

## UNRIVALLED 161

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Nathan smiled faintly. "They're taking issues related to misbehavior among the children of officials very seriously these days, aren't they? So the higher-ups have been strictly keeping watch for they're afraid of these spoilt brats causing trouble. The Mayor even set up a channel for normal citizens recently so anyone who encounters similar problems can always give the Mayor a call. He has taken such matters very seriously and will deal with them right away. So I called the hotline, but I have never expected the Mayor to actually come and solve the issue."

Penny believed Nathan's words but Luther and William were slightly skeptical.

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Meanwhile, inside a private room at Wigston Club.

Jon Xander was having a toast with a Southeast Asian man.

This Southeast Asian chap was over 170 cm tall and wore a wolf's fang as a necklace.

He had tanned skin and toned muscles. At first glance, he looked like a farmer who worked on the fields by the countryside.

But the man was, in fact, a powerful figure. He was a mercenary leader who carried out activities in several small countries of Southeast Asia all year long, Fearless Wolf.

Fearless Wolf led a mercenary force consisting of dozens of men, which operated in Southeast Asia throughout the year.

Their main duties were to act as hitmen and protect drug dealers who wanted to cross checkpoints.

China was very strict when it came to mercenaries, leaving little opportunity for them to survive in such a prosperous and stable country.

Mercenaries normally didn't want to risk carrying out their activities here either; the penalties of being caught were extremely harsh.

But this time, Jon Xander had offered Adalwolf's team eighty million to come over and kill Nathan Cross.

Adalwolf was very tempted.

This was why he had turned up in Channing and was now drinking with Jon Xander at Wigston Club.

Adalwolf frequented various countries in Southeast Asia and was fluent in many languages around that

region. "Mr. Xander, it might be easy to kill a commoner like Nathan Cross. But we're in China now," he said in a rather flat Chinese accent. "It's a big risk for us to be here especially knowing how strict this country is when hunting down mercenaries. I'll take my men to kill Nathan tonight itself if you pay half the fee now. You can pay the rest after I'm done. That's not a problem for you, right?"

"Fair enough," Jon Xander responded. "Pay him, Hades."

Hades was another very capable subordinate of Jon.

His real name was Lucifer Sky and he was practically a killing machine.

Everyone in Arcvale's underworld knew him and referred to him as Hades.

"Yes, Boss," Hades replied in a deep voice.

Several minutes later, forty million was transferred into Adalwolf's account.

With that, Adalwolf said delightfully, "Very good. It's always a joy dealing with decisive people like you, Mr. Xander.

Jon raised his glass and said to Adalwolf, "I wish you success in getting rid of Nathan Cross. Cheers."

Adalwolf returned the gesture. "Cheers!"

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At night, Nathan and Penny took their daughter to Zornorstone amusement park.

They wanted to let the child take the Ferris wheel and carousel, but strong winds began to blow as they arrived at Zornorstone, despite the sky being clear when they left home.

Now, dark clouds filled the sky, and lightning flashed continuously followed by the sounds of thunder. It was clear that a storm was coming.

"It's going to rain. The amusement park will close soon so we should head back," Nathan said to Penny and Queenie.

Queenie was slightly dejected, but she knew she couldn't play at the park now even if she wanted to. "Okay," she said reluctantly.

Nathan carried the child and got ready to walk out of the amusement park with Penny.

Suddenly, he felt a chill down his spine. This was an intuition he had developed after being on the battlefields for so long.

Nathan would only feel this way if someone was aiming a gun at him from behind.

Without any hesitation, he dragged Penny along while holding onto their daughter and hid behind a large Snow White statue.

At the same time, a hitman aimed a sniper rifle at Nathan from five hundred meters away. Just as he was just about to fire, he couldn't help but exclaim softly after seeing Nathan's move.

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The sniper, Hector Creed, watched as Nathan suddenly disappeared from his shooting range. "What's going on?" he mumbled.

Steve Zayne, the assistant who was sprawled next to Hector and observing their target with a pair of binoculars, was just as puzzled.

"Maybe they're trying to hide because it's about to rain," he said while gazing through the binoculars.

"Sh\*t," Hector said irritably. "I had already aimed and would've fired if I were given just one more second."

Steve Zayne said calmly, "There was a strong wind earlier; level five from the southeast. It would've been difficult to fix the bullet path.

"Even if you had fired, you wouldn't have necessarily been able to kill the target in one shot.

"They're now hiding behind the Snow White statue which they can hide from the wind at most, but not the rain.

"I guess they'll come out from behind the statue soon. Wait patiently and finish him off with one shot."

Hector shifted his sniper while sprawled on the ground and aimed at the surroundings of the statue. He hummed a hunter's folksong while keeping his eyes narrowed, ready to fire at his prey the moment it appeared within his shooting range.

Having been dragged behind the Snow White statue out of the blue, Penny asked in confusion, "What's going on?"

"I think there's someone sneaking around and spying on us," Nathan answered calmly.

A look of worry appeared on Penny's face as she remembered the incident of her uncle's kidnapping from two days ago. "Could there be someone plotting something against us?"

"Don't worry," Nathan said. "I'll take care of it."

He took out his phone and gave Colin Dunne a call. "I'm at Zornorstone stone now. There's a bit of a problem."

