

N Destiny 2351

Chapter 2351

“That’s not the present. The present is a tie,” Shirley said, blushing. Clutching the underwear in her hand, she didn’t know what else to say. The gift that the cashier mentioned is actually a pair of men’s underwear!

Equally stunned, Zacharias then burst into laughter. He picked up the tie and admired it before extending his hand at her, demanding, “Give me the underwear, too.”

“N-No!” She hid the underwear behind her back. “I’m giving it to my father.”

“You’ve already bought it. Why won’t you give it to me?” he grumbled.

“This is a free gift,” she explained, blushing.

“I want to wear it,” he demanded, extending his hand at her. This time, her face was a bright red. An underwear as a birthday gift? It sounds like an ambiguous relationship, no matter how I look at it!

“You’ve already brought it back. Why won’t you just give it to me?” he asked with quizzical, narrowed eyes.

Shirley contemplated for a second before handing over the underwear into his hand. “Alright, you can have it.”

Taking it from her, he then placed it into the bag and smiled. “I like the presents very much.”

Staring at the huge cake, Shirley said, “I’m sending the cake to the dorm.”

“Sure.” Zacharias nodded. After she packed the cake properly, she carried it outside and sent it to the dorm by car. Learning that it was Zacharias’ birthday today, Roy was delighted to share the cake with everyone else, too.

Shirley asked Imogen over as well, and the latter took a slice of cake with her before they returned to the room.

When the door closed, Imogen asked with a smile, “Shirley, are you the only one who celebrated Mr. Flintstone’s birthday with him?”

As Imogen had already guessed it correctly, Shirley nodded and answered honestly, “Yeah, Mr. Flintstone didn’t invite his family over today.”

“You’re so lucky to spend the evening alone with Mr. Vice President on his birthday! Spill the beans. Did anything interesting happen?” The eagerness to hear the latest gossip was written all over Imogen’s face.

The little hiccup with the underwear came into Shirley’s mind, but she didn’t plan to share the story. So, she smiled and shook her head. “Nothing interesting happened. It was just a regular birthday celebration.”

“Shirley, Mr. Flintstone is such a dreamboat. Aren’t you attracted to him even a little?” Imogen asked curiously. To that, Shirley shook her head. “No, he’s merely my superior.”

“Are you sure? We’re such good friends, so don’t lie to me, okay?” Imogen pressed on. Nodding, Shirley assured, “I swear I’m not lying to you.”

A grin spread across Imogen’s face. “You sure have my trust, but I’m different from you. The moment I first saw Mr. Flintstone, I felt my heart beating out of my chest.”

Surprised and curious, Shirley asked, “Do you like Mr. Flintstone?”

Imogen was honest and lowered her voice as she leaned closer to Shirley. “Keep this a secret, okay?”

Hearing that as an answer, Shirley was sure that Imogen had fallen for Zacharias and nodded, “Alright, my lips are sealed.”

“As you know, I’ve never fallen for anyone, but when I saw Mr. Flintstone for the first time, I understood what ‘love at first sight’ means.”

Imogen’s eyes were filled with her adoration for Zacharias, and Shirley could read them so clearly. However, she didn’t expect that Imogen would develop romantic feelings for him.

“Shirley, will you please keep it a secret for me? I’m just going to like him in the dark and won’t let it affect my work,” Imogen added, looking at her pleadingly. Shirley nodded her head earnestly. “You have my word.”

Picking up the cake, Imogen then took a bite happily. “Mmm, it’s really sweet! I think it’s especially delicious because it’s Mr. Flintstone’s birthday cake.”

“I don’t like it because it’s too sweet,” Shirley commented.

“Looks like we like different types, Shirley,” Imogen pointed out.

Images of the times when Zacharias was acting intimately with her appeared in Shirley’s mind, and her heart was unsettled. Just then, her phone beeped from receiving a message, and she took a glance; it was Zacharias urging her to return.

Chapter 2352

“Rest early, Imogen. I’m going back first,” Shirley said.

“I’m so envious of you, Shirley! How amazing it will be if I can come and go from the Flintstone Residence just like you,” Imogen blurted, thinking out loud. However, Shirley didn’t know how to console her. “Well, you’ll need Mr. Flintstone’s permission for this.”

