

## Chapter 5546

Charlie's intensity and cool demeanor sent shivers down Antonio's spine. Charlie's words only heightened his fear, he understood that Charlie's decision to spare him for now hung on the whims of his mood.

Overwhelmed, Antonio broke into tears and implored Charlie, "Mr. Wade, today was just a minor misunderstanding. You've already taken a heavy toll by breaking my knee. Please consider my sincerity. I admit my mistake..."

Charlie smirked, "Look at you, crying like this. A Sicilian man shouldn't shed tears. Especially not in front of his daughter. Are you honoring the Sicilian code?"

Suddenly, Antonio felt a profound shame.

Despite his frequent championing of Sicilian values, when faced with a loaded gun and the threat of death, he found himself begging Charlie for mercy.

At this moment, survival was paramount. Antonio would have gladly run pantless through Manhattan or circled Central Park three times if it meant Charlie spared him.

Few accomplished individuals in any field were truly unafraid of death. Despite Antonio's rise through the ranks, he was not as fearless as his youth would suggest.

In his early days, Antonio was like many fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds, impoverished and unfamiliar with prosperity. He couldn't even afford a cab to his hits. A bus ride, machete on his back, fare dodging, that was his reality.

He hadn't grasped the value of life then. It was a bus ride to carry out killings while alive, and a brief stint in an ambulance if he met his end. But as he clawed his way up to become the reigning mafia kingpin of New York, his fear of death grew.

His courage only surged when victory was absolute. Just ten minutes ago, Charlie seemed inconsequential, an ant to be crushed without hesitation.

Yet, now, at a dire disadvantage, his courage vanished.

In a desperate bid for survival, Antonio stammered, "Mr. Wade, if you're still dissatisfied, I'm willing to compensate you with five million dollars. It's a small gesture..."

Charlie's smile was wry. He queried, "Antonio, how much do you really have?"

Panic flitted across Antonio's face. He hesitated, avoiding Charlie's gaze, and said, "I...I...I probably have tens of millions in net worth..."

Charlie raised his pistol, pressing it against Antonio's cheek, sneering, "Do you fear death or parting with money?"

Trembling, Antonio quickly corrected himself, "No, no... I misspoke... I probably have hundreds of millions..."

Suddenly, Antonio added, "But mostly in real estate..."

With a frigid expression, Charlie pulled the trigger near his ear. The jolt left Antonio's right ear ringing. Whether from the gunshot or other factors, it felt numb, until warmth trickled down his cheek. He was horrified to discover his right ear had been severed!

The Italian-made Beretta 92SF was a prized possession of the Italian Mafia. Its power was formidable, though it hadn't pierced Antonio's ear, it had obliterated it.

Agonized, Antonio wailed. Julia cried, shielding her father's ears with trembling hands. She confronted Charlie, incensed, "Are you mad? Are you a fascist?"

Charlie chuckled, "As a Chinese man, I can't be a fascist. Your father, this great Sicilian man, might have ties to Mussolini."

Staring at Julia, Charlie's voice turned stern, "You'd do well to see clearly. It was your father who first sought to end my life. You saw it, he aimed for my head. Were I less capable, I'd be an unrecognizable corpse. I've only given him two shots and he's still breathing. Compared to him, I'm merciful."

Julia was momentarily speechless. She knew her father bore full responsibility, it was his intent to kill. To some extent, it was his own doing. But the man now who got shot twice was her father. She could only nod, unable to utter a word.

Ignoring her, Charlie turned back to Antonio, "Will you tell the truth, or continue with your lies?"

Terrified, Antonio wept, "I'll tell the truth...I'll tell the truth...I have over 2 billion in assets. Roughly a quarter in real estate, a quarter in fixed assets, another quarter in various forms of cash, deposits, stocks and trusts and the rest from drug deals and contraband..."

Charlie sneered, "Only two billion? Why the secrecy? Are you afraid I'd rob you?"

Antonio shook his head, blurting, "No, no, that's not what I meant..."

Gesturing to Jordan, Charlie continued, "Meet Jordan. He runs a roast goose shop in Chinatown. A gang, the Burning Angels, extorts three thousand a month from him. What's your tie to the Burning Angels?"

"They're not connected to me..." Antonio attempted to defend himself, but it dawned on him that this was Charlie's grievance.

