

The Host (solution)

by Celestine Lau

(Note: This puzzle was written for a hunt in October 2023. Data is accurate as of that time.)

First, identify the 9 people shown. They should be fairly recognizable as the leaders of 9 different countries. Note that these 9 countries cover all letters from I to Q – this provides an ordering. Also, as the flavortext suggests, since we need to find birthday gifts for them, it would be useful to note down their birthdays.

In country order, these leaders are:

Country	Name	Birthday
Israel	Isaac Herzog	22 September 1960
Jordan	Abdullah II	30 January 1962
Kyrgyzstan	Sadyr Japarov	6 December 1968
Laos	Thongloun Sisoulith	10 November 1945
Malawi	Lazarus Chakwera	5 April 1955
Norway	Harald V	21 February 1937
Oman	Haitham bin Tariq	11 October 1955
Poland	Andrzej Duda	16 May 1972
Qatar	Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani	3 June 1980

Now, identify the 18 items shown below. 9 of them are recognizable as gemstones. They are listed in alphabetical order, which should help with identification.

Amethyst	Babylon	Catch	Commandments	Diamond	Emerald
Flags	Forever	Garnet	Inazuma	Musketeers	Opal
Pearl	Rock	Sapphire	Sweet	Topaz	Turquoise

How could these make a suitable birthday gift? The 9 gemstones are birthstones, each representing one of the birth months of the 9 leaders. Similarly, each of the other 9 words can be associated with a number, e.g. “Catch 22”. These match the birth days accordingly.

The below table shows the birthstone and item (with the referenced phrase containing the number corresponding to the birth day) associated with each birthday. The given prices (in millions) are listed in parentheses.

Country	Birthday	Birthstone (Month)	Item Reference (Day)	Sum / Extract
Israel	22 September 1960	Sapphire (4)	Catch 22 (-3)	1
Jordan	30 January 1962	Garnet (15)	30 Rock (-1)	14
Kyrgyzstan	6 December 1968	Turquoise (17)	Six Flags (8)	25
Laos	10 November 1945	Topaz (9)	10 Commandments (6)	15
Malawi	5 April 1955	Diamond (3)	Babylon 5 (3)	6
Norway	21 February 1937	Amethyst (18)	Forever 21 (2)	20
Oman	11 October 1955	Opal (1)	Inazuma 11 (7)	8
Poland	16 May 1972	Emerald (5)	Sweet 16 (0)	5
Qatar	3 June 1980	Pearl (12)	3 Musketeers (1)	13

Sum the price of the birthstone and other item for each birthday and use A1Z26 to get the phrase "ANY OF THEM". These people are all heads of state of their respective countries, so the final answer is **HEAD OF STATE**.