“If he needs more help in his residence, will you recommend me?”

Shirley nodded. “Sure, if this opportunity pops up, you’ll be the first I recommend.” Delighted, Imogen hugged her arm. “Shirley, you’re my best friend. I’m so lucky to be your friend.”

Patting her softly, Shirley repeated, "Rest early, okay?"

Imogen watched Shirley from the back as she left, and an unscrupulous smile tinged the edge of her lips. She knew Shirley's personality, so she first got her to deny liking Zacharias, and then, immediately afterward, she admitted her affection for him. Given the nature of their relationship, Shirley shouldn't fall for Zacharias in the future.

Even if she did, she would have an extra concern in her mind because it was akin to stealing the man she carried a torch for years.

This was truly an underhand tactic, and, considering Shirley's personality and the years of friendship they shared, Imogen was pretty sure that Shirley wouldn't date a man she had a crush on.

While on the drive back to the Flintstone Residence, Shirley thought over the things Imogen just told her. The fact that Imogen told her about this out of the blue surprised her.

Nevertheless, she wasn't surprised that Imogen had fallen for Zacharias because the women around this man were smitten with him, just like Corrine from before, as well as Jesslyn. This man had what it took to have a woman fall in love with him at first sight, so she couldn't blame Imogen for falling for him.

When Shirley was back at the Flintstone Residence and entered the living room, she thought that Zacharias was already in bed, but when she opened the door, she found him on the couch as though he was specially waiting for her to return.

"Why are you still awake?" she asked.

"I'm waiting for you," he answered honestly.

"Why are you waiting for me?" she asked instead. "I'm waiting for you to return because I have a gift for you." He gazed at her tenderly.

Shirley saw a box in front of him, and it was the one that Freddie sent over this morning, which she remembered was his birthday present.

“Come here and take a seat,” he invited, patting the couch. Although she went over, she didn’t sit as instructed. “It’s getting late. You should go to bed.”

Despite what she said, he opened the gift box, and there were two watches lying quietly inside -one for men and another for women. Zacharias picked up the men’s watch and put it on himself, and then he passed the women’s watch to Shirley. “I’m giving you the female watch.”

Blinking, Shirley couldn’t accept the gift that came so suddenly. Moreover, just from one glance, she could tell that it was pricey. “No, I can’t accept it.” Her first thought was to reject the gift.

Even though he had already expected her to reject it, he insisted on giving it to her. “It’s not like you have to wear it now. You can wear it in your free time later.”

“This gift is too expensive. Keep it for your future girlfriend,” she suggested. With a burning passion in his eyes, he gazed at her and smirked. “That’s exactly what I’m doing now.”

Dumbstruck, she jerked her head up at him. “Pardon?”

He reached out and held her wrist. Slipping the watch through her palm, he put on the watch for her. “Miss Lloyd, I’ve decided to court you.”

It took Shirley a full second to realize that she was wearing the watch. Hastily, she wanted to take it off and return it to him, but he pulled her into his arms and whispered into her ear in a husky voice, “Do you know what I wished for?”

Shirley’s body stiffened. “Let me go.”

“My wish was for you to be mine,” he muttered. Blood rushed to her head all of a sudden, and she blurted, “Don’t tell it to me, or it won’t come true.”

He chuckled. “Are you concerned that my wish won’t come true?”

Helplessly, she said composedly, "Zacharias, I don't plan to be your girlfriend."

Chapter 2353

Despite the dejection in Zacharias' heart, he wouldn't be holding his current position if he was a person who would give up easily. Putting on an understanding smile, he released her. "No rush. You'll need time to know me better."

Stunned, Shirley thought, Any man who has been rejected on the spot will be a little upset, but this man appears unexpectedly calm!

"I've given the watch to you. If you don't like it, you can give it to someone else or sell it. Do whatever you want with it," he commented. With that, he picked up his cell phone and started upstairs.

Shirley took off the watch from her wrist and went after him, grabbing his hand. "I don't want it. Please take it back."

In reply, he merely turned back at her and said kindly, "The bin is right there."

Annoyed, she thought, How can he tell me to throw such an expensive gift away?

Ignoring her, Zacharias headed for the staircase, leaving Shirley behind with a woman's watch in her hand and at a loss for what to do. Every word he just said had thrown her heart into a mess, and she decided not to think about anything and went upstairs.

