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"I never said that," Jack explained, disinterested. He continued, "What kind of person you are has nothing to do with me. I don't want to know either."

Wendy glanced at him. She couldn't help but explain, "Don't perceive me negatively. I am not that kind of person."

However, Jack didn't want to entertain her. What she was like as a person had nothing to do with him.

However, Wendy had no idea what Jack was thinking.

She bit her lip, wanting to explain herself. Then, she realized that Jack had assumed her character based on her actions.

It wasn't helpful to linger on this topic, so she talked about something else. "You seemed to have a good relationship with your girlfriend.

Jack stared at her coldly. "Are you threatening me again? Let me reiterate. That drunken night we had was consensual. Please don't have any ideas."

Wendy was so furious at Jack that she was about to cry. "You bastard! I was just casually asking. Why do you have to think of me so terribly?"

"It better be that way. Otherwise, you will have to pay the price," Jack warned.

Wendy couldn't sustain the conversation any longer with this bastard.

In the past, other men would go out of the way to appear charming before her, but this bastard acted like she was the most unbearable thing on earth.

To prevent Jack from misunderstanding her further, Wendy talked about

something else. "Jack, I have something to ask. I hope you will give me an honest answer."

"That'll depend on what your question is," Jack replied.

Wendy took a deep breath and asked gently, "Back then, when the terrorists attacked the flight we were on that headed toward Brightland, what were you doing?"

Jack's gaze sharpened. "Why are you asking me this?"

Wendy looked at Jack's shoulder and said, "I noticed the gunshot wound on your shoulder and the bandages hidden in the corner of your bathroom."

Jack knew she would ask about this.

After a frivolous night with Wendy at the hotel, Jack discovered that someone had flipped through the unwashed garments he had kept hidden. At that moment, he assumed Wendy was the one who did. Now, it had proven to be true.

Jack didn't dodge the question. Instead, he truthfully admitted, "Yes, but I hope you will keep this a secret."

Wendy initially wanted to thank Jack but thought it was no longer necessary after being received with such an aloof attitude.

Then, she mocked, "You really are a virtuous person! Doing good deeds, yet not leaving your name anywhere, huh?"

Jack couldn't be bothered. He didn't want to waste his time explaining himself to Wendy.

At this moment, Jack's phone rang. It was Caspian.

Jack answered the call. It turned out that Julian, whom they had beaten up the last time, was back again to cause trouble for Caspian.

After beating Julian up at the sauna, Caspian's reputation in the underworld soared.

However, there was no way Julian would back down.

Recently, Julian brought reinforcements, looking for Caspian high and low to teach him a hard lesson.

Caspian chose to go into hiding to avoid causing Jack trouble, but Julian had no intention of letting Caspian off the hook. He smashed up Caspian's place and wrecked his car, letting the word out that if Jack and Caspian had the guts, they should meet him in a week at the vacant lot in Vermilion Mountain for a showdown.

By then, they should rally whoever they had and engage in a battle to be remembered.

If Julian won, Caspian and Jack would need to submit to him.

The news spread like wildfire, causing an uproar in Alnewgo.

Caspian called Jack to discuss the strategy.

Jack nodded in agreement. Then, he told Wendy, "If there's nothing else, I'm leaving."

Seeing Jack about to leave, Wendy quickly stood up and asked, "Are you leaving?"

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There seemed to be a reluctance in Wendy's tone.

Feeling strange, Jack asked, "Is there anything else?"

Wendy helplessly answered, "There's nothing else! I'll manage Patrick and Drakengard Games, but don't forget your promise."

Managing Patrick was a piece of cake to Wendy, and she wouldn't feel guilty doing anything to him.

At that time, Patrick lied to her and plotted against Jack. Wendy didn't feel much about turning against Patrick.

The only worry she had was Jack going against his word.

However, considering how Jack was willing to suffer pain to save a plane full of people, she was somewhat convinced that this bastard's character could still be trusted sometimes.

