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I'm Someone Else Chapter 71

"What's the grudge between you and the Hind Family? Tell me about it. If it's nothing major, I'll talk to them about it. I'm sure they'll be willing to drop it on my account."

Quincy wasn't exaggerating. The Hind Family was trying to win him over and had even invited him to Drake's funeral. Nevertheless, Quincy thought Drake had it coming from him. He heard about Drake's heinous deeds, though he didn't expect Drake to die at such a young age at the hands of another. The despicable ones do indeed get what's coming for them.

Thomas shook his head. "It's not a minor issue. Accurately speaking, you could say it's a blood feud."

"A blood feud?" Quincy frowned in thought for a moment before it dawned on him. "Wait a minute. Thomas, are you telling me that you're the one who killed Drake Hind?"

"That's right. I killed him," Thomas readily admitted. "I even did it in front of Blake and Jake Hind!"

"What?!" Thomas' jaw dropped. He couldn't believe the fact that Thomas had killed Drake right in front of Blake and Jake!

Drake was Jake's son!

Both Blake and Jake were merciless men who could make all of Irieson shake at the drop of a hat. Blake learned martial arts ever since he was a child and was once the top martial arts expert in all of Irieson. Thomas killed his nephew right in front of him... My, my. How powerful does that make Thomas then?

That explains it. That explains why they created the explosion to take his life.

"Why did you do it?" Quincy asked.

Thomas gave Quincy a brief summary, and Quincy was surprised by the sacrifices Thomas was willing to make for Olivia's sake.

Even though you're her driver, it doesn't mean you need to go to such lengths, right?

"Have you fallen in love with Olivia?" After considering all the possibilities, Quincy thought love was the only explanation for such behavior. Thomas... Of all people you could love, you shouldn't fall in love with Olivia! Her fate was set at her birth! You'll only be damning yourself if you fall in love with her!

Quincy knew that the Pearsons would never agree to the relationship. Olivia bore the weight of the entire Pearson Family on her shoulders.

Thomas was startled. "What are you talking about, Dr. Hofstead?" What kind of dramatic love story is he cooking up inside his mind? I only saved Olivia because she's my friend. I don't want to see a repeat of what happened to Zachary. That's all. What does love have got to do with it?

"I'm not trying to scare you, Thomas, but you can fall in love with anyone except for Olivia. How's this? Let me introduce you to a few young women. They're all beautiful ladies from respectable families."

Quincy gave Thomas a long speech to warn him off. Even though Olivia was a beautiful woman with an elite background, she still wasn't a good choice. Bad luck would befall those who ended up with her.

"Don't worry," Thomas said with a weak chuckle. "I won't fall in love with Olivia."

Since Thomas seemed pretty serious about what he just said, Quincy was somewhat appeased. He was certain that a handsome young man like Thomas with such genius talents in medicine would surely soar to great heights if the right chance was provided to him. When the time comes, he won't have a problem finding a girlfriend!

This won't do. I need to hurry up and help him find a girlfriend. It'll help me get closer to him too.

Over at Hind Residence, Blake and Jake were sitting on the couch and looking at the masked man in front of them.

"A kind-hearted soul uploaded the video of the explosion to the Internet. Have you seen it yet?" The masked man had a slightly husky voice.

“We did!” Jake nodded. He nearly jumped for joy when he saw the video.

It would take a miracle for Thomas Clifford to survive such a large explosion.

Thomas Clifford, you f*cker! You’re just a stinking driver without any background. How dare you go up against the Hinds? Who the f*ck do you think you are? See how easy it was for me to kill you? How dare you kill my son?! Just you wait, f*cker. This isn’t over yet. You have a godsister that you’re very close to, don’t you? She’ll be joining you in hell soon enough! I wouldn’t want you to be lonely down there!

The masked man nodded and looked at Jake.

Jake got up to get the money. Soon, he came back with a bank card.

“Here’s the 30 million you asked for. It’s in this bank account. The password’s six ones.”

The masked man checked the bank card and nodded before turning to leave.

“Gasp!”

As soon as the masked man turned around, he was stabbed in the heart with a dagger.

“You...” The masked man had a look of disbelief when he saw the tip of the dagger sticking out of his chest. They were killing him to silence him!

Jake pulled the dagger back out and the masked man slumped to the ground.

“Come and deal with it!” Jake got the servants to drag the body out.

Jake was a smart man. The Hinds and the Pearsons were in an antagonistic relationship right now. If word got out that they were the ones behind the explosion, the Pearsons would undoubtedly try to get their revenge. Even though they killed Thomas, it was Olivia’s car that exploded! There was no telling how the Pearsons would interpret that information.

Therefore, they couldn’t let this hitman walk away with his life!

Only the dead could keep a secret!

The Hinds promised the masked man a payment of 30 million in exchange for Thomas' life!

It had to be said that the Hinds did not take Thomas lightly.

Hitmen had their own professional code to follow, and one was to never divulge their client's information, even with their life on the line. This was the most basic principle in their line of work. None of the hitmen could survive if they failed to follow this rule. The other hitmen would take him out.

However, the Hinds didn't think that was enough. They didn't care about the hitmen's rules. In their eyes, the masked man was still an outsider, and considering what he knew, he couldn't be allowed to remain alive.

The Hinds rose to their current glory at the expense of the blood of others. They knew nothing of rules, principles, or trust. Nothing but viciousness and ruthlessness ran in their blood!

Jake picked up the bank card and guffawed. "See that, Blake? We didn't even need to spend any money to kill that b*stard Thomas Clifford. We came out on top this time!"

Blake nodded happily. 30 million was nothing to the Hinds, so he didn't care much about the money. He was pleased by the fact that Thomas was dead! The guy who killed his nephew and humiliated him was dead!

The night passed in peace. The next morning, Thomas gave Sean a call.

"Hi, Thomas. What's up?" Sean had been in the middle of breakfast when he got the call. He swallowed his mouthful of cereal and answered his phone.

"Hey... You said you wanted to give me a car a while back. Can you... lend it to me for a couple of days?" Thomas felt a little embarrassed.

"Why would I need to lend it to you, Thomas? I said I was giving it to you and I meant it! Hang on. I'll bring it over to you right away

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Soon, Sean drove over in a black Lamborghini. "Here's the car I got for you, Thomas. Check your schedule. When you're free, let's take a look at the villa I got you. It's got a great environment. I'm sure you'll like it."