In fact, Charlie already knew of his ties to the Burning Angels!

Aman Ramovich was equally defeated. He lamented, "What rotten luck! Charlie came for Antonio today and here I am, half an hour late. Antonio might already be gone and I'd be spared the offense and the gunshot..."

Antonio was aghast. He hadn't anticipated that Charlie's front at his house was a pretext to settle scores!

Realizing he'd be shot thrice, Antonio refrained from provoking further. He confessed, "Mr. Wade... I'll tell you the truth... I oversee the Burning Angels... They're loyal, but I didn't endorse this audacity. Please, let me bring their leader here. I'll deal with him."

Charlie looked at Julia and posed the question, "Do you see now? Who's the one eager to kill? Your father, trying to save himself, is willing to kill for me. Tell me, is this man worth more than a dog?"

Julia couldn't meet his eyes, while Antonio hastily added, "Mr. Wade... I also want to rectify this with Jordan..."

Ignoring him, Charlie addressed Jordan, "How much does your shop make monthly?"

Jordan replied, "Mr. Wade, the shop clears four thousand, but expenses cut into it, rent, staff, protection fee. Four thousand is the cap."

Charlie nodded, scrutinizing Antonio, "Do local gangs usually demand 75%?"

Antonio shook his head frantically, "No, no... There might be a misunderstanding... the Burning Angels took independent action..."

Charlie dismissed it, "Irrelevant. From now on, Jordan belongs to the Chinese Gang. He holds 75% of the debts of local gangs. Clear?"

Antonio's eyes widened, but he dared not object. He only nodded, stammering, "I understand... Mr. Wade, I'll personally ensure Jordan gets the monthly fee..."

Charlie waved him off, "You won't have another chance. If you cooperate today, you and Aman Ramovich will leave New York alive tomorrow. Your daughter will take care of the monthly expenses. Fail and there won't be a tomorrow."

Antonio's voice trembled, "Mr. Wade...where will you send us?"

Charlie casually replied, "Syria. A friend runs a war experience camp. You'll go, all expenses covered. No need to worry about a thing. Consider it my treat!"

## Chapter 5547

### Chapter 5547 bookmark

Charlie believed that there were two strategies to cleanse the malevolence that had taken root in Europe and America.

The first was a heavy-handed approach, much like his previous actions against the Canadian human trafficking syndicate or the Mexican underworld. This involved capturing, eliminating, or abducting these nefarious individuals. The second approach was to attempt a more humane approach. He likened it to peeling and removing the thorns from a durian fruit, leaving the delectable pulp to be savored in one satisfying bite.

Charlie may have looked down on the petty amount of money involved, but he couldn't leave empty-handed after arriving today. His intentions were to nurture and fortify Jordan for future growth, and Antonio's family would be the first sumptuous meal on this journey.

Antonio, at this point, was less concerned about the 75% profit he was forfeiting. Survival was his priority. He harbored hopes of vengeance against Charlie in the future, but if that opportunity never materialized, he was willing to settle for survival.

But when Charlie informed Antonio of his impending transfer to Syria, Antonio was shaken to his core. He pleaded, "Mr. Wade, name your price. I'll give you 75%, 85% of the profits, anything you want. Just don't send me away from New York!"

Charlie's response was icy and unwavering, "You have only two choices, Syria or death."

Tears welled up in Antonio's eyes as he cried out, "If I leave, the Zano family will be leaderless, our profits promised to you will vanish. If you spare me, I will work diligently to earn for you."

Charlie shifted his gaze to Julia and remarked, "Once you leave, your daughter will take charge of your organization."

Julia protested vehemently, "I don't want it! I refuse to be part of the mafia!"

Charlie, perplexed, inquired, "Isn't your father the one who insisted Sicilian women should be acquainted with blood? I thought he was grooming you to take over."

Julia shook her head, clarifying, "No, he only wanted to marry me off to that Russian..."

Charlie suddenly comprehended and nodded in acknowledgment. He turned to Aman Ramovich, inquiring with a grin, "Mr. Ramovich, have you come to the United States this time to find a partner?"

Aman Ramovich, facing the abyss, awkwardly replied, "Yes, Antonio offered to marry his daughter to me..."