Colin was shocked to hear this. "I'll send a team over right away."

"Keep a low profile. We don't want to cause a stir."

"Understood," Colin said. "Number Three and Quinten of the National Guards' Elite Eight are watching over your daughter from the shadows today. In fact, they're inside Zornorstone too. I'll send them an order to move at once. I'll be there with a backup team shortly."

"Alright!"

On top of the pavilion, Zornorstone's highest point.

The two snipers, Hector and Steve, frowned while staring at the large Snow White statue through their respective gun scopes.

"What are they doing hiding behind the statue? Do you think they've noticed us?" Hector asked irritably.

Steve denied immediately. "That's impossible. How could he know we're here?"

Hector felt the guy had a point, but he was beginning to feel restless seeing that Nathan hadn't come out after so long. "How about we change our positions?"

Just as Steve was about to respond, a cold voice rang out from behind them. "There's no such need!"

There's someone behind us!

Hector and Steve were completely taken aback. They were rigorously-trained mercenaries, so they had developed extremely sensitive senses and were highly alert of their surroundings.

Yet, someone had appeared behind them unnoticed!

The two snipers were beyond terrified. Without a moment of hesitation, Steve pulled out a gun from his waist and turned to the back.

Hector also aimed his sniper rifle toward the back with a low grunt.

But the moment they turned around, their necks were slashed by a dagger in a swift motion.

Blood flowed out of their throats as they flopped to the ground like two dead chickens.

The life in their eyes began to fade away as they lay on the floor.

They died with their eyes fixated on the tall Chinese man standing in front of them.

This Chinese man was none other than Quinten of Nathan's Elite Eight.

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Quinten picked up the sniper rifle and took over the commanding ground.

Whoosh! Another figure appeared next to Quinten.

It was Number Three, another member of the Elite Eight.

Number Three gazed at the two dead bodies and said to Quinten, "I've just searched the premise. There aren't any other suspicious characters in Zornorstone."

"Then we'll send General a text and tell him the danger's been removed for the time being?"

Just as Quinten finished speaking, a phone on one of the corpses rang.

Number Three searched the corpse and found the phone. Gazing at the incoming call, he turned to Quinten instead of answering it.

Quinten frowned. "It looks like the killers have accomplices!"

"We have to report this to the General right away!"

Nathan quickly received a text from Number Three, The danger has temporarily been cleared, but the enemies have reinforcements. Please don't leave the amusement park for the time being. We're ready to provide support and protection at any time.

Rain began to fall as Nathan read the message on his phone.

He smiled faintly at Penny and their daughter. "It's fine now. Let's head over to the restaurant and stay there until the rain stops."

Seven to eight old vans stopped by the roadside outside Zornorstone.

Adalwolf and his 28 mercenary force members were armed with weapons while they hid inside the vans.

Adalwolf had prepared two sets of plans to kill Nathan.

The first plan was to dispatch a small team of snipers into the amusement park to assassinate Nathan.

This was a move that would cost them the least.

The second plan was for Adalwolf and his entire team of Wolves to barge into the amusement park to gun Nathan down.

Then, they would run for cover in the rain at night and evacuate with Jon Xander's help.

But having received no word from the two snipers, Adalwolf's patience was wearing thin. He called them on the phone, but no one answered.

"What are those two idiots doing?" Adalwolf raged. "Forget it. We're carrying out Plan B right now. It's not safe for us to stay any longer in China. We have to get this over with quickly."

While Adalwolf ordered his men to check their guns and ammunition, a few insignificant-looking container trucks drove into the amusement park.

Inside the container trucks were elite soldiers of the Dragonfury Special Forces, heavily armed and seated in rows.

The rumbling sound of a thunder released a heavy downpour.

Having arrived inside Zornorstone amusement park, the five container trucks spread out in an orderly fashion.

Inside every carriage was a platoon of Dragonfury soldiers with no facial expressions.

With each container truck comprising five platoons of soldiers, their numbers totaled to over two hundred. It was a large-scale team!

The rain continued to pour heavily.

The five container trucks quietly stopped at the central square. Instead of getting down, the soldiers awaited the command of their chief.

However, the IT soldiers from each platoon were now silently on the move.

Every carrier was equipped with thermal imaging and other electronic equipment used during battle. At this very moment, all communication inside Zornorstone was being monitored.

Furthermore, the activities of every individual within a two-kilometer radius was being tracked by the thermographic cameras.

In other words, the Dragonfury had access to every single communication tool in the premise and was well aware of every movement made within a radius of two kilometers.

Many visitors didn't manage to leave the amusement park before the rain poured and were now stranded inside the restaurant.

Nathan, Penny and Queenie were eating their hamburgers and Cajun chicken wings.

Nathan looked out the window and he could vaguely see seven to eight vans entering the amusement park in the storm.

The vehicles stopped in the middle of Zornorstone Square and a sturdy-looking Southeast Asian man got down. It was Adalwolf, leader of the Wolves mercenary team!

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Adalwolf was also known as 'Fearless Wolf' in China.

The 28 members of the mercenary force alighted from their vehicle and stood next to Adalwolf in the rain.

Most of the soldiers only had pistols or daggers as their weapons, while a few possessed submachine guns.

