

## **N Destiny 2431**

### Chapter 2431

Zacharias had switched out his necktie for another one, and he hadn't tied it up. He extended his hand. "Will you tie my necktie for me?"

Shirley elegantly approached Zacharias and took the necktie. Zacharias wrapped an arm around her waist and pulled her closer. When Shirley was tying the necktie, he seized the chance to peck her lips. "You're gorgeous tonight."

Shirley looked at him. "I hope I won't embarrass you."

"You won't. After tonight, the whole world will know we're dating," Zacharias said.

Shirley blinked. "What? Why?"

"Because the entrance is going to be broadcast to the whole nation live. It's important news making its way to the world."

Shirley's eyes went wide. Did he just trick me into making an official announcement about our relationship?

Zacharias' convoy was waiting downstairs. Shirley held his arm, following him down. The staff members were already looking at them. They thought the vice president was single, but now they were proven wrong. The vice president not only had a girlfriend, but he had a gorgeous one, too. She was tall, lithe, gorgeous, gentle, and gracious. She was obviously from a rich family.

Shirley thought she would get nervous, but with Zacharias by her side, she felt a bubble of invisible strength enveloping her. She stood with him calmly, accepting everyone's stares. They got into the car, and the convoy made its way to the hotel where the dinner would happen.

Reporters from all around the world were gathered here, holding up their cameras and mics, waiting for the moment to witness the friendship between the two nations deepening.

When Shirley got out of the car, she was blinded by the camera flashes. Okay, everyone's going to know we're dating after this dinner.

Shirley heard a reporter saying, "Vice President Zacharias Flintstone's fiancée will be attending this dinner as well. Oh, she's gracious. How captivating."

Shirley heard that, and she waved at the camera. This was her first time attending something like this, but she grew up having a lot of confidence, as if this was where she was supposed to be.

Zacharias was shaking hands with everyone, but he was also holding Shirley's hand at all times. Their interlocked hands were captured by a lot of cameras.

Zacharias took Shirley into the great hall. There, they met a few more people, and Shirley smiled at all of them. They came to the dining hall on the third floor, and she saw the wife of Dansbury's vice president. She was in a purple dress. Freddie came over and whispered, "Miss Lloyd, we've prepared a present for tonight. After dinner is done, we shall present it to the guests in your name."

Shirley nodded. She was now representing the nation, and she felt heavy responsibility and duty weighing on her shoulders.

Angela was at home, seated before the TV and holding her husband's arm. When she saw her daughter passing through the screen, she teared up, excited. "Our girl's finally making a name for herself," said Angela.

Richard felt conflicted. He didn't want his daughter to leave his care so soon, but Zacharias was the perfect husband for Shirley. He had to let her go. When his wife told him to let Shirley intern at Flintstone Residence, he objected to it, but he eventually relented. Now that Shirley and Zacharias were in love, he didn't have to worry about his daughter's love life anymore.

Still, he knew that once Shirley became Zacharias' wife, responsibility and danger would come to her, just like how they came to Zacharias. Richard narrowed his eyes. I will keep my daughter safe.

It was time for dinner. Shirley chatted in Chinese with the wife of Dansbury's vice president. She was well-read and knew a lot of stuff, and the second lady of Dansbury was interested in their nations'

histories. Shirley was a history enthusiast, too, so the second lady got a lot of answers to her questions from Shirley. She was impressed by this young lady.

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Shirley left a good impression on her. After dinner, Shirley took a present from the waiter and presented it to the second lady of Dansbury. Delighted, the lady hugged Shirley and gave her a present in return. The dinner finally came to an end, and Shirley eased up a little. She stood with Zacharias, sending the second lady and gentleman of Dansbury off. Once their vehicle was out of sight, Shirley heaved a sigh of relief. She raised her head, asking, "Did I embarrass you?"

Zacharias put an arm around Shirley's waist and leaned down. "No. You made me proud."

Shirley smiled. That was the best praise she could receive. Zacharias took her into the car, but before that, Shirley saw the waiter walking to them with the present. She asked Zacharias, "Where are we sending this gift?"

Amused, Zacharias said, "The second lady of Dansbury gave you that. It belongs to you."

Shirley was surprised she could keep the present.

"Take it. It's your prize." Zacharias chuckled. He told his bodyguards to take the presents while he took Shirley into the car.

Shirley got into the car, and someone texted her. She picked up her phone and realized it was from her mother. 'Your father and I are going to Elliot's place. We're probably going to stay at their family's hotel. You do whatever you want tonight.

Shirley heaved a sigh of relief. She was going to come up with an excuse not to go home later, but her mother gave her one. 'Sure, Mom. Can do, Shirley texted.

