

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

The entire city of Channing was on high alert.

A military aircraft was making its landing at the Channing International Airport.

Hundreds of soldiers from the special forces aligned themselves into neat rows at the airport. Each soldier was dressed in full battle gear.

None of them could tear their adulatory eyes away from the aircraft that had just landed. There was a sense of eager anticipation in the air.

Nathan Cross made his way down the aircraft's stairs after he had exited. His black combat boots creaked with every step he took.

“Attention!”

“Salute!”

The strident voice of the officer pierced through the air with a note of authority and discipline.

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

The troops raised their right hand uniformly to give their salutes while greeting him concertedly, "Welcome to Channing, Sir!"

He was their general, whose actual name was Nathan Cross, although they liked to refer him as the Ares of the North.

That was because he had never lost a battle in his distinguished military career, since the day he had joined the army as a young chap.

His track record for the past five years had been jaw-dropping when he had led the troops to several significant victories in the north.

He had repeatedly defended the borders from invading enemies. The country owed it to his tactical genius and strategic astuteness for the peace and prosperity that it was enjoying today.

With a tall and muscular physique, Nathan Cross was an attractive man. His luminous eyes sparkled like diamonds in the



## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

dazzling sunlight.

Nonetheless, he seemed a little displeased. Knitting his brows together, he muttered to Colin Dunne, captain of the National Guards, "Didn't I tell you to keep a low profile?"

"That's what I've been telling the Channing's authorities, Sir. I'd never expected that they would make such a fuss about it," Colin Dunne replied abashedly.

"Send the troops back and inform them to lift the red alert status, reverting everything to its usual course. The same goes for you - I don't need you to follow me around. I have my own arrangements."

"Yes, Sir!" Colin Dunne clapped his heels together and saluted.

Nathan Cross strode out of the airport alone, accompanied by a sudden myriad of strange emotions that tugged at his heart, which was a huge departure from his usual calm demeanor.

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

Five years ago, the grief from his mother's passing had forced him into a drunken stupor and left him sleeping on the streets.

A kind-hearted lady took pity on him and tried to give him a hand. But his desires, aroused by drunkenness, got the better of him as he forced her to have sex with him.

By the time he had woken up, the lady had left.

It had been five grueling years for Nathan as he exhausted all the possibilities to find the lady. Unfortunately, all his efforts had come to naught. It was only until recently that he finally got a hold of the information he had been looking for.

His sources had informed him that her name was Penny Smith, and that she was still unmarried.

She had given birth to a daughter, Queenie Smith, a corollary of their one-night stand.

It pained him to think about the dreadful life that the two had to face over the past

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

few years.

*Now that I've found you, I assure you that there will only be joy and happiness in your lives from now on, he solemnly vowed. I shall give you the wonderful lives that you both deserve.*

...

In the meeting room of Diva Limited, Penny Smith was amidst a discussion with her client, Derek Harvey. Dressed in a smart suit, Penny appeared business-like, yet stunningly attractive.

However, her face was full of rage as she glared at the fat, pudgy man in front of her. "I'm sorry, Mr. Harvey, but I'm unable to oblige your request. I'm not one of those who would give myself away merely for the sake of a contract," she rejected him indignantly.

With that being said, she stood up and turned to leave the meeting room.

Derek Harvey stretched out his flabby

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

arms to block her from leaving. “Don't be mad, Ms. Smith.” His lips widened into a nauseous grin, like a hungry wolf baring its fangs. “All I'm asking is for you to put on your company's latest lingerie design for couples so that I can get a better sense of how they look on one's body.” Leering, he tried to persuade her, “Just a small feast for my eyes, that's all I ask!”

“Why don't you just model them for me? I'll place an order for fifty million immediately if I like what I see. That's my stance, take it or leave it.”

“And to top it off, I'll give you a big fat tip of one million as well. How does that sound to you?”

“Please stop harassing me and show me some respect, Mr. Harvey!”

“Respect for you?” Derek Harvey shriled at the top of his voice.

“Who would respect someone like you after they've found out about your dirty past, our beloved daughter of the Smith

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

Family? Every member of Channing's upper class would cover their mouths and giggled at this open secret. Stop pretending like you're like some pure and innocent virgin in front of me!"

A shiver ran down Penny Smith's spine. Her face immediately paled when he brought up that ugly incident - it was the ghost that would haunt her for the rest of her life, a perpetual shame that would forever plague the reputation of the Smith Family.

Just the mention of it was torture to her. She had never expected Derek Harvey to use it, trampling all over her dignity.

"I don't see the need to explain my personal life to you," her beautiful face turned frigid, "And I've decided to call off our business cooperation with you. There's nothing left to discuss, goodbye!"

With his eyes pinned on Penny's alluring body, Derek Harvey refused to relent. He darted his eyes over to the lingerie samples on the table and threatened, "No

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

woman can escape from me once I have my eyes on her, Ms. Smith. Don't blame me for getting rough if you insist on defying me.”

His words still resounding in her ears, Penny was instantly cornered by two bodyguards with crooked smiles on their faces.

“What are you trying to do?” Penny immediately grew alert. Her voice was thick with rage and fear.

“I'm just trying to have some fun with you, Ms. Smith. Don't you know how much I adore you?” Derek Harvey smiled his obnoxious, lewd smile, “But since you are such a pig-headed fool, I'm afraid that I'll have to resort to physical means to make you submit to my demands.”

A pang of horror shot through Penny when he uttered those words, making her cheek twitch with fear. Abruptly, she dashed for the door in a bid to escape.

The two bodyguards grasped her wrists

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

and held her back.

“Help! Someone help me, please!” Penny screamed at the top of her lungs.

“Hehehe, save your breath, my dear. I've picked this hour for our meeting as all of your staff have already left for home.” Derek Harvey flashed a grotesque grin, “You can shout all you want, nobody will come to save you.”

Tears welled up in Penny's eyes as she plunged into despair, feeling like a trapped animal. She had never expected Derek Harvey to be such a vicious monster.

“Oh baby, why are you crying? Daddy is here...” Derek Harvey pressed closer to her with a sneer on his repugnant face, spinning his nasty web around Penny, who had been pinned down by his bodyguards.

*Bang!* A thunderous thud reverberated around the room.

The meeting room's door was booted open with such force that it flew off its hinge



## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

and landed with a thud right under the nose of Derek Harvey and his men, leaving them in shock, mouths agape.

A man walked into the room. His strong, lean body looked as fit as a professional athlete, while his exquisite looks appeared good enough to grace the cover of magazines. He was Nathan Cross.

Penny gave a start the moment she saw Nathan *-it's him!*

She had fought back her tears even when Derek Harvey had almost molested her, yet the sight of Nathan made her tears run like rivulets down her cheeks.

A sharp pain stung Nathan's heart upon seeing Penny cry like a baby, melting the layers of ice within him.

Five years ago, she had saved him in a chance encounter.

Yet, in his inebriated state, he had taken her by force and had non-consensual sex with her.

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

Over the past five years, Nathan had never stopped looking for her.

Her face filled his dreams every night; she was incontestably the most unforgettable woman he had met.

Now that they found each other again, the inexplicable look in their eyes spoke a thousand words.

Derek Harvey's voice snapped both of them back to their senses. "Who the hell are you?" His eyes were narrowed and full of menace as he assessed Nathan, who was dressed in civilian clothes.

"Come with me!" Nathan beckoned to Penny with his gaze fixed on her. He did not answer Derek Harvey's question, nor did he spare him a glance.

Penny shook her head fervently. Her tears were streaming down like waterfalls.

This was the man who had raped her five years ago, bringing shame to her family as he turned her into the laughingstock of the

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

entire Channing. Her own resilience amazed her - she survived the scathing tirade of mockery and insults that the others had launched at her.

Yet the same man who was now standing in front of her had not shown the slightest bit of compassion to her plight. The first sentence he had uttered was a condescending order to leave with him. *What do you take me for, a slave?*

Derek Harvey had been so close to laying his hands on Penny, but Nathan's sudden appearance thwarted his grand scheme. His eyes bulged angrily while his flabby chin quivered with rage when he heard that Nathan was going to take Penny away with him.

"How dare you meddle in my affairs, you punk!" He snarled, "Quin, Luke, I want you to smash his legs and make sure that he'll never be able to walk again!"

"Yes, boss!"

The two towering bodyguards spread their

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

claws and lunged at Nathan Cross.

*Boom! Bang!*With two firm kicks, Nathan sent them flying backward, and they landed heavily on the floor. The force had broken their ribs, leaving two huge indentations in their chests. Both the men fell unconscious.

With the two bodyguards taken care of, Nathan sauntered towards Derek Harvey with his cold killer stare.

“How dare you? What do you think you're doing?” Derek Harvey tried to put up a brave front, even though he knew he had been completely overpowered by Nathan.

“Don't you know who I am? I'm Derek Harvey, the boss of Mingda Corporation!”

“No one dares to touch me in the whole of Channing, knowing that I'll beat the shit out of them should they even harm a hair of mine.”

Nathan stood directly in front of him with a disinterested look. “Are you done with your

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

nonsense?”

His reply astounded Derek Harvey, who was under the impression that everyone would shun away with fear when they heard his name. But this guy seemed impervious to his threat.

Unwarily, Nathan raised his leg and stomped on Derek Harvey's left leg with brutal force.

*Crack*, came the sound of his fractured bone.

Nathan had broken Derek's left fibula, which sent Derek Harvey rolling and writhing in pain on the floor, wailing like a banshee.

With an unconcerned look, Nathan turned and walked towards Penny, who was watching with eyes as big as saucers. “Come with me?” His tone had softened.

“No way!”

She bit her lip resolutely; it was impossible

## Chapter 1 Ares Of The North

to forgive a monster like him who had utterly ruined her life.

“I've been looking for you everywhere since I first met you five years ago. I shall never let you leave my sight again.”

With that being said, he scooped her up and strode out of the room.



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## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

Penny did not struggle in his arms. It was as if she had lost her will to fight.

The only sign of defiance was the tears that spilled over the corners of her eyes.

She had lived her life in the past five years like a zombie, benumbing herself to the relentless insults and humiliation targeted at her. She had thought of ending her life several times to escape from the pain and misery, but each time, her daughter's face would surface in her mind. With her daughter as her sole anchor, Penny gritted her teeth and forged onward.

It was all because of this devil who had torn her life apart!

Nathan was the one who had brought the relentless misery and despair upon her and her daughter.

She swore that she would strive to work hard and stay single for the rest of her life. Her only purpose was to make up for her daughter's sufferings by giving her a blissful and promising future.



## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

Little did she know that the man who had started the tragedy five years ago and brought upon the most torturous times of her life was now back to haunt her. It was like rubbing salt in her wound. Upon his reappearance, all the poignant memories which had been long buried came back to life, flashing across her mind like indelible ghosts.

How she yearned for a break. She prayed to God for a little salvation, earnestly begging the heavens to stop piling up on her hardships.

The sight of Penny's piteous state was unbearable to Nathan. He gently put her down and let her stand on her feet.

“Can you give me a chance to make up to you and our daughter, please?” A stony-hearted creature like him was a complete stranger to tenderness, but he begged for the first time in the gentlest manner he could muster.

“For the sake of our daughter, and for you as well, please give me a chance,” he

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

pleaded.

Penny quivered uncontrollably when he uttered 'our daughter'.

It gifted her with a glint of hope as she slowly lifted her eyes.

