

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft)

Chapter 461

Splat!

Blood sprayed everywhere. Leander's palm cut through the air like a steel blade through tofu, plunging straight into Orianna's chest and shattering her heart.

Then fire erupted from his hand, bursting outward and enveloping the female Chief Arbitrator in a blazing cocoon. In an instant, the incomparable powerhouse was consumed by a towering fireball. Her body disintegrated into ash midair, and even her soul evaporated into nothingness.

The ground trembled immediately.

Every pair of eyes snapped to him—fear, shock, horror frozen on their faces. No one had anticipated this. A Chief Arbitrator, a being beyond the Infernal Crown Transcendent Realm, had been obliterated just like that.

Jeframon and Reefus drew in sharp, cold breaths, dread crawling into their bones.

For the first time, they tasted true fear.

All this time, they had believed themselves untouchable, perched above the world like kings on a mountaintop. But witnessing a peer's sudden annihilation, they finally grasped the cruelty of reality.

No matter your status, when confronted by a force greater than yourself, you are nothing more than smoke in the wind. And Leander he was that unstoppable force.

"After today, the Arbitration Office will lose three Chief Arbitrators."

With a single motion, Leander had ended Orianna's life. His tone remained flat, expression unreadable, as his body flickered-ghostlike—melding seamlessly into the night.

"D*mn it!"

Jeframon, wielding the light spear, reacted instantly. Even severely injured, his instincts were razor-sharp. His light spear morphed into a dragon of luminous energy and lunged toward the space in front of Reefus.

From the darkness emerged a figure-Leander-standing before Reefus like the Grim Reaper incarnate.

Reefus' heart skipped. His spiritual strength flared into a defensive net as he tried to retreat, but Leander was faster. A flaming fist was already aimed at his shoulder.

Scrape!

Jeframon's light spear struck from the side, clashing with Leander's fist by the barest margin.

Clang!

Metallic thunder shattered the air. Light erupted like shards of glass. Before a hundred stunned witnesses, the peerless light spear in Jeframon's hands was obliterated by a single punch from Leander.

Splat!

Jeframon coughed up blood, tumbling backward, aura crashing. Flames spread across his chest, scorching a wide section of his shirt.

"B*stard!"

Reefus roared, slamming his palm forward. A formless wind blade cut through the air toward Leander's back.

Clang!

Sparks flew, but Leander didn't flinch. Jeframon felt his arm go numb, and the wind blade he had condensed shattered like glass.

"Do you think being a spiritual-strength practitioner gives you the power to harm me?"

Leander's head turned lazily, voice calm.

Reefus' face was drained of color. "Oh no!" Read complete version only at

Panic gripped Reefus. He bolted instinctively, retreating hundreds of feet in a single bound.

Leander didn't pursue him.

He merely sneered, raised his palm, and conjured a wind blade that spun into life.

"It's your turn to take my strike."

His tone remained deceptively mild. The wind blade sliced outward.

Whoosh! Zip!

The spinning blade ripped through the air like a spinning disc, punching a path through the void with absolute dominance. Sonic cracks followed its flight.

Even a casual wind blade from Leander made Reefus' attacks look like child's play - sharper, faster, utterly beyond comparison.

Reefus could only watch the white arc hurtle toward him. No time to dodge. He roared, channeling innate vitality into his spiritual strength to form a solid barrier over his skin.

Splat!

The wind blade struck, ignoring his defenses entirely. It tore through the barrier, grazed his neck in a single, lethal sweep, and continued flying into the distance. "H-How is this possible?"

Reefus' lips parted, and his body froze midair. His eyes dulled to gray.

Even as life slipped from him, he still couldn't fathom how Leander had done it. "What just happened?"

Heads whipped up across the crowd, shock rippling through every onlooker.

Jeframon braced himself, ready to

charge, when he noticed it-a thin,

crimson line slicing across Reefus neck deepe

gradually,

encircling his throat, until Reefus'

head detached and tumbled from the sky.

"Reefus!"

Jeframon's eyes narrowed to pinpoints, disbelief rooting him to the spot.

The only spiritual master among the twenty-four Chief Arbitrators had been cut down just like that.

A long moment passed before he finally lifted his gaze, fixing Leander with the stare of someone facing a reaper.

The proud Flame Goddess had withdrawn all her fire, shrinking into a regular woman, utterly still.

Silence reigned.

"Dear Lord, I actually went up against a monster like him? I must've lost my d*mn mind."

Leander floated above, one hand clasped behind his back. He directed his attention to the last one-Jeframon.

"I'm done with you. You bore me." He wagged a finger. "Use your final card. This is your one and only chance."

Jeframon's eyes tightened once more.

He paused, gathering himself. Then, a ruthless glint appeared in his gaze. "Jeff, you will regret everything you've done today for the rest of your life!

"You dragged me here. Fine. Even if I'm torn apart, I'll take you to hell with me!"

His roar shattered the mountains. The entire Aorinth Peaks region seemed to join in a chorus of ghostly wails.

"With my blood, I burn my soul!"

A wisp of pale smoke rose above him—the soul that marked a practitioner of exceptional power.

Jeframon was not a spiritual-strength practitioner, yet now his soul slipped free, terrifying in its intensity.

Hum!

As soon as it emerged, he bit his tongue, spitting a mouthful of essence blood. Blood and soul fused, igniting into a blazing inferno in the sky.

"Soul Burn-Arbitration Summoning!"

His voice carried from within the fireball. The world fell silent.

Eyes lifted in astonishment. Across the valley, a circular spatial gate, dozens of feet wide, spun open. Darkness swirled within, thick as ink, devouring sight itself.

"Spatial transfer?"

Leander's eyes narrowed. He stared at the black vortex, a flicker of genuine surprise breaking through his composure.

The gate rotated. A longsword wrapped in holy light shot out first. Then figures— one, two, three...

Twelve in total—emerged, hovering above like deities descending.

Each of the twelve who stepped through the portal radiated an aura at least as strong as Reefus', most even greater. Their presence propped up the heavens and pressed down on the air. Space itself groaned under the weight, faint fractures creeping along the edges.

Halia's eyes fluttered. She had no words left. The valley fell silent. Twelve Chief Arbitrators had appeared out of nowhere.

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Seth and the rest lifted their eyes to the heavens. The so-called big shots from the International Combat Units—guys who normally strutted around like kings were all wearing that same shaken, ghosted stare.

Even Halia, proud to a fault, retreated on instinct. She pressed herself to the cliff face and kept her mouth shut.

A crushing force smothered the entire valley. Twelve silhouettes stood suspended in midair, like they owned both sky and earth.

Twelve Chief Arbitrators.

Just seeing them together was enough to make your scalp go cold.

The Arbitration Office had twenty-four Chief Arbitrators in total. With Reefus and Orianna already taken out by Leander, and Jeframon having burned away his own soul, that number dropped to twenty-one.

And now, more than half of what was left had appeared in a single sweep.

Twelve Chief Arbitrators like this could make any powerhouse nation tense up. Showing up as a group, it felt like the Arbitration Office had unleashed its second line of monsters.

With a whoosh, a spear of fire cut through first, clearly the vanguard. It ballooned into a roaring sun of flame, so hot the air warped and wailed. In the heart of it stood a woman's curvy outline, relaxed as if she were strolling through a garden.

Her blaze was tighter, brighter, far heavier than Halia's. The heat she gave off rolled over the valley like a runaway kiln.

One lazy glance from her felt like it could snag your soul. Even those iron-willed ranked elites felt their hearts stutter, nearly slipping the second she showed herself.

"Wait... that's the Flame Witch?"

Halia gaped at the alluring figure, all the color draining from her face.

Flame Witch—that was the title people truly feared. They called Halia the Flame Goddess, which sounded grander on paper, but she wasn't fooling herself.

Ten of her stacked together still wouldn't touch the Flame Witch.

They were both fire-element metahumans, sure, but the distance between them was a canyon.

The Flame Witch's fire was born from an ancient source hidden in the western mountains-The Blaze. Its strength and eerie nature were on a level Halia couldn't even compare to.

The Flame Witch lifted her gaze and fixed it on Leander. Her voice was smooth as honey, yet cold enough to cut. "So, you killed Reefus... and the others?"