Zacharias huddled closer. "Who are you talking to?"

"My mom. She and my dad won't be home tonight, so I don't have to go home either." Shirley smiled at Zacharias. Zacharias was surprised. "Really? You can come to my place tonight?"

"I didn't say I was going to your place. I'm going to Grandma's," Shirley teased. Zacharias held her hand at once and imperiously said, "You're not going anywhere but my place tonight."

Shirley chuckled and said nothing more. The bodyguards had entered the car as well. Can't flirt with them around.

The convoy made their way to the Flintstone Residence. Shirley was excited all the way, and she couldn't wait to get there.

They finally arrived at the residence. Zacharias got out of the car and saw a red supercar parked in the courtyard. He frowned.

Shirley looked at the red car too, and she paused for a few moments. That's Tony's car He's here too? "Is Tony staying here?" Shirley asked curiously.

Zacharias said, "No, he's leaving in a bit."

Shirley glanced at the look on Zacharias' face and realized that Tony would be kicked out. She felt sorry for the guy.

Tony was in the living room, lounging on the leather couch. He was munching on a bag of snacks while watching a movie. When he saw Shirley, he happily said, "My Goddess, you're here. It's been days since I saw you."

"What brings you here?"

"I'm staying here for a bit," said Tony. This was like his home anyway. Zacharias let Shirley go and approached Tony. "Come out. We need to talk."

Tony blinked and looked at his uncle and then at the gorgeously-dressed Shirley. At once, he knew he couldn't stay tonight. "Okay, Zacharias." Tony stood up and followed Zacharias out.

Tony said, "Don't stay here tonight. Go to my dad's place."

"You're kicking me out just to date my goddess, aren't you? It won't be that easy." Tony's eyes twinkled with mischief.

Chapter 2433

Tony wasn't going to leave without getting anything.

"What do you want?" Zacharias knew his nephew wasn't one to acquiesce that easily.

"I'm kinda tight on money lately." Tony was delighted. I can get money from him now.

"How much do you want?" Zacharias narrowed his eyes dangerously.

"Not much. Fifteen grand." It's not easy getting fifteen grand from him. Zacharias scoffed. "Fifteen hundred."

"I'm not leaving, then. I'm going to stay here tonight. You're not going to flirt with my goddess." Tony opened the door and was about to get in. Zacharias relented. "Fine, I'll do it."

Tony pulled his hand back and turned back around with a smile. "Give me the money before you leave. I don't want you breaking your promise."

Zacharias took his phone out and gave Tony the money. Fifteen grand. Tony cursed himself. Man, that was quick. Maybe I should've asked for more. He could've given me 75 grand if I asked. Too late for regrets.

"Now leave," snapped Zacharias. We can't have this guy here ruining things for us.

Tony said, "Right away." When he came back into the lounge, Shirley was having some water. He pretended he had to leave. "See you next time, my goddess. I have to go now. Urgent stuff."

Zacharias shot Tony a sharp look. The guy took his car key and left, and then he was gone from the residence.

Shirley smiled, watching Zacharias turn the TV off. She didn't ask him how he managed to chase Tony out. She pretended none of this had happened. "It's still early. Do you want to work for a bit?" she asked.

Zacharias took the glass of water and gazed at Shirley. "Do you think I'm still in the mood to work tonight?"

Shirley felt electrified for a moment. Zacharias' gaze was like fire, and she melted for him.

"My time is yours tonight." Zacharias put the glass down and hugged Shirley. "Work's important, but you're more important."

Shirley wrapped her arms around him. She missed him so much, and that hug squeezed out all her longing for him. She rubbed her cheeks against his chest. "Okay, then."

"Let's go upstairs." Zacharias picked her up and carried her in his arms. Shirley giggled, wrapping her arms around his neck.

"I don't want to tire you out. Put me down."

Zacharias didn't listen to her and took her upstairs instead. Shirley enjoyed his firm hold on her. She felt safe and secure in his arms. She thought he would at least put her down so she could have some rest, but he didn't. Instead, he took her to the battlefield.

His bed.

Shirley's heart started to race. She did miss him a lot, but this was too quick and straightforward. Shouldn't we...

Shirley couldn't think of anything else better to do with the time, and her cheeks burned. What's going on with me? Why am I so lewd ever since meeting him? "I need to take a shower." Shirley sat up.

Chapter 2434

The bathroom didn't have a lock inside, so it made it easy for him to come in. When Shirley heard the door opening, she turned around and quickly hid herself in the steam. "Why did you..."

