard, his eyes stripped of reverence.

The other families and the younger warriors of Astria held their breath. No one dared to speak.

"Leander."

The soul stepped forward. His ghostly frame loomed like a mountain.

"Nine years ago, my power reached its peak, and I awoke. I foresaw this very day. I saw a great calamity descend on the Southern Ocean. The four major elite families would face destruction.

"Your grandfather, Reginald, came before me. He asked how the Ashcroft family could endure.

"I gave him my answer."

The soul's eyes glowed deep.

"To protect your family, your martial power had to be destroyed. You had to be cast into the mountains. Only then could the Ashcroft family survive its doom."

Reginald's eyes shook. Every word matched the truth of that day. Leander's lips twisted into a cold grin.

"So you knew the calamity had nothing to do with me. Yet you demanded they cripple me. You told them to cast me away."

The crowd erupted in shock. The words struck like thunder. Reginald and Gareth snapped their heads toward the soul. Disbelief painted their faces. The soul gave a faint smile and nodded. "That is correct."

Leander's eyes turned to ice. Celestial Mirror, an artifact with the power to see the future. This ancient relic had known the truth all along. It had never been him who would doom the Ashcroft family. Yet it still gave the command that doomed him to nine years of torment.

Reginald and Gareth trembled with guilt. Their hearts broke under the weight of it.

The mirror had known Leander was not their ruin. Then why? Why had it ordered them to destroy him?

Had all their cruelty, all their betrayal, been nothing but the whim of a lying artifact? Had they truly condemned their own blood because of one careless word?

The soul felt the weight of Leander's fury and quickly lifted his hand.

"Leander, hold your anger. I told Reginald to strip away your martial power and

banish you from the Ashcroft family because I had a reason.

"You can see it clearly today. The Arbitration Office joined hands with the War God Sanctum. Two Stage Transcendents came them, warriors ranked in the

International Combat Units Eleven Transcendents stood together. Even if the four major elite families of Highcliffe gave everything, how could they withstand such power?

"I saw this day nine years ago. And the answer to this disaster was always you."

The soul's eyes locked onto him. His voice grew deep and heavy.

"Only when your power was torn away and you were thrown into the mortal world could your hidden strength awaken. Only through pain and hardship could you forge the might needed to break this storm.

"From the moment you were born, I felt it. You carried the mark of a Sovereign. You were chosen. A miracle not seen in a hundred years.

"By ten years old, your name had spread across Highcliffe. You crushed every peer around you. That was your gift.

"But talent alone is never enough to become a true Sovereign."

The soul breathed out a long sigh.

"You were a rare jewel. Inside the Ashcroft family, you would have had safety, endless resources, and every comfort. But comfort dulls the blade if you had stayed in that life for nine more years, the best you could have reached was the middle of Martial Sovereign. At most, Iates Martial Sovereign if luck was on your side. Nothing greater.

"That is why commanded Reginald. Your power had to be taken. You had to be cast out. You had to walk through storms and blood. Only when you lived between life and you

death would your hidden fire burn Only then could you step onto the true road of the Sovereign. Only then could you rise above the world.

"If I had not done this, then today, when the War God Sanctum and Arbitration Office came together, who could have stopped them?

"If you had not been cast out, there would never be the Iron Sovereign who rules this battlefield."

The voice spread like a cold wind through empty cliffs. The crowd stood silent and pale. Even Leander's eyes flickered.

Was it true? Had the Celestial Mirror pushed him out only to awaken his full power?

He remembered. Back then, he had been unmatched among his peers. But if he had remained inside the Ashcroft family, his path would have ended at Martial Sovereign. He would never have stood against the Transcendents of today.

It was because Gareth shattered his power that he found a new path. He touched the flow of heaven and earth. He created the Devourer's Ninefold Path. That path gave him strength no one else could match.

He had once believed the mirror had ruined his life. Yet now he saw that it had been the very fire that forged him.

Reginald and Gareth stared wide-eyed. The truth struck them like a hammer.

