

N Destiny 2371

Chapter 2371

“Goddess, Goddess!” Tony urgently got out of the car, wanting to come to her rescue.

“Stay inside!” Shirley shouted at him. With that, she delivered a powerful punch to the leader. Breaking free, she approached the man with the stick, who instantly turned pale with fear as if he had seen a ghost.

Shirley, like an angered goddess, stood amid the chilling wind that tousled her long hair. Her face was incredibly beautiful yet radiated intense determination to kill.

The man had no choice but to face the challenge. He swung the stick wildly, but Shirley seized the opportunity, closing in and grabbing his wrist. Disarming him, she viciously struck him down with the iron rod and then stepped on him with a forceful stomp. A distinct sound of ribs breaking echoed in the air.

“Ahh!” The man let out a gruesome scream. Shirley tossed aside the iron rod and, looking at the fallen thugs, walked toward Tony’s car. Tony, inside the car, was so nervous that he was sweating profusely. Just then, his phone rang-it was a call from Zacharias.

“It’s Uncle Zacharias calling, Should I answer?”

“No. Let’s go back,” Shirley said. She didn’t want Zacharias to know about what happened. Plus, these people only needed a lesson. Tony drove ahead, still amazed. “I’m truly impressed. You’re incredible, taking on eight guys by yourself!”

Shirley shrugged it off. “They were just ordinary fighters.”

“I can’t handle even one of them. You took on eight. You really are my goddess. All hail,” Tony exclaimed, almost ready to bow down in admiration.

While Shirley was adjusting her hair, she winced as she accidentally tugged on the wound on her back. The blow from earlier had indeed been quite harsh.

“That blow from earlier injured you, didn’t it?” Tony asked worriedly.

“It’s fine,” Shirley replied plainly. Just then, Shirley’s phone rang. Unsurprisingly, it was still Zacharias. “Hello?” She knew she had to answer this one.

“Where are you two?” the man asked.

“We’re on our way back, twenty minutes.”

“Stay safe,” Zacharias said. “Will do,” Shirley replied and hung up. Then, he turned to Tony. “Never tell your uncle about this.”

Tony nodded in agreement, but deep down, he genuinely wanted Zacharias to know about their encounter, hoping those hooligans would end up in prison for messing with his goddess. They shouldn’t get away with it.

Shirley lightly touched her back, feeling a burning pain. She might need some medication once they return.

Twenty minutes later, Shirley and Tony returned to the Flintstone Residence. On the couch, Zacharias had been waiting for them.

He got up and approached them. Given his keen eyesight, he quickly noticed the dirt on Shirley’s knee, and he frowned. “Did something happen?”

“Nothing,” Shirley immediately rushed to answer, leading Zacharias to suspect something was definitely up. At that, he turned to his nephew. “Tony, you speak.”

“N-Nothing happened!” Tony replied nervously. Zacharias might not know Shirley well, but he knew his nephew. The guilty look on Tony’s face clearly indicated that something was amiss.

“Tell the truth. Where did you take her to fight this time?” Zacharias sternly questioned. Shirley was stumped. How did he know I had been in a fight?

The young woman had underestimated Zacharias’ perceptiveness. The dirt and creases on her clothes were evidence that she had definitely been involved in a physical altercation.

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Zacharias’ face turned grim. He stepped forward and grabbed Shirley’s wrist. “Go upstairs. I’ll apply some ointment for you.”

“I don’t need it, thank you. Let go of me,” Shirley refused. She tried to withdraw her hand only to tug on the wound on her back, causing her to hiss reflexively in pain. “It doesn’t hurt, huh?” Zacharias huffed. “Come upstairs with me.”

Just like that, Shirley was dragged upstairs, leaving Tony blinking downstairs. Damn, Uncle Zacharias is so domineering. A real man should be like him! After leading Shirley to her room, Zacharias went back out and came back with the first aid kit.

“Just leave the kit here,” she said to Zacharias. “I can handle it myself.”

Naturally, he wouldn’t take no for an answer. “What, afraid I’ll take advantage of you?” he asked with a quirked brow.

“You say it as if you haven’t done it a few times already,” Shirley retorted. At that, Zacharias replied with a quirked brow, “Not today. Take off your shirt and turn your back to me.”