"I—" Thomas began, but Sean cut him off with a wave. "Can't talk now, Thomas. I have a business negotiation this morning, so I need to make my way over there now. Let me know when you're free!"

Sean flagged down a cab and left.

Thomas shook his head helplessly as he watched Sean leave. Nevertheless, he couldn't dwell on it now as time was running out. First, he drove to Olivia's apartment, but when he realized no one was there, he drove to Pearson Residence.

Soon, Olivia stepped out of the house. She saw Thomas leaning against the Lamborghini smoking a cigarette and immediately felt vexed. Stupid Thomas, you b*stard! How dare you stand me up?! She got into the car without saying a word.

Thomas stamped out his cigarette, got into the car as well, and drove off to Pearson Group.

He secretly glanced at Olivia and saw that she didn't look too good. He knew it couldn't be a physical problem. It had to be an emotional one—it was probably because he didn't show up last night.

Any woman would be upset that the man she invited had been a no-show, let alone the Most Beautiful Female Entrepreneur in Irieson!

"I'm sorry. Something unexpected came up last night so I couldn't join your birthday celebration. I was going to call you, but my phone ran out of battery." Thomas gave a sincere explanation as he drove.

He had kept his phone in his jacket, and it was destroyed by the explosion last night. He couldn't call Olivia even if he wanted to.

Despite his apology, Olivia's expression didn't soften. "It's fine," she said icily. "It's not like you're anyone important anyway. It didn't matter whether you came or not. It didn't change a single thing."

Even a fool would pick up on the fury and contempt in Olivia's response!

I'm your boss, okay? And, it was my first time inviting a man to my birthday celebration. I even got all dressed up for you, but what did you do, huh? You

stood me up and all you say is that something unexpected came up? Who do you think I am?

Thomas took out the necklace with the jade pendant he carved himself and passed it over to Olivia. "This is for you."

It wasn't an expensive present. In any case, as the head of Pearson Group, Olivia would've gotten all manner of expensive gifts before. Since he carved this pendant himself, it was at least a show of sincerity!

"Hm?" Olivia looked at the necklace and was immediately drawn to the exquisite carving. She began to toy with the necklace.

"It's so pretty. Where did you buy it?"

"I didn't buy it. I made it myself."

"You made it yourself?" Olivia blinked. Immediately, most of her anger dissipated. He must've been planning on coming, or otherwise, he wouldn't have gone through all that effort to carve me a gift himself. I guess something urgent did crop up unexpectedly.

Olivia put the necklace on.

"Does it look pretty on me?"

Thomas glanced at her.

"It looks gorgeous on you." Thomas complimented with all his heart.

He quickly turned back to the front and focused on driving. He wouldn't be able to pay any attention to the road if he looked any longer, and he was sure to crash the car.

"Hmph! You always know what to say. Oh, well. Since you're such a sweet-talker, I've decided not to be mad at you anymore! You're forgiven!" Olivia announced haughtily.

Though she could come across as being rather tough, she was actually a big softie on the inside. Even when she claimed to be furious, it was easy enough to appease her.

It wasn't surprising that she was upset. After all, with her looks, talents, and family background, tons of men would line up all across Irieson to attend her birthday celebration, but she wasn't interested in any of them. Instead, the man she invited was a no-show. Anyone in her position would be upset too.

When they got to the office, Thomas passed a flask to Olivia so that she could take her medicine.

"Set aside these documents, Molly. I'll need them for the meeting next week."

"Yes, Miss Pearson!"

"Once you're done, you can leave for the day."

It was the weekend. As the head of Pearson Group, Olivia had to come in to prepare for next week's work, but Molly didn't need to work overtime with her.

Molly put away the documents and tidied up the desk before coming out of the office. She walked up to Thomas who was smoking by the window and said, "It's the weekend, Thomas. Are you free? Do you want to watch a movie with me?"

You have to say yes, Thomas! It's my first time asking you out! Molly prayed to herself.

Thomas looked into Molly's hopeful eyes. He wanted to say yes, but he couldn't. He had to hunt down the sixth member of Minacia Oito. He wasn't going to let anyone who harmed Dominic get away with it! Two down, six to go!

"I'm sorry but I have plans. Let's see a movie next time. It'll be my treat."

"I see." Molly nodded disappointedly and walked off.

I'm sure he has something he needs to do, she thought to herself in consolation. I'm sure he would've said yes if he could.

After a while, Olivia came out with her bag in hand. "Let's go, Thomas. Time to get off work."

As soon as they got into the car, Olivia dropped her usual ice princess demeanor and said, "Thomas! You ruined my birthday because you didn't

show up at the celebration last night. I don't care what your reason is. It's not good manners to stand someone up, so you must make it up to me!"

Thomas turned around and looked at Olivia in surprise. He saw her with her arms at her waist and her sultry red lips pursed into a pout. She looked both domineering and adorable at the same time.

What's with her? Why did she change her attitude all of a sudden? Didn't she say I wasn't anyone important and that my presence didn't matter? Why is she now saying that I ruined her birthday by not showing up?

Nevertheless, he figured that Olivia had a point. He did stand her up, so it was reasonable for him to make it up to her.

"I'll pick you up at eight tonight." Thomas set the time.

"Okay!" Olivia smiled brightly at his words

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There was no sign of her usual aloof and reserved personality. She was just like a cheerful and easygoing girl next door.

After dropping Olivia back at her place, Thomas drove to a leisure club.

It was one of Irieson's most famous leisure clubs that offered a large variety of entertainment and leisure activities. It had everything from arcade games to pool tables. It also offered karaoke and a buffet. All in all, it provided top-notch service.

Thomas didn't get out of the car. He sat inside and smoked a cigarette as the information he had clearly stated that the person he was waiting for would only arrive at 5.00PM. There was no reason for him to head in any earlier than that, so he waited in the car.

Alas, he forgot that he was currently driving a Lamborghini. Many of the women who came to the leisure club tried to talk to him, though he shooed them away. He wasn't interested in these types of gold-digging women. In fact, after everything that happened with Felice, his instinctive response was to feel repulsed by them.

“Hey, handsome. I sprained my ankle. Can you give me a ride to Excitare Street? It’s just up ahead,” a pretty woman in a miniskirt and fishnet stockings came over and asked Thomas.

Excitare Street was lined with hotels that offered rooms by the hour. It was obvious why this woman asked Thomas to give her a ride to that area.