“Trust me, I know what kind of hell you both have gone through over the years,” Nathan continued to plead in his soft voice, “I know that you loathe me too, but please give me a chance to make amends.”

“Children from single-parent families are more prone to suffer from personality disorders, which may affect their overall well-being.”

“Please give me a chance, Penny.”

Penny's eyes reflected a whirlwind of emotions as she ruminated on his words. Queenie was growing up fast and getting more sensible by the day.

A family without a father could never be

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

complete, let alone offer a sense of normalcy and oneness to the child.

It broke her heart whenever she saw the pitiful look on Queenie's face when she asked for her papa.

Yet, she could only turn away and wipe her tears as she had no answer for her dear daughter.

*Yes, Queenie needs a father!*

The determination in Nathan's eyes only fueled her conviction.

It took her a long time to decide, but she finally agreed, "Alright, I'll give you a chance to reunite with your daughter."

"I'm giving you the chance because she needs a papa in her life. But let me give you a stern warning - do nothing that might upset her."

"And just to be clear, the fact that Queenie calls you papa does not mean you are my husband, do you get it?"

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

“Yes!” Nathan nodded his affirmation.

Nathan knew well that Penny was giving him the opportunity to reunite with Queenie because she wanted the young girl to have a bright future.

It would take a lifetime for her to forgive him for the pain he had inflicted on her, let alone take him as her husband.

Those years of suffering in silence had spun an invisible web within her, creating a deadly mess of entangled knots. He knew that it would take time to untwine and unravel those knots of pain and grievances.

...

Meanwhile, inside the elementary classroom of Golden Apple Kindergarten, the teacher was nowhere to be seen!

A pudgy boy decked in designer wear was gloating with delight, pulling on a rope.

The other end of the rope was tied to the

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

neck of a little girl who was being towed along like a puppy.

The fat boy tugged on the makeshift leash impatiently and shouted at her, "Don't you know you're my dog, Queenie? Dogs are supposed to bark, do it now!"

The victim crawled on her limbs like a puppy, her grubby face stained with chalk dust. She was a little girl around the age of four.

Underneath the grime and dust was a well-defined face with the winsome features of a pretty, innocent young girl.

The fat boy kept tugging at the rope around her neck, which left her gasping for air.

Unsatisfied with her inaction, the fat boy pestered her again, "Queenie, I'm warning you, bark, or I'll get everyone to wallop you. You're a stupid b\*\*\*\*\* who doesn't even have a father..."

Her eyes red-rimmed, Queenie sobbed

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

pitifully, “No, don't call me a b\*\*\*\*\*, I'm not...”

“Listen, I am the king of this place and when I say you're a b\*\*\*\*\*, you'd better act like one. Now, do as I say and bark like a dog!” The fat boy was relentlessly cruel and demanding.

The rest of the kids laughed at what they saw, as if they were watching a comical cartoon.

Nathan and Penny had just reached the entrance of the classroom.

The sight of her daughter being leashed like a puppy threw Penny into a state of shock. She rushed forward and lifted Queenie into her arms.

She untied the rope from Queenie's neck and tossed it away as if it were a repulsive snake. “What happened to you, Queenie?” She asked worriedly, her eyes burning with anger.

Queenie could not withhold her tears any

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

longer upon seeing her mother. Like a dam that had exploded, she sobbed until her little body trembled, "Mama, Max Zahn has said that I'm a b\*\*\*\*\* and that he wants me to bark like a dog, otherwise, he would get everybody in the class to beat me up..."

*What?*

Gripped with rage, fury coursed through Penny's veins, making her quiver.

She was well aware of this fat bully named Max Zahn. He always picked on Queenie as his target.

It stunned her when she saw the inhumane treatment that Queenie was receiving from him.

Penny held Queenie dearly as she consoled her, "You have a papa, Queenie. They're wrong to call you a b\*\*\*\*\*."

Queenie sobbed and replied through hiccups, "No, Queenie has no papa..."

"No, Queenie, you have a papa. I'm your



## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

papa!" exclaimed Nathan, whose heart was ripped apart when he heard Queenie's heart-wrenching cries.

Queenie stopped sobbing as she turned quizzically to her mother. "Mama, is he really my papa?"

"Yes, he's your papa, Queenie. He just retired from the army." Penny nodded fervently.

"Papa..."

Queenie was overwhelmed with joy as she raced towards Nathan, who picked her up into his arms as his heart filled with incandescent love.

With her little arms wrapped around his neck, Queenie was consumed with such intense happiness that she could not stop calling him, "Papa, papa."

Nathan was equally swamped with tenderness and love as he responded to her whimpers with passion and affection.

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

Penny observed the interaction between the pair, full of giggles and chuckles, from the sideline. She shuddered with joy as it all seemed so warm and cozy, yet it was unbelievably real.

This was the first time Queenie felt the warmth and love of a father.

Still huddled close to her father, Queenie repeatedly called him “papa” till her voice became hoarse.

His appearance filled her small world with such jubilation, giving her a sense of pride that she had never experienced before in her young life.

She turned around and smirked at the fat boy, “Look here, I’m not a b\*\*\*\*\*, I have a papa too.”

The fat boy rebutted sarcastically, “He isn’t your papa. My mummy says that you’re a b\*\*\*\*\* because your mother is a loose woman who sleeps around with men. She got herself pregnant, and that’s how you came along. That’s why you have no papa.”

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

A shadow slipped across Nathan's face when he heard those words.

Penny could not hold back any longer. She cautioned the fat boy in a stern tone, "Hey, little fellow, watch your words. If you keep being mean and disrespectful, I'm going to tell your teacher about it and make sure that you receive a good lecture from her."

*Wah!* The fat boy squalled with fear when he heard what Penny had said.

"What happened to you, my sweetie? Did someone bully you?"

Just then, a high-pitched, penetrating voice pierced the air like the shrills of a witch.

A plump woman scurried into the classroom; her fury so apparent that one could imagine steam spurting out of her ears. She looked to be middle-aged and was clad head-to-toe in designer clothing. Lavish jewellery and diamonds weighed down her stubby fingers, making her appear ostentatious.

## Chapter 2 The Reunion Of Father And Daughter

The tacky woman was the mother of the fat boy. She was here to pick him up after school.

The moment he saw his mother, the fat boy pointed at Penny and cried, "It's her, mummy. She's bullied me and hit me!"



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### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

“How dare you hit my son, b\*\*\*\*! I'll beat the shit out of you!”

Without giving Penny any room for explanation, Mrs. Zahn raised her fleshy arm and swung it towards Penny's delicate face.

Penny Smith tried to explain the situation to Mrs. Zahn, but Mrs. Zahn's demeanor was simply overbearing, to the point of being barbaric. Mrs. Zahn appeared to be the kind of woman who would raise her hand on a whim.

Caught off guard, Penny could not dodge the assault in time.

The flesh on Mrs. Zahn's arm jiggled from her force, and her palm was about to strike Penny's face.

Nathan stepped in at the nick of time.

With Queenie held in his left arm, Nathan immediately extended his right arm to grasp Mrs. Zahn's wrist.

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

Mrs. Zahn's meaty palm was mere inches away from Penny's face. Even so, it hung stationary in mid-air as if it had been frozen; her palm was unable to inch forward.

*Slap!* Before she knew it, Nathan had withdrawn his hand in a flash and landed a harsh slap on her face.

Nathan slapped her as if he were swatting an irritating mosquito. The slap was of such great magnitude that it almost caused her to see stars.

Her hair that had been arranged in a posh updo was now disheveled.

She stared incredulously at Nathan as she covered her swollen cheek with her hand. "How dare you slap me in such a manner?" she screeched.

"You deserve this for being a lousy role model for your kids. How could you treat others with such insolence, without even bothering to uncover the truth of the matter?"

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

Meanwhile, the teacher was back from her bathroom break.

Stupefied by the sudden outbreak of events, she rushed over frantically and tried to placate everyone, “Are you okay, Mrs. Zahn?”

Mrs. Zahn had barely recovered from the shock of being slapped by Nathan. She brushed the teacher aside with and shrieked hysterically at Nathan, “You have the guts to slap me? Are you trying to die? Just wait and see what will become of you!”

With that being said, she pulled out her phone and dialled a number.

After a few minutes, the screeching sound of the car tires travelled from outside the room.

Two Mercedes Benzes' sped into the kindergarten compound, charging through the entrance at breakneck speed. They came to a sudden halt upon arriving at the classroom building.



### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

Five men dressed in slick outfits alighted from both cars.

Their leader was a hulking man with a face that was contorted with menace and cruelty.

He stormed into the classroom, flanked by four bodyguards, and roared like a savage beast, "Who was the idiot who'd bullied my wife and kid?"

"What took you so long to get here, honey?" Mrs. Zahn was over the moon when she saw his repulsive face. She waddled over to him like an inflated goose, her fat hips swaying from side to side. "Don't you know he could have beaten us to death if you'd arrived a tad bit later?"

The man cast a bestial look around the room and demanded, "Who's the idiot who had the nerve to beat my wife? Doesn't he know who I am? I'm Walter Zahn!"

*This man is Walter Zahn?*

The worried look in Penny's eyes

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

intensified when she heard the name.

Notorious in Channing for his wealth and status, he was a ruthless and cruel character.

Mrs. Zahn pointed towards Nathan and Penny. "That is the sickening couple who bullied us, honey." She scoffed, "I demand that you make them compensate me with a hefty sum, or I'll move out with our son, leaving you for good."

Walter Zahn slit his eyes and sneered, "That's just a piece of cake for me, my dear. I'll slap the woman till she loses all the teeth. As for the man, I'll chop off the hand that hit you."

The fat boy cried out in excitement, "Daddy, don't forget their daughter, Queenie, as well. I want you to beat her up for bullying me."

Walter Zahn smiled as he caressed his son's head, "Sure, my boy. I'll tie her on a leash and make her crawl on the floor so that you can treat her like a dog."

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

As if Walter Zahn's words were the most beautiful arias to their ears, his wife swooned with delight while his fat son clapped his hands ecstatically.

Everyone in the kindergarten, including teachers and parents who had come to fetch their children, was watching with horror from a distance. They all felt sorry for Nathan and his family upon hearing Walter's declaration.

As if it had been set in stone - *Thou shall not offend Walter Zahn lest you feel suicidal.*

Even Penny was getting worried. She stepped forward and tried to explain, "Please let me explain the matter to you, Mr. Zahn. I'm Penny Smith from the Smith Family. This is all a misunderstanding."

"Don't give me that crap, I don't need any explanation." Walter Zahn snorted, "Nobody would dare to defy me. It's my word that counts."

"Besides, what is the Smith Family to me?"

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

Don't waste your time trying to intimidate me with that lame family of yours.”

“And don't think that I'm unaware of your dishonored past too. You're the shameless daughter from the Smith Family, who had slept around with men and given birth to a child without a husband. You should count your blessings that your old man still keeps you in the family.”

“How dare you get a sucker like him to bully my wife? I'm going to teach you a bloody lesson today on behalf of your family, and I'll make sure that it's the most painful lesson in your life!”

Walter Zahn shouted at his four bodyguards, “What are you guys waiting for? Move!”

“Got it, boss!”

The four of them gave a synchronous answer and ferociously lunged at Nathan and his family.

“Go to hell!” They yelled.