Around midnight, while Shirley was in a daze in her sleep, she heard noises from the staircase outside. Alert as she was, she sprang up and walked nimbly to the door. Softly, she opened the door and tiptoed out in her pajamas.

Rapidly, she jogged to the foyer and heard sounds coming from downstairs. Step by step, she went down the staircase. When she saw the man standing next to the wine cabinet, a huge sigh of relief escaped her lips. Why is this guy wandering around instead of sleeping in the middle of the night?

Meanwhile, Zacharias was opening a bottle of wine. Turning his head, he saw the girl coming downstairs in her pajamas and cordially invited, "Would you like a drink?"

"It's already so late. Aren't you going to bed?" Shirley asked.

"I can't sleep," he replied. Nobody can sleep soundly after having their confession rejected. After Zacharias returned to his room earlier, he thought about his situation so much that he ended up not being able to sleep.

Pacing over to his side, Shirley saw that he had prepared two wine glasses and turned him down. "I'm not drinking."

Still, he insisted on pouring half a glass for her. Placing down his glass, he picked up the other one and passed it to her. "It's my birthday today. Have a drink with me for my sake."

"It's already midnight, so your birthday is over, no?" Shirley corrected him.

From Zacharias' unruly hair, it was clear that the man had slept a little before. Presently, he said in an authoritative tone, "Please have a drink with me.

Shirley took the glass from him, and he clinked his glass against hers before throwing his head back and taking a huge gulp. Then, he fixed his deep, dark eyes on her, taking in every detail of her face.

Her long hair framed her face, which was clear and bright like a pearl, radiating a pearly-white glow. She was stunning and gorgeous, filling his mind with imagination.

"You still can't forget Cole?" Zacharias asked out of the blue.

Shirley's brows knitted together for a second. This is odd. Ever since I last saw Cole the other day, it seems like he's out of my mind, and my liking for him has somehow disappeared without me realizing it.

"I've been thinking, if I had met you a little earlier before Cole did, would we have a chance at it?" A wry smile touched his lips.

His words caught Shirley by surprise. As she only had a short relationship before, her knowledge of romantic love was still very shallow. To her, loving someone was a highly sacred matter.

"It's late. Go to bed after having one drink," she said. Because she was wearing nothing under her pajamas, it was a little awkward for her to face this man right now.

After saying that, she put down her glass, turned around, and was about to leave. However, the man suddenly took a sip of wine in his mouth, grasped her wrist, and hauled her into his embrace.

Before Shirley could react, she bumped into Zacharias' chest and felt him holding her chin. Then, along with his passionate kiss on her lips, he fed the wine in his mouth into hers. Her eyes widened, and her slender throat swallowed the liquid from his mouth out of reflex.

Frustrated, she wanted to shove him aside, but he gripped her hands and pinned them on the wine cabinet. His tongue explored her mouth like a tornado ravishing through the fields, and she was breathless from his kissing, her mind going blank.

Chapter 2354

Shirley felt dizzy as her body reacted strongly to Zacharias. This was a feeling she had never experienced when she was with Cole, as her feeling toward him was more of an innocent puppy love. However, the feeling Zacharias gave her now stirred something inside her, something more primitive.

"Let go..." she forced the words out through her lips, but he didn't listen and reacted more passionately. Shirley felt light-headed, and an unfamiliar feeling buried her reason. She forgot to push him away as her body told her she liked this pleasurable kiss and wanted more.

Her hands unconsciously wrapped around Zacharias' waist as she clumsily responded to his kiss, pleasantly surprising him as he sucked on her sweetness. Under the chandelier, the kissing couple sat beside the wine counter, making the air around them get hotter.

Then, Zacharias lifted Shirley onto the counter. It was only then that she regained her senses. She pushed him away shyly, embarrassed by the position they were in.

Her legs were around his waist as she sat dangerously near the edge of the counter with their waists touching. This ambiguous position made her face and ears turn red.

Zacharias touched her black hair and supported the back of her head with his big hands as Shirley's flushed face reflected into his dazed eyes.

"Put me down," she pleaded softly. Zacharias leaned forward and planted a kiss on her forehead. "You were amazing tonight."

