

Chapter 148: Errand Boy

Thorne - Halls Corporation

During a normal morning, before Rollo had left for NLA, Thorne had suddenly shot up from his seat with a serious expression.

“Listen to me, guys. Can you both please just hire an errand boy or something?”

“Why?” Claire replied. “I don’t see a need for it.”

Thorne then glanced over at Rollo, who slowly finished chewing before responding.

“What she said,”

“...You guys—”

Before Thorne could continue, Rollo cut him off.

“Anyway, I’ll be going off to NLA once we have the business with Sensorial settled. I’ll be counting on you again, Claire.”

“Yeah, yeah. It figures.”

Thorne could only helplessly watch as his two friends progressed the conversation without him. He didn’t even get a chance to bring up his topic again as they left immediately after their breakfast.

Thorne clicked his tongue as he walked into his office and slammed his door shut.

His sudden action startled the employees of the security department, as it wasn’t often he lost his cool.

However, no one dared to go question him about it and they all went back to their work. Thorne also paid them no heed and began reviewing the documents for the day.

There were many things he had to sign off on for the security department. Ranging from procurement orders to personnel shifts, they all made their way to his desk for approval.

While he wanted to delegate as much as possible, these tedious responsibilities weren’t something he dared hand off to someone else. He only reaffirmed this belief as he read over the procurement order before him.

He quickly summoned the officer responsible for the matter into his office after reading through the preliminary report.

“James, I’ve just read the report. I see that you have outlined three potential VTOLs we should procure. I see that you have included all the manufacturers’ information and specifications, but where is the recording of your test flights?”

“Sir, they refused to allow any recording of it, so I only included my report of my experience.”

“...In that case, schedule another test flight for me for...later today, if possible. I’ll go see if a few others who have experience flying these things are available. We’ll need as many people’s input as possible.”

“...Yes, sir. I’ll see if the seller can accommodate us immediately. If you’ll excuse me.”

Watching his subordinate off, Thorne was about to place a call to the people he needed to reach out to when an incoming call disrupted him. Claire’s voice was easily discerned.

“Thorne, can you come with me to the mall? I wanted to get Lucy a gift since her birthday is coming up.”

“...Sure, just give me a second.”

With the new event popping up in his schedule, Thorne could only work faster to make up for it.

He was used to his friends calling him up on short notice, so he wasn’t surprised by their sudden requests.

The two Halls Corporation executives soon exited the compound under the heavy escort of a dozen Wraiths. The number of corpos in the city was one of the highest in the world, but at the same time, the huge population of Elevate City meant that the ratio wasn’t that impressive.

That was why plenty of onlookers still gawked at the scene of a corporate caravan driving down the city as if they owned the roads. The number of spectators lessened as they reached districts with higher economic conditions, but many curious gazes were still drawn to the high-profile motorcade.

Despite being surrounded by dozens of guards, Thorne still never let his guard down as he accompanied Claire into the mall. He knew from experience danger could strike at any time, and he had enough of losing in one lifetime after the incident with his mom.

However, today was not one of those days he needed to put his combat skills to the test.

Claire was able to finish her errand and return without issue. It only ended so swiftly because she got a call from the office about a matter she needed to attend to, which forced her to quickly make her decision regarding the gifts she had been struggling to choose between.

While this was a pleasant turn of events for Thorne, the interruptions didn’t end there.

“Thorne! I forgot to buy the new handbag I wanted just now. Can you please go back and get it for me?” Claire pleaded with puppy eyes as they pulled up into the head office.

“...Fine.”

“Yay, love you!”

After letting Claire off, he quickly turned around back to the mall. He used the precious moments while they were traveling to message his men about delaying the test flights for a few hours.

It was at moments like these, where he found himself strapped for time, that he allowed his convoy of vehicles to bully the other vehicles out of the way, guilty-free. And thankfully, Claire had sent a detailed file on the bag she wanted, so he simply had to walk straight into the store and forward the same file to the store clerk.

Just as he finished his purchase and made his way back to the car, another call came in.

“Hey Thorne, I heard you’re out at the Emerald Square. Can you pick up some food there and pick up the limited edition Kyoto Grape-flavoured milkshake at Frostonics for me?” Rollo’s voice rang out.

“...Sure.”

He did a quick one-eighty and re-entered the mall.

After that, Thorne’s errands were finally complete when he dropped off the items when he made his second return trip back to his company headquarters.

With the errands complete, he could finally leave for the test flight of the VTOL aircraft they planned to procure.

Not long after his return, he rode out again, along with a few of his subordinates. They headed not to an airport but to one of the largest malls in the city, at the heart of the ‘corpo’ district. Everyone in the city knew the name of Oceanic Palace, as it would immediately pop up when they talked about the premier malls in town.

The building had waterfalls coming from one of the middle floors, down to a pool level that was basically an aquarium.

