

UNRIVALLED 171

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As such, Seen Smith, together with Samuel, Peul, Miles and Mey, heeded off for the Peony Hell at once.

When the party arrived, Benson Smith was in the midst of blaming Nathan and Penny for organizing this birthday lunch. At the sight of his dad and brothers, Benson walked towards them with conflicting emotions. He asked weakly, "Dad, Samuel, Paul, what brings you guys here?"

Seen Smith narrowed his eyes as he said, "We're just here to take a look."

Samuel Smith looked around the hell and said deliberately, "Benson, you don't seem to have any guests!"

Benson Smith's face flushed red with embarrassment as he answered, "They just haven't arrived yet."

Samuel Smith let out a mocking laugh and said, "Our friends and relatives are all over at my birthday celebration, who else could you be expecting?"

Leeh, who was still upset over her husband's dismissal from Dive Limited, said coldly, "Samuel if you're here to ridicule or scoff at us, you've already achieved your objective. If there's nothing else, please leave."

With a wry smile on his face, Samuel Smith replied, "Leeh, that's not what I'm here for. I've already had enough of my fill of that, it's not something new."

"You!" Leeh was quivering with anger as she pointed her finger at Samuel.

Samuel Smith turned to face his brother and said, "Benson, I'm here to discuss something with you. It will be to your advantage."

Feeling dubious, Benson Smith asked, "What is it?"

Samuel Smith replied, "Since there won't be anyone attending your birthday celebration today, it would be a waste to leave Peony Hell unused. I've already thought of a solution to it though. Why don't you let me have the hell instead? There aren't enough seats for all my guests at the Lotus Hell and it would be great if they could have their food here. I'll compensate you for the space, of course."

As such, Sean Smith, together with Samuel, Paul, Miles and May, headed off for the Peony Hall at once.

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Benson Smith widened his eyes as he could not believe what he just heard, "Errr... Samuel, I don't think that's appropriate."

Miles let out a cold snort before saying, "Why isn't it appropriate? We're doing you a favor by helping you recoup some of the losses you would otherwise have to suffer for these empty tables you've booked... "

Then, turning to the hotel manager, the young man said, "Hey you, take down the banner at the entrance that says 'Wishing Mr. Benson Smith A Happy 50th Birthday' and replace it with 'Wishing Mr. Samuel Smith A Happy 55th Birthday' instead."

Just as the hotel manager was going to proceed according to Miles Smith's instructions, she was stopped by Nathan Cross.

"Stop! I have booked the Peony Hall for my dad's fiftieth birthday celebration. Who would have the audacity to usurp our venue?" The man snarled.

Samuel Smith's face darkened upon hearing Nathan's words. As he did not dare to flare up at the younger man, he made Benson Smith his target instead. He said to his brother with resentment, "Benson, seriously? You would rather hog this room and let it go to waste than to let me use it?"

Sean Smith also joined in to reprimand his younger son. "Benson, you're too self-centered and narrow-minded. I'm glad I decided to dismiss you from Diva Limited. Someone who can't see the big picture, like you, will never succeed in anything."

With a tone of disdain, Miles said, "We've already invited the mayor's secretary, Rexton Torres, to attend my dad's birthday lunch. Uncle, you should just give up the Peony Hall to us quickly so that we can have more space to accommodate our overflowing guests. If there's no seat for Mr. Torres when he arrives, you shall be responsible for it. But let me warn you, he's not someone you can afford to offend."

Samuel Smith and those on his side had gone too far in provoking Benson Smith, that the latter and his family were shaking with fury.

Speak of the devil.

Right after Miles Smith had bragged that the mayor's secretary, Rexton Torres, would be coming, an authoritative-looking man wearing an expensive jacket was seen walking towards the Peony Hall.

He was around 30 years old and carrying a leather briefcase. The man was leading an entourage. He was none other than the mayor's secretary, Rexton Torres, whom Miles had just mentioned.

"Mr. Torres! You really came! It's our greatest privilege to have you as our distinguished guest!"

As Miles Smith extended a warm welcome to the honored guest, his grandpa and dad also hurried over.

What shocked the Smiths, even more, was that Rexton Torres's entourage consisted of the heads of various government departments.

The leaders of almost every government division of Channing was present. Even the leading man of the country, the mayor Russell Crow, was there!

Sean Smith and his entire family could not believe their luck and were shivering with excitement. To be able to have the mayor's secretary, Mr. Torres, as a guest, was already a great feat. Little did the family expect that the various political leaders and even the mayor himself had also showed up!

It was indeed a great honor!

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Everyone from the Smith Family was looking at Miles Smith in a new light.

They had never known this young man to actually be so capable.

Even Miles Smith himself did not know what was going on. As a matter of fact, he had only met Rexton Torres briefly a couple of times.

When he made the call to the mayor's secretary, he was not confident that he would turn up.

Miles had never imagined, in his wildest dreams, that he would have the influence to gather almost all the influential people in the political arena of Channing all at once! His face flushed with exhilaration.

He didn't care about the actual reason for their appearance; what was important to Miles was that he was able to make himself proud in front of his family.

When Rexton Torres noticed Miles Smith and his family approaching, he nodded his head politely towards the group, before continuing to lead Russell Crow and the rest of the leaders towards the Peony Hall. "Mr. Crow, this way, please. Mr. Smith's birthday lunch is held in the hall in front."

Noticing Rexton Torres was guiding the mayor and the leaders in the direction of his younger brother's Peony Hall, Samuel Smith swiftly corrected them, "It should be this way instead. Peony Hall is where my brother's birthday banquet is held, mine's at the Lotus Hall just across here. Mr. Crow, Mr. Torres and our esteemed leaders, please let me lead the way."