Shirley's heart started beating furiously as she avoided his gaze. She was embarrassed to think of how she fell into his embrace just now. He just had the charm and skill to make her body submit to him even if she rejected him.

Shirley glared warningly at him with her bright eyes before he reluctantly held her waist to put her down. However, she realized her legs were weak when they touched the floor.

"Go to sleep." Zacharias smiled tenderly before letting go of her. She walked toward the stairs and climbed up with her hand on the rail. Meanwhile, Zacharias raised his wine glass, a smile playing on his lips. He saw hope in this relationship.

As for Shirley, she slumped onto her bed when she returned to her room and hid her face in the sheets as she felt like dying.

Just now... I lost my mind just with a kiss. He's so good at kissing! Has he kissed a lot of girls before? Is that why he became a good kisser? Damn it! How would a man like him not have girls? Maybe he never lacked partners ever since becoming an adult. It was only then that Shirley came to her senses and wanted to pull her hair out. Why should I care about this?!

And so, she couldn't fall asleep anymore as she went down the rabbit hole.

The next morning, Shirley woke up early to run at the training fields and bumped into Imogen. The latter felt it strange, so she asked, "Shirley, I thought you didn't need to train?"

It was true that Shirley didn't need to train, but she didn't sleep well and wanted to train to improve her focus and stop thinking about all the nonsense.

"I should since I have the time." Then, she invited Imogen for a run. And so, Imogen ran a few laps with her and looked up to see Zacharias walking toward them when Shirley was catching her breath on the bench.

He was in sportswear, so it was obvious that he was there to exercise. Imogen's eyes widened instantly, and she told Shirley, "Mr. Flintstone is here."

Chapter 2355

"Why can't we say hi?" Imogen tugged hard on Shirley's arm, forcing her to get up as they walked toward Zacharias.

Zacharias watched with a smile as the two women walked toward him in the cold breeze. Imogen's heart fluttered as she thought that he was looking at her since they were a distance away.

Shirley also noticed Imogen's nervousness and excitement and looked up to find Zacharias looking in their direction.

She knew that Imogen had misunderstood and thought that Zacharias was looking at her and got nervous. However, Shirley felt that Zacharias was actually looking at her.

Sure enough, Zacharias gaze was on Shirley when they were nearer to him and Imogen blushed immediately from the shame of being ignored. It was then that she realized that Zacharias had been looking at Shirley, who was beside her. Imogen was the one who was overthinking things and got nervous for nothing. She felt ashamed even though no one noticed the change in her emotions.

"Shirley, walk with me!" Zacharias invited outright.

Shirley was distressed as she didn't want to be too close to him in front of outsiders. And now, he wasn't helping the situation at all.

Unfortunately, she couldn't reject him, considering his position since she was only a trainee bodyguard.

"Alright," she answered immediately. Zacharias turned to walk in a different direction, and she followed behind him. At the same time, Roy had the foresight to gather his men and ordered, "Dismissed. Everyone, return to your dorms."

Imogen was also asked to return to her dorm and the whole training field was left empty for Zacharias and Shirley to take a stroll.

Deep in thought, Shirley walked behind Zacharias and didn't realize that he had stopped walking, so she bumped into his back.

When she came to her senses, she stood straight and looked at him with a red face.

"What are you thinking about? You're so distracted," Zacharias stated.

"Nothing." She lowered her head and looked at her feet.

"Thinking about some guy?" he teased. He was spot on. She was indeed thinking about a guy, and it was none other than the one in front of her. "No!" Shirley denied it. Zacharias stretched his arms and told her, "Follow me to my office today. Let's have lunch together."

"No." She rejected his offer outright. He turned his head to glance at her. "You have no right to reject."

She choked at his response as she almost forgot that she was only a trainee.

"Then, can I complain about last night?" She decided to fight back, as where there was oppression, there was bound to be resistance.

The corner of Zacharias' lips curved up ever so slightly. "Who are you going to complain about? Your great-uncle or your dad? Are you going to tell them we were drinking in the middle of the night and kissed?"

Shirley blushed. Is there no one I can complain about this to?

“If you insist on taking this matter public, I’ll take the responsibility and marry you!” Zacharias raised a brow and announced.

And so, Shirley could only let it slide as he was being unreasonable. “Zacharias, if you need a girlfriend, find someone else. Stop playing with me,” she suggested to him.

