

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 702[1,398 words]

Chapter 702 Unexpected Visit to the Bar

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Downtown, at Ironwood Bar, Leander had just changed into his work uniform when the bar owner walked toward him.

The owner was a young woman with a pretty face.

She had some connections with underground figures around Downtown, so things had always gone smoothly for her here. Almost no one dared to cause trouble in the bar, and business was good.

"Leander, move a little faster. Finish cleaning up, we're about to open. It's the weekend, so there'll be more customers than usual."

She called out to him as he stepped out of the changing room.

"Got it, boss."

Leander smiled lightly and didn't mind.

This was his life now-calm and simple.

He had been here for almost a month, and he was already used to being ordered around.

He hadn't touched his huge fortune at all.

-Aside from renting an apartment when he first arrived in Highcrest, he hadn't spent a single cent of it. Everything he ate came from what he earned working here part-time. Leander swung the mop and carefully cleaned the bar floor.

Three hours had passed in the blink of an eye. It was already 7:30 p.m., and customers had started to come in.

After working nonstop for three hours, he finally found a moment to rest. He was about to head back to the changing room to fix his clothes when the boss' voice rang out again.

"Leander, table twenty-three is ready to order. Go take care of them."

The boss clearly treated him like cheap labor, but Leander didn't care. He just nodded and walked over.

Table twenty-three was in the center area. It was spacious and close to the middle of the bar. Four lively young girls were sitting there.

1/5

16:51 Thu, May 14

47

Chapter 702 Unexpected Visit to the Bar

"What would you like to drink?"

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He leaned slightly forward and was about to hand them the menu when one of the girls suddenly stood up and smiled at him.

"Bring us a case of beer, a plate of sunflower seeds, a plate of peanuts, and a fruit platter."

When Leander heard her voice, his eyes narrowed slightly. He felt a bit surprised. Even though she wore big, black-framed glasses and had changed her hair color, he recognized her at a glance.

It was Rachel, the campus beauty of Ember University.

She was standing right in front of him now, smiling brightly. Even though she had disguised herself, it meant nothing to him.

He found it a little strange.

Three hours ago, he had just parted ways with Billy and her. After dinner, they should have gone to places like karaoke or a club.

Why is she here?

Rachel seemed to notice his confusion and smiled as she explained.

"This afternoon, thanks to you and Billy stepping in, I got out of trouble. I already thanked "him, so I should thank you too.

"You left quickly, so I asked him where you work. I came here to support you and help you earn some tips. It's just a small gesture."

She brushed her hair aside and stepped closer. Then, she suddenly reached out her hand.

"Even though Billy already told me your name, we haven't really met properly yet. So, let's fix that now." She smiled softly. "Hi, I'm Rachel."

The three girls with her looked shocked.

They couldn't believe it.

There were countless guys pursuing Rachel. They could practically form a whole group.

It was always others trying to get to know her, yet they had never seen her take the initiative to approach a guy, let alone offer a handshake first.

215

16:51 Thu, May 14

Chapter 702 Unexpected Visit to the Bar

47.47.

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Her hand was right there. Countless men would dream of touching it, but Leander didn't move at all.

He didn't reach out. He just gave a polite smile. "Ms. Haley, please wait a moment. Your drinks and snacks will be here soon."

After saying that, he turned and walked away, leaving Rachel and her confused friends stunned.

They never expected that her rare attempt to shake hands would end like this. What they didn't know was that Leander simply didn't want anything to do with her. He came to Highcrest to live a quiet life. Meeting Billy had been unexpected, but getting involved with Rachel was something he intended to avoid.

She was stunning and had too many admirers, including powerful heirs from wealthy families. There were too many connections tied to her. He didn't want to get involved or be disturbed.

On top of that, Billy truly liked her. Leander always kept his distance from women his friends liked. It was the safest choice.

Rachel froze. Her hand stayed in the air for a long time before she came back to her senses.

It was the first time she had reached out to get to know a guy, and she had been rejected so coldly.

After a while, she turned to look at Leander. He was bending slightly as he lifted a box of beer. He didn't even glance at her.

She sat back down, feeling a bit down.

One of the girls beside her suddenly spoke in frustration.

"Rachel, you asked us to come here just to support this guy? Are you serious?"

She

gave Leander a dismissive look. He was in a waiter's uniform, getting bossed around by the owner. She treated him like free labor, and even the supervisors dumped all the dirty and heavy work on him.

The more she watched, the more she looked down on him.

Another girl chimed in.

"Rachel, aside from being a bit more handsome than others, he's nowhere near your other

3/5

16:51 Thu, May 14

Chapter 702 Unexpected Visit to the Bar

47

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admirers in every way. Why would you come here just for him? And look at his attitude just now. You took the initiative to greet him, and he barely responded. He's just a waiter, but he acts like he's some big shot. It's ridiculous!"

Rachel forced a smile but couldn't argue.

She knew the gap between them. Still, she couldn't explain why she felt drawn to him. Every move he made caught her attention.

Especially today, when he faced twenty people alone. He stayed calm and composed throughout. That kind of presence was something those rich heirs couldn't compare to.

That curiosity was exactly why, after dinner, she turned down Billy's invitation to go to karaoke. Instead, she came here with her friends.

She wanted to thank Leander for helping her deal with Jace. She also wanted to get to know him better, but his reaction caught her completely off guard.

After a long pause, she finally said it. "He's a good person. And... a special one."

A girl dressed in luxury brands beside her narrowed her eyes and looked at her carefully.

"No way, Rachel. Are you actually into him? That's crazy!" She spread her hands in confusion. "Think about it. In terms of background, wealth, and fame, any one of your admirers could leave him far behind. You even have people like Jace and Billy pursuing you. They're basically kings here. And you like him? Is it just because of his looks and body?"

She waved her hand dismissively.

"These days, being handsome doesn't mean much-unless he plans to live off rich women!"

This girl was very close to Rachel, being dormmates and sharing everything. She had always been bold and spoke without holding back.

Rachel understood what she meant.

Still, there was something about Leander that she couldn't put into words. It drew her in.

She blinked and turned her head slightly.

Leander was walking toward them with a case of beer. He held the box against his chest and walked steadily. Every step felt controlled and rhythmic. His gaze was straight ahead. His expression was calm and unbothered.

"Ms. Haley, here's your beer. The snacks will be here soon."

4/5

16:51 Thu, May 14

Chapter 702 Unexpected Visit to the Bar

47

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He placed the beer on the table. His attitude toward her was still distant. He greeted her politely, then turned to leave.

"Hey!"

The girl sitting across from Rachel couldn't take it anymore. She quickly took a sip of beer and pretended to spit it out.

"Stop right there! You're giving us beer this cold? Are you trying to freeze us? How are you even a waiter? Is this the level of service in your bar?"

In the next moment, she slammed her hand on the table.

The glass slid off and shattered near Leander's feet.

5/5

Olivia Harris is an emerging author celebrated for her captivating romantic and steamy novels. With a talent for crafting deep emotional connections and fiery chemistry between her characters, Olivia's stories offer readers an escape into worlds filled with passion, intrigue, and heart-stopping drama.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 703[1,526 words]

Chapter 703 Trouble Comes Knocking, Rowan

73

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The wine glass slipped from the table and rolled to a stop by Leander's feet. What little was left inside splashed out and soaked into his pant leg.