“I’m fine, really. You should leave,” Shirley insisted. However, Zacharias wasn’t backing down either. “You have to let me apply the ointment.”

Shirley bit her lip and eventually removed her suit jacket and put it aside. Then, she lifted her black sweater and unhooked her bra to expose her entire back.

Sure enough, a long bruise had formed on her back, and under the light, it looked somewhat horrifying. Zacharias’ heart tightened. Who beat her so brutally?

“Who did this to you?” he asked.

“Just some street hooligans,” Shirley replied.

“How many of them?”

“Eight. I took them all down,” Shirley said triumphantly.

“Can’t you stay out of trouble?” Zacharias remarked with displeasure. “I can, but I’m not afraid of trouble. They stopped our car first. That was why I fought back, Shirley explained. At the same time, she felt the warmth of fingertips gently applying ointment to her bruise.

The man didn’t even use a cotton swab; he directly used his hand to apply the medicine. The warmth from his fingertips would enhance the penetration of the medicine into the skin, achieving a better healing effect.

Shirley felt a slight warmth in the area where the man was applying the ointment. She bit her lips, experiencing the man’s large palm rubbing her back. Just then, Zacharias applied some pressure, causing her to cry out in pain.

He immediately became gentler. Though rubbing with some force would be more effective, his heart ached for her, so he did not apply too much pressure.

After applying the ointment, Zacharias noticed the smooth and glossy skin on her back. He was certain it would carry a delicate fragrance if he kissed it. At that, his breath became slightly rapid, and he struggled to restrain himself.

Shirley quickly pulled her sweater down when he finished applying the ointment. Meanwhile, Zacharias crouched down to tidy up the first aid kit, not wanting her to see the intense desire in his eyes.

“Thank you,” Shirley expressed her gratitude. No matter what, he had helped her.

“Next time you encounter such a situation, don’t take matters into your own hands. Call for help first,” Zacharias advised.

“Am I the type of person who’s afraid of death?” Shirley retorted. Zacharias looked at her seriously. “You may not be afraid of death, but I am.”

Shirley was stumped for a moment, unable to find the right words. She even felt a burning sensation in her chest. His words were more captivating than any confession.

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Soon after, Tony came up to check on her. “Goddess, my uncle helped you apply the ointment, didn’t he?” Tony asked with a grin.

“I couldn’t have done it myself,” Shirley replied.

“Do you like Uncle Zacharias, then?” Tony pressed on.

“Sure! He’s the vice president. Who wouldn’t like him?” Shirley replied super calmly, leading Tony to glare at her. “You know exactly what kind of like I’m talking about.”

However, Shirley played dumb. “I’m not very good at reading underlying messages.”

Still, Tony saw through her. “I know you definitely like Uncle Zacharias.”

Despite knowing that Tony was only joking, her heart still skipped a beat, as though her deepest secret had been discovered.

“Just now, I heard Uncle say he would sort the matter out. Those people are in big trouble; they might spend the rest of their lives behind bars for daring to mess with my uncle’s woman.”

“Watch your words,” Shirley gave him a stern look. What do you mean by your uncle’s woman? Tony grinned. “I don’t see a problem with what I said.”

Shirley chose not to argue with him. Tony expressed his gratitude, "Thanks a lot, Goddess, for saving my life tonight. Without you, I might have been in big trouble."

"It's nothing," Shirley replied. "However! I have a feeling that we might become family in the future! You could be my aunt-in-law, hehe." With that, Tony quickly headed toward the door, fearing retaliation, and left.

Sure enough, Shirley became exasperated, but she couldn't do anything about him. That said, she liked Tony's personality-a playful and cheerful younger brother-like figure.

Tony left. Shirley couldn't take a shower that night, so she changed into a set of pajamas and lay in bed. Zacharias' words from earlier echoed in her mind. You must not die in front of me. Shirley thought it was somewhat ominous, not for her but for him.

Will it be any better if he died in front of me? Of course not! Shirley strongly refuted that idea. She wished him a long and healthy life.

In the middle of the night, gentle rain began to fall. The sound of raindrops hitting the window woke Shirley up. She opened her eyes and checked the time-it was 3.30AM.