Leander was someone destined for greatness. The Ashcroft family had been nothing more than a small world. Someone like that could never reveal their true might if they were trapped.

But thrown into the endless world could he soar across seas and skies, his power unbound.

The soul's eyes stayed fixed on Leander. His voice dropped into a low, echoing murmur.

"Leander, you are the chosen one. You are beyond compare. Even I cannot see where your path ends.

"Today, your power woke me before my time."

He lifted his hand. A stream of blue light burst out, shaping itself into a glowing triangular sigil.

"This is the core of the Celestial Mirror. Whoever holds it commands the mirror. The source of this content is

"In the ancient era, only one man ever held such power. Aurion, the Sun Emperor. No one else since.

"Today, I give you the soul of the Celestial Mirror. From this moment, you are my master."

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## Chapter 368

The soul's voice rolled across the shore of the Southern Ocean. Many stared in shock. But it was the Ashcroft family who shook with fear.

For nearly a century, the Celestial Mirror had been their sacred relic. Since the first patriarch discovered it, they had worshiped it as a god.

In all those years, no one had dared to claim mastery. Not one had even touched its true power. They worshipped the mirror as if it were sacred. Divine. And that devotion never wavered, not for even a day.

Reginald, once head of the family, had never seen the soul take form. He had only heard its distant voice.

Yet now, the soul stood before them. And it declared Leander its master.

Such a thing had never appeared in their family's history.

A sharp tone split the air.

The Abyssal Godblade, planted into the earth by Leander, shuddered free. It soared into the sky and hovered before him, glowing like starlight.

The soul stood beside the sword, its presence fierce and unyielding.

"This sword too was once held by Aurion. To be chosen by it marks you as a destined king. Today, both I and the Abyssal Godblade bend to you. You will become the second emperor of this age, after Aurion himself."

Shock poured over the crowd. Faces turned pale. Bodies shook.

The Celestial Mirror was born from the world itself. Until now, the Ashcroft family had only known one gift it carried, the power to see the future. Who could imagine what else it could unleash when mastered?

And now it had chosen Leander. He was already unmatched. With the mirror in his grasp, his power would climb higher still. With the Abyssal Godblade also his, his strength would rise to a peak no one could rival.

Astria itself, and perhaps the whole world, would fall under his shadow.

Every eye turned toward him. They believed he would claim it all without hesitation. But Leander laughed softly.

"Celestial Mirror, you are amusing."

His face remained calm. He pointed at the soul, then closed his hand around the glowing sigil.

The instant it touched his palm, light roared across the sky. The Celestial Mirror above burned like a second sun, flooding the beach in its radiance.

Leander turned his head. His voice was steady, his gaze sharp.

"So tell me. Am I now the master of the Celestial Mirror?"

The soul sank to one knee. His head bowed, his voice rang out with deep reverence.

"Master, I bow before you."

"Is that so?"

Leander's lips curved into a faint smile. He turned, his stride slow and deliberate, until he stood before Daphne, who was frozen in shock.

"Dani."

He caught her hand and pressed the glowing sigil into her palm.

"From now on, the Celestial Mirror is yours."

The beach erupted with gasps. Faces turned pale. Even Reginald and Gareth, men who stood tall among Transcendents, froze where they stood.

The Celestial Mirror was no common artifact. It was a divine relic, filled with power so vast that even kings of the Infernal Crown Realm would hunger for it.

Yet Leander had handed it away without hesitation.

"Ander, what are you doing?"

Daphne's voice trembled. She tried to return it, but Leander clasped her hand tightly and gave a firm nod.

"I gave this to you. Will you really turn it away?"

Her breath caught. Before she could speak, the soul's voice rang out, filled with alarm.

"Master, what is the meaning of this?"

"The Celestial Mirror holds power beyond measure. Only the strongest sovereigns can claim it. Why would you "

Leander silenced him with a sweep of his hand.

"I don't care how strong it is. I don't even want to know."

"But I know this. I don't need it."