He paused mid-step, then slowly turned around. A girl shot to her feet, pointing straight at him. "What are you staring at? Yeah, I'm talking to you!"

Her name was Orlena Newton, Rachel's childhood friend.

In my opinion, he's just some college kid from Astria, a part-time worker at best. What gives him the right to treat Rachel like that? I can't stand guys who have nothing going for them but still act all high and mighty like they've got some kind of principles.

Right then and there, she decided she was going to knock him down a peg.

Ignoring the look Rachel gave her, Orlena snapped at him, "What kind of job are you even doing? You brought this over and didn't even check if the beer was cold?"

"And you call yourself a server? Get your manager. I'd love to ask how someone with your level of service even got hired."

Rachel tried to stand and stop her, but the well-dressed girl beside her grabbed her arm and held her back.

Leander found it faintly amusing.

This beer is definitely cold. She's obviously just picking a fight for no reason.

Thinking back to how he had treated Rachel earlier, it clicked almost immediately. He was about to speak when his gaze flickered. He suddenly turned toward the entrance.

A middle-aged man in a long, old-style shirt stepped in. His features refined and composed as he walked into the bar.

The moment he entered, his eyes lifted and went straight to Leander.

Their gazes met for a brief second.

Leander was the first to look away, turning back as he continued to deal with Orlena's provocation.

"Interesting kid," the man murmured with a faint chuckle. He walked past Leander and took a seat in one of the innermost booths.

1/4

14:45 Fri, May 15

Chapter 703 Trouble Comes Knocking, Rowan

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"Where are you looking? I'm talking to you, and you're checking out something else? What kind of attitude is that? Don't you know the customer is always right?" Orlena refused to let up. Seeing how calm and unbothered he was only made her more agitated.

She looked like she was ready to tear into him.

Sensing exactly what she was trying to do, Leander didn't react much.

He pressed two fingers lightly against the beer bottle, then gave a faint, easy smile as he dipped slightly toward them. "Sorry, that's on me. I didn't realize you preferred it extra cold. My bad. I'll go grab you another one right away. This round's on me."

I'm not planning to make a big deal out of this. Right now, I'm just a server, so I should act like one. Getting hassled by customers is basically part of the job. It happens every day. I can't just flip the table and lose it over something like this.

Even though he apologized, she wasn't about to drop it. She crossed her long legs, and her expression turned colder. "You're treating us? Do we look like we need that? We came here to spend money. Do you think we care about the price of one drink? I don't know where a nobody server like you gets the nerve to ignore my bestie.

"The fact that she was even willing to get to know you should've been your lucky day. And you're still acting all full of yourself, offering to buy us drinks? Do we even know you?"

Her voice rose sharply, loud enough that people at nearby tables started turning to look.

"Go on, get your boss out here. I'd really love to see who hired a server like you. With that kind of attitude and service? You should've been fired a long time ago." Orlena looked completely unbothered, like she had him cornered and wasn't letting go.

Leander didn't react.

He just gave a faint chuckle, shook his head, and stayed where he was, letting Orlena keep pushing.

"Okay, Orlena, what are you doing?" Rachel finally pulled free from her bestie and stepped right between them.

Her brows pulled tight as her voice dropped. "Orlena, I know you're trying to stand up for me. I get it. But this is too much. Nothing even happened to me, so stop going at him like this. He's my friend."

Orlena clicked her tongue and turned her head away with a soft huff, clearly still not taking Leander seriously.

2/4

14:45 Fri, May 15

Chapter 703 Trouble Comes Knocking, Rowan

73

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Rachel sighed and shook her head before turning back to him. "Leander, I'm really sorry. I came here to show you some support, and I didn't expect it to turn into this. She's one of my closest friends.

"We go way back. She just has a bit of a temper, so please don't take it to heart. If this caused you any trouble. I could explain it to your boss."

She looked genuinely apologetic, but Leander just waved it off, his tone easy and casual. "It's fine. A girl sticking up for her best friend? That's normal."

He really didn't care that much.

This kind of thing came with the job. He wasn't who he used to be, not the Iron Sovereign who stood above everyone else. Right now, he was just another Astrian student, working shifts to get by.

"What's going on here?" He was about to leave when the bar owner showed up. The noise had drawn attention, and one of the servers had already called her over.

She glanced at Leander, then at Rachel and the others. Her frown deepened. "Leander, did you mess up the service and offend our guests?"

Rachel started to speak, but Leander nodded first. "That's on me. I didn't think things through and ended up offending them."

He didn't try to argue. In this line of work, the customer always came first.

"I see. Then, you know the rules. Half your pay this month is gone. Consider it covering their drinks," the owner said.

Rachel waved her hands, trying to step in, but Leander moved forward first, stopping her. He gave a small nod. "Got it."

There was never really a clear right or wrong in this line of work.

When a server clashed with a customer, the blame almost always landed on the server. He did not even bother trying to defend himself.

Just as the bar owner was about to apologize to Rachel and her friends again, a deafening crash exploded from the entrance. The glass doors shattered on impact, breaking into pieces that scattered all over the floor.

A few of the servers shrieked and scrambled out of the way.

The rest of the customers turned toward the door.

3/4

14:45 Fri, May 15

4.35 Free Coins

A thick-built, rough-looking middle-aged man stormed in, his presence aggressive

and imposing. Dozens of men in black followed right behind him, forty or fifty at least, filing into the bar one after another.

Most of the people inside had no idea what was going on. Some, however, recognized the man immediately. Fear flashed across their expressions, and they pushed to their feet, ready to leave.

Right then, the man at the front barked, "Everybody stay seated. Do not move. I am looking for someone. If anyone so much as twitches, I will make sure they leave here missing a piece."

The moment he finished speaking, those who had tried to stand slowly sat back down, not daring to move again.

He dropped heavily onto a couch, leaning back like he owned the place. His legs were propped up on the table. The men in black lined up on both sides of him, gripping knives and clubs, making it clear who was in charge.

He lit a cigarette and spoke in a low, threatening voice. "I know some of you are scared. That is fine. Just do not scream, and do not call the cops. Otherwise, I cannot promise this blade will know who to spare."

Seeing the scene unfold, the bar owner forced herself to step forward. "Sir, I do not know how Ironwood Bar has offended you, but was it really necessary to smash our front door? Do you even realize this place is under Mr. Ware's protection?"

With that one line, she had played her strongest card.

Harden from Downtown had been the one calling the shots in that area. He was the kind of guy straight out of those triad dramas, the one playing the gang boss. Even

the local police had given him some leeway, and almost no one had dared to cross

him.

"Mr. Ware? You mean Harden Ware?" The man let out a short, mocking laugh. "Then, go ask him if he has the nerve to stick his nose into my business. Rowan Zachman."

The moment the name "Rowan Zachman" was spoken, the entire room went pale.

The bar owner froze where she stood, completely speechless, fear filling her eyes. Rachel and her friends were no different. Their expressions shifted instantly, and they fell silent, not daring to say a word.

Olivia Harris is an emerging author celebrated for her captivating romantic and steamy novels. With a talent for crafting deep emotional connections and fiery chemistry between her characters, Olivia's stories offer readers an escape into worlds filled with passion, intrigue, and heart-stopping drama.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 704[1,350 words]

Chapter 704 Nine-Star King Phase Master

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Rachel and the others went pale. Around them, the entire bar seemed to tense up in fear.

