

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 561[896 words]

Splash!

An off-road vehicle tore across the desert at top speed, leaving a long, winding trail etched into the endless sand.

Leander lounged in the front passenger seat as a professional driver, dispatched by Yelem's powerful families, took the wheel.

The back seat was filled with food, water, and spare tires-everything necessary to survive the desert.

Leander closed his eyes behind thick sunglasses, looking more like a tourist than anything else.

Only Leander and the driver were in the car; Celia wasn't with them. After she indicated the path, Leander had sent her to protect Nathan and the others. He pressed on alone into the desert, searching for the legendary Westerian Divinity Vault.

A divinity vault beyond the King Phase was irresistible.

Leander was eager to glimpse the wealth and power of a Westerian divinity.

Across the endless desert, the vehicle pressed forward, its tires churning golden dust into the air. For miles around, there was only this solitary car.

"Eh?"

Leander sat motionless, sunglasses shielding him from the scorching sun. After half an hour, the driver suddenly called out.

"Sir, there's a figure ahead! It seems to be a woman."

Leander kept his eyes closed and spoke calmly, "Let her be. We'll go our own way."

In the boundless desert, foot travelers weren't unusual. In places like Umbrya and Qasara, locals wrapped their faces and wandered the sun-scorched sands, searching for remnants of past gold mining.

He was here for the divinity vault, and the strangers he encountered meant nothing to him.

The driver spoke again, sounding puzzled. "Sir, she's waving and heading straight for our car."

"Oh?" Leander lowered his sunglasses and opened his eyes.

Ahead, a slender woman draped in a red scarf made her way through the sand, her steps faltering. She waved her arms frantically, clearly signaling for help.

Leander found it strange. She had no cultivation and seemed completely ordinary, yet she was crossing the desert on foot with barely any water or proper gear. He couldn't understand it.

The vehicle stopped in front of her.

Even with her face covered, Leander could tell she was stunning. Her sunburned skin could not hide her beauty, which was easily on par with Celia's. Seeing a delicate, beautiful woman walking alone through the desert was unusual.

"Please, help me. I'll pay any price."

Her voice carried Astric, with a hint of a regional accent revealing her origin.

Leander recognized it immediately. She's from Bladewick. Her elegant attire and graceful manner mark her as a member of a wealthy family. Half a world from home -why does she come here alone, to suffer like this?

As she spoke, she reached for the car door handle, her eyes pleading.

"Sir, what do we do?" The driver didn't unlock the door right away, instead seeking Leander's judgment. Along the way, Leander had been calling every shot.

"Let her in Leander gave a calm nod. Life and death were fragile in such a place. Bladewick lay in Astric territory, and since they shared the same homeland helping he was the right choice.

With a soft click, the driver unlocked the door.

The woman slid into the back seat and instantly spotted the water and food. Without hesitation, she grabbed them, drinking and eating as if she hadn't had a proper meal in ages.

Eyes straight ahead, Leander ignored her as the engine roared back to life.

After twenty minutes, she finally caught her breath. Her lips pressed together as she spoke, her voice hoarse and tired.

"Thank you! I've been in the desert for five hours without anything to drink or eat. I was about to pass out." Her words carried a weight of honesty.

In her eyes, they were her only lifeline in this merciless desert. One more hour in the scorching sun, and she would have been done for.

Leander leaned back in his seat, hands behind his head, and spoke without turning. "Why were you out here? Even tourists know not to enter the desert without proper provisions."

She froze for a heartbeat, realizing he was speaking Astric.

Slowly, she began to recount her story. She was the beloved granddaughter of the Snowbrook family from Bladewick-famous as both a jewelry designer and a fashion model.

She had arrived with a group of more than twenty, only to be torn from them by a sudden sand tornado five hours ago.

The storm had cast her toward a lone mound, leaving the others swallowed by the desert. For five hours, she walked without seeing a single sign of life.

Everything-food, water, and any means of communication—was with her companions. She was completely cut off. She could do net

nothing but press on, fighting the relentless heat and her parched throat, until at last she came across them.

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"You brought over twenty people from Bladewick just to see how strong a sand tornado is?" His calm tone carried a faint trace of scrutiny.

She must have had a deeper purpose for coming here. No one drags over twenty people into the desert without a reason.

She sensed him probing. After a brief hesitation, she spoke again.

"Those twenty-plus people with me are elite bodyguards. We came because of a rumor. There's said to be an oasis hidden in this desert. Its air is fresh, its scenery beautiful.

"Someone once drank from its spring. Afterward, all his illnesses disappeared, and he lived ten more years.

"I came here for my grandfather. He's nearing the end of his life. I'm searching for that spring of life."

"The spring of life?" Leander's pupils constricted, and his heart skipped a beat. "Could it be Verdant Dew?"

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 562[891 words]

"The spring of life? Could it be Verdant Dew?"

Leander was taken aback by her words.

A single sip of the spring water could cure all illnesses and grant a decade of life. Stronger than the Phoenix Essence Pill he had created, it bypassed all

intermediaries, directly awakening the body's cells to unlock genuine longevity. Only the legendary Verdant Dew could do this.

Leander had read of it endlessly in ancient texts but had never witnessed it firsthand. Yet from her description, it seemed the spring truly flowed somewhere within this barren desert.

If he could locate it and immerse himself for seven days, his strength and cellular vitality would grow exponentially. He might even break through the Devourer Form and ascend to a far higher level.

Surprise flickered within him, but his expression betrayed nothing.

"You mean you're completely cut off from your bodyguards?" he asked, turning just enough to see her. The veil had lifted, revealing her delicate, tear-streaked face. Yet he remained impassive, his voice calm. "Since your bodyguards are out of reach, do you want to find safety first, or press on in search of the oasis?"

Leander studied her silently, weighing the possibility that the oasis she spoke of was the same secret site Celia had revealed to him.

Hesitation flickered in the woman's eyes. Fear had gripped her after being trapped in this endless desert, with death looming close more than once. Yet being saved rekindled hope, and her mind turned to her bedridden grandfather far away.

In Bladewick, the Snowbrooks were counted among the five most prestigious families, their reputation unrivaled and their wealth vast. Regrettably, the next generation—her parents—had proven unable to uphold the legacy.

Meanwhile, rival families prowled like predators, waiting for any slip. When her grandfather became ill, the Snowbrooks were assailed from all sides. United, several rival families drove the family fortune down by twenty percent. Her parents tried their best, but they were overwhelmed and forced to retreat.

That was why she had brought over twenty bodyguards into the deadly Sahar Wastes. She wanted to find the miraculous spring, save her grandfather, and give him ten more years to remain in power. Only then would the younger generation have time to grow and compete, instead of watching the Snowbrook family get swallowed whole.

What she had never foreseen was a sandstorm this rare. It separated the group, and she had nearly been buried alive.

After a short silence, she raised her head. Her eyes glinted with resolve, and her words rang firm and unwavering.

"Please, help me find the oasis. I'll pay any price you ask."

Her grandfather's illness weighed on her like a shadow. She had ceased worrying about herself and focused solely on finding the miraculous spring.

"Oh? All by yourself, and you haven't given up on that spring?"

Leander smirked slightly, his voice tinged with mockery. "You might want to think carefully. You're on your own-what if we're bad people? What if we do something to you and leave you here in the desert?"

The woman was far from naive. Her gaze held firm, and she smiled with quiet composure.

"If you intended to hurt me, I'd be helpless out here. But if you choose to work for me, the reward will surpass your expectations-enough to buy freedom and desire alike. I assume you both know how to make the right choice."

Leander showed no reaction, but his attention sharpened. Just moments ago, she had been desperate and drained; now, fed and restored, she, exuded the confidence, and control

of a masterful leader.

After a beat, he shook his head and chuckled.

"You're interesting, and fortune seems to favor you. The oasis you spoke of is likely my destination too. Since this is for your grandfather, you may come with us."

"Really?"