Plus, Jack would act this way because she and Patrick betrayed him first.

Now, Jack's revenge against her was all her own doing.

At the thought of it, Wendy blankly watched as Jack left. Her heart welled up with mixed emotions.

After saying goodbye to Wendy, Jack arrived at Caspian's house.

Caspian's car had been smashed to pieces. Caspian and the rest of the group had grim expressions in the house.

Julian's offensive attempts were stressing Caspian out.

When they saw Jack, everyone stood up with respect.

Caspian explained everything to Jack in detail, and Jack nodded in assent.

The initial conflict with Julian was sparked by Leslie, Hector, and the others.

Now, with Julian stirring up trouble again with no intention of backing down, it was time to settle the old and new grudges once and for all.

Caspian asked, "Boss, what should we do now?"

Boris, who was at the side, quickly nodded and complied. "We will do what you ask without a second thought. You just need to say the word."

Although they knew they would be on the losing end going up against Julian, rather than cowering and hiding in disgrace, it would be better to fight it out once and for all.

Jack asked, "How many men did Julian gather?"

Caspian replied, "I'm not sure. Recently, Julian had beaten us up badly. After all, he was a notorious thug in this area. Besides our area, most of the thugs residing

in parts of Alnewgo are huge supporters of him. We are at a disadvantage, so why not take an easy win, show off a little, and even do someone a favor in the process? That's why I'm guessing Julian will bring a huge crowd this time."

Jack asked again, "How many men can we gather?"

Jack was merely a student, so he couldn't gather that much manpower, but Caspian could.

Caspian explained, "If we call the whole gang, we can gather up to a hundred people. However, among this group, only thirty to fifty of them were truly capable of putting up a good fight. The rest are merely construction workers and small- time thugs. They are good enough to bully students but hardly reliable for a battle."

Jack nodded in assent. Then, he smiled, asking, "Are you guys afraid?"

Everyone's expressions appeared defiant; there was no hint of fear.

How could someone from the underworld shy away from bloodshed? If they were scared, they should be home taking care of their children.

Jack nodded, an idea cooking in his mind. "Caspian, gather the men and make sure we don't lose momentum. I'll cover all the medical expenses and miscellaneous fees. We'll go big or go home!"

Jack's instructions brimmed with ambition and unwavering determination.

They couldn't avoid this battle; this battle had to be of epic proportions, one that commanded respect and left a lasting mark.

With Jack backing them up, Caspian's worries vanished into thin air.

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Caspian immediately declared, "Alright! I'll spread the word right now. A week from now, we'll settle this once and for all."

"Great! Boris, let's survey the place on Vermilion Mountain and see if there are any advantages we can leverage. Since we need to fight, let's make it an epic battle and earn our glory," Jack said.

"Oh, let the others know we can't slow down on training. We need to increase them."

Although Caspian and Boris were unsure why Jack wanted to survey the place, they trusted him deeply. Since Jack suggested it, they were more than willing to comply.

Then, Caspian began arranging the necessary matters while Jack, along with Boris and the rest, headed to Vermilion Mountain for an on-site inspection.

Vermilion Mountain's terrain was wide open, with a vast river running alongside it. This geographical setting was perfect for Jack's plan.

Jack told Boris, "Tell Caspian to execute according to my plan. Also, rent a few excavators and bulldozers. I have some use for them."

The two of them got to work.

Caspian's acceptance of Julian's challenge sent shockwaves through the underworld.

The underworld, which remained peaceful for years, was stirred up once again. Everyone speculated on the outcome of the upcoming battle.

Julian was a reputable figure, so he was naturally the talk of the town.

Caspian may have made a name for himself in the university district, but at best, he was merely an audacious small-time thug.

The majority thought Caspian would lose terribly to Julian.

At this moment, Julian was enjoying the services at a high-end sauna room. A beautiful lady was massaging his back.

Since he was beaten up in the sauna, Julian had become more cautious. Even when he showered, he had a group of lackeys watching his surroundings.