Rowan was a name people whispered in Highcrest's underworld. Among the power players running those gray-market empires, even mentioning him felt off-limits.

None of them had ever seen him in person. But they had heard more than enough stories.

He was the undisputed king of Westbrook District-a real heavyweight in Highcrest. Nearly half of the city's underground forces answered to him. And anyone who could truly stand on equal footing with him was basically nonexistent.

Harden might have been the top dog in Downtown. But compared to Rowan, that was a completely different league. Rowan practically ruled half of Highcrest's underworld. The gap between them was not even close.

And that was not all. Rumor had it Rowan was backed by the most powerful of the Ten Great Houses, the Dufays. That kind of backing put him on a whole other level.

In front of him, Harden was nothing more than someone who could be crushed without a second thought.

"I am so sorry, Mr. Zachman. I had no idea you would come to a small place like mine. Is there something you need?" The bar owner instantly switched her tone, forcing a polite smile as she spoke carefully.

"If it has nothing to do with you, keep your mouth shut and get out of my sight." Rowan shot her a glare and slapped her hard across the left cheek, knocking her to the floor.

Then his gaze swept across the room, thick with killing intent, as he barked, "Leander from Astria, get your ass out here now!"

In an instant, every server and every pair of eyes in Rachel's group turned toward Leander.

Not far behind him, in a booth, a middle-aged man in a scholar's robe lifted his gaze slightly, a faint, unreadable smile tugging at his lips.

Rowan's shout thundered through the bar. It drowned out the music entirely. The force of it rolled across the room, leaving people dizzy.

Almost everyone froze where they sat, too scared to make a sound. Orlena and Rachel's other friend, who had been giving Leander a hard time earlier, had completely lost their nerve. They shrank into their seats like frightened quails.

1/4

16:19 Sat, May 16 🎵

Chapter 704 Nine-Star King Phase Master

58

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Rowan controlled half of Highcrest's underworld. Girls like them, from business families, would not dare offend someone like that. If anything, they wished they could disappear.

Rachel and the others kept their eyes locked on Leander. He still looked calm, as if he had no idea who Rowan was. A hint of confusion crossed his face as he stepped forward. "You are looking for me? What is this about?"

He glanced at Rowan and asked casually, like he had no clue what was going on.

A few people nearby could not help but smirk.

I swear, this kid from Astria is just stupid. Rowan shows up in person and calls him out by name. What else could it be? This is obviously life-or-death serious.

He could have stayed quiet and kept his head down. Instead, he walks right up and hands himself over. That makes zero sense.

The middle-aged man sitting in the inner booth curled his lips into a faint smile, eyes lingering on Leander with quiet interest. He had not expected Rowan and his crew to come all the way here just to track down a server from Astria.

"So you're Leander?" Rowan held a cigar between his fingers, eyes narrowed as he sized him up from head to toe.

"There's something about you. Got a bit of backbone, huh?" The smile on his lips stayed, but there was a cold, dangerous glint behind it.

"I've heard you can fight. Real good. They say you can drop over twenty retired soldiers in seconds, bare-handed. I'd like to see if that's just talk. Honestly, I like kids like you. Too bad someone paid to have you crippled." He lifted a hand as he finished speaking. Four men in black stepped forward behind him. They carried a vicious, brutal aura, the kind that only came from living through blood and violence. Their sharp, predatory eyes said it all.

"Kid, you know what this is about." One of them stepped up, a dragon-and-python tattoo coiling around his arm. He grinned, twisted and menacing, as he stopped right in front of Leander.

Leander stood at about six-one, and the man wasn't much shorter. His arm was as thick as someone else's thigh. With one hand, he yanked a glass table from the side like it weighed nothing.

"Ah!" Rachel cried out.

Rowan showing up out of nowhere and calling out Leander by name? Yeah, that's not random. This was planned. The only person I can think of is Jace, the guy who clashed with Leander earlier today. But I

2/4

16:19 Sat, May 16 J

Chapter 704 Nine-Star King Phase Master

58

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didn't think he'd go this far. Bringing in Rowan, Highcrest's underground boss. The guy's got a terrifying reputation, and the people under him are all top-tier fighters- straight-up maniacs.

At that moment, the tattooed brute lifted the glass table and brought it crashing down toward Leander's head.

"Man..." Leander let out a quiet sigh, shaking his head as he stepped to the side. The table barely missed him, skimming past his chest before shattering against the ground.

The instant it hit, he moved. His foot snapped forward and drove straight into the man's abdomen. The timing and flow of the move were flawless.

Bang!

The big man with dragon and python tattoos on his arm let out a muffled groan and staggered backward. He had been through countless fights, hardened by years of blood and blades, but he still couldn't take Leander's kick. He dropped to his knees on the spot, cold sweat running down his face.

At that moment, the middle-aged man in a scholar's robe, sitting inside the booth, let a faint spark of interest flicker in his eyes, along with a hint of approval.

He was one of the few martial great grandmasters in the world, and even with his level of insight, he had to admit Leander's timing had been flawless. If he had been in Leander's position and relied purely on physical ability, he wouldn't have done any better.

Leander had pushed his body to the absolute limit of what he could control, even squeezing out more than one hundred percent of what he should have been capable of.

Rowan also showed a trace of surprise. After all, the tattooed man on his arm was his top enforcer. Back when Rowan was laying low and building himself up, this man had helped him carve out territory for the Blood Hounds, fighting campaign after campaign and taking ground after ground. He was one of the key reasons Rowan had risen to become the underground king of Highcrest.

Among all the elite enforcers in Highcrest's underworld, there were very few who could match the tattooed man's fighting ability. No one expected some working stiff from Astria to take him down so easily.

But even with that brief flash of surprise, Rowan quickly dismissed it. In his eyes, Leander was still nothing more than a nobody worth noting. When he looked at him,

it was like a world-class veteran glancing at someone who had just picked up a participation trophy for the very first time.

The tattooed man hit the ground, and the other three reacted instantly. Their pupils

3/4

16:20 Sat, May 16 🎵

58

Chapter 704 Nine-Star King Phase Master

contracted as they moved together, stepping forward in sync.

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They attacked from three different angles. A punch, a kick, and a knife-hand strike

all shot toward Leander's neck, ribs, and lower abdomen with no hesitation.

At that exact moment, the middle-aged man in the scholar's robe inside the booth slowly raised his hand and clenched it toward the air in front of him. Leander's eyes suddenly lit up. "King Phase? And a nine-star King Phase master?"

4/4

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From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 706[1,437 words]

Chapter 706 The Unstoppable Gessingers

Chapter 706 The Unstoppable Gessingers

Ignatius had already poured about seventy percent of his inner strength into that strike. Even the front end of a sedan would have been crushed flat on the spot,

reduced to twisted scrap metal

Stop!

Just as his palm was about to come down on Leander's head, a voice drifted in out of nowhere, calm and unhurried.

everyone in the bar froze.

Ignatius carried himself like some unstoppable force, almost inhuman. No one could wrap their head around the idea that someone would actually dare to step in and challenge Rowan right now.

Yet the moment that voice sounded, Ignatius locked up like he had been frozen in place. His movement stalled instantly. His raised hand hung stiff in midair, shock flooding his

eyes.

Others could not tell where the voice came from, that was one thing. But Ignatius stood at the peak of the Martial Sovereign level, a master who could claim a spot on the Astria Power Index. And even he had no clue where that voice had come from. Rowan noticed something was off with him

and narrowed his eyes. Right as both of them were still reeling, a set of steady, measured footsteps sounded from behind. They turned at the same time.