Her eyes lit up in surprise and joy. She hadn't expected him to agree so quickly, after just a few sentences.

"Let me be clear. We'll take you

there-nothing more. What happens

You're

after is none of our concern

on your own. The price is one million

Bladewick dollars, paid in full to my

driver. Any objections?"

A million was mere pocket change to the Snowbrooks. She was already thankful just

to be allowed to go with them.

She nodded briskly. "Just get me there, and once I can contact the outside world, I'll send the money immediately."

"Deal." He nodded slightly and signaled the driver to speed up.

Sand and dust exploded around the off-road vehicle as the driver slammed the pedal, propelling them forward.

The road ahead held nothing—no buildings, no oasis, no signs of life. Just endless desert. It felt as though they alone traversed an infinite wasteland.

Mile after mile, the scenery remained unchanged—an endless stretch of sand and gravel. Thirty minutes in, a wave of panic began to rise in the woman at the back.

"Where is it? Why can't we find it?"

Disappointment filled her eyes. She had arrived in the Sahar Wastes full of hope, yet now she wasn't sure the miraculous spring even existed.

The barren wasteland stretched endlessly before her, bringing with it a crushing sense of being lost. Not a trace of her former companions could be seen.

In that instant, Leander raised a hand, and the vehicle ground to a stop.

Rolling down the window, he squinted. A subtle glow sparked deep in his eyes. The swirling wind seemed alive, funneling toward his ears like whispered signals.

"Devourer's Ninefold Path: Hear the Wind Sing."

After a year and a half, he was finally using this nearly impossible-to-defend detection technique again.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 563[1,318 words]

Leander told the driver to pull over. Both Ophelia in the back seat and the driver found it strange, unsure what he was about to do.

They both looked at him.

Leander sat in the front, silent for a moment, as if weighing something in his mind. Then, he raised a hand and pointed decisively in one direction. "Go that way."

The direction he indicated was nothing but endless yellow sand. Ahead, sand and dust churned violently, far harsher than the other routes, with visibility that could disappear at any moment.

"Mr. Ashcroft, are you sure you want to go that way?" The driver was familiar with most of the desert routes. When he saw where Leander was pointing, his expression shifted, a flicker of fear crossing his face.

"That area is known by the locals as the Kiss of Death. There are hidden currents of quicksand everywhere. One wrong move and it will swallow you whole. Sand tornadoes often form there as well. Even locals who know this desert well avoid it. Mr. Ashcroft, could you be mistaken?"

Even though the people above had instructed him to follow Leander's orders without question on this desert expedition, doubt still crept in.

Money mattered, but his life mattered more.

In the desert, one wrong move can get everyone in the car killed. If we lose our lives, what is there left to enjoy?

"No mistake. Trust me. This way." Leander looked indifferent. His expression was flat and final, as if changing his mind was never an option.

The driver hesitated, his expression full of uncertainty, until Ophelia finally spoke up from the back seat. "Leander, are you sure you are not mistaken?"

Her eyes flickered with tension as she lowered her voice. "I remember this desert area. My team and I passed through here before. Even the guide we hired warned us that this region was strictly off-limits. Anyone who goes in risks death.

"And now you want us to drive straight through it. Are you seriously treating our lives like a joke?"

Leander did not even glance at her. He kept his eyes on the driver. "You were assigned to bring me here, and your orders were to follow everything I say. If I tell you to take that route, you take it. Do not worry. If anything happens, I will take full responsibility."

After that, he finally turned to Ophelia. "We are going this way. If you are uncomfortable or have concerns, you are welcome to leave. I will give you a portion of water and food."

The coldness in his words made Ophelia freeze for a moment. This guy...

She felt a surge of grievance well up inside her.

I am the precious daughter of the Snowbrooks from Bladewick. I am also a fashion jewelry designer. Not just any designer, but someone who leads the entire industry.

Additionally, I work part-time as a print model and have appeared on the covers of numerous weekly magazines. Wherever I go, I am polished, glamorous, and constantly in the spotlight.

Even if I strip away every title and bit of shine, I am still a breathtaking beauty. Men fall for me everywhere. And yet when Leander looks at me, it is like he is staring at a stranger-someone who has no connection to him.

Getting even a few extra words out of him feels like pulling teeth. I seriously start to wonder if the desert sun has been roasting me for too long. Perhaps my looks have actually taken a hit, and that is why he treats me this way.

"So, have you made up your mind?" Leander asked calmly. His gaze was deep, unreadable, and stripped of any evident emotion.

Ophelia glanced around at the endless stretch of yellow sand. Her heart jolted. She clenched her jaw, then made her decision. "Fine. I will go with you."

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Out here in this desolate desert, running into two other people had already felt like a miracle. If she had to face this wasteland alone again, she did not even want to imagine how bad it could get.

The road ahead was dangerous, no doubt. Still, three people traveling together was far better than one. At least they could watch each other's backs.

"Let's move." Leander did not hesitate for a second. He gave the driver a brief nod.

The driver gritted his teeth. Thinking of the massive payout waiting for him, he slammed on the accelerator. The off-roader roared forward and plunged straight into the swirling sea of sand.

The road ahead was completely buried. Visibility dropped to almost nothing. The wipers swept back and forth nonstop, yet they could not clear the sand blasting against the windshield.

Leander took in the scene and let out a faint, indifferent smile. He rested his palm against the passenger-side door. A surge of net

Primordial Energy spread, silently forming an invisible barrier, outward

around the off-roader. No matter

how violently the sand whipped

through the air, any grain that came

within a foot of the vehicle was

repelled by an unseen force.

The driver sensed that something was off, but he didn't dwell on it. He focused entirely on handling the off-roader. After half an hour of tense driving, they finally burst out of the storm zone.

"Phew." As the surroundings calmed, Ophelia let out a long breath. The chaos of flying sand and howling wind had genuinely shaken her. Her eyes flickered as she was about to speak, then her gaze suddenly froze.

About a kilometer ahead, a massive oasis came into view. Sandsong Oasis stood there in full clarity.

"Sandsong Oasis? That really is Sandsong Oasis? So, it actually exists!" Ophelia stared in disbelief before shouting in pure excitement, her expression lighting up with joy.

She had come all the way to the Sahar Wastes for this exact reason. She was searching for Sandsong Oasis and the spring of life hidden within it.

The driver also relaxed when he saw the oasis. As long as he delivered Leander here, his job was done.

The off-roader headed straight toward Sandsong Oasis. As they drew closer, more than a dozen figures emerged from the trees.

At the sight of them, Ophelia's excitement surged even higher. "It's them. Those are the bodyguards I hired!"

She spoke as she leaned out the window, waving vigorously at the people ahead.

More than a dozen burly men in long coats had noticed the scene as well. One of the younger men recognized Ophelia and lit up immediately, hurrying toward the off-roader with long strides.

"Ophelia? Is that really you?" He did not even wait for the vehicle to come to a complete stop before rushing to the back seat, reaching out as if to take her hand.

Ophelia instinctively leaned back, dodging his grasp. She still stepped out quickly and joined the others.

A flicker of awkwardness crossed the young man's expression. Around them, the dozen-plus guards Ophelia had hired closed in. Their weathered expressions made it obvious that after being scattered by the tornado, none of them had come through unscathed.

"Ms. Snowbrook, are you all right?" The lead guard looked at Ophelia with open concern. He had worked for the Snowbrooks for ten years and had always treated her like his own daughter.

When she was separated from them in the storm, he had blamed himself relentlessly.

"I'm fine, Evren. They saved me." Ophelia gestured behind her as Leander and the driver stepped out of the vehicle and walked over.

"Leander, let me introduce you. This

Ine

is Evren Westvale. He's the head of security hired by the Snowbrooks, and also my grandpa's personal bodyguard. She turned toward Leander, gratitude clear in her eyes, as she introduced the broad-shouldered man beside her.

