

## **N Destiny 2381**

### Chapter 2381

Shirley felt a tremor in her chest. Did Imogen truly harbor such intense feelings for Zacharias? To the point of disregarding her own life? Shirley couldn't be certain, but she was convinced that nothing would ever happen between Imogen and him. While she couldn't guarantee it, for now, it seemed unlikely that the man would reciprocate Imogen's feelings.

'Imogen, you're still young, and you have a long road ahead. Just do what you should do and cherish your life.'

'Shirley, I mean it. I'm willing to give everything for Mr. Flintstone, Imogen replied.

Shirley felt that Imogen's liking for Zacharias might be a bit excessive. How could she utter such irrational statements?

'Imogen, it's very late. Get some rest, Shirley advised. Imogen responded, 'Okay. You should rest early, too. After sending this message, a cunning smile played on her lips. She aimed to instill a sense of guilt in Shirley, even if Shirley harbored feelings for Zacharias.

The next morning, Shirley received a call from Ava.

"Hey, Grandma!"

"Shirley, come over to accompany me this Saturday at noon. I want to go out and have lunch with friends, and I want you to come with me."

"Sure, Grandma. Got it," Shirley replied.

"Also, dress up a bit. Women should groom themselves. Don't wear that uniform all the time. You look like an insurance salesperson."

Shirley couldn't help but chuckle. "Grandma, this is a legitimate security uniform!"

“In any case, you’re not allowed to wear it this Saturday, okay?”

“Alright, I got it. I’ll make sure to dress up nicely to see you.” Shirley laughed. After she ended the call, Zacharias was about to go out again. Shirley immediately followed him, announcing, “I’ll go out with you!”

He shook his head. “No need. I’m going to a meeting, you’ll be bored.” As long as it wasn’t for entertainment, he didn’t want to take her out. Waiting outside for hours would be painful for her. It was better to leave her at home, enjoying all the good food she wanted in a cozy environment.

Shirley suddenly felt a bit aggrieved. “Do you not trust my abilities at work?”

“It’s not that.” Zacharias denied it and explained,

“When you’re around, my focus at work tends to waver.”

She was puzzled by his words and asked, “Why?”

“Because I’ll be too busy thinking about you and neglect my work,” Zacharias confessed.

This statement was a blatant confession. Upon hearing that, Shirley was speechless, unsure how to refute him.

Seeing that he had convinced her, he smiled. “Stay at home. Be good and wait for my return.”

Fuming, she wondered, Why does he speak to me as if I’m a pet? She certainly didn’t want to be treated that way. “That reminds me. I need to accompany my grandmother on Saturday morning. Can I have two days off?” She took the opportunity to request a leave.

“Of course.” He wouldn’t stand in the way of her filial duties.

She nodded. "Okay, take care."

"Do you like flowers?" Zacharias suddenly asked. Shirley didn't think much before she blurted out, "Mhm!"

He smiled and left without uttering a word. Blinking, she pondered whether he had plans to give her flowers. Uncertain, she unexpectedly found herself anticipating it throughout the day. Admittedly, she was mostly eager to confirm if her guess was correct.

In the evening, when the sound of a car outside reached her ears, Shirley came out of her room. She quickly descended the stairs and reached the door. When the door opened, Zacharias stepped in with a coat in his hand.

A faint sense of disappointment crept into her heart when she noticed the absence of flowers in his hands. Maybe she had set her expectations too high. After all, this man was incredibly busy-how could he find time for such gestures? His question earlier that morning might have been nothing more than a casual remark. Lost in thought, she was taken by surprise as he suddenly opened his coat, revealing a beautifully wrapped bouquet of roses in his hands.

Shirley's eyes widened in surprise. Zacharias had actually hidden the flowers beneath his coat.

Chapter 2382

"You said you like flowers this morning. Here you go. They're yours." Zacharias handed the bouquet to Shirley.