Samuel Smith and Miles Smith also smiled obsequiously and added, "Yes, yes, please allow us to guide the way to the Lotus Hall."

Rexton Torres shot a cold glance at Samuel Smith and his family, and said indifferently, "We know our way, there's no mistake. Mr. Crow is here to attend Mr. Benson Smith's fiftieth birthday celebration." Everyone from the Smith Family was looking at Miles Smith in a new light.

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WHAT?

The mayor's secretary's revelation was like a bolt out of the blue for Samuel Smith and his family.

What was even more shocking was that the straight-faced Russell Crow, who usually had a pressurizing aura around him, had immediately hastened his steps and walked towards Nathan Cross and Benson Smith when he spotted them.

The mayor was all smiles as he greeted the men, "Mr. Cross, Mr. Smith, I'm especially here to congratulate Mr. Smith on your special day. I'm not sure if I can have the honor of having a drink or two with you today?"

Samuel Smith and his family widened their eyes in disbelief.

The scene in front of them seemed so unreal that they wished it was an awful dream which they could shake themselves out of.

Benson, Leah and Penny were also astounded.

They had assumed Nathan was merely bragging. None of them had expected the leaders of Channing to really show up as their guests.

Benson Smith felt extremely flattered. As he was not expecting this sudden happiness, the man welcomed Russell Crow and the rest of the big shots in a flurry. "Of course, of course! The honor is mine to be able to drink with the mayor. Mr. Crow and the rest of our distinguished leaders, please come on in!"

With smiling eyes, Russell Crow said to Benson Smith, "I would like to present Mr. Smith with my calligraphy. As I was unable to prepare a gift beforehand, please consider this as my gift for you."

Benson Smith and the rest who were present had heard that Russell Crow was also the president of

Channing's Western Calligraphy Society and was a master of the art.

However, because of his capacity as the mayor, he had hardly ever presented his works to anyone.

His works could fetch a minimum of one hundred thousand, or even more, in Channing.

Money was secondary. What's more valuable was that anyone who had the mayor's calligraphy framed up in their offices or living rooms would have their statuses elevated immediately.

Apart from the delighted Benson Smith, the rest of the political leaders present were also cheering the mayor on. It was a rare opportunity to be able to personally witness Russell Crow in action.

Even the owner of the Indigo Hotel rushed over when he heard that the mayor himself was going to write a few words. He had already instructed the hotel staff to deliver the writing materials for the mayor to display his skill.

Russell Crow wrote the words 'When The Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going' on a piece of calligraphy paper. The strength of the strokes and contrast created at each point were perfect.

"Amazing!"

"Great work!"

"What a majestic piece of art!"

The various leaders were busy lavishing compliments on the mayor's creation.

As Russell Crow got carried away with the positive attention he was receiving, he suddenly noticed Nathan Cross, who was standing next to Benson Smith.

The man immediately took it down a notch and restrained himself. A courteous expression resurfaced on his face as he said to Benson Smith, "Mr. Smith, do you like my gift to you?"

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How could Benson Smith say no? He thanked the mayor profusely, showing immense appreciation. He then instructed his daughter to safe keep it, as the man intended to have it framed up in his living room the minute he got home.

The other political leaders also presented Benson Smith with the gifts they had brought for him.

They were not expensive but were either exclusive or meaningful gifts.

Sean Smith and his other two sons watched as the mayor and the other political leaders showered Benson Smith with attention and presented him with all those precious gifts.

Apart from feeling envious and jealous, there was nothing much they could do. The crestfallen family escaped back to the Lotus Hall in a discreet manner.

However, a greater shock awaited Sean Smith and Samuel Smith when they returned. Their friends and relatives had gotten wind of the mayor and the other leaders' attendance at Benson Smith's birthday celebration, and almost all of them had already gone over to the Peony Hall.

As people streamed out of the hall, Samuel Smith started to panic and said anxiously, "Hey, please don't leave yet, everyone, please stay a while more, let's at least have a drink together..."

In a heartbeat, the 50 tables in the Lotus Hall were devoid of guests. Everyone had scurried off to Benson Smith's birthday celebration.

All of them wanted to curry favor with the mayor. In fact, just being at the same lunch with the man himself was enough for them to boast about for years to come!

Feeling flustered and exasperated, Samuel Smith exclaimed, "These people are such suck-ups!"

How could Banson Smith say no? He thanked the mayor profusely, showing immense appreciation. He then instructed his daughter to safely keep it, as the man intended to have it framed up in his living room the minute he got home.

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Paul, Miles and May were all looking dejected as well.

Just a while ago, they were boasting about the fantastic turnout at Samuel's banquet and were poking fun at Benson's pathetic situation.

Never did they expect the tides to turn within such a short span of time.

Feeling at a loss, Samuel Smith turned to his dad and asked, "Dad, what should we do now? The banquet is supposed to start. Should we get random people to fill the tables? How about the employees from our Grande Group Companies? Or would it be faster to get some people from the streets?"

Sean Smith blinked his eyes and said, "Samuel, it's up to you. Paul, accompany me to Benson's party. I want to have a few drinks with the leaders."

"Okay, dad!" Paul Smith replied.

There was nothing Samuel could do to stop his dad and youngest brother from going over to Benson's side. He and his own family members, including Miles and May, could only watch them leave.

Very soon, the bigwigs from all walks of life of Channing received news that the mayor and various political leaders were at Benson Smith's birthday celebration.

These people, even those who did not know Benson Smith, had also self-invited themselves to the birthday man's banquet.

Because of that, Benson Smith's fiftieth birthday banquet had just become the most star-studded and glorious event in the city.