"We're showering together." Zacharias smiled and came in.

Shirley blushed. "Is it too late to say no?"

Yes. Zacharias held her waist and the back of her head, and then he kissed her. Shirley moaned and was pulled into Zacharias' embrace. He led the action in the steamy bathroom. They then took the battle to the bed.

Shirley had no idea how much time had passed, but she was eventually exhausted, and she was usually a vivacious person. She lay in Zacharias' arms languidly, with nary the strength to even open her eyes.

Zacharias was combing her hair. He was radiating warmth, like a tiger who had its fill. Shirley had a look of enjoyment on her face, a smile curling her lips.

Zacharias kissed her. "Sleep."

Shirley didn't even want to think. She was so tired, she just wanted to sleep, and she fell asleep in Zacharias' arms a while later. He kissed her hair and fell asleep with Shirley in his arms.

Dawn came. Shirley opened her eyes and found that Zacharias was already gone, though he left a note for her. He told her to get breakfast after she woke up, and then someone would take her home. Shirley wanted to stay, but Zacharias was going to work immediately, and with Christmas coming, he would have a lot more to deal with.

Shirley went home. Right after that, she got news that her father would bring his whole family back to the base for Christmas. That included her. Shirley was shocked. "Why are we going back to the base? Can't we celebrate Christmas here?" Shirley quickly asked.

"Tons of things to settle at the base. Pack up your stuff, Shirley. We're setting off at six."

Shirley wanted to stay, but her parents would be at the base, and as their daughter, she had to celebrate Christmas with them.

Back in the bedroom, Angela said, "Richard, you could've told Shirley about this. She's confused right now."

Richard shook her head. "I can't, or she won't leave. Zacharias is dealing with some dangerous individuals right now, and he's worried she might get dragged into the mess."

Earlier in the morning, Zacharias called Richard and asked them to take Shirley back to the base. He was dealing with some dangerous people who had intel on a lot of stuff, including Shirley's details. Shirley went back to her room. Resigned, she called Zacharias. I have to go back to the base.

"Hello?" Zacharias asked.

"Zach, my dad just said we'll be celebrating Christmas at the base. I might have to go with him," said Shirley, a little resigned.

"It's alright, Shir. We'll meet after Christmas. I can't leave work right now either, so you spend some time with your folks," said Zacharias, consoling Shirley.

Shirley had no choice but to listen to him. "I will. You take care of yourself. Don't work through the night, alright?"

"Yeah, I know. I won't," said Zacharias in a husky voice.



"I'd love to see you again before I leave." Shirley bit her lip. Richard was in a hurry, though. They had to leave by six, so she wouldn't be able to do that.

"Go to the base with your folks, alright? I'll see you there after Christmas."

"Really?" Shirley asked, surprised.

"Yes."

"We have a deal. You're coming to the base for me after Christmas." Shirley was delighted. She grew up in the base, and she was more than happy to take Zacharias on a tour.

After getting her spirits lifted, Shirley packed her things.

Back at Zacharias' office, Zacharias put his phone down and heaved a sigh. Now that Shirley and her parents are safe, it's time to settle a score. This will be a hard battle.

#### Chapter 2435

The enemies hidden in the dark were going to make their move too. There would be an election after Christmas. So, Zacharias planned to get rid of some people then. Those people were also trying to eliminate Zacharias and instate one of their supporters in the position of vice president. A quiet war had drawn its curtains. The people were oblivious to the raging undercurrents.

"The plan for Zacharias' trip to Easternia is underway. We'll make our move there. It's a remote island, and no media's going to be alerted. All we have to do is kill Zacharias and his men and make the seabed cave-in. We'll then tell everyone that it was a natural disaster, and Zacharias will cease from being a thorn in our side."

"Sounds perfect. Execute it well, and we'll have nothing to worry about anymore."

"We cannot fail this time, or we'll never know peace."

Shirley and her family arrived at the airport that afternoon. After she handed her luggage to Richard's underling, she sat with Ava. Ava was delighted to make this trip, whereas Angela kept checking on Shirley and saw her staring out the window. It was as if she was reluctant to leave. She truly felt for her daughter. It was difficult for anyone to stay away from their lover when they were in the honeymoon phase.

After Shirley's flight took off, Zacharias came out of his office. His motorcade was waiting for him. He would have to go to Easternia next. A new secret base was being built there. He had to be there to sign the papers and call a meeting.

The motorcade came to the port. Freddie and Roy followed Zacharias closely. Apart from Zacharias' eight bodyguards, the Minister of Security and his men would be tagging along as well.