The Wolves mercenary force was usually very well-equipped with weapons and ammunition when they carried out missions in Southeast Asia. Sometimes, they even had armored vehicles and helicopters.

However, in China, where they were currently situated, was equivalent to hell for the mercenaries.

It wasn't easy to amass weaponry into China within such a short period of time.

Besides, to Adalwolf, Nathan Cross was merely an ordinary person. As such, he did not see the need to splurge on remarkable military equipment for their current mission in China.

He was confident that, with the pistols and daggers which the soldiers had, it would be more than enough for the force to succeed in their assignment.

Adalwolf swept off the rain from his face with the back of his palm, and said in a ruthless tone, "Nathan Cross's car has not been seen driving out from the amusement park yet, so he must still be inside."

"Everyone, team yourselves up in pairs and split up to search for him. We'll have to find that guy within 15 minutes and get rid of him!"

"Yes, Sir!"

The 28 mercenaries answered in unison and got ready to set off in different directions.

However, just then, soldiers started streaming out of five inconspicuous container trucks which had been parked around the square. There were at least hundreds of them.

Adalwolf's deputy, Carter, exclaimed, "Shit, we're being ambushed! There are large numbers of Chinese soldiers here!"

Carter raised his submachine gun at once, to initiate an attack on the numerous soldiers from the Dragonfury Special Forces, who were already closing in on them.

However, at the same time, a sniper rifle shot was fired from the Zornorstone Pavilion, which was a few hundred meters away.

Bang! The bullet struck Carter in his chest and the man was killed on the spot.

The impact from the sniper rifle shot not only knocked Carter to the ground and took his life instantly, but it also caused the man's body to be propelled a distance of about 7 to 8 meters away.

"There are snipers!"

The soldiers from the Wolves mercenary force cried out in panic.

By now, Colin Dunne and the 200 over Dragonfury soldiers whom he was commanding, had already encircled Adalwolf and his men.

Colin Dunne said coldly, "Drop your weapons and surrender immediately, otherwise, all of you will be executed!"

Right after the man finished speaking, the translator for the Special Forces immediately repeated the captain's words loudly to Adalwolf and the mercenaries, translating it into a few different languages.

Being surrounded by the Chinese Special Forces, the Wolves mercenaries were all tensed up. With trembling voices, they asked Adalwolf, "Captain, what's our plan? Are we charging our way through?"

Boom! Lightning flashed, followed immediately by loud thunder which rumbled above their heads.

As lightning illuminated the area, Adalwolf could clearly see the 200 over soldiers on the enemy's side. They were armed soldiers from the Special Forces who were carrying submachine guns. He also noticed a badge sewn on the sleeves of one of the soldiers.

The top half of the badge had the word 'NORTH' in red, while the second half was an image of a ferocious dragon.

Only then did Adalwolf realize, to his horror, that these Chinese soldiers were not ordinary soldiers. Instead, they were the Dragonfury Special Forces from China's North Army!



Originally, the captain of the mercenary force had planned to put up a fierce fight and attempt to break through the siege. However, after becoming aware of who their enemy was, all color drained from his face.

China's North Army was world-famous.

And the Dragonfury Special Forces was the North Army's ace.

Fearless Wolf cursed Jon Xander under his breath. Why did he tell me Nathan Cross is a nobody? How can someone who can mobilize the Dragonfury Special Forces be a nobody?

Bloody hell! He's such a f\*cking idiot!

Fearless Wolf knew very well that, given the Wolves' criminal records and notorious reputation globally, they would come to no good if they were caught by the Chinese military troops.

"Let's surge forward and fight our way out!" Adalwolf growled.

The man lifted his submachine gun, as he prepared to fire the first shot.

Right after he decided to revolt against the Chinese troops and made a move, Quinten, who was stationed at the Zornorstone Pavilion, pulled the trigger once more. BANG! Adalwolf was shot dead instantaneously.

"Fire!" At the same time, Colin Dunne also gave his orders.

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Bang! Bang! Bang! A string of gunshots pierced through the air.

The 200 over soldiers from the Dragonfury Special Forces fired concurrently.

With all of them firing one shot each, the effect was like a prolonged gunshot.

If not listened to carefully, one could have easily mistaken it for the sound of thunder.

The single shots fired by each of the 200 Dragonfury soldiers were more than enough to extinguish all of Adalwolf's men. The 20 odd men fell dead almost at once when the shots sounded.

Every one of them had more than one gunshot wounds on their bodies.

These members of the Wolves mercenary force did not even get the chance to pull their triggers before they were all shot to death.

Overlooking the bodies of his enemies, Colin Dunne spoke without any emotion in his voice. “We have zero tolerance for those who dare offend our country.”

“Clean up the battlefield and retreat swiftly. Make sure not to alarm the General nor the residents nearby!”

“Yes, Captain!” The soldiers from the Dragonfury Special Forces answered in unison.

The bodies of Adalwolf and his men were dragged away speedily.

Traces of blood which had been spilt all over the ground were also removed.

Colin Dunne and his subordinates exited the scene in their container trucks without delay, as if the rainy night marred by bloodshed was just an illusion.

Nathan Cross, who had just finished dinner in a fast-food restaurant with his wife and daughter, suddenly received a message from Colin Dunne. The man texted, All cleared, everything is back to normal now.

The rain gradually subsided.