Charlie smiled and mused, "It seems we're destined to cross paths for the second time. Both times you were engrossed with partners, but I disrupted your plans. Mr. Ramovich, aren't you vexed?"

Aman Ramovich was equally dispirited, having never anticipated such outcomes. In their previous encounter, he'd lost face and suffered a mere dozen slaps. Today, however, had proven dire, he'd lost a leg. Looking at his surroundings, it was clear that Charlie intended to ship him off to Syria.

But he dared not defy Charlie's query. Instead, he quickly shook his head and uttered, "Mr. Wade, I could never bear any ill will towards you. I would be grateful if you'd spare me."

Charlie nodded approvingly, saying, "Your understanding is ideal, it will make your future hardships easier to bear."

He then shifted his attention to Antonio, questioning him, "How many children do you have?"

Antonio instinctively replied, "Three..."

Charlie gestured towards Julia and inquired, "Where does she fall in the birth order?"

Antonio promptly responded, "Julia is my second child."

Charlie continued, "And the other two, are they boys or girls?"

Antonio candidly answered, "The other two are boys. The elder one is 25, the younger one is 19."

Charlie pressed further, "Who do you intend to groom as your successor?"

Antonio hastily replied, "I plan for my eldest son to assume that role..."

Charlie nodded and declared, "Very well, from tomorrow, your eldest son will assume your position. I'll have Wesley Drake from the Dragon Temple come to support him, ensuring a smooth transition. If he ever disobeys, he'll know Wesley is watching. Understand?"

Antonio was horrified at the mention of the Dragon Temple and Wesley Drake. Its name was legendary in the realms of mercenaries and crime. Antonio was aware of its illustrious history and Wesley's exceptional skills. Yet, he never imagined that Charlie could call upon Wesley to join him in New York, implying that Wesley was part of his inner circle.

Aman Ramovich, meanwhile, began to reassess the dynamics between Charlie and the Dragon Temple. Previously, he assumed that the Dragon Temple had seized control of the Wade family, leading him to defend them. However, Charlie's indomitable power and fierce personality suggested a different narrative. He pondered whether Charlie had conquered the Dragon Temple.

Aman Ramovich felt even more apprehensive at this prospect. If Charlie had indeed defeated the Dragon Temple, what did that signify for him? Would he be utterly subservient to Charlie?

Antonio, too, was gripped by fear. He realized that Charlie intended for Wesley to supervise the Zano family. Any disobedience would likely result in Wesley's lethal intervention.

At this point, Charlie abandoned any subtlety and threatened, "From tomorrow onward, any utterance of defiance within the Zano family will result in immediate execution by Wesley. The punishment will escalate with each insubordination. If Jordan is harmed or injured in any way, it will be considered your failure to protect him, whether you're at fault or not. If he breaks a leg, two of you will lose a limb. If Jordan dies, all the male members of the Zano family will perish alongside him. Do you understand?"

This concept of continuous escalating consequences was entirely novel to Antonio, and it moved him to tears. He was overwhelmed, nearly collapsing, but he also

recognized that Charlie left no room for disobedience. The only viable option was unwavering, unconditional obedience.

Reluctantly, Antonio nodded and pledged, "Rest assured, Mr. Wade, the Zano family will go to great lengths to safeguard Jordan's well-being..."

Charlie nodded, then turned to Aman Ramovich and declared, "You, too, are part of this system. I strongly recommend you place all your associates and heirs under Jordan's jurisdiction. Let them serve him while ensuring his safety. Should anything befall him, the consequences will be dire. Do you understand? When you're in Syria, don't blame me for failing to warn you."

Aman Ramovich, faced with the prospect of being sent to Syria, was terrified and disoriented. He had no idea what Charlie had in store, and the war-torn nature of the region made it a perilous destination. He pleaded, "Mr. Wade, all my transgressions today stem from confusion. Please, don't be like me. If you remain dissatisfied, you may hit me or berate me and I will compensate you generously. Just name your price and I implore you to act nobly and release me..."

Charlie, however, was unequivocal, "I already released you once, back in Northern Europe. Otherwise, you wouldn't have had the opportunity to confront me here now."

With a resigned sigh, Charlie added, "I offered you a chance, and you squandered it."

Aman Ramovich wished to plead further, but Charlie dismissed him with a curt statement, "Tell your men to withdraw. In ten minutes, both of you will accompany me to Chinatown!"