Then, she opened her palm toward the handsome young man nearby. After a brief hesitation, she continued, "This is Cedric Montgomery, the heir of the Montgomerys from Bladewick. He's my "

Before the word "fiance" could leave her mouth, Leander cut her off with an

impatient wave of his hand. "You don't need to tell me who they are. I'm not interested. We've delivered you safely to Sandsong Oasis. The deal is done. Pay us what you owe.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 564[1,284 words]

"Time to pay up." Leander's blunt remark cut Ophelia off mid-sentence, the rest of her words dying in her throat.

She had been planning to introduce him properly. Everyone present was someone of status in Bladewick. Even Evren, just a bodyguard by title, was widely known there and carried real influence.

Leander had saved her. She intended to put in a good word for him, give him connections, and make things easier for him if he ever went to Bladewick. She never expected him to shut her down so coldly, killing the conversation with a single line.

Irritation surged in Ophelia's chest. Around them, expressions shifted one by one, expressions darkening. That one sentence had offended far too many people.

Cedric, most of all. His gaze turned heavy, edged with chill.

As the first heir of the Montgomerys from Bladewick, he was a genuine public figure. Paparazzi tracked his every move. Every gesture, every word, was fodder for newspapers and magazines.

From where I stand, Ophelia introducing me is already doing him a huge favor. And he turns around and says he has no interest in knowing who we are? That kind of arrogance is rare in Bladewick. Very few people dare speak to me in that manner.

Cedric looked straight at Leander and stepped forward, deliberately placing himself in front of Ophelia. "I do not care who you are. You saved Ophelia. Name your price, and I will pay it. Leave your car here. Once this is over, I will double the amount and add another half a million."

There was no attempt at courtesy in his voice. To him, Leander was nothing more than hired help, a driver for hire. In Cedric's opinion, money solved everything, and people like Leander were no exception.

"The deal was with her. As long as she pays what she owes, that's enough. Whatever you're offering, I'm not interested," Leander said.

Cedric had been confident Leander would jump at the offer. He never expected that cold, detached stare. Leander did not even bother to look at him. The proposed deal was dismissed with complete indifference.

"What did you just say?" Cedric's eyes narrowed as anger flared instantly.

As the heir of the Montgomery Family from Bladewick, he had come all the way to this desolate wasteland for a reason. He wanted Ophelia to see his sincerity. More than that, he was paving the way to marry her one day and secure the Snowbrooks' hundreds of billions in assets.

After arriving, he had assumed everything would go smoothly with more than twenty people at his command. Instead, the scorching desert heat came first, followed by the sudden sand cyclone. Only then did he truly understand the brutality of nature.

Cedric had already been holding back a mountain of frustration. Leander's detached attitude finally pushed him over the edge. "What did you say?" He stepped forward, glaring straight at Leander.

"Do you even know who I am? How much do you know about the Montgomery Family from Bladewick? And you think you can talk to me like this? Let me be clear. I came to you because I chose to. That was me giving you a reputation. And here you are, acting all high and mighty. Who do you think you are? Do you really think saving Ophelia once gives you the right to push your luck with me? Believe it or not, all it takes is one word from me. You will not drive that car anywhere, and you will not get a single cent."

Cedric's tone had turned openly hostile. His eyes narrowed further, sharp with unmistakable danger.

Even though Leander had brought Ophelia with him, nearly everyone here was on Cedric's payroll. A few men had been lost in the sandstorm earlier but Cedric still had more than a dozen people under his command.

Que word from him wow command

be

enough to have Leander and the off-roader surrounded and restrained.

Cedric had always thrown his weight around in Bladewick, bullying whoever he pleased. Out here in the wild desert, he no longer bothered pretending to be decent. Any sense of shame or restraint had been stripped away entirely.

"Oh? Is that so?" Leander stayed where he was. He lifted his gaze and gave Cedric a brief once-over, a faint, knowing smile tugging at his lips.

"You really want to push your luck?" Cedric's mouth curved into a cruel grin. He had a special fondness for people who didn't know when to back down. In a Sandsong Oasis like this, he had been bored out of his mind anyway. Teaching Leander a lesson sounded like excellent entertainment.

"Cedric, what are you doing?" Sensing the tension, Ophelia hurried forward and stepped between them. "Leander saved me. He was the one who brought me here. What is this attitude of yours?"

Cedric did not bother restraining himself. He let out a cold laugh. "My attitude? Ophelia, if he hadn't saved you, I would have dealt with him already. Who does he think he is, acting all high and mighty in front of me?"

He clearly did not take Leander seriously at all, his arrogance written all over his expression.

Ophelia knew Cedric's temperament all too well. She turned to Leander at once, her voice apologetic. "Leander, I'm really sorry. He's always been like this in Bladewick. Please don't take it to heart."

"Don't take it to heart?" Leander's eyes curved with a smile that never reached them. "So I'm supposed to swallow this and let him keep running his mouth in front of me?"

He lifted a finger and gave a slight shake, his lips set in a calm, indifferent expression. "I said before that taking you to Sandsong Oasis was part of our deal. That was then.

Now I've changed my mind. Dean guarantee one thing. You can search

this place all you want, but you won't

find anything you came here for.

That includes the spring of life you need to save your grandpa."

Leander's gaze was flat as he pointed straight at Cedric. "Ophelia, I've made myself

clear. If you want the spring of life, then make him disappear from my sight right

now. If you can't do that, then I'm sorry. Your little treasure hunt ends here."

Most of the time, Leander did not bother with people beneath his notice. Even a god, however, could feel anger. That did not mean

Saving Ophelia earlier had been

anyone was free to bark at her

nothing more than a sense of duty toward a fellow Astrian. Escorting her to Sandsong Oasis had been a matter of convenience. But the moment Cedric showed up, barking orders and issuing threats, even talking about seizing the off-roader by force, Leander had no intention of being polite anymore.

If even gods could lose their temper, how much more so someone like Leander, the Iron Sovereign. Usually, he ignored insignificant people simply because they were not worth a second glance. This time, he felt like stepping down hard, and there was nothing they could do to stop him.

"What? Did I hear that right?" Cedric's eyes flickered as he sneered. "You want me gone, and you want Ophelia to cut ties with me? Who do you think you are?" Leander did not spare him a look. His attention stayed on Ophelia. "I'll count to three. Tell me your decision. And don't make the mistake of thinking I'm joking. If I say you won't get what you want, then you won't get it."

"Haha!" Cedric burst out laughing, as if Leander were nothing but a joke. "What, you think you're some big shot in Astria? Or the president of Agylae? You think whatever you say just goes?"

Leander gave a faint, contemptuous smile. There was not the slightest ripple in his expression. "I'm not a big shot in Astria, and I'm not the president of Agylae. But here, my word is the rule."

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 565[1,226 words]

"My word is the rule!" Leander dropped the sentence like a hammer, and everyone froze for a moment, all eyes snapping to him.

It was such a simple line, but it carried this unshakable, almost untouchable swagger.

After a brief pause, Cedric laughed out loud. "Ha! What did you just say? Your word is the rule? Then I guess my word is a royal decree. Who do you think you are, thinking whatever you say just goes? You've been driving around the desert way too long. It's scrambled your brain."

Ophelia's eyes flickered, surprise written all over her expression. She had never expected Leander to speak like that.

Leander didn't even flinch at Cedric's mocking tone. He just looked at Ophelia. "You've got three seconds to decide."

Ophelia met his gaze, her expression shifting. Typically, Cedric's attitude was over the line, and he had no right to speak to Leander that way. But the Snowbrooks and the Montgomerys had been close for generations, and she was the pride of the Snowbrooks. On top of that, Cedric had traveled all the way with her to Sandsong Oasis in the Sahar Wastes, and there was no way she could make him leave.

She glanced at Leander and said softly, "Leander, don't take it this far. You saved me, and I'm grateful. I'll pay you every penny I promised. Let's just forget what happened earlier, okay?"