Nathan smiled at Penny and Queenie and said, “The rain isn’t so heavy now, let’s go home.”

“Hooray! We can finally go home,” the little girl cheered.

Nathan Cross drove his family back.

When they reached the Riverside Garden, he dropped his family at the door. He then informed his wife that he had something to handle and had to head off for a while.

Penny Smith did not think too much about it and took her daughter home. Before she left, she reminded her husband not to stay out too late.

“Sure, I’ll be back soon,” Nathan Cross answered the woman warmly.

After Penny Smith and his little girl entered the house, Nathan Cross walked out of the residential estate.

There were three vehicles—a black Mercedes-Benz and two jeeps—waiting for him outside the main gate of Riverside Garden.

Thomas Dunn was seated in the black Mercedes-Benz, while the jeeps carried Colin Dunne and the Elite Eight.

“General!”

Thomas Dunn, Colin Dunne and the Elite Eight got out of their respective vehicles immediately when they saw Nathan Cross, and greeted him respectfully.

Nathan Cross asked in a cold voice, “Do we know who were the mercenaries engaged by?”

“We’ve already found out that it was Jon Xander, tyrant of the South, who hired them,” Colin Dunne answered.

Nathan Cross let out a cold harrumph. “Bring him to me!”

“Yes, Sir! I’ll see to it right away,” Colin Dunne replied with a salute.

Inside one of the private rooms at the Wigston Club, Jon Xander was making out with a young lady. Ambient music filled the room while a champagne tower reflected the dazzling dim lights from a disco ball that was twirling above.

Jon Xander pushed the lady on the sofa and dismissed his subordinates who were also present in the room, with a wave.

“Don’t disturb me or let anyone come in here unless it’s Adalwolf coming with good news telling me that he has killed Nathan Cross,” he instructed his men.

“Yes, boss!”

Will and the other few men who were in the private room left quickly, knowing it was going to be a battlefield for their boss and the C-list actress.

With a suggestive grin on his face, Jon Xander said to the young actress, “Baby, here I come!”

Like a hungry wolf, the man pounced on the pretty lady and starting kissing her all over. The room was soon filled with the actress’s moans.

However, barely minutes after Will and the guys left, they retreated into the private room again, behaving like they were under some form of voodoo.

When Jon Xander turned around and saw his men back inside the room, there was an obvious look of displeasure on his face. “Didn’t I say no one is allowed to come in?” The man yelled angrily.

Right after Jon Xander finished his sentence, he noticed that his subordinates were not alone. There was another man who followed them in and was pointing a muzzle at Will’s forehead. That man was Thomas Dunn.

Thomas Dunn was accompanied by a group of his underlings, who were all armed with pistols. In total, there were more than ten pistols aimed at Jon Xander and his men.

Jon Xander's expression changed drastically, as he realized that Will and the rest were being forced back at gunpoint by Thomas Dunn's party.

Thomas Dunn's gaze landed on Jon Xander, and he saw that the man had pinned a young lady. Thomas Dunn's curled his lips slightly as he said nonchalantly, "Jon Xander, my Young Master would like to meet you."

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After Thomas Dunn spoke, he took a glance at the woman who was pinned under Jon Xander and arched his eyebrows.

"No rush though, you may finish whatever you were doing first before leaving with us. Our Young Master is really understanding. I'm sure he wouldn't mind waiting for a few more minutes," Thomas Dunn added.

Jon Xander got up from on top of the woman and glared at Thomas Dunn with his cheeks flushed red. Even though the man was secretly feeling rather fearful, he put on a stern expression and said, "Thomas Dunn, how dare you! Don't you know who my Master is? I'm the protégé of the Zabinski family, one of the Southern Four. I'm sure you already know of the Zabinski family's power in the South. I'm going to leave this room with my men right now. Try to stop me if you dare. Mr. Zabinski will annihilate your entire family if you dare lay a finger on me."

After Jon Xander finished speaking, he winked at Will and the rest of his men, signaling them to walk out of the room with him.

With the Zabinski family as out backing, Thomas Dunn will not dare to really hurt us. With that thought in mind, Will and the other underlings followed behind Jon Xander.

With the intention to make a strong exit, the men extended their arms to push away Thomas Dunn and his men.

But before Will and the rest of the guys could touch their adversaries, Thomas Dunn's group had already pulled the triggers without any hesitation.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Will and the other subordinates were shot. In a flash, blood splattered everywhere in the room.

Jon Xander turned ghastly pale at that very moment. The C-list actress, who had witnessed the bloody scene, screamed in horror.

Thomas Dunn looked towards the pretty lady and put his finger on his lips, an indication for her to keep quiet. "You didn't see anything here today," he said to her.

"Y-y-yes, of course, I didn't see anything, I wasn't here today at all... "

The terrified woman covered her mouth with her hands immediately after saying that.

Thomas Dunn turned his attention towards Jon Xander and said indifferently, "So, can we leave now?"

Beads of cold sweat dripped down Jon Xander's forehead as he stared at Thomas Dunn with dread.

It was incomprehensible to the man that these people seemed totally unafraid of the Zabinski family.

Two nights ago, Jon Xander had ordered his men to kidnap Samuel Smith and left him at an abandoned building situated in the Eastern suburbs.