Just then, a lightning bolt streaked across the sky, illuminating the entire room. Soon after, a loud clap of thunder followed, sounding particularly striking as if it originated from the top of the house. Shirley lost any desire to sleep. She decided to sit up and contemplate some things.

Then, she heard a noise outside. Despite the thunder, Shirley remained vigilant. As a bodyguard for Zacharias, she had to investigate any unusual sounds inside the house during such weather.

Shirley gently pushed the door open, moving quietly like a cat as she checked her surroundings. Since she was on the second floor and Zacharias stayed on the third floor, she had to go up and see if everything was alright especially the master bedroom.

Shirley took each step carefully as she ascended to the third floor. Meanwhile, on the third floor, Zachary was preparing to return to his room when he sensed someone coming up. Recognizing who it was, he couldn't help but smirk and hid behind a nearby pillar.

Shirley reached the third floor and found everything quiet except for the thunderous noise outside the room, which was somewhat intimidating.

Just as she let out a sigh of relief, she suddenly noticed a shadow on the floor moving. Immediately, she approached the pillar with clenched fists. Simultaneously, a figure emerged from behind the pillar, startling her.

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At that, Shirley headed back to her room on the second floor, but Zacharias suddenly extended an invitation. "Do you want to sleep with me?"

Shirley's steps paused, and her body stiffened. Turning back, she refused, "No."

"How about giving me a massage then? It will help me sleep. I have a whole day of meetings to attend tomorrow. It'll be terrible if I spend the night sleepless," the man said, sounding somewhat pitiful. Shirley immediately imagined this man dozing off during the next day's meetings and found it amusing.

"Do you have sleeping pills at home? Take one!" Shirley suggested. This method would be more effective. Suddenly, Zacharias grabbed her domineeringly. "Alright, I'll take the pills, but you have to stay with me."

Shirley was at a loss for words, but when she heard that he would take the medicine, she felt somewhat concerned for him. Is his sleep really that bad?

Whether out of empathy or pity, Shirley followed him into his room. Once inside, the man let go of her hand, took out a box of pills from the drawer, and popped one into his mouth, washing it down with water from a nearby cup. After swallowing, he turned to Shirley and said, "I took the pill."

Seeing him take the medicine so decisively, Shirley nodded. "Alright, I'll stay with you until you fall asleep, and then I'll leave."

Since he took the pill, he would probably fall asleep quickly. She was also concerned about his other possible reactions to the pill.

Zacharias lifted the covers and lay down on the bed, leaving a side empty. "Come here. It's warmer under the covers," he said while looking at Shirley and patting the empty spot. Shirley shook her head and went to sit on the couch. "I'll stay here. You go to sleep."

At that, Zacharias turned to his side and fixed his mesmerizing gaze on her, not blinking. Shirley, with her arms crossed, too, observed him. Just like that, the two stared at each other in the dimly lit room.

Soon, Zacharias sighed. "I seem to have gotten more excited."

"What are you excited about?" Shirley asked with a frown. Zacharias didn't know why, either. Despite taking the medicine, his nerves seemed to be resisting the effects, making him more excited and eager to do something.

"Can I call you Shir?" the man asked in a hoarse voice. Shirley quirked a brow in response. "No, only my family is allowed to call me that. Others are not permitted."

"Well, I'm calling you that," he insisted obstinately. Shirley looked helplessly at him with crossed arms. "Can't you just close your eyes and sleep after taking the sleeping pill?"

She decided to ignore him and simply wait for him to fall asleep. Just then, a clap of thunder sounded outside, startling Shirley visibly. The man in bed furrowed his brow, noticing Shirley's reaction to the sudden noise.

At that, he got out of bed. Seeing that he refused to sleep, Shirley decided not to accompany him anymore. "I'm going back to my room."

However, she had just taken a couple of steps when a strong arm wrapped around her waist. Her back was pressed against the man's warm chest while his chin rested on her shoulder. "Stay and sleep with me, please?" He pleaded with her.

Perhaps due to the effects of the medicine, the man's tone was not domineering. Instead, it carried a gentle quality, akin to a puppy seeking comfort.

Boom!

Another clap of thunder rumbled overhead, causing Shirley's body to instinctively tense up, fearing that the thunder might strike her directly. The man tightened his embrace a bit more. "Afraid? Come to bed with me."