A middle-aged man in a scholar's robe was strolling forward at an easy pace, walking straight up to Leander's side.

And you are?" Ignatius' gaze sharpened. He quickly lowered his hand and took a step back.

To his senses, Leander felt completely ordinary, almost indistinguishable from anyone else. But this man was different. He felt vast, unfathomable, like a boundless ocean. Standing in front of him, Ignatius felt like nothing more than a lone boat adrift at sea, unable to see where the horizon ended.

He knew almost instantly that this man's cultivation far surpassed his own. As for how far, that was no longer something he could even begin to gauge.

The man did not answer. He simply smiled faintly. "Normally, this is between your Blood Hounds and this young man. It is not my place to interfere. But for some reason, I took a liking to him. I cannot quite explain it, but I intend to keep him alive. I do not care about your history with him. From today on, no one from Blood Hounds is to trouble him again. If

15

18

15:54 Mon, May 18 M

Chapter 706 The Unstoppable Gessingers

anyone crosses that line, I will wipe your entire organization out."

His tone stayed casual, almost indifferent.

But the words themselves sent a chill through the room, making everyone suck in a sharp breath.

Blood Hounds was the number one gang in Highcrest. They had their hands in almost the entire underground scene. Nearly every nightclub and bar in the city operated under their shadow.

Even the authorities had no choice but to acknowledge their influence, let alone try to take them down.

And yet this man spoke as if they were nothing.

He openly threatened Rowan, even declaring he would erase Blood Hounds. To him, the so-called top gang looked like a pile of worthless trash, something that could be crushed out of existence with a single thought.

"This..." Rowan's anger spiked, sharp and immediate. He flicked a glance at Ignatius beside him and froze for a second. The man's face had gone completely rigid, drained of color.

If it had been anyone else talking like that, Ignatius would've already crushed them without a second thought. No hesitation. No mercy. But standing in front of this middle-aged man in a scholar's robe, he didn't even dare open his mouth. The fear in him was obvious. It ran deep.

It clicked for Rowan right away.

Whoever this man was, even Ignatius was scared stiff of him. To most people, Blood Hounds was a force that dominated the entire underworld of Highcrest. Untouchable. But Rowan knew better. To the real heavy hitters, the top-tier martial artists and those world-level powerhouses, Blood Hounds was nothing. Just another forgettable gang. If they wanted it gone, it would be over in the blink of an eye. Still, he couldn't let it go. The man in front of him was clearly powerful, but Rowan needed to know who he was.

The middle-aged man seemed to read him like an open book. A faint smile touched his lips as he spoke, voice calm and unhurried. "A legendary figure straight out of the imperial inner circle had finally shown up, and the Gessingers in Highcrest had just turned out a real big shot."

2/5

15:54 Mon, May 18 M

Chapter 706 The Unstoppable Gessingers

The words landed, but Rowan was still lost. Most of the people around them looked just as confused.

Ignatius, on the other hand, reacted as if he had just seen a god. He stepped

forward immediately, bent at the waist, and saluted with full respect. "I'm from the

younger generation. It's an honor to meet you, sir."

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now?" A few streets away, Rowan and his had been used to running wild in

Highcrest,

ted, and he couldn't help but turn to Ignatius and

down. There was fear lingering in his eyes, his voice

cally a living relic of Highcrest. The founding ancestor of the her Gessinger."

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15:54 Mon, May 18 M

Chapter 706 The Unstoppable Gessingers

The Gessingers stood above every family in Highcrest. Even if the ten great aristocratic houses joined forces, along with the High Hounds, they still had no choice but to remain beneath the Gessingers. Even someone as powerful as Ignatius had to visit the Gessingers every few months to show respect. That alone showed how terrifying the Gessingers were.

This had been an unspoken rule in Highcrest for over a century. Everyone in high society followed it quietly, without questioning why.

"You don't understand what Homer represents. He was someone even the Queen of the Empire back then had to treat like a national mentor. Because of him, the Gessingers have always stood at the very top of Highcrest, known as the unstoppable Gessingers."

Ignatius' expression was heavy, his voice rough and low.

"If we had been even a step slower just now, Homer would have killed us without hesitation. At his level, killing us would've taken nothing more than a single thought. Listen carefully. From today on, no one in the Blood Hounds is allowed to go after that kid from Astria. If anyone disobeys, I'll deal with them myself." Everyone was completely shaken. No one dared to say another word. They all instinctively quickened their pace.

Rowan walked beside Ignatius. After a moment, he lowered his voice and asked again, "The founder of the Gessingers wasn't he supposed to have left Highcrest a hundred years ago and vanished without a trace? He's still alive?" Ignatius' gaze turned sharp. His hand trembled slightly. "Because he is a king phase existence. His lifespan exceeds two hundred years. I've told you before, a hundred years ago, there was a War of the King Phase. Every king phase in the world was dragged into it.

"Homer was one of the main figures in that war. After it ended, he left Highcrest. He once declared in the martial world that unless the War of the King Phase began again, he would never return to Highcrest."

"What?" Rowan's expression froze. "Then his appearance in Highcrest now... does that mean

"Yes. Ignatius nodded heavily, his tone more serious than become a battlefield." The Cond War of the King

Phase is inevitable. When that time comes, the entire world will become a battlefield."

He walked with his hands behind his back, staring up at the starry night sky. His

emotions surged The only ones who can stand at the end of

that wently. "The world is about to change.

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So who will become the main

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Chapter 706 The Unstoppable Gessingers

A legendar Gessinge

straight out of the imperial inner circle had finally shown up, and t rest had just

turned out a real big shot?"

the Ironwood Bar. Leander muttered softly, his eyes faintly brighten he had sealed within him began to stir because of Homer's appearance.

Olivia Harris is an emerging author celebrated for her captivating romantic and steamy novels. With a talent for crafting deep emotional connections and fiery chemistry between her characters, Olivia's stories offer readers an escape into worlds filled with passion, intrigue, and heart-stopping drama.

From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 707[1,596 words]

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Chapter 707 Welcome Home

Chapter 707 Welcome Home

Seriously? A top-tier nine-star King Phase master just shows up in Highcrest? Guess I picked the wrong place.

Leander shook his head lightly, a faint, wry smile tugging at his lips.

He had come to Highcrest to slow things down, to live simply and take in the full range of life. By keeping things plain and unremarkable, he had hoped to refine his state of mind and push through to the Origin Breaking Realm in one clean breakthrough, laying the groundwork for forging the True Martial Heavenrend.

But now, a nine-star King Phase master had appeared in Highcrest and even crossed paths with him. That alone was enough to signal the end of his quiet days.

But why does he step in to help me? And right in front of Rowan and the others, no less?

His

gaze flickered as he stared absently at the ground.

Could it be he senses my cultivation?

He fell silent for a moment, then shook his head inwardly, dismissing the thought.

From the moment he arrived in Highcrest, he had sealed away his own power. Unless he chose to lift that seal himself, his ability to mask his presence was absolute. Even someone beyond the King Phase standing right in front of him would not pick up on anything unusual.

That middle-aged man in scholar robes might sit at the very peak of the King Phase, but there is no way he reads my cultivation. If that is the case, then maybe he really did step in on a whim. Hopefully, he is a friend and not an enemy.