Thomas glanced at her and snapped in irritation, “Get away from me!”

The pretty woman in stockings rolled her eyes and walked off.

What kind of man is that? He has no sense of appreciation at all! Do you think I would’ve bothered to talk to you if I hadn’t seen you in that Lamborghini? Get away from you, huh? No problem! What’s the

big deal? I can just find a new target.

Meanwhile, Thomas was also confused. What’s with these women? Why can’t they just find a boyfriend and get into a proper relationship? Why must they do such things?

Just as he was caught up in his disdain, an Audi TT pulled up outside the leisure club and a bald man dressed in casualwear stepped out of the car. He walked into the club with his arms around a pair of women who looked like twins.

“He’s here!”

That bald man was James Yorn, the sixth member of Minacia Oito Irieson, and the one on Thomas’ hitlist today!

Thomas got out of the car and took a deep puff of his cigarette. He had to stretch out his sore upper body. His wounds hadn’t recovered yet and he was still human enough to feel pain. Nevertheless, he couldn’t pay attention to these things right now. He would make the Hinds pay sooner or later!

According to the information, James would spend an hour at the arcade before having a meal at the buffet.

Thomas was surprised by that. The other members of Minacia Oito were living a life of luxury. They wouldn’t eat anything less than food from five-star hotels. On the other hand, James was perfectly fine with having food from a buffet.

“You’re here at last, Mr. James! We’ve been waiting all day for you!”

Two gaudily-dressed young men immediately called out to James as soon as he entered the place. It was clear that James was well-known among them.

James chuckled and walked over to the men. He took a glass of red wine from the server and had a sip before asking, “What are we playing today?”

“How do you want to play today, Mr. James?” Both of these blonde-haired men had their arms around a pretty woman too.

“That’s right, Mr. James. How do you want to play today?” The twins beside James also asked him with their coquettish voices.

Isn’t this great? We landed Mr. James! We must make the best use of this opportunity. If we keep him happy, we’ll never have to worry about money ever again!

James was in a good mood as well.

“You decide, my babies, and I’ll go along with it. You can decide for me today!”

The twins exchanged glances. “Oh! I have an idea. How about this? Let’s make it a best of three, and whoever loses will have to pay for everything tonight!”

“Alright! Since you have spoken, my babies, let’s do it!” James gave each woman a kiss and guffawed.

One of the men nodded. “Come on, Mr. James! Let’s have a match first! Please go easy on me!”

He spoke with an unmistakably fawning tone. Both these men were hoping that they could become James’ men.

“Sure!” James walked over to one of the arcade machines and took a seat with the blonde-haired man.

They were playing a one-on-one fighting match called Tekken.

The tinny music rang out and the two men started duking it out.

Slam! Smash! Thump!

The two men pounded on the controls of the arcade machine. James' character ended up pummeling the blonde's character to the ground.

"Yay! You're amazing, Mr. James!"

"That was so cool, Mr. James! I love you!"

The twins quickly cheered for James.

"You could've spared my dignity a little, Mr. James!" the blonde man cried out with a despondent expression.

"Hahaha. If you manage to take away half my health in the next round, I'll consider it your victory!"

The other blonde man took a seat at the machine and flexed his hands in preparation.

Pow!

After a burst of sound effects, James emerged victorious once more.

The two blondes stuck their thumbs up. "You're such an expert, Mr. James!"

"Exactly! We practiced so hard so that we could play against you, but we couldn't even take half your health off! We thought we could at least win a round off you, Mr. James, but from the looks of it now, I don't think we'll ever be able to win against you!"

Thomas, who was standing nearby, nearly puked when he heard what they said. What the hell kind of simps are they?

Alas, there was no lack of people groveling at James' feet. The twins giggled and declared, "Mr. James is undefeatable! He has never lost before. How could you possibly defeat him?"

James acted like he was a world champion as he waved them off and said, "Haha. Keep your voices down. I don't want to brag. By the way, where are Johnson and Bernard? Why aren't they picking up their phones?"

“Mr. Johnson and Mr. Bernard should be together right now. As you know, Mr. Johnson likes bringing people over to Mr. Bernard’s place for some fun.”

“Oh, right.” James thought it sounded quite possible.

“Should I send someone over to Westsea Manor to check, Mr. James?” one of the blonde men asked.

James shook his head. “It’s fine. They’re probably having so much fun that they lost track of time. Come. Let’s go! We’ll eat first before we play something else”

He put his arms around the twins and headed to the buffet on the second floor with the two blond men in tow.

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The group of seven made their way to the room. In fact, all the rooms were already booked, but James thought it was noisy outside, so he forced the owner to modify a spot into a room, and that place was exclusive to him. No one else could have it.

Thomas paid for his bill at the entrance and sat in a corner, then he dug into his meal. Can’t kill on an empty stomach. Half an hour went by, and he looked at the time. “Six o’clock. Time to kill. I have a lady to pick up later.” He dabbed his mouth with a tissue and moved toward the innermost room in the restaurant.

The door was opened, and all because of James’ hubris. He thought no one would disturb him and his friends while they ate. If anyone tried to do that, he would kill them.

Thomas went inside and locked the door.

One of the blonde guys flew into a rage and roared at Thomas, “Who the f*ck are you? F*ck off!” Who the hell is he? He barged right in and locked the door. Why?

Thomas broke the man’s finger without missing a beat. The man howled in pain and crouched down, on the verge of tears.

“What the f*ck?” James and the other blond guy were enraged. They were just trying to have a nice dinner, and some punk barged in just to start a fight. That would not be tolerated. The two of them picked up the bottles on the table and charged toward Thomas. If I don’t get rid of him, everyone’s going to laugh at me. He’s done for.

Thomas didn’t even give them a moment of his attention. They were beneath him. He raised his leg and slammed it into the guy on the ground, and the impact sent him flying toward James and the other lackey. Caught by surprise, the two of them crashed into the flying guy and fell to the ground.

“Ow, sh*t!”

“That f*cking hurts!”

“He’s going to kill us!”

The twins and the blond guys’ women screamed in terror, but Thomas shot them an icy look. “Shut up or die.”

The women quickly kept their mouths shut, but their faces were as pale as a sheet. They stared at Thomas in terror.

Thomas whipped out his dagger and slit one of the blond guy’s throats, and blood spurted everywhere. Still, Thomas was unfazed, like what he did just now was not murdering someone but a reaping of crops.