Leander didn't blink. His eyes stayed flat and frosty.

He didn't bother replying.

He only curved his lips. "So, Jeframon burned his soul to pin a portal down and drag you here quicker. To take me out, he really emptied his whole chest, huh."

The corners of his mouth still held that easy smile. Staring down Twelve Chief Arbitrators, he looked bored, not scared.

"What?" The Flame Witch's eyes narrowed to slits. "You're... Jeff Ashcroft?"

The instant her words landed, the other eleven Chief Arbitrators went still as well. Every gaze snapped to Leander. Murderous intent gathered, thick and suffocating, like a storm rolling in.

"So what if I am?"

Leander replied like it was nothing, hands folded behind him as he faced all twelve without blinking.

"You really took down Reefus and the other two?"

The Flame Witch's gaze sharpened, faint surprise flickering in her eyes.

Leander's name carried just as much weight in the Arbitration Office as any of theirs. Almost every top-ranked fighter there had heard of him.

Not only because he was their number-one execution target, but because his strength was terrifying.

The Arbitration Office had stood for centuries, watching kingdoms rise and collapse. Every major conflict in history had their shadow behind it.

The once-mighty Church of Europa ruled half a continent and commanded multiple states, but even they were forced into extinction by the Arbitration Office. The latest episodes are on the

Their final High Priest had been cut down before three thousand believers by one of The 16 Supreme Arbiters.

Ever since then, the Arbitration Office remained the world's highest authority, strong enough to challenge entire nations.

And in all those long years, not a single person they marked for death had ever escaped intact.

Even the Dragon Emperor of Astria-who once walked the battlefield like a one-man army-was cornered and driven into hiding by a Supreme Arbiter.

But these past ten years, Leander had been their biggest headache.

They'd sent three or four full operations to kill him.

He wiped them all out.

He was still alive, while their elite ranks kept bleeding.

Even the Son of Judgment had died under his hand, so yes—Leander was officially branded a heretic. Kill on sight. No exceptions.

Every Chief Arbitrator treated him like a walking disaster.

What they didn't expect... was that he could kill Chief Arbitrators.

And not one, but three.

"Jeff... we really did underestimate you."

The man standing beside the Flame Witch lifted a white blade. Tall, carved like marble, his gaze was icy as it locked onto Leander.

"Back then, we thought you were just a promising kid," he said, voice steady. "So we didn't go all out. Let the fight drag on... let you grow into this. Reefus and the others dying all at once abgace under you? Even the Dragon

Emperor back then might've

struggled with that.

"You really are Astria's brightest fighter in the last century. But don't worry we won't hold back again."

He raised the sword, his aura thickening until it felt almost physical, killing intent curling like a gathering storm.

"The Sword of Light... That's Dholous Igen, the former Son of Europa," Seth whispered, throat tight.

"Jeff, Jeframon burned his own soul

to force open a portal and summon all twelve of us You should know exactly how badly she wanted you gone. Today, unless the heavens personally intervene, you're dead."

Another figure stepped out behind Dholous—a long coat brushing the ground, an easy grin showing sharp canine teeth, pupils deep and vertical like a beast's.

"Edis Utas... from the Fable Court?"

At once, several high-ranked fighters sucked in a breath.

The Fable Court had once been a world-level powerhouse, raised high under the Church's protection. Even nations like Atland gave way to them.

When the Arbitration Office destroyed the Church, the Fable Court vanished overnight. Decades passed without a single sign.

Most assumed the Office had wiped them out too—but clearly not.

Their Master was standing here, alive and smiling.

"So, the Fable Court didn't disappear... They joined the Arbitration Office. And Edis is a Chief Arbitrator now?"

Keith and Kenneth both swallowed hard, their expressions frozen.

Twelve Chief Arbitrators—with Dholous and Edis, two old monsters who once ruled Europa—this setup was practically a sealed execution ground.

"Jeff, your final choice. Seal your cultivation, come with us to the Arbitration Office, take the Doomlight baptism, and become the new Son of Judgment. That is the only path left for you. The only way you walk out alive."

The Flame Witch crossed her arms, her flames swelling outward, closing in for the kill.

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Every gaze zeroed in on Leander. Twelve Chief Arbitrators loomed above him like a descending tempest. A lineup like that could level a small nation before anyone even blinked.

He had taken down three Chief Arbitrators earlier—an unbelievable feat on its own.

But twelve?

No one in their right mind thought he still had a chance.

To everyone watching, he had only one logical option: swallow his pride for now, step back, play along... then think of something later.

Because if he said one wrong word, all twelve would strike at once.

He'd be crushed before he could take a second breath.

Three against twelve wasn't just a difference in headcount.

It was a gulf in absolute strength.

The whole crowd watched in suffocating silence. Above, the twelve Chief Arbitrators hovered like divine judges, waiting for his decision.

"Join you?" Leander let out a low chuckle. "I've already answered that more than once. In this entire world, there isn't a single faction I'd bow to."

"I fight for myself and for my homeland. You expect me to kneel to your Arbitration Office and help you terrorize the world? Keep dreaming."

His gaze sharpened into blades. He swept his eyes across the twelve, lips curling in a sharp, mocking grin.

"Enough talking. Since Jeframon burned his soul just to open that gate and drag you here... why would I waste his effort?"

He lifted his hand lazily, giving the twelve a smile dripping with contempt.

"Come at me together. Dead men walking don't get to negotiate—no matter how many of you show up."

Silence slammed across the valley. Faces went slack.

He was really about to fight twelve Chief Arbitrators alone?

That wasn't courage—that was pure lunacy.

Worse, he wasn't even pretending to respect them.

He flat-out called them dead men.

How bold could one man be?

"Jeff Ashcroft, you must be sick of living!"

The Flame Witch's stare turned glacial. Flames surged beneath her feet, her robes rising in the heatless wind, her pupils like frozen crystal.

Beside her, Edis-the Master of the Fable Court-flicked his coat aside. A fist slid out of his sleeve, gleaming with killing power.

Dholous, the Son of Europa, lifted the Sword of Light to his chest, ready to carve a path through the air.

And the remaining nine were no less terrifying.

Their life force pulsed like ocean tides, depths impossible to measure.

Give them even the tiniest opening, and they would unleash a strike capable of ripping Leander apart.

His answer had completely wiped out whatever patience they had left.

"Enough talking." Leander's voice stayed level.

During the fight with Reefus and the other two, he had already sensed it-the spiritual energy inside the Bloodjadea leaves was reaching its eruption point.

And a treasure like that, once it peaked, would quickly lose its potency.

If he dragged this out, he'd miss the perfect moment to gather it.

He couldn't afford delays.

Even facing twelve Chief Arbitrators, he needed to finish this quickly.

The moment the words left his mouth, he didn't wait for anyone to react-he moved first.

His figure shot upward, wind exploding around him. He streaked into the sky like a bolt of deep-blue lightning, aiming straight for the Chief Arbitrator standing in front.

"Hmph!"

The man in front wore a short-sleeved shirt, bronze muscles bare and bulging. He was a notch stronger than Reefus and the other two combined.

Seeing Leander charge, he didn't dodge-he just snorted and threw a punch.

The air split into thin, jagged seams.

A massive fist shadow-over a hundred feet wide-filled the heavens and slammed toward the blue streak like a mountain collapsing.

"Seal of Heavens Fist? That's Inas Cage, the former master of the Taybourne Sect!"

A chorus of shocked cries followed.

In the old days, the Taybourne Sect dominated the entire state. Even the king had to tip his head to Inas Cage.

Rumor said he once challenged the elders of the Arbitration Office directly, then vanished for decades.

No one thought he'd reappear as one of the Chief Arbitrators.

People inhaled sharply.

That was the terrifying thing about the Arbitration Office. It gathered the strongest from every corner of the world, bent them to its will and kept

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No wonder it had ruled for centuries, standing above giants like Agylae, Astria, and Skarovia.

With a crash, the colossal fist came down.

Below, Leander merely lifted a single finger.

His finger wind tore through space, tapping the weakest node beneath the descending fist.

Finger and fist collided in midair and locked, dead even.

Seeing someone block Leander, the Flame Witch let out a cold, amused snort.