Leander let out a quiet breath and turned his attention to the mess left behind.

"Leander, are you okay?" Rachel walked over while he was still deep in thought. Her voice was soft, her eyes filled with concern.

"I'm fine." He waved it off and slipped right back into his role as a server, crouching down to clean up the scattered glass shards and the wreckage all over the floor.

As he worked, he glanced toward the bar owner. "Boss, sorry about this. It started because of me. I'll cover all the damages. Just dock it from my pay. If this month's not enough, take it out of next month too."

The young bar owner's expression shifted. She had always been harsh with Leander before,

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14:28 Tue, May 19...

Chapter 707 Welcome Home

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but now her expression softened immediately, and she shook her head. "It's fine. The damage isn't much. You'll still get your full pay this month."

The broken tables and chairs on the ground, along with the shattered glass door, totaled more than three thousand. Before this, she would have deducted his wages without a second thought, maybe even made him work extra shifts to pay it off. But after what just happened, she did not dare make him pay a single cent.

That middle-aged man in scholar robes openly threatens Rowan and Ignatius, and they treat him like he is untouchable. He steps in for Leander, maybe on a whim, but who knows if there is more

to it? If I go after Leander and that man comes back for it, I am the one who will be in serious trouble.

Leander smiled faintly and did not argue, more than happy to let it be. His monthly pay was not much to begin with. If he really had to cover all that damage, he would have been scraping by with nothing this month.

After what happened with Rowan, the atmosphere inside the bar shifted noticeably. Many guests lost interest and left one after another, while Rachel and the others stayed at their table, chattering nonstop.

Once the shock wore off, curiosity completely took over. They started talking about Leander.

After all, even when Rowan showed up, Leander had not flinched at all. He had faced the four elite enforcers head-on without backing down. And when he stood in front of the terrifying Ignatius, he remained calm and unreadable. That kind of composure and courage was exactly what drew girls their age in.

Orlena, who had previously dismissed Leander as nothing more than an attention seeker, had completely changed her mind. Her eyes kept flickering with curiosity and interest as she looked toward him from a distance. "Rachel, now I get what you meant. Leander really is something else."

Regardless of everything else, the fact that Rowan had targeted Leander and still managed to have a powerful figure step in to handle the situation was already enough for them to look at him differently.

Rachel smiled and nodded. She tilted her head slightly, feeling that the mysterious layer around Leander had only grown thicker.

Throughout the night, the group of young girls kept finding ways to get Leander over to their table. Orlena even tried multiple times to get him to drink as an apology for what had happened earlier. But he only took a few sips each time and always kept a careful distance from them.

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14:28 Tue, May 19

Chapter 707 Welcome Home

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At eleven at night, a figure stood quietly in front of the largest seaside villa in Highcrest

The villa spread across an enormous stretch of land. Within miles along the bay, it stood as the only residence. All around it, tall golden columns held the structure up, each one etched with intricate, ornate patterns that caught the light and gave the entire place a rich, almost regal glow.

At the villa's entrance stood a slab of natural marble. Carved into its surface was striking inscription: "The Gessingers."

single,

The lettering was sharp and deliberate, every stroke clean and precise, carrying a refined edge. But the longer they looked, the more it gave off something colder underneath, like a life steeped in battle. There was a faint, almost chilling intensity to it, as if the hand behind it had seen bloodshed and carried that weight into every line. It was clearly the work of a true master.

This was the Gessinger Estate, the only one in Highcrest, known as the unstoppable Gessingers.

The figure standing outside the villa was the middle-aged man in scholar's robes who had left the bar earlier. He stared at the estate, so different from what it had been in the past, and a trace of nostalgia surfaced in his eyes. "After more than a hundred years, I am finally back."

He placed his hands behind his back and walked forward slowly. The guards at the entrance of the Gessinger Estate were completely unaware of his presence, as if he did not exist at all.

He passed through without any obstruction and walked straight into the main hall of the Gessinger Estate.

Inside the hall, a middle-aged man and a young man were discussing the recent situation of the Gessingers.

The middle-aged man had thick brows and a sharp, authoritative presence. He was Colden Gessinger, the current head of the Gessingers.

The young man beside him was his only son, the next in line for the Gessingers, the one set to carry the family forward. Around Highcrest, he was known as the top young heir, Garin Gessinger.

"Dad, ever since Grandpa passed away, the Gessingers' influence in Highcrest has been declining year by year. Even though the ten great families still recognize us as the leader, each of them has their own hidden agenda and has been developing side businesses behind our backs. They no longer truly respect the Gessingers. Especially the Dufays. Recently, they have been in contact with the O'Briens in Highcliffe and the Wave Alliance. Their ambition is

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14:28 Tue, May 19

Chapter 707 Welcome Home

obvious. What should we do?" Garin stood respectfully at his side and asked Colden.

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A cold light flashed in Colden's eyes, sharp and unforgiving. "Your grandfather failed

to break through to the King Phase and passed away four years ago. The Gessingers have been on shaky ground ever since. If not for Osmund and me holding the line, the ten great families and the Blood Hounds would have already been running roughshod over us. But this time, with the Dufays reaching out to the O'Briens and the Wave Alliance backing them with massive financial power, even Osmund and I can no longer suppress them.

"The O'Briens themselves already have a Transcendent Realm expert, and they also have deep ties with the official forces of Astria. This time, the Dufays are truly aiming to break away and take control of Highcrest. For now, ignore the other nine families. Let them keep each other in check and maintain balance. We will not make any major moves. Until you step into the Transcendent Realm, we stay silent. We cannot afford another setback."

As his voice fell, Garin nodded. Just as he turned to leave, a voice suddenly echoed through the hall, ancient and distant. "I never expected that after more than a hundred years, my descendants would have fallen to such a state, weakened and struggling just to hold their name together."

Both of them froze instantly, turning toward the entrance in disbelief. A middle-aged man in scholar's robes was walking in with steady steps. A deep sense of familial connection rose instinctively from within their bodies.

They were completely stunned. Only when the man reached them did Colden finally react.

He dropped straight to his knees and his head low all the way down, as if a devout believer had finally come face to face with the god he worshipped. "I am Colden, the fourth-generation head of the Gessingers. I welcome your return."

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From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 708[1,488 words]

15:36 Wed, May 20

Chapter 708 Ruling Over Highcrest

Chapter 708 Ruling Over Highcrest

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"I am Colden, the fourth-generation head of the Gessingers. I welcome your return." In an instant, Colden dropped straight to his knees, his expression filled with reverence and shock.

Even before he was born, Homer had already left the Gessingers to travel the world. He had never met Homer, but he had heard about him many times from his father, Aubert Gessinger.

Aubert once described Homer as having an effortless, wind-like grace and a presence that felt completely natural, as if it had always belonged to him.

Homer was dressed in a scholar's robe, tall and lean, and time had left no trace on his face at all, except for those eyes. They were deep and solid, as if they could see through reincarnation itself, worn by countless years.

"Fourth generation? You're Aubert's son, right?" His expression was indifferent. Even facing his own descendants, there was barely any change in him. He simply took the seat at the head of the hall.

Garin had already dropped to his knees on the side, not daring to say a single word, with Colden accompanying him the entire time.

"Great Ancestor, that was indeed my father, but unfortunately..." Colden recalled the moment years ago when Aubert passed away, a trace of loneliness and unwillingness flashing through his eyes.