The women’s lips trembled, and they wanted to scream, but Thomas’ threat lingered in their minds, so they quickly covered their mouths. They didn’t even dare to breathe out loud.

James and the other blond guy were shocked. They had no idea who Thomas was nor what they had done to him. So why did he kill us all of a sudden?

Thomas didn’t stop. Just like that, the other blonde guy was taken out, leaving James alone and terrified. “U-Um, who might you be, good sir? I believe we’ve done nothing wrong to you. This must be a misunderstanding.” James wasn’t stupid enough to pick a fight with someone more powerful than him, so he begged for mercy. “This is our first meeting, and I believe you’ve had enough fun, friend. But I can sweeten the deal further. What do you want? Money? Women? Name your price, and I’ll give you whatever you want.” All I have to

do is survive. Dignity means nothing. Once I get out of this place in one piece, I'll get back at him.

Thomas sat on a chair and waved at James. "Come."

"Okay." James quickly obliged. His friends were killed in mere moments, and if he were to disobey, he had no doubt this murderer would kill him right away. Resistance was futile. This guy just sent a grown man flying away with a single kick. There was no way he could compete with that kind of strength.

"Kneel."

James did as he was told. Thomas opened a bottle of liquor and took the wasabi on the table, then carefully poured the wasabi into the bottle of liquor. The liquid quickly turned green, and Thomas swirled the bottle, so the wasabi blended with the liquid. Happy with his creation, Thomas placed the bottle in front of James and ordered, "Finish this bottle in one go."

"S-Sorry?" James felt goosebumps all over his body. Finish this in one go? Is this even safe? Wasabi's spicy to begin with, and liquor is too. This isn't even alcohol anymore; it's poison! This guy added a big f*cking bowl of wasabi into it!

"My patience is running thin." Thomas smoked, holding back his urge to kill, though only barely. You guys love tormenting people, don't you? Then I'll let you have a taste of your own medicine. I'll make you pay for what you did to my friend. The Westsea Manor pervert got off easy, but you won't be so lucky.

"V-Very well..." James gritted his teeth. It's just wasabi-infused liquor. I can do this. It's better than getting killed. He stood up and reluctantly took the bottle.

"I don't remember saying you can stand up," said Thomas coldly.

James quickly went down on his knees. He was going to use that opportunity to take his phone, and once he had his phone, he could tell his lackeys to back him up, but that plan was a no-go now.

Quickly, he downed the bottle of liquor, and every gulp he took was accompanied by a stream of tears. Wasabi-infused liquor was much too powerful.

The ladies gulped as they watched James down the liquor. Just smelling it already made them gag. Drinking it must be at least ten times worse.

James let out a burp, and not a single drop was left in the bottle. His face was red, and the world around him started to spin faster and faster. "I-I did what you told me to do, friend. Y-You can let me go now, can't you?" James knelt before Thomas like a dog begging for mercy from its killer. No longer was he the same menace he used to be. Never in his life did he expect the day would come when he would have to kneel before someone else. My life is supposed to be filled with glory, riches, and fun. Once I get out of this place, I'll show him. I'll make him pay for what he did to me

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"You think I'm done?" Thomas sneered. He really thinks he can get out of this alive? Yeah, right. "I'm not done just yet. I still have to serve you some food, don't I?"

"F-Food?" James' head was spinning, and he wondered what Thomas meant. We ate a lot. I don't think I can stomach anything more.

Thomas picked up the forks on the table and bent all seven of them, then he laid it out before James. "Here, bon appetit. It's on me."

"What the hell?" James was so scared that he almost peed his pants. Do you want me to eat these? Is this a joke? These are metal. If I eat these, they'll kill me. He tried this on someone before, but he never thought he would face the same torture someday. James shook his head violently. There's no way I'm eating that. No f*cking way. I don't even know you. Why are you doing this to me?

Thomas grinned toothily, but his smile glinted with only menace. "Oh, don't be a stranger. Fine, I'll feed you." Thomas grabbed James by his chin and stuffed the forks into his mouth. Just listening to Zoe describe this made Thomas feel how much pain his friend was in before he died. I'd be a fool to let you go. There is no way you can run from this. You will suffer before you die.

James tried to scream but his mouth was filled with forks, so he couldn't make a sound. Thomas then shoved the fork into James' mouth deeper into his throat. The metal cut through his esophagus, and blood spilled like a fountain. The pain made James roll around in agony, but all Thomas did was light a cigarette and watch on in silence. You deserve this.

Two minutes later, James stopped rolling around and lay on the ground motionlessly, inches away from death. Thomas was not going to torture him further as there was no need. He just walked ahead and cut off his head, then he wrapped it up with a coat he got at random.

The ladies were huddled closely together. Only then could they find some sense of security. Thomas looked at them. There's no need to kill them. I have enough blood on my hands already. Besides, they weren't involved in Dominic's death. "Nothing happened here. Tell them that, or else." After saying that, he left the room.

It wasn't until a while after he left that the ladies snapped out of their stupor, and ear-piercing screams filled the air. Like madwomen, they ran out of the room. No longer would they stay in that room of evil. They had a feeling they just had a close encounter with death, but they were fortunate enough to get out alive.

The whole place's surveillance cameras were destroyed. It was child's play to destroy anything that might incriminate Thomas. After he returned home, he tucked his 'trophy' away, then he took a shower and drove to Olivia's place. Three down, five to go. No one can escape their fate. No one.

"Here's the financial report for last month. Our profits have dipped five percent compared to the same quarter last year. We should..." Norman looked at his spaced-out daughter and stopped talking. Earlier, he wanted to talk about work at the company, but he was told that Olivia had returned to her home, so he came over to talk about things.

However, Olivia, unlike her usual self, was out of it. She kept checking the time like she was waiting for something, and Norman wondered what was wrong. Olivia was always serious about work, so her spacing out was unheard of. "Are you unwell, Olivia?"

"Huh?" Olivia snapped out of it, but the first thing she did was check the time. "Talk later, Dad. I have to leave now." She grabbed her bag and ran off like the wind. Thomas was already waiting at the neighborhood's entrance. She got into the car, and they left.

Norman stood on the balcony, frowning at them. "Was Ophelie right? Is Olivia dating someone?" No, that can't happen, or the family's done for. "That day is almost upon us, and Olivia cannot have a

boyfriend. She must keep her chastity unbroken. No, she can't be dating Thomas. They've only known each other for days."