Leander didn't move. He just kept looking at her. Three seconds later, he nodded. "Time's up!" He shoved one hand in his pocket and scanned the crowd. "The treasure hunt is over. Nothing here belongs to any of you. You can turn around and leave."

Then he pointed at Ophelia, his voice cold. "That goes for you too."

Hearing the way Leander spoke, arrogant and self-assured as if he owned the entire situation, Cedric finally lost his patience.

He stepped forward, cutting straight past Ophelia, and pointed directly at Leander. "Kid, do you really think I would not touch you? You think I was joking with you earlier?"

Cedric did not hold back. He waved a hand sharply at the three burly men behind him. "You three. Take this brat and dump him in the desert. If anything happens, I will take full responsibility."

The three men were hired muscle to begin with. Once Cedric gave the order, they did not hesitate. They moved quickly toward Leander.

After seeing this, Ophelia tried to speak up and stop them, but Cedric stepped back to her side and grabbed her arm, lowering his voice. "Ophelia, I know he saved you, that part is true. But with an attitude like this, he has been asking for a lesson. Do not worry. I am just scaring him, teaching him some manners."

She hesitated. Thinking about Leander's blatant arrogance moments earlier, she could not help feeling that he had gone too far. In that brief hesitation, the three men were already standing in front of Leander, ready to move.

"Stop." At that moment, Evren, who had remained silent the entire time, finally spoke.

The moment Evren's voice carried across the scene, everyone froze. No one dared act out of line in front of the famed boxing great grandmaster of Bladewick, and even Cedric and Ophelia turned to look at him.

Evren stood with his hands behind his back, every bit the image of an esteemed master. He gave the three men a look and said calmly, "This young man saved Ms. Snowbrook. That makes him a benefactor of the Snowbrooks. Laying hands on a benefactor is deeply disrespectful."

Hearing this, the three men stepped back in shame. Evren then turned his gaze toward Leander.

"Hey, kid. That is just how Mr. Cedric

Qu

is. He was only joking earlier. When you said we should all turn back, I knew you were speaking out of anger. How about this? Do me a favor on this and let us both take a step back. Wait here for us. Once we get what we came for, we will hire your off-roader and leave together. The pay and the benefits will not disappoint you." His tone stayed polite and measured, and he sounded sincere enough. Still, there was an unquestionable sense of authority woven into his words, as if Leander had no real choice but to follow his arrangement.

As soon as Evren finished speaking, he turned to Cedric. "Mr. Cedric, let us leave it

at that. We are all in the desert together. We should be helping each other, not stirring up trouble at a time like this. If you truly have other intentions, wait until we are out of the desert. I will not interfere then. How does that sound?"

Cedric was arrogant and overbearing, someone who ran wild in Bladewick. Even so, he had heard of Evren's reputation since childhood.

Although Evren served publicly as a retainer of the Snowbrooks and appeared to be the personal bodyguard of Ophelia's grandfather, Celvon Snowbrook, he actually held an exceptionally high status. Within the Snowbrooks, his standing rivaled Celvon's. The two were close friends.

Back when he was young, Evren had received a great favor from Celvon. Because of that, he had stayed with the Snowbrooks for ten years, keeping to the shadows while guarding Celvon's safety.

Across all of Bladewick, Evren's status is no weaker than that of any great family head. I hear he is a Martial Sovereign. Not long ago, he even made the Astria Power Index and ranked twelfth. That

kind of standing is untouchable. If my grandpa were here, he would still have to address him as Mr. Westvale. How could I possibly act out of line?

When Evren spoke, Cedric immediately nodded. "Mr. Westvale, you are right. I will do as you say."

Seeing Evren step in, Ophelia finally let out a quiet breath of relief. She thought the matter would end there. Instead, Leander spoke again.

"Do you a favor?" A trace of disdain curled across Leander's expression as he looked straight at Evren. "And you think you are worthy of that?"

The moment those words fell, the calm on Evren's expression shattered. Ophelia, Cedric, and the others all stiffened in shock, their expressions turning pale.

Leander actually says that Evren isn't even worth showing him respect? He has to understand, this is Evren, the one whose name shakes all of Bladewick. Even the highest rulers in Bladewick treat him with proper respect. The heads of those great families all consider him their equal. At nearly ninety-nine percent of high-society banquets in Bladewick, everyone prides themselves on Evren's presence. And now, a young guy who looks no older than twenty actually dares to speak disrespectfully to Evren and claims Evren doesn't even deserve a little respect? We all think Leander has lost his mind.

"That guy really is a complete fool!" Cedric almost laughed out loud.

I mean to challenge Leander, sure, but since Evren speaks up, I have no choice but

to drop it. And now, Leander actually has the nerve to talk back to Evren, even saying something about whether he's qualified enough—this is just reckless.

At that moment, even Ophelia felt a deep sense of helplessness. She shook her head at Leander in silent disapproval, her irritation growing.

Evren was one of the Snowbrooks' honored elders, someone she respected above most. And now, seeing Leander act like this toward him, even after he had saved her life, she couldn't help being upset.

Evren's gaze narrowed, carrying a cold edge. "Young man, do you even know what it means to speak recklessly?"

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 566[1,451 words]

"Young man, do you even know what it means to speak recklessly?" Evren stared at Leander, his gaze turning cold.

Before this, he had held a certain respect for Leander for bringing Ophelia back and saving her. That was why, when Cedric confronted Leander, Evren had spoken up for him, hoping to calm things down. He hadn't expected, however, that Leander wouldn't just brush it off but would openly declare in front of everyone that he wasn't even worthy.

I am a Martial Sovereign, ranked among the elite on the Astria Power Index, with a fearsome reputation across the Astria martial world, standing at the very top. And yet, to be ignored entirely by some kid feels downright absurd.

Leander hadn't even considered him a threat. He just gave a mocking smile. "You're only an Advanced Martial Sovereign. Your cultivation can't even crack the top ten on the Astria Power Index, and now you've ended up as someone else's personal bodyguard. You've lost the heart of a Martial Practitioner. And yet, you dare to lecture me? Tell me how to handle things? Do you really think you have the right?"

Everyone around thought Leander's words were outrageously arrogant, like he looked down on the entire world. But Evren froze, struck dumb, his expression a mix of shock and disbelief.

I'm an Advanced Martial Sovereign, that's true. But I can't wrap my head around how he could judge my cultivation at a single glance.

"Who are you?" Inside, Evren felt his world flip over. His heart churned as he locked eyes with Leander, suddenly aware that the young man in front of him was anything but ordinary.

Leander did not answer. He simply lifted his gaze and looked toward the distant sky off to the side.

Evren was still trying to make sense of it when his ears twitched. A sharp tearing sound sliced through the air. He turned his head just in time to see two streaks of light racing in from the horizon, moving so fast they felt unreal, like supercars pushed past their limits. In the blink of an eye, they reached the edge of Sandson Oasis.

Ophelia, Cedric, and the others turned as well, their attention snapping to the same point in the sky.

One blue figure and one black figure came to a halt midair, standing effortlessly upon empty space. They were two elderly men with gentle expressions, carrying themselves with the quiet authority of immortals who had walked the mortal world for centuries.

None of them had ever seen anything like this. For a moment, even the brilliant Ophelia and the fearless Cedric, who ruled Bladewick without restraint, stood frozen in stunned silence.

When Evren saw who had arrived, he faltered briefly, then his expression lit up with uncontrollable joy. In front of everyone, he bent deeply at the waist and saluted them. "Greetings, Master Matthias. Greetings, Elder Tobey."

The others immediately turned to stare at Evren, shock written all over their expressions.

These two elders who have just arrived are actually connected to Evren? One is his Master Matthias, and the other is Elder Tobey.

Ophelia's gaze flickered, her heart shaken to the core.

Evren alone had once dominated Bladewick without a single defeat, ruling by sheer force of his fists and rising into an elite figure both revered and feared. She had seen it with her own eyes. From more than ten feet away, Evren struck a bronze cauldron with a bare palm and sent it sliding three meters across the ground. He had flipped a sedan weighing several tons with one hand, just like a martial world master ripped straight out of a TV drama.