After Zacharias boarded the ship, someone in a car hidden nearby pulled the telescope away, and they texted, 'Zacharias has boarded the ship.'

The person who received the text made a call. They said, "Target has set sail. Get ready."

Zacharias was in his waiting room on the ship. Freddie was working, but his heart wasn't in it. He closed his laptop and looked at his composed boss. Yet, he couldn't stop the increasing anxiety welling up in his heart.

The Minister of Security came in holding a laptop. His underling was typing away. It seemed that they had managed to intercept a few phone signals.

"Sir, they're starting to communicate, and we've intercepted all the messages."

"Keep that as evidence," instructed Zacharias.

"We've apprehended all the spies they installed among us. The island is now under our control. We'll be able to lure them onto the island and capture all of them by 10.00PM at the latest. We'll have enough evidence and witnesses by then. I'm certain that they will not escape court-martial."

Zacharias nodded. He was setting himself up as bait. Thus, he had already expected that several sharks would come out to play.

Richard had gone to the plane's cabin. His phone was left on his seat. Shirley heard someone texting her father as he had only kept his phone on vibrate. She could check her father's phone anytime she wanted, especially since the passcode was her birthday. So, she sneakily picked up the phone, trying to see who was texting her father.

When she noticed the chat history between her father and Zacharias, she was momentarily stunned. Then, she didn't hesitate to scroll through the conversation. They were all simple texts.

'Be careful! That was what Richard texted Zacharias earlier that morning.

'Don't worry, Richard. Everything is under control. That was from Zacharias.

'Tell me if anything happens.' That was from Richard.

'Understood.

The texts would seem nonsensical to outsiders. However, Shirley's heart sank as she understood the implications. She knew right then why her father was taking them back to the base in such a hurry. He didn't have anything urgent to settle at all. Instead, Zacharias was going through some dangerous operation. That was why her father had to take her into hiding. What kind of operation is it this time? Shirley was reminded of the assassination attempt that had occurred last time. This had to have something to do with that. Who is Zacharias fighting?

Chapter 2436

Shirley grabbed her phone and headed toward the cabin. Richard was fiddling with a machine when he suddenly saw his precious daughter coming in. He looked up and asked, "Why are you here?"

She handed him the phone with a firm resolve. "Dad, please instruct your men to turn around. I need to go back to Averno."

Richard looked at the phone she handed him. He didn't even need to guess to know that his daughter was aware of his communication with Zacharias.

"Don't be unreasonable." He took the phone and said, "Go back to your seat."

"What if I parachute off the plane then?" She looked at her father and only became even more determined. He was immediately startled. So, he quickly grabbed her. "Don't act rashly at this altitude!"

"Tell me what mission Zacharias is undertaking then. Why did he send me away? Is it perilous?" Shirley sat across from her father. Although she was overwhelmed by anxiety and on the verge of tears, she remained composed on the surface.

Richard looked at his daughter and suddenly felt his heart pang. He sighed wearily as he spoke, "Shirley, of course, I would love nothing more than to allow you to return. However, there's a chance that Zacharias would get distracted if you're in Averno."

She couldn't help but grip her father's hand as her eyes turned red-rimmed. "Dad, please. I beg you. Turn the plane around! Send me back there. At least let me know if he's safe. Please?"

Richard knew the daughter he had raised wasn't one to get flustered easily. She was usually calm and rational. So, he felt pained to see her in such emotional distress for the first time. In the end, what else could he do but support his daughter in her endeavors? "Nixon, turn the plane around," Richard called out to the cockpit.

"Understood, Mr. Lloyd." The plane smoothly switched to another route. There wasn't even a hint of turbulence.

Richard took out a satellite phone and dialed a number before giving an order on the other end, saying sternly, "Keep an eye on the situation at Easternia. Immediately report to me if any strange activities are happening."

Shirley sat beside her father. "Dad, do you know who he's dealing with?"

“A few people who are capable of collectively challenging his position. It’s definitely not something ordinary folks can intervene in. These individuals wield extensive influence and have numerous subordinates. Zacharias sent you away so he could focus on his task without worrying about you.” Richard didn’t bother hiding the truth from her.

He had received a heads-up from Ren about this matter because they had been setting up a trap all this time. They were going to use this opportunity to take down several major players capable of causing massive upheaval in one fell swoop.

Shirley’s heart instantly tightened as her mind started racing. Even though she understood that Zacharias wanted to protect her, all she wanted to do was stay by his side and support him in any way she could. She didn’t want to be apart from him at all.

The plane swiftly flew to the military airport in Averna. Richard had already scheduled for a car in advance. Nonetheless, he arranged for another car to take Angela and Ava home. Meanwhile, he took Shirley and headed straight in a particular direction.