Norman quickly took his phone out. "Hey."

"What do you need, sir?"

"You'll be Olivia's secretary starting tomorrow. I'll tell her that. Keep an eye on her and Thomas. The only relationship they can have is an employer-employee relationship. They can't even be friends."

"Of course, sir."

Still worried, Norman asked a few people to tail Olivia, then he plopped down on the couch. He looked like he had aged ten years.

There was a nice restaurant in the street behind Irieson First High. Thomas didn't know which hotels in Irieson served good food, and he couldn't possibly take Olivia to that five-star hotel. That would make him look a bit too pretentious. I'd rather have a date at small places like this.

Olivia didn't mind, and she smiled. "This is a good place. Looks clean and nice."

Thomas took her bag. He was worried Olivia might complain, but he was delighted that she found this place nice. "I've ordered the cake. It should be here soon, so let's go inside."

Their appearance stunned everyone in the restaurant. The waitstaff couldn't believe a woman as gorgeous as Olivia would come into their shop and standing beside her was a handsome and apparently rich man. This is just like a TV drama. Of course, they thought Olivia and Thomas were a couple. They looked perfect for each other, and they came in a Lamborghini after all.

"So, what dishes do you want?" asked Thomas

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"I'm fine with anything. Just order what you want, but nothing too cheap. You're making it up to me, so I want the best of the best," said Olivia cheekily.

Thomas smiled. He didn't mind the money. Besides, even if she wanted the best of the best, the food in this shop wouldn't cost much, anyway. She was

just teasing him, so he took the menu and ordered, “Two smoked salmons, one borscht, two medium-well sirloin steaks, and two salads, please.”

He had a bit to eat back at the buffet, but Olivia might suspect something if he ate nothing, so he still made some orders for himself. A while later, his phone rang. The cake was here, and he went to take it. It was just a small cake since they couldn't finish a big one with just the two of them.

The moment Olivia opened up the box, she teared up. It was her favorite fruit cake, and there were a lot of oranges on it, too. “How did you know I like oranges?” She started digging in. Ever since her mother's passing, she had never eaten cakes made with oranges. The moment she saw this cake, it reminded her of her mother.

“You like oranges?” Thomas was surprised. He had no idea what her preferences were, so when he made that order, he just made it according to his preference.

“When my mother was still with me, she'd make orange-flavored cakes on my birthdays.” Although she could still have cake on her birthdays, things weren't the same anymore.

“Your mother's gone?” he asked. Wait... Now that I think about it, I've been to the villa before, but I've never seen her mother.

“Yes. It's been ten years since then. I was only 14 back then.” As soon as Olivia said that, tears started streaming down her cheeks. She missed her mother, especially so during the day of her birthday. After all, it was the day her mother had brought her into this world.

Thomas stared at the table in silence. He had no idea what to say. He was born an orphan, so he had no idea what his parents were like, and the old man who raised him had gone missing a long time ago. The person called ‘mother’ was nothing more than a strange concept for him.

She dug into her cake and glanced at him. What am I doing? Sure, it's sad that Mom's gone, but Thomas is born an orphan. The only relative he has is his sister, and she's not even blood-related. Great job in dampening the mood, me, she cursed herself in her mind.

Back when Thomas came to her and asked for a job, she had asked someone to look into his past, and she knew a lot about him. I have to change the subject, so he won't feel down.

"This cake tastes so good. Don't just sit there. Try some." She held up a small piece of cake and tried to feed him.

"Um..." Thomas blushed. It was the first time a lady was feeding him. I can't refuse her, or that's going to be a blow to her confidence. Thus, he had no choice but to eat it.

A moment later, their food was served, and he said, "Happy birthday. A bit late, but still..."

"Thank you." Olivia had a good appetite. She finished her steak and wolfed down Thomas' share as well.

He wasn't hungry anyway, so he didn't even touch his steak.

"Being with you is always fun. I get to ease up and wind down. Whenever I'm at the company, I have to put on a stern look so everyone will respect me. I don't have many friends growing up. They either get jealous of me, or they want to be nothing but bootlickers and sycophants so they can get my family to help them get what they want. I only have two ladies whom I can call friends. If you'd shown up at my birthday party, I could've introduced them to you."

She continued, "Everyone thinks it's sunshine and roses in my life. I am my father's firstborn and was born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I'm the president of my family's company. I went abroad to study and came back to everyone calling me a business genius. They even labeled me as 'the Most Beautiful Female Entrepreneur in Irieson,' but no one ever knows how hard I have it."

Olivia looked a little sullen, and Thomas felt for her. Yeah, they only see the glory, but they have no idea about the suffering she has to go through. I have a few people I can call friends, but she only has two. And as if that's not enough, fate cracks a joke on her. Now, she's nothing but a sacrifice to her family.

Talking about that dark side of her life roused something in Olivia, and she told the waiter to get some wine for her. "When I was little, I wanted to go to

the amusement park for my birthday. I wanted to go on roller coasters, carousels, and haunted houses, but I never did get my wish. Because I was born into this family, I had to study right after school and make sure I was always in the top three of my year. If I didn't, I'd be an embarrassment to my family. And then, the working life came. Even after work, I spend my time negotiating and talking about business. If I am not doing that, I stay at home because many people have their eyes on me. The Hind Family, for example."

My friends might come from regular families, but at least they're happy. Not only that, they make enough money to support themselves, too. Unlike me, I've been locked in a cage since young, Olivia lamented.

Thomas looked at the time and smiled. "Easy. It's still early; we can go to the amusement park after this."

Her eyes lit up at once. "Really?"

"Yep." He nodded. He was a man of his word.

"Cool!" An excited Olivia dabbed her mouth with a tissue. "I had my fill."

"Huh?" You're full the moment you know you can go to the amusement park, huh? But you were wolfing down the food just now. They might call you 'the Most Beautiful Female Entrepreneur in Irieson,' but in reality, you're just a little girl insid

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Thomas chuckled and paid the bill. Then, he took Olivia to the biggest amusement park in the city. Unbeknownst to them, the moment they set off, an Audi was following them some distance away. They were close enough to keep an eye on Thomas' car but far enough for Thomas not to notice them.