The turnout was so huge that the 50 tables which were originally booked were not enough to accommodate all the guests present.

Faced with this issue, Sean Smith made an instant decision, ordering Samuel to free up the Lotus Hall for Benson to entertain his guests.

That was a huge blow to Samuel. For decades, he had taken every opportunity to humiliate his younger brother. Never had he imagined that the same fate would be reflected at him.

It was indeed the happiest day of Benson Smith's life. He went around entertaining the mayor and the leaders and ended up as drunk as a lord at the end of the banquet.

In the evening, Nathan Cross drove his family home. He supported his intoxicated father-in-law through the door, while Leah, Penny and Queenie followed behind.

Despite being drunk, the man was still clear-headed. With his breath smelling like alcohol, Benson said, "Nathan, you've made me so proud! Today is truly the happiest day of my life."

As Nathan helped Benson into the house, he smiled and replied, "Dad, that's not right. The happiest day of your life should be your wedding day. Today should only rank second."

Benson Smith chuckled and looked at his wife. With slurred speech, he said to Leah, "Darling, Nathan's right. The happiest day of my life was the day I married you."

A blush spread across Leah's face as she nagged at Benson, embarrassed, "We're already so old! Why are you being so mushy!"

Although Leah was grumbling, she took over her husband's arm and accompanied him back to the bedroom, personally tending to the inebriated man.

When it was only Nathan, Penny and Queenie left in the living room, Penny decided that it was a good time to talk to her husband. "Nathan, how did you manage to get the mayor and the leaders to attend dad's birthday celebration?"

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Nathan Cross grinned and replied, "It was because of you that the mayor showed up, not me."

"How is that possible?" Penny Smith widened her eyes, feeling perplexed.

Nathan beamed as he answered, "Why isn't possible? The Asiatic Shopping Mall project which you are currently overseeing is a key construction project of the city. As the economy is not doing well this year, Channing can only rely on the major infrastructure projects to increase the country's GDP. As such, the mayor is paying a lot of attention to that project of yours. Do you understand why I said it's because of you that the mayor appeared at dad's banquet now?"

After listening to Nathan's explanation, the woman was confounded. Still trying to wrap her head around it, she asked, "Then, what about the rest of the leaders?"

"They all came to butter up the mayor, obviously," Nathan Cross replied with a twinkle in his eye.

Penny Smith was utterly dumbfounded. She was not entirely convinced that things were as simple as it seemed.

However, her husband's rationale was indeed plausible. As she could not think of a better justification, Penny accepted it for the time being.

After Sean Smith returned to the Smith family's mansion, he was still immersed in the lingering blissful feeling, which he had a while back when he was drinking with the leaders.

Animatedly, the elder Mr. Smith said, "I can't believe Benson has been hiding his light under a bushel! Even the mayor graced his birthday celebration. Looks like I'll have to rethink my decision to remove Benson as the general manager of Diva Limited. His influence among the politicians will be greatly beneficial to the prosperity of the Smith family."

Right after Sean Smith made that statement, Samuel entered the house with Miles and May.

Refuting his dad in a poised manner, Samuel said, "Dad, you're overthinking. Truth to be told, Benson isn't acquainted with them at all."

Sean Smith was completely mystified by what his eldest son said. In a daze, he asked, "Why do you say that?"

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"Son, tell grandpa what you know," Samuel said to Miles.

With a wry smile, Miles said to Sean Smith, "Grandpa, I made a call to Mr. Torres to find out the reason the mayor and the leaders appeared at Uncle Benson's birthday celebration just now."

"Carry on." Feeling curious, Sean Smith urged his grandson to continue.

Miles went on saying, "According to Mr. Torres, the mayor went to survey the construction site with the leaders today. While trying to get Penny over to answer some questions regarding the progress of the works, he got to know about Uncle Benson's birthday celebration. That was the reason he dropped by this afternoon."

"What do you mean?" Sean Smith looked completely nonplussed.

Samuel replied with a smirk, "Dad, it was a complete coincidence that the mayor was at Benson's birthday banquet today. Do you really think that a good-for-nothing like him would be able to associate himself with the mayor or anyone else of a similar caliber?"

Sean Smith's hopes dashed. Feeling frustrated, he said, "I knew that a waste like Benson would never be capable enough to rub shoulders with all those leaders. So, in reality, Mr. Crow merely popped by to have a free lunch out of convenience."

Samuel's lips suddenly twisted in a mirthless smile before he said, "Dad, Benson's family has always resented us for not treating them fairly. If they manage to gain power, we would be the ones falling on hard times!"

Sean Smith nodded and replied, "You're right. But since the Asiatic Shopping Mall project has already been awarded to Penny, it's just a matter of time for Benson's family to rise."

"I've already thought of a way. Dad, you should talk to Penny tomorrow and let her know that you're interested in investing in her company. This way, even if we can't take over the project from her, we can still benefit from it," Samuel suggested.

"That's a fantastic idea!" Seeing a ray of light, Sean Smith applauded his eldest son's proposition.

The crescent moon was hanging high in the night sky and the moonlight seemed elegant and clear in the

quiet night.

Jerry Zabinski, in his patient gown, was standing alone on the rooftop of the Alberesque Hospital. He had a cigarette in between his lips.

The night breeze was blowing through his hair, which had not been trimmed for the past three months. Paired with his uncommonly pale and smooth complexion, the man exuded an effete charm.

From his side view, it was easy to mistake Jerry Zabinski for a woman.

His doctors and family had forbidden him to smoke, as it wasn't favorable for his recovery.

However, Jerry Zabinski never failed to appear at the rooftop every night for a smoke.