## Chapter 5548

### Chapter 5548 bookmark

At this moment, Antonio and Aman Ramovich no longer dared to defy Charlie. Thus, they promptly complied with Charlie's request and ordered their men and families to evacuate from the Zano family's manor, which took less than ten minutes.

Charlie released his reiki to scan the empty manor and instructed Jordan, "Jordan, get the car to the entrance."

"Of course, Mr. Wade," Jordan nodded, hurrying to the wine cellar.



Charlie turned his attention to Antonio and Aman Ramovich and calmly ordered, "You two, get up and make your way to the entrance."

Antonio gazed at his paralyzed legs and choked out, "Mr. Wade, I can't walk..."

Aman Ramovich, his face filled with despair, added, "I can't walk either. My right leg is in excruciating pain, I can't even stand..."

Charlie's tone turned icy. "One of you has a broken right leg, and the other has a broken left leg. It seems you'll have to help each other. If you can't be father-in-law and son-in-law, at least be brothers who support one another."

Julia couldn't bear it any longer and tried to assist her father, but Charlie warned, "Don't interfere."

Angrily, Julia asked, "Why are you torturing them like this?"

Charlie retorted, "This is called torture? Do you want your father to explain how this medieval torture rack is usually used? Perhaps even demonstrate it on others to show you?"

Julia wanted to protest, but Antonio turned pale with fear. He hastily pushed his daughter away and said nervously, "Julia, don't help me, I'll manage on my own. You can stand up..."

With considerable effort, he propped himself up on one leg and hopped awkwardly towards Aman Ramovich.

Aman Ramovich, also fearing Charlie's wrath, hopped towards Antonio on one leg. After a struggle, they clung to each other and managed to stay upright.

Charlie ignored Julia and walked out. Antonio and Aman Ramovich followed suit, embracing one another for support.

Julia followed them, and when they all reached the entrance, Jordan had already positioned the car there.

Charlie seated Antonio and Aman Ramovich in the back, then moved to the passenger seat. As he opened the door, he told Julia, who was trailing behind, "No need to follow, go find someone to remove the wine from the cellar, dispose of the bodies, and inform the entire Zano family and Aman Ramovich's bodyguards that I'll eliminate anyone who dares to seek revenge for them."

An anxious Julia inquired, "What about my father tonight? Can he return home?"



Charlie replied, "He can't go back. He'll be in Chinatown tonight and departing for Syria by boat tomorrow."

Julia rushed to say, "We must allow him to bid farewell to his family..."

Charlie nodded and assured her, "Don't worry, I'll arrange for you to say goodbye to him tomorrow. Just await the instructions."

With that, Charlie entered the car and told Jordan, "Drive."

Jordan accelerated, and the car quickly left the Zano family's estate en route to Chinatown.

Simultaneously, at the Chinatown roast goose shop, the five members of the Burning Angels remained under Hogan and Casey Vigo's watchful eyes, unable to make a move.

They hoped that their boss and comrades would realize something was amiss and send help. However, they understood that their absence for just an hour or two wouldn't arouse suspicion. To truly alert their boss, they'd need to wait until early tomorrow morning.

Just as they held out hope for a miracle, the door swung open.

They turned their eyes to the entrance, astonished to see Charlie, the last person they expected, walk in. What surprised them even more was the two men behind him, clinging to each other and hopping awkwardly on one leg.

Upon closer inspection, it became evident that both men suffered from gunshot wounds. Their legs were soaked in blood, explaining their strange gait.

Will Johnson, the leader of the five, with sharp eyes, recognized one of the injured men and exclaimed in horror, "Za...Boss Zano?!"

The other four widened their eyes upon hearing this and looked in the direction Will was pointing. To their shock, they beheld their boss's boss, the New York Mafia's godfather, Antonio Zano, in this sorry state inside a small roast goose shop.

This was the most influential mafia boss in New York, the undisputed emperor of the city's underworld. Now, he was an abject captive. The contrast was staggering.

Casey Vigo, the boss of the Chinese Gang, was equally dumbfounded. He knew Antonio well, as the Chinese Gang operated at the lowest level of New York's gang

hierarchy. He hadn't even deemed himself worthy of surrendering to Antonio. Yet, here he was, watching Antonio as Charlie's prisoner.