Shirley’s heartstrings were taut throughout the entire journey. She knew the people Zacharias was dealing with at this time were extraordinarily dangerous. Those who could challenge his status were undoubtedly deeply entrenched in this battle.

“Dad, does he stand a chance?” she asked Richard nervously.

“We’re not sure.”

“Can I go to the island?” Shirley begged earnestly. “Dad, please take me to the island!”

“Do you really want to go?” Richard turned to ask. He had trained Shirley himself and had complete confidence in her abilities. Still, he couldn’t bear to see her take such risks.

“Dad, trust me. I can handle it.” Shirley nodded resolutely. She wanted to stand side by side with Zacharias and support him through this battle.

Just then, she was standing by the railing at the dock when she suddenly saw a series of fireworks exploding in the air from the distant island. So, she pointed at it and said urgently, "Dad, something's happening over there."

She looked at the explosions and flashes on the island. Those only indicated that the battle had officially begun.

"Dad, let's go over there! I beg of you," pleaded Shirley. At this moment, her entire heart flew toward the island.

Suddenly, there was a deafening sound of rotor blades as three military helicopters hovered in the sky. Soon, one of them descended steadily onto the road. Shirley tugged Richard over, exclaiming, "Dad, let's go! I want to go, too."

Chapter 2437

Richard couldn't resist turning Shirley's down. Still, he had to set some ground rules as he spoke sternly, "Fine, on two conditions. Once we're there, you are not to leave my sight and will stay close to the team."

"Understood, Mr. Lloyd." Shirley immediately transformed into one of her father's subordinates and saluted.

Richard and his daughter boarded the helicopter. A complete set of gear was immediately provided to her, and she wasted no time putting it on. At this moment, she wished desperately that she could teleport herself to that island.

As they approached the island, the flashes of explosions became more visible and audible. There was no doubt that the battle was a difficult one, and everyone involved had no intention of leaving until the other was pronounced dead on the battlefield. Besides, they had heard through credible sources that the opposing side had hired several mercenaries to the island to engage in a gunfight with Zacharias' men.

Richard hadn't anticipated this audacity from the prey that dared to confront Zacharias' people. So, he was thankful he had listened to Shirley's suggestion to make this trip. Otherwise, how could he tell his beloved daughter that something awful had happened to Zacharias?

So, he accompanied his daughter to rescue Zacharias.

“Dad, please be careful too.” Shirley worried not only about Zacharias but also about Richard.

“Nixon, take Shirley and take this road.”

“Don’t worry, Mr. Lloyd! Leave it to me. I’ll make sure Miss Lloyd stays safe.”

Shirley glanced at her phone and was just about to send a message to Zacharias when she realized that there was no signal on the island.

She immediately turned to Richard and informed him, intoning seriously, “Dad, the communication here has been intercepted and cut off. This place has become a complete warzone.”

Richard immediately whisked out his phone and attempted to use satellite signals. Alas, all his efforts were futile, as the results only confirmed his daughter’s speculations. Hence, he quickly understood that they had all underestimated the adversaries Zacharias was battling against.

The opposing force had somehow managed to control the entire island and had established a powerful signal jamming field that disrupted all communications.

“Shirley, be careful. Stick with Nixon and the others. Don’t venture out alone.”

“Okay. I’ll find Zacharias. We’ll rendezvous at this drop site once I do,” Shirley said as Richard was heading toward the side where the gunfight was going strong.

She and her father had no choice but to part ways now that the battle wasn’t looking great. At this moment, Zacharias’ forces were engaged in a battle with the opposition on the eastern side of the island. Her mission was to find Zacharias, while Richard’s mission was to join the gunfight.

Zacharias was currently stuck in a cave. Just moments ago, the Minister of Security had betrayed him. He hadn't expected that one of the elders he trusted the most would end up colluding with the opposition.

"Mr. Flintstone, we were careless. Who would have thought even the minister..." Freddie punched a rock as he was deeply disappointed by this elder he had respected greatly.

Zacharias' eyes flashed with anger. "We underestimated them. These people are everywhere. It's no wonder that they could get their hands on the highest-ranking officials."

"Mr. Flintstone, there's no signal, and we can't contact any outside support. We're stranded and alone. Now, it's all up to us if we want to get ourselves out of this place," Freddie said while changing a magazine. "Even our bullets are running low. I'm not sure how long they'll last."

Zacharias patted him on the back. "We'll fight them to the end. Even if we don't make it back alive, we should never yield to the likes of those scum."