At this moment, Julian's phone constantly rang. Many of the renowned figures in the underworld called to show their support.

These people wanted to seize the opportunity to curry favor from Julian and gain benefits.

After all, the outcome of the battle was practically predetermined. How could a small-time thug go up against such a strong force?

Julian was faced with what seemed to be an easy win. The battle was guaranteed a win, and he could even showcase his ability, collect some entrance fees, and enjoy the banquet. It was practically handed to him on a silver platter.

He would be a fool not to participate in this.

However, Julian understood that this battle was not child's play, and he had to be still cautious.

The more the merrier-even if it were just for show, the sheer momentum alone would be enough to overwhelm the opponent.

Plus, everyone wanted to show their support. If he rejected it, he might offend the prominent figures of the underworld, who might accuse him of not showing proper respect.

It would be troublesome if they decided to support the opponent out of spite. Julian had a vast empire and abundant resources; he had plenty of people at his disposal, so he didn't mind others joining in the fun.

Julian even considered hosting a banquet to celebrate his victory with hundreds of people after he had exhausted his fun.

He caressed the beautiful lady beside him and asked his underling, "Do you have a final headcount? How many people will be at the scene to help us secure our authority?"

The lackey did a mental tally. Since Jack took over the scene, calls had been pouring in from his peers. Some asked about the situation, while others declared their intention to join the fight. The numbers were growing so fast that they had started losing count.

Then, the lackey casually showed a number using his fingers, saying, "No matter what, we have to gather this number of people."

Julian shook his flabby body and grumbled, "This is so boring. There's nothing to flaunt about ganging up on a few rookies with so many people. On top of that, I have to feed these people."

With so many people supporting them, the outcome of this battle was a guaranteed win.

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There was an unmistakable air of arrogance in Julian's tone. Few could command the kind of loyalty and authority he did.

As the final preparations fell into place, the tension in the air grew heavier, like the calm before a storm.

The night before the confrontation, Jack gathered every ally he could muster and threw a grand feast at a hotel. Dozens of tables were set, and the room buzzed

with energy.

Strong liquor flowed freely, and the men pounded their chests and swore they'd give it everything they had.

At first light the next morning, Jack led his crew toward Vermilion Mountain.

The contrast between their modest setup and Julian's side was stark. Julian's men arrived in a fleet of luxury cars. There were a few BMWs, Mercedes, Audis, and even high-end models like Ferraris and Bentleys. They were decked out in flashy gold chains, puffing on expensive cigarettes.

They looked down on Jack's group like they were nothing more than a bunch of villagers and students, hardly worth their time.

But Jack didn't care. He had a plan and was ready to show his opponents what he was capable of.

Soon, Julian arrived. The entrance was now a sea of cars, and the men Julian had brought with him were all fired up, exchanging greetings and flexing their confidence.

Julian moved through the crowd with ease, exchanging words and laughs, every bit the imposing figure. As he mingled, his gaze flicked to Jack's side.

Compared to his well-fed, well-dressed crew, Jack's team looked underwhelming. A mix of old and young, some looking like they hadn't eaten well in weeks. Only a few dozen seemed like they could hold their own in a fight.

Julian was slightly worried that Jack's people might not make it out alive if things turned violent.

However, Jack and his team looked confident. When Julian approached, Jack, along with Caspian and Boris, stubbed out their cigarettes and stood to meet him. Despite their smaller numbers, their energy was fierce.

Julian hissed, "Do you even know what death is?"

Jack smiled and replied, "I'll find out soon enough."

Julian nodded and snapped, "I'll give you one chance to walk away alive. See all my men here? I don't want people saying I bullied you. If you and your men kneel and beg us, I'll just break your legs and let you go. How about that?"

Jack sneered and retorted, "Go to hell."

Julian replied, "So there's no talking this out?"

"Talking? I didn't come here to negotiate. I'm going to make sure you're flat on your back, you coward."