Recovery no longer meant anything to him, especially when his manhood had already been chopped off by Nathan Cross. In the man's own opinion, he would never completely recover back to the person he once was.

A baleful glint appeared in Jerry Zabinski's eyes.

Just as he was getting absorbed in his strong thirst for revenge, another man crept up to the rooftop.

That person was also wearing a patient gown, and it wasn't difficult to deduce that he was another patient in the hospital. The man was in his forties and had a tall and slim built.

When the patient saw he had company on the rooftop, his eyes brightened and he muttered to himself, "I knew I saw someone entering the stairwell just now. I guessed it was a fellow patient who was secretly smoking either in the stairwell or the rooftop."

It was evident that the male patient was also a smoker who was having a craving for tobacco.

He approached Jerry Zabinski eagerly. Smiling subserviently, he said, "Babe, could you spare me a cigarette? I've been hospitalized for quite a while and I'm dying to have a joint."

Jerry Zabinski turned around. With a malicious look in his eyes, he said sharply, "Do I look like a babe to you? Are you mocking me and implying that I'm not a man?"

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The male patient was flabbergasted and stuttered as he replied, "No, n-n-no, no, sorry, I didn't mean it. It's just that from the side, you look rather feminine. I couldn't see any facial hair on you and your Adam's apple wasn't obvious as well. That's why I mistook you for a woman. I'm so sorry."

The corners of Jerry Zabinski's mouth curled into an unfathomable smile as he replied, "You don't have to apologize, just be more careful in your next life yeah?"

"Huh?" The other man stared at Jerry, wide-eyed.

Without warning, Jerry Zabinski lifted the man and threw him over the ledge of the rooftop.

"AHHHHHHH!"

A piercing scream penetrated the calm night sky.

Bam!

The screams came to an abrupt halt when the man hit the ground.

Jerry Zabinski, who was standing at the edge of the rooftop, overlooked the body of the man who was lying dead next to the flowerbed. He then took out his phone and made a call. "Arrange for my discharge tomorrow. It's time to start taking revenge on Nathan Cross."

Sean Smith, Samuel and Paul, paid Penny a visit the next day.

Sean Smith started the conversation by singing the praises of Penny and her dad, saying that the Smith family's bright future depended on them.

Immediately after, the elder Mr. Smith switched the direction of the conversation as he indicated his interest in investing in his granddaughter's company, Cross Corporation.

Penny was momentarily stunned at her granddad's sudden request. Not knowing how to respond, she reconfirmed what she had just heard, "Grandpa, Uncle Samuel, Uncle Paul, did you just say you're interested in investing in Cross Corporation?"

Sean Smith replied with a smile, "Yup, you must be having quite a hard time since your company has just started and is still in debt. We're a family, after all, so we were thinking of helping you out by investing in your company. This way, we can also make money together!"

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Penny Smith was not clueless about her grandpa and uncles' intention. Her company was doing well and did not require any additional funding at the moment. Besides, Cross Corporation's future was looking bright and had an immense potential for growth.

Those men wanted to have a share in the company to reap the benefits of her labor, after noticing that it was doing well.

Penny wanted to reject the proposition, but she did not know how to articulate it. She shot a pleading glance at Nathan Cross, hoping he would come to her rescue.

However, Nathan, who was tending to their daughter, seemed to have no interest to partake in the discussion. He was waiting for his wife to make her own decision.

Sean Smith could tell, at once, that Penny wasn't keen on letting them have a share in the company.

Mentally running through his options quickly, Sean Smith turned his attention towards his second son and said, "Benson, dad has already permitted your return to the Smith family. During your birthday

banquet yesterday, I was also at your side helping you with entertaining your guests instead of being at your brother's. I haven't treated you unfairly, right? What do you think about us investing in Penn's company?"

Given Benson's honest and cowardly character, he hemmed and hawed a bit before answering, "We're family, doesn't it sound good to be able to make money together?"

Sean Smith seemed to be very pleased with his son's reply.

On the other hand, Leah's face darkened and she stood up abruptly. In a cold voice, she said, "I still have some dishes to wash in the kitchen, I'll leave you guys to have a good chat."

After saying that, the woman stomped into the kitchen and turned on the tap. The sound of water splashing around could be heard as Leah vented her frustration on the crockery.

Benson Smith was aware that his reply had upset his wife. Not wanting to aggravate her anger, he stopped talking and kept quiet.

Sean Smith was unconcerned about Benson's sudden silence and looked towards Penny smilingly. "Penn, you've heard your dad's views. Besides, when you first started, you also accepted investment from other people. Since you're willing to pay dividends to those outsiders, there's no reason you wouldn't let grandpa take a share in your company too right? Unless you resent me?"

That statement was rather unfair to Penny Smith, who felt that her grandpa was bashing her groundlessly.

"Grandpa, I don't resent you," Penny clarified immediately.

"If that's the case, what do you think about my investment in Cross Corporation?" Sean Smith pressed on.

After a moment of hesitation, Penny Smith asked, "How much are you three intending to invest then?"

With a slight smile on his face, Sean Smith replied, "We're not intending to take advantage of you. So, your two uncles and I are thinking of putting in three hundred million each, in exchange for 20% of your company's shares for each one of us."

To trade for 20% of Cross Corporation's shares with three hundred million seemed like a fair proposition.

However, Nathan Cross, who had been playing with his daughter at the side, suddenly spoke. He said nonchalantly, "20% is too much. For three hundred million, a 10% share would be more appropriate."

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Penny Smith was slightly startled by her husband's reply. However, immediately after, she figured out the meaning of his words.

