

ESCORT THROUGH THE KINGDOM OF POWER

The jet sliced through the thick clouds like a shadow returning home.

Ethan Ward sat by the window, staring down at the breathtaking view unfolding beneath him.

Avalora — the capital of Verdanis — shimmered like a living gem. Tall crystalline skyscrapers stretched toward the sky, reflecting sunlight in shards of gold and white. 2

Wide highways carved perfect lines through the city, and military drones patrolled the air like silent guardians.

Nothing in Westeria compared to this.

Westeria felt modern.

Avalora felt ancient and powerful—as if history, wealth, and danger lived beneath every polished street. 3

Ethan found himself gripping the armrest. 1

He didn't know if he was excited or terrified. 2

Everything in his world had collapsed in Brookhaven — his marriage, his company, his pride — yet the world waiting for him here felt ten times larger. 1

The jet engines lowered in pitch as the plane descended. 1

A gentle thud. 1

The wheels touched the runway.

They had arrived.

Steward Leonard stood immediately, his posture was straight and respectful.

"Young Master Ethan, welcome to Avalora."

The jet's door opened—but not in the normal way.

A movable enclosed bridge slid in, attaching to the jet with a heavy metallic click.

Ethan frowned.

This wasn't the airport walkway used by business-class or private passengers.

This was armored, tinted, reinforced... almost like a government tunnel. 1

"What is the meaning of this?" Ethan asked. 2

Steward Leonard smiled softly, his expression hiding something heavy.

"You will understand it better soon, Young Master. For now, the Old Master awaits at Arvendale Villa." 1

Ethan nodded hesitantly and followed. 1

The moment he stepped into the passageway, he understood something instantly:

This wasn't VIP treatment.

This was protection. 1

Serious protection.

Two guards walked ahead, armed, their uniforms were marked with a symbol Ethan didn't recognize—some kind of elite security division. 2

At the end of the passage, armored SUVs waited directly beside the plane. Not on the pick-up lane. Not near the terminal doors. 3

Right at the jet's exit. 2

The vehicles were massive, black, reinforced with plating. Their engines hummed with quiet, intimidating power. On the hoods, Ethan saw a silver dragon engraved—the symbol of the Xavier Group. 1

People inside the airport stared through the tall glass windows, whispering behind their hands.

A few airport officials froze on the spot, bowing without knowing who they were bowing to.

Ethan wasn't used to attention.

He felt overwhelmed.

Steward Leonard gestured toward the largest SUV. 2

"This one is specially prepared for you, Master Ethan."

Inside, the seats looked softer than clouds.

The interior smelled like fine cedarwood and luxury leather.

As they pulled away, Ethan glanced behind at the other SUVs lining up into formation like soldiers preparing for war. 1

Outside the runway area, civilians paused, staring in awe.

"Who arrived?"

"I don't know, but look at those cars!"

"That emblem... wait, isn't that the Xavier Group's crest?" 1

"Oh my God — someone from that family is here!"

Their excitement mixed with fear. Verdanis respected only two things: 1

Power and the Xavier name.

The convoy merged onto the private airport road, escorted by military bikes and overhead drones. 1

The city passed by Ethan's window—luxury districts, government towers, massive billboards, and ancient monuments preserved between modern buildings. 1

Avalora was a city where history and power coexisted without apology. 1

Then Steward Leonard's phone rang.

The old man answered immediately. 3

His face changed. 1

All the color drained from his cheeks.

"Damn it," he whispered.

Ethan straightened. 1

"What happened? Steward Leonard?"

Lee closed the phone slowly. 1

When he looked at Ethan, his eyes held a seriousness Ethan had never seen before.

"It is Old Master Xavier," he said quietly. "He doesn't have much time left."

A cold chill ran down Ethan's spine.

He had barely processed the idea that his grandfather wanted to see him.

Now he was being dragged into a deathbed scenario he didn't fully understand. 1

Steward Leonard leaned forward toward the driver.

"Speed up. Maximum secure velocity. Move!"

The convoy accelerated immediately, engines roaring. 1

Traffic split apart like water around a ship.

Sirens echoed from the escort units, and Ethan on his part braced his hand on the seat.

"This is reckless. Someone could get hurt. This over speeding could

cause an accident." 1

Steward Leonard turned to him sharply.

"Young Master, you don't understand the situation." 1

Ethan frowned.

"Then explain it." 1

The old steward took a breath, his voice was heavy with pressure.

"Old Master Xavier must officially hand over the mantle of leadership of the Xavier Group to you as soon as possible, before he gives up the ghost." 1

Ethan was stunned. 1

"Me? Why would he—?"

"Because if he dies without naming a successor especially one of his own blood." Steward Leonard interrupted, "There will be a great war in Verdanis." 1

The SUV fell silent.

Outside, mountains flashed past as the convoy sped along the highway toward the countryside. 1

Ethan stared in disbelief.

"A war? Over a business?"

Steward Leonard shook his head urgently.

"Young Master... the Xavier Group is not just a business. It is the financial heart of this nation. Entire factions, government branches, military units, and ancient families rely on Old Master Xavier's rule." 2

His expression tightened. 1

"If he dies without naming a successor, all of them — ALL — will fight for the throne."

Ethan's heartbeat grew louder in his ears.

He had lived in Brookhaven thinking he was just a man struggling through betrayal, heartbreak, and loss. 3

But here? 1

In Verdanis?

He was the heir to a kingdom built on unimaginable wealth and dangerous power.

"But what about his will?" Ethan asked quietly. "He must have a will... right? I mean a will can ensure that my grandfather's decision regarding who succeeds him can still be upheld even after his death." 4

Steward Leonard closed his eyes briefly.

Then he spoke the sentence that shattered Ethan's assumptions: 3

"Young Master... this isn't Westeria." 2

"This is Verdanis."

"And things work differently here." 1