Despite feeling excited, she only asked him quietly, "Why are you giving me flowers? I don't have a place to put them."

"Why not? You can take any vase here and put them wherever you like." He chuckled. He had noticed the anticipation in her eyes; it seemed he was gradually making his presence felt in her heart.

After Shirley reached out and took the flowers, Zacharias went to hang his coat. A smile unknowingly appeared on her lips when she smelled the fragrance of the flowers.

She felt a sense of surrealism when she noticed her lips curling. What was happening to her? She had been eagerly anticipating him giving her flowers all day.

And after receiving the flowers, she couldn't help but be in a much better mood.

This feeling wasn't just a simple imagination like the fleeting thoughts about Cole. It was a real experience.

She searched around and found three vases. She wanted to keep this bouquet alive; it was too beautiful, and she couldn't bear to see it wither too quickly.

Although Shirley didn't have the skills for flower arranging, the flowers were so vibrant and charming. Any random placement created a picturesque scene.

She left one vase on the dining table. Then, she contemplated whether to take another vase to Zacharias' study. Some flowers would enhance the atmosphere there.

She first placed her vase in her room and then went upstairs to the third floor. He had just started working in the study room. She knocked on the door, entered with the vase, and asked him, "Do you want a vase of flowers?"

He raised an eyebrow. "You haven't even enjoyed them for long, and you've already taken the bouquet apart?"

Shirley found it amusing, too. Zacharias carefully gave her a beautifully wrapped bouquet, and she indeed hadn't appreciated them for more than a few minutes before taking them apart, not even taking a photo.

But she was quite laid-back about many things. So, she asked again, "Do you want them or not?"

"Sure." The man nodded. "Leave them."

After placing the vase on his desk, she noted how it had indeed added some life to the room. His mood also improved.

“Did you personally buy these flowers, or did you have your assistant buy them?” Shirley asked.

Zacharias certainly couldn't have personally gone out to buy them. In other words, these beautiful flowers must have been chosen by Freddie. Zacharias raised an eyebrow. “I knew you would care about this, so I went to pick them up.”

She was taken aback, wondering how this man saw through her so well. Did he anticipate that she would ask this question?

“You went out to buy them yourself? Don't do it next time. Someone of your status shouldn't appear in public.” Shirley became concerned again. She didn't want Zacharias to attract attention just to buy her a bouquet.

He couldn't help but chuckle. “A woman's heart is truly contradictory.”

Her pretty face blushed. She realized that she was indeed contradicting herself by complaining that the flowers weren't personally bought by him yet worrying about his safety.

“Anyway, don't get out of your car next time,” she reminded him. Beyond the joy of receiving flowers, her foremost wish was for this man to stay safe and sound.

He nodded. “Sure, I'll listen to you.”

“To be honest, I'm not really a fan of flowers. If I like them, I'd prefer to grow them myself. I can plant them in your backyard,” Shirley added. Bought flowers had a short lifespan. It was also disheartening having to see them wither.

Zacharias smiled. “Alright, I'll buy you some flower seeds. You can grow them yourself.”

“Good, let’s do that.” She also smiled as she nodded. Suddenly, the ambiance in the study lightened, becoming pleasant. When their gazes met in mid-air, the man’s eyes held a hint of deep affection and indulgence, leaving her feeling a bit overwhelmed.

“Okay, I’ll leave now. I wouldn’t want to disturb you when you are working.” Shirley turned around and left.

As soon as she stepped out, she felt her heart beating faster. As she placed her hand over her chest, she realized that her heart wasn’t steady, it was beating irregularly and thumping rapidly.

Chapter 2383

What was happening? Why was Shirley’s heart beating so fast? Was it because of Zacharias?

Shirley bit her red lip. There was something she had been unwilling to admit or acknowledge: her feelings toward Zacharias.