"Holy sh*t. Did she just celebrate her birthday with her driver?" one of the bodyguards blurted out, confused. That's Olivia Pearson. The most beautiful woman in the city and the firstborn of the Pearsons. She's a VVIP, yet instead of spending her free time talking to the rich and powerful, she fools around with her driver?! If news gets out, people are going to laugh at her.

The bodyguard in the passenger seat sighed. "Who knows what goes on in her head? Even I feel embarrassed for her." She shouldn't be so close to another man. If news gets out, she will most certainly be the thing of gossip.

She's the president of a powerful company, while the other guy is just a former military man. She's leagues above him. If anyone finds out, they're going to think they're dating.

The driver sighed. "Not like we get to tell them what they should do. Just do our job, mate. Keep your eyes on them."

"Yeah. We're not that much better than Thomas, anyway."

Thomas came to Paradise Amusement Park, and Olivia hopped off like a bunny who had just come to the great plains. "Oh, did you see that? That's a roller coaster! I want to have a go! Come with me!"

A moment later...

"My gosh, I'm falling! This is so exciting!" she screamed at the top of her lungs, and Thomas sat beside her, staring at the excited lady.

The amusement park was brightly lit, and not a hint of the darkness of the night was seen. As the light shone on Olivia, Thomas, for a moment, thought she was an angel who fell on Earth. She's gorgeous.

So gorgeous that I can't even take my eyes off her. He found himself getting lost in her eyes. If he hadn't seen it for himself, he would never have thought this woman was the president of a big company.

Once they came down from the roller coaster, Olivia asked, "Aren't you scared?" Aside from her shrieks, she couldn't recall hearing Thomas' screaming during the ride earlier.

The man smiled. Yeah, right. I used to jump off higher places and had nothing but a parachute supporting me. This is child's play. "What else do you want to play?"

"Haunted house. I've always wondered if there are ghosts inside." Her eyes shone with curiosity.

"Ah, there are no ghosts in this world," Thomas muttered.

"Yeah, right. I bet you'll cry when you get inside."

"Nope. I think you should be the one prepared for some frights."

“Hah! I’ve been brave since I was a kid. This won’t scare me.”

Five minutes later, Olivia screamed and pounced into Thomas’ embrace.

He furrowed his brows upon the impact. That hit just now had slammed into his wound. It hurt. “It’s alright. It’s a human hiding behind the disguise.” He pointed at the vampire that scared the lady.

“I see.” She nodded while still keeping her hold on his arm. That was her only source of security. Once they left the haunted house, she resumed her happy self. This wasn’t a chance she could get every day, so she wanted to savor every moment, going onto all the rides she had never had the opportunity to go onto.

She finally got the chance to experience roller coasters and haunted houses. No longer did she have to dream about it. She could feel it for herself. Afterward, they went onto a Ferris wheel and watched the city shrouded in the night. “Irieson is gorgeous,” said Olivia. It was her first time enjoying the scenery of the city, even though she was born and bred here.

“You know, my biggest dream isn’t becoming a respected company president. I just want to be a regular girl and marry someone who loves me. Then, we can buy a house by the seaside. Whenever we’re exhausted, we’ll rest, and whenever we have time, we’ll swim in the sea. It’s a good life.”

Thomas looked at her. That’s a regular wish, but she probably doesn’t know that it’s hard to get for her. Ever since she was born, she was destined to be a sacrifice. If I didn’t help her, she would never live to see her wish fulfilled. I can’t let her be sacrificed. She’s a human, not an object. Her life is hers to control, not anyone else’s. She’s not a puppet.

“Oh, I wanna play with that gun,” Olivia chirped the moment they got off the Ferris wheel.

It was obvious she was still excited, and Thomas wouldn’t want to ruin her mood. He bought them some tickets so she could play all she wanted.

She fired off three shots, but none hit. “Aww, why can’t I hit them?” she grumbled.

The man approached her with a smile and taught her how to shoot. “Keep your eyes on the target and hold the gun firmly. Calm your heart and breath.”

If the special forces knew what was happening now, they'd be jealous of Olivia. Having the King of Marksmen teaching them how to shoot was something they could never hope for, but now, that kind of luck had fallen upon a woman who had no idea how to shoot. He even taught her step by step and with a toy gun too.

Meanwhile, Olivia could barely stay calm. The moment Thomas touched her hand, her heart started thumping furiously, and she went red. This was different from that time in the haunted house. She didn't realize what she was doing then, but now she was very much aware of the close proximity between them.

Though, Thomas didn't feel anything. He was still trying to teach her how to shoot. That was his instinct kicking in. Every time he was using a gun, he would get into the flow, even if it was just a toy gun.

"You shoot it. I want that big plushie. The white one." Even though Thomas was teaching her seriously, Olivia was not in the headspace to learn. She could only think about how close they were standing, and there was no way she could listen to the lessons

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If the special forces had seen this, they probably would have roared with fury. To think someone would refuse the teachings of the King of Marksmen himself... That was unthinkable! They would kill just to have a one-on-one lesson with him.

Thomas sighed. Times sure have changed. When I was in the military, everyone wanted me to teach them how to shoot, and I would just ignore them. The tables have turned now. Unbeknownst to him, Olivia was filled with the urge to lean into his embrace, especially when they were so close, and she could smell the scent of tobacco coming off him.

Each shot he made had hit the mark, and he gave Olivia the prize. "Anything else you want to play?"

"Ice skating!" she exclaimed.

They came to the ice rink and changed into some ice skates. It was only then Thomas realized Olivia had no idea how to skate on ice.

"D-Don't let me go, or I'm going to fall." Her legs were trembling. Just standing on ice was the best she could do.

"Relax your legs and put your strength into your ankles," the man instructed patiently. "I'll hold you. You won't fall."

She slowly moved ahead, but the moment she did, she lost her balance. Fortunately, Thomas had kept his hold on her and prevented her fall. "Oh, this is hard." Olivia looked a little defeated.

"Give me your hand." Thomas took her hand and slowly led her across the ice rink. He figured this was the best way for her to find her bearing on the surface. "Ice skating isn't that much different from cycling. You should always keep your eyes on the road ahead. The more you worry about falling, the more you will," he said.

Under his guidance, Olivia slowly got the hang of it, and her smile returned.

"Dammit, he's holding her hand!" One of the bodyguards clenched his fists, glaring at Thomas with fury. How dare you touch her hand, you peasant! He had noticed how close they were standing together at the shooting range, and now Thomas took it a step further. He's taking advantage of her!