“Thank you for your kind suggestion, but I’m pursuing you. Don’t you realize that?” he drawled. Shirley was speechless as she stared at his back. Her fists were clenched and she had the urge to kick him.

Chapter 2356

At that same time, Imogen was looking out into the training field from her dorm. She watched as Zacharias and Shirley chatted side by side. Despite the distance, she could see that he was in a good mood and that he had endless things to talk to Shirley about.

What are they talking about? Imogen was curious because she would be too nervous to speak if she was standing beside Zacharias. However, Shirley could chat so well with him, which made her envious. Even so, that seemingly nobleman was actually openly teasing Shirley, who didn’t want to chat at all.

“We should head back,” Shirley told Zacharias. He glanced at his wristwatch. “Okay. Let’s go get breakfast.”

As they left the field, Imogen turned around to enter her room. At that moment, Roy came over and ordered, “Imogen, get ready. We have a mission today.

Imogen was secretly surprised yet replied calmly, “Understood,”

When Zacharias was eating breakfast, Freddie came over and gave a detailed list of the day’s itinerary. Shirley also sneaked a look and saw the page was packed with words. Seems like hell be super busy today.

“Mr. Flintstone, we wanted to cancel the interview this afternoon, but with the current circumstances, you would need to give a five- minute speech on stage.”

Shirley immediately questioned him, “How could you let him appear in public? We just had a dangerous incident.”

Zacharias looked at her, who was concerned about him. “You stay in the house today. You don’t need to come with me.”

However, she insisted on it despite being opposed to going out just a few seconds ago. “No. I’ll come with you.” Even Zacharias was serious as he commented, “You don’t need to.”

At that, Shirley firmly stated, “I can be your assistant and stand beside you on stage.”

On the side, Freddie was also observing their expressions and realized something. It seems Mr. Flintstone hasn’t been idle despite being injured!

“This is an order.” Zacharias then told Freddie, “Get the car ready. I’ll be out in a moment.”

And so, Freddie didn’t dare watch their exchange anymore and left the room to make the necessary arrangements. Zacharias put his spoon down and stared calmly at Shirley. “Listen to me. Wait for me at home.”

“I’m your bodyguard. It’s my responsibility to protect you,” Shirley told him earnestly. This man just got injured. He can’t be in danger again.

“Do you think Roy and the rest are just for show? Their presence is enough.” Then, Zacharias got up to go to his clothes rack. Shirley followed him and grabbed her jacket as well. In the end, he sighed. “Fine. You can go, but you can’t come up on stage with me.”

And so, Shirley compromised as well since he agreed for her to follow him. “Sure. I’ll watch you from below the stage.”

“Are you that worried about me?” he asked in a low tone behind her.

Shirley’s hand that was about to pull the door open froze for a moment, and she didn’t answer him before walking out. Then, she vaguely heard his laughter behind her as a gust of cold wind blew past her, yet her face felt hot. She didn’t want to admit that she was doing this because she was worried about him. She wanted to think that this was what a bodyguard should do.

Zacharias’ car stopped before them, and Freddie opened the passenger seat for Zacharias to enter with Shirley.

At the same time, Imogen had changed into a suit and sat in the other car that was on standby outside. It was her first time out on a mission, so she was nervous yet eager. Roy told her that she could stand beside Zacharias on stage as his assistant. And she was excited at the thought of being able to get close to him.

Chapter 2357

Imogen’s smile disappeared as she watched Shirley accompany Zacharias into the lobby while she could only stand next to the bodyguard’s car and wait for orders.

The difference in treatment made her feel unjust. Shirley followed Zacharias to his office door, and he told her, “Come on in.”

And so, she entered with him as he turned around to order Freddie, “Two cups of tea.”

Then, Freddie asked an assistant to send the tea in while Zacharias sat on his chair, looking serious and confident, radiating a charismatic aura.

The assistant brought the cups in and placed one before Zacharias and the other in front of Shirley before leaving. Zacharias looked up and told Shirley, “Sit. You don’t need to be so tense here.”

“I’m here to work, not enjoy my time.” Shirley didn’t accept his preferential treatment.