"I stand proud alone. I live and fight with my fists. I don't lean on weapons."

"I don't depend on relics. That is not my way."

His voice roared across the shore. Then his hand reached into the air with a sudden shout.

"Abyssal Godblade!"

The blade streaked across the horizon like a black streak of fire. It fell into his grasp with a thunderous roar.

Leander drew two fingers along its edge.

Then, in one clean motion, he slashed toward the ocean.

The sea answered with a deafening crack.

Waves exploded apart. A stretch of water two hundred yards wide split down the middle, forming a canyon through the surf.

One sword stroke had carved the ocean itself.

The crowd went pale. Their throats tightened. Their eyes shook. This was a casual swing. What kind of destruction would it bring if Leander wielded it in true battle?

He slid the blade across his back and clasped his hands behind him. His gaze swept the younger fighters, and at last it settled on Claire.

He stepped forward and nodded lightly.

"Claire. Among the young sword bearers of Astria, you stand above them all. The Sword Canon you follow may not be Astria's most supreme technique. But it holds the essence of Silvermoon Sect's masters, built upon the work of generations."

"You already reached Lucent Blade, and at this age too. You are the greatest talent of your sect."

He drew the Abyssal Godblade once more and laid it flat before her.

"This blade is yours now. It will never defy my will. From this moment, you are its master.

"You are Astria's finest young swordswoman. You are a fitting master for this weapon."

Claire's eyes shook with disbelief. Her lips parted, but no sound came. She stood frozen. Around her, every gaze trembled with shock.

The Abyssal Godblade and the Celestial Mirror-treasures of legend. And Leander handed them away as though they were nothing.

"Who else would cast aside godly relics like scraps? Only Jeff."

Emma's eyes shimmered with sorrow. Thoughts of missed chances with him struck deep. Regret washed over her heart like a tide.

Leander's gaze lingered on Claire. His tone stayed calm, yet it carried force. "You chose this path. Then carry the heart of a warrior. Do you dare take it?"

Claire's eyes steadied. Determination flared within them. She reached out and gripped the hilt.

Once, she could not even budge it. Now, it rose at her touch. A column of divine light burst skyward. Strength surged through her body and spirit. She felt herself rise into an entirely new realm.

She drew the blade close, dropped to her knees, and bowed low.

"Thank you, Sovereign, for this gift. I will never disgrace the name of the Abyssal Godblade."

Leander smiled softly and walked past her. His eyes fell on Ethan at last.

Their gazes locked. Ethan's chest tightened with turmoil. Nine years ago, Leander's brilliance had outshone them all. Nine years later, he stood even higher. He had become the dragon that ruled Astria. Leander's smile was quiet, but his words carried weight.

"Surpassing me won't be an easy path, boy.

"You may stand close to the realm of a Martial Sovereign. But the true realm of Sovereign is still one step beyond your reach.

Leander's voice cut across the waves, sharp and steady. "Tonight, I'll help you step into the realm of a Martial Sovereign!"

His palm sliced forward, and a surge of blue light shot out, striking Ethan's brow with force.

Ethan's body jerked. Heat roared out of his core and tore through every vein. His flesh snapped and popped like beans bursting over open fire. In that violent surge, the invisible wall inside him shattered apart.

The shaky foundation he had built when he rushed into Martial Sovereign finally steadied. Not only steady, but it also grew stronger, sharper, and far beyond anything he had before.

The crowd froze where they stood. No one dared to breathe. To raise another's strength was a miracle that consumed more than life itself. Yer with a single sweep of his hand, Leander had pushed Ethan into Martial Sovereign. It was a feat no one had ever heard of.

Ethan tightened his fists. His lips curved, but the smile was bitter.

"Leander, I don't think I'll ever catch up to you."

His head dropped, his voice heavy and raw.

"Our battle is finished. I've lost to you, Leander."

Leander shook his head with a faint laugh. He said nothing. His gaze slid past Ethan and landed on Wesley. The man's face was stiff, his eyes uneasy. Leander's smile cut sharper.