Perhaps it was the early morning hour or the rainy night, but it could easily weaken one's defenses and dull one's will. Emotions that couldn't be breached during the day seemed to dissipate at this time.

When Zacharias pulled Shirley toward the bed, it was like her legs weren't hers, and she found herself standing beside the bed with him.

By the time she realized it, a small internal struggle took place. When the man lay down and reached for her wrist, his eyes were filled with desire.

Shirley sat on his large bed, and the man's long arm pressed her down onto the bed. He lifted the blanket, covering both of them.

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It felt warm under the covers. Despite the continuous thunder outside, it didn't seem as frightening anymore.

Shirley felt herself tensing up. It was as if her sanity had taken a brief leave of absence, but now that it was back, she wondered, What the hell has gotten into you, Lloyd? How can you be sharing a bed and even a blanket with Zacharias? Not only that, you're even resting your head on his arm! Their bodies were only fractions of an inch away from each other, seeming rather improper.

Still, undeniably, the sense of warmth and security was intense.

"Go to sleep," Zacharias uttered in a low voice. It was evident that the effects of the sleeping pills were kicking in.

Shirley was pressed into the man's arms by his large hand. Due to the injury on her back, lying flat would naturally compress the wounded area, but turning her back to the man didn't seem like a good idea either. So, she turned on her side, her face resting on the man's chest, and fell asleep in his embrace.

She listened quietly for a while, and ten minutes later, Zacharias' breathing became steady. Listening to his rhythmic breathing, Shirley seemed to catch the drowsiness as well. She closed her eyes and decided not to move.

I'll just sleep here one night, she mused and closed her eyes. On this rainy night, on the gray bed, a man and a woman embraced each other, sleeping soundly.

Zacharias, who had taken a sleeping pill and entered deep sleep, woke up first the following morning. After four hours of deep sleep, he felt remarkably refreshed. He had been aware that Shirley was sleeping in his arms, but when he opened his eyes, it still felt like a dream.

The girl sleeping in his arms was soft and sweet, with long hair spread over his arm. Her exposed face was clear and tender, tempting him to kiss it. However, Zacharias refrained from doing so because he didn't want to wake her. He wanted to savor this gentle moment with her, who was like a lazy cat sleeping in his embrace.

Zacharias' phone suddenly vibrated, and he immediately reached for it, disconnecting the call from Freddie, who was already waiting downstairs. Zacharias, who usually got up at seven, surprisingly hadn't gotten up yet. They had a tight schedule that day, so leaving at seven in the morning was the plan.

After some contemplation, Freddie decided to head upstairs and knock on his boss' bedroom door to urge him.

He already realized that Zacharias was up when his call got disconnected. However, he wasn't sure why his boss would hang up on him. Could it be that Mr. Flintstone is annoyed that I woke him up, even at his age?

It was because Freddie was puzzled that he decided to come upstairs to check it out for himself. When it came to work, he always maintained a serious and responsible attitude. Even if it meant offending his boss, he couldn't be careless about his work.

Upon arriving at the second floor, he found Tony coming out with messy hair. Tony's hair, usually well-styled, was now a bit disheveled, resembling a bird's nest.

Freddie thought that asking the young man to disturb his uncle might be better compared to him disturbing his boss.

"Mr. Tony, could you do me a favor? Can you wake up the vice president? Our convoy is waiting outside."

Tony scratched his head. "Alright, wait a moment!"

"Thank you!" Freddie breathed a sigh of relief; Tony was more suitable for the task.

Tony went upstairs and headed toward the master bedroom. Feeling sleepy, he rubbed his eyes while reaching for the door handle of his uncle's room.

His method of waking someone up involved going next to the bed and lifting the covers, so he didn't think there was anything inappropriate, especially when the person he would be waking up was his uncle. At that, he opened the door and glanced at the gray bed, instantly rousing his still-booting brain.

What the heck? There's a woman in Uncle Zacharias' arm! Who is she? Even though she had her back to him, and he could only see her long hair under the covers, Tony still recognized her.

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Before Tony could come around, an annoyed voice commanded, "Get out."

Finally, Tony snapped out of it, and he quickly apologized with a grin, "Sorry for the intrusion. You two, please continue."