"Jeff, you really don't understand your limits."

She gestured lazily at the figures beside her.

"Any one of us twelve could overpower the vast majority of the International Combat Units. Yes, you killed Reefus and Orianna, but among the twenty-four Chief Arbitrators those two were mid- lower-tier at best. You take them down and suddenly think you can fight all of us at once?"

"Fight you?"

were mid-to

Leander lifted his head, his eyes glinting like frozen steel.

"You misunderstood. I'm not here to fight you. I'm here to wipe you out."

Silence crashed over the valley.

Then, in the next breath, flames of rage erupted in all twelve pairs of eyes.

"Jeff Ashcroft—today, we'll show you what true fear of the Arbitration Office feels like!"

Inas' expression turned cruel. He stepped down hard, unleashing another punch. Layers of force piled over each other, burying Leander from above.

Leander slid one foot back half a step, pressed one finger forward, and intercepted the blow again.

Two vicious torrents of power clashed and tore the sky apart.

At that moment, another figure shot out like a cannonball. His clothes inflated from the force blasting. through his body. He broke the sound barrier and rammed Leander from the side.

"Body Check!"

The shout shook the air. Ripples exploded around them.

He slammed in with the side of his body—an invisible wall materializing and expanding like a shockwave. THIS CHAPTER IS UPDATE BY

This was Eckhart—a monster of body refinement.

Years ago, he'd made his name across Northara by stopping a moving cargo train with nothing but his body.

Every inch of him was a weapon.

One body check from him could turn an Infernal Crown Transcendent into paste.

"Not bad." Leander laughed softly.

His palm snapped upward, finger force exploding, lifting both of Inas' massive fist shadows clean off the sky.

Freed, he stepped down and thrust his shoulder forward, launching himself into Eckhart head-on.

Shoulder to shoulder.

No tricks.

A bare, brutal collision.

The entire world shook with a boom. It felt like a mountain had cracked open.

The cliffs in the valley detonated outward. Rock blasted toward the heavens. A ring of invisible shockwaves rippled across the sky, twisting clouds into spirals.

Far beyond the Aorinth Peaks, native villagers saw the heavens distort and dropped to their knees, praying to their sacred mountain.

And deep within those mountains, Leander and the twelve Chief Arbitrators had only just begun their furious battle.

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A deafening crack tore through the sky. Violent shockwaves blasted outward, whipping the air into spiraling gales.

The ground split open inch by inch, fracturing into a spiderweb of deep ravines.

Under countless stunned stares, a figure was hurled backward, blood spraying from his lips as he skidded over a hundred feet across the shattered earth. It was Eckhart.

All of a sudden, a streak of motion carved through the air-Leander.

Before Eckhart could even regain balance, Leander's foot came down like a divine hammer, stomping straight into his chest.

Blood misted upward as one of the Arbitration Office's Chief Arbitrators plummeted from the sky, carving a long trench into the ground before vanishing beneath a storm of dust and debris.

"The first."

Leander cast a cold glance at the fallen body, then lifted his gaze toward the remaining eleven elites standing ahead.

"Next."

The abrupt reversal drained the color from the Flame Witch's face and from every other Chief Arbitrator's expression.

Eckhart's body was so tough he'd once stopped a moving freight train with just his torso.

Yet Leander had crushed him within a heartbeat. Flesh against flesh, no tricks, no mercy, slamming him into rubble like he weighed nothing.

The Flame Witch straightened, eyes narrowing, and barked the order without hesitation.

"Everyone—don't treat Jeff like just another target. All together! Kill him. Don't let this drag out!"

Her shout snapped the others awake.

These Chief Arbitrators-people who normally looked down on the world-threw all pride aside.

Eleven sonic booms tore through the air as they shot toward Leander.

"Good. All of you at once."

As the eleven streaked in, Leander only sneered and vanished.

Their faces tightened.

In the same instant, the eleven scattered, switching into full alert.

For a single breath, none of them could sense where Leander had gone.

"How did he..." The Flame Witch's gaze trembled.

A slip of wind brushed past her side.

"Behind you!"

She shouted, but she was too late.

Just behind her, a Chief Arbitrator barely had time to lift his head when a sharp, breathtakingly cold face appeared inches from his own.

"What-"

Pure terror exploded through him.

In nearly a hundred years of life, he had never felt such absolute, lethal intent.

Leander's pale hand curled into a fist and slammed into his chest.

With that, the Chief Arbitrator shot backward like a meteor.

Before everyone's stunned eyes, he crashed into a mountain, vanishing inside it.

The entire peak split down the center and began collapsing in chunks.

Whether he survived... no one knew.

"The second."

Leander grinned, stepped hard in the air, and slingshotted himself straight at another target.

"Not good!"

This one had sharp instincts and reacted fast, but Leander was faster.

His eyes narrowed as Leander closed the gap. He barely had time to suck in a breath.

Leander's pale, marble-hard fist was about to smash down when a figure suddenly flashed in front of him, cutting off the blow.

"Jeff, don't you dare!"

Inas' voice cracked like thunder. He looked thin and almost frail, but the aura exploding around him felt like a mountain coming alive.

"Crescent Fist!"

His bony palm thrust forward, eerie silver lights sparkling around his hand.

A punch tore out, and a deep-blue crescent-shaped fist mark materialized from nothing, a hundred feet wide, swallowing the sky like a field of glowing stars. Leander's eyes stayed cold.

He punched back, a burning blue fist-shadow ripping the air open.

Trinity Strike Technique-first form: Soulbreaker.

Two colossal fist prints, both blazing with blue light, collided.

Twin shockwaves erupted and rolled outward.

Both men skidded backward across the sky, boots scraping against the air itself, stabilizing only after several steps.

When they raised their heads, both wore heavy, serious expressions.

Leander didn't chase him.

He twisted midair and shot toward another Chief Arbitrator instead.

By now he had their measure.

Of the twelve, Inas, the Flame Witch, Edis, and Dholous were the true threats-the ones standing on a completely different tier.

The best strategy was obvious: break their formation and pick off the weaker ones first.

Save the four anchors for the end.

It was the fastest path to wrapping this up.

Suddenly, wind screamed around the next man. His eyes tightened.

After seeing two colleagues taken down instantly, he wasn't about to play hero.

Both hands blurred through a rapid string of seals.

"Watercage Technique!"

A thick curtain of water crashed into existence before him, sealing him off from Leander.

This was his trademark defense-able to flex between softness and steel.

It had saved his life more times than he could count.

Leander reached the watery veil and spun-no hesitation, no pause.

The instant he touched it, Nirvana Energy detonated from within him.

An explosive force burst through the veil's core.

The master someone who had surpassed the Infernal Crown Transcendent stared in horror as his strongest barrier ripped outward from the center, torn apart by an invisible blast.

A human-sized opening bloomed in the middle of the shattered veil.

Leander stepped through it without slowing.

The Iron Fist slammed into his chest.

Just like the others, he vomited blood and plummeted, life fading from his eyes before he even hit the ground.

"The third."

Leander dropped him with a single punch, then turned back toward the others with a smile that looked carved straight out of hell.

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

The Flame Witch's voice shook. She'd already revised her expectations of him once, and even that hadn't been enough.

Around them, the spectators were frozen stiff, staring as if they'd seen a nightmare come alive.

One punch. One kick. Enough to cripple-or outright finish—a Chief Arbitrator.

Who in the world could fight like that?

Fear rippled through every face.

Edis, Dholous, and Inas looked like they'd bitten into steel.

Just minutes ago they'd charged in with absolute confidence, now Leander had torn

their momentum apart like wet paper.

And the worst part?

None of them could figure out why.

If Leander could casually crush Chief Arbitrators one by one, why had he fought the Arbitration Office so many times before? Why hadn't he just steamrolled them from the start?

They didn't know the truth.

The Nirvana Energy flowing through Leander wasn't some ordinary cultivation—it was a force born from and beyond heaven and earth, unmatched by anything known.

Every battle, every opponent defeated, sent that Nirvana Energy spiraling upward—igniting his growth, pushing him sharper and stronger.

And the tougher the opponent, the bigger the leap after the victory.

For Leander, fighting wasn't just surviving. It was leveling up. And winning was the catalyst.

