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Stanley looked livid with rage but he couldn't come up with anything to refute them. Only he himself as well as several others knew how excellent Matthew's medical skills were. As the members of the Ten Greatest Families were not aware about it, they would not believe it no matter how hard Stanley tried to convince them.

At that juncture, Matthew spoke, "Gentlemen, all of you will know whether I can win at the medical conference by giving me a chance to try. I can make a pledge for all of you here—if I am defeated in the medical conference, my life will be all yours."

Master Sandel jeered right away. "Matthew Larson, do you think your life is that valuable? This is a business which is worth up to ten billion and every year, the medical association can bring in around two to three billion profit for us.

Are you trying to convince us to use such a staggering sum of money as a stake to bet with your life? Are you even worth the money?"

Because of Matthew's relationship with Leanna, Master Sandel had always found Matthew an eyesore. Therefore, there was no doubt he would make full use of this chance to taunt and mock Matthew the best he could.

Looking bleak, Matthew advised, "Master Sandel, I don't think you should make your stance too absolute. Today, I'm asking for a favor from all of you here. If you guys are willing to offer me help, I'll keep that in my mind. But, if you refuse, I'll remember it too!" Everyone burst out laughing at once. "Oh, it seems like you're one who holds grudges! But, so what? Are you going to set yourself against all of us in the future?

Mr. Larson, we're here just because you're a friend of Master Newman's. But, you have to remind yourself that you aren't him! Your favor means nothing to all of us!"

Master Sandel rose to his feet and bellowed, "Let's go! Let's not waste our time talking with that crap!"

When he reached the door, he stopped in his tracks suddenly to cast a glimpse at Matthew. "Larson, you'd better listen to me carefully!

Stay as far away as possible from Leanna in the future because I don't want people to start talking about how a member of our family has an affair with a kept man! I think you know what I mean!"

With an icy look, Matthew challenged him, "Master Sandel, is your power extensive enough to control that?"

Master Sandel scoffed, "You may give it a try. Mind you, my family is way more superior to some other families!"

The master of the Jacksons looked slightly offended because it was very obvious that Master Sandel was mocking his family but he did not voice out his displeasure.

The Jacksons had suffered a substantial loss after what had taken place between them and the Hughes. At the moment, they couldn't even be sure whether they could still remain part of the Ten Greatest Families of Eastcliff.

The masters of the rest of the families all rose to their feet and left the room in between laughter. The way they stared at Matthew was brimming with contempt as if he was an idiot. After watching them walk away, Stanley couldn't resist but to land a forceful punch on the table and cursed, "These bunch of gaffers are such bullies! Mr. Larson, shall we visit Master Newman to see whether he's willing to persuade them himself?"

Matthew shook his head and said, "Master Newman has helped me on too many occasions and I can't always rely on his help whenever I have a problem. President Carlson, can you think of any other ways to go about this?"

With a deep crease on his forehead, Stanley mulled it over for a long time before he stated in a soft voice, "There's another way I can think of, but I'm afraid this might be e-even more unlikely to work."

"What's that?" Matthew asked.

Stanley proposed, "If you can establish a new medical association to take the place of Eastcliff Medical Association, you will then have the full say in deciding the affairs in the medical industry in the city. With that, you will have no problem representing Eastcliff to join the medical conference!"

Matthew was stunned for a moment after listening to Stanley's suggestion. "C-Can this work? How does one establish such an association?"

Stanley continued, "Establishing the association itself is as easy as ABC. The more challenging part will be to replace the Eastcliff Medical Association—who owns an asset of almost 10 billion—to participate in the medical conference. Therefore, your association must own a fund of at least that amount before it can replace the Eastcliff Medical Association."

Matthew frowned, thinking that a fund of 10 billion was quite a significant sum.

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Stanley first glanced at Matthew before he added in a soft voice, "The 10 billion fund will be in the form of a direct investment. Once you take part in the medical conference, you will have to offer the fund at the medical conference as the medical resources of Eastcliff.

In the event you lose at the medical conference, a part of that money will be seized by the other five states. Coupled with the oppression from the Hughes Family, it's highly likely that the 10 billion fund will all go down the drain in the end. So, I think it will be challenging trying to get people to invest in the association."

Matthew looked even more troubled because he had never expected that Stanley's method just turned out to be more and more strenuous.

Seeing that Matthew was keeping silent, Stanley spoke suddenly, "Mr. Larson, if you've really decided to do this, I can offer an investment of 1.5 billion! I'm going to get the money by putting up Carlson Pharmacy as collateral to the bank. Mr. Larson, you will have my full support even though I might have to sell off all my assets!"

Matthew was deeply moved by Stanley. To be frank, Stanley really trusted him a great deal. Based on the wealth owned by Stanley, 1.5 billion was the maximum he could allocate for the investment and he probably had to take on loans to get cash. If Matthew was defeated at the medical conference, Stanley might be bankrupt too.

Matthew nodded at him in gratitude. "President Carlson, I'll keep your kind gesture in my mind! I'll come up with ways to gather the rest of the fund."

After saying goodbye to Stanley, Matthew went on to visit Timothy, who agreed to offer an investment of 2 billion to support Matthew very decisively. Together with what Stanley had offered, Matthew had a total of 3.5 billion at the moment.

Next, he made his way to visit Billy. Being very confident with his strong financial foundation, Billy asked Matthew to try finding himself more investors first because he would offer him whatever amount he lacked in the end.