He looked at her helplessly and didn't push it anymore. After a moment, Freddie entered and led Zacharias out for a meeting. Then, Shirley followed him and saw him seated in the middle of a grand couch while chatting politely with a few foreign guests.

She watched the poised man exude a sense of dominance, causing the guests to treat him with respect.

He would occasionally look at her with a hint of a smile in his gaze, and she felt as if her mind would wander if she met his eyes. His smile could easily make one lose their mind, so she decided to fix her gaze somewhere else and not in his direction.

During lunchtime, Zacharias had to eat with the guests while Shirley ate with Freddie, who was welcoming toward her.

"Miss Lloyd, I think you don't need to stand on stage with Mr. Flintstone during the speech later, Freddie commented.

"Why?"

"You'll distract him during the speech," he stated. She blinked her eyes in confusion. So, he explained with a smile, "You know that Mr. Flintstone likes you, right?"

Shirley's face burned. "What does this have to do with me standing beside him on stage?"

"Obviously, he needs to focus on the speech, and you'll distract him if you stand beside him," Freddie said matter-of-factly. Even though Shirley felt that wasn't possible, she still nodded. "Alright. I'll stand below the stage, then."

"Captain Barlowe has arranged for someone to stand beside Mr. Flintstone, so you needn't worry. We've made sufficient arrangements this time. Nothing will happen."

Shirley nodded. "Okay." Of course, she would trust in Roy's capabilities.

After the meal, Zacharias needed some rest, and Shirley stood guard outside his office door. Then, he suddenly opened the door and told her, "Come in."

"Is there a problem?" she asked, to which he answered, "Yes."

And so, Shirley entered his office, only to hear him shut the door and lock it. She was stunned and glared at him. Why did he lock the door?

"Just to avoid people disturbing our rest," Zacharias explained. She raised a brow at that. "But people will misunderstand."

"Misunderstand what?" he asked knowingly. Seeing the tiredness on his face, she relented as she wanted him to do well in the speech in the afternoon. "Alright, alright. You can go ahead and rest. I'll be here."

Zacharias, however, suddenly grabbed her wrist. "Have a nap together."

Shirley was pulled to the couch on the side, and he sat down, bringing her into his embrace. "Zacharias, be serious!" Shirley was furious as she struggled to get up from his lap. He looked up and grinned evilly. "Can't help it. I can't act seriously in front of you."

She couldn't do anything else, so she muttered, "Go to sleep then! I'll be here."

He nodded and leaned into the couch as he closed his eyes with her sitting beside him.

Chapter 2358

Lo and behold, Zacharias fell asleep in no time, but his head suddenly slid down. Shirley instinctively moved closer, and Zacharias' head rested perfectly on her shoulder.

Shirley let him rest against her, but what she didn't know was that the man was pretending to be asleep, and even this series of actions was all an act. The man's lips curled up slightly, enjoying her shoulder, and then he peacefully rested.

Shirley's thoughts were also on her shoulder. She turned slightly and saw the man's tall nose and his lightly pursed, sexy lips. A surge of electricity ran through her body for no apparent reason, and she immediately sat up straight.

Shirley also couldn't help but close her eyes because she had trouble sleeping last night. Due to drowsiness, her head lightly leaned toward the man's side. Sensing her situation, Zacharias, who was still pretending to be asleep, immediately opened his eyes, extended his hand, and caught the girl's face leaning toward him, after which he gently placed her on his shoulder. Finally, he closed his eyes to rest.

The pair spent half an hour asleep in that posture until Freddie knocked on the door and entered, only to be stumped by the view on the couch.

Just as he attempted to retreat, Shirley woke up. As she opened her eyes and saw Freddie, she felt warm on one side of her face. At that, she turned, only to find she had fallen asleep leaning against Zacharias' shoulder.

Wasn't it he who leaned against me? Shirley blushed while a chuckle escaped Freddie before he said, "Sir, it's about time we leave."

"Alright, one moment," Zacharias said to him. Freddie tactfully left the room. Shirley stood up, and Zacharias casually took hold of her wrist, using her support to stand up.

Shirley immediately applied some force on her wrist to help him up, and once Zacharias released her, she said somewhat bashfully, "I shouldn't have fallen asleep just now."

After seeing her hair a bit disheveled, Zacharias reached out and smoothed her long hair. "You should tie your hair again. It's gotten messy."