And yet, the two elderly men standing in the sky were on an entirely different level. They stepped through empty air and pressed down on the heavens themselves, a sight so shocking it defied description. If Evren had not warned her beforehand, she would almost have bent at the waist in instinctive respect.

High above, the two elderly men gave Evren a brief nod, signaling for him to rise. Then, together, they turned their attention toward the depths of Sandsong Oasis, a trace of delight flashing in their eyes.

"Such abundant spiritual energy. This really is a treasured land," the elder in blue said, His gaze deep and contemplative, tinged with quiet awe.

"Indeed. If not for a passerby who happened to spread the word earlier, who would have imagined that within the Sahar Wastes Desert, a place like the Westeria Divine Vault could exist at all?" The elder in black nodded, unmistakable pleasure in his voice.

We only come because we receive word from Evren that Verdant Dew might exist here. Otherwise, why would people like us, old recluses who have long withdrawn from the world, travel thousands of miles just to gather in this place?

"Ms. Snowbrook, these two are the Grandmaster of the Bulwark Sect lineage and the Elder in charge of transmission. This is my master, Matthias, and Elder Tobey. Come and pay your respects."

Evren shot Ophelia a meaningful look. She immediately stepped forward and bowed, her posture respectful as she addressed the two figures in the sky. "I am Ophelia Snowbrook. It is an honor to meet you both, seniors."

"Ophelia Snowbrook?"

Both of them turned their attention to her. The elderly man in blue spoke first. "Your aura feels similar to that brat Kivon Snowbrook's. If I am not mistaken, you should be his granddaughter. The last time I saw him was fifty years ago. Back then, he had only just started to make a name for himself in Bladewick Now in the blink of an eye, you are already past thirty. Fifty years really do pass like nothing at all."

Ophelia's expression shifted as she listened. Shock rippled across her expression, followed by pure disbelief.

Kivon is my grandfather. He is seventy-five now, yet this old man casually calls him a brat and says the last time he saw him was fifty years ago. How am I supposed not to be stunned by that?

Her expression was stricken with panic, and her voice dropped a few octaves. "Since you know my grandpa, I beg you, please show mercy and find him a sip of the spring of life to extend his life. I would be forever grateful!" She finished speaking, bowing low with sincerity.

"Little girl, stand up. Kivon and I share some roots in the Bulwark Sect. Now that we're here, we won't let Kivon die in vain. You'll come with us. And as for the spring of life Kivon needs, it's réfinitely inside Sandsong Qasis. But remember this once you take the spring of life, you leave immediately. No secrets about this place can get out, or you will die without mercy. Understand?"

As the blue-robed elder finished speaking, a wave of murderous intent crashed down like a tidal wave. The bodyguards below, all former special forces, shivered. Ophelia and Cedric turned pale, nodding quickly.

The two elders descended from above. They passed right by Leander without so much as a glance, treating him like an insignificant insect, moving forward without a

care.

"Evren, take your people and follow. The Sandsong Oasis is crawling with danger. You'll only be safe near us," the blue-robed elder instructed. Evren nodded and gathered Ophelia and the others behind them, ready to enter the oasis.

Leander, meanwhile, found himself completely isolated, ignored by everyone. Ophelia only gave him a brief glance before turning away, unwilling to interact with him at all. A woman from a business family was naturally cold and self-interested.

Before, Leander could still be useful to her, so she had spoken politely, begged, and coaxed him. But now, with two unimaginable Transcendents present and willing to lead her to the spring of life, she wouldn't waste another word on him.

The two elders led the way, stepping toward the heart of the Sandsong Oasis, when suddenly Leander's voice rang out. "Stop!"

The two elders immediately paused and turned, their eyes icy. Evren's pupils contracted sharply, his expression darkening. "Young man, I don't know who you are. Maybe you have some connections in the martial world, maybe there are elders in your family who walk that path. But this is not a place for you to act recklessly.

"I could forgive your earlier rudeness,

but these two are my Master Matthias and Elder Tobey. They are the pinnacle of the Bulwark Sect, standing as Infernal Crown

Transcendents in this partial

know anything about the world, you should understand what an Infernal Crown Transcendent means. Do you really intend to stop us?"

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Leander's gaze was calm. Then he cracked a grin. "Infernal Crown Transcendent?"

In the next instant, he swung his arm and unleashed a palm strike.

Boom!

The ground shook violently. A massive chasm tore open, cutting off everyone from the Sandsong Oasis, forming what looked like a natural chasm from heaven itself.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 567[1,384 words]

Boom!

Leander just swung his arm lightly, but the air itself erupted like a riot. It was as if some invisible, massive whip had slammed straight down from the sky, striking the path right in front of the two elders.

The sound was deafening. A trench ripped open before everyone, wide as ten feet, plunging deep for several yards, stretching a full fifty meters across their path.

Every single person shuddered at that moment, their expressions frozen in sheer terror. Even the driver who had brought Leander there earlier just stood there, stunned, his jaw practically dropping.

What kind of move is this?

Cedric, Ophelia, and the others just froze, their eyes locked on the long chasm ahead. Nobody could get a word out. Even the bodyguards around them went completely stiff, standing there like statues.

Evren, whose cultivation had reached the Martial Sovereign Realm and who had climbed onto the Astria Power Index just last month, felt his gaze tremble. It landed squarely on the two elders standing in front of him. He knew too well what a single strike like that meant.

The two elders, dressed in black and blue, stood before them, their pupils constricting at that very moment. When they first arrived, they hadn't even paid Leander any attention. They hadn't even noticed him. They had no idea this place was hiding a Supreme Grandmaster.

Leander just flicked his arm, and suddenly a fierce wind whipped past them. Before they even had time to react, a massive chasm appeared out of nowhere. They knew deep down that even if either of them had attacked, they could never have caused this kind of destruction.

The young man standing beside them clearly had cultivation far beyond theirs. "You can try. Take one more step forward," Leander said, one hand in his pocket, tilting his head slightly. Coldness dripped from every line of his expression. Before, everyone had laughed at Leander, thinking his words were a joke. It had seemed ridiculous. But now, there was nothing but silence. Cedric, who had mocked Leander before, felt a lump in his throat. Twenty people in the room and not a single one dared to move forward, not even the two elders whose cultivation had reached the Transcendent realm. They all froze in place.

The two elders turned to look over at Leander, their expressions grave. They both bowed slightly and clasped their fists in respect.

"I didn't expect an esteemed master to be present. I am Matthias Falkenberg of the Bulwark Sect, and this is my junior, Tobey Bennett. May I ask your honored name?" The blue-robe elder's words were polished and courteous, carrying the air of wandering scholars from the martial world.

Leander didn't really say much. He just shrugged and went, "I'm from the Ashcrofts."

"The Ashcrofts?"

Both of the armored masters blinked. Then it hit them, or something, and their expressions completely changed.

Not long ago, didn't a Supreme Grandmaster from the Ashcrofts do something absolutely massive out in the Sahar Wastes? Considering their age and power, the only young person in the world from the Ashcrofts whose cultivation even tops ours is just one.

The two of them immediately bowed low to Leander, their previous tension melting into sheer reverence and awe as they lowered their heads in respect. "So it's the Iron Sovereign in person. Greetings, Sovereign Ashcroft!"

Cedric and the others at the back froze on the spot. Cedric had never taken Leander seriously. In his eyes, Leander was just a minor figure who could be crushed without a second thought. A little effort on his part could have sent Leander into oblivion. Yet now, these two beings, like immortals walking the earth, bowed and lowered themselves before Leander. That alone spoke volumes about the sheer terror of Leander's status.

After Matthias and Tobey spoke, Evren reacted instantly. He dropped to one knee before Leander. "Greetings, Sovereign Ashcroft. It was my blindness before. Any offense I caused, I beg your forgiveness!"