"Mr. Florian, on Eastvale Mountain's peak, you told me I wasn't worthy to stand beside Dani."

He stepped closer. His voice rose. "Now tell me. Am I worthy?"

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## Chapter 369

Wesley's face twisted with panic. He stumbled forward, his tone dripping with flattery.

"My vision failed me. I'm very sorry, Sovereign!" He bent low, his smile forced wide.

"For Dani to know you is her greatest blessing. It is also the honor of my family."

The man who once stood proud as Half Lord of Highcliffe now bowed with submission. His will was broken.

Raphael stood quiet, his face calm. Yet inside, laughter thundered.

Daphne and Leander had grown up together. Their bond ran deeper than anyone imagined. Today, Leander had even placed the Celestial Mirror in her hands. That act alone proved it.

If Daphne stood beside Leander, then the Florian family had Astria's strongest force at their back. With Leander supporting them, they would rise higher than anyone else. Raphael's lips twitched in triumph he dared not show.

Leander turned to Daphne. His eyes softened, his voice gentle. "Dani, it's over now. Let's walk through the Southern Ocean bazaar."

The sigil in her palm had already sunk into her skin, leaving a glowing triangle etched across her arm. She rushed to him, slipped her hand into his, and smiled wide.

"Of course!"

Her joy bloomed like sunlight. She leaned against his shoulder, her whole body trembling with delight. Together, they left, ignoring every other soul. Their figures vanished into the horizon.

From beginning to end, Leander never once looked at Reginald or Gareth. The Celestial Mirror might have ordered his exile, but it was their hands that carried it out.

Whatever bond he once had with the Ashcroft family was already cut.

Gareth stood frozen. Reginald tipped his head back and sighed long and heavy.

They had cast him out. They had destroyed his strength. That decision had birthed a titan who now towered above them. Yet that titan wanted nothing more to do with them. They could not tell if it was their victory or their tragedy.

Eira's eyes narrowed. Her hand curled into a fist as she watched the couple leave. IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE CHAPTERS, PLEASE VISIT

"Hmph. You think having Daphne erases everything?

"You saw my body. You'll pay for it."

Not far away, Aurora's gaze burned hotter and hotter. She said nothing, but her eyes clung to Leander's back with hunger she could not hide.

The golden sands of the Southern Ocean stretched wide under the silver moon. Leander and Daphne walked close, shoulders brushing, the night painting them in light.

"Ander, you must have suffered so much in these nine years."

Her voice quivered. Her eyes shone with pride and ache.

She had seen his strength. She had seen him stand higher than anyone else. But the joy twisted into sorrow.

Behind his power lay endless struggle. He had risen after losing everything. After losing his martial power. He had clawed his way out of despair. How many times had he faced death?

The thought made her chest ache.

"Those days are gone."

Leander's tone was calm.

Daphne said nothing more. She darted a few steps ahead, spun, and looked back at him with eyes full of love.

"I never thought you would be so incredible, Ander. Iron Sovereign. What a name. One day I'll marry you. I'll be the Iron Sovereign's wife. That alone makes me the happiest woman alive."

Leander chuckled, his voice playful. "And when'd I say I'd marry you?"

Her brows shot up. "What?" She lunged at him, her face bright with playful anger.

Leander laughed and backed away.

"Catch me, and I'll marry you!"

Their laughter rolled across the beach. The moon looked down as they chased each other through the sand.

The night stretched on. At last, the game ended. Leander sat at the edge of the shore, his eyes locked on the restless sea. Daphne lay across his lap, fast asleep, her face soft with peace.

The moment was still. Then a blue glow flared on her arm. The soul of the Celestial Mirror rose into the air.

Leander's eyes narrowed, cold and sharp. His voice cut the silence.

"You dare appear without your master's permission. Do you think her unworthy of your respect?"

"Ah."

The soul let out a quiet sigh and stared at Leander.

"I once swore myself to you. Now that you've passed me on, Daphne is my new master. I don't resent her. I'll serve her just the same."