If her grandpa and two uncles each held 20% of the company's shares, they would occupy 60% of the shares in total.

That would make them the majority shareholders of the company, and they would hold the decisive vote in any matters concerning Cross Corporation.

According to Nathan Cross's counter-proposition, the shares that Sean Smith and his sons were entitled to would only equate to 30% of the company's total shares. That meant that the final decision of any company matters would still be in Penny Smith's hands.

Sean, Samuel and Paul widened their eyes and said in dissatisfaction, "You mean our nine hundred million is only worth 30% of your company's shares?"

Nathan Cross replied indifferently, "If you think this is a losing proposition for you, you don't have to force yourselves to take it up. Besides, even if you become our shareholders, you will only be common shareholders who receive dividends and would not be involved in making day-to-day decisions."

Sean Smith and his sons' original plan was to own more than half of the company's shares among the three of them and have a controlling interest in Cross Corporation. This way, it would make it easier for them to seize the company entirely.

They had not expected Nathan Cross to see through their scheme.

Even though the three men deeply resented Nathan, they hid their true feelings as they had their eyes on the Cross Group's fortune. Smiling ear to ear, they replied, "Okay, let's just do as you say then."

As such, on the very day itself, Penny Smith signed a contract with her grandpa and two uncles, stating that the three men would put in nine hundred million in total, and occupy 30% of Cross Corporation's total shares.

Nathan and Penny had dinner together with Penny's parents that evening.

One could easily tell from Leah's expression, that she was still upset over what happened in the afternoon. At the same time, her eyes were also filled with worry.

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in any matters concerning Cross Corporation.

According to Nathan Cross's counter-proposition, the shares that Sam Smith and his sons were entitled to would only amount to 30% of the company's total shares. That meant that the final decision of any company matters would still be in Panny Smith's hands.

Sam, Samuel and Paul widened their eyes and said in dissatisfaction, "You mean our nine hundred million is only worth 30% of your company's shares?"

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As such, on the very day itself, Panny Smith signed a contract with her grandpa and two uncles, stating that the three men would put in nine hundred million in total, and occupy 30% of Cross Corporation's total shares.

Nathan and Panny had dinner together with Panny's parents that evening.

One could easily tell from Leah's expression, that she was still upset over what happened in the afternoon. At the same time, her eyes were also filled with worry.

In Leah's opinion, her husband's dad had never taken care of their family nor had he ever offered to share any benefits that the rest of the Smith family enjoyed with them.

They only offered to invest after seeing the potential of the Cross Corporation and the good results which the company was achieving. They merely did not want to miss out on a slice of the pie.

Benson and Penny were aware that Leah was unhappy that the old man had taken advantage of their family. However, neither of them dared to say anything, as they did not want to risk Leah's wrath.

The father-daughter pair kept casting glances at Nathan, signaling him to placate Leah.

Recently, Leah had been growing increasingly fond of her son-in-law.

As such, he was the only one Leah was likely to listen to.

Nathan Cross was all smiles as he asked his mother-in-law, "Mom, are you feeling upset?"

The woman replied indignantly, "Your grandpa is always taking advantage of us! He wants to have a share in our company after seeing its stellar performance. Isn't it too much?"

"That's not a problem. We could use the extra funds anyway. It doesn't matter who the investors are. Even though grandpa and uncles hold some of the company's shares now, with their additional investment, Penn now has more resources to work with, without having to worry about cash flow. She will also be able to achieve more and lead the company to greater heights," Nathan Cross tried to console Leah.

Penny agreed softly with what her husband said. "Yeah mom, let me draw an analogy. With more resources, I will be able to bake a bigger cake. Even though we have to share a portion of the cake with grandpa and uncles, our remaining cake would still be bigger than the cake we had before we had the additional resources."

"Shut up, Penny!" Leah was still in a bad mood and grumped at her daughter.

Penny Smith begrudgingly kept quiet as her mom turned her head towards Nathan Cross, with a much tender look in her eyes.

With a gentle voice, Leah said to Nathan, "I don't know anything about business, but I know your grandpa and uncles are up to no good. Sean and Penn are sentimental people, I'm just worried they will be taken advantage of. Nathan, you have to keep an eye on the situation yeah? We can't allow them to exploit our family anymore."

Nathan Cross offered a comforting smile and replied, "Mom, don't worry. I will never allow anyone to bully our family."

What Nathan said was the absolute truth. Ever since he married Penny, no one had dared to offend their family, unless they wanted to risk being taught a lesson by Nathan Cross.

Leah finally broke into a smile and said, "I trust you, Nathan. You're always so dependable."

The father-daughter pair looked at each other knowingly and let out a bitter laugh simultaneously.

It seems like Nathan is Leah's favorite now. She trusts him more than her own husband and daughter.

Three days later, at the Asiatic Shopping Mall construction site, construction workers were gathered in the workers' dormitory, which was made of stacked-up containers. Some of them were browsing their phones while some were playing card games. Majority of the workers had gone out for supper or to drink and make merry.

At this moment, without anyone knowing, a suspicious person had climbed over the fence and sneaked into the construction site.

With agile movements, the person speedily ran towards the tower crane...

Slightly more than 10 minutes later, the massive construction crane collapsed with a loud thud.

BOOM!

An earth-shattering crash was heard as the tower crane smashed onto the workers' makeshift dormitory.

In that very instant, the containers which were occupied by the construction workers fell into ruins.

As shrieks and wails filled the construction site, the suspicious person sneaked out stealthily.

After the man escaped unnoticed, the first thing he did was to ring Jerry Zabinski. "Mr. Zabinski, it's been done. From the looks of it, there should be a lot of casualties. The person-in-charge of this project, Penny Smith, is definitely doomed."