Freddie, who was encouraged, nodded in agreement. "Mr. Flintstone, I'll ensure your safe return even if it costs me my life."

Zacharias was touched as he chuckled. "If you have a chance to escape, take it. Don't worry about me."

"No way. Miss Lloyd is waiting for you. Mr. Flintstone, you need to get out of here," Freddie said, trying to motivate him.

Zacharias smiled with a touch of bitterness and regret in his eyes. "If I never get to be with her in this life, I suppose I'll have to wait for the next."

Just as Zacharias was lamenting the cruelty of Fate, Roy rushed into the cave while clutching his injured arm. "Mr. Flintstone, a few helicopters just landed on the island. It seems like reinforcements have arrived."

"But... we can't call for reinforcements, so who could it be?" Freddie blurted in surprise.



"I don't know, but someone joined the gunfight. They looked like military personnel from our side, Roy reported.

Zacharias' pupils were slightly dilated as his heart started pounding. Although he had his suspicions about who those people were, he hoped with all his heart that it wasn't who he was thinking of.

Richard had promised to take her away. There was no way he would allow her to return. Therefore, there was definitely no chance Richard would bring his daughter to the battlefield.

"Who could it be?" Freddie speculated. This team was arranged by Mr. Watts, and they had no means to contact reinforcements. So, who would suddenly join the battle?

Chapter 2438

"Whoever it is, at least we're not fighting alone. Mr. Flintstone, let's head south toward the forest. It's a good hiding spot where we won't be discovered easily," Freddie suggested.

Zacharias had a hunch, and it wasn't just anyone who arrived. Those men were probably Richard's men. Could she be here too?

Meanwhile, Richard soon realized that this wasn't the simple situation that Zacharias had described. He had years of experience under his belt. Naturally, he could tell that this was an assassination attempt on Zacharias.

Richard encountered an assassin head-on. When the assassin caught sight of him, he hesitated briefly before asking, "Who are you?"

Richard's appearance wasn't on their hit list. So, the assassin didn't want to make a mistake and cause irreparable damage.

"My target is Zacharias Flintstone," Richard replied promptly. The assassin heaved a sigh of relief. "You're Mr. Webb's men, right? No wonder I haven't seen you here before."

Richard could barely hide the shock in his eyes. Zain Webb? Did he betray Zacharias? If he was right, that meant that Zacharias' decision to come to the island with Zain was indeed part of a massive conspiracy.

"Yes, I'm with Mr. Webb. Where exactly is Zacharias right now?"

"All signals on the island are cut off. No external communication can come through. Not even satellite signals. It's quite the thrill! I would have never imagined that I would have a chance to hunt down the vice president like this. This is truly one hunting game that no other can top in my lifetime." The assassin lit a cigarette and spoke casually, "So, don't worry. There's no rush. We have plenty of people here. There's no way he can escape from our clutches. Besides, there's no point working so hard when we're all going to get paid the same regardless of who kills him."

Richard's fists clenched. He hadn't expected such audacity to occur right under Ren's nose, especially with Zacharias as the target.

"Want a cig? I can bet all my savings that Zacharias never once suspected that Mr. Webb would be one of ours. You know, we almost killed him earlier. Unfortunately, his men reacted quickly and saved him at the very last second," the assassin said while finishing the cigarette and crushing it underfoot. "He probably fled south. It's an undeveloped area. So, that's their best bet if they want to lay low and regroup."

At that moment, someone called out to him, "Tiger, let's go. We're heading south."

"This is our new member. Let's go together!" Tiger, who mistook Richard for a seasoned mercenary due to his demeanor, invited him along.

Richard looked rather young for his age. As a result, he appeared to be in his early forties. Plus, he exuded a disciplined military aura that made Tiger assume he was a long-term mercenary.

"Let's move!" Richard followed them immediately. Then, he grabbed some dust from the ground and smeared it on his face. Tiger did the same upon seeing this. "Looks like you've got a whole lotta experience, buddy! You'd better cover me later."

Richard patted his shoulder. "We'll watch out for each other."

“I can’t wait to pull the trigger on that young vice president.”

Richard’s men were protecting Shirley, so it was advantageous for him to blend in with the group alone.

He had directed Shirley south earlier in hopes she would meet with Zacharias. At this moment, Zacharias’ safety was paramount. The situation had spiraled so out of control that even he was willing to become one of Zacharias’ protectors.

Since this wasn’t a mere battle of lives but a battle of power and defending the country’s highest authority against traitors, he would do everything in his power to uphold his duty as a soldier.

Meanwhile, Shirley and a few of her father’s men sped down the road under the cover of night. Shirley seemed comfortable navigating her way through the darkness due to the training and exposure she had been given under her father’s guidance.