His tone shifted, gentler now. "But there's something you need to hear."

His lips barely moved. No one else heard his words. His voice turned into a sharp current that slid straight into Leander's ear.

"I chose you because I wanted to see how far your power could go.

"But if you choose to stop here, I can't change that.

"I'll tell you this, though. A real catastrophe is coming. It won't hit one country, one family, or one people. It will strike the whole world."

Leander's eyes flickered.

"An apocalypse?" His voice was low.

The Celestial Mirror never lied, and

that alone made his stomach twist.

The world had its trade wars and

cold alliances, but nothing that hinted at an ending. So what was this supposed doomsday?

The soul didn't answer his question.

"This disaster will reach beyond what you can imagine. Even I can't see when or how it starts.

"When it comes, nothing will last.

Everything will vanish. Even someone like you is nowhere near ready to survive it. If you want to protect your people you need to keep climbing."

Leander stood still, eyes heavy with thought.

Right now, only the Aster Communion and the Arbitration Office stood as his equals.

The world's greatest fighters gathered under those banners. He trusted his strength, but he knew the truth. Alone, he couldn't take on both.

He struggled to imagine what kind of event could crush even those ancient powers.

"Leander, the universe is far greater than you think. What you've seen so far is only a glimpse.

"This isn't the first time the end has come. Five thousand years ago, Aurion the Sun Emperor and Veyar God of War fought to stop it. They both fell that day. Their sacrifice bought the Earth five thousand years of peace.

"But now, there's no one like them left. You're the only one I've seen who might reach their level.

"When the next apocalypse comes, you're the one who'll stand for this world."

Leander's eyes narrowed as the voice continued to echo.

"Remember this. The Arbitration Office and the Aster Communion are powerful, yes, but their reach ends at Earth.

"Out there, among the stars, they're nothing.

"Grow stronger, Leander. When the world burns, it will need your strength."

The last word faded. The soul turned into a beam of blue light and sank into Daphne's arm.

Leander blinked, as if waking from a dream. He watched the ocean shimmer for a long time, then smiled faintly.

"Interesting."

He had believed he had reached the peak, that nothing on this planet could threaten him. But now, the Celestial Mirror's words had cracked that certainty open.

His journey wasn't over. It hadn't even begun.

"An apocalypse, huh?"

He clenched his hand slowly. His eyes glowed with hunger, not fear.

The path stretched far ahead. Everything was only beginning.

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## Chapter 370

Leander and Daphne spent two full days along the Southern Ocean before they finally drove back to Highcliffe.

The tournament at the coast had started as a contest between the four elite families of Highcliffe's younger generation. But when the War God Sanctum and the Arbitration Office interfered, the entire event spiraled into chaos.

Leander's final battle had crushed eleven Transcendent Realm fighters, including two from the International Combat Units at the Burning Stage. The story spread fast. Not just Astria, but the entire world felt the shock.

The International Martial Network-a private site only open to Martial Sovereigns and above-erupted like wildfire. The site had existed since the first days of the internet. No one knew who ran it or how powerful its creators were, but everyone respected its authority. It was representative of martial artists, sorcerers, and metahumans all at once.

For years, hackers had tried to break through its system to steal data or secrets. None had ever succeeded. Most couldn't even scratch the surface of its defenses.

Its firewall rivaled the best military systems of superpowers and maybe even surpassed them. The mystery behind it made the site feel untouchable.

That day, the public forums blew up. Posts flooded in faster than anyone could read.

"Jeff's insane. Seven-on-one was already ridiculous, but now he took down eleven? That included 'King of Thunder' Ares and the swordsman Enderman! Is this guy even human?"

"No way he's under twenty. He's probably some freak who's been training for a century."

"Astria gave us the Dragon Emperor sixty years ago. Now there's Jeff. The country's blessed, man. He's even scarier than the Dragon Emperor used to be. The Dragon Emperor killed four Transcendents alone. Maybe Jeff will surpass him someday."

"Surpass him? He already will. Jeff's gonna be number one in the world."