Antonio had not anticipated being recognized in this place. Seeing that Will was from a gang, he realized this man was likely part of the peripheral gangs under his command. This realization made him angry, thinking that if his subordinates hadn't collected protection money from Charlie, he wouldn't have suffered such brutal torture today.

He forgot his current predicament and cursed Will with rage. "You damned fool, who's your boss? Who allowed you to collect protection money in Chinatown? You're utterly blind! You dare act so arrogantly here!"

Will didn't anticipate that his idol and his boss's boss would insult him immediately. He felt wronged and responded, "I'm not working for the Chinatown gang, I'm Will from the Burning Angels! My boss is Daniel. Boss Zano instructed him to take over Chinatown and Lower Manhattan, so he assigned Chinatown to me... We were only following orders!"

Antonio, realizing that he had personally allocated territories to the Burning Angels and other peripheral gangs, asked them to clear their areas rapidly. Chinatown was indeed assigned to the Burning Angels. In other words, whoever ended up with this area would inevitably bring them into conflict with Charlie. This realization silenced him, and he dared not speak further.

Observing Antonio's silence, Charlie delivered a slap to his face and said coldly, "Look at how cowardly you are, you're an embarrassment to the Sicilians."

Antonio accepted the slap, shame written on his face. He muttered, "I'm sorry, Mr. Wade... it's all my fault..."

Charlie then inquired coldly, "Do you know who the second-in-command of the Burning Angels is?"

Antonio replied, "Yes, the second boss is Mike, and Daniel, and he grew up together."

Charlie stated, "Contact Daniel and instruct him to bring that microphone here immediately."

He added, "Tonight, we're going to meet all the gang leaders and second-in-commands."

## Chapter 5549

Antonio, the clandestine ruler of all New York's underworld, wielded an unquestionable influence. When he beckoned the gang leaders to his summons, they all responded with a prompt and eager enthusiasm.

The messages conveyed by Charlie, on the other hand, were shrouded in mystique. Following Charlie's directives, he informed the gang leaders that a momentous and highly confidential business awaited discussion. Each leader was tasked with bringing a trusted confidant to a hidden meeting spot in Chinatown – a modest roast goose shop.

Moreover, Charlie stressed the utmost secrecy and exclusivity of this gathering, explaining that the choice of Chinatown was intended to keep prying eyes at bay. Antonio cautioned them never to breathe a word to anyone outside their inner circle, lest they risk permanent expulsion from the Zano family.

These gang leaders relied on Antonio for their livelihoods, their territorial sovereignty in New York, and his unwavering support. Without his backing, rival gangs under Antonio's jurisdiction would undoubtedly encroach on their territories. This instilled a profound loyalty in the gangs, a fear that even the slightest dissatisfaction would result in their removal.

In essence, these New York gangs loyal to the Zano family were akin to a pack of fierce guard dogs, each with their own territory. The size and quality of their "food bowls" varied, but owing allegiance to the same master prevented any of them from coveting another's resources.

Yet, should a dog be abandoned by its owner, the others would swiftly seize its provisions and eliminate the outcast, ensuring their own dominance.

An intriguing twist emerged as Daniel, the leader of the Burning Angels, arrived first at the rendezvous point in Chinatown, accompanied by his trusted confidant, Mike. During their journey, the two pondered Antonio's enigmatic intentions, as he had revealed no specifics over the phone. They presumed their summons was in recognition of their recent successes in Chinatown, where they had unexpectedly triumphed over the Chinese Gang, conquering territories and the entire neighborhood.

To them, this was a remarkable feat, a sure sign that rewards and promotions awaited them in the ever-brightening future of the Burning Angels.

Upon parking outside the roast goose shop, they noticed the motorcycles belonging to some of their men. Mike found it somewhat surprising and commented, "Boss, those motorcycles seem to belong to Will and his associates."

Daniel, undeterred, responded, "Will has been in Chinatown for days, dealing with the Chinese gang members and uncooperative Chinese vendors. He must have impressed the boss with his progress."

Mike offered a discreet warning, "Boss, while I acknowledge that Will is your mistress's brother, I can't help but caution you to be cautious of him. He's ambitious and might not be content with a subordinate role. His aspirations might surpass your current achievements. This favor he's earned from the boss might pave the way for even greater prosperity in his future. Beware."