He looked like a child caught in trouble, expression pale with fear, legs trembling as if he were a criminal about to be judged.

Leander didn't acknowledge Matthias or Tobey. His gaze settled coldly on Evren. "Now, you know who I am?"

Evren hurriedly nodded, bowing his head over and over. "Yes, yes. I had no idea who I was dealing with just now!"

Leander sneered, a hint of mockery in his expression. "Do you want me to go easy on you?"

Cold sweat ran down Evren's face. His chest sank completely, and he shook his head frantically. "Sovereign Ashcroft, you're joking. I would never dare."

Even as one of the top Martial Sovereigns on the Astria Power Index, highly respected and extremely powerful, Evren was nothing compared to Leander. Compared to Leander, he was just a tiny spark next to that brilliance.

Not even considering Leander's current strength, just by the Astria Power Index alone, he was untouchable at the very top. No one had managed to shake his throne.

Listening to the exchange, Matthias' chest tightened. He shot Evren a dissatisfied glance before turning to Leander. "Sovereign Ashcroft, my ungrateful disciple, has offended you. It's my failure as a master. Please, grant him your mercy. Once we leave the desert, I will make him come to you in person, to bow and beg for your forgiveness."

A Martial Sovereign was like a

dragon, untouchable and proud. The Transcendent Realm was godlike, beyond any mockery. And Leander stood even above it all, untouchable on his throne in the clouds. Offending him meant nothing less than complete humiliation. Even if it meant Evren had to cut off an arm to make amends, it was nothing out of the ordinary.

"I don't need anyone apology. Just make sure you heard me clearly!" Leander's gaze was cold and detached. "I said it already. Everything here belongs to me. No one is allowed to set foot in Sandsong Oasis. Anyone who dares to enter-kill them!"

When that last word left his mouth, the whole room felt like an icy chill had descended from above. It was as if they were suddenly trapped inside a frozen tomb. Even the two Infernal Crown Transcendent standing there had their expressions change drastically, and their hearts grew heavy.

"Sovereign Ashcroft, this Sandsong Oasis is part of the Westerian Divinity Vault. After the Bulwark Sect obtained the intel, we already had a plan in place to enter. We're here on Master alor's orders to seek treasure. If those people have ever offended you, I can clear them out with a single strike. All I ask is for you to do us this favor and let the two of us in."

As for the others, Matthias and Tobey didn't care one bit. All they wanted was to get inside and secure the treasure the sect needed. Their mission had two purposes: treasure hunting and scouting for Master Valor of the Bulwark Sect. People like Ophelia were just along for the ride. They didn't matter.

"Impossible!" Leander waved a finger lightly. "I never go back on my word. I said no one enters. That won't change. This path is closed. Go back!"

His firm tone caught Tobey and Matthias off guard. They exchanged a glance, and their eyes darkened. The politeness was fading from their expressions. "Sovereign Ashcroft, we respect you as a living legend, so we're asking politely. But you want to stop us from seeking treasure with just a word. Isn't that a little too extreme?" Leander didn't flinch. "I've always been extreme. What are you going to do about it?"

Matthias and Tobey were stunned. They clearly hadn't expected him to answer like that. Leander held the top spot in the International Combat Units. After the King Phase Rankings reopened, he was the only Supreme Grandmaster listed, capable of taking down ten supersonic fighters in a row. With him saying that, they didn't dare force their way in.

But not daring to force their way in didn't mean they were afraid of him. Matthias eyes went cold as he spoke again, "Sovereign Ashcroft you're a living legend. We all admire that. But your extreme methods are

hard for us to accept. Your cultivation tras reached the King Phase, and we know we can't match you. But the Bulwark Sect has King Phase too."

As soon as he finished, a sonic boom tore through the distant sky. A streak of light shot toward them at a speed the naked eye could barely track.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 568[1,384 words]

A streak of light shimmered with a faint red glow as it descended straight from the sky, speeding rapidly toward the oasis.

Cedric, Ophelia, and the others all looked up. In barely ten seconds, the light had already stopped above them, transforming into a figure with bare arms.

It was a middle-aged man.

His arms gleamed with a bronze-like sheen, and though his face showed no anger, his eyes carried an imposing authority. He was tall and powerfully built, and just by standing there, he gave off a crushing presence, heavy as a mountain pressing down on them, like Mount Everest bearing down from above.

"It's the former sect master!"

As the man descended, Matthias and Tobey both clasped their fists and bowed in respect, their voices filled with reverence.

"Master Valor!" Evren bowed deeply as well, his face full of excitement.

This man was the legend of the Bulwark Sect, a super figure who had once shaken the world. He was also the former sect master of the Bulwark Sect!

Ever since Evren joined the Bulwark Sect, he had often heard the elders speak of the former sect master's stories. From Matthias alone, he had heard more than a dozen legendary tales about him.

This man was a true powerhouse from a hundred years ago. He once served as the personal guard of the kingdom of Orenthall Empress Dowager, protecting the royal family.

He had even used his own flesh and blood to withstand steel warships and heavy artillery without suffering the slightest injury, striking fear into western nations. In fact, countless western experts had been defeated by his hands.

He had also survived the War of the King Phase, becoming one of the very few eastern King Phases, a clear testament to his terrifying strength.

Evren assumed that meeting this legend would require the right opportunity. He never imagined that the man would appear here instead.

The middle-aged man floated in the air, nodded slightly to Matthias and the others, then swept his gaze across the area before stopping on Leander, a hint of surprise flashing in his eyes.

His legacy began a century ago. His insight far surpassed that of Matthias and Tobey, who were merely Infernal Crown Transcendents. With a single glance, he sensed that Leander's physical body was extraordinary, radiating a strange and powerful aura. Even his own steel body, tempered through a hundred years of cultivation, faintly felt threatened.

"And who might you be?" he asked, taking the initiative.

Before Leander could answer, Matthias spoke first. "Master Valor, this is the most renowned legendary martial artist of the present era—Jeff Ashcroft, also known as Sovereign Ashcroft!"

"Is that so?" The man's gaze paused, and a look of surprise appeared on his face. "So you are the famous, undefeated Sovereign! I am Darian Valor, head of the Bulwark Sect. My apologies for the lack of courtesy."

He took the initiative to clasp his fists and salute Leander. If he had met Leander just a week earlier, he would have found it nothing special at all—at most, he might have simply nodded in acknowledgment.

Leander had risen to first place on the world combat power rankings, but in the eyes of a King Phase existence from a hundred years ago like Darian, that list was little more than child's play, lightweight and meaningless. Even with Leander ranked number one, Darian still believed he fell far short of their generation.

However, news soon spread that Leander had single-handedly wiped out ten supersonic fighter jets, shaking the entire world. That level of strength was

something even some King Phase experts from a century ago had never achieved.

It meant that Leander had truly entered the ranks of the world's top-tier powerhouses. Even Darian had to treat him as an equal and did not dare show the slightest arrogance.

A hint of surprise appeared on Leander's face. "A King Phase?"

He had not expected the Bulwark Sect to still have a King Phase. And this was not a newly advanced, unstable King Phase like Neil. Darian had fully entered the King Phase, his foundation solid and complete.

The two were not comparable at all. Even with ten Neils around, he wasn't a match for Darian.

Seeing Leander's expression, Matthias and Tobey secretly laughed to themselves. They thought Leander had begun to feel wary of Darian, so Matthias immediately spoke up.

"Sovereign Ashcroft, it seems like Master Valor intends to enter the Westorian Divinity Vault and seek its treasures. You are both peak experts of this era. If the two of you join forces, you will surely gain enormous rewards! The both of us shall follow your orders. What do you think?"

Matthias was filled with confidence. Now that Darian had appeared, he was certain Leander would no longer be as forceful as before. Both were King Phase experts, after all. Leander could no longer rely on sheer strength to overpower them.