With that, he scurried off, closing the door behind him. Shirley's face turned red with embarrassment. Great, there's no clarifying the situation anymore! And what was I thinking last night, sleeping in Zacharias' bed?

She lifted the covers, got out of bed, and hastily opened the door to leave. Just as she stepped out, she saw Tony still there. However, he didn't make fun of her. Instead, he asked, "Goddess, did you sleep well last night?"

"It's not what you think. Your uncle took sleeping pills, and I was just keeping him company..." Shirley tried to explain, but Tony's eyes were teasing, making her realize that the explanation was futile.

"Never mind. Nothing happened between us," she said and went downstairs. After returning to her room, she took a few breaths to calm down. Good Lord, that was embarrassing!

Twenty minutes later, Zacharias came downstairs dressed in a classic black suit, exuding a captivating charm.

"Sir, the convoy is ready. We can leave now," Freddie said.

"How did you handle those people from last night?" Zacharias asked.

"They've all been arrested."

"Don't let them off easily," Zacharias grunted in a deep voice. Although Freddie didn't understand how those thugs offended Zacharias, he knew that this matter had to be handled with caution.

Shirley, who was on the second floor, breathed a sigh of relief when she saw Zacharias' convoy leaving. As she touched her face, it was still warm, as if the man's warmth lingered on her, even though nothing had happened last night.

After breakfast, Shirley returned to her room to watch the news. She eagerly looked for glimpses of the man in the news. Although there were only a few shots, Shirley deliberately paused to stare at him.

She couldn't help but imagine how he would look if he hadn't slept well last night and dozed off in this setting! At the same time, Ava had just called her good friend. "Lyra, your grandson is still in the country, right?"

“Yes, he won’t be leaving until after the New Year.”

“How about we meet up this weekend? I’d like to introduce my granddaughter to your grandson.”

“That sounds good. I was actually thinking about that, too.”

“Great! My granddaughter happens to be in the city and is free on the weekends. So, it’s a date. We’ll bring them out together for a meal. Who knows, they might hit off.”

“It would be wonderful if we could become in-laws! I’m looking forward to it!”

After hanging up the phone, Ava was filled with anticipation. She wanted to introduce her granddaughter to a young man she knew well.

In the evening, while Shirley was contemplating what to have for dinner, her phone rang. She picked it up and was surprised to find her granduncle calling. “Hello, Granduncle.”

“Shir, come over for dinner tonight.”

“Sure, I’ll definitely come,” Shirley happily replied.

“Great, make sure to come early tonight.”

After hanging up, Shirley felt happy thinking that she was going to have dinner with her family that night. She checked the time and realized it was time to leave.

Just then, a black car pulled up from outside. Shirley didn’t expect Zacharias to return at this time. She opened the door to welcome him, but to her surprise, Zacharias remained in the car.

“Aren’t you getting out?” Shirley curiously asked.

“Go change into something else. I’ll wait for you here,” said Zacharias, stupefying her. “Why are you waiting for me?”

“To go to Mr. Husson’s house for dinner, of course. Did you not receive the call?” Zacharias asked in return. Shirley was rendered speechless. What? He’s going too? But Granduncle didn’t say anything about it!

“Are you sure we’re going together?” she checked.

“Do you want to go separately?” Zacharias questioned, finding her question somewhat amusing. “Of course, we’re going together.”

Shirley had hoped not to have dinner with him that night, but who’d have thought she was still having dinner with him?

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“Alright, give me five minutes, Shirley said before she went upstairs to change her clothes. Five minutes later, she came downstairs and got into Zacharias’ car to head to the Vice President’s Residence. On the way, Zacharias looked at documents while Shirley was lost in thought.

Finally, they arrived at the Vice President’s Residence. As Zacharias massaged his temples, Shirley turned to look at him and couldn’t help sympathizing with him for a few seconds. His daily work schedule was too tight.

Zacharias got out of the car while Shirley got out from the other side, standing at the entrance of the Vice President’s Residence. She felt as comfortable as she would in her own home because she had been fostered here when she was a child, and she often came with her father to this place. Sometimes, she would stay here for several days.

A faint smile appeared on Zacharias’ lips as memories from his childhood came rushing back. He remembered when he had come here with his father as a guest and got lost in the backyard, only to meet a charming little girl.