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

A cold spark flashed across Nathan's eyes as he turned to Penny, "Shield Queenie's eyes, don't let her see this."

Penny was grappling with the meaning of his instruction, but she soon realized what he was going to do. She immediately covered Queenie's eyes with her hand.

Nathan stepped forward and delivered a knockout punch to the first man who had charged at him.

*Boom!*

*Boom!*

*Boom!*

With a few thuds, the men fell to the ground in succession, like dominoes.

Everyone present gasped in awe at Nathan's agility and aggression.

He then walked directly to Walter Zahn. Clamping his hand on Walter's shoulder, he ordered sharply, "Kneel!"

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

His hand seemed to weigh like a ton of bricks on Walter's shoulder and he crumpled to his knees.

*Thump!*

Walter Zahn's knees slammed on the floor, and his features twisted in agony.

*Slap!*

Before he could even scream, Nathan landed a series of thunderous slaps on both his cheeks.

Walter Zahn's face began to swell as blood dripped from the corners of his lips. "You have such nerve to hit me like this!" He stared fixedly at Nathan with a venomous look. "Wait till you find out who you're dealing with, you little muppet!" He spat.

"Don't you know who my boss is? He's someone who can squash you like a cockroach for laying your hand on me! He's Thomas Dunn!"

"Trust me, I can make your wife and child

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

perish with a single phone call!”

*Yes, Thomas Dunn! The almighty Thomas Dunn!*

Thomas Dunn was the captain of the Armed Forces in the Eastern District.

Simply put, they regarded him as the warlord of the Eastern District.

Ruthless and rapacious, he was infamous for turning a blind eye to the vices of the filthy rich.



Walter Zahn had always been in his good books. Hence, Thomas regarded him as one of his right-hand men.

Everybody cast a sympathetic look at Nathan when they heard the mention of Thomas Dunn, fearing the worst for Nathan and his family. They were convinced that Nathan would soon be doomed as they murmured a prayer for him.

Even though they were impressed by



### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

Nathan's sublime skills, there was simply no way he could defend himself against an army.

They lamented Nathan's sorrowful fate. Instead of losing a leg, it would now cost him his life.

Penny was no less concerned than the rest as she watched from afar with Queenie in her arms. The turn of events filled her lovely face with unease.

Nathan seemed undaunted by Walter's threats. His eyes took on a frosty look as he mocked, "Sounds too good to be true."



"Do you think that I'm lying?" Walter's eyes seemed to bulge out of his skull as he glared menacingly at Nathan. "Let me make that call, and I bet you'll be crying like a baby in ten minutes' time. I'll make you wish that you could crawl back into your mother's womb!"

*Thump!* He had barely finished his sentence when something was thrown at his face.

### Chapter 3 Soon It Will Be Payback Time

It was a rugged, shock-resistant mobile phone!

Walter darted his eyes between the phone and Nathan, looking nonplussed.

“You have ten minutes to call for help,” Nathan uttered indifferently.

“Mobilize all your men and show me what you've got, and make sure that you get all your big guns here to support you.”

“Whether you're coming at me or my family, just bring your A game!”



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## Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

*What an outrageous, pompous ass!*

Walter Zahn seethed and cursed as he picked up the phone and called Thomas Dunn to seek his help. His voice sounded like a foghorn.

“Soon you'll get to experience living hell!” He grinned grotesquely at Nathan after he had made the call.

Everybody was shaking their heads, lamenting Nathan's folly. To the onlookers, Nathan had committed a suicidal act. Rather than using the opportunity to escape, he had just sent himself to the gallows when he allowed Walter Zahn to seek help from Thomas Dunn.

Anxiety was all over her face as Penny scurried over with Queenie in her arms. “We should leave now, Nathan,” she persuaded, “Thomas Dunn is the big daddy here in Eastern District. He's a vicious guy who sides with vile people like Walter Zahn.”

“Just leave it to me, Penny,” He said coolly,

## Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

“It'll save us the trouble of dealing with them one at a time. Let me take care of them in one go.”

It took less than ten minutes before the second round of commotion broke out again in the otherwise harmonious kindergarten. This time, it was an even bigger one.

Someone stared out of the window and shouted in amazement, “Wow, what a spectacular sight! Look at the troops of soldiers who are standing outside, even the military trucks have arrived in dozens!”

One by one, dozens of military trucks rolled stridently into the kindergarten with the grandeur of a military procession.

“Quick!”

“Quick!”

Thousands of soldiers in camouflage uniforms dismounted from the trucks when they came to a halt and assembled themselves in an organized formation.

## Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

Soon after, a brawny man with thick sideburns stepped out of a military jeep.

He was Thomas Dunn, the person whom Walter Zahn had called for help.

“Squad One and Squad Two, seal off the streets. I want this kindergarten to be fully enclosed.”

“Without my permission, not even a bird can enter or leave the vicinity.”

Thomas Dunn's rotund voice resounded like a gong as he belted out the orders.

“Understood, Sir! We shall do everything to ensure accomplishment of mission!”

Squad One and Squad Two answered in synchrony as they sprang into action immediately. In the blink of an eye, the kindergarten was surrounded.

Thomas Dunn drew out a handgun from his waistband and gestured towards his remaining squad, “Follow me!”

## Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

“Let's find out who has the audacity to touch my men. I'll make sure to beat the hell out of him!”

One by one, the soldiers barged into the classroom, wielding weapons that ranged from bayonets to machine guns, and even grenades.

They surrounded the whole kindergarten in a flash, with every corner guarded by soldiers.

“Freeze!”

The sight of Thomas Dunn was enough to send shivers down everyone's spines, and they felt increasingly sorry for Nathan and his family.

Now that he had the backing of Thomas Dunn, Walter Zahn was back to his arrogant self. “Hehe, your end is near,” he gloated with malignant pleasure.

Next, he turned to Thomas Dunn and buttered him up, “I'm so glad that you're finally here, Mr. Dunn. Please accept my

#### Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

heartfelt gratitude for helping me to seek justice. Please take pity on my family and don't let him escape scot-free!"

"Indeed, Mr. Dunn." Mrs. Zahn joined in the plea with their fat son and wept crocodile tears, "Look at how cruel he is, torturing us! Please give us the justice we deserve!"

Thomas Dunn frowned at the sight of Walter Zahn's bodyguards lying on the floor, writhing in pain. "What happened?" He turned to Walter, whose face was smeared with blood.

"All thanks to him." Walter Zahn pointed at Nathan with scathing resentment. "This savage hooligan not only bullied my wife and my kid, but he also assaulted my bodyguards and made me kneel in front of him."

Thomas Dunn's gaze followed Walter's finger. His eyes met Nathan's steady gaze.

There was a discernible change in his demeanor, and his eyes flickered.



#### Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

"I've never been humiliated in such a way before, Mr. Dunn." Walter Zahn sulked in defeat as he stood beside Thomas Dunn. "He turned me into the laughingstock of Channing. Please help me seek revenge."

Thomas Dunn's eyes lingered on Nathan for a while before he turned to Walter Zahn, "So, what would you like me to do?"

As if he were about to receive an honorary award, Walter Zahn straightened his back and lifted his head high with his chest puffed out. He tauntingly side-eyed Nathan and his family before addressing everyone in his loud and unpleasant voice, "Well, everyone in Channing knows that I'm a man of my word."

"Since I've promised to break his arm, I need to stick to my word. But the number has changed - I want to break both of his arms instead of one."

Mrs. Zahn jumped in, "We should not let that b\*\*\*\* leave unscathed. Slap her until she's left with no more teeth!"

## Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

“Well said!” Thomas Dunn looked impressed.

With that being said, he turned to face his soldiers and commanded, “Take them down.” He pointed at Walter Zahn and his wife, “Break both the arms of the man and slap the woman until she's toothless.”

*What?*

Everybody at the scene stood transfixed, wide-eyed and open-mouthed. Nobody saw this coming. They all expected Nathan and his family to perish instead of Walter Zahn and his wife.

They were utterly dazed -*what just happened?*

Walter Zahn and his wife were shocked to the core too.

The soldiers sprang into action once Thomas gave his orders, ready to launch a blistering attack on the couple.

“What's going on here, Mr. Dunn?” Walter

#### Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

Zahn floundered as he struggled in vain to free himself.

“Is this some kind of mistake, Mr. Dunn?”  
Mrs. Zahn's voice quivered with fear,  
“Shouldn't it be targeting the wretched couple instead of us...”

“Shut up!”

Thomas Dunn bellowed at them before pointing at Nathan, who was standing idly at a distance with his hands behind his back. “Do you know who he really is? And how much he means to me? He is my God, my faith, and my belief all in one!”

“I have pledged my life and soul to him, and I would never defy him. I swore to serve him wholeheartedly, with every ounce of my strength.”

“Who do you think you are to insult my hero? You're just some dispensable lackeys of mine.”

Walter Zahn and his wife were stumped. They gazed despairingly at Nathan, horror

#### Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

evident in their eyes.

They knew that they were in deep trouble for offending Thomas's beloved idol. He had made it clear that he worshipped Nathan like his god. Their faces turned ashen.

With one forceful thrust of their legs, Thomas Dunn's soldiers kicked Walter Zahn to the floor before he could even open his mouth to beg for his life.

*Crack! Crack!* They broke both his arms.

"Ah!"

The room was filled with Walter Zahn's blood-curdling shrieks.

Two men in suits grasped Mrs. Zahn by her arms while another man unleashed a series of unforgiving slaps on her cheeks.

One by one, her teeth popped out from her mouth, stained with blood.

*Thump! Thump!*

#### Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

Both lay prostrate in front of Nathan;  
Walter Zahn with his broken arms and Mrs.  
Zahn, who had lost all her teeth.

Thomas Dunn quickly approached Nathan.  
He started to get down on his knees in a  
gesture of respect. "I am Thomas Dunn,  
General..."

"Generally speaking, you're no longer  
working under me, so there's no need for  
the formalities." Nathan stretched out his  
arm and halted him from kneeling.

Initially, the name "Thomas Dunn" did not  
ring any bells with Nathan.

But the penny dropped when he saw  
Thomas Dunn's face. He was one of  
Nathan's personal guards.

*Generally speaking?*

Thomas Dunn started when he heard  
Nathan's queer response, but it took him  
less than two seconds to decipher the  
intention behind his response - Nathan  
Cross wanted to keep his identity a secret.

#### Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

He replied earnestly, "It's my honor to have served you in the North, Sir. I'll forever be under your command!"

Thomas Dunn had suffered an injury while he was a personal guard of the General, hence they had transferred him to the Eastern District hitherto.

Given his proximity to Nathan, his admiration for the general was inexorably greater than the other soldiers.

He idolized Nathan to the extent of worshipping him as a pillar of his faith.

It was like a dream come true for him to meet his hero again. His churning emotions almost moved him to tears when he saw Nathan.

A sense of defeat washed over Walter Zahn and his wife when they saw Thomas Dunn going down on his knees in front of Nathan. He resembled a tamed lion bowing down to its majestic master. They knew that this was not their day.

#### Chapter 4 What A Spectacular Scene

Gone was their smug and overbearing insolence. Even the slightest tinge of hatred had faded away from their eyes, leaving behind fear, despair, and regret...



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## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

Nathan glanced at Walter Zahn and his wife, who were both lying half-dead on the floor. "Are they your subordinates?" he asked Thomas Dunn.

"Yes, he works for me," Thomas Dunn acknowledged with shame, "His name is Walter Zahn."