"Aubert had a very weak constitution since childhood. Although he was suited for martial arts, his innate condition was flawed, so the heights he could reach were extremely limited. If he did not enter the king phase, his lifespan would only be around one hundred and fifty years at most. I had already anticipated his downfall, or I would not have returned so soon." Homer's gaze remained calm. He showed no real emotional reaction to Aubert's death, as if he were simply stating something trivial.

After he finished speaking, he suddenly turned to Garin beside him. "What's your name?"

Garin did not dare to hesitate. He bowed and replied, "Great Ancestor, my name is Garin. My dad named me this to remember you and to hope for your return!"

"Garin?" Homer did not look pleased at all. Instead, a trace of disappointment flashed in his eyes. He let out a cold snort and looked straight at Colden. "Remembering me? Hoping for my return? Nonsense!"

"Since my time, which one of the Gessingers, even without me, your grandfather and great-grandfather, did not rely on their own strength to dominate Highcrest? When did they ever

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15:36 Wed, May 20

Chapter 708 Ruling Over Highcrest

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wait for someone else? Yet under your leadership, the Gessingers have fallen to the point where you need to hope for someone else to save them. So the one who truly disappoints me is you."

At that, Colden was so frightened that he dropped straight to his knees again, repeatedly pleading for forgiveness. "Great Ancestor, I am incompetent. Please punish me!"

Homer's icy glint slowly faded from his eyes. He let out a faint sigh and swept his gaze across the two of them. "Back in the era of the last royal family, I came to Highcrest and founded the Gessingers. Even the Imperial Queen had to drop straight to her knees and greet me. Yet I left for a hundred years. In just that century, you two managed to let Highcrest turn into a place where new forces kept popping up everywhere. Take Rowan, take Ignatius, and even the Ten Great Families."

Colden and Garin shuddered all over, not daring to say a word. They could only listen as he continued.

"In Highcrest, the unstoppable Gessingers stood alone at the top. Pride was everything to us. No one was ever allowed to challenge our authority. The unstoppable Gessingers were the number one family in Highcrest. But after I handed the succession over to you, things have come to this. Even the so-called Ten Great Families now dare to play little tricks right under your noses. They flatter you on the surface, but it's all a front. Tell me, do you really think you've been a competent head of the Gessingers?" His gaze turned sharp as a blade, almost as if it could pierce straight through Colden.

"Ever since Aubert passed away a few years ago, you've been walking on eggshells, always playing it safe. Because of that, the Gessingers' authority built over more than two hundred years in Highcrest has completely faded. It's like a fading old beast that has lost its roar. Do you still think you've done nothing wrong?" His words fell one by one, each one like a knife sinking

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Colden was left completely speechless. Not a single word of defense came out. After Aubert's death, the Gessingers had indeed lost an Infernal Crown Transcendent. That was why he had chosen to be cautious, afraid of any further instability, and only waited for Homer's return.

But because of that caution, the Gessingers' influence in Highcrest kept slipping. Now, even the Ten Great Families dared to defy them in subtle ways. It was a humiliation to the two-hundred-year legacy of the Gessingers.

"I know I was wrong. Please punish me." Colden let out a broken cry and bowed deeply.

"Punish you?" Homer chuckled softly and shook his head. "If you already know you were wrong, what good is punishment now? Tell me, what do you think you should be doing instead?"

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Chapter 708 Ruling Over Highcrest

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younger

Colden, who had ruled the Gessingers for decades, suddenly widened his eyes. A sharp light exploded within them. For a moment, he looked as though he had returned to his days, full of ambition and fighting spirit. A fierce, domineering aura surfaced on his face. "I will make the whole of Highcrest remember what the unstoppable Gessingers truly are. I will make the Ten Great Families, the Blood Hounds, and every other force understand exactly who rules this place."

Homer finally nodded, a trace of approval in his eyes. "Then go and do it. The unstoppable Gessingers move, and Highcrest trembles. The unstoppable Gessingers stand still, and Highcrest falls silent. Remember this. I have returned. Tell every family in Highcrest this one thing. Those who follow me prosper. Those who stand against me fall."

He rose to his feet. Above the Gessingers' estate, thick clouds churned violently across the sky, like the edge of a blade splitting heaven itself and revealing a streak of light. "The Gessingers will once again sweep across Highcrest just like they did two hundred years ago. I will reshuffle the entire upper world of Highcrest." Thunderous pressure rolled through the air above the estate.

And the entire Highcrest was destined to be thrown into chaos once again with Homer's return.

At Ember University, Leander had spent the entire day in the library. Just as he was about to head to the cafeteria for dinner, Billy called him.

"Leander, let me guess. You're in the library again?" Billy teased.

"Yeah. What is it?" Leander replied casually.

"Of course I've got something. I'm downstairs right now. Come down, and I'll tell you!" Billy said, then hung up immediately.

Leander rubbed the back of his neck and made his way downstairs at an unhurried pace. When he reached the entrance, a BMW 5 Series was parked by the side. Billy got out of the driver's seat.

"Leander, come on. I'm taking you to a dinner. It's at my place!"

Leander frowned slightly. "Your place? I'll pass. I'll just grab something at the cafeteria."

Honestly, Billy and I are cool, but going over to his house for dinner feels a bit off.

"Don't do that!" Billy rushed forward and lowered his voice. "Look, I invited Rachel.

But she said she'll only come if you're there. I didn't have a choice."

3/4

15:36 Wed, May 20

Chapter 708 Ruling Over Highcrest

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Leander didn't say anything, but Billy didn't give him time to refuse. He pulled him straight into the back seat. Leander could only shake his head and lean back, letting Billy drive off.

They arrived at the school gate. Billy hit the brakes. On the sidewalk to the right stood a slender figure in a beige dress. It was Rachel.

"Rachel, get in!" Billy called out.

Rachel nodded. She noticed Leander sitting in the back seat and reached for the door. She tried a few times, but it wouldn't open. Leander just sat there quietly, not moving to open it. That made her feel a little disappointed, so she ended up getting into the front passenger seat instead.

"Where are we going, Billy?" she asked, shifting her gaze away from Leander.

"That's a secret. You'll find out when we get there. I'm taking you to meet some heavy hitters." At the sight of the stunning Rachel, Billy was completely captivated. His attention drifted for a moment. He stepped on the gas and drove toward the Woods villa.

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**From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding
Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 709[
1,432 words]**

Chapter 709 Underestimated

Chapter 709 Underestimated

About half an hour later, the three of them arrived at the Wood estate.

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The Woods ranked among Highcrest's top ten elite families. They truly had deep pockets. Even their residence looked lavish and dazzling, like a private palace, and Rachel found herself staring a little longer than she meant to.

Billy felt a surge of pride. The thought that he might actually win her over lit him up from the inside. He gestured for her to go ahead. "Rachel, this is my place. Come on in. I just invited you all over for a meal today. It's nothing formal, just us. My older brother Arnold Wood and my second sister Aveline Wood are both easygoing, so don't overthink it."

This was exactly why he had brought Rachel here. Since he had already decided to marry her, he wanted to use this dinner to have Arnold and Aveline meet her first, lay the groundwork for a proper introduction later. That was how things were done in families like

his.

Rachel's brows knit slightly, but when she glanced back at Leander, the tension eased. In the end, she nodded.