He had never thought that 20 years later, he would return to this place with her and continue being a guest there. The only difference was that the little girl from back then had now grown into a graceful young woman.

When Shirley and Zacharias entered the hall, the helpers immediately came forward. At the same time, the elegant and noble Ruka emerged from a side hall.

“Shirley!” Ruka greeted her with joy. This was a child she had watched grow up, and she was as dear to her as her own.

“Great Aunt!” Shirley reached out and gave her a hug.

“It’s been a while. You look even more beautiful now!” Ruka praised.

“Good evening, Mrs. Husson,” Zacharias greeted her with a smile.

“Good evening, Zach. I’m so glad you both could come for dinner. Your great-uncle is still upstairs in an online meeting. Please have a seat. Dinner is being prepared,” she offered.

Shirley nodded in response. Seeing that there was still some daylight left, Zacharias turned to her and asked, “Miss Lloyd, would you like to take a walk with me in the backyard?”

Shirley had yet to respond when Ruka Intervened, “Yes, let Shirley accompany you to the backyard. She’s very familiar with it since she has lived here since she was a child.”

And so, Shirley could only agree. “Alright, then. Let’s go.”

Led by Shirley, Zacharias walked toward the corridor in the backyard. There was a row of wisteria in full bloom beside it, presenting a beautiful and serene scene.

“I wish we could have met a bit earlier.” Zacharias regretted that he had met her too late. Shirley couldn’t help but giggle. “If we had met earlier, I might not have paid much attention to you.”

Indeed, the old Shirley had blended in with the male team members at the base and hadn't given much thought to any man. Wanting to be as strong as a man in everything she did, she didn't have the feminine qualities she had now.

Zacharias also chuckled. "You're right. Miss Lloyd, you do have high standards."

Shirley's standards weren't high; she just hadn't awakened to her feelings for men until the three months she met Cole.

Even then, her understanding of love between men and women was quite limited. It was only when she met Zacharias that she truly began to understand love in a romantic sense.

As for Zacharias, he felt regretful about not meeting her earlier. If they had met a few years ago, they would have had more time together. Back then, he wasn't the vice president, and he didn't have an overwhelming workload. He would have had time to spend with her, go for a leisurely drive, and do something romantic together.

But now, his position didn't allow him to do any of that. It didn't even allow him the simple act of holding her hand and going for a walk outside.

Shirley led him into the garden. Despite it being winter, the garden was filled with various winter flowers, making it look beautiful. The trees had also grown lush. It wasn't just a simple garden; it was a large, extensive backyard where one could take a half-hour stroll.

No wonder Zacharias had gotten lost here when he was a child.

He pointed to a path. "Back then, I was playing around here when I got lost and couldn't find my way home."

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"What was I doing at that time?" Shirley asked curiously. Zacharias thought for a moment. It seemed like there was a scooter by her side, and she was picking wild fruits in the grass. "You were playing on the grass."

Shirley's lips curved into a smile. "You remember it so clearly."

"I remember what you were wearing, how you styled your hair, your shoes, your facial expressions, your smile; I remember them all," Zacharias replied, looking at her seriously. For some reason, Shirley blushed under his intense gaze. She pursed her lips and asked, "Is that so?"

"You were adorable." He praised her before adding, "I'll be very happy if I have a daughter as cute as you were."

Shirley's face turned even redder, and she turned away. "If you want a child, go find someone to have one with you!"

"But will someone else's child be as cute as you were when you were little?" He threw her a hint. "Only the child you give birth to can be as adorable as you were."

Shirley turned to glare at him. "Dream on."

Zacharias burst into hearty laughter. He enjoyed teasing her like this. Her face was still flushed. When she thought of having children, she realized that she should first have a romantic relationship with him, get married, and then...

It grew even hotter as her mind wandered. What am I thinking about? My thoughts are turning quite naughty indeed...

The more she let her mind wander, the less she paid attention to where she was walking. She ended up stumbling over a rock.

"Ah!" Shirley instinctively exclaimed. At that moment, a pair of hands swiftly caught her wrist and pulled her into an embrace. She collided with Zacharias' chest.

She lifted her head while the man happened to lower his head at the same time. Their breaths were now very close.