In just a few minutes, he'd knocked three Chief Arbitrators clean out of the sky.

Everyone was stunned.

The remaining Chief Arbitrators—who had been roaring and charging earlier—suddenly hesitated, nerves fraying as they held back.

Seeing their fear, Leander's smirk only deepened, his tone dripping with contempt.

"What's the matter? Did the great Arbitration Office lose its courage?"

"Chief Arbitrators?" He laughed softly. "To me, you're nothing but paper tigers. Twelve of you think you

can take me down? Adorable. Unless The 16 Supreme Arbiters show up, don't expect me to take

this seriously."

His voice rolled across the battlefield, and his aura soared upward, slicing through the clouds. Follow current novels on find-novel.net

It was a declaration of dominance—raw, overwhelming power shaking the sky. "Today, I'll show you what real strength is."

Below, Halia's lips twitched. She couldn't stop the words from slipping out, "This isn't a battle. This is... a one-sided massacre."

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High above, the remaining nine Chief Arbitrators stood frozen, their minds blank. No one had imagined that even with a lineup like this, Leander would dismantle them in mere minutes.

"Whoosh!"

As fear swallowed the valley, Leander's figure flickered and vanished again.

The masters of the Arbitration Office, who had strutted in earlier like they owned the sky, now looked rattled to the bone.

Leander moved like a phantom of death, and they were the prey.

Wherever he reappeared, they scattered in panic, terrified they'd be the next one crushed.

"Stop him!"

Edis finally snapped. He barked something to Inas, and both shot forward at top speed.

Dholous followed right after, dragging the Sword of Light with him.

These three were the pillars among the Chief Arbitrators, the only ones with the power to interfere.

If they didn't intercept him now, all twelve of them would be wiped out.

"With just you three?"

A cold laugh rolled across the air.

Edis, who'd just launched himself forward, felt his gut twist.

Bad sign.

The Flame Witch and four other Chief Arbitrators were still frozen when Leander ghosted in and dropped right in front of them.

"What..."

The Flame Witch stood at the front.

Her expression locked for a split second before a claw-like hand ripped out of thin air, grabbing straight for her head.

"You dare!" she roared, flames bursting from her body.

A massive flaming palm formed above her, crashing down like a burning avalanche.

Leander braced one hand against the flaming palm, stomping a huge crater into its center.

Then he pushed off, flipping backward, and shot straight toward the four beside her, a feral grin on his face.

These four weren't anywhere near Inas' or Edis' level, and none of them had a terrifying elemental gift like the Flame Witch.

The moment Leander appeared, cold dread drowned them.

One didn't even get a full cry out when Leander's fingers closed, and the man's head snapped sideways under the force, life extinguished in an instant.

Leander tossed the limp body aside and lunged like a predator toward the remaining three.

Among them, the man with the blood-red saber had the best odds.

He ripped his blade free and held it before his chest, the crimson glow lighting up the sky.

He gathered every bit of will he had, desperate to block the incoming strike. Leander's gaze turned wintry. His fist fired out like a cannon shot.

Metal screamed, and sparks burst from the saber.

The man's eyes flew wide, shock flooding his face. His breath hitched, blood rising in his throat, and before he could stagger away, a sharp crack followed.

Leander's flaming fist blasted through the saber, splintering it, and slammed straight into the man's chest.

His gaze froze, terror etched across his face, and his body went limp as the force burst out of his back.

"H-He's a demon! A demon!"

The last two Chief Arbitrators snapped.

Their courage shattered, and they turned to flee, screaming in pure panic.

"Run?"

Leander's smile went glacial.

He darted forward, gripping each of their necks in one motion.

His fingers tightened.

Their bodies jerked, then went still, suspended in the air like broken dolls.

All color drained from the onlookers' faces.

Four more Chief Arbitrators gone in the blink of an eye.

In under ten minutes, seven of the twelve had fallen.

"Damn you!"

Edis' and Inas' eyes went blood-red.

With rage boiling out of them, they roared and charged straight at Leander. Original content can be found at

Leander didn't even spare them a glance.

He snapped, "Devourer's Ninefold Path—Wind and Thunder!"

Just as Edis and the others closed in, he vanished again—no afterimage, no trail.

An instant later, screams from Chief Arbitrators tore across the sky.

Cries rose, overlapped, cut off.

The spectators below only caught flashes—spheres of light, streaks of lightning—sparking under Leander's feet.

Wherever he materialized, a Chief Arbitrator dropped.

None of them dared to clash with him head-on.

His killing aura was suffocating.

They scattered in terror, their strength collapsing under fear.

He chased them down like a reaper, and each one ended with a single punch.

Edis, Dholous, and Inas tried

desperately to intercept this ghost-like slaughter, but Leander's movements were too strange too fast as if he were blinking through space itself.

A Chief Arbitrator fell.

Then another.

Then another.

No pause, no mercy—just bodies dropping from the sky.

"No!"

When Leander stomped the last fleeing Chief Arbitrator into the abyss with one brutal strike, the Flame Witch finally snapped.

Her face drained of color. Rage twisted her scream.

The fire-wielder threw herself into

full elemental form again, her body swelling into a blazing sphere that punched through the clouds as she hurled herself at Leander's back.

"Flame Witch-fall back!"

Seeing her completely lose control, even Inas and the others panicked, calling after her, but they were too late.

Leander didn't dodge.

Didn't even flinch.

He took the fireball head-on and stood there like a stone pillar.

"Your turn."

The Flame Witch's eyes widened. She tried to slip past him as pure flame, but Leander's grin cut her off.

Fire surged over his fist, a deeper, fiercer blaze.

His flaming punch slammed toward her skull.

The sky erupted.

The heat roared outward-far hotter than The Blaze she wielded. It swallowed her instantly.

She was fire-yet she had never imagined a flame existed that could burn her.

Her scream ripped through the heavens.

She endured a few seconds longer than the others under Dragonfire, but it didn't matter.

Her seductive silhouette thinned, flickered, and vanished above the valley like smoke blown away by the wind.

After cutting down the Flame Witch, Leander finally stopped. The Wind and Thunder Technique beneath his feet faded to nothing.

Below, the major figures from the

International Combat

Units-including Seth and the others

from the Shadow Division stood frozen, faces blank, like someone had carved them out of stone.

Twelve Chief Arbitrators plus the three from Reefus' squad earlier-fifteen in total.

That was more than half of the Arbitration Office's elite upper ranks.

And this superstar formation had been shredded in under twenty minutes.

Leander alone had butchered twelve of them, leaving only Inas, Edis, and Dholous still breathing.

If word of this spread, it wouldn't just shake the martial world. It would make the leaders of entire nations lose sleep.

High in the sky, a lone figure stood tall, flames still curling around his fist-like a god of slaughter descending into the realm.

Halia, who'd always looked down on men, suddenly had a softness blooming in her gaze. Even someone as cold and venomous as she felt a spark of genuine admiration.

Who else could do this? One man facing fifteen Chief Arbitrators and killing twelve.

Outside of the Iron Sovereign, who else even came close?

She had been right earlier.

This wasn't a battle. This was a massacre-pure and simple.

The flames cloaking Leander's fist slowly quieted. His eyes, dark as midnight, finally settled on the last three standing.

Dholous Igen-the Son of Europa.

Edis Utas-former Master of the Fable Court.

Inas Cage—the old Taybourne Sect Leader.

"Now then," Leander said, his voice low, steady, and cold. "You three are up."

Halia, who always looked down on men, had softness flooding her eyes. Even that cold-blooded viper felt a flicker of something called admiration for Leander.

Who else could wield power like this? One man against fifteen Chief Arbitrators, twelve killed. Aside from the Iron Sovereign, who could do that?

She'd been right from the start. This wasn't a fight. It was a one-sided massacre.

The fire around Leander's fist ebbed. His eyes, deep as the night sky, finally landed on the last three.

Dholous Igen, the Son of Europa.

Edis Utas, former Master of the Fable Court.

Inas Cage, the Taybourne Sect Leader.

"Last up, it's your turn-you three."

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Chapter 466

A teasing curve lingered at the corner of Leander's mouth. Flames surged through his palm, while his eyes stayed glacial-razor-sharp, merciless.