On one of the floors near the top, there were several helipads and some of the upper floors were entirely repurposed to serve as aircraft hangers. Some of them were for the guests to use, while others belonged to the businesses.

It was here that Thorne would be testing out the VTOL aircraft before he decided which one to procure.

They soon made their way out of the elevator and headed for the first company on their agenda, AeroDynamic. As he walked by the other brands, Thorne couldn't help but note SocialCorp among the options as well.

However, true to their policy, they didn't sell military items, and their store only sold luxury aircraft for VIPs to use.

He threw the thought of other brands out of his mind when he arrived at the AeroDynamic store and was immediately greeted by a female clerk.

"Welcome, sir. You are from the Halls Corporation, correct?"

"Yes, sorry for the delay."

"If there aren't any issues, please follow me to the back."

The employee displayed flawless etiquette the entire time, but Thorne didn't dare to underestimate her.

AeroDynamic was an A-Class corporation. In fact, all companies that dealt with VTOLs were at least B-Class corporations. It was understandable when you considered that one of their products was priced at several million credits at the very least. The technology, cost, and production that went into manufacturing these birds wasn't something just any corporation could pull off.

The woman soon led Thorne's entourage toward an open hangar at the back of the store. There were no windows there, as a gigantic opening could be seen on the opposite side of the hangar.

However, no wind could be felt despite their high elevation. Thorne squinted his eyes and noticed a blue shimmering light blocking the elements from the outside. He couldn't help but be reminded of the energy shield tech he had encountered before.

It made him feel how much room they had to grow, especially when he saw one of the nearby VTOLs take off and exit through the barrier as if it wasn't there.

It can select what can pass through it, which means it can select which bullets can pass through too...

The woman soon brought his team toward one of the aircraft off in the corner, among a dozen others.

"This is our company's latest work in the Overseer product line, the AeroDynamic Overseer Sentinel IV. Our test pilots are already inside, so please feel free to enter."

The woman quickly left after that, leaving the men to eye the rear hatch of the aircraft. After getting a good look at the bird, they boarded.

The aircraft's rear cabin could seat fourteen people or six power armors. As soon as they boarded the aircraft, the PA system rang out.

"Get in the seats and put on the headsets, boys. We're taking off."

The men did as instructed when they felt the aircraft's vibration that warned them the vehicle was starting up. They were able to hear the same voice with more clarity this time as soon as they wore the headsets attached to the seats.

"Welcome aboard the test flight for the Overseer Sentinel IV. This bad girl has only been in service for a year and a half, and I'm here to introduce to you all about her. Do any of you have any questions?"

"No...not yet. Can you give us the basic rundown?"

"Of course! If you're looking to purchase this bad girl, then I guess you found her weapon systems attractive, so I'll start there. She's equipped with twin railgun turrets that can fire rounds that can easily penetrate most power armors without even using the micro missiles on board. For smaller arms, we've got plasma turrets that can quickly spew out projectiles to intercept any oncoming missiles."

"How easy is it to change the default setup?" One of Thorne's companions asked.

"Not too easy, not too hard. I'll say the mechanics will need half a day. What you need to consider is the balance of this beauty. She has twin engines and an ionic one as a backup, but they'll need to be fine-tuned, which is what delays any refitting the most."

The pilots and Thorne's group went into more detailed specifications about the usage and maintenance of the aircraft as they took off from the hangar. Thorne stared carefully at the moment they passed by the energy shield, but he couldn't feel a thing when it happened.

They flew a quick circle around the city before they returned to the Oceanic Palace. Elevate City didn't have enough empty land for them to test their destructive weapon systems, so they could only make do with hearing about the technicals.

As they finished up the tour and made for the exit, Thorne couldn't help but glance over at the models meant for corpo executives instead of the combat-oriented ones they experienced.

Rollo should've gotten one of those first instead. It is much safer for him and it's not like it isn't armed. The military ones have a distinct lack of comfort, that it wouldn't be appropriate to give our guests a ride in...

He shook his head as he shelved his thoughts. He had run the same conversation with Rollo before and the decision has already been made despite his differing opinion. Rollo had been too stubborn about practicality and cost efficiency.

The Halls Corporation employees soon made their way to test the next potential candidate with a different brand, but just before they arrived, another call from Rollo came in.

“Hey Thorne, can we head out and start our hunt a little early today? I have to meet with Luford tomorrow morning.”

“...How early?”

“No rush, maybe in an hour or two?”

“...Sure.”

As soon as he hung up, he turned to his subordinates.

“Reschedule the remaining flight we had today to tomorrow morning instead.”

Another mundane but eventful day soon ended for Thorne. He had finished all his obligations and fulfilled his friends' requests.

However, during breakfast the next day, he steeled up his resolve and declared his intention once more.

“You two! You are to hire an errand boy as soon as possible! I won't be taking care of your little requests anymore!”