With that, Jack raised his hand and roared, "Let's take them down!"

To everyone's surprise, Jack's men didn't charge forward. Instead, they began to retreat quickly.

Julian's side erupted in laughter, mocking Jack's crew for being a bunch of clueless fools. Their laughter, however, was short-lived.

Jack's men brought out many massive iron frames welded together and rolled forward. Strapped to them were enormous boulders. With a deafening roar, the boulders were launched into the air, raining down on Julian's men like a hailstorm.

Caught completely off guard, Julian's crew was pummeled. The boulders crashed and sent the men sprawling, bloodied, and screaming.

Jack's men, meanwhile, fought fiercer with every moment. They pushed the catapults forward, targeting the densest clusters of Julian's forces. The open field offered no cover, and Julian's men were utterly defenseless against the onslaught.

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"Charge!" Jack led the pack, armed with a metal rod.

Caspian and Boris followed close behind, wielding metal bats as they surged toward Julian and his men.

Julian's men, already disoriented and battered from the barrage of boulders, stood no chance against Jack's onslaught. Many hadn't even had time to grab their weapons and could only scatter in panic.

Those who tried to put up a fight were quickly overwhelmed. Jack and his men struck with precision and force, leaving Julian's men bruised and bloodied.

Julian's men were completely defeated, their cries of pain echoing across the battlefield.

Julian had never seen such a brutal scene. Furious and humiliated, he had intended this fight to intimidate his rivals, but instead, his team had been utterly crushed. He knew that if this continued, his reputation in Narthorn District would be in tatters.

Julian roared, "Don't run! We outnumber them. Grab your weapons and fight back!"

But his words alone weren't enough to turn the tide. Julian realized he needed to make some sacrifice. "Anyone who follows me and takes down one of them gets five thousand dollars!"

The promise of cash was enough to stir some of his men. A few who were running away stopped in their tracks. They couldn't let a bunch of small-time thugs humiliate them like this. Some men picked up their weapons and prepared to fight.

Jack noticed Julian's men had stopped chasing and were regrouping. He pulled out a megaphone from nowhere and commanded, "Everyone, third wave. Let's go!"

Jack's men immediately retreated. Julian and his men, mistaking this for cowardice, cheered and raised their weapons, ready to charge. But their celebration was cut short by a deafening rumble.

The villagers were driving the bulldozers and excavators that Jack had rented from a construction site. When it came to hand-to-hand combat, these villagers might not have been the most skilled, but operating heavy machinery? That was their specialty.

The massive machines moved with surprising agility in the hands of the villagers, as if they were extensions of their bodies. They plowed through the battlefield with unstoppable force, crushing everything in their path.

Julian and his men were sent scrambling, their bravado replaced by panic.

What kind of fight was this? Who in their right mind would go up against the steel machinery? If this were a battlefield, these machines were the equivalent of heavy armored tanks.

And going up against tanks as mere foot soldiers? That was nothing short of suicide.

The excavator roared forward, its mechanical arm swinging with terrifying precision. Julian's men screamed and fled in every direction. Cries of fear, shouts of desperation, and utter chaos filled the air.

As the bulldozers and excavators reached the roadside, they encountered a new obstacle-rows of luxury cars, parked haphazardly by Julian and his men.

There were BMWs, Mercedes, Audis, and even a Ferrari. At the front of the line was Julian's prized Porsche Cayenne.

With a single swing of the excavator's arm, the Cayenne was reduced to a crumpled heap of metal. Two more swings, and a pair of brand-new Audi were turned into scrap. Another swing, and a Mercedes was sliced clean in half.

The men watched in horror, their faces pale as they realized the sheer destructive power of the machines.

Just then, a boat pulled up to the shore nearby. A group of helmeted men, armed with weapons, stormed out and attacked Julian and his men.

"It's an ambush! Run for your lives!" someone screamed.