Nathan instantly flew into a rage, "Tell me, who gave you the authority to send out the armed forces for no valid reason, other than to parade them around like troupers?"

"That was my mistake, Sir. I will accept any punishment." Thomas Dunn was full of remorse.

"Hand in your resignation once you've returned to camp. You are not fit for the post!" ordered Nathan.

"Yes, Sir. Thank you for your advice. I shall reflect on my mistake," Thomas Dunn said humbly and reverently.

"That's good to hear." Thomas Dunn won a nod of approval from Nathan for his

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

positive attitude.

Thomas Dunn then turned towards the couple on the floor. "What are you still waiting for?" He barked at them, "Get on your knees and apologize! If you upset my Sir again, I'll make sure you won't live to see the next day."

Walter Zahn and his wife clambered to their knees, groveling for forgiveness at Nathan's feet.

"Go and apologize to my wife and daughter." Nathan was impassive to their plea.

They scrambled hastily to kneel in front of Penny and her daughter while sobbing with grief, "Mrs. Cross, Ms. Cross, it was all our fault. We were simply blinded by our own foolishness. Please have mercy on us and let us go, we beg you!"

Penny had recovered from her initial shock and fear. Her kind-hearted nature was easily swayed. Looking at the pathetic couple before her, she suggested to

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

Nathan, “Why don't we give them a chance, since they look like they have genuinely repented? Besides, they have already received the punishment that they deserve.”

“Sure, as long as it pleases you, my dear.”  
Nathan's lips curved into a rare, tender smile.

His cheeky reply made her flush red.

Thomas Dunn could tell from the softness in Penny's eyes that she had already forgiven them. “What are you two still waiting for?” He shouted at Walter Zahn and his wife,

“Scram!”

The frantic couple seized the opportunity and stumbled to the door in feverish haste with their fat son in tow, as if they were running away from a huge catastrophe.

Thomas Dunn offered to throw a lavish welcoming party for Nathan, but the latter rejected his offer, making known his desire

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

to spend some quality time with his family instead.

With a knowing look in his eyes, Thomas Dunn disappeared promptly and left Nathan with his family.

Nathan carried Queenie in his arms as the trio made their way out of the kindergarten.

“You're so awesome, Papa.” Little Queenie beamed with pride as she gazed at her father. “Now that you're back, I'm sure that nobody would dare to bully Mama and me again.”

“That's right, my princess,” Nathan said in a tone full of indulgence. “Papa will never let anyone bully you and Mama again.”

Penny listened quietly from the side with tears rolling down her cheeks. Queenie's elated face was a sight to behold.

...

Asiatic - the center of the city.

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

Penny lived in an old, dilapidated building that was located downtown Asiatic.

There were no elevators in the building.

With Queenie in his arms, Nathan climbed up six-stories to get to Penny's house.

"Come in, the place is pretty cramped and messy," Penny invited Nathan in as she opened the door.

Inside the living room, Benson Smith, Penny's dad, was reading the newspaper with his reading glasses on.

Her mum, Leah Smith, was making dinner in the kitchen.

It surprised Benson to see his daughter bringing a man home with her.

This was the first time Penny had ever brought a guy home.

She had vowed to stay single and had insisted that she would raise Queenie on her own, blatantly refusing to attend the

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

matchmaking sessions they had arranged for her.

Benson set down his papers and walked up to greet them.

“Hello, who is this gentleman?” He looked puzzled when he saw Queenie in Nathan's arms.

Penny tried to structure a suitable reply, but little Queenie had already answered in her bubbly voice, “He's my Papa, Grandpa. My Papa is back.”

“Does that mean that you're the beast who raped my daughter five years ago? So it's you who turned our lives into a living hell!”

Benson Smith was a soft-spoken, humble man who hardly raised his voice. He flew into a rare fit of rage when he discovered that the man standing in front of him was none other than the culprit who had raped her daughter five years ago. He was the one who had ruined her life by impregnating her and letting her raise their child on her own.

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

“I can't believe you have the audacity to come and look for her! I swear I'll chop off your head!”

A shrill voice penetrated the air when a woman ran out from the kitchen, swinging a cleaver madly. Leah Smith's body was quivering with rage.

*Wah!* The sudden outrage from her grandparents shocked little Queenie to the core, and she started wailing.

Penny held back her mother with all her might. “Mum, please don't---” she pleaded.

With Penny clinging tightly to her body, Leah could not budge.

“It's all because of you that we were kicked out of the family mansion by Benson's dad.” Leah pointed her cleaver at Nathan as she spat, “You've ruined Penny's life utterly and brought her nothing but pain. You're worse than a beast! You're a monster!”

It aggravated Benson to see that his usual



## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

calm and orderly world had been upturned by Nathan's sudden reappearance. The Penny and Queenie's wails almost drove him mad.

“That's enough!” Benson let out a roar that was uncharacteristic of his soft-spoken nature.

His bellow effectively brought Leah's wild emotions under control.

Benson seized the opportunity to take the cleaver away from Leah's hands. He pulled her into his arms to soothe her. “Get out of our house! Don't ever show your face again!” He shouted at Nathan scornfully, “The hurt you've inflicted on my daughter is irreparable. We've had enough of the pain and torture. Leave us alone!”

“I will not leave.” Nathan met his gaze with a determined look in his eyes. With Queenie in his arms, his insistence to make up for his family was reflected in his solemn and sincere tone.

“Trust me, I know the torment Penny went

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

through all these years.”

“I will never let them suffer in silence anymore. They deserve a life that is happy and blissful, and their future will be a path paved with diamonds. They are my family, my queen and my princess, and I'll make sure that they have the whole world under their feet.”

*Happy and blissful life? A path paved with diamonds? The whole world under their feet?*

It sounded like mere empty promises to Benson. To him, only a guy full of crap would say such things, and those were the type of people he disliked most.

Only young, vulnerable ladies like Penny would fall for his honeyed words.

“Hey you, didn't you hear what my husband just said? He asked you to leave!” Leah bawled at Nathan, “Now get the hell out of my house!” Her tone was harsh and unforgiving.

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

“That's right. I'm going to call the police if you insist on staying,” Benson warned.

Truth was that Benson would have already done so when he found out that Nathan was the homeless man who had raped his daughter. Nonetheless, he refrained from doing so as he could not bear to let Penny go through the torment again.

At that point, Penny wiped the tears on her face and said calmly, “Dad, Mum, please let him stay.”

*What?*

Both Benson and Leah stared incredulously at their daughter.

“Are you out of your mind, Penny?” Leah asked worriedly.

“No, Mum. I'm fine.” Penny shook her head.

“I'm doing it because of Queenie.”

“She's starting to understand all that's going on, and she needs a father.”

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

“Dad, Mum, please give him a chance and let him stay with us for the time being.”

Her words led Benson to consider what would be in Queenie's best interest.

Besides disbelieving the vagabond's bold claims, Benson also seriously doubted his ability to fill up the void in Queenie.

Yet, it was impossible for him to turn a blind eye to the pleading look on his daughter's face and his granddaughter's heart-wrenching sobs.

He ultimately succumbed to their pleas and sobs, giving his approval with a helpless sigh.

His approval drew a loud cry of disbelief from Leah, who could no longer control her rage.

She stormed back to her room and shut the door with a thunderous bang. Her weeps and whimpers could be heard from the other side of the door.

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

Leah refused to leave the room when it was time for dinner.

Absentmindedly, Benson took a few bites from his plate before scooping some food onto his plate and heading back to his room to join his wife.

Only Nathan, Penny, and Queenie were left in the dining table.

Penny eyed him while she fed Queenie her dinner. "There are only two bedrooms in the house," she explained, "Queenie sleeps with me in my room. You can share the same room with us, but you can only sleep on the floor."

"Sure," Nathan agreed breezily.

After dinner, Penny selected a set of Benson's unused clothes and gave them to Nathan so that he could change into them after his bath.

Soon after Nathan entered the bathroom, someone pounded at the door. "Open the door!"

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

The loud thumps brought Benson and Leah out of their room. “It sounds like Samuel,” Benson said as he pricked up his ears to listen. “Quick, open the door.”

Upon opening the door, they were greeted by a mean-looking middle-aged man who appeared to be around the age of fifty. The man was tall and had a wide frame. His hair was heavily streaked with grey, and he wore a scrutinizing expression. His most prominent feature was his hawk-like eyes that looked at them shrewdly.

His name was Samuel Smith, and he was the de facto leader of the Smith family's business.

Benson was over the moon when he saw that Samuel had shown up unexpectedly at his door. “What brings you here, Samuel? Come on in.”

“No, I'll stay here.” Samuel glimpsed the shabby and narrow house while he blatantly rejected Benson's offer, “It's too filthy inside.”

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

His cruel remarks stabbed Benson and Leah's hearts like a dagger, filling them with burning shame.

Other than their shared surname, the brothers had absolutely nothing in common. There was a sea of difference in terms of their wealth, status, and just about everything else.

The moment he caught sight of Penny, Samuel's eyes turned cold, "I heard that you've patched up with that homeless guy who raped you. And you even instructed him to beat Mr. Harvey, our most important client."

"No, Uncle Samuel, please let me explain." Penny tried to clarify the situation.

"Look, I'm not here to listen to your explanation." Samuel cut her off rudely, "You've brought enough shame to our family for getting involved with this homeless guy, and giving birth to a fatherless child. I was the one who took pity on you and pleaded with your grandpa not to banish you from our family. I even



## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

let you keep your job in our company.”

“How could you have the audacity to let that homeless bum leech off you like a parasite? Just because you can't find yourself a husband doesn't mean that you have to act in such an ignominious way. Don't you know you've just turned our family into the biggest joke in town?”

“I demand you to apologize to Mr. Harvey in person and ask for his forgiveness.”

“If not, you can forget about coming back to the company. Your entire family will have to live on breadcrumbs if you lose your job!”

After unleashing his tirade of insults, Samuel turned swiftly, walking away.

Penny was left wallowing in despair as tears formed in her eyes. Benson drooped his head and puffed at his cigarette.

Leah thumped her fists on Benson's chest like a petulant child, “Look at you, what a weakling you are!” She ranted, “You're so

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

useless compared to your brother. He takes the helm of the family empire, and he owns everything. But what about you? You don't even have the guts to ask him for your share.”

“You have kept silent even when he accused our daughter and bad-mouthed us in front of your dad. He even got booted us out of our family mansion! But all you did was turn a deaf ear to everything.”

“And you're still as timid as ever, even when he comes here to trample all over us like dirt. What kind of man are you? How could you be such a wimp? Ah!” She let out a mournful wail.

Nathan was baffled when he came out from his bath. It seemed like a major upheaval had taken place while he was taking his shower.

He creased his brows in concern as he tried to ask around about what had happened.

## Chapter 5 He Used To Work For Me

All he could discern were the sullen looks and sorrowful sobs.

It was his daughter, Queenie, who finally approached him. Pulling at his sleeve, she said timidly, "Uncle Samuel was here, Papa. He wants Mama to apologize to somebody, or he will sack Mama from her job and banish us from the Smith family."

Nathan winced with disgust when he heard Queenie's words. The cruelty of these people from the Smith family was abominable. He vowed to make these people pay for their cold-bloodedness!



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## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

Nathan lifted Queenie into his arms and consoled the rest of them, "Let's not get upset over it. Who knows? Derek Harvey might turn up at our house all of a sudden and offer his apology."