On the Arbitration Office's side, only three Chief Arbitrators remained.

Edis and Dholous were drowning in despair. They had thrown everything into this operation. Jeframon had even burned his soul to tear open a portal and drag all twelve of them here.

And in the span of a breath, Leander had butchered the rest.

For the Arbitration Office, this was the greatest disaster in centuries utterly incalculable.

A single Chief Arbitrator took mountains of resources and decades of cultivation to produce. Losing even one was agony.

Now?

Twelve had fallen in one sweep.

If this reached the Arbitration Office, The 16 Supreme Arbiters would erupt like volcanoes.

Among the stunned spectators, only Halia had fought Leander up close. She thought she understood his strength.

Now she realized he'd never used even half of it on her.

When Reefus and his group appeared earlier, her confidence soared.

With that lineup, killing Leander seemed guaranteed. Then she could slip away and steal the Bloodjadea in the chaos. Latest content published on

And when twelve more Chief Arbitrators descended from the sky, she was even more certain Leander's death was sealed.

But reality slapped her awake. Hard.

Leander alone had slaughtered twelve Chief Arbitrators.

In less than half an hour, only Edis, Inas, and Dholous remained. He even one-punched the Flame Witch, a fire-type metahuman and a full tier above Halia.

A monster like this erased the last trace of greed in her chest. Treasure was wonderful, sure, but compared to your life, it meant nothing.

She wanted no part in getting hunted across continents by a creature like him just for a shiny leaf.

The other onlookers trembled, lips quivering. These weren't random powerhouses he'd killed. They were Chief Arbitrators of the Arbitration Office, and Leander had torn through them like paper.

Unbelievable wasn't strong enough to describe it.

In a world this vast, who could defeat this unstoppable, sky-cracking youth?

That thought hit everyone at the same time.

"Your turn, you three."

Leander's voice was cold enough to freeze bone. Sparks danced across his palm. He was ready.

They forced their hearts steady and crushed the panic threatening to crack them. They understood perfectly: this was the knife-edge between life and death.

One thought led upward; one led straight into the abyss.

They had come to surround and kill Leander and failed spectacularly.

With the way Leander operated, none of them were walking away.

"Only a fight to the death leaves us even a sliver of hope!"

Dholous, who had been arrogant earlier and eager to settle the score, now wanted just one thing—survival. Leander's monstrous strength and terrifying speed shattered any illusion of victory.

Dholous had no confidence left.

"You came for me?" Leander's gaze sharpened to a blade. "Then be ready to die."

Leander stepped forward. His fist drove out, and a deep-blue fist shadow rolled ahead of him. This time, he didn't hold back at all.

In that same instant, the three let out a roar. Almost as one, they each dragged out a ghost-blue Judgment Crystal and crushed it in their palms.

Doomlight rained down like blue sparks and wrapped around their bodies. Their faces twisted with frenzy. As their power surged, their confidence surged with it.

Inas moved first, charging in with both fists slammed together.

"Tharok's Technique-United Dragonfire Fist!"

His fists blasted forward. A dragon-shaped shadow spiraled up into the air, and a faint draconic roar echoed through the valley.

The dragon lunged. One enormous fist shadow swept out, colliding head-on with Leander's blue fist shadow.

Inas poured everything into that strike. But a heartbeat later came the dragon's dying shriek—Leander's fist shadow crushed it clean and burst it apart midair. It didn't even last ten seconds.

A figure tore through the fading glow—a man in white. Leander.

Inas stiffened. Leander flipped in the air, his leg dropping like a guillotine.

Inas threw his forearms up to block. A dull boom shook the sky. The force snapped both his arms like dry branches and launched him out of the air.

"Flamebreaker!"

Leander didn't pause. As Inas fell, Leander's palm descended.

A giant hand of fire slammed down from above, swallowing Inas whole and driving him deep into the ground. The flames kept roaring, refusing to die out.

One of the top three among the fifteen strongest here gone in an instant.

"Run!"

Edis and Dholous felt their renewed courage crumble again. Ice flooded their veins.

Seeing Inas erased, neither dared stay. They turned into twin streaks of light and shot away.

"Soul Shatter Claw!"

A low shout drifted after them like a passing wind. It brushed Dholous across the chest-the man with the lightsword.

He looked down in disbelief. Thin claw marks opened slowly across his calf, his abdomen, his chest.

"No!"

He screamed at the sky, rage and terror choking together. He was a

Chief Arbitrator-ies

towering above kings and armie He'd thought the world belonged to him.

And today... Someone could truly kill him.

Crack!

His body split apart. Flesh and bone scattered through the air. A cold shiver knifed through every onlooker's heart.

Not far away, Edis' eyes narrowed, his face going paper-white.

No hesitation. No delay. The moment Dholous was shredded, Edis spun and fled at the fastest speed he'd ever forced from his body.

He knew the tide was dead. He couldn't fight Leander. If he escaped, he'd rush straight to The 16 Supreme Arbiters and beg them to hunt Leander down themselves. "You think you can run?"

Leander lifted his eyes. Edis was already hundreds of feet away.

"Devourer's Wind and Thunder Technique!"

Thunder rolled. Wind screamed. Leander vanished-then, in less than a breath, he was standing right in front of Edis.

"What kind of speed is that?"

Terror swallowed Edis whole. He staggered back, one step after another.

"I'm sick of the Arbitration Office. From the very start, you never should've come after me."

Leander's gaze stayed cold. His hand rose. In the next breath, one finger shot forward, straight toward Edis' brow—too fast to see, too fast to dodge.

Edis didn't even have time to twitch. Within thirty feet, that finger pierced clean through his forehead.

The world fell into a graveyard silence, thick with killing intent.

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Chapter 467

Leander's finger flicked-clean, precise. It punched straight through Edis' forehead.

The former Master of the Fable Court-now a Chief Arbitrator-went slack, eyes emptying in an instant.

A dark hole opened at the center of his brow, running straight through to the back of his skull.

Yet not a drop of blood flowed out.

His expression didn't even twist. If anything, a faint smile tugged at his lips.

Leander's eyes narrowed. The wound wasn't a wound at all.

It was hollow-so hollow he could clearly see the mountain ridge behind Edis, like the blow had turned the space transparent.

"Jeff, I'll give it to you your fighting strength is outrageous. But killing me? You've still got a long way to go!"

The void at his brow began knitting together.

Edis barked out a laugh and sprang back. His body blurred, turning thin and hazy, as if he could scatter into the air itself.

"A wind-element metahuman?" Leander muttered, genuinely surprised.

So Edis was an elemental too, and one of the slipperiest types in the natural line: wind.

Unlike the fire wielders-the Flame Witch and Halia-a wind user could dissolve into formless currents, disappearing into the faintest breeze.

Any wisp of air could hide his true body. He could drift with the wind, flow with the gusts, utterly impossible to pinpoint.

"Jeff, I'll come for you one day. I'll remember this humiliation. I swear it."

His eerie, disembodied voice rolled across the sky as his presence faded farther and farther. The onlookers shivered, goosebumps rising.

Leander stayed still, hovering midair like carved stone. Then his eyes snapped open, and a wicked grin tugged at his mouth.

"No one I decide to kill escapes. Not even a wind user."

Flames bloomed across his hands, weaving and lacing together until they formed a brilliant, otherworldly fire whip.

With a single sweep of his arm, the flaming whip cracked across the sky, stretching over a hundred feet.

Winds howled. A vortex of fire spiraled open in the heavens.

"Argh!"

A scream of pure despair tore through the void.

Shredded currents of wind were sucked into the whirling blaze, dragged tighter and tighter-until they condensed back into Edis' physical form.

Terror twisted his face. He looked like he was staring at a nightmare.

Everyone knew the rule: to deal with elementals who could transform into pure essence, you needed either elemental mastery or rare Profound Force.

But wind users?

Even experts in Profound Force struggled to track them.

To kill one, you usually needed city-level techniques—wide-area cleansers that could wipe out everything at once.

Otherwise, the wind user would break into countless threads and vanish into the world's currents. His true body could split into thousands of pieces.

Hurting him was already hard-killing him was nearly impossible.

Edis knew Leander could kill fire-types, so he assumed Leander understood Profound Force.