Mike's words perturbed Daniel. While he wasn't known for his intelligence, his fierce determination had rallied a loyal following among street-level gangsters. Coming from a modest background, he remained unacquainted with strategic thinking and believed in rewarding hard work and loyalty from his brothers. If he had a piece of bread, they all had a share of the soup. However, Mike's intellect surpassed his own.

Despite hailing from a neighborhood rife with crime and divorce, Mike's intellectual prowess allowed him to secure admission to a reputable public university as the sole top student from his community. In such an environment, Mike's success was a testament to his extraordinary intellect.

Yet, his financial struggles during college led him down a wayward path, resorting to theft to make ends meet. He pilfered fellow students' belongings, including cell phones, laptops, and bicycles, for quick cash. Ultimately, he was expelled from college in his second year.

Desperate, he joined the gang he'd encountered while drowning in debt, the precursor to the Burning Angels. His intellect propelled him to become the second-in-command of the Burning Angels, earning Daniel's respect.

However, Mike harbored a constant unease about his tenuous position and viewed Will as his greatest threat. He seized this opportunity to sow doubt about Will, urging Daniel to be vigilant.

Unbeknownst to them, Will's fate hung by a thread, and their current circumstances were poised for a seismic shift.

They soon entered the roast goose shop, finding Antonio, who had lost two ears and a leg, seated at a table in the farthest corner. He donned a woolen hat, his appearance unassuming.

As they entered, both greeted Antonio with deference. Antonio cast a complex gaze upon them and, with a heavy heart, mentioned, "Daniel, don't blame me when we end up in Syria."

Puzzled, Daniel inquired, "What do you mean, boss? Who's going to Syria? Are we going to Syria?"

Antonio let out a deep sigh. Charlie had laid out his plans without reservation. Tonight, he would use Antonio as bait to lure the leaders of all the organizations under his control and the second-in-command figures. The following morning, Wesley would transport these gang leaders to Syria. When Wesley arrived, he would take them away before the second-in-commands, promoting them to leadership positions within their respective gangs. The intent was to make the entire New York gang scene Charlie's puppets in a single night.

Once these surviving second-in-commands returned, fully under Charlie's influence and aware of the powerful Dragon Temple backing him, they would have no choice but to obey his every order. The decades of work put in by the Zano family would be undone overnight.

Resigned to his fate, Antonio could only lament to Daniel, "Daniel, it's not just us. Once the other leaders arrive one by one, we'll all head to Syria. Our new bosses will take over, and we'll be expected to pay 75% of our profits to the Chinese Gang every month. If anyone disobeys, they'll join us in Syria until a compliant boss is found."

Daniel was taken aback, "Boss, we're not mercenaries. What's our role in Syria? We can't just invade and seize territory there. Those people are much more formidable than us, armed with RPGs while we wield nine-millimeter pistols."

Antonio replied, "Mr. Wade will provide the details."

Confused, Daniel asked, "Mr. Wade? Which Mr. Wade?"

At this moment, an East Asian man emerged from the kitchen. He calmly addressed them, "Starting tomorrow, all gang leaders under the Zano family, including the Burning Angels, will be dispatched to Syria. The second-in-commands will assume control, while the new leaders will remit 75% of their gang's profits to the Chinese Gang every month. Any defiance will result in a one-way trip to Syria until an obedient leader is found."

The shock of the demand rippled through Daniel and Mike. To them, the idea of paying tribute to the Chinese Gang, despite their recent victory in Chinatown, was absurd.

In an impulsive moment, Daniel drew his pistol, aiming it at Charlie, and uttered, "Who are you? You're quite audacious! Are you part of the Chinese Gang?"

With lightning speed, Charlie snatched a chopstick from a container before Antonio and, in one swift motion, sent it hurtling towards the side of Daniel's pistol. A sharp "chu" echoed as the chopstick pierced the pistol's side, lodging it firmly into the wall. Daniel's astonishment was palpable, how could a mere bamboo chopstick penetrate a steel firearm, let alone the sleeve and barrel constructed from robust materials?

Terrified, Daniel's legs quivered as he contemplated a hasty retreat. At that moment, two East Asian men, Jordan and Casey Vigo, entered and trained pistols at their heads.