Matthew heaved out a sigh of relief. All in all, he was really impressed by how much those three trusted him. After doing a calculation in his mind, he estimated that he could get another 500 million from Cunningham Pharmaceuticals and with that, he would have a total of 4 billion. In other words, Billy had to fork out another 6 billion to bring up the total to 10 billion.

Matthew felt slightly resigned about this. Although Billy trusted in his medical skill a great deal, to fork out a sum of 6 billion at one go was very challenging, and it was a risky gamble even to Billy. Just as he was cracking his brain for solutions, Leanna called him to invite him to her office to have a chat.

Matthew rushed to Creative Cloud Group and he saw Leanna's secretary waiting for him when he arrived at the building. Instead of bringing him to Leanna's room, she brought him to a secluded room located in the basement parking lot. Matthew was bewildered and he wondered what Leanna was going to pull off this time.

Right after he stepped into the room, the first person he saw was not Leanna but Old Master Jackson, whose first name was Connor. The man looked like he had aged a great deal within the past two days because he looked frail with his back hunched.

Matthew scanned his surroundings in astonishment and found no one else in the room.

"Mr. Larson, you don't have to look around because you and I are the only ones here," Connor spoke in a deep but weak voice.

Feeling doubtful, Matthew asked, "So, you are the one who wants to meet me?"

Connor nodded slowly and said, "You can think of it that way. Mr. Larson, please have a seat."

As soon as Matthew sat down, the secretary exited the room and closed the door.

"Old Master Jackson, how can I help you?"

Connor coughed several times before he muttered, "Mr. Larson, do you know how heavy the price my family has paid this time?"

Matthew put on a frown and countered, "Old Master Jackson, I can't see why you're telling me this. I don't think this has anything to do with me."

Connor laughed bitterly and recounted, "Yesterday, Master Jackson and I made a trip to Eastshire planning to talk it out with the Hughes. But, you know what? They've already captured my son and my daughter-in-law, who are Zachary's parents."

Matthew's heart gave a lurch. Was he going to be exposed soon?

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Connor's eyes went red-rimmed as he told his story, "The two of them were already in bad shape when I was there. My son, whose whole body was covered

with blood, was thrown into a pool of mud full of ants which were crawling all over his body. The moment he spotted me, he actually begged me so hard to kill him!"

Tears started streaming down his face when he got to that part because it hurt him.

After a sharp intake of breath, he wiped away his tears and continued, "As for my daughter-in-law, all her limbs were chopped off before her torso was squeezed into a jar. The Hughes fed her medicine to keep her alive and sober so that she could experience every bit of the pain and torture."

Matthew frowned at the cruelty of the Hughes in seeking revenge.

No wonder none of the Ten Greatest Families of Eastcliff had the guts to set themselves against them; it seemed like he had indeed underestimated them.

However, it actually served as a reminder for Matthew to take this more seriously.

This was no longer just a competition in business with the Hughes.

If he turned out to be the loser this time around, he would definitely end up very badly.

Connor mumbled, "At that time, I knelt down in front of Master Hughes begging him to let my son and my daughter-in-law go, but he ignored me and continued chatting with me happily.

I watched how my son and my daughter-in-law went through the torture for the entire day. At night, Master Hughes handed me a knife and asked me to kill my son myself as compensation for their family. You know what?

The moment I stabbed the dagger into my son's chest, he actually looked so grateful to be freed of the misery instead of looking pained. That was not all. In the end, they dumped their bodies to a pack of dogs and I had to witness how their bodies were devoured by the animals..."

Connor choked with sobs at that moment.

It was then Matthew realized why Connor had aged so much in just two days.

"Old Master Jackson, what do you want me to do for you?" Matthew queried.

After wiping away the tears on his face, Connor explained, "The Hughes demanded us to hand over 70% of our business to them. There's no turning back for my family at this point.

Mr. Larson, I've decided to go all out to fight them! However, we aren't strong enough to do that on our own so I'd like to work with you. I know you've been trying to gather funds recently and my family is willing to offer you a sum of 3 billion to fully support you!"

Matthew was stunned because he had never thought that Connor would actually offer him something like that.

Knowing well that Connor was a very cunning and shrewd man, Matthew was sure he must have guessed that he was involved in the incident.

Under such a circumstance, it was only reasonable for him to loathe Matthew. Why would he want to work with him instead?

Were there any hidden traps in his offer?

Just as Matthew was deep in thought, he received a call from Tiger.

Matthew, who was taken aback by the call, picked it up and Tiger's croaky voice came from the other end immediately. "Mr. Larson, I-I've let you down..."

Looking alarmed, Matthew asked anxiously, "What's going on? What happened?"

In a trembling voice, Tiger answered him, "Something happened to Julian! His car was knocked into by a huge truck when he was on his way to pick up his daughter..."

Matthew felt as though his brain was jammed all of a sudden and something nearly exploded in his head. That was his best buddy!

"How did it happen?" Matthew questioned in a grim tone.

After taking a deep breath, Tiger spoke in a soft voice, "I reckon the Hughes was the culprit. This morning, some people from their family came to Wellness Herbary and offered to sell some chinese herbs to us, but Julian rejected their offer.

Because of that, they warned him to be careful and t-then, the accident took place. Mr. Larson, I've let you down. I-I didn't manage to protect Julian..."

Matthew clenched both fists tightly to learn that once again, the Hughes was the culprit behind the accident. "Travis Hughes, I will make sure you won't be able to leave Eastcliff alive!" he bellowed.