But what wrapped around him now was something beyond Profound Force.

The massive firestorm howled with vicious suction, dragging every scrap of air within hundreds of feet into its core.

Even if he scattered into a thousand streams of wind, the vortex would reel him back in. There was no escape.

The blazing heat wrapped around him tighter and tighter. He could feel his limbs, his body, beginning to melt away.

"Jeff, spare me! From today on, I'll be your servant! I'll obey you completely! I'll never betray you-I swear!" Edis' scream cracked inside the inferno.

Pride gone.

All he wanted was one thing to live.

"Too bad. I don't take servants."

Leander didn't blink. His palms pressed together, and the firestorm clenched like a flaming cage. It crushed inward.

Edis was erased inside, body and soul. Not even a final scream remained.

Leander curled his fingers. The flames dissolved and faded into the night wind.

Silence settled over the mountains again, as if nothing had happened at all.

Only the scorched craters and shattered cliffs proved that a slaughter had just taken place here.

High above, Leander stood

alone-calm, steady, untouchable.

He slowly closed his hand, lifted his

chin toward the moon, and his expr

ession softened as the Ninefold Nirvana Energy inside him surged wildly. sŵnovels

The entire field trembled. Awe, fear, disbelief—every gaze rose toward that lone, towering figure in the sky.

After all the carnage, his clothes were merely torn in a few places. Not a scratch on him.

His hair whipped behind him, wild and free, and his face—sharp, perfect—looked almost divine in the moonlight.

Halia—the cold, venomous woman who claimed nothing about a man could shake her heart—felt it pounding out of rhythm.

She couldn't steady herself.

She saw nothing but that fearless, unrivaled silhouette in the sky.

"After tonight... not even the Arbitration Office can bury Jeff's name," she whispered, trembling.

The elite fighters from the International Combat Units list stood frozen. Leander was ranked No. 5, but plenty had mocked the ranking, saying he'd reached it by luck.

After all, back then at Southern Shore, aside from the young Astrian elites, only the four great houses of Highcliffe saw him fight.

News came through them-no hard evidence for the rest of the world.

Could he really kill the monsters on that list?

Many doubted it.

But here, on the Aorinth Peaks, he proved it beyond question.

He first beat Halia bare-handed.

Then he killed three top-ranked powerhouses one after another—including the God of Madness, Khaedor, the man who held the No. 1 spot.

And when the Arbitration Office sent its elites—fifteen Chief Arbitrators—he wiped them all out alone.

That kind of dominance? Insanity. A level far beyond any typical Transcendent.

No one doubted him anymore. Tonight, Leander wasn't just "No. 5." He became the symbol of the entire list.

No fighter in the list's history had ever reached a peak like this.

Then Asgard Galen-veteran

powerhouse ranked No. 6-stepped forward, clasped his fists, and declared in a ringing voice,

"Congratulations, Sovereign-on

taking

the No. position in the

1

International Combat Units! From

this moment on, unless a King

Phase arises, you stand

unmatched!"

As Asgard bowed, the others followed suit. Even Halia—wild, proud, and born of the natural elements—lowered her head.

"Congratulations, Sovereign!"

The shout rippled through the valley, rising and falling like thunder.

The Aorinth Peaks, once roaring with storms and battling giants, rang with only one name—Leander Ashcroft.

Starlight flickered through Leander's eyes.

He didn't show much emotion.

He simply reached out and pulled the hot spring below detonated, and a golden beam shot upward into his hand.

The Bloodjadea. A treasure only the strongest could claim.

Leander gazed at the radiant, glass-bright herb and finally smiled.

Then, he looked over the crowd and spoke in a calm, cutting voice, "After tonight spread this across the international

martial world no one

runs wild on Astrian soil while I live. Anyone who offends Astria... dies."

From that moment on, Astria became forbidden territory for martial titans and

Transcendent metahumans across the world.

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Chapter 468

With a single sentence, Leander stunned every powerhouse in the International Combat Units. They etched his words deep into their hearts, not daring to ever forget them.

Back when the Dragon Emperor had dominated over Astria, he shook the whole world with his strength alone. His achievements forced countless geniuses and prodigies to bow their heads. Even veteran experts trembled before him, not daring to challenge his authority.

There was only one rule.

He declared that no powerhouse was ever permitted to rampage or wreak havoc in Astria. Though many acknowledged the rule, many others did not. After all, his legend was forged through innumerable battles before he finally reached the peak; it had not been built overnight.

But on this day, Leander crushed the two strongest martial experts at the top of the International Combat Units with astonishing speed and single-handedly slew fifteen Chief Arbitrators with overwhelming strength. It was a shocking display of his absolute power.

Among those present, not one person dared to defy him or show even a hint of disrespect.

His words were the ironclad rules of the world. Who would dare disobey them?

A chorus of sonic booms echoed across the sky as the martial experts who had come to fight over the treasure retreated in quick succession. Their once-eager expressions had turned solemn, not a trace of greed remaining in their eyes. None of them dared to harbor even the slightest thought of coveting the relic now.

Evelyn's fiery-red dress fluttered in the wind, exposing a flash of her fair and delicate skin.

More daring than the rest, she approached Leander with a seductive smile that could drive any man wild.

"I've finally witnessed what it means to be a true man of the world, Sovereign Ashcroft. Rest assured, from this day onward, I will never act presumptuously within Astria! But... I will remember you."

Her smile lingered, tempting men to their downfall. After she finished speaking, she transformed into a whirl of flames and vanished into the sky.

Out of the twenty-odd Transcendent Realm martial experts present, most had quickly retreated, gone in the blink of an eye. Only Seth, Keith, and Kenneth remained, standing there in stunned disbelief.

A long time passed before they recovered from their shock and gave Leander a respectful bow.

"Thank you for your aid, Sovereign!"

Previously, they felt only a measure of fear and vigilance toward him. They honestly believed that he was nothing more than a Transcendent Realm martial expert who might one day pose a threat. But now, in their eyes, he had become an undefeated god of war, worthy of praise and worship.

Ignoring their heartfelt gratitude, Leander swept his gaze over them. Then, he lifted his hand. The surface of the hot spring erupted again. A column of water shot into the sky, splitting into four separate golden beams that surged endlessly.

"What's that?"

They stared, mouths agape in astonishment. The source of this content is find·novel·net

Leander flickered a finger at the three men. One of the golden beams instantly shot toward them and hovered above their heads.

Startled, they tried to dodge.

In the next instant, a warm current poured over their heads and penetrated their skulls. Flowing through their limbs and bones, the warmth flooded their entire bodies. It felt as though they had been reborn. Every cell thrummed with endless energy as the innate vitality in their bodies grew stronger and more refined.

While they were reeling in bewilderment, Leander's calm voice entered their ears. "I've already taken the relic that appeared on the Aorinth Peaks. Even if the Shadow Division demands it, I will not hand it over.

"But aside from the relic I need, there is another priceless natural treasure there—the Verdant Dew produced by the Bloodjadea.

"The Shadow Division is a special division within the government. Though I have claimed the relic, I won't send you back empty-handed.

"These three water columns hidden at the bottom of the hot spring are the core of the Verdant Dew! Take them with you—they'll strengthen your body and boost your cultivation. They could even unlock the latent potential of an ordinary man, allowing them to step onto the path of ancient martial techniques and cultivate their inner strength."

The three men inhaled sharply. At his level, they knew he would not lie about such things.

Judging by the scale of the Verdant Dew, it wouldn't be hard to form a special forces unit of a hundred men, each an ancient martial artist. Such a force would be a tremendous boost to the nation's military strength.

But that wasn't even the greatest advantage of the Verdant Dew. Its true power lay in enhancing a martial artist's cultivation.

They had only been infused with a

single wisp of its vapor, yet their innate vitality was already surging wildly. In other words, bringing these three cores back with them would allow countless martial experts in the Shadow Division to temper and strengthen themselves.

"Thank you, Sovereign! Thank you very much!"

They bowed once more, voices overflowing with gratitude.

Leander brushed aside their gratitude, refusing to take any credit. Descending from the sky, he studied them with a ripple in his eyes.

"There's something I wanted to ask you." His low voice was calm but tinged with curiosity. "What exactly is the King Phase?"