Soon, they were bound, silenced, and escorted to the second floor, joining Will Johnson and five others who had met a similar fate. Bound tightly, their mouths gagged with a greasy-smelling rag, the group found themselves in a precarious situation.

Jordan activated an electric kettle, threatening, "Remember, as more gang members arrive, not a sound from any of you. Once this kettle boils, I'll pour it down his throat!"

#### Chapter 5550

Antonio, the underworld emperor of New York, flexed his influence, summoning gang leaders who rushed in with enthusiasm at his beckoning.

Yet, a twist of fate awaited them in Chinatown - they found themselves bound and gagged, stashed on the second floor of a roast goose shop. With each new arrival, Antonio's anxiety mounted.

Seizing a lull between the latest arrivals and the previous group being whisked upstairs, Antonio couldn't help but plead with Charlie, "Mr. Wade... I've lured all these gang bosses to Syria. I've betrayed every New York gang boss. If they unite against me once we're in Syria, I won't make it out alive..."

Charlie smiled and asked, "So, what's your suggestion?"

Antonio swallowed and replied cautiously, "I've been quite cooperative, why not let me stay in New York and work for you and your strong associate..."

Charlie retorted, "If you stay in New York, won't you be worried about revenge seekers? You've conned all the gang bosses into heading to Syria. Do you think their families will let you off the hook?"

Antonio's lips twitched as he tentatively asked, "Mr. Wade, why not allow me to return to Sicily..."

Charlie patted his shoulder and stated calmly, "Alright, Antonio, stop dreaming. Sicilian compatriots are spread across Europe and the United States. None of them are venturing to Syria to make a name for themselves. In Syria, justice prevails, those who harm others face retribution and killers pay with their lives. Among those upstairs, if someone does try to kill you, my old friend Commander Hamid will ensure you get justice. New York is more forgiving, the body count you've left behind wouldn't let you survive a week there."

Desperation filled Antonio's heart as Charlie remained resolute, but Charlie's words did offer a modicum of comfort. It felt as if they were all incarcerated together, albeit with guards and wardens to deter reckless behavior. This time, however, he had truly offended the higher-ups. Even if he ever returned to New York, life wouldn't be easy.

The kidnapping persisted until early morning.

The gang bosses, lured by the Burning Angel's trick, were bound and silenced before they could grasp the full situation. They remained unaware of how their trusted Sicilian leader, Antonio Zano, had betrayed them, keeping them tied up on that dim second floor.

Charlie didn't waste words, he secured them as they arrived, leaving Jordan to watch over them. Any signs of resistance, movement, or indiscreet noises were met with boiling water pouring over their laps.

While it might sound brutal, it paled in comparison to the ruthless tactics these gangsters employed. Nevertheless, this method proved incredibly effective, none of the ruthless gang bosses dared to step out of line in front of the steaming pot.

Early in the morning, Wesley and over ten soldiers of the Dragon Temple soared into the skies, on a Concorde passenger plane, bound for New York.

Unsure of why Charlie had summoned him to New York, Wesley hurried directly to Chinatown upon landing.

Upon his arrival, he spotted Charlie on the first floor and respectfully inquired, "Mr. Wade, you urgently summoned your subordinate. What are your instructions?"



Charlie gestured to Antonio beside him and explained, "This is the boss of the New York Mafia. Get acquainted. There are many notable figures from the New York gangs upstairs. You'll have to greet them one by one shortly. They're a headstrong bunch. I can handle them on my own, but they won't be convinced without someone of your stature, background and team to keep them in check. At dawn, you'll take him and his comrades out of the United States by boat, then transfer to Syria and deliver the cargo directly to Hamid."

Wesley nodded promptly and said, "Alright, Mr. Wade. Anything else you'd like to convey to your subordinate, or should I pass a message to Commander Hamid?"

Charlie glanced at Antonio and quipped, "This Antonio is a genuine Sicilian, but with a limp. Inform Hamid that since Syria's medical facilities are limited, there's no need for elaborate treatment. Get him a crutch from a carpenter, after all, Hamid's building fortifications and a limp won't impede him from working."

Antonio felt like he might as well drop dead then and there. He never imagined his life would come to this point.

Charlie instructed Jordan to ascend once more and bring Aman Ramovich down.