His words only aggravated them and elicited a slew of angry remarks.

"What nerve you have to say such a thing!" Leah vented all her rage on him, "Don't you know that it's all because of you? If you didn't beat up Mr. Harvey and May, Samuel wouldn't have come to our house and made a big fuss about it!"

Penny could not blame Nathan since she knew that he had done so because of her.

"You must be out of your mind to say such a thing, Nathan." She heaved a frustrated sigh, "Why in the world would Mr. Harvey apologize to us? I'll be counting my blessings if he doesn't hold us responsible for beating him up, and it'll be a miracle if he continues his business relationship with Diva."

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

“Just relax, everybody,” Nathan said with an air of nonchalance. “I am sure that he will turn up tomorrow to apologize. You can take my word for it.”

Penny and the rest knew better than to take his word. It was simply against Derek Harvey's insolent nature to apologize when he had been humiliated in such a devastating manner. Pigs could fly if that came true!

Even if he found his conscience and became repentant, it was practically impossible for him to show up at their house and apologize, at least from a physical standpoint.

That was because Derek Harvey was still lying in the hospital nursing his broken leg, all thanks to Nathan.

Would it be possible for Mr. Harvey to leave the hospital on crutches and drag himself here to offer an apology? It was simply inconceivable.

Benson's lips curled in disdain at Nathan's

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

whimsical blabbers. “This is not the time for fantastical ideas,” he quipped soberly, “Let's get down to business and think about how we can offer an apology that would please Mr. Harvey.”

“Penny, we'll go to the hospital tomorrow to visit Mr. Harvey and seek his forgiveness. Nathan, you'd better come along with us.”

With those instructions, Benson hoped that they could appease Mr. Harvey when they visited him at the hospital tomorrow. Soon, he and Leah retired for the night.

Meanwhile, Penny brought Queenie to the bathroom for her bath. Nathan took this opportunity to step outside to the balcony and called Colin Dixon, “Colin, I want you to get hold of Thomas Dunn and make sure he...”

That night, Penny struggled to get accustomed to having Nathan sleep in her room with Queenie, even though he was only sleeping on the floor.

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

She briefed him on some house rules before she went to bed. "I've heard of the unsightly behaviours when men sleep. I'd appreciate it if you could behave yourself and show us some basic decency."

"Oh?" Nathan was at a loss for words. "Sure!" He replied amusedly.

Queenie watched with curiosity as Nathan rolled out a mattress onto the floor. "Mama, why isn't Papa sleeping with you?"

Penny blushed at the question, trying to pass it off as anger. "What silly question is that?" She chastised, "What makes you think that Mama and Papa have to sleep together?"

"Isn't that what they always do on television?" Queenie blinked her innocent eyes.

"Those programs are having a bad influence on you." Penny admonished, "No TV for you for two days."

Queenie pouted her lips and sulked,



## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

wondering what she had done to deserve this.

...

The next morning, the Smiths woke up to a wonderful aroma.

When they noticed the scrumptious spread Nathan had prepared, the adults exchanged glances at each other while Queenie bubbled with joy, "Wow! Yummy!"

It was a breakfast packed with nutrients. The table was filled with cereal, eggs, milk, and fruits.

Benson kept his composure as he sneaked a glimpse at Nathan. "Tuck in, everybody." He pulled out a chair and sat down, "There's a long day ahead for us. We need to drop Queenie off at kindergarten and buy some fruits and flowers before we visit Mr. Harvey at the hospital." He muttered, "Let's pray that he would forgive us and not pursue the matter any further."

He had barely ended his mutterings when

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

somebody knocked at the door, "Hello, is anybody at home?" Came a polite voice from outside the house.

"Who could it be at this hour?" frowned Leah.

"Probably some salesperson looking to sell us some water purifiers? Let me get it," offered Penny as she headed for the door.

"H-How could it be..." Penny's eyes popped out when she opened the door, "W-what are you doing here?" She let out a loud gasp of surprise.

"What's the matter, Penny? Who's at the door?"

Benson and Leah were worried when they heard Penny's gasp. They put down their bowls hastily and rushed to the door. They ended up motionless at the door with their mouths hanging wide open.

A bald, middle-aged man donning a white patient's robe was standing at their door. He was leaning on crutches with his left

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

leg in a plaster cast.

A few men in suits stood behind the bald man. They appeared to be his bodyguards.

Benson and Leah's faces were filled with confusion as they were still grappling with what was going on.

“Hello, I'm Derek Harvey, President of Oceana Corporation.” The bald man introduced himself with a cheesy grin on his face, “I'm deeply sorry for having offended Mr. Cross and Ms. Smith yesterday. It has hit me with such terrible remorse that I could scarcely sleep or eat. That's why I'm here this morning to offer my sincerest apology.”

*What?*

His words left the Smiths gawking at him with unbelieving eyes. As if their brains were clogged and their throats stuck with bewilderment, they hardly knew what to say.

It hit them with a pang as they recalled

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

what Nathan had told them last night. His words had come true - Derek Harvey would show up at their house to offer his apology.

Synchronously, the three of them twisted their heads to look at Nathan, who was sitting at the side of the table feeding Queenie from her bowl of cereal. The same question popped up in their minds - could it be him who made this happen?

Penny gulped down her shock as she tried to pull herself together. She turned suspiciously to Derek Harvey, "Are you serious, Mr. Harvey?"

Derek Harvey jerked with fear when Penny posed the question.

"Of course, I'm serious," he replied nervously, "I am here today to express my deepest remorse for causing so much distress to you and your family."

"To prove my sincerity, I'd refused to let them help me when I was climbing up the stairs just now. It took every ounce of my

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

strength and determination to take each step at a time on my crutches, until I finally reached your house.”

His words only made the Smiths feel as if an avalanche of shock waves were banging their heads.

Yet it was evidently clear to them that Derek Harvey was speaking nothing but the truth, judging by the redness of his face, his sodden robe, and his heavy panting.

*How could it be possible?*

Hell must have frozen over if someone as haughty as Derek Harvey, who behaved like he wore a halo of superiority above his head, to climb six-stories of stairs on crutches to offer his apology in person.

This was virtually as good as asking the sun to rise from the west!

The muted response from Penny compounded the anxiety and fear in Derek Harvey. He desperately needed her to

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

forgive him.

With a clench of his fists, he resorted to using his most persuasive approach. “It seems like Ms. Smith is still unconvinced about my sincerity,” he announced through gritted teeth.

“I wouldn't blame you at all, Ms. Smith.” He explained humbly, “My arrogance and snobbery has made you doubt my earnestness. Please believe me, Ms. Smith. I'm down on my knees now to beg you, please.”

As if he was determined to follow through with his proclaims, Derek Harvey threw his crutches aside and attempted to get down on his knees, disregarding the heavy cast on his left leg.

His move threw Penny and her family into a complete state of profound shock.

“Please don't force it, boss.” His bodyguards came up to him and pleaded, “It could turn you into a cripple if you knelt on your broken leg.”

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

Derek Harvey dismissed their pleas in a spurt of rage, “Get away from me, you fools! Don't you know that I'll be as good as dead if I can't get Ms. Smith to forgive me?”

Derek Harvey almost turned hysterical when he shrugged off the helping hands from his bodyguards, insisting on getting down on his knees.

Meanwhile, Nathan casually walked up to the door with Queenie in his arms. “It appears that Mr. Harvey is genuinely sorry for his wrongdoing, honey.” He suggested to Penny, “Why not we just give him a chance then?”

His suggestion struck her like a bolt from the blue and sharpened her mind instantly. “Yes, I forgive you, Mr. Harvey.” She gesticulated at him, “Please don't kneel and hurt yourself, it would only get me into more trouble.”

“Is that true, Ms. Smith?” Derek Harvey asked in his quivering voice. “Do you mean that you've accepted my apology?”



## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

“Yes, I've accepted your apology.”

Penny was in fact brooding with fear that he might hurt himself and land her deeper in trouble. She was more than happy to accept his apology.

“Hurrah! I've made it! Ms. Smith has accepted my apology!” Derek Harvey was in a state of euphoria as he clapped his hands as if he had just won the biggest lottery in town.

Giggling and chuckling with ecstatic delight, he retrieved his crutches and turned around to leave.

His men rushed over frantically to carry him down the stairs and whisked him off from the sight of Penny and her family.

“Do you think that he has gone out of his mind?” Penny wondered.

“I don't think so.” Nathan flashed an enigmatic smile, “He's simply elated.”

Penny and her family exchanged quizzical

## Chapter 6 An Apology In Person

glances with one another. It seemed like a mystery that they could never fathom.



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## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

The unexpected appearance of Derek Harvey left Penny and her family reeling from the sudden, inexplicable turn of events.

Curiosity got the better of Benson when they were back at the dining table, continuing their breakfast. “Your words came true when you’d said Mr. Harvey would show up today to apologize in person.” He cast an inquisitive glance at Nathan, “Do you have something to do with this?”

“How could this be possible? I’m sure that it’s merely a coincidence.” Leah snorted, “He hardly had stepped out of the house the entire night. There’s no way that he could be involved,” she insisted.

“Besides, what makes you think that a homeless bum like him could get Mr. Harvey to show up with his apology?”

“I’m sure that this is due to his conscience that has been haunting him with horrible nightmares, reminding him of what karma would befall on him if he’d continued with

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

his vices.”

“That’s why he showed up at such wee hours of the morning.” She shrugged, “He was merely following his conscience, that’s all.”

Leah was a devout believer who had never skipped a prayer throughout her life. Hence she would attribute all unexplained events to karma, fate, and retribution.

Benson was skeptical of Leah’s explanation; he found it wrought with superstition.

Yet he could not agree more with Leah when she proclaimed that Nathan was incapable of performing such a heroic feat when all he had done was loitering around doing nothing. *How could he get Derek Harvey to show up and apologize, let alone if he could not even get himself a proper job?*

He speculated that it had all boiled down to Derek Harvey’s own conscience, which had prompted him to feel remorseful.

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

A different vibe struck Penny about the whole matter. She reckoned that it was likely masterminded by Nathan and executed by Thomas Dunn.

It takes a monster to kill a monster. There would be no suitable candidate for the job, other than Thomas Dunn, who was a hundred times more ruthless and diabolical than Derek Harvey.

While she was glad to escape unscathed from the turmoil, she knew that it was all due to the influence of Thomas Dunn, whom of which Nathan had already helped Nathan on two occasions.

She firmly believed it would be impossible for Thomas Dunn to help them again for the third time. Their luck would run out soon, and it was vital for Nathan to rein in his rashness.

...

Meanwhile, at the Royale Villa Residences, the Smith Family's Mansion.

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

Sean Smith, the patriarch of the Smith family, together with Samuel Smith and Paul Smith, his eldest and his third son, was having a conversation in the study.

“I found it simply outrageous,” Paul complained. “How could Mr. Harvey let Penny off the hook and, calling us up to inform us that he would continue to partner with us?”

“Mr. Harvey is a shrewd businessman. I bet that he would not want to meddle with Penny’s lunatic boyfriend. A mad and penniless guy like him has nothing to lose. Mr. Harvey knew better than to waste his time with that hooligan, subjecting himself to unnecessary risk.” Samuel explained, “It’s better for him to drop it altogether and let the matter pan out.”