Mortified, she pulled the hair tie down, and her long hair cascaded down like a waterfall. Zacharias, deeply infatuated, gazed at her long locks and reached out, using his fingers to comb through it gently.

Hurriedly, Shirley tied up her long hair neatly to avoid allowing the man to play with her hair.

“Mind the occasion,” Shirley reminded Zacharias, who smiled and replied, “Thank you for the reminder, Miss Lloyd.”

Downstairs, Zacharias’ convoy was already prepared. When Imogen saw him coming out, her chest tightened, and she stood up even straighter. Then, she noticed Shirley standing behind Zacharias as a matter of course.

A radiance enveloped this man, and Shirley appeared even more dazzling. Lost in her thoughts all along, Shirley didn’t greet Imogen behind her, and when Freddie opened the car door for her, she smoothly sat beside Zacharias.

Imogen watched with jealousy welling up in her eyes. She was keenly aware of her and Shirley’s identity, yet she still couldn’t let it go.

When Shirley entered the car, Freddie was handing Zacharias a document from the passenger seat. “Sir, this is the revised speech I’ve prepared. Please take a look during the journey.”

Zacharias took the three pages of the speech and started reading in the car. Shirley glanced at him with concern.

Even on the smoothest road, reading in a moving vehicle was still quite straining on the eyes.

The convoy headed straight for a nearby building where the speech was scheduled to take place. Even though the people coming to listen to the speech had their identities checked, it was still highly dangerous for Zacharias to be in a public setting.

The convoy stopped at a side entrance, and Roy’s men immediately approached. Roy himself stood by Zacharias’ side. Suddenly, Shirley was pulled out by a bodyguard. He said to her, “Sir has given orders; you are to rest in the car.”

Shirley was startled. Zacharias intended to leave her in the car?! Just then, she saw Imogen standing next to Zacharias, dressed in a suit and wearing glasses, pretending to be an assistant.

After breaking free from the bodyguard's grip, Shirley insisted, "I want to go inside."

Seeing that he couldn't hold her back, the bodyguard decided not to insist further since Shirley was also a member of the security team.

Entering the lecture hall, she was met with a central hall filled with nearly five hundred people. The audience was already seated, and the security team was in action, with Roy and Imogen standing on either side of Zacharias.

Shirley walked into the hall and positioned herself on the left side of the stage, right next to Imogen. Imogen's gaze landed on her, and at that moment, Imogen felt a rush of satisfaction.

She was indeed enveloped in Zacharias' radiant aura as she stood beside him as if the entire world was focused on her. The sense of being in the spotlight was strong.

Shirley's gaze also swept across the people in the audience. She hoped Zacharias would deliver a successful speech and return home.

After the chairman's impassioned opening speech, Zacharias walked up to the stage amidst enthusiastic applause. His tall figure and commanding presence gave him a kingly aura as he stood there.

The photographers in the audience went crazy capturing him, and various reporters aimed their microphones at him. He spoke in a deep, powerful voice.

"Thank you very much for your patience," he began, and the previously lively hall suddenly fell silent. Shirley raised her head to watch the composed and powerful man deliver his speech, exuding a convincing charisma.

Shirley's heart suddenly raced uncontrollably, no longer calm. She lowered her head to feel her rapidly beating heart and her slightly quickened breath. What was happening to her? Still, she knew it was all related to the man on the stage, the one making her heart race.

She immediately shook off these thoughts and focused her gaze on the audience, ready to detect any potential dangers that might arise.

As Zacharias' speech drew to a close, suddenly, an elderly woman pulled out a bouquet of flowers. She stood up and walked out from the audience, catching the attention of Shirley and everyone else. She was holding a walking stick in one hand and flowers in the other. Shirley approached her, saying, "Ma'am, let me help you up."

"No need. I want to give a bouquet to Mr. Vice President as a token of my appreciation," the elderly lady said with a smile.

Zacharias had been about to leave the stage, but upon seeing someone presenting him with flowers, especially an elderly woman, he smiled and remained where he was. Imogen noticed Shirley's reaction, and they exchanged glances, with Shirley nodding in acknowledgment.

Imogen also nodded slightly. The elderly lady finally reached Zacharias, holding the bouquet and smiling. She said, "On behalf of all of us, I want to thank you for leading us. This bouquet is for you."