[Chapter 177](#)

In a building a few hundred meters away from the Asiatic Shopping Mall construction site, Jerry Zabinski was standing in front of a floor-to-ceiling window in a room on the top floor. With his phone in his hand, he was looking towards the construction site.

The man narrowed his eyes as he spoke into the phone with a satisfied expression on his face. "I saw it already, Chien. I've already transferred one million to your bank account. For the time being, leave Channing and go into hiding."

Chien replied excitedly, "Yes, Mr. Zabinski!"

After Jerry Zabinski hung up, he saw numerous police vehicles and ambulances speed pass the building. With a sneer on his face, the man thought out loud, "Nathan Cross, Penny Smith, this isn't the end yet, I'll deal with you two slowly."

At 9 p.m., while Penny was tutoring her daughter in her schoolwork, she received a call regarding the accident at the construction site. Color drained out of the woman's face at once.

When Nathan Cross came out of the study, he saw his wife's expression. "What happened?" He asked her, with his brows creased.

Looking extremely pale and with her voice shaking, Penny replied, "Nathan, something's happened at the construction site. The tower crane suddenly collapsed and smashed onto the containers where the

workers were staying at. We don't know the actual casualties figures yet."

Nathan Cross's face was grim as he heard the bad news. In a grave tone, the man said, "Let's hurry over and check out the situation first."

Penny agreed. After entrusting Queenie to her parents, Penny and Nathan rushed out of the house hastily.

When the couple arrived at the construction site, it was already filled with police cars and ambulances. The place was in chaos as stretchers carrying the injured workers were loaded on the ambulances. In a building a few hundred meters away from the Asiatic Shopping Mall construction site, Jarry Zabinski was standing in front of a floor-to-ceiling window in a room on the top floor. With his phone in his hand, he was looking towards the construction site.

The man narrowed his eyes as he spoke into the phone with a satisfied expression on his face. "I saw it already, Chian. I've already transferred one million to your bank account. For the time being, leave Channing and go into hiding."

Chian replied excitedly, "Yes, Mr. Zabinski!"

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What baffled Nathan and Penny most was the presence of reporters from various media outlets at the

site.

When the media representatives spotted Penny Smith, the head of Cross Corporation, who was also the person-in-charge of the Asiatic Shopping Mall project, they crowded her at once and started snapping photos of the woman.

The reporters grabbed this golden opportunity to throw sharp questions at her, “President Smith, how are you intending to take responsibility for what has happened at the construction site?”

“President Smith, we heard you were in the fashion industry before you started this company. Now that an accident had occurred in this project which you are managing, do you think it is due to your lack of expertise?”

“President Smith, do you have anything to say to the injured workers or their families?”

Faced with the relentless questions from the media, Nathan Cross answered solemnly, “Sorry, we don’t have anything to say at this moment. We’re here to deal with the accident and would appreciate it if you could let us pass.”

After saying that, the man shoved his way through the reporters forcefully and entered the construction premises with Penny Smith, as he shielded his wife from the crowd.

The police had already cordoned off the site of the accident. Doctors, nurses and paramedics were busy lifting the injured into ambulances. They could not afford to waste a single minute.

Tears welled up in Penny Smith’s eyes as she looked around at the fallen tower crane, the ruined makeshift workers’ dormitory, and the injured workers covered in blood.

Just then, Bob Hoffman, the supervisor at the construction site, was seen running towards the woman, drenched in sweat. “President Smith!” he greeted her in a quivering voice.

Penny knew this was not the time to cry and quickly wiped off her tears with the back of her palm.

She had to deal with the aftermath of the accident first. The priority at the moment was to save the injured workers. Pulling herself together, the woman asked the supervisor, “Bob, what happened?”

With a mournful look, Bob Hoffman replied, “I’m not sure what happened. Everything was fine when we checked, but the tower crane suddenly collapsed. It had to fall on the workers’ dormitory of all places!”

“What’s the casualties’ toll?” Penny Smith asked.

Looking pale, Bob Hoffman answered, “We don’t have the data yet, but as far as we know, there haven’t been any fatal injuries. However, among the injured, there are a few who were seriously wounded. They have already been transported to the Channing Hospital to receive immediate medical attention, but

the chances of them surviving are very slim.”

Oh my God! The situation was a lot worse than what Penny had expected.

Penny then replied, “We’ll do whatever we can to save and treat our injured workers. Medical costs will be entirely borne by the company. We also need to placate the family members of the injured. Reassure them that the company will take full responsibility for the accident.”

Bob Hoffman nodded and replied, “Okay, I know what to do, President Smith.”

Just then, a leader wearing a black jacket arrived at the scene with a group of his subordinates and several policemen.

The leader was none other than Channing’s second-in-command, who was just one rank below the mayor, Jerry McGrady.

[Chapter 178](#)

With a grim expression, Jerry McGrady said to Penny Smith, “President Smith, this is your company’s construction project. Now that such a serious accident has happened, you will have to take responsibility for it.”

Penny bit her lips and replied, “I will bear full responsibility for this. I’m prepared to face any consequences, regardless if it is doing jail time or compensate for the damages.”

When Jerry McGrady saw Nathan Cross, who was standing next to Penny Smith, he softened his tone considerably and said, “We’re still looking into this matter. We will only know what caused it and who should bear the responsibility when the investigation is complete.”

Penny nodded as she answered, “I will definitely cooperate with your investigation.”

Jerry McGrady let out a sigh as he said, “We have never expected that such an unfortunate accident would happen at the construction site. I guess we can only take comfort in the fact that there are no fatalities. However, there are a few badly injured workers who are still receiving emergency treatment at the hospital. If they do not manage to pull through, the situation will become much more severe, especially if the death toll rises to more than three. This is what I’m worried most about. I might also be held accountable for it. President Smith, you may have to be mentally prepared.”