Sean expressed a scornful grimace the moment he heard Samuel talk about Penny and Nathan. “It sickens me to the core whenever I hear her name. What have I done to deserve such a shameless granddaughter like her? She has utterly ruined our family’s name!”

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

Samuel came up with a baneful suggestion, “Dad, since we’re having your seventieth birthday banquet tomorrow, why don’t we banish Benson and his family from attending the party, using this opportunity to disown them from the Smith family?”

Paul played along, “Yes, Dad. Wouldn’t it be an utter humiliation in front of our friends and relatives to let them attend your anniversary party?”

“Let them come.” Sean waved his hands in disagreement, “Now that Mr. Harvey had the leniency to let them off the hook, what would others think of us if we expel them from our family? It would look bad on us and make us look petty and callous if they compare us to an outsider like Mr. Harvey.”

In the afternoon, Penny and her family were delighted to know that they had been invited to her grandpa’s seventieth birthday banquet, which would be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

That meant that they were still regarded as



## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

part of the Smith family since Sean had given them the green light to attend the banquet.

Nonetheless, it was a thorny issue when they had tried to think of a suitable birthday present for Sean.

“I know that we can’t afford something lavish, but we shouldn’t give him something too cheap either, or it could reflect badly on us.” Penny suggested, “We should think of a present that is moderately priced, yet useful and meaningful to him in a certain way.”

They racked their brains to think of one, but it was easier said than done.

It was Nathan who finally made the bold call, “Why don’t you just leave it to me? I assure you that we’ll give Sean an extraordinary present which would mean the world to him.”

“Nathan, are you sure about this?” Penny eyed him skeptically, “Do you really think that you can find a present that would

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

please grandpa on his seventieth birthday?”

“Trust me, I know what to do.” Nathan offered her a confident smile.

Soon after, he walked out to the balcony, giving Colin Dunne a call, “I need a present for Sean Smith, who will celebrate his birthday tomorrow. The present doesn’t have to be most lavish, but it must be the best for him.”

“Understood, Sir!” Colin Dunne answered with absolute subservience.

...

The following day.

It was a big day for Penny and her family, as they prepared themselves for Sean’s birthday banquet.

Just as they were about to leave the house, Penny asked Nathan whether he had the present ready. It had almost slipped her mind.

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

“Here it is.” Nathan smiled, unearthing a small box.

It was an inconspicuous, worn-out box.

What was inside the box was a pill, all sealed up in plastic. It was almost the size of a marble.

Penny and her family brooded with fear. They dreaded to think of Sean’s response upon seeing such a preposterous present at his seventieth birthday banquet.

“How could this tiny little pill be our birthday present? Are you out of your mind, Nathan?” Penny was on the verge of tearing at her hair.

“This is no ordinary pill, Penny.” Nathan explained benignly, “This pill was cultivated more than sixty years ago, its name is Phoenixia. It was made with the rarest and most precious medicinal herbs and ingredients that have a miraculous effect on illnesses caused by what we commonly termed as the three highs - hypertension, high blood sugar, and high

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

cholesterol. These are the three harmful killers that could lead to typical chronic diseases such as stroke.”

Unbeknownst to them, it was a gift carefully chosen by Colin Dunne, as required by Nathan.

After conducting a thoughtful analysis on Sean Smith, Colin Dunne knew that Sean was flushed with cash; he was never short of money.

His greatest worry was his health since he was aging and plagued with the three highs; hypertension, high blood sugar, and high cholesterol.

These three highs were potential killers that could lead to illnesses such as stroke, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. Colin Dunne splurged an enormous amount of money to get ahold of the miracle pill which could work wonders at treating such chronic diseases. That was how it had ended up being the birthday gift for Sean Smith.

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

Penny and her family were taken by surprise when they heard about the miraculous effect of this unsightly pill.

Besides, they could hardly afford any lavish gift because of their shoestring budget, not to mention they were running out of time to get themselves another present.

“Are you completely sure of this, Nathan? This pill could really work wonders?” Penny needed a double confirmation to dispel her doubts.

“Absolutely.” Nathan asserted.

So they gave him the benefit of doubt and made the pill their birthday present.

All they could do was pray hard that what Nathan had said was true, that this was indeed a miracle pill. Otherwise, they could land up heading home with their tails between their legs.

With Queenie in his arms, Nathan and company showed up punctually at the

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

entrance of Grand Hyatt Hotel - the venue of Sean's birthday banquet.

The whole of Peony Hall of the hotel had been reserved for the grand occasion of Sean's seventieth birthday banquet. Fifty tables were spread across the hall, which was bustling with activity.

Donned in a classic tailored suit, Sean was busy welcoming their guests at the reception area, accompanied by his two sons, Samuel and Paul.

"Compliments from Mr. Joseph Jenkins, President of Harvest Corporation, a Monet masterpiece with his message, *Happy birthday to Mr. Sean Smith.*"

"Compliments from Mr. Zack Tyler, President of Sky Property Group, a century-old Pine Bonsai Tree with his message, *All the best to Mr. Sean Smith on your seventieth birthday.*"

The staff at the reception announced the names of the arriving guests and even the nature of their gifts and birthday

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

messages.

When it came to Nathan and company, the staff read out aloud, “Compliments from Benson Smith and his family, a tattered, broken pill with their message, *Best Wishes and Happy Birthday to father.*”

*A tattered, broken pill!*

The words sent a burst of roaring laughter from the hundreds of guests in the hall.

This made Sean see red. His cheeks were puffed, like two blobs of red paint as he glared heatedly at Benson, who had just come up to Sean, about to greet him.

“What kind of shit are you giving me as a birthday gift, Benson?” Sean spat out at Benson, furiously.

“Don’t get so worked up, Dad.” Benson explained nervously when he saw the rage in Sean’s eyes, “This is a pill called Phoenixia; it is said to be a miracle pill against chronic diseases caused by the three highs in...”



## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

“What do you mean by that, Benson?”

Samuel cut him off with a sardonic grin.

“Are you trying to say that you can’t wait for Dad to catch those chronic diseases? Is that the reason why you have given him the pill as your present?”

“No, Dad, Samuel. That’s not what I mean...” Benson’s face turned deathly pale.

*Plop!*

An old-looking, worn-down box was thrown to the floor, right in front of Benson and his family. It almost shattered the box to pieces. A tiny round pill came rolling out of the broken box; it was Phoenixia.

It was Miles Smith, the son of Samuel Smith, who had thrown the box to the floor.

“Look at the broken pill you’re giving us here,” scoffed Miles. “Save it for yourself!”

Rage and shame were all over the faces of Benson, Leah, and Penny, who was carrying Queenie in her arms.

## Chapter 7 A Discarded Treasure

Nathan gave them a cold, hard stare before he bent over and picked up the pill. “Wait till you find out the monstrous prowess of this tiny pill. You’ll come back begging on your knees for it.” He uttered impassively, “And you’ll live to regret throwing away a piece of treasure like this.”

“Huh? A broken pill like this is a rare treasure? Save it for yourself, we’ll never beg you for it! Haha!” Samuel snorted, while the rest of his men laughed mockingly.



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

Sean gave Benson and his family a dismissive glance and announced, “We have no tables for you in the main hall. There’s a small table in the corridor that would be enough for your whole family. Tuck in now; dinner is about to be served.”

All eyes in the room turned towards Benson and his family as if they were some strange-looking aliens who had just descended on earth.

While everybody sat in the main hall, which was the Peony Hall, Benson and his family had to squeeze themselves to fit into the miserable, tiny table in the corridor.

Nothing could be more humiliating than to be treated like some downbeat outcasts. How they had wanted to walk away from the banquet, snubbing all the insults. Nonetheless, Benson and his family put up with the embarrassment with gritted teeth and clenched fists. They did not want to be seen as impertinent and rude, simply walking away from his dad’s birthday banquet.

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

They walked over to the lone table in the corridor and sat down, under the mocking eyes of their guests and relatives.

The banquet had officially begun!

The guests at the banquet were treated to a sumptuous feast with successive delectable, mouth-watering gourmet dishes. All except for the solitary table in the corridor.

They waited till the guests had finished their last round of desserts, yet there was still no food served on their table.

When the dinner was almost finished, Samuel came over and ordered the servers to serve the leftovers to Benson and his family.

As if it was the final straw, Benson and his family could not contain their rage and resentment anymore. *What do they take us for? Beggars or dogs that are only entitled to leftovers?*

As if he had reached the tipping point,

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

Benson gave an uncharacteristic scowl and stood up abruptly from the table. "Let's go," he urged stoutly. "We're done with the banquet."

Sean was merrily clinking glasses with some of his most distinguished guests at his banquet when Samuel approached him and whispered in his ear, "Dad, Benson, and his family have skipped the dinner and left the banquet. They'd seemed rather displeased."

"Huh! Serves them right for giving me a rotten pill for my birthday. What are they thinking? Are they really here to celebrate or to curse me? Why should I feed them with all the wonderful food? I'd rather feed the dogs."

...

The moment they exited the hotel, Leah, who was bitter, lashed out at Nathan.

"Look at you and your dumb idea. We'd assigned you the task of finding a suitable birthday present for Sean. What the hell

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

were you thinking, presenting him with an embarrassing pill as a gift? Thanks for making us look like a fool in front of everybody, making them feed us with leftovers as if we were some kind of beggars. What an ingenious idea of yours!”

Penny tried to placate her mother, “I’m sure that Nathan hadn’t intended so, Mum.”

“Let’s stop arguing.” Benson suggested gloomily, “We’ve utterly embarrassed ourselves in front of our friends and relatives today. I’m sure that dad would only find us more repulsive than ever. Our situation would only take a turn for the worse.”

“Just calm down, everybody. Soon they’ll be knocking at our door, begging us for the pill,” Nathan asserted.

Penny shot him a rueful smile, “Come on, Nathan. We’ve had enough of your nonsense. How could that be possible?”

“Didn’t they just throw the pill away in front of everyone? What makes you think that

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

they would eat their words and beg us for it?”

“Even if grandpa would fall sick, he has the cash and means to seek out the best medical treatment. He doesn’t need your pill at all.”

But Nathan had no qualms about his prediction, “Just relax, I’m convinced they’ll eat humble pie and return to us for the pill.”

His assuring demeanor was no different from when he had predicted Mr. Harvey’s appearance for his apology.

Penny and her family were befuddled by his words. *What made him so sure of his prediction?*

Their thoughts were interrupted when Queenie mewled pitifully, “Queenie is hungry, Papa. When can we have our lunch? I saw them having so much food on their tables earlier! It makes me so hungry.”



## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

Queenie was referring to the scrumptious and appetizing food that was served at Sean's seventieth birthday banquet. The exhaustive list was made up of glamorous and expensive dishes that had included Wagyu beef, foie gras, caviar, abalone, lobsters, and many more. Any single dish could cost them a month to even a whopping full year's salary, burning a hole in their pockets.

"Those dishes are far too expensive, Queenie. We can't afford them." Penny explained to her daughter, "Mama will cook you something else when we get home."

But Nathan insisted, "What makes you think that we can't afford them? Come on, let's treat ourselves to a good meal today."

"But we don't have the money, Nathan..." Penny trailed off in a diffident tone.

"Don't worry, let me pay for the meal. I do have a few pennies for that," Nathan reassured her.

Though he was never obsessed with

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

money and wealth, Nathan was pretty sure that he had a bankroll of up to tens of millions. It had all meant nothing to him, as they were just figures.