"Mr. Billy, please head inside. Mr. Arnold and Ms. Aveline have already arrived," a middle-aged man who looked like the butler came up and said respectfully.

Billy gave a small nod and led Leander and Rachel through the main hall, then out toward the backyard.

The garden was filled with the scent of flowers, blooms surrounding them. A long patio table stretched across the lawn, where four people were already seated, one man and three women.

"Arnold, Aveline, Ava," Billy called out in greeting. But when his eyes landed on the last girl, his expression froze.

It wasn't just him. Even Rachel, the soon-to-be Miss Highcrest champion, stiffened, her eyes flashing with excitement and disbelief.

"Maeve?" they both blurted out at the same time. They had never expected that this internationally renowned pop diva would be here at this dinner.

Maeve smiled and gave them a small nod. Then her gaze suddenly froze, locking on something behind Billy and Rachel.

Leander stepped out from behind them, dressed in casual sportswear. His eyes shifted, sweeping across the group before settling on Maeve.

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Chapter 709 Underestimated

He paused for a beat, clearly not expecting to run into someone who actually knew him here. Especially Maeve. They had history, more than he cared to admit. The last person he thought he would see in a place like this.

He had once made a three-year promise to her. Yet somehow, they had already crossed paths once in the Sahar Wastes. And now, they ran into each other again in Highcrest.

A quiet sigh slipped through his thoughts.

Am I seriously stuck with this girl or what? Why do we keep running into each other?

Maeve stood there like she had been hit with a freeze spell, completely rooted to the spot. Her fingers trembled slightly, disbelief flooding her eyes.

The last time she saw Leander was in the Sahar Wastes. Back then, he tore through the Hermit and seven Half-Kings from the Arbitration Office all on his own. They had joined forces to hunt him down, but he crushed them without breaking a sweat.

A few months had passed. The sharp edge around him was gone, along with that overwhelming, sky-piercing aura. Now he wore thick, black-rimmed glasses. His presence was calmer, almost scholarly.

She had never seen this side of him before.

"Lean..." Maeve rose to her feet, about to say his name, but he cut her off with a single look.

"I'm here in Highcrest to lay low. Don't blow my cover." His voice slipped straight into her ears. She caught on immediately and swallowed the words that were about to leave her lips.

Arnold, Aveline, and the others all noticed her reaction and exchanged puzzled glances. Billy and Rachel were just as surprised. From the way Maeve reacted, it was obvious she knew Leander.

"Leander, it's you. I didn't expect to see you here!" Maeve forced the excitement out of her eyes and replaced it with a warm, easy smile, like a friendly, sweet girl next door.

"Ms. Maeve, good to see you." Leander smiled and nodded right on cue, acting no different from an ordinary guy.

"Ms. Maeve, you two know each other?" Billy asked, curiosity written all over his expression.

Maeve nodded lightly, a faint spark still lingering in her eyes. "We met once in Ravenridge, Mornwick. He helped me out back then. I've never forgotten it."

There was no lie in her words. After all, he had wiped out the Umbral Court in Ravenridge

24

Chapter 709 Underestimated

and saved her life.

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Rachel blinked, even more intrigued now. Leander felt harder to read by the second. The fact that he even knew Maeve, her number one idol, only made him more mysterious.

"Well, since you already know each other, that saves me the trouble of introductions!" Billy grinned, clearly pleased. He had no idea his buddy had crossed paths with someone like her.

He waved Leander and Rachel over to sit, giving a quick intro as they joined. Soon, the seven of them gathered around a patio table, chatting like they had known each other for years.

Maeve sat on Leander's left, while Rachel was on his right. He was seated between the two beauties, eyes not wandering at all as he focused on the snacks on the table.

Maeve was chatting with Billy and the others, but her eyes kept drifting toward Leander now and then. No matter how she looked at him, it never felt like enough.

If she weren't worried about Leander's identity being exposed, she would have stayed right by his side the entire time.

As they talked casually,

the conve I eventually

shifted to Jeff Enterprises.

"I heard Jeff Enterprises' valuation has already surpassed the combined total of the other nine companies in the world's top ten. Just the total assets of its Highcrest division alone already far exceed our top ten elite families. It's honestly terrifying," Arnold said with emotion, unable to hide his amazement.

"Yeah, Jeff Enterprises really is on another level," Aveline agreed. "Every company usually has its peak and decline, and products eventually become outdated. Even a once-premium phone company

is seeing its sales drop sharply, with its stock value shrinking significantly. But the Phoenix Essence Pill from Jeff Enterprises has taken over the world since its launch.

"It became a global sensation overnight. And it has never really declined, only grown stronger. Even after more than a year, the Phoenix Essence Pill is still extremely hard to get. Money alone isn't enough to buy it. On top of that, Jeff Enterprises recently released a line of skincare and anti-aging products. Every single one of them outperforms expensive luxury skincare brands on the market. It has sparked another global beauty craze among women. It's unstoppable."

Billy rubbed his nose and couldn't help drawing in a sharp breath. "I've heard about Jeff Enterprises for a long time. For a company to rise to number one in the world in just a year and keep widening the gap with second and third place is insane. I honestly wonder what kind of monster-level person could build something like that." Hearing this, Arnold immediately responded, "Billy, you don't even know the name of

Jeff

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Chapter 709 Underestimated

Enterprises chairman? I heard from a wealthy botinewman from Atria renty fath name is Leander. But he has never appeared in public or the media. As for what he wen looks like. I've never seen him either?

Leander? The name made both Billy and Rachel pause. They exchange a stra O before turning their eyes toward Leander

Leander, you're also called Leander. You wouldn't happen to be Jeff Enterprises chairman, would you?" Billy asked.

The others also looked over with curiosity. Their expressions were full of confusion.

Under everyone's gaze, Leander shrugged and let out a helpless smile. 'Billy, don't mess with me. Do look like the chairman of Jeff Enterprises? I'm just lucky if my job at the bar even covers my monthly expenses. Of course, I do have a dream. I'd like to build a company one day and make it number one in the world. But right now, it's just a dream. For now, I think it's more important to focus on my job and my studies"

He said it without missing a beat, and everyone found it amusing, breaking into light laughter.

Only Maeve, sitting to the side, finally lost control. She spat out her red wine.

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From Outcast to Overlord The Unyielding Heir (Leander Ashcroft) - Chapter 710[1,653 words]

16:09 Fri, May 22 JM.

Chapter 710 Follow Us or Get Left Behind

Chapter 710 Follow Us or Get Left Behind

"Pfft!" Maeve immediately spat out her red wine.

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Everyone turned to stare at her in shock. She quickly made up an excuse to cover her slip, but she could not hold back the laughter bubbling inside her, no matter

what.

Leander's words were perfectly reasonable. The Woods didn't show even a hint of displeasure. Instead, they actually felt a bit more favorable toward him.

Successful people had always felt a trace of sympathy and pity toward those who seemed insecure on the surface.

Arnold smiled at Leander and asked, "Leander, what do your parents do?"

"We don't really do much. My grandfather's retired at home, my parents don't have steady jobs, and my younger brother's still in university. So I had no choice but to come to

Highcrest and try my luck, study while I can, see the bigger world out there, pick up some part-time work, and ease the burden on my family!"

Maeve's arms trembled slightly as she forced herself to hold back what felt like a burst of laughter. She silently cursed Leander for being way too mischievous.

She really hadn't expected that the same cold, iron-blooded man could have such a playful side.