“Be careful,” Zacharias reminded her in a low voice, smiling. Shirley quickly pulled away from his grasp and hissed quietly, “Don’t try anything here.”

If this incident were to reach her parents’ ears, it would be hard to explain, and she was also afraid of her parents finding out about her and Zacharias.

After all, women tended to be shy about such matters. The man continued to tease her by saying, “Are you implying that I can misbehave outside this place?”

At that, Shirley turned her head and warned, “Don’t you dare.”

Zacharias couldn’t help but laugh again. This girl had the guts to challenge him, and he liked that. After taking a stroll around the backyard with Shirley, they returned to the dinner table. Ren, who had finished his work, greeted the two younger guests.

Since his children were studying abroad, the residence was quite quiet at the moment.

At the dining table, Ruka noticed the couple sitting across from her, and she couldn’t help but think they looked like a married couple. She thought to herself how wonderful it would be if Shirley were to be with Zacharias in the future.

“Shirley, are you getting used to staying at the Flintstone Residence?” Ren asked in concern, to which Shirley replied, “Not really, Granduncle. Please give me a transfer!”

Someone sitting nearby choked on their tea.

“Oh! Zach, do slow down.” Ruka handed him a tissue.

“Thank you, Mrs. Husson,” Zacharias muttered as he took the tissue. Ren chuckled and asked Shirley, “Where would you like to be transferred to?”

“I want to be with you, Granduncle. How about I complete my internship with you?” Shirley didn’t seem to consider a certain man’s feelings.

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The man who had choked on his tea looked visibly relieved. After hearing the discussion, Shirley had no choice but to give up. “Okay, I’ll wait until my internship is over, and then I’ll work with you, Great Uncle.”

“You’ll have to ask your father!” Ren didn’t dare make that decision.

“Shirley, interning with Zacharias can be a great learning experience. I think it’s a good idea,” Ruka advised.

“You are right, Great Aunt.” In the end, Shirley had to drop the matter.

“Mr. and Mrs. Husson, please rest assured. I will take good care of Shirley!” Zacharias promised.

Suddenly, Ren understood the reason for the kick he received from his wife earlier. He could see that his great-niece and Zacharias were surprisingly well-matched.

If Zacharias became a part of the family, it would be wonderful.

“We also trust that you will take good care of Shirley, Zach.” Ruka smiled.

After dinner, Zacharias and Ren went upstairs to discuss business while Ruka took Shirley to her collection room. The older woman had noticed that Shirley’s attire was too androgynous, so she had prepared some beautiful dresses and coats for her during the last appointment with the tailor. These were very youthful and fashionable clothes.

Meanwhile, she also gave Shirley a set of jewelry, encouraging her to dress up when going out. Shirley happily accepted the gift. She was touched by the warmth and love of her elders.

This weekend, she would be visiting her grandmother's house. That would be the perfect opportunity for her to dress up.

At 9.00PM, Zacharias' convoy headed toward the Flintstone Residence.

At the entrance and exit checkpoint of the Flintstone Residence, Imogen and another team member were on duty tonight. Seeing the convoy returning, Imogen immediately straightened up in nervousness and excitement.

As the convoy approached, though she couldn't see who was inside, she knew Zacharias was there. She was elated just imagining his handsome and charming appearance.

At that moment, Zacharias noticed Imogen. Remembering her bravery in protecting him from an attack last time, he signaled the bodyguards to stop the car.

"Stop"

The bodyguard immediately halted the car. Zacharias then lowered the window and asked Imogen, "How's your injury?"

Imogen was extremely moved upon hearing that. She hadn't expected Zacharias to personally inquire about her well-being. "Thank you for your concern, but it's nothing serious," she quickly replied.

As Imogen was still processing this unexpected attention, she suddenly saw another face appearing beside Zacharias. Shirley leaned over and greeted her. "Imogen."

Imogen's smile froze for a moment. She hadn't anticipated that Shirley and Zacharias would be in the same car. However, she continued smiling. "Hi, Shirley."

Zacharias raised the car window, his large hand gently capturing Shirley as she leaned in. On the other hand, Shirley glared at him in frustration, wishing he wouldn't act as he pleased.

Zacharias lowered his head and planted a kiss on her hair. Shirley then silently pushed him away.