Aman Ramovich, well-traveled and worldly, instantly recognized Wesley upon seeing him. His shock was palpable. He couldn't fathom how Charlie had acted so swiftly. Just hours ago, Wesley had been continents away. It was astounding that he now stood in New York.

Charlie directed Jordan to remove the gag from Aman Ramovich's mouth.

In a respectful tone, Aman Ramovich hurriedly said, "Mr. Wade... do you have any instructions for me?"

Charlie pointed at Wesley and spoke composedly, "Aren't you always curious about my ties with the Dragon Temple? Well, the Lord of the Dragon Temple is here now, let him talk to you."

Wesley maintained a stern expression. He feared Aman Ramovich might utter something treasonous, so he promptly stated, "Mr. Wade, everyone, including members of the Dragon Temple, is on the same side. If this person makes any disrespectful comments or slanders the Wade family, please instruct your subordinate to make sure he remembers."

Aman Ramovich was utterly horrified. His suspicions had been confirmed. It wasn't the Dragon Temple that bent the Wade Family to their will, but Charlie who had conquered it.

Wesley, too, experienced a wave of dread. Back at Wade Mountain, he had been so arrogant, threatening to obliterate Charlie's parents. If it hadn't been for Charlie's benevolence, his parents might have faced dire consequences due to his actions.

Moreover, he had severed his own meridians that day. Were it not for Charlie's intervention, he'd still be powerless. His journey from weakness to mastery in the dark realm was all thanks to Charlie. He felt profound shame when recalling those events.

Furthermore, he was alarmed by Charlie's downplay of their connection. To the outside world, Charlie insisted that the Wade family had depleted their wealth to secure the Dragon Temple's support. Consequently, Wesley was apprehensive, wishing he could broadcast to the world that he had lost, while Charlie insisted he'd won.

Upon hearing these words from Wesley, Aman Ramovich was equally overcome with panic. He hurriedly apologized, "I'm sorry, Mr. Wade. I was influenced by rumors from outside. Please pardon my impertinence..."

Charlie smiled and reassured, "No need to be so frightened. I told you, I'm not cut from the same cloth as you."

Aman Ramovich breathed a sigh of relief. At this point, he cared little about whether he was bound for Syria or Afghanistan, as long as it meant preserving his life.

Charlie scrutinized him and said earnestly, "Ramovich, you're distinct from the gang bosses upstairs and Antonio from Sicily. They're small fry, unfit for the grand stage, but you've been a true oligarch. I believe you were sharp and resourceful in your youth, but as you've grown older over the past two years, you've been dazzled by beauty."

Aman Ramovich hung his head in shame. He'd realized earlier that both of his past transgressions had revolved around women. Yet, his obsession was never with the allure of the opposite sex, his intentions always ran deeper.

He had sought to win the respect he deserved in Western Europe, yearning to marry Helena. Similarly, in New York, he aimed to wed into the Antonio family to swiftly establish a foothold. Ultimately, his actions stemmed from the circumstances he found himself in.

True, he was an oligarch, but due to his identity and background, he remained on the fringes of Western Europe and North America. What value did wealth truly hold on its

own? He might reside in the finest British abode, but even a British toddler dared to insult him on camera, demanding he leave the UK. He felt marginalized.

His mind meandered towards the days when he contemplated his life. A persistent theme had emerged that he was an oligarch unable to claim the recognition he deserved. But these thoughts were triggered by a lack of genuine power, rather than a fascination with women.

Charlie recognized this, and his words revealed a fresh perspective. "Aman Ramovich, neither Eastern Europe nor Western Europe is your true calling. Europe and the United States don't suit you either. However, you may find a new purpose in Syria. I'll have Hamid pay special attention to you. If you win his favor, you might discover a fresh direction for your life in Syria."

From Charlie's view point, Hamid came from humble beginnings, just as Aman Ramovich had. Hamid had risen through the ranks with a gun, while Aman Ramovich had crafted his oligarch legend through his intellect.

Their potential collaboration could yield positive results. Aman Ramovich might not hold Syria in high regard, but he lacked alternatives. Charlie chose to tamp down his expectations and encourage him to regard Hamid as a potential partner, granting him a chance to turn a new leaf.

This process was akin to helping a wealthy man find a partner who met his extraordinarily high standards, only to scale down the requirements gradually until just one remained, offering a lifeline for survival.

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