However, what he had not expected was that he himself would be seized by Thomas Dunn and brought to the same abandoned building two days later. What an irony indeed!

Nathan Cross, Colin Dunne and the Elite Eight had been waiting for the man's arrival for quite some time.

Thomas Dunn shoved Jon Xander in front of Nathan Cross and said in a respectful manner, "Young Master, I've brought Jon Xander to you."

"So, you were the one who hired the mercenaries to kill me?" Nathan Cross looked at Thomas Dunn coldly.

Fear surged in Jon Xander's chest. Since Nathan Cross was unscathed, it must have meant that Adalwolf and his men had failed in their mission, and were most probably already dead.

The man could not figure out the reason for Adalwolf's defeat. Instead of killing Nathan Cross, the mercenary force was eliminated instead. Not only that, but it had also caused himself to land in Nathan Cross's hands.

Jon Xander knew Nathan Cross must have had gathered enough evidence before approaching him. As such, he could not see any ways out for himself, apart from death.

As a last attempt to survive, Jon Xander dropped to his knees and pleaded with a trembling voice, "Mr. Cross, I'm sorry! Please forgive me! Mr. Zabinski was the one who ordered me to kill you."

"I'm just a pawn in his game and have no idea what his greater plan is. On account of the fact that you're still safe and sound and I've not committed an irreversible sin, could you please let me off this

once? I promise I'll make myself scarce and never return to Channing ever again!"

Nathan Cross replied unemotionally, "Sure, you can go off now!"

Jon Xander widened his eyes in disbelief. Did this guy just say I can leave?

Even though it sounded too good to be true, it did not make sense for him to stay, since Nathan Cross had given him permission to leave. As such, Jon Xander got to his feet at once and ran off.

The man escaped from the abandoned building and reached the highway. Just then, he saw a cab approaching.

After Jon Xander flagged down the cab, he opened the car door to the back and sat down. "Please take me to the Channing International Airport, thank you," he said to the driver.

The man finally let out a sigh of relief as he leaned back on the car seat. He looked out of the window and started muttering under his breath, "Those d\*ck heads, Nathan Cross and Thomas Dunn, you b\*stards just wait and see! I'll tell Mr. Zabinski about this once I get out of Channing and make you pay for today. I'm gonna kill your entire families and you'll regret treating me this way!"

Suddenly, Jon Xander realized something was amiss. The cab had not moved.

Wondering what's going on, he looked at the cab driver anxiously and said, "Hey, why aren't you..."

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Before the men could complete his sentence, the driver was already holding him at gunpoint.

It turned out that the cab driver was Jeck, Thomas Dunn's right-hand man.

Holding the revolver to Jon Xander's forehead, Jeck sneered, "I heard you wanted to seek revenge on Mr. Cross and Thomas after you escape, yeah?"

Jon Xander was shocked beyond words as he stared at Jeck.

At the same time, Nathan Cross, Thomas Dunn and Colin Dunne had also driven out of the abandoned building.

When Nathan Cross's car passed by the cab, he stopped.

The men wound down this car window and looked at Jon Xander, who had despair written all over his face. Nathan Cross said unfeelingly, "As you requested, I gave you a chance, but you didn't cherish it. Remember to be kind in your next life."

That was all Nathan Cross said, before he rolled up his window and instructed Colin Dunne, who was at the wheel, "Let's go."

Nathan Cross's fleet of vehicles picked up pace as they drove further away.

Seconds later, a loud gunshot was heard from the cab behind.

With the illumination of the moonlight, Nathan Cross could see, from the rear-view mirror, Jack dragging out Jon Xander's body from the cab and putting it into the trunk.

As he drove, Colin Dunne asked deferentially, "Young Master, it seems like the Zebinski family was behind all this. Should we do something to give them a warning?"

Nathan Cross replied in an unconcerned manner, "Let's observe a while more. If this is not enough for the Zebinski family to learn their lesson and they try something funny again, I don't mind exterminating that entire family."

Meanwhile, Jerry Zebinski was lying in bed in the VIP ward of the Albersque hospital, expressionless. Before the man could complete his sentence, the driver was already holding him at gunpoint.

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His parents, Finley Zabinski and Harriett Quigley were by their son's bedside, looking at him with pained expressions.

"Isn't that Jon Xander supposed to be the tyrant of the South? He's undeserving of that reputation. Your grandpa has instructed him to finish off Nathan Cross and Thomas Dunn, but not only did he fail his mission, but he also got himself killed instead!" Finley Zabinski was burning with wrath as he spoke to his son.

"But Jerry, don't worry yeah? Our Zabinski family has men everywhere in the South. Your grandpa said he would get a more reliable person to avenge you."

Jerry Zabinski, who was in a white patient gown, finally opened his mouth to speak. His voice did not sound as booming and orotund as it used to be, but instead, had a sharper and more effeminate tone to it.

He said unemotionally, "Dad, tell grandpa that I'm going to get revenge myself."

Finley Zabinski was momentarily stunned when he heard what his son said. Harriett Quigley tried to persuade her son, "Jerry my dear, why lower ourselves to battle those crazy people?"

Finley Zabinski added, "Exactly! Just leave it to your grandpa. Our aim is just to see Nathan Cross and Thomas Dunn dead anyway."