Staying strong, Penny Smith replied, “I’m not afraid to make atonement for my mistake if need be. My biggest wish is that the injured workers would be able to pull through and recover. Otherwise, it would be too much for their families to bear.”

Nathan and Penny did not rest the entire night, as they were busy assisting in investigations, visiting the injured in the hospital, as well as comforting their families.

Among the five construction workers who were more severely injured, two of them were already out of immediate danger after receiving emergency treatment.

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Among the five construction workers who were more seriously injured, two of them were already out of immediate danger after receiving emergency treatment.

However, the remaining three were still in a coma. They were lying in the ICU and could lose their lives at any time.

The next day, Nathan and Penny, who had both pulled an all-nighter, visited the three unconscious victims in the ICU.

Once they reached outside the ICU, enraged family members of the injured workers charged towards Penny, launching an attack on her.

Those family members were in tears as they called Penny Smith a murderer. They just wanted their healthy sons and husbands back home.

Nathan Cross held back the incensed families and shouted for them to stop. "This is the ICU. Do you think kicking up a scene will help in the patients' recovery? It will just further aggravate their conditions!"

A tearful tall-built man said, "It's easy for you to say that. Did you know that the doctor has just informed us that my brother may pass away at any time?"

The rest of the aggrieved family members and relatives agreed dolefully, "He's right. The doctor has already told us that our family members are on the brink of death and that we should be mentally prepared for the event."

Nathan Cross said in a deep voice, "We should not give up as long as there is still hope. I will get the best doctors to save them."

The same tall-built man replied immediately, "The hospital director has just spoken to us. My brother and the other two injured workers have blood clots in their skulls. They need to undergo a second operation to remove the blood clots. However, even the top surgeons in Channing are not confident in performing this surgery. They said that only Dr. Rothschild, who is also known as the 'Unmatched Talent', is capable of performing this type of surgery."

When Penny Smith heard that Dr. Rothschild would be able to save those three patients who were in the ICU, she saw a glimmer of hope. However, her eyes darkened a split second later.

Dr. Rothschild was the director of the North Army General Hospital and the elderly professor was already semi-retired. As such, unless it was the top leaders of the country or soldiers who had committed a heroic deed who required his service, it was almost impossible to get Dr. Rothschild to personally perform any surgery.

An ordinary man would never be able to ask the favor of Dr. Rothschild.

If everyone in the country needed his medical attention, it would be unrealistic for the doctor to attend to each one of them.

Penny Smith could tell from the hopeful gazes of the crowd that they were relying on her to get Dr. Rothschild here to save their dying family members.

Although it wasn't easy for her to be honest with them, the woman decided to be truthful and said, "I know everyone here are eager to save your family members, that's also my wish. If the problem can be solved by money, I would gladly help, but it really is not within my abilities to get Dr. Rothschild to perform the surgery."

After hearing Penny Smith's confession, the next-of-kin of the three injured workers were unable to conceal the disappointment on their faces.

There were even a few who started sobbing and exclaiming that, without Dr. Rothschild, there was not even a single bit of hope left for their family members.

While Penny Smith was feeling guilty, and the family members were weeping uncontrollably at their miserable plight, Nathan Cross suddenly spoke.

“You should have said earlier that the problem could be solved by getting Dr. Rothschild to perform the surgery. That’s simple!”

[Chapter 179](#)

Simple?

Penny and her family stared at Nathan wide-eyed, taken aback at his words.

Nathan continued, “I’ll call Dr. Rothschild and get him to come from North Army General Hospital to operate on the patients.”

The family members beamed with delight and chipped in, “Are you serious? Don’t try to fool us. We won’t let you off easy!”

Penny was anxious upon hearing his words. “Nathan, don’t overpromise them. It’s not easy to get a hold of Dr. Rothschild.”

“Rumor has it that even a tycoon could not even get Dr. Rothschild to operate on him, even after offering him a billion.”

Nathan knew the tycoon was uncharitable with his wealth. It was because of this that Dr. Rothschild had refused to save him.

Plus, Nathan Cross was the general of the Northern army. Dr. Rothschild had been the one to suture his wounds every single time.

It would not be an overstatement to say that Dr. Rothschild was Nathan Cross’s personal doctor.

Nathan grinned, “Though other people might not be able to get Dr. Rothschild for a billion, I can get him rushing to my aid with only ten.”

The family members at the scene were dumbfounded. They realized that he was not only overclaiming but even bluffing them!

The tycoon could not even get Dr. Rothschild with ten billion, yet you’re telling us that you could get him with only ten bucks? Who do you think you are? The Northern General?

Penny panicked and added, "Nathan, I beg you to stop messing around. Please stop making things worse."
Simpla?

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Penny panicked and added, "Nathan, I beg you to stop messing around. Please stop making things worse."

She chased Nathan out of the ICU afterwards.

She did not want him to aggravate the family members further and get beaten up in the end.

Nathan could only smile bitterly after being chased out by Penny.

He went to a place with nobody around and took out his phone to call Dr. Rothschild who was thousands of miles away. He ordered, "Dr, please come to Channing and help me save a few severely injured people."

Nathan went back to the ICU after he was done making the call.

In the corridor, Penny was trying to soothe the family members. Even though she could not get the irreplaceable Dr. Rothschild, she would try her best to get the most well-known surgeon in all of Channing, Dr. Richard Steele, to operate on the patients.

She vowed to save the three severely injured workers' lives, no matter the cost.