Still, she couldn’t help but feel worried as she was unaware of the events on the island. The tense atmosphere of impending conflict made her extremely anxious.

How was Zacharias? Where was he?

“Miss Lloyd, be careful.” Nixon cautioned her.

“Don’t worry! Let’s split up and search,” Shirley said.

As they ventured deeper into the south, darkness engulfed them like a monstrous cloud. The area was lit only by the moonlight and their flashlights. They were equipped adequately, and their primary goal was to rendezvous with Zacharias amidst the tension that hung thick in the air.

Chapter 2439

Soon, they arrived at a wooded area near a beach. Nixon spotted a flicker of light from a cave not far away. So, he immediately shielded Shirley and whispered, “Miss Lloyd, there’s someone in that cave. I’ll scout the area up ahead.” He immediately turned around to get a visual on her. Yet, Shirley was gone.

She had already moved ahead.

“Hey! Miss Lloyd, be careful.” Nixon waved, and his men swiftly followed.

Shirley was extremely anxious at this moment. She could tell that something was wrong on this island as time passed. All her devices were malfunctioning. Why would someone go through all this effort just to jam the signals within this island? Just what clandestine agenda were they plotting?

Her mind already had an inkling of what the answer was.

They wanted to deal with someone. Someone of significant status-Zacharias.

She trod the difficult path ahead effortlessly. Although the terrain was challenging, her movements were swift and agile. It was as if she was a ghost gliding through all her obstacles. When her companions saw that, they had to acknowledge that the child personally trained by their leader truly possessed exceptional skills.

Sure enough, Shirley was soon near the cave. She crouched beside a rock while peering through a pair of binoculars, intending to observe the situation from a safe distance. Suddenly, someone emerged from the cave. She couldn't see the person's face clearly. Still, she could recognize the person from his silhouette.

It was Roy.

Her heart surged with excitement and joy. She turned to Nixon. “That should be where Zacharias is hiding, Mr. Nixon. I'm going there now, and you can join me in a bit.”

“Miss Lloyd...” Nixon hadn't even finished his sentence when Shirley rushed to the cave.

“Lord! It's tiring to keep an eye on kids.” Nixon sighed as he signaled for his four men to follow.

Shirley swiftly arrived near the cave entrance. At this moment, she knew that she could not afford to enter rashly as it could spark a misunderstanding. Since the situation was dire, Zacharias' men had no way of differentiating allies apart from enemies. Thus, she had to move cautiously to prevent a needless conflict from sparking.

She threw a stone to knock against the wall. Soon, a figure carefully emerged from the cave to inspect the noise. Shirley recognized him as one of Roy's men. So, she immediately seized his gun, covered his mouth, and dragged him into the shadows.

"I'm Shirley Lloyd," she whispered into his ear.

The man dropped his guard upon hearing her name and turned to confirm her identity. He was pleasantly surprised. "Miss Lloyd, what are you doing here?"

"Where's Mr. Flintstone?"

"He's inside."

"Is he injured?" Shirley's heart clenched.

"Mr. Flintstone isn't injured, but Roy is. We've also lost two men before we managed to retreat here."

Shirley called out, "Mr. Nixon, come out! They are Zacharias' men."

After that, she made her way briskly into the cave. She had only taken a few steps into the cave when she found a group of people either sitting or standing. Meanwhile, Zacharias was leaning against the wall. His suit was undone, and his tie was missing. She took a good look at him and soon saw that his dark hair was also slightly disheveled. Nevertheless, his authoritative presence remained undiminished.

He spotted the girl rushing in and was unsure whether to be glad or concerned. He was overjoyed that she brought reinforcement with her but worried as he would rather that she not be here in the first place.

“Miss Lloyd, you’re here!” Roy exclaimed as he felt his tense nerves relax slightly. Even Freddie breathed a sigh of relief; reinforcements had finally arrived to their aid. Shirley’s gaze was fixed on Zacharias. Although she hadn’t spoken, it was clear that she was checking whether he had sustained any injuries.

Zacharias’ tall figure moved past his men before grabbing hold of Shirley and pulling her toward a side cave. She was led several meters inside and pushed against the wall. His voice was firm, as if he was issuing a command, saying sternly, “Return to where you came from. Stop meddling. It’s dangerous out here.”

Since Shirley had already begged her father to bring her here, she wouldn’t leave without at least dragging Zacharias back with her. So, she pushed his hand away and arched her eyebrows. “Mr. Zacharias, the only identity that matters the moment I stepped into this cave is being your bodyguard. I’m here to ensure your safety and do my job.”