The other bodyguard had a much clearer mind. "Well, he's teaching her how to skate, after all."

"Bullsh*t! He's taking advantage of her! I'm going to teach him a lesson! That'll teach him not to get close to Miss Olivia!"

"Um..."

"If you don't want to do it, I will!"

"Hey, I'm not the kind of guy to let my friend work alone."

"Good. We're done for the day. We need to tell Mr. Pearson about this. If that sc*mbag still hounds Miss Olivia, I'll kill him!"

Olivia played until midnight. It was Sunday the next day, so she figured she could sleep in. She didn't have to worry about not getting enough rest. They then left the amusement park and got into the car. "Thank you, Thomas." She

turned around and blinked at him. This was the happiest birthday in her life. The bliss came late, but it was better than never.

Thomas smiled and drove away to Olivia's place. He saw her off before he left.

Olivia held the big plushie and entered her house. When she saw Norman, she asked in surprise, "Dad? Why are you still here?" He didn't leave? But it must've been hours.

Norman looked at her. "You're back."

"Yes. You want to talk about something?" She knew her father had something to talk about.

"Come. Sit."

She sat beside her father, waiting for him to speak.

"I've told Yukine about this; she'll be your secretary starting Monday."

Olivia froze for a moment. She already had a secretary, so having one more would make it two, and that was one too many for her. Besides, she didn't like Yukine that much. Yukine Pearson was, as her name implied, part of the Pearson Family, but she was never nice to Olivia. Even when Olivia tried to talk to her, she wouldn't respond. "There's no need for that, Dad. I have my own secretary. It's—"

Norman waved her down and imperiously said, "This is my order. It's just an announcement, not a discussion."

Olivia looked upset upon hearing that. Still as bossy as ever. She might be the company's president, but her father was the one who made all the decisions behind the scenes. He was the chairman, after all. "If nothing else, I'll be retiring for the night." With that, she headed toward her bedroom.

"Remember your promise. No dating anyone for ten years."

"Yeah, yeah." She went into her bedroom and slammed the door shut. The day her mother passed away, her father, for some reason, made her swear off romance for ten years, and she couldn't even get close to any men.

“We don’t have much time.” Norman left the house and heaved a long sigh. Of course, he was sad his daughter was chosen as the sacrifice, but what choice did he have? Rules were rules. Compared to the family’s future, one person’s happiness meant nothing.

Thomas woke up early the next morning and brewed the medicine. It might be a Sunday, but the treatment must go on, so he took it to Olivia’s house, but the moment he came to her place, he frowned. Why didn’t she lock the door? Wait... Something’s not right. The door’s not opened. It was lockpicked, and there are traces left too. Could it be...

He quickly darted into her house and rushed to her bedroom, but he walked as silently as possible.

Olivia was still sound asleep, but before her bed stood a masked man. “Heh. If she dies, you’ll all go to hell, Pearsons!” He whipped out a bottle of green liquid, uncorked it, and slathered it over his dagger.

Scorpion venom. Thomas couldn’t believe this man would do that. The moment he stabbed Olivia with that dagger, the poison would diffuse into her blood and kill her within sixty seconds

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Who is he? And why does he hate the Pearsons so much? Based on his posture, he’s going for her carotid artery. That’s where blood flows the fastest bar the heart. If that hit connects, Olivia will die immediately. Even if she could last until she got to the hospital and had her bleeding stopped, the venom would’ve spread across her whole body. She’d be beyond help.

Thomas’ skills in medicine were top-tier among the people in this city. Even Quincy said he was better than him, but not even Thomas could save Olivia should the venom run its course.

The masked man raised his hand and was about to strike, but Thomas tapped the man’s shoulder lightly right at that moment.

“Huh?” The man was startled. He was sure no one else was in the condo when he broke in. So, who’s behind me? Despite his surprise, he didn’t make a sound, or he’d have woken up Olivia.

Thomas quickly held the man's nape with one hand and his wrist with the other. Trying to kill her, huh? You're done for. She's my friend, and anyone who tries to touch her has to face me.

The masked man was trained in martial arts as well, so he reacted quickly to the attack. Before Thomas could do anything, he flicked his other hand, and three little knives buried themselves in Thomas' chest.

Thomas was caught by surprise, and a stab of pain flared from his chest. When he snapped out of it, the masked man had already run off, and Thomas coughed up blood. He still hadn't fully healed from the explosion last time, and now he had gotten some new injuries over the old ones. Now is not the time to go after him. I have to make sure Olivia's fine. He could've poisoned her before I came.

He quickly smacked himself in a few places to stop the bleeding before heading over to check Olivia's pulse. Good. Things are normal. I showed up right on time. Once he was sure she was fine, he placed the thermos on the nightstand and left soon after. Half an hour later, he showed up in the hospital.

Quincy's eyes went wide, and he asked, "You can teleport instantly, can't you?"

"Sorry?" Why would he ask me that?

"I mean, I bet you've gone to Iraq and fought in a war, then you teleport right back to get treated. You're getting injured every other day now."

Thomas shook his head, smiling bitterly.

"I'll deal with the injuries." Quincy sighed. We're living in different worlds, alright. He gets injured so often. After pulling out the last knife, Quincy went to wash his hands while Thomas heaved a long sigh and wiped off the sweat on his forehead.

Who sent that assassin? The Hind Family? That can't be right, though. I was the one who killed Drake, so even if they wanted revenge, they'd come for me first before going after Olivia. He fiddled around with the knife. "Do you recognize these knives, Dr. Hofstead?" The edge was sharp, and the blade was beautiful. This was no ordinary knife.

Quincy had been too focused on helping Thomas with his wounds, so he didn't realize what he had taken out. The mention of knives made him freeze, and he then took one knife to inspect it closely. "Let me see." A moment later, he asked in exasperation, "How did you get entangled with these people?"

"So, you do know them?" Thomas smiled.

"Yes. This is the product of the Xalmar Family, and judging from the looks of it, the guy who hurt you was a core member of the family, too. Otherwise, they wouldn't have had these knives," explained Quincy. As if the Hind Family isn't enough, he is crossing the Xalmars now, too? Most people would have been destroyed if they had crossed even one family, but he gets on two families' bad sides. They're two of the biggest families in the city. The Xalmars master the art of throwing knives, and

they're infamous for their usage of scorpion venom. Yet, this guy here survived the attack of a core member. How lucky can he be?