With a menacing look in his eyes, Jerry Zabinski said in a hoarse voice, "What good is revenge if we can't feel the satisfaction of it? I'm going to torture Nathan Cross with my own hands, such that he'll rather be dead instead, and beg for my mercy. Not only that, but I'll also make sure his wife gets raped many times over!"

"Sure, sure. We'll do as you deem fit. We'll leave it to you to decide. I'll tell grandpa to halt taking action and let that son of a b\*tch Nathan Cross live for a while more. You can deal with him personally after you're discharged from the hospital two months later." Finley Zabinski and his wife tried to calm their agitated son down.



Two months passed by in a blink of an eye.

The Smith Family, especially Sean Smith, had been secretly worrying that the Zabinski family would stir up trouble for them.

Sean Smith had even handed over Diva Limited, which he had originally planned to gift the Zabinski family, to Benson Smith.

The reason for this move was to let Benson Smith take the first blow in the event the Zabinski family sought revenge.

However, it had been more than two months since Benson Smith took over the subsidiary.

Apart from sending Jon Xander to kick up a scene in the company, the Zabinski family had not taken any further action.

This evening, Sean Smith had called for a meeting with his eldest son, Samuel, and his third son, Paul, in his study. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss a plan to gain back control of Diva Limited.

The brothers had expressed their approval when they heard of their dad's proposition to recover the company.

"Dad, it seems like the Zabinski family has let the matter slide. They seem to have no intention of getting even with us. Since this is the case, there's no reason to continue letting Benson manage Diva Limited," Samuel Smith sneered.

Paul Smith agreed, saying, "Yeah, Benson and his family are of no value to us anymore. It's time to get the company back."

Their father squinted and replied, "Okay then, in my capacity as the Group's chairman, I'll remove Benson from his position and reappoint May to manage Diva Limited instead."

## [Chapter 168](#)

The next day, Benson Smith arrived at the office as usual, all geared up.

However, once he reached the office, he found himself being approached by May, who was accompanied by a few other senior management personnel of the company. The woman was holding the letter of his dismissal.

As the woman handed Benson Smith the official letter, she let out a cold laugh and said, "Uncle, you've been released from your position. The chairman has appointed me as the general manager of Diva Limited with effect from today. You should get packing and leave the office as soon as possible."

Benson Smith could not believe his eyes when he saw the letter of dismissal.

After he snapped out of his shock, he became agitated and said, "This can't be true. Dad has just praised me a while back for doing a good job. How is it possible that I'm suddenly fired?"

The man immediately took out his phone and made a call to his dad, Sean Smith.

Sean Smith picked up just after a few rings. He spoke in a laidback manner, "Hey Benson, May was in charge of Diva Limited for a long time and is more familiar with the fashion industry. After some serious contemplation, I decided that she's still the best person to manage the company."

Benson Smith was still in denial. His voice was shaking as he said, "Dad, but I..."

An obvious hint of displeasure could be heard from Sean Smith's voice when he spoke, "Benson, you can't be selfish. We have to look at the big picture."

Benson Smith's face darkened as he said softly, "Okay, Dad, I understand. I'll do as you say and hand over Diva Limited to May."

"Perfect!" Sean Smith was very satisfied with his son's response.

After Benson Smith hung up, he started packing his belongings into a paper carton and carried it in his arms as he left the office. On his way out, most of the employees were pointing fingers at him. It was a miserable departure for the man.

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Leah was watching TV with Queenie when Benson Smith got home.

The woman went up to her husband when she spotted the look of dejection on his face. Feeling puzzled and unsettled, she asked, "Benson, aren't you supposed to be at work now? Why are you back so early?"

Benson Smith let out a bitter laugh and described the eventful morning to his wife, without leaving out a single detail.

After Leah heard what happened, she was trembling with fury. "See, I told you that they wouldn't be so kind to us. They must have been worried that the Zabinski family would initiate a forced takeover of Diva Limited and did not want to face them head-on. They planned to let you manage the company so that you would be the one bearing the brunt. Now that Nathan had dealt with the troublemaker sent by the Zabinski family, they are burning the bridge as you have no use for them anymore. That's too much!"

Nathan Cross and Penny Smith arrived for lunch at noon.

Penny noticed that her dad was out of sorts, and checked on him. That was when Leah narrated the entire episode to their daughter and Nathan.

Anger rushed through Nathan Cross as he learned of the injustice his father-in-law had to endure. After being made use of, the elder man had been mercilessly kicked to one side like garbage.

"Dad, don't be too affected by it. Since grandpa wasn't sincere in letting you manage Diva Limited, we would actually be better off without it." Penny tried to console her dad.

Nathan concurred and added, "Yup! Dad, it's your fiftieth birthday tomorrow. Penn and I have already booked the Peony Hall at the Indigo Hotel. We've reserved around 50 tables for your birthday celebration."

Feeling comforted, Benson Smith replied, "That sounds nice. It's really thoughtful of the both of you."

Benson Smith did not have the habit of celebrating his birthdays, but turning 50 was considered a milestone, as such, it was a meaningful one.

He had originally also planned to host a dinner and invite some close friends and relatives to get together.

He wanted it to be a boisterous affair so that everyone would know that the second son of the Smith Family was also doing quite well.