Zacharias’ eyebrows furrowed, and his voice was hoarse. “Listen to me. It’s dangerous here. I don’t want you to get hurt.”

“Do you think that I could possibly live a peaceful life if you’re hurt or, worse, killed?” She raised her chin, and her eyes were shining bright. “Or do you think that I can marry someone else after losing you?”

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Zacharias was momentarily taken aback. He was well aware that neither of them could bear to part with the other, nor could they afford to lose the other.

“Now that I’m here, I won’t leave,” Shirley asserted firmly. He had always thought that the power he wielded was effective at any given time. Alas, he didn’t expect that it would be completely useless against her.

“Miss Lloyd, how many people have you brought over?” Freddie inquired as he approached the duo.

“There are eight of us, including my father and me. Four are with me, while two are with my father, Shirley replied succinctly.

“The other side has at least 50 people. What are we going to do now? The disparity in strength is far too great. Freddie sighed.

“How did this happen? Didn’t you arrange for manpower when you set out?” she asked as her brows furrowed in confusion.

“We did arrange for a task force. Unfortunately, Mr. Watts was the organizer. So, we only realized that Mr. Watts was also an enemy once we made it here. This was a trap from the get-go. Anyone who has set foot on this island is their target, and they’re shooting to kill,” Freddie explained with a vexed look on his face. The expression he was currently wearing was quite a stark contrast to his usual warm smile.

Shirley looked up at Zacharias. At this moment, she knew that he was definitely hurt and disappointed. The one he trusted, one of his inner circle, had betrayed him.

“It’s a disgrace. He was even Mr. Flintstone’s friend! So, Mr. Zacharias naturally held him in high regard and placed a great deal of trust in him. Who would have thought something like this could happen?” Roy huffed angrily.

“There’s no point dwelling on it now that we’re in this situation. We need to come up with a plan if we want to get out of here and make them pay, Zacharias said while glancing at Shirley. He couldn’t let her die here, not on his watch.

Shirley’s gaze was fixed on him as well. Her eyes conveyed that even if she were to die here, she would do anything to save him.

The selfless concern they bore for one another was just another reason that neither of them would be able to let the other go. The mutual sentiment they shared motivated them to get back down to business even though they were stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Nixon pondered over their options as he said carefully, “It’s not that we don’t have reinforcements on the way. The problem is that we’re not sure whether they could make it on time.”

“We have reinforcements? Are you sure about that? The operation this time was confidential, and Mr. Webb cut off all possible support routes. We-”

"If only you knew just how much Mrs. Lloyd cares for Mr. Lloyd, then you'd know she'd definitely notice something amiss. Plus, Miss Lloyd is here," Nixon interjected confidently.

"Are you saying my mother will call for help?" Shirley's eyes brightened with hope.

"I'm certain that Mrs. Lloyd will do so," Nixon affirmed, utterly convinced. Indeed, he was correct in his assumption. Angela had noticed it was past 11.00PM, and neither her husband nor her daughter had returned. Although she was safe at home, how could she possibly sleep?

She had tried calling them without success. Then, she attempted to call Richard's associates. Alas, she couldn't reach anyone either. Angela, who was accustomed to living with Richard for years, was keenly attuned to danger. This prompted her to call her husband's subordinate, who was stationed nearby. "Jace, find out where Richard is right now. I need to know where he is."

"Of course, Mrs. Lloyd." The man wasted no time carrying out her command.

In less than a minute, he reported, "It's strange. We can't track Mr. Lloyd's location at all."

"What do you mean you can't track him? Don't you have the most advanced tracking devices available?" Angela questioned sharply.

Jace was unable to locate him after several attempts. Eventually, he raised his suspicions and suggested tentatively, "Mr. Lloyd may be stuck in a location that has somehow jammed all signals."

Angela quickly started recalling just where her husband and daughter had gone. Wasn't it where Zacharias was supposed to deal with those dangerous individuals? Now that she couldn't reach them, it was evident they were in danger.

"Jace, quickly dispatch people to Easternia. Immediately! Richard is in danger, and even Mr. Flintstone is in danger. Hurry!" Angela urged urgently.



Then, her next call was to Ren, and she explained the situation to him. Shortly after, six helicopters took off, and the special forces were mobilized in the nearest base to Easternia.

On the other hand, Zacharias and the others decided to head to where Nixon and the others had parked the helicopter after their lengthy discussion in the cave. They intended to leave this place as soon as possible.

Zacharias wanted to ensure Shirley's departure. Shirley was of the same mind, except she wanted to ensure his departure from this hazardous island.