After waves of relentless attacks, Julian and his men were defeated. All they could think about was running away. Who would dare continue fighting?

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Those who couldn't run fast enough weren't so lucky. They took a few brutal hits and collapsed to the ground, groaning in pain. The scene was nothing short of chaos.

The once-open field was now a disaster zone, with cars smashed to pieces by the bulldozers and excavators, bodies scattered everywhere.

Julian tried to make a run for it, but Jack caught him by the collar. A few hard slaps later, Julian's face was so swollen that even his mother wouldn't recognize him.

The rest of Julian's men, realizing they couldn't outrun the inevitable, dropped to their knees and begged for mercy. "We surrender! Please, spare us!"

Jack grabbed Julian by the hair and demanded, "Do you surrender?"

Julian pleaded desperately, "Yes! From now on, I'm your follower! Whatever you say, boss!"

Jack was a little surprised. It seemed Julian was the type who knew when to bend. And judging by the state of him and his men, they'd taken more than enough of a beating.

Jack nodded and shot a glance at Caspian, who immediately understood. He pulled out a pack of cigarettes and tossed a few to Julian and his men. "Just remember who's in charge around here from now on."

Julian quickly agreed, "Yes. From this day forward, I'm your loyal follower."

Jack smirked. "What about the medical bills for my injured brothers? And the damage to those cars?"

Julian immediately replied, "I'll cover it all! Name your price. Is a million dollars enough? If not, you can take all the cars as collateral."

Jack and Caspian exchanged a knowing grin.

After the morning's intense showdown, Jack's reputation was solidified. By the afternoon, the men had all retreated to tend their wounds, too scared to cause any more trouble. When asked about their injuries, none of them dared to say a word.

As for the luxury cars that had been crushed by the excavators and bulldozers? No one dared to report it to the authorities.

Caspian, however, had become a legend in Narthorn District. Everyone knew how ferocious he was, how he'd led a smaller force to crush Julian's crew with precision and strategy. The other thugs in the area now regarded him with a mix of fear and respect.

Meanwhile, Jack sat quietly in his classroom, attending lectures.

Finally, summer break arrived. It was graduation season again, and as the seniors packed up and left campus, Jack's sophomore year came to an end. The hot, lazy days of summer stretched ahead.

Jack couldn't care less about the ongoing feud between Patrick from Drakengard Games and Wendy from Pentime Group. Since Wendy had approached him that one time, she hadn't shown up again. Still, Jack had a feeling Patrick wasn't having an easy time.

With Wendy's ruthless nature and the full backing of Pentime Group, winning Patrick was an easy feat. Jack didn't feel an ounce of sympathy. From the moment Patrick betrayed him, any fallout was entirely his doing. The fact that Jack hadn't personally dealt with him was already an act of mercy.

Bella had no plans to travel during the summer. With her junior year approaching, her coursework was becoming increasingly demanding. Rumor had it that she was planning to head to the capital to study music.

Meanwhile, Emily kept showing up unexpectedly, trying to strike up conversations with Jack or just catch a glimpse of him. But Jack always found a way to avoid her. He had no desire to see her again.

Samuel, on the other hand, decided to stay on campus over the summer to focus on programming. His determination and sharp mind had already made him an invaluable asset to Jack. He helped to write programs and fix bugs on the Haven website.

As for the other guys in the dorm, they had gone on a summer trip with the girls from the shared dorm rooms. They planned to climb mountains and explore the country's most breathtaking landscapes.

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Jack decided to head home for the summer.

After this break, Joanne would be entering her final year of high school, and she needed someone to help her with her studies. As a former top scorer in the state, Jack planned to personally tutor her, hoping to help her get into a good university.

Wesley and Eddie had also returned home, as had many of their classmates. Rumor had it that Cynthia was planning to organize a class reunion over the

summer.

Leo also called Jack to say he might be spending part of the summer in Perthter City due to his father's job transfer. He wanted to hang out with Jack while he was there. Leo had become one of Jack's most devoted followers, proud to call himself Jack's lackey and always ready to follow his lead.