After knowing that his daughter and her husband had already made arrangements for his birthday, Benson Smith spent the rest of the day making calls to friends and relatives, inviting them to his birthday event at the Indigo Hotel's Peony Hall held at noon tomorrow.

However, when he rang his elder brother, Samuel, he heard something which had thrown him off. Letting out a wry laugh, Samuel Smith said, "What a coincidence! I'm also planning to celebrate my fifty-fifth birthday at the Indigo Hotel's Lotus Hall tomorrow."

Feeling baffled, Benson Smith replied, "Samuel, isn't your birthday three days later?"

Samuel Smith answered his brother in a cherry tone, "Well, tomorrow is a weekend, so I decided to hold the celebration a few days earlier. It would be rather inconvenient for my guests to attend it if it's on a weekday, as they would be working."

Benson was speechless. He was at a loss and asked, "If both of us hold our birthday celebrations at the same time, how can our friends and relatives appear on both sides simultaneously?"

Baring his teeth, Samuel smiled and said, "Although we have chosen the same hotel to hold our birthday celebrations, there would be no conflict as you'll be at the Peony Hall, while mine is held at the Lotus Hall. As for our relatives and friends, it's up to them to choose between your party at the Peony Hall or mine at the Lotus Hall. Does that make sense?"

There was nothing Benson Smith could do about it. After he got off the phone with his brother, he got slightly worried.

### [Chapter 169](#)

The next day, Benson Smith and Samuel Smith hosted their birthday celebrations at Indigo Hotel's Peony Hall and Lotus Hall respectively.

Seen Smith, Paul Smith and the rest of the members of the Smith family were gathered at the Lotus Hall, where Samuel Smith's luncheon was held.

Relatives and friends who had started streaming in, dropped by the Peony Hall to pass Benson Smith a small gift, before heading to Samuel Smith's side with the expensive presents.

As the time approached noon, Samuel Smith's Lotus Hall was already filled with guests who were there to celebrate his birthday; more people were flowing in.

On the other hand, Benson Smith's Peony Hall was cold and cheerless.

Apart from the hotel's service crew, Benson, Leah, Nathan, Queenie and Penny were the only people there. Not even one guest was present.

Suddenly, a man who was dressed in suit, walked in. It was Joe Harris, Benson's cousin.

It was a rare sight that someone else other than Benson Smith's family itself had shown up. Naturally, Benson, together with his family, welcomed him warmly, "Joe, it's good to see you."

Joe Harris's smile extended to his eyes as he took out a gift box and handed it to Benson Smith. "Happy fiftieth birthday, Benson! I've brought you a small gift. May all your wishes come true!"

Benson passed the gift box to Penny and said to his cousin merrily, "Joe, you didn't have to bring a present, I'm just glad you took time to be here. C'mon, let's sit down and have a few drinks together. We need to catch up properly! By the way, where's your wife? Didn't she come here with you?" The next day, Benson Smith and Samuel Smith hosted their birthday celebrations at Indigo Hotel's Peony Hall and Lotus Hall respectively.

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Joe Harris politely declined the invitation to catch-up with a wave of his hand. Apologetically, he said, "My wife and the kids are at the Lotus Hall. I just came over to pass you the gift. I'll be having lunch at Samuel's. Thanks for your hospitality though, Benson."

Joe Harris left and proceeded towards Samuel Smith's Lotus Hall after saying that.

Benson Smith did not even get the chance to persuade him to stay.

Even though Benson Smith had experienced the vicissitudes of life, he had finally understood the fickleness of human nature today.

The stark contrast between his brother's crowded Lotus Hall, and his empty Peony Hall, was the perfect representation of social snobbery.

With his pride hurt, Benson blamed his daughter and son-in-law for his predicament. "See! I've already told you guys not to fuss over my birthday. We now have 50 empty tables without a single guest. How embarrassing is this!"

Just then, the hotel manager walked over and asked in a hushed tone, "Mr. Smith, it's just half an hour to noon, but none of your guests have arrived. Are you still intending to proceed with the lunch as planned?"

Benson Smith could feel the mocking stares from the manager and the service crew. He was scorched with shame and was thinking of cancelling the lunch banquet and offering to bear the resulting losses.

Before he could state his intention, however, Nathan had already spoken. "Of course we are proceeding as planned. Please arrange for more service staff. I'm afraid that the people you have here will not be enough to handle our numerous guests."

The hotel manager scanned around the deserted Peony Hall and silently sneered, before casually acknowledging the man's request.

The people we currently have are not enough to serve those empty tables? What a joke! He's such a braggart. By the looks of it, even if they waited half an hour more, there wouldn't be much change to the situation.

Penny was getting anxious as well. She said to her husband softly, "Our friends and relatives are all over

at uncle's side, no one is going to come here. What should we do?"

Leah agreed. "Yeah, we've reserved 50 tables but we can't even manage one full table. This is such a humiliation!"

However, Nathan Cross seemed unfazed. "Don't worry, I guarantee you that all of these tables will be filled in half an hour."

Penny and her parents had a look of suspicion on their faces. The woman asked her husband, "Nathan, you're thinking of inviting the homeless people on the streets to be our guests, aren't you? If you do that, we'll be the laughing stock of our friends and relatives."