Suddenly, Leander let out a light chuckle. "Do you think you can enter the oasis just because another King Phase has arrived?"

A sharp, mocking curve formed on Leander's lips, filled with contempt. "So what if a King Phase expert comes in person? As I've said before, no one else is allowed to enter the oasis, and I'll stick to it. Even the former sect master of the Bulwark Sect is no exception!"

The spiritual energy within the oasis surged sky-high. Leander had long sensed that something he needed was hidden inside. In the path of cultivation, it had always been survival of the strongest. Treasure lands were no exception, and only the capable deserved them. It was cruel by nature.

Darian wanted to take a share of it, whereas Leander would never agree. Hearing this, Darian's expression shifted slightly, his face darkening. "Sovereign Ashcroft, what exactly do you mean?"

Leander did not hesitate, only wagging a finger at him. "Very simple," he said. "No one is allowed to step into the oasis, including you. Whoever enters without permission shall die."

Darian's pupils shrank sharply, and the hands he had clasped in salute to Leander earlier now fell slowly to his sides. "I've long heard that you dominate the present age, arrogant beyond measure. Seeing you today, it seems like they've downplayed how cocky you are. It's a shame, truly."

He stood suspended in midair, his gaze icy. "Jeff, you are indeed a legend of this era, I'll give you that. But just because you can face an army alone, doesn't mean you are truly invincible under heaven. You know far too little about King Phase experts from a hundred years ago."

He stared straight at Leander and continued, "You and I are both the strongest of Astria, both peaks of Eastern forces. We should not be enemies. But if you block me from entering the treasure vault, have no want to cross hands with me here, in this endless desert?"

other choice. Do you want

He was determined to claim the treasures within.

With Leander present, he was willing to enter together and take what each deserved. But Leander wanted to keep everything for himself, so how could Darian possibly accept that?

Darian was known as 'The

Siegeborn' who roamed the world

for over a hundred years and had never feared anyone. Even in the era when King Phase experts ruled absolutely, he had still stood firm, surviving the great King Phase battles and becoming one of the very few Eastern King Phases left alive. Without true strength, how could that have been possible?

Leander might have shot down supersonic fighter jets, but Darian knew well that it had been done by catching them off guard. He admired it, but it was not enough to inspire fear. Back then, with

weakened body, he himself had

faced Western invaders head-on, smashing through fifteen ocean warships with flesh and blood alone. Compared to Leander, he was no less formidable.

For this rising junior to try to exclude him from the treasure vault was nothing less

than a challenge to his century-old King Phase authority.

Leander might be the sole King Phase at the top of today's rankings, but he was still

a newcomer—a junior among juniors.

There was no way Darian would back down.

"A battle here in the dunes?" Leander swept his gaze over the endless yellow sand around them, then suddenly broke into a grin. "Why not?"

As his words fell, he wasted no more breath. He raised his hand and threw a punch.

In an instant, sand and stones exploded into the air, and the world itself seemed to lose its color.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 569[1,355 words]

Leander threw a punch, fast and clean. The force behind it exploded like a violent storm, hammering forward from the center of his fist without holding anything back. There was a deep, thunderous blast.

A blood-chilling scream tore through the air, completely drowned out by the raging wind. Everyone felt the pressure crash into them like a tidal wave. Then, right in front of Darian, the air warped into a visible dent shaped like a fist-like a barrier had slammed down between them and Darian, splitting the world in two.

Darian's eyes shifted. His expression flickered with surprise, maybe even disbelief. He hadn't expected Leander to actually hit him. Let alone do it without a second thought.

The power from that punch cracked the sky. But instead of flinching, Darian stood his ground and countered with a punch of his own.

No theatrics. No extra flash. Just raw power from his body. The air right in front of him collapsed into a vacuum as the pressure blasted out. The two punches collided with the impact of warheads detonating. The wind went wild, kicking up a wall of sand so high it nearly blocked the sky.

Back at Yelem Church, even Neil—a newly ascended King Phase—had been knocked dozens of yards back from a direct punch from Leander. But Darian? He didn't budge. He absorbed that punch like it was nothing.

That tiny move spelled out the gap between him and Neil louder than words ever could. There was no comparing a century-hardened King Phase to one who had just broken through.

Ophelia, Cedric, and the others could barely keep their eyes open with the wind and sand cutting across their faces, but it didn't matter. The power radiating off Leander and Darian was impossible to miss.

Ophelia's eyes trembled.

Leander had saved her back in the middle of this cursed desert, and she'd been grateful. But in her mind, he was just some good-looking young guy who happened to pass by.

She never imagined he'd be standing toe-to-toe with the previous leader of the Bulwark Sect—a man even she and Cedric wouldn't dare speak casually to.

And yet here he was, facing him down like it was nothing, commanding a terrifying amount of power. She couldn't even process what she was seeing.

Darian blocked the blow with one arm, face locked in a hard scowl. His eyes were cold and unreadable. "Jeff, you're way too full of yourself!"

His voice was like ice. He wasn't just anyone. He was the legendary head of the Bulwark Sect in the past. Former Imperial Commander. The very same man who used to stand at the right hand of royalty. In his prime, Western elites used to panic at the mere mention of his name.

But Leander hadn't shown him the slightest bit of respect. He'd attacked without hesitation. That was nothing short of a challenge to everything Darian stood for.

It had been over a hundred years since he'd been in a real fight. Across both the East and West, barely anyone dared throw hands with him anymore.

And yet, Leander was the first one in a century to do exactly that.

"I already said it. Anyone who lays a hand on the Oasis dies! And besides, I've been dying to see for myself what makes a century-old King Phase so special."

Leander's voice was calm, even casual. But behind his eyes, a wild spark of battle-lust lit up like fire.

Even Darian froze when he saw it.

"Jeff, you and I are both Astria elites. Both Eastern King Phases. We should be fighting side by side, not going at each other's throats.

"This Westerian Divinity Vault? You and I are the only King Phases in the area. We could both go in, take what we need, boost our power. Everyone wins.

"So, why are you so set on throwing down with me in the middle of this desert?"

A hundred years ago, Darian wouldn't have wasted a second. He would've thrown down with Leander without saying a word, no matter who he was or what his background looked like.

But a century of growth and the bloodbath that was the last King Phase war had changed him. He wasn't some royal brute anymore. He understood what actually mattered now. He didn't start fights with strong opponents unless there was no other choice.

And the truth was, he didn't see a good reason to fight Leander. They were on the same side, both Eastern forces. Was one vault really worth it?

But Leander didn't flinch. He took a step forward.

"Then, don't fight me. Just grab your people and all those guys from Bladewick and get out of here. This vault belongs to me."

If anyone in a movie had said something like that, they'd be cast as the main villain for sure. But right now, in this moment, Leander said it like it was just another fact. No rage. No pride. Just cold indifference in his voice.

This was the world of power. Only the strong had a voice. Only the ones with the hardest fists got to make the rules.

And Leander didn't just have strength. He had the guts to use it. Even if a century- old King Phase wanted a piece of something he claimed, he wasn't backing down an inch.

"Jeff, are you really choosing to go against me?"

Darian's face darkened all the way. He'd been trying to talk sense into him, but Leander wouldn't budge. Leander's patience he'd built up over

hundred years started to wear

thin.

The bronze tone of his skin began to ripple as his muscles bulked up

beneath it.

"If you're that stubborn, then how about we make a bet? You and I fight. No death match. Just a clean contest."

He jumped down to the ground and drew a line behind him with one hand. Then, he walked twenty meters forward, stopping with the line directly behind him.

He faced Leander head-on.

"Jeff, you want the treasure? Fine. I'll give you a shot.

"I'm standing right here. All you have to do is push me back past that line. If you can

do that, I won't touch the vault. I'll even guard it for you and make sure no one else gets close.

"But if you can't, then you lose. Same conditions. Deal?"

He looked Leander dead in the eye and opened his hand, waiting.