Dr. Steele wasn't a nobody. It was said that he was Dr. Rothschild's student and an excellent surgeon.

However, he was the primary surgeon at a private hospital and his fees were exorbitant.

His charges would easily surpass millions, to a point where Dr. Steele had been coined 'Doctor for the Rich' at Channing.

The family members were finally at ease after hearing that Penny would invite Dr. Steele to operate on the workers.

After all, Dr. Richard Steele was a well-known doctor and charged a hefty amount too.

He was also Dr. Rothschild's student.

It would a win-win situation to be able to ask Dr. Steele to operate on the workers.

Nathan walked over, "Honey, there's no need to invite the exorbitantly-priced surgeon. I've already called Dr. Rothschild to come to Channing to operate on the workers."

Penny did not wait for him to finish and interjected, "Please just shut up!"

Penny dragged Nathan away afterwards, afraid he might cause a ruckus with him overclaiming things.

Nathan could only put on a bitter smile as he was dragged out of the hospital by his wife.

Nathan asked Penny where they were heading when both of them got in the car.

Penny replied, "To the Adventist Private Hospital. We're going to get Dr. Steele to operate on the three workers."

Nathan was helpless and added, "Honey, I've already told you that I've called Dr. Rothschild to come to

Channing...”

Penny did not believe him at all and could not help but be frustrated at his delusion, “Right. Stop bluffing and drive to the Adventist Private Hospital.”

Nathan felt helpless at his wife’s demeanor. However, he thought it could be quite taxing for Dr. Rothschild to operate on three workers consecutively as he was already getting on in age.

Since this Richard Steele used to be Dr. Rothschild’s student, it would not be a bad idea to ask him to be the secondary surgeon to lessen Dr. Rothschild’s burden.

So, he complied and drove toward Adventist Private Hospital.

[Chapter 180](#)

In the private office of Adventist Private Hospital.

A pot-bellied, slightly bald man in his forties could be seen talking respectfully to a feminine-looking man.

This feminine-looking man was no other than Jerry Zabinski.

Jerry Zabinski toyed with the paper cutter in his hand and spoke in an impassive tone, “I heard that three workers from the accident at Asiatic Mall construction site are still in critical condition. They have to undergo craniotomy surgeries to save their lives.”

Richard Steele then chimed in, “Yes. Even a number of doctors from different hospitals in Channing could not save them.”

“I’m guessing Penny Smith will come looking for you soon. It’s very likely that she will request for you to be the primary surgeon. I want to see the operations fail and the three workers become casualties of the accident.”

Richard Steele had wanted to reject Zabinski’s request intuitively. After all, his reputation was at risk if the three patients died on his operating table.

However, his eyes met with Jerry Zabinski’s death glare when he was about to reject him.

He then thought about Jerry Zabinski’s cruel and ruthless acts and the influences of the Zabinski family. Richard Steele then lowered his head, “Yes, Mr. Zabinski. I understand.”

Jerry Zabinski was pleased, “Don’t worry, it’s not unpaid labor. I’ll give you a billion when it’s done.”

“Plus, you could take the chance to rip off Penny Smith. That bitch will definitely request for you to operate, no matter the cost.”

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"Plus, you could take the chance to rip off Panny Smith. That bitch will definitely request for you to operate, no matter the cost."

Steele's eyes gleamed with delight. He made some simple calculations in his head and realized that he could make a major fortune this time.

He grinned, "Hehe. I understand, Mr. Zabinski."

It was at this moment that someone came knocking on the door.

Richard Steele gave his consent and his female personal assistant came in.

The assistant reported in a polite manner, "Dr. Steele, Mr. Nathan Cross and Ms. Penny Smith are here to see you."

Richard Steele and Jerry Zabinski cast glances at each other before Steele turned his head to face his

assistant. "Take them to the reception room. I'll be there in a minute."

"Okay!" The assistant replied.

Richard Steele reached the reception room wearing his white robe and gold-rimmed glasses a few moments later.

He saw Nathan Cross and Penny Smith as soon as he went inside the reception room.

His eyes glinted as soon as he saw Penny Smith. Wow, what a surprise. This little minx is quite the package with her alluring curves and pretty face.

Penny Smith did not notice his salacious stare and approached him swiftly. She greeted Steele politely, "Greetings, Dr. Steele. I'm the General Manager for Diva Limited, Penny Smith. This is my husband, Nathan Cross."

Samuel Steele did not bother glancing at Nathan Cross. He eyeballed Penny's hourglass figure and grinned, "Ms. Smith, I've heard a lot about you since the accident at Asiatic Mall construction site yesterday night."

Penny smiled awkwardly, "Ah, it's unfortunate that bad news travels faster than the wind."

Richard Steele replied with all smiles, "May I ask what brings Ms. Smith here today?"

Penny went straight to the point, "Actually, both my husband and I require your help this time. The three workers involved are in critical condition."

"We would like to ask you to become the primary surgeon and perform a craniotomy on them."

Richard Steele acted like he was on the fence upon hearing their request, "Yes. I've heard about the three workers' condition from my acquaintances at Channing Hospital. It's quite a sticky situation."

Penny hurriedly continued, "That is why we are here to ask for your help in this matter. You're Dr. Rothschild's student after all. Surely you can handle this well. Of course, I'm aware of your charges. Money is not an issue here."

Penny was wearing a formal suit but her curves still showed through it all. Richard Steele's eyes greedily stared at her breasts, and he grinned wickedly, "Then I'd like to ask your husband to wait outside for a bit."

Nathan had long noticed Steele's perverted stares. As a man himself, he knew what Steele was thinking all too well. His face darkened at the thought.