Cloud Palace - the most expensive restaurant in Channing.

It was situated at the highest level of the highest building in Channing - The Pinnacle.

The upscale restaurant overlooked the most breathtaking panoramic view of Channing, boasting the most premium ingredients and the most accomplished chefs who would whip up dishes that could swoon your palate with delight.

Cloud Palace was exclusive, being available to only those who could boast excessive wealth, power, and status.

Those who were filthy rich but lacked the prestige and position in society would be snubbed at Cloud Palace.

Nathan brought Penny and her family to

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

the Pinnacle, taking the exclusive elevator to the top of the building.

Penny and her family were daunted by the poshness of the place when they learned that Nathan was taking them to Cloud Palace for lunch.

“This place looks so fancy and lavish, Penny,” Benson intercepted nervously. “I guess it would cost a bomb to dine in here.”

“This place is extremely costly; a simple dish could cost up to tens of thousands.” Penny stated taciturnly, “It is one of the most expensive restaurants in Channing, but it doesn’t just cater to the rich, you’ve really got to be somebody in order to dine inside.”

Her words gave Leah the chills as she gasped, “My god, this is as good as daylight robbery. Where would we find the money to dine here? It would cost us our lifetime’s wages to simply have a meal here. Let’s get out of here.”

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

Nathan tried to allay their worries with a tranquil smile, “Come on, guys. Don’t be silly, how much could a simple meal cost? Just let me take care of the bill.”

With those words, Nathan and company were on their way into the restaurant.

They were stopped at the entrance by a few men in well-tailored suits, who appeared to be the security of the restaurant. A man who seemed to be their supervisor gave them an unfriendly look and announced, “I’m sorry, according to our dress code, we deny entry to people who are not appropriately attired.”

Nathan and company were bemused by what he had said. Despite not being dressed in Gucci, Armani, or some designer labels, they had certainly appeared presentable and well-dressed for the occasion.

A man dressed in a creased tank top, loose crumpled shorts, and flip-flops walked past them and strode into the restaurant casually as if he was walking

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

into a supermarket. Nathan pointed at him and asked the security, “What makes you say that we are inappropriately dressed? What about him then? Why wasn’t he barred from entering?”

“That man is a property magnate who owns dozens of properties. So what if he is dressed in tank tops and flip-flops?” The supervisor sneered, “What makes you think that you’re on the same level as him?”

“Do you know how much we charge for our dishes? A simple meal could easily cost you over a hundred grand. This is not a place for paupers like you to dine in.”

Penny’s life savings were merely over a hundred thousand, which meant that she could hardly afford a decent meal in this place. “Forget it, Nathan. Let’s find another place for dinner.”

“No, there’s no reason for us to leave.” Nathan insisted, “This is the first time I’m taking you guys out for dinner. I insist on treating you guys to a good meal.”

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

“Hey, you, I want to see your boss. Get him here.”

The supervisor and his men cackled in laughter.

“We have a dozen bosses here, which one are you referring to?” the supervisor laughed a humorless laugh.

“The one who has the final say,” Nathan answered, indifferently.

“I’ll shut down your restaurant if your boss does not appear in front of me in ten minutes’ time,” he warned.

“What a load of hogwash!” The supervisor sniggered, “How dare you talk in such a manner? Do you know who’s our big boss?”

“He’s Thomas Dunn!”

“Get your asses out of here before he throws you out from the window!”

Unbeknownst to Nathan, Thomas Dunn

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

had already submitted his resignation as instructed by Nathan, and he was no longer the armed forces' chief of Eastern District.

Following his resignation, he bought over Cloud Palace and had now become a businessman cum restaurant owner.

Plucky and big-hearted, he was still a man with significant influence, given his previous post in the armed forces and his resourceful network.

He remained the undisputed big daddy of the Eastern District.

When he heard that Thomas Dunn was the owner of Cloud Palace, Nathan gravely took out his phone and dialed the number of Thomas Dunn. "It's me, Thomas. I'm right outside your restaurant."

*Thomas?*

The supervisor and his men burst out in another round of laughter. It seemed ludicrous to them that Nathan could come



## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

up with such an idiotic idea to pretend that he was on the phone with Mr. Dunn.

Their laughter resonated like those who were watching a hilarious comedy inside a cinema. All of a sudden, a bare-footed man dashed out from the management office of the restaurant towards them. The man was tall and stout with prominent side-burns on his face. He was Thomas Dunn.

A woman ran yelling behind Thomas Dunn with a pair of shoes in her hands. She was his secretary cum foot massager, “Your shoes, Mr. Dunn! You’ve forgotten to put on your shoes...”

Thomas Dunn had been pampering himself to a foot massage when Nathan had called.

He sprang up from his chair like an elastic spring the instant he heard Nathan’s call, scrambling out of his office, without even bothering to put on his shoes.

Overwhelmed by Nathan’s sudden

## Chapter 8 The Cloud Palace

appearance, he greeted him with an unctuous grin, “Welcome to Cloud Palace, Sir!”

The supervisor and his men stood transfixed, as they were utterly lost when they saw the barefooted Thomas Dunn address Nathan as “Sir”.

It turned their mouths wide-opened as bagels and their eyes were almost popping out from their sockets.

“Yes, I am here to try out your restaurant.” Nathan muttered with a disinterested tone, “But your security has barred me from entering because he said that I’m a pauper.”



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

Thomas Dunn's unctuous expression took a pause as his face turned beet-red with flaring nostrils the moment he heard those words from Nathan!

He turned and glared at the security supervisor and his men, "What a bunch of idiots! You are all fired, scram!"

He sacked them on the spot and chased them away immediately.

He then turned to Nathan and resumed his fawning smile, "Please follow me, Sir."

Nathan glimpsed at his bare feet and reminded him, "You'd better put on your shoes first."

Thomas Dunn was dazed when he lowered his eyes and saw his two bare feet. He realized with a pang that he had completely forgotten about his shoes when he rushed out in a frenzy.

His secretary came over and squatted down to help him put on his shoes.

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

Thomas Dunn slipped back into his shoes and stifled an awkward grin before he invited Nathan into the restaurant, “Sir, this way, please.”

After a comical encounter, Nathan and company finally stepped into Cloud Palace.

As if they were stepping into a real palace, they were awed by its interior, which was exquisitely furnished and exuberantly lavish.

“Please come this way, Sir. This is our best VIP room.” Thomas Dunn led them to a large room.

Leah fidgeted and suggested, “Why don’t we just dine in the main hall? Let’s skip the VIP room.”

She knew that it would cost much more to dine in a VIP room. It was the unwritten rule in every entertainment or dining outlet.

The lush decor of this place made the palaces she had seen on television pale in

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

comparison.

Fearing that they might not have been able to pay for the bill, Leah suggested skipping the VIP room.

“So my mother-in-law doesn’t like to dine in a VIP room,” Nathan relayed her suggestion to Thomas Dunn.

“Oh, I see. Do you like a more cozy feel? Let’s sit in the main hall then. I’ll get you a table by the window so that you can enjoy the view as well.” Thomas Dunn presented them a gummy smile.

“That would be fine,” Nathan agreed.

So they tucked in at a table near the window while Thomas Dunn asked for the menu from his captain. He would personally take their orders.

Penny and the rest held their breath as they saw the prices on the menu.

Wagyu beef at eight thousand per pound, caviar at thirty grand per pound, bluefin

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

tuna at nine thousand per pound...

As if he was sitting on a boiling cauldron, Benson was about to eject from his seat in fear, "These are way too costly for folks like us. There's no way that we can afford it. We shouldn't stay any longer, let's leave now."

"Wait, don't be alarmed by the prices." Thomas Dunn explained, "How could I let you pay a single cent for the meal? Don't you see what it means to me to have Mr. Cross and his family dine in my restaurant? It's an honor that no money can buy."

"Mr. and Mrs. Smith, you'll never have to spend a single dime to dine here for the rest of your life."

"Just take this to be your house. Come and dine whenever you feel like it. There's no need for the formalities with me, please."

*Are you kidding?*

*Free for the rest of our lives?*

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

Benson and Leah exchanged a stupefied glance with one another, their mouths hanging wide open as if they had been gagged by an invisible cloth.

“Dad, Nathan has a very good relationship with Mr. Dunn, that’s why...” Penny struggled to make them understand.

Nathan jumped in and explained, “Thomas used to be my subordinate, that’s why he treats us like his family, there’s no need to feel uneasy about that.”

Thomas Dunn was almost moved to tears when he heard Nathan mention that he was like their family, “Yes, oh yes, that’s so true...” He quivered in his strident voice, “We are family. It was Mr. Cross who took pity on me when I was down and out. I wouldn’t be what I am today if not for Mr. Cross. Please make yourself comfortable, don’t stand on ceremony here.”

Despite his reassuring speech, the Smiths were still hesitant to order their food. Thomas Dunn took the liberty and ordered his captains to serve them the most



## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

sumptuous dishes of the restaurant, including lobsters, Wagyu beef, and more.

Thomas Dunn even ordered ice-cream and desserts for little princess Queenie.

To top it up, he opened up a bottle of grand Chateau Lafite, which could cost up to a hundred thousand grand per bottle.

Nathan lifted his drink and cleared his glass with Thomas Dunn. "I do not wish to be disturbed when I'm having a meal with my family. Do you get what I mean, Thomas?" he demanded.

Heated by wine, the Thomas Dunn's face was flushed with ecstatic joy. The chance to have a drink with Nathan filled his heart to the brim with pride and satisfaction.

"Sure, I got it, Sir. I'll leave you and your family to enjoy a quiet meal," he replied while nodding with gratification.

After leaving the table, Thomas Dunn instructed Jack, his sidekick, to ensure that nobody would disturb Nathan and his

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

company while they were enjoying their meal.

Penny and her family were served a succession of exquisite cuisines that would cost over three years of their combined income.

“What wonderful food we’re having here!” Queenie let out an elated mewl, “They all taste so yummy. Look, Papa, there’s even ice-cream. Don’t you think that they are better than what we saw at great grandpa’s banquet? I love you, Papa, you’re my hero.”

“Are you sure, Nathan?” Benson cast him a skeptical look, “That your bond with Thomas Dunn runs that deep as he had said?”

“Absolutely.” Nathan gave a brisk nod.

“And he’s not charging us for this meal?” Leah wanted to double confirm.

“Not just for this meal, Leah. Every meal would be free when you dine here,” Nathan

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

promised her.

“Looks like Thomas Dunn really treasured his bond with you.” Penny grinned ruefully, “Because you’d given him a hand when he’d needed it the most, he felt indebted to you for the rest of his life.”

“But I think that we shouldn’t rely on him to bail us out every time. Besides, it’s better we cook for ourselves than to eat out.”

“We should strive to work things out on our own effort. It’s too much to be troubling him all the time.”

“Yes, sure,” Nathan smiled warmly.

It had been such a topsy-turvy day for Nathan and company. While they left the banquet with an empty stomach, they ended up with a meal that was far more sumptuous than the banquet had offered, making it all the more jolly and appetizing when they could finally tuck in and enjoy their lunch.

Finally, there was a sense of solace to their

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

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## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

depressed souls.

While Nathan and company were enjoying their lunch, something disastrous happened at the banquet.

After Nathan and company left the banquet, several high-ranking government officials arrived unannounced at the banquet.

These were officials of such authority whom Sean and his sons would not dare to antagonize.