"A bet?" Leander grinned. "If you want to gamble, then let's do it. If I can't knock you past that line, I won't take a single step into that vault."

Matthias, Tobey, and the others all gasped. Their faces went pale.

These two monsters-top-tier powerhouses of their time—were actually making a bet like this in the middle of nowhere. No one could breathe. The air felt like it was about to freeze solid.

In front of everyone, Leander slowly raised his hand. His long, pale fingers opened, then curled into a tight fist.

"If we're betting, there should be limits. "I'll throw one punch. If that one punch doesn't settle it, I'll walk away."

As the words left his mouth, a swirl of blue light lit up around his knuckles. His joints cracked with sharp little snaps, one after another. The energy in the air surged around him like a storm drawn into his orbit.

To everyone watching, Leander

looked like a spear aimed at the sky. His energy cut straight through the atmosphere like a knife. It was like he didn't even exist in the same world as them anymore. His eyes lit up, glowing like a divine weapon. Content

Trinity Strike Technique: Earthshaker.

He pulled his fist back-then drove it forward.

There was a violent crash.

In that split second,

Darian-century-old King Phase and former Imperial

powerhouse-snapped to full alert.

His pupils shrank. His face hardened his muscles surged, swelling beneath his skin like steel walls locking into place. His arms came up, crossing tight in front of him.

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Another blast rang out.

Leander's devastating punch landed clean against Darian's forearms.

A sharp grinding screech cut through the air as Darian's feet dug into the sand.

The sheer force shoved him backward. After a few tense seconds, the energy finally dissipated and the world fell quiet again.

Everyone looked back at Darian. And when they saw what had happened, every face froze.

The heel of Darian's foot had just tapped that line. Not by much. Just half an inch over.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 570[1,228 words]

The Valor name had produced some of the fiercest warlords in Astria's history. But two stood above the rest.

The first was Nautilus Valor, a commander from a humble farming family during the Warring States Era.

He was the founding figure of the Bulwark Sect. His strength was beyond belief. Back in the Warring States Era, he'd taken on the First Empire's Cavalry with nothing but his bare hands and didn't even break a sweat. He took down miles of First Empire's land in a single night. Tens of thousands of First Empire's soldiers fled in panic. Even Geoffrey Kenzington, the man who'd killed millions of enemies alone, praised him as unmatched.

The second was Warsong Valor, the final shield of Odin Collins during the End Years. A one-man army who could block ten thousand troops, a fighter so fierce he was said to rival the Trinity Empire's top general, Bruce Landmark.

And Darian? He was the most legendary Valor descendant in the past hundred years. The Bulwark Sect's one-in-a-century prodigy. His power nearly caught up with the old master Nautilus himself. People called him "the Iron Wall." His mastery over body-enhancement techniques let him stop a speeding train with just his hands. He could take down Western warships and artillery using only brute force.

But now, that same living legend had just been knocked back by a rising star. A young fighter who looked no older than twenty.

He'd been forced back twenty yards. His feet carved two deep lines into the desert, dragging across the sand until his heel hit the line. One inch over.

But that inch sealed the match.

Darian raised his arms. They were still shaking. He turned and looked behind him. His gaze narrowed the second he caught that heel mark stretching just beyond the line.

"You lost."

Leander stood dozens of yards away, slowly lowering his fist. His voice was calm.

"I lost?"

Darian stood there, stunned. His expression kept shifting. But after a few seconds, his face settled, and a strange smile crept in.

"You really are something, Sovereign Ashcroft. I clearly underestimated you."

His voice dipped as he continued. "Half a month ago, I had a brief meeting with the Dragon Emperor. He told me the future of Astria's martial world—the future of the Eastern King Phases—would belong to you. I thought he was overselling it. But after that punch today, I finally get it.

"I've known the Dragon Emperor for almost a hundred years. Not once have I heard him praise someone from the younger generation. Jeff, you're the first.

"You've earned that title of 'living legend.' No doubt about it."

Every word he said came straight from the heart. His Iron Body might not have reached the god-level being threshold, but once it had reached its peak, he'd become almost completely untouchable. Unless it was something specifically designed to break through heavy armor, bullets and explosives couldn't even scratch him.

With Primordial Energy reinforcing him, he was like a steel tower rooted deep in the earth. Even a speeding sports car wouldn't have been able to move him an inch.

But Leander's punch had hit like a tectonic shift. All that strength compressed into a single blow. Brutal. Precise. Overwhelming. Darian had thrown all his Primordial Energy into defense, and he still got sent flying twenty yards.

That punch alone proved Leander's power.

Darian bowed again.

"I lost this bet fair and square.

"And I honor my word. I won't step into that vault. I'll stay right here and guard the entrance. No one gets in."

Matthias and Tobey could barely believe what they were hearing. Their eyes widened in disbelief.

This was the same immortal legend from the Bulwark Sect. The same former elite of the old imperial court. Even in the King Phase war, he'd never lost a fight. He once took on three King Phases with just his body and came out the other side with his reputation stronger than ever.

But now, Leander had thrown one punch—and he conceded. It may have been just a bet, but for men like them, who had always treated Darian like a god, it still felt surreal.

The two of them exchanged a glance. Then they both looked at Leander. The fear in their eyes was unmistakable.

For the first time, they understood what it meant to be a "living legend." Even a century-old King Phase couldn't stand against him.

Darian had admitted defeat without hesitation. And Leander didn't gloat. In fact, his respect for Darian only grew.

Of all the powerful figures he'd met,

few had the same strength of character, The coldness in Leander's eyes softened a little. "It was just a bet. It has nothing to do with strength As for who's stronger wel figure that out some other day."

He turned and started walking toward the oasis. His voice carried back.

"Hold the line for me. Anyone who tries to break in-kill them on sight." That last sentence was aimed at everyone in the area. Ophelia had still been clinging to hope, but the moment she heard that, her face turned pale and she froze.

Back when Leander gave her the choice-cut ties with Cedric and make him leave —she thought he was just lashing out. She hadn't taken it seriously.

But now, a world-class powerhouse had just promised to stand guard for Leander without asking for anything in return. The shift in tone was beyond jarring.

As Leander walked past, she instinctively stepped sideways to put distance between herself and Cedric.

Then she walked up beside Leander, eyes pleading, posture low, and her voice soft. "Leander... no Sovereign Ashcroft my grandfather

seriously ill. He's in pain every single day. The spring of life is the only thing that can save him. Please... I'm begging you. Let me go in with you.

"My whole family-everyone in the Snowbrook estate-would be eternally grateful. Whatever it costs, we'll pay it."

She might have been grateful to Leander before, but she'd still carried herself like

the proud little heiress of the Snowbrook family, always with a trace of arrogance in her voice.

But now, all of that pride was gone. She looked more like a helpless girl, just praying Leander would show her some mercy.

"I already gave you a chance. Too bad you made the wrong call."

Leander glanced at her, eyes cold, and walked right past her without pausing.

She had made her choice. The consequences were hers to carry.

This was what real power looked like. If the one standing here today wasn't Leander

but just some ordinary guy, Cedric would've crushed him without blinking. He

would've thrown him into the desert to die.

But too bad for Cedric. He ran into Leander.

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Leander kept walking toward the entrance of the oasis. During that time, Cedric shrank back like a scared bird, hiding among more than a dozen security guards, trying his hardest to disappear before Leander noticed him.

It was the first time in his life he'd ever felt real fear.

Just when he thought Leander was going to let him off, Leander turned around. His

eyes, deep and dark, locked onto Cedric's face.

"You were gonna have someone dump me in the desert?"

Leander's voice cut through the silence. Then he raised a hand and pressed down lightly.

There was a sudden, crushing blast of force.

Cedric was slammed straight into the sand, leaving behind a person-sized crater. His body was already reduced to shattered bones and pulp.

"Tell the Montgomery family they're welcome to come for revenge. Anytime."

With those words, Leander stepped into the oasis, leaving behind a crowd of stunned faces frozen in terror.