Zacharias reached out to accept the flowers and said politely, "Thank you, ma'am."

However, right then, a glint of cold steel flashed as the elderly lady suddenly brandished a dagger concealed within her walking stick, aiming it at Zacharias' heart.

Imogen acted swiftly, grabbing the lady's hand, and Roy immediately positioned himself between Zacharias and the assailant.

"Don't hurt her," Zacharias commanded sternly.

Chapter 2360

Zacharias turned to look at her before saying to his other subordinate, "Get her to the hospital."

He was referring to Imogen. Imogen immediately suppressed her pain and said, "Sir, you don't need to worry about me. You should leave now!"

Zacharias glanced at her. Seeing this, she was inwardly elated, for she had successfully captured his attention, which was her ultimate goal-to make Zacharias remember her. Shirley turned to Freddie and said, "Mr. Hurst, arrange for someone to take the injured to the hospital."

"Understood! You lead Mr. Flintstone out," Freddie replied urgently. He never expected that an incident like this would happen, but fortunately, Zacharias remained unharmed.

Shirley held onto Zacharias as they left through the back door, and at that moment, Roy and his men quickly formed a protective barrier around them. They escorted Zacharias this way until they reached the car. Shirley opened the car door, but Zacharias suddenly pushed her inside before he took a seat.

Although Shirley had seen everything clearly, she still couldn't help but express her concern, "Are you hurt?"

Zacharias shook his head. "I'm fine."

Shirley breathed a sigh of relief. Just then, Roy's voice came through the communication device. "Return to the mansion immediately."

Freddie would handle things here, and Imogen was on her way to the hospital. Zacharias called Freddie and said in a serious tone, "Find out this person's identity and background immediately. Provide me with detailed information."

"Understood, sir. We're already verifying her information," Freddie replied.

"Don't be rough with her before we have a clear picture," Zacharias added.

"Yes, sir."

Seeing how Zacharias could maintain a compassionate heart even after an assassination attempt, Shirley couldn't help but feel even more drawn to him.

After that, Zacharias received numerous calls of sympathy and support from various quarters, including the President and his father, Josef.

Shirley finally breathed a sigh of relief when they arrived at Flintstone Residence. Meanwhile, Zacharias received a call from Freddie. The identity of the elderly woman earlier had been confirmed. It turned out that she was the mother of the suicide bomber on the highway the other time, and she blamed Zacharias for her son's death.

Zacharias told Freddie, "Investigate the circumstances of her entry this time. I suspect there was an intentional arrangement to bring her in."

"Are you suggesting that the person behind the scenes is still attempting to assassinate you, sir?"

"He's only struggling in his dying moments," Zacharias replied with an icy gaze.

"Understood, we will investigate thoroughly."

While Zacharias was on the phone, Shirley stood behind him. The false alarm earlier had startled her, and she couldn't help but think about what might have happened if the elderly woman had been armed with a gun instead of a knife. It would have been a different outcome.

"In the future, if there are such public events, you should consider avoiding them. With your status, you don't need to be in the public eye," Shirley said to the man who had turned around.

Zacharias had relaxed his stern expression upon seeing her, and he smiled. "Did today scare you?"

Shirley wasn't afraid of death, but for some reason, the idea of him dying deeply frightened her.

"There's no room for error when it comes to you," Shirley replied.

Zacharias had sensed her concern just now and reassured her, "Don't worry. I'll be more careful next time."

Shirley nodded and tried to calm her emotions. She felt she had been overly emotional that day. She was also frustrated with herself for not seeing through the elderly woman's intentions. She had even extended a helping hand to her.

Later, she picked up her phone and texted Imogen. 'Imogen, how is your wound? Is it serious?'

'I'm fine, just seven stitches on the skin, Imogen replied swiftly. 'Alright, you rest a few days in the hospital, Shirley said.

'Will do. Is Mr. Flintstone alright?'

'He's fine, thanks to you, Shirley replied 'It's my duty and responsibility. What matters is that Mr. Flintstone is okay, Imogen said.

'Take care, Shirley expressed her concern.

At the hospital, Imogen sat on the bed with stitches on her back. For her, it was a minor injury, but she couldn't forget the last look Zacharias gave her.