Eddie had returned home earlier than Jack and Wesley. These days, Eddie had become more refined, his glasses thicker than before.

Over the past two years, he had been studying medicine under a well-known mentor, living a fulfilling and happy life. Moreover, he had started dating a nursing student-a sweet and lively girl.

However, the most talked-about figure this summer was undoubtedly Feena. The fantasy drama she had starred in had taken the country by storm, racking up an astonishing 500 million views on streaming platforms and rapidly closing in on a billion. Thanks to the show's success, Feena had become an overnight sensation.

What made her rise even more remarkable was that, despite playing the female lead's supporting role, her standout performance had overshadowed the lead actress, making her the show's breakout star.

Feena was constantly in the headlines, and her popularity was skyrocketing. Even Helena was a fan of the drama. She spread the news to their neighbors that Feena, the rising star, was from Perthter City.

The revelation caused a stir in the old district of Perthter City. People couldn't stop talking about how their humble neighborhood had produced not only a state top scorer but also a big-name celebrity. Feena had undoubtedly brought pride to the community.

Though her parents were wealthy business owners living in a luxurious villa, her grandparents still resided in the old district's slum area. Feena's father had tried to convince them to move, but the elderly couple was too attached to their familiar surroundings and the close-knit community to leave.

Feena was often seen zipping through the narrow alleys on her bicycle or glimpsed through the windows of a sleek Mercedes-Benz.

Many had long predicted that Feena would soar like a golden phoenix, far beyond the confines of their small Perthter City. But no one expected it to happen so quickly! Yet, it only proved the foresight of the neighbors who had always believed in her potential.

Feena had become the benchmark among her peers-someone to chase and surpass. When she was accepted into the prestigious Eirene Music Academy, many thought that with enough hard work, they might one day catch up or even surpass her. At least, it had seemed within reach.

While they were still figuring out how to get into a better university or striving to become class representatives or student council members, Feena had already left them in the dust. She had become a nationwide sensation, a rising star in the entertainment industry.

For many girls who had once looked up to her as a role model, this was devastating. No matter how hard they worked, they could never hope to reach the heights Feena had achieved.

In stark contrast to Feena's meteoric rise, Jack seemed to have faded into the background. Though he was still the same man who had once brought glory to Perthter City as the top scorer in the state's college entrance exams, two years had passed since then.

The buzz around Jack's achievement had cooled. Occasionally, he'd run into familiar faces in the neighborhoods who would greet him with a warm, teasing remark.

They'd say, "Hey, our top scorer is back!"

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Jack spent his free time with Eddie and Wesley during the break. They rode their bikes along familiar paths to fish by the river, drank and chatted over peanuts on Wesley's second-floor balcony, and rushed to the internet café to play games.

One afternoon, after finishing lunch, Jack was about to catch up on the news when he got a call from Wesley summoning him to the second floor for a night of drinking.

By the time Jack arrived, Eddie and Wesley had already set up the drinks and snacks, waiting for him to join.

As they ate and chatted, they learned that the class reunion was scheduled for a week later, and they agreed to go together.

The conversation eventually turned to Feena. Eddie and Wesley couldn't help but sigh with admiration and regret.

Wesley tossed a peanut into his mouth and said, "I'm really starting to feel the gap between us and those top-tier students. You two are just on another level-one of you somehow became the state's top scorer, and the other quietly turned into a superstar. It feels like the gap between us isn't shrinking; it's only getting bigger."

Eddie added, "Seems like I missed out on all the excitement you guys had in Eirene! Wesley's filled me in on everything. Your lives over there sound so vibrant. Mine feels pretty dull in comparison."

Wesley grinned at Jack and said, "Thank goodness your riverside confession didn't work out back then. Otherwise, you and Feena would've become the legendary couple. How could we ever hope to catch up to you two?"

