

# Chapter 1

Andy

Today is my birthday, but I can't stand birthdays. Each one feels like a countdown, another reminder that time is slipping through my fingers. I'm the kind of man who's never satisfied, constantly chasing something more. Sure, I've accomplished plenty, but my mind is always on the next project, the next challenge. And aging? It feels like a slow betrayal.

I live in one of those countries where every day's a grind. Thirty-eight years here is like seventy-six anywhere else. The pace is exhausting, but I wouldn't know what to do with a normal life if I had one.

I'm a software developer. You know the type—the ones who think up ideas nobody really needs, pitch them as groundbreaking innovations, and somehow convince investors to pour money into them. That's the dream. But the reality is far messier.

I remember the early days—People used to ask, "Are you one of those .com guys?" They had no idea. We were all trying to ride that wave, launching websites, selling them for fortunes. Then, the game shifted. Smartphones hit, and the world needed apps. Hundreds of us worked from our garages, hoping to strike gold with the next big app. Some did. Most didn't.

When I look back, it's funny. I picture myself sitting in some sleek office, surrounded by employees who all work for me. I'd sit back in the boss chair, sipping coffee and watching it all run smoothly. But life doesn't work that way, does it?