Nathan Cross smiled and replied, "Today is dad's fiftieth birthday. How can we get random passersby to be his guests? Of course, we have to get some VIPs. Oh! Why don't I invite the leaders of Channing here to join in dad's birthday celebration?"

## [Chapter 170](#)

What? The leaders of Channing?

Benson, Leah and Penny looked at Nathan as if he was insane.

Benson Smith let out a sigh as he said, "Nathan, get your head out of the clouds. It's almost noon. How are we going to get the leaders of Channing here? Why don't you say we'll invite the mayor instead?"

As a matter of fact, Nathan Cross replied, "Yeah! That's right! The leaders of Channing whom I was referring to include the mayor as well."

Everyone from the family couldn't help but roll their eyes at the men's absurdity.

Since it did not cost anything to brag, Nathan seemed to be overindulging in it.

Peony Hall was situated at the East Wing of the second floor of the Indigo hotel, while the West Wing housed the Lotus Hall.

As compared to the desolate Peony Hall, the Lotus Hall was full of activity.

Friends and relatives of the Smith Family had all chosen to attend Samuel Smith's fifty-fifth birthday celebration instead of Benson Smith's fiftieth.

Those who were slightly closer to Benson had taken the effort to pass him a small gift to thank him for the invite.

However, the majority of the invited guests did not even bother to stop by the Peony Hall. They had headed directly to the Lotus Hall.

Everyone knew Samuel Smith was the one taking care of all matters relating to the Smith Family, regardless of magnitude. As such, it was an open secret that Samuel would be the future head of the family.

Benson Smith paled in comparison to his brother. He was someone even his own dad looked down on.

Dressed in a bespoke suit, Samuel welcomed his guests together with his family as they arrived.

Samuel Smith was satisfied with the turnout of his eldest son's birthday celebration today. It was an indication of his wide influence and network.

However, there was still something lacking.

The people who were present at Samuel Smith's birthday celebration were mostly either members of the Smith Family or the senior management of the Grande Group.

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However, there was still something lacking.

The people who were present at Samuel Smith's birthday celebration were mostly either members of the Smith Family or the senior management of the Grande Group.

Included in the guest list were also the Group's business associates, as well as friends from Samuel Smith's own social circle. There was not a single politician at the event.

Sean Smith was very clear of the workings of the business world. If one aspired to make it big, having a politician's backing was of utmost importance.

As such, he was slightly disappointed that there were no representatives of the political arena present among his eldest son's invited guests.

Samuel Smith observed his dad's discontentment and couldn't help but ask, "Dad, what's the matter?"

Sean Smith lowered his voice as he replied, "I'm happy to see so many people showing up at your birthday celebration today, but I was just thinking it'd be even more perfect if there were political representatives here as well. I'm worried that others might get the impression that our Smith family doesn't have any political influence!"

Samuel Smith was taken aback by his dad's comment and quickly scanned his surroundings.

The more distinguished guests comprised a few business partners of the Grande Group.

Apart from those people, there were no other leaders or important guests present.

Miles, who was beside listening to his dad and granddad's conversation, suddenly spoke. "Dad, Grandpa, leave this to me. I've had a few dealings with the mayor's secretary, Rexton Torres. I can try to invite Mr. Torres to join our lunch."

Sean Smith and his two sons, Samuel and Paul, were all surprised at the young man's words.

Sean Smith was delighted and said, "Miles my boy, I didn't know you're even acquainted with the mayor's secretary! Impressive!"

Samuel Smith was barely able to contain his excitement as he instructed his son, "Quick! Contact Mr. Torres immediately."

"Yup! Oh, and remember to be polite and try to sound more sincere yeah? Mr. Torres is the mayor's secretary as well as his most trusted subordinate. Everyone behaves deferentially towards him, including business moguls and the heads of various government departments. It would be a great honor if we manage to have him as our guest," Paul Smith added.

Feeling very pleased with himself, Miles whipped out his phone immediately. In an extremely fawning tone, he informed the mayor's secretary that it was his dad's birthday and hoped that the man would be able to grace them with his presence.

After the brief call ended, Miles Smith was smiling ear to ear as he said to his family, "Mr. Torres said he might not be free today, but if he can find some spare time, he would drop by for a short while."

Everyone nodded continuously, including Sean Smith, who replied, "It's completely understandable. After all, Mr. Torres is no ordinary man. As the mayor's secretary, he must have tons of tasks to attend to every day. It makes perfect sense even if he's not able to turn up."

Just then, May walked over and said to Sean Smith, "Grandpa, the 50 tables which we've booked are all already full, but we're expecting quite a few more guests. We wouldn't have any more seats for those people who are arriving later, what should we do?"

Sean Smith creased his brows slightly as he replied, "Should we get them to set up a few more tables along the corridor outside the entrance of the Lotus Hall?"

"Dad, how can we let our guests have their meals along the corridor? That would make us a bad host!" Samuel shook his head and objected to that suggestion.

May said, "I have an idea, isn't Uncle Benson hosting his birthday celebration at the Peony Hall right across here? I went to take a look just now and it's so lifeless. There wasn't even a single guest. How about we ask him to let us have the hall instead? If that's the case, our problem of space constraints will be solved!"

Samuel Smith loved the idea. With a twinkle in his eyes, he exclaimed, "It's a wonderful suggestion, let's do that!"