Yet their unexpected appearance at his birthday banquet caused Sean to beam with pride and delight.

As a gesture of appreciation, he gave each of these officials a round of toasts and he had ended up drinking almost twenty bottles of wine.

The officials left the banquet when they had enough of the booze.

Soon after the officials had departed, Sean

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

felt a strong discomfort in his body.

His doctor had strongly advised him not to take a single drop of wine, since he had a medical condition of the three highs - hypertension, high blood sugar, and high cholesterol.

But today he had turned a deaf ear to his doctor's advice, drinking a whopping twenty bottles of wine, just to please the government officials.

He suffered a stroke right at the scene of the banquet!

What was supposed to be a joyous occasion turned chaotic and ghastly all at once. It terrified everyone at the banquet.

Thankfully, Samuel Smith had been informed that a famous professor of cardiology, Tony Lynch, was dining in the room next to their ballroom.

Instead of waiting for the ambulance to arrive, he raced over to seek immediate help from Tony Lynch.

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

Tony Lynch rushed over to check on Sean's condition. After a brief examination, he shook his head and concluded, "I'm afraid that his condition doesn't look too good, given that he was suffering from the three highs. He shouldn't have been drinking. Let's get him to the hospital and see how it goes. But I'd advise you to be mentally prepared for the worst."

His words dropped a bombshell on Samuel and company, who could tell that their father was in a critical condition!



"Is it really that bad, Professor Lynch? Is there any way to save my father? Or is there any kind of special medication for him?" asked Samuel Smith, who had been shaken by the state of his father's condition.

Tony Lynch sighed, "Strokes are one of the most challenging illnesses of modern medicine." he explained, "We can only rely on preventive measures to avoid getting a stroke, applying passive treatment to treat it. The chances of recovery from a stroke are more determined by luck instead of



## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

treatment.”

“As far as medication is concerned,” the professor halted as he seemed to recall something, “there is a kind of pill that could work wonders.”

“Really?” His words were a real shot in the arm of Samuel and his men. “What kind of pill is it? We’ll do whatever it takes to get the pill, regardless of the price.”

“They called it Phoenixia,” the professor described, “it was a pill cultivated over half a century ago with nine of the most exotic and rare ingredients, including wild medicinal herbs and animal parts of tigers, rhinoceros, and others which have a marvelous effect on strokes. It was made during the time when they had yet to ban the use of these rare ingredients for cultivation and medicinal purposes. That’s what makes Phoenixia such a precious and miraculous pill.”

“No sooner when they finished the cultivation of Phoenixia, they imposed a ban on using these ingredients. That

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

marked the end of Phoenixia's production as well."

"It is now extremely rare to find any more Phoenixia. Someone paid ten million for Phoenixia some years ago at an auction."

"I know it's meaningless for you to know all about Phoenixia since it is almost impossible to find one of the pills these days."

Samuel mused over the words of the professor. The name, Phoenixia, seemed starkly familiar to Samuel.

It all returned to him now, as he shouted a loud question to his men, "Didn't Benson just bring a pill called Phoenixia for dad's birthday present?"

His question prompted Miles Smith to scurry across the room, picking up an old, worn-out box on the floor.

It was the box which was used to contain the pill.

## Chapter 9 Phoenixia

The name of the pill vaguely sounded like Phoenixia, as Miles recalled. He had dumped it on the floor.

Tony Lynch cried out in surprise when Miles showed him the worn-out box. “T- This is the box that stores Phoenixia. So do you have that miracle pill?”

“Give it to your dad now, I’m sure it would improve his condition dramatically. He needs to consume the pill within twenty-four hours from the occurrence of his stroke, or its effect would wane significantly.”



Rate the Translation to Get 2 Pearls.



Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

Back in the Cloud Palace, Nathan was enjoying his lunch together with Penny and her family, soaking in some wonderful, quality family time.

Suddenly, the Benson's phone let out a loud shrill.

He could not believe his eyes when he saw the number on the screen, "Wait, it's Samuel calling. Why would he call me all of a sudden?"

"My instincts tell me he must have called for the pill," Nathan stressed out, with an indiscernible curl of his lips.

With that being said, he laid out the pill on the table. The pill had been sealed up to preserve its freshness and effect.

It had dawned upon Benson and his family that Nathan had seen this coming when he had said that it would be a matter of time for Samuel and his men to come begging for the pill.

With a smidgen of skepticism in his eye,

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

Benson put the call on speaker mode,  
“Hello?”

Samuel’s voice resonated across the other end of the call, “Benson, dad is in terrible shape now and he needs Phoenixia to save his life. Bring the pill over now, right away.”

Benson’s startled eyes grew bigger and rounder when he heard Samuel’s quivering voice asking for the pill *-It’s true! Nathan had hit the bullseye again!*

He flashed an unbelievable look at Nathan and was about to open his mouth to agree to Samuel’s request.

Benson had always been wary of his elder brother; he would never dare to defy Samuel.

Leah snatched the phone away before he could say a word. “Huh! So you’re asking for Phoenixia now?” She cried scornfully, “Didn’t you guys throw it on the floor and say that it was a rotten pill? And you even told us to save it for ourselves?”

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

“What makes you think that you can just take it back now since you’ve treated it like dirt?”

“Don’t think that it’ll be so easy to take it back just like this. Come and beg us if you really want it!”

With an angry grunt, she hung up the call.

The phone shrilled again the moment she hung up; it was Samuel again.

She switched off the phone altogether, along with her own and Penny’s phone.

“Didn’t they just put us to shame in front of our friends and relatives when they’d dumped our present to the floor?” The red-faced Leah spoke agitatedly, “Not to mention how they singled us out by making us sit outside the banquet, feeding us with leftovers.”

“Yet they have the guts to demand us to hand over the pill as if they have every right to own it.”

“There’s no way I’m going to give in unless

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

they come to us and plead for it. Not over my dead body!”

Penny could not tear her eyes away from Nathan. It was unfathomable to her how he could say things with absolute accuracy. This was just like the previous occasion when he expected that Mr. Harvey would show up at their door with an apology. It had turned out to be true.

Now his prophecy seemed to materialize again when he said that Samuel and his men would come back for the pill, and he was right again. Samuel had just called Benson asking for Phoenixia.

It dawned upon Penny that Nathan had always kept his word; his prediction was never wrong.

“You’d better be upfront with me and tell me what’s this all about,” Penny demanded with a scrutinizing tone.

“What are you talking about?” chided Nathan with a lighthearted smile, feeding Queenie with her food.



## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

“Don’t give me that look.” Penny puffed at him, “What made you think that Samuel would come and beg us for that pill? How did you know that in advance?”

Her words prompted Benson and Leah to fix their suspicious eyes on him.

“When I was mulling over what should be the best birthday present for Sean, I heard that he had a medical condition of the three highs, which was prone to illnesses such as stroke,” Nathan explained.

“That’s why I wanted to give him the pill as a present.”

“As for what makes me so sure that they would come back and beg us for the pill, it all began at the banquet when I saw him offering rounds of toast to his guests.”

“Drinking is the largest cause which has led people with such medical conditions to fall ill, hence I’ve secretly feared the worst for Sean.”

“I was sure that Samuel and the rest would

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

be bound to find out about Phoenixia from the doctor, should anything have happened to Sean. That's why I said that he would come to us and ask for the pill in order to save Sean."

As if they had just unlocked the greatest mystery on earth, Benson and Leah gave out a revelatory expression after they had heard Nathan's explanation.

Though Penny was still feeling skeptical about the whole matter, the explanation from Nathan sounded plausible to her.

"So is it true that Phoenixia can work wonders for those illnesses caused by three highs?" Benson asked, awed by the miracle pill.

"Yes, it really does." Nathan nodded firmly.

"I presume that it would cost a bomb?" Leah wheezed.

"It would be extremely difficult to find such an ancient pill these days," Nathan acknowledged with a smile, "the last time

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

they saw one was at an auction. It was sold for ten million.”

*Ten million!*

Penny and her family gasped in awe when they heard its price tag.

“Since it’s such a precious thing,” Benson immediately handed back the pill to Nathan, “you’d better keep it somewhere safe.”

“This thing only cost a few bucks in the old days.” Nathan explained, “Now its price has soared to some astronomical figure, thanks to those rich men who had found out about its miraculous effects and wanted it for the sake of their own health.”

“Yeah, but even a few bucks in the old days was still quite a sum of money for this pill. How did you get the pill, Nathan?” Penny inquired.

“It had always been with my family.” Nathan gave a beguiling wink, “It wasn’t costly when we first had it.”

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

“But this pill has become so precious now. You’d better take it back and make sure you keep it well,” Leah stressed.

“Since Samuel had asked Benson for the pill. I believe that it has got to do with Sean’s condition. Why don’t we let Benson decide on what to do with it?” Nathan suggested with a friendly smile.

His message was obvious to Penny and her family.

Knowing that Sean needed the pill badly for his condition, Nathan wanted Benson to have the pill, empowering him with not just the choice of giving or keeping the pill, but with the choice of saving Sean’s life.

“Yeah, this was what we had wanted to give Sean as his birthday present, but he had thrown it on the floor and made a scene out of it. Think about how he made us sit on a solitary table outside the banquet, feeding us with leftovers.” Leah glared at her husband reproachfully, “Should you dare to give the pill to them just like that, I’ll make sure that you’ll never

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

get a day of peace in the rest of your life,” she warned.

Nathan jumped in to offer his support, “My mother-in-law is right, Benson. Sometimes we need to flex our muscles and let them know that we have our pride too.”

His words were music to the ears of Leah, who would usually have chided Nathan for calling her as his mother-in-law since she hardly had a favorable impression of him. However, things seemed to have changed for the better now for Nathan in Leah’s eyes, as she began to see him in a more positive light.

...

An ambulance arrived at the Grand Hyatt Hotel and rushed Sean to the hospital.

Samuel sent his wife and kids along with the rest of the relatives to wait at the hospital, while he beckoned for Paul, his young brother, to follow him to a discreet corner at the hotel for a secret chat.

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

“I’ve called Benson up, asking him to send over the pill, Phoenixia. But he just hung up on me,” Samuel grumbled, “and now he’d even turned off his phone.”

“I bet he’s pissed off with us now,” spat Paul, grudgingly, “he doesn’t even give a damn for dad’s condition.”

“Dad is getting on in age. This may be his last straw and he could leave us forever.”

“But isn’t that a good thing for you, Samuel? With dad’s gone, you could take over as the patriarch of our family.”

“The problem is that dad has not made a will, Paul.” Samuel shook his head in frustration, “If dad should pass away so suddenly in the absence of a will, Benson would get up to one-third of the family’s fortune too, according to the inter-state laws.”

“What? What gives him the right to such a claim?” Paul cried out in exasperation.

“Being the son of Sean Smith, he’s entitled

## Chapter 10 To Beg In Person

to dad's fortune, just like you and I," Samuel explained.

"What should we do now, Samuel?" Paul was running out of patience.

"We need to ensure that dad stays alive so that we can get him to make a will. It should only include you and me as the beneficiaries to his estate." Samuel said with a grave voice, "I'm sure that I can get dad to do that since he listens to me."

"But we need the pill from Benson to save dad. By any means, I need you to go to Benson now and get the pill from him."

"That's easy." Paul flashed a sinister grin, "I'll take Dico and his guys along with me. They'll beat the shit out of Benson if he refuses to hand over the pill."