The three men froze, pupils contracting in shock. Even their expressions stiffened as though their breath had been caught in their throats.

"The King Phase..." Seth muttered softly, his expression filled with absolute reverence. After a long pause, he asked in disbelief, "Do you not know about the King Phase, Sovereign Ashcroft?"

Leander shook his head. Though he'd seen the term in several ancient texts, none had ever explained the cultivation realm in detail. And since his rise, he'd never actually encountered anyone of that level in battle.

Hearing Maddox and the Black Dragon mentioning the King Phase today had piqued his interest. He wanted to know how much of the world remained unknown to him..... and where his current strength placed him.

Despite his confidence in his strength, he was not arrogant enough to believe he was invincible.

Seth nodded in understanding. Leander might possess monstrous cultivation, but he was still young—and the term King Phase belonged to an older era.

"The King Phase is a realm above the Transcendent Realm—a realm that completely surpasses the Transcendent Realm. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to call those in King Phase as living deities of the

world," he explained.

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"There are four stages within the Transcendent Realm, but the King Phase easily surpasses them. Even an Infernal Crown Transcendent at their peak would seem like a helpless baby before a King Phase master.

"Legend has it that a King Phase master can even manipulate the power of heaven and earth with a flick of their finger—causing floods and tsunamis, crushing mountains and rivers, and even sealing space itself."

"Oh?" Leander murmured. "Controlling nature and even sealing space itself?"

Those words were short and concise, but they vividly painted the might of a King Phase master.

Starting from the Ember

Transcendent, one could begin to vaguely manipulate the forces of the world on a small scale. They could channel their innate vitality to draw the primordial energy of the world into themselves, shaping the energy into either a shield or a blade.

But it was crude—rudimentary at best. True control over the forces of the world was far beyond their reach.

Yet according to Seth, a true King Phase master could freely wield the forces of the world as if they were his own.

Borrowing the power of nature to empower oneself and the authority of heaven and earth itself to reign over others—that was the most primitive form of power, strength at its purest.

The "Devourer's Ninefold Path" that Leander wielded was powerful for the very same reason: Everything eventually returned to nature. It was formless, intangible, and elusive—possessing unfathomable potential.

It was obvious King Phase masters held power that even he could not afford to ignore.

Hands clasped behind his back, he gazed across the mountain ravine.

"Have you ever seen a true King Phase master?"

The three men exchanged looks, then simultaneously shook their heads.

Seth's voice was solemn and grim. "Nearly a hundred years have passed since the last appearance of a true King Phase master."

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Chapter 469

"Oh?" Leander remained motionless, his eyes narrowing slightly.

"Not a single one in nearly a hundred years?"

That's strange indeed.

Though the King Phase was indeed a cultivation realm above the Transcendent Realm, the fact that its existence was recorded in history meant that people had once reached it, just like the Transcendent Realm in ages past.

Both Grayson and Tsaric once paid an enormous price, sacrificing more than half their lives just to break into the Transcendent Realm. Yet now, there were dozens of Transcendents.

There was no doubt the King Phase was far stronger and much more mysterious -than the Transcendent Realm. But for no one to have reached the King Phase in nearly a century? It was truly inconceivable.

"Indeed."

Seth nodded hard.

"The Shadow Division was one of the earliest special divisions to be founded in Astria, but even the director possesses only partial information about the King Phase. Everything we know comes solely from ancient written records."

"According to these records, the last King Phase master to appear in the entire world was from Astria. He was known among the strongest martial artists of the world as...the Dragon Emperor!"

Leander widened his eyes, his pupils contracting.

"Do you mean the Dragon Emperor of Astria? He was the last King Phase master to have appeared in the world?"

He'd often heard about the Dragon Emperor. In fact, during his battle with Galen in Highcliffe, the Dragon Emperor had even sent Master Branson, head of the Ancient Lingster Sanctum, to meet him.

But he knew precious little regarding the Dragon Emperor himself—only that the Dragon Emperor had once been Astria's invincible legend, a supreme being who had dominated the world across multiple eras, a peerless figure revered throughout the land from the reign of the last royal family to the early days of the republican era. He had no idea that the Dragon Emperor carried yet another special identity—the last King Phase master in the world. It was a title of undeniable dominion.

A look of deep reverence appeared on the faces of Seth and the other two men.

"To be honest, we don't even know if the King Phase truly exists. Even with the Dragon Emperor, most of what we know comes from hearsay. Only the director and deputy director can access the Shadow Division's top-secret files on him," Seth continued.

"And the last time he appeared in public was nearly a century ago, tracing back to World War I. As for whether he still lives or whether a true King Phase master still walks the world... we do not know."

Leander clasped his hands behind his back, his gaze as deep as the night sky. Though he said nothing, a faint yet ambiguous smile tugged at his lips.

Seth's words reminded him of Master Branson, who once exchanged a single blow with him.

He was certain that Master Branson had held back during their clash. Even restrained, he could sense that Master Branson's cultivation and power were much stronger than any of the fifteen Chief Arbitrators he had fought today.

Even if all fifteen had joined forces, they wouldn't have been able to touch a single hair on Master Branson's head. Had he intended to destroy them, they would have perished before they could even blink.

Yet those fifteen were masters standing at the pinnacle of Infernal Crown Transcendent. By that measure, Master Branson was likely a King Phase master.

And since Master Branson was a close friend of the Dragon Emperor, the Dragon Emperor must be a King Phase master as well.

So, the King Phase does exist... There was no limit to the pursuit of strength. Even someone as proud and indomitable as Leander dared not claim he could glimpse the end of this endless path.

"The King Phase, huh..." Leander murmured thoughtfully.

Then, his thoughts shifted to the Arbitration Office, the organization that now stood fully opposed to him.

The Spirit Avatar that appeared when he slew Fergus could only have belonged to someone whose spiritual strength had reached the Origin Realm. In other words, there was a King Phase master hidden in the Arbitration Office as well.

Otherwise, the Dragon Emperor would not have been repeatedly besieged by the Arbitration Office-until he was forced to go into hiding.

Among the twenty-four Chief Arbitrators of the Arbitration Office, nine had yet to appear. If these nine were stronger than the fifteen he's just killed, then they must be King Phase masters.

And even further above them were the lofty Sixteen Supreme Arbiters...

Leander could feel his blood boiling with excitement. It seemed the higher he climbed, the more he could sense how vast the world truly was. But that only made his enthusiasm burn even brighter.

A moment later, he smiled.

"King or Emperor I'll surely meet them one day."

Then, he pushed aside all thoughts of the King Phase.

At his current level, the idea of facing a powerful opponent no longer made him flinch or tremble. He knew that he simply needed to crush everything in his path with absolute strength.

Be it a Transcendent or a legendary King Phase master, if they stood in his path, he would pulverize them without mercy.

"The King Phase is too distant right now. I should focus on what's in front of me. First, I need a place to refine the Bloodjadea and the Dragon Core. I must advance into the Origin Realm as soon as possible!"

Spiritual cultivation was just as

important to him as martial cultivation. After all, defeating the fifteen Chief Arbitrators would have required far less effort if his spiritual

strength had already been in the Origin Realm.

At that level, he could transform his mind into a blade and seal away a small region of space with a single thought. That would have allowed him to erase such a line-up in a heartbeat.

Having made his decision, he turned away without sparing another glance at the three men. He tapped his toe against the ground and transformed into a streak of blue light, vanishing into the distance at lightning speed.

The three quietly watched the blue streak fading into the distance.

A long while passed before Kenneth broke the silence.

"Jeff Ashcroft's battle today may have shaken the Arbitration Office's unshakable dominance that lasted for centuries. In fact, he will surely overturn the stagnant hierarchy of the international martial world!"

Keith nodded in agreement. He shared the same sentiment.

Only Seth, after a moment of thought, said solemnly, "No, he won't just overturn the international martial world; the structure of the entire underground world will change after this battle."

After Leander departed from the Aorinth Peaks, his whereabouts became unknown. However, news of the battle soon spread across the world by word of mouth and various other channels.

Forums on the International Martial Network exploded as martial artists from everywhere spammed the comment section, discussing only one thing: Leander killing the fifteen Chief Arbitrators by himself.