Then, he added, "But hey, your current girlfriend sounds great too! I heard from Phoebe that she's a beauty from the School of Music, right?"

Jack nodded.

Wesley and Eddie's eyes lit up instantly.

Wesley couldn't resist teasing, "Damn it, Jack. Don't forget about your old buddies just because you've got a new flame! You've got to hook us up with some beauties from the School of Music through your girlfriend. Our lifelong happiness is in your hands now!"

Jack laughed at Wesley's exaggerated antics and promised to do his best.

The next day, Jack and Wesley set out to book a venue for the class reunion.

The reunion was being organized by Cynthia. Given the local custom in Perthter City, where many couples chose to get married during the summer break, they knew they had to secure a venue early. Otherwise, they might not find a suitable place.

Cynthia had chosen a renowned hotel in Perthter City called Dynasty Hotel. One of their former classmates, Bruce Kirk, had an uncle in the hotel's management who could offer a 20 percent discount for the booking. Given how packed the hotel's restaurant usually was, this kind of deal was hard to come by. So, Jack and Wesley headed to the Dynasty Hotel together to handle the booking.

Dynasty Hotel lived up to its five-star reputation, boasting grandeur and luxury at every turn.

Bruce led them inside and helped confirm the details for the reunion. Just as they were about to finalize the menu, a waitress rushed out, looking visibly upset.

"Mr. Kirk, the guests in there are impossible to please," she complained.

Bruce's uncle, Craig Kirk, frowned and sighed. "Just be careful with them. We can't afford to offend these thugs."

"Uncle Craig, who's there?" Bruce asked curiously.

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"They're from a nearby village and are difficult to handle, so it's best not to provoke them," Craig explained with a fearful expression.

These troublemakers could be a real headache, especially when they had connections. Craig figured it was better to avoid trouble altogether.

Just then, the door to the private room swung open, and a shirtless man covered in scars stormed out.

"Where the hell are the waiters? How come there's no one in the room? You better watch it, or I'll smash this place!" Howard Lane bellowed.

His eyes landed on the waitress talking to Craig, and his expression darkened.

"So, there you are! Get in here and pour us some drinks!"

Howard grabbed the waitress roughly, causing her to scream in fear. Craig intervened, but Howard snarled, "Back off!"

Before Howard could slap Craig, Jack caught his wrist in mid-air. "What gives you the right to hit people?" he demanded.

Howard was stunned. He was known for his strength; he could take on three or four grown men without breaking a sweat. Yet, Jack simply gripped his wrist, immobilizing him completely.

Howard winced, feeling as though his bones might crack under the pressure. Jack was so powerful!

Sweat beaded on Howard's forehead as he struggled to free himself. "Don't you dare leave. Just wait!"

As Howard stormed off to call for backup, Craig turned pale. "You need to get out of here. If you stay, you might not make it out alive. These guys aren't people you want to mess with."

But it was too late. Within seconds, two more burly men emerged from the room.

"Mr. Jonsen, this punk's causing trouble."

The man roared, "Are you tired of living?"

But as his eyes landed on Jack, he froze. Then, he asked, "Big Jack?"

Jack was equally surprised. The man was none other than Boris, one of Caspian's

men.

He hadn't expected to run into him here.

Howard asked in confusion, "Mr. Jonsen, do you know him?"

"You idiot, he's my boss's boss! He's the one who took down Julian and made a name for himself!" Boris snapped.

Turning back to Jack, Boris grinned and asked, "What are you doing here? This is fate! Come in, let me buy you a drink!"

Boris scratched his head sheepishly, his respect for Jack evident in every gesture.

Howard finally snapped out of his daze. He had heard about Boris' rise in Alnewgo, how he followed a boss who had taken down the infamous Julian.

The story about Jack had spread like wildfire, not just in Alnewgo but even back in Perthter City.

After Boris returned, all the local big shots in Perthter City scrambled to get on his good side. After all, everyone wanted a piece of the action. Being connected to Boris wasn't just about prestige-it was about having a safety net, especially if they ever decided to expand their ventures to Alnewgo.