Imogen's gaze fixed on the car from the checkpoint, and a strong sense of jealousy welled up in her eyes. Back at the base, she had focused on building a friendship with Shirley. They shared meals, accommodation, and training, and there was no apparent difference between them.

Now, however, with Shirley and Zacharias sitting in the same car, the stark contrast between them became evident.

Imogen suddenly realized that the man she admired from a distance was within reach for Shirley.

Chapter 2380

"Tony, you look like you're itching somewhere. Do you want me to give you a scratch?" Shirley playfully taunted.

"Uncle Zacharias, Uncle Zacharias, you better control your future wife! She's threatening me." Tony immediately hid behind Zacharias while chuckling. Shirley was left speechless.

But Zacharias was in a good mood. "She wouldn't punish you if you hadn't provoked her?"

Tony immediately said, "I knew that you two would be on each other's side. What am I even doing here?"

"You're becoming more and more unruly!" Shirley remarked angrily with her hands on her hips. Tony finally stopped joking. Still, he had put a lot of effort into making Zacharias marry Shirley.

Zacharias had never noticed any lovable qualities in Tony before, but today, Zacharias found his nephew a bit cute.

"I'm ignoring you guys. I'm going back to my room. Pretend I don't exist. If you want to act all lovey-dovey or sleep together, go ahead. I won't disturb you," Tony quickly went upstairs, genuinely afraid that Shirley would hit him.

Once Tony left, the atmosphere in the hall suddenly became a bit suggestive. Zacharias looked at Shirley. "If you're still scared tonight, my room is always open for you."

"No, I'd rather go ghost hunting than sleep in your bed," she retorted nonchalantly.

Zacharias chuckled. "I didn't expect you to know how to hunt ghosts, Miss Lloyd. Impressive. But before you go to sleep, can you make me a cup of coffee? I still have to work overtime."

"Coffee at this hour? No wonder you have trouble sleeping. Relying on sleeping pills daily isn't a solution either. How about switching to tea?" Shirley suggested.

Zacharias suddenly felt loved. He smiled and said, "Alright, I'll go with your suggestion."

He then went upstairs. She made him a cup of tea, carrying it to his study. Watching the man put on his silver-framed glasses again, his air of nobility seemed even stronger. She couldn't help but steal a few more glances before leaving. When she got back to her room, her phone beeped. It was a message from Imogen. 'Shirley, sorry I didn't see you in the car just now.'

Shirley replied, 'It's okay. If your injury isn't healed, take a break for now!'

This minor injury is nothing. It seems like you have a good relationship with Mr. Flintstone, Imogen inquired.

Shirley hesitated briefly. Aware of Imogen's crush on Zacharias, Shirley found herself uncertain about how to respond. Then, she stated, 'I'm just ensuring his safety during travels.'

Imogen sent another message. 'Shirley, if you ever develop feelings for Mr. Flintstone, you have to let me know. I won't feel burdened then.'

Shirley sighed. She was unprepared for the conversation to take such a weighty turn.

'Shirley, you said you wouldn't like Mr. Flintstone. Do you already have someone you like?' Imogen persisted in her questioning. Shirley truly didn't know how to answer Imogen's question.

'It's okay, Shirley. There's certainly no chance for me and Mr. Flintstone, but you have a chance! You and Mr. Flintstone make a great match.

Shirley reflected on her previous assurance to Imogen. She stated that she wouldn't develop feelings for Zacharias. Hence, she knew that expressing any desire to pursue him now would contradict herself. So, she replied, 'Imogen, I haven't thought about matters of the heart right now.

Imogen, who was in the dormitory, had a calculating look in her eyes. She knew Shirley was loyal and respected their friendship. She quickly sent another message. 'Don't worry too much about Mr. Flintstone showing concern for me tonight!' She deliberately emphasized Zacharias' concern for her, wanting Shirley to know that she had caught his attention.

Shirley didn't pay much attention to it. She replied, 'Of course not! It's natural for him to care about you.'

'Blocking him from knife attacks is not only my duty; it would be my honor to die for him, Imogen expressed..

'Imogen, don't say such ominous things, Shirley advised.

'I mean it. I'm genuinely willing to sacrifice my life for Mr. Flintstone. From the moment I laid eyes on him, I knew my life would be dedicated to him.