"The Xalmars?" Thomas frowned. Another family I've never heard of.

"Yes." Quincy nodded. "Remember what I told you about Olivia? Sacrifices like her are prepared by the six greatest families of Irieson, and the Xalmar Family is one of them."

Just then, Thomas recalled the masked man's words. No wonder he said that about the Pearsons.

"So, how did you cross them again?" Quincy smirked. He crossed the Hind Family to protect Olivia, so why did he cross the Xalmars this time?

Thomas shook his head. "I didn't cross them."

Surprised, Quincy asked, "What? Why did they try to kill you, then? Are they ignoring the law now?"

An ice-cold glint flared in Thomas' eyes. He was thinking about something, but Quincy didn't know what. Since Thomas wouldn't speak, Quincy wouldn't ask. If he refused to talk, no matter how much Quincy asked, he wouldn't spill it out.

Thomas started smoking. I used to do things however I wanted, but I've overlooked one thing. If I clear her system of toxins, what will happen to her?

What happens to her family? Will they all die like what the masked guy said? As he thought of that, he asked, "Dr. Hofstead, if Olivia isn't taken away, or if she cannot become a sacrifice, what will happen?"

Quincy shivered a little, and he looked at Thomas for a while. He had a feeling Thomas was about to do something irreversible. "Something unimaginably horrifying."

"How much horror are we talking about?" Thomas had made up his mind. If he had to fall out with the six families to save his friend, he would do it. He would kill everyone if it meant saving Olivia. He would never let anything happen to her.

"A lot. You might die a horrible death."

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Quincy had a grim look on his face as he said those words. A lot of the big families in Irieson knew about this fact. Even if he didn't tell Thomas, the latter could still find someone else to answer him.

"Interesting." Thomas flicked his cigarette and left the office. "I'll die a horrible death, eh? Then, let's see if that'll happen." Olivia's my friend, and I won't let anything happen to her. Zachary had died, and Thomas swore he would never let anything like that happen to his friends.

He came to Adam's ward. Adam had just taken his medication and fell asleep while Chloe stayed by his side, taking care of him. When Thomas appeared, Chloe got to her feet and took him out of the ward. "Thomas, what brings you here?"

Thomas smiled. "Just want to see how your father's doing. Fine?"

"Yeah, almost. The doctor said he could be discharged in two days. All he has to do after that is rest at home."

"Good. I'll pick him up by then." His phone rang right then, and he took it out of his pocket. William?

"Hey, Thomas. Whatcha doing?" William was having tea with Samuel.

"Nothing. What is it?"

“Come over, then. It’s been a while, and I wanna see you. I have some good wine, too. Let’s share.”

“Sure, coming right now.” Thomas checked the time. It was early. Only 1.00PM. Since he didn’t plan to return to his home, he might as well go to William’s. He had business to attend to later that night, which involved a certain person’s head. He said goodbye to Chloe and left the hospital.

Chloe saw him off, and tears glistened in her eyes. Seeing him reminded her of her brother. Her father was healing up well, but she had not much time left. I wonder if I can still see my brother one last time.

...

Samuel and William sat across from each other, and Samuel looked at William solemnly. “Are you certain that is not a joke? Did that man truly kill three of the Minacia Oito?” The whole city was talking about that. Three of the Minacia Oito were dead, but no one knew who did it.

Tigre Shawn, leader of the Minacia Oito, had promised a hefty sum of reward for those who could provide him with the clues of the killer, and that kind of reward would most certainly attract some reckless people. After all, three of the Minacia Oito—who had the power to send the people trembling in fear just from hearing their names—had died. Their network was vast and complex, and not even the Peralta Family would challenge them. No, not because of fear, but because they’d rather not deal with too many complications.

“I mean, think about it. Who else but him would kill the Minacia Oito? Thomas is different. Minacia Oito tortured and killed his friend just because they wanted his bar, and Thomas is not one to take it lying down. He only told Sean and me to stay out of this so we wouldn’t be dragged into this mess. I am certain he was the one who did this. He told me no one who hurt his friends would live.”

There was worship in William’s eyes. He could still remember the look on Thomas’ face when he said that back then. He looked like a king decreeing the punishment of the wicked, and William almost knelt before him.

Samuel heaved a long sigh. If even William says that, then Thomas must be the killer. How powerful is he, anyway? He took out three of the eight without anyone knowing. Not even we can do it that cleanly, even if we worked with the Mortons. “That friend of yours is... something,” praised Samuel.

“Of course. He’s my friend,” said William smugly. It felt like he was the one who did the deed for a moment. Even though they were not blood-related, William saw Thomas as his brother. Sometimes,

William felt he was closer to Thomas than his own brother. He didn’t care what his grandfather had to say; Thomas would always be someone he and Sean looked up to.

Smiling, Samuel looked at the time. “It’s late. Why isn’t he here yet? He should’ve been here by now.” The Peralta Residence was in the city, and it wasn’t even in a remote area. An hour had gone by since William made the call, but Thomas still hadn’t shown up.

Odd. Thomas is a punctual man. Did he run into something? He called Thomas. “Where you at, Thomas?”

“I can’t make it, sorry. Ran into something. Let’s meet up some other time.” With that, Thomas hung up.

William wanted to ask him what he had run into, but he couldn’t make it. A small smile tugged his lips, and he explained things to Samuel. He was sure Thomas was the one who killed the three, and there was only one reason Thomas didn’t tell him; he didn’t want to drag the Peralta Family into this. It’s for our own good.

On the other hand, Thomas couldn’t make it because he was stopped on his way. Ever since he started driving, he knew someone was tailing him, and he wondered who it was. Ultimately, he drove to a remote corner to find out who his enemy was.

Eight Cherokees stood in front of his car, their headlamps shining brightly. A man in the leading car made a call. “Sir.”

“Turn on the camera. I want to see him die,” a voice said coldly. Even at this distance, the lackeys could still feel the anger behind the voice.

“Yes, sir.” The man turned on the camera and got out of his car, pointing the camera at Thomas.

Everyone else got out as well, and they were armed with machetes. All of them glared at Thomas, and judging from the size of these people, they were professional fighters.

Yet, Thomas was unfazed. He exited the car and leaned on his car door with his arms crossed, still smoking. He looked at those burly men. Who sent them? The Hind Family? Probably not. Not even their killers managed to kill me. There's no way they would send out regular people. Unless they're dumb, that is