The forum overflowed with excitement, disbelief, and arguments.

Some praised him like a god.

Others mocked him with venom.

"So what if Jeff's strong? He's talented, but he needs years, even a decade, just to get stronger than Dragon Emperor. Talent doesn't mean much when you've got enemies like the Arbitration Office. You think you can kill one of their elite Arbitrators and walk away alive?"

"Come on, people. We're supposed to be martial artists, not fanboys," someone posted. "Jeff's strong, sure, but you guys are blowing him up like he's invincible. Yeah, he crushed eleven Transcendent Realm fighters at the Southern Ocean, but in doing that, he made the Arbitration Office his mortal enemy. Everyone knows what they're capable of. Even the Dragon Emperor had to flee from their Supreme Arbiters and hide in Astria for sixty years. Jeff's got a long way to go before he reaches that level."

Another user replied within seconds. "Don't forget, the War God Sanctum he wiped out had ties with the Aster Communion. That's the second strongest force after the Arbitration Office. Now he's angered both. You think he's gonna live long? He's already a walking corpse."

The forum exploded. Half the users were cheering for Leander, saying he'd tear through every obstacle until he reached the top. The rest claimed he'd signed his death warrant and would soon be buried by the powers he'd crossed.

The arguments turned ugly fast. Threads flooded the board. Posts stacked faster than anyone could read. Some users even dropped their addresses, shouting for others to come fight them face to face.

Then, right as the chaos reached its peak, the site froze for a second. A gold banner stretched across the top of the screen. Its shining letters glowed like fire.

Every home around the world went quiet.

Martial artists stopped mid-argument, fingers hovering over their keyboards, eyes fixed on the words above.

New International Combat Units!

The silence broke as millions clicked it at once. The screen changed, turning dark and old-fashioned. Twenty names appeared, ranked from first to twentieth, each with a detailed profile beside it.

Traffic on the International Martial Network went wild. The view counter shot past a billion in seconds. Then another message appeared on-screen.

"The new International Combat Units list has been officially released. Members of the martial, occult, and metahuman communities are invited to review."

At the bottom, a single name

gleamed. Reincarnation Destroyer. The master of International Martial Network No one new who they Get full chapters from

were. No one had ever seen them. But their presence had ruled the

network for sixty years, and their

words carried more weight than law.

In Highcliffe, Gareth and Reginald Ashcroft sat close in front of their monitor, eyes locked on the banner.

They clicked. The list opened.

20- Rivenstern, 'Goldmelter.' A Burning Stage Transcendent Realm. His body produced deadly corrosion. His hands could melt through solid steel. He once split the legendary Fallwater blade with his bare palms and fought the swordmaster Enderman for three days and nights before losing by a single strike.

19 — Shinobi Tetra-Skylark. One of Jesund's top Jonin. Burning Stage Transcendent Realm. A master of ninjutsu who could vanish or fly at will. He once tracked three Kindling Stage Transcendent Realms for miles and killed them all in a single pursuit.

18 — Grenger Simone-Fallstein. Another Jesund Jonin. Burning Stage Transcendent Realm. Equal in strength to Skylark. He once evaded Enderman's strongest sword strike without so much as a scratch.

They scrolled on. From twentieth to tenth, every name was an old legend they already knew.

The ninth. The sixth. No changes.

Then Reginald's eyes froze when he reached the fifth.

5- Jeff Ashcroft. Alias: Iron Sovereign. Origin: Highcliffe Ashcroft Family. Age: 19. Realm: Unrecorded. Beneath it, the words hit like

thunder. "He rose to the peak fot

the moment he appeared. He defeated countless masters. At nineteen, he topped the Astria Power Index He clashed with t

Arbitration Office and the War God Sanctum and destroyed them both. At the battle of the Southern Ocean, he killed eleven Transcendent Realm fighters, including Ares and Enderman, both former members of the International Combat Units. His victory shook the world."

Reginald's breath caught. He turned to Gareth. Neither spoke.

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Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.