

Miles Banister fidgeted with his tie and cleared his parched throat as he stared blankly over the ViViD scrolling text. His speech had been prepared for him by someone he didn't know, and likely would never meet—just another anonymous cog in the machine called Overcorp.

Someday that grand system would be his to run.

But he didn't want to think about that.

Beyond the hovering words sat his expectant classmates—a sea of faces he barely recognized, despite spending the last four years alongside them. Not with them. Because, as his father would say, What sort of god loiters among his own people?

“Today begins an enormous journey, a grand opportunity. You have been awarded a privilege higher than any other—the chance to prove yourselves worthy of all that Overcorp has to offer. A future that rests entirely in your hands.”

The text ceased scrolling as Miles hesitated, his gaze passing over his classmates in their sleek graduation gowns. Overcorp Blue, of course—emblazoned with the Overcorp logo and the prestigious symbol of the University.

This lavish arena, housed within Overcorp's opulent Manor, was packed with prospective employers, waiting to sweep the graduating elite into High Licensed positions. Family and friends of the graduates sat in a designated area, as well as devoted alumni.

He scolded himself for searching the crowd. He wouldn't find him there; his father had far more important business to attend to. And what was Miles' college graduation to his father, anyway? Why would the President of Overcorp bother with a mere formality on his son's inevitable path to the presidency?

“Through Overcorp, each gets what one deserves. It is your responsibility to become deserving, to be what Overcorp needs, lest you become what Overcorp can do without.”

Had his father written this speech? The words sounded like his— but then again so did his professors' words. And every other voice of authority. And now they were his words, too. He wasn't sure they felt right on his lips.

As his father would say—better get used to it.

“Congratulations, and may Istvani be with you, all of your days.”

Miles let out a long breath. The dreaded speech was finally over. It was tradition, he was told. The heir to Overcorp's presidency always gave the address at his own graduation, ever since his great-grandfather's time. Or was it his great-great-grandfather?

*My father would kill me if he knew I couldn't remember...*