Every major ranking was dominated by this event, becoming the trending topic on the International Martial Network. In fact, discussions hit the website's highest peak since its founding.

Various headlines flooded the forum

as post after post went live: 'Sovereign Ashcroft Reigns Supreme', 'The Arbitration Office's Rule Challenged', 'Just How Strong Is Jeff Ashcroft? Has Jeff Ashcroft Surpassed the Infernal Crown Transcendent?'

His name once again soared to the top of the International Martial Network. Even the recently updated International Combat Units became completely overshadowed. People began speculating whether

the rankings needed a complete reshuffle. Just as arguments were escalating, the website owner "Umbrial Court suddenly appeared and pinned a new international Combat Units to the front page.

Curious, countless martial artists clicked into the link. When the page loaded, they stared speechlessly at their screens.

The new rankings were astonishingly simple. There was no long roster of names; no flashy titles or code names. There was only one name and one title, written in Astric: The Iron Sovereign, Jeff Ashcroft.

Such a phenomenon was a first in the history of the International Martial Network. Read full story at

Leander had successfully ascended to the top of the International Martial Network before he even reached twenty. He became the sole existence in three hundred years to wipe the board clean the one and only in the world!

At the Ashcroft Residence in Highcliffe, Ethan sat in front of his computer. His eyes were slightly unfocused; his expression filled with despair.

"Leander... you've climbed so high I can't even hope to catch up to you anymore..."

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Chapter 470

Ethan slumped in his chair, his eyes unfocused and dull.

Though he and Leander were brothers by blood, he'd always been fiercely competitive. And the higher Leander climbed, the harder it struck his pride.

There was a time when he was the prodigy of the Ashcroft Family. Celebrated across Astria for his achievements, he was hailed as the brightest star of Astria's martial world since Gareth Ashcroft.

The prestige, the praise, everything... they should have belonged to him.

Even if fate refused to favor him, he never imagined it would all return to Leander, whose martial power had once been crippled.

After all, he was the one born gifted. He possessed the only dual martial power in the history of the Ashcroft Family, one of which had been stripped from Leander and transplanted into him. He should have been the undisputed champion of his generation.

But instead, he failed to show the slightest brilliance in any aspect. He was constantly overshadowed by Leander, who had successfully clawed his way back into the martial world.

And now... he was slowly realizing that he was gradually losing even the right to chase after Leander's shadow. While Leander stood high above the clouds, blazing as brilliantly as the sun, he could only shrink back into the darkness-resentful, envious, and blinded by the unreachable radiance.

A long time passed before he heaved a heavy sigh, saturated with his bitter resentment.

Given Leander's wealth, identity, and status, even the great powers of the world had to tread cautiously around him. He had even ranked first in the International Combat Units.

At this point, there was nothing Ethan could do to deny the cruel reality. His only option was to swallow the bitter pill of truth.

Just then, a graceful figure appeared at the doorway.

"Mom."

Ethan hurriedly wiped away the tears in his eyes.

Dressed in a flowing green traditional outfit that framed her figure, Lydia entered the room. She gave Ethan a cursory nod, then glanced toward the computer screen.

Her expression shifted slightly as soon as she saw Leander's name displayed at the top of the International Combat Units. She understood at once.

"Ethan..." She patted his shoulder comfortingly, her words heavy with meaning. "You've always been fiercely competitive, always wanting to be the best. It's a trait you've had since you were young.

"But... some things cannot be forced. Everyone will eventually meet someone stronger than themselves. It's the natural course of life. You must not let this become a demon in your heart.

"Once a heart demon takes root, your path in the martial arts will only grow steeper and narrower. You may even stagnate forever, unable to take another step forward."

Startled, Ethan froze for a moment. Lydia had always been a gentle, loving mother. Whether in public or in private, she had always appeared no different from an ordinary woman. She had never spoken to him about martial arts-not even once.

Therefore, her words today shocked him deeply.

Ignoring his reaction, she sat before him. Her tone remained gentle but firm. "Ethan, the path of martial arts has no end. You must ignore the noise around you and press forward with everything you have. Only then can you climb to greater and greater heights.

"Even the Dragon Emperor was once a lone cultivator with no background or support. He simply persevered, trampling the forces in Astria and forging his title of 'invincible' with sheer strength.

"And the World Arbitration Office? They, too, shook the world with pure power. They've stood strong for centuries, and today, they've become a massive underground force feared by the great nations.

"What I mean to say is... the world is full of endless possibilities. Don't let temporary victories or losses cloud your heart.

"Besides... he's your elder brother."

Once she finished speaking, she stood to leave. She paused at the door and glanced backward, a touch of weariness and sorrow in her voice.

"I lived at Durham Abbey for more than ten years because of Leander, refusing to return to the Ashcroft Residence. Because of that, you may think he weighs more in my heart than you do, but...

"You're both my sons. There can never be one more important than the other. You're both precious to me.

"I've prepared a gift for you. I'll have it sent over later. It'll help you take one step closer to Leander."

Then, she left.

Meanwhile, Ethan remained frozen in place, reeling with confusion.

At the Ashcroft Residence.

Dressed in elegant robes, Gareth stood with his hands clasped behind his back, facing a wall covered in blooming peonies.

Lydia approached slowly, exuding the gentle elegance of a classical beauty with every step.

"Gareth... I remember you planted these flowers for me when you first brought me here. It hasn't changed in the slightest, though more than ten years have passed."

At her arrival, his stern expression softened instantly, almost smiling.

"Lydia, I've never forgotten a single moment spent with you."

Looking at the man she loved, affection shimmered in her eyes.

She smiled and stepped forward, holding his broad hand.

"Gareth, my refusal to return to the Ashcroft Residence over the past ten years..... I admit, it was because I held resentment toward you."

"But I've never blamed you."

Stroking his cheek, she suddenly smiled. Her entire face seemed to brighten in that moment.

"For the next three months... take me on a trip around the world. It doesn't matter where we go. Let's leave tomorrow."

Those words startled him, making him flinch slightly.

"Lydia... must you go back?" His expression stiffened at the thought. "With the Ashcroft Family's current strength and the connections we've built across Astria.. I don't believe they can truly threaten you."

She shook her head gently, a faint smile playing on her lips.

"Gareth... you know very well-those from that place are not bound by any nation. Rules mean nothing to them."

"I violated their greatest taboo when I chose to marry you, enter the Ashcroft Family, and become pregnant with Leander."

Her expression dimmed with sorrow.

"If I hadn't agreed to the twenty-year pact... and if my father hadn't staked his name on the line to vouch for me... they would've exterminated the Ashcroft Family twenty years ago.

"And now, the twenty-year deadline has come. If I don't return as promised, they won't spare the Ashcroft Family. They won't show mercy to you, to Leander, or to Ethan.

"You're the ones I love and cherish the most. How could I allow anything to happen to you?"

Her voice trembled slightly.

"The Ashcroft Family is flourishing now—holding an irreplaceable position, carrying real weight in Astria, and even receiving the nation's protection.

"Leander used to worry me the most. But now he's safe—and standing at the very top of the world. Aside from the Arbitration Office and a few ancient powers no one can truly threaten him anymore content

"As for Ethan, he is one of the brightest talents of his generation. His future is limitless. And he has the Ashcroft Family—and Leander to shield and support him." This chapter is updated by

Her gaze hardened with quiet resolve.

"Honestly, I have nothing left to fear. And that is why I have the courage and confidence to face whatever awaits me when I return.

"These twenty years in the mortal world... I am content. I will not ask for more."

Gareth clenched his fists tightly, fiery emotions blazing in his eyes. But the moment he thought of that place, a wave of helplessness washed over him.

Although he was a Transcendent known as one of Astria's Four Extremes, he was still far too weak, far too insignificant compared to the people there. Even Leander now the undisputed number one in the world, was not yet qualified to challenge them.

Spreading his arms, he pulled his wife into a tight embrace, his eyes growing moist.

"Lydia... for these three months, I'll take you across the world. Just you and me."

A warm tear slid down Lydia's cheek. Wrapping her arms around him, she held him tightly.

Finally, the husband and wife who once swore eternal devotion pressed their hearts close once more.

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