As Jack followed Boris into the private room, the once-arrogant local tough guys immediately straightened up, their eyes filled with admiration and respect. Truly, heroes emerged from the young.

Howard quickly rubbed his bare shoulders and forced an awkward laugh. "Big Jack, I'm really sorry. I had no idea who you were. I was out of line earlier. How about this? Let Boris and I pour you a few drinks to make it up to you."

Jack exchanged a few polite words with the group, sharing a couple of drinks to keep up appearances.

After ensuring everyone felt respected, he stood up and said, "Enjoy the food and drinks. I've got some things to take care of, so I'll leave you to it."

"But Big Jack..." Boris tried to persuade him to stay a little longer, but seeing that Jack wasn't in the mood for more drinks, he didn't push it.

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As Jack stepped out of the private room, Wesley and Francis stared at him in surprise.

Wesley stammered, "J-Jack, how did you become their boss?"

Jack shrugged casually. "It's nothing like that. I just happened to help them out while I was in Alnewgo. It's not as complicated as you think."

Wesley nodded as if that made sense. After all, they'd grown up together, and Wesley knew Jack inside and out. Jack becoming the state's top scorer was already mind-blowing enough. The idea of him being some legendary boss? That was straight out of a fantasy.

After finalizing the reunion venue, the three of them said their goodbyes to Craig and prepared to leave.

Just then, a young man came running in and shouted, "Mr. Kirk, something's wrong! There's trouble!"

Craig's expression turned serious. "Is someone causing a scene again?"

The young man said nervously, "You'd better see for yourself."

Before anyone could respond, a woman's shrill voice echoed through the lobby. "Get your manager out here! If my brother can't have his wedding banquet here in two days, I'll tear this hotel down!"

Craig replied, "Ma'am, please calm down. If you've made a reservation with us, we'll do everything we can to accommodate you. But if you haven't, I'm afraid our venue is fully booked."

The woman lit a cigarette, not even bothering to look at Craig. "Do you know who Lester Cort is? He's the Deputy Mayor of the Economics Department, and he's also my uncle!"

Another voice roared, "You bastards! If you don't clear a spot for us, I'll burn this place to the ground!"

A group of young men, dressed in black leather pants and looking like they'd stepped out of a bad action movie, stormed into the lobby. At the front was a young man with a menacing expression, like a tiger prowling through a forest of timid prey.

Jack froze, his eyes locking onto the leader. It was Shawn Cort. He and Caslita had humiliated Jack and nearly gotten him killed.

Jack had heard rumors that Shawn was a well-connected, second-generation rich kid; he never expected to run into him here.

Shawn hadn't noticed Jack at first. His attention was entirely on Craig.

Shawn slammed his hand on the table and demanded, "Give me an answer right now! Can I have my wedding here in a few days or not?"

Craig was terrified, not just by the threats but also by the mention of Lester. His expression immediately shifted, and he began nodding. "So, it's Mr. Cort! Of course, we'll make sure that you're satisfied with your wedding in three days."

There was no other choice-this spoiled rich kid was the type who might kill someone if provoked.

Shawn glared at Craig and snapped, "You fool. You only listen when I yell at you, huh?"

With that, Shawn finally seemed satisfied and broke into a smug grin.

Suddenly, Shawn's eyes widened as they landed on Jack. "Wait a minute. What the hell are you doing here?"

Jack smiled faintly. "It looks like we've met again."

Jack's sudden appearance left Shawn stunned. He vividly remembered the day he'd ordered his men to beat Jack to a pulp, severing his tendons and leaving him for dead. But here Jack stood, looking completely unharmed, as if that brutal incident had never happened.

A flicker of doubt crossed Shawn's mind. Had this loser really recovered from such a devastating injury?

Shawn hissed, "I didn't manage to kill you last time. You've got the guts to show your face here again?"