She had actually looked into his background before and compiled most of his information.

Leander came from the Ashcroft Family of Highcliffe. His grandfather, Reginald, was indeed retired at home, but that so-called retiree actually controlled the entire direction of the Ashcroft Family's power structure in Highcliffe, standing on equal footing with the top figures in Astria.

As for his father, Gareth, he had once rattled Astria with his martial arts. Before Leander made his debut, Gareth was even hailed as the future hope of Astria's martial world for the next fifty years. Yet the way Leander talked about him made him sound like some unemployed drifter with no steady job.

What "come to Highcrest to see the big world," and "working part-time to ease family pressure?" That almost made me laugh to death. He's the Iron Sovereign who dominates the world, and he's also the chairman of Jeff Enterprises, The Ashcrofts only rose to international fame because of him. How could he ever be a burden to his family?

At the same time. Maeve grew even more curious.

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Chapter 710 Follow Us or Get Left Behind

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With Leander's overwhelmingly godlike status, why would he come to Highcrest and live as a working college student?

Arnold and Aveline, on the other hand, were completely clueless.

Arnold even gave Leander a comforting look. He smiled warmly and said. "Leander,

it's fine Don't overthink it. There are plenty of paths in this world. Being able to support yourself is already something your family would be proud of. If you ever run into trouble, just tell Billy

or come to me."

"Thanks. Arnold!" Leander said with a smile. "Right now, I'm just focused on studying hard and working diligently. If I can graduate and land a job paying seven or eight thousand a month. I'd be more than satisfied."

He said it with such conviction that even Maeve, the celebrated singer and actress, had to admire his acting skills. She even chimed in smoothly, "Yeah, Leander. With Mr. Arnold's reputation and influence in Highcrest, getting you a job that pays over ten thousand a month would be effortless. You don't need to worry about your future."

Arnold had no idea the two of them were playing along. He nodded sincerely. "That's right. Since Ms. Maeve has spoken today, I'll make you a promise. As long as you're willing, my company's is always open to you. Forget ten thousand a month. Even a hundred thousand a month, I can offer it. If you truly have that kind of ability, you're more than welcome."

Rachel's eyes lit up at the news, and her expression brightened with delight. She had always felt that the image of a bar server didn't quite fit Leander at all. If he could take off that uniform, step into a big corporation, and become a proper white-collar or even elite professional, she thought that would finally match the level he belonged to

Leander gave a faint smile and was just about to thank Arnold when a figure suddenly appeared at the entrance of the courtyard.

It was a middle-aged man in his fifties, holding what appeared to be a document. His expression was slightly dark as he walked toward them.

"Dad?" Billy quickly greeted him.

The man was none other than Clovis Wood, the current head of the Woods
cross Leander and the other.

His gaze swept landing on his three children. Arnold, Aveline. Billy come here

An invitation for membership?

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24

16:09 Fri, May 22 d M.

Chapter 710 Follow Us or Get Left Behind

The bold words on the first line immediately caught their eyes, and their expressions tightened slightly.

"This is the Gessinger Association? Did the Gessingers set this up?"

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What Clovis was holding was a membership invitation form. The three of them almost immediately understood what it meant. In Highcrest, only the Gessingers, the undisputed top family, had the influence and confidence to extend something like this, even to a powerhouse like the Woods.

"This invitation was sent to our home last night by the Gessingers. As far as I know, we're not the only ones invited. The top ten families in Highcrest, the Blood Hounds, and several other well-known gangs are all on the Gessinger Association's invitation list. In another half hour, someone from the Gessingers will come to collect this form." Clovis spoke in a deep voice before sitting down at the table, not bothering to avoid Leander and the others at all.

To the Woods, Leander, Rachel, and Maeve were nothing more than ordinary people. Their opinions held no weight, and even if they heard everything, it wouldn't affect the Woods in any way.

The three of the Woods frowned slightly, clearly deep in thought. Ava also knitted her brows, carefully weighing the situation. The atmosphere quickly turned heavy and quiet.

Maeve, Rachel, and Leander, on the other hand, continued eating and drinking as if nothing was happening. The two women didn't really understand what was going on, while Leander simply had no interest.

"Dad, we should join," Aveline said after a moment of consideration. "It's clearly stated here that members can share resources and help each other resolve conflicts and difficulties. That's a win-win situation for the Woods. A lot of resources and connections we lack could be found through the Gessinger Association."

Arnold nodded in agreement. "Aveline's right. The Gessingers are already the dominant force in Highcrest. Even though the Dufays are starting to show signs of competing with them, their foundation and strength are still weaker. Now that the Gessingers are forming this association and bringing together all the influential families and major players in Highcrest, if everyone else is joining, why wouldn't we?"

Clovis didn't respond right away. Instead, he turned his gaze to Billy, who had been silent the entire time. "Billy, what do you think?"

Billy lightly pinched his chin. He usually carried a carefree, almost reckless attitude, but right now his expression turned thoughtful. "Dad, I don't think the Gessinger Association should be allowed in."

3/4

16:09 Fri, May 22 M.

Chapter 710 Follow Us or Get Left Behind

His fingers tapped the table gently as he went on. "The Gessingers are undeniably powerful in Highcrest. Even the ten great families like ours are nowhere near their level. But they've never made a move like this before. This time, they're forming the Gessinger Association under the guise of inviting Highcrest's major elites, the wealthy upper class, to work together for the city's prosperity and share resources. "In my view, this isn't an invitation. It's intimidation. They're using this as an opportunity to make all the major families and influential figures in Highcrest submit to them, to secure their dominance here. Once we join, it means another family has surrendered to the Gessingers. If all ten great families join, the balance held in Highcrest for a hundred years will be completely broken.

"After that, whether it's the ten great families or any other powerful tycoons, no one will even think about standing against the Gessingers anymore. That would mean Highcrest is once again under their control."

His words were clear and decisive, leaving no room for doubt.

A sharp light suddenly flashed in Clovis' eyes, full of approval. "Billy, your thoughts align with mine."

He felt a surge of relief. Among the three children of the Woods, Arnold handled the business empire, Aveline managed overseas affairs, and Billy had always been seen as the reckless one, lost in indulgence, which had disappointed him greatly. But today, he realized Billy, who always seemed so careless, was not nearly as simple as he appeared to be. In fact, he had a sharp mind and a solid grasp of the situation.

Arnold and Aveline were also awakened by Billy's analysis. After weighing everything carefully, they realized every word he said made sense.

Clovis lightly struck the table, and his expression was firm. "It seems we're all on the

same page." He paused, then made the final call. "In that case, the Woods will not join the Gessinger Association."

The moment his words fell, a loud crash echoed through Wood Manor as an outer wall suddenly collapsed.

"Mr. Wood certainly has a clear mind." A young man in tight-fitting attire stepped over the broken wall. His hands behind his back, he walked toward them.

In just a few strides, he stopped about ten yards away. A cold smile curled on his lips. "It's a pity. Mr. Wood. Even though your mind is clear, your choice isn't very wise. The Gessingers ancestor asked me to deliver a message to you all. Follow us or get left behind!"

4/4

Olivia Harris is an emerging author celebrated for her captivating romantic and steamy novels. With a talent for crafting deep emotional connections and fiery chemistry between her characters, Olivia's stories offer readers an escape into worlds filled with passion, intrigue, and heart-stopping drama.