She wondered, uncertain. Do I like him? When did I become a woman who speaks one way and thinks another? She didn’t want to delve further into things she couldn’t figure out. Instead, she returned to her room, took a shower, and went to bed.

In the blink of an eye, it was Saturday tomorrow. With Zacharias granting her leave, Shirley eagerly anticipated a day of relaxation at Ava’s house. She couldn’t wait to savor the delightful pastries and fruit tea her grandmother lovingly prepared.

Zacharias worked until the early hours. During a break, he reached for a rose and lightly kissed it as if kissing a certain someone. Then, he got up, went downstairs, had a glass of red wine to help him sleep, and looked in the direction of the second floor. Although the fatigue from overloaded work often made him tired, he felt that the future was promising because he now had someone to protect and someone to bring glory to.

Everything was worth it.

After Shirley got up in the morning, she didn't wear her uniform in case Ava would complain about her looking like an insurance salesperson. The clothes Shirley's aunt sent her last time were very stylish, and there was even a set of jewelry to match.

She began to apply light makeup. She wore a lazy beige sweater with a leather skirt as the base layer and topped it with a vintage French wool coat. Her black knee-high boots gave her a fashionable yet youthful vibe.

After she was done, she went downstairs, planning to have breakfast at her grandmother's house. She assumed that Zacharias, who had worked late last night, wouldn't be awake yet, so she didn't need to say goodbye.

However, Shirley was mistaken. Zacharias, wearing a black robe, was sitting on the couch enjoying tea. He seemed to have come downstairs after exercising.

"Good morning!" He raised his eyebrows and smiled, his gaze fixed on the woman who brightened up his morning.

It was rare to see her dressed so stylishly. While her usual uniform could captivate him, her outfit today had a special place in his heart. Mainly because the owner of the clothes strongly attracted him.

"Morning." Shirley smiled and waved. "I'm off."

"You look so good. Are you sure you're going to see your grandmother?" Zacharias suddenly asked. After hearing that, she turned her head and replied, "Yup. I'm going to have lunch with Grandma today."

He nodded. "Alright. Go ahead."

As she departed, an inexplicable sense of doubt crept over him. Since today was a day off, Tony also came over with a car key in his hand, looking as though he was ready to head out.

"Tony, help me with something," Zacharias said.

“What’s up, Uncle Zacharias?”

“Miss Lloyd just left. I want you to follow her and see who she’s meeting today,” Zacharias instructed his nephew. This task was more suitable for his nephew, as his bodyguards were meant to protect him during travel, not follow women.

Tony, who had a free day today, planned to have lunch with friends. However, he thought that helping his uncle pursue Shirley was the more important task now!

“Got it, Uncle Zacharias. Leave it to me!” Tony then remembered something. “Uncle Zacharias, my car is too conspicuous. What if she recognizes it at a glance?”

Zacharias gave it a thought and agreed. “Take the keys on the cabinet, then. Use my car.”

Chapter 2384

Ava smiled. “Of course.” After all, this was related to her granddaughter’s future. While savoring a piping hot breakfast, Shirley contemplated that meeting her grandmother’s friend would likely be a laid-back affair. After all, she just needed to enjoy herself.

Around 11.00AM, Shirley drove Ava out. She didn’t notice that a black SUV had been parked for two hours on the nearby street. Inside the car, Tony, who had been playing mobile games, was more than happy to wait.

“Oh, here they come.” When Tony saw her car, he immediately put down his phone and stepped on the gas to catch up to them.

Following Ava’s instructions, Shirley drove toward a somewhat vintage street. It seemed to be a preferred spot for affluent ladies to have afternoon tea. The area was also dotted with various restaurants, globally recognized ones included.

Finally, Shirley parked in front of a high-end Mediterranean restaurant before she helped Ava out of the car. Not long after they entered, a figure dressed in fusion attire also walked in. To avoid being recognized by Shirley, Tony deliberately wore a mask and sunglasses.

The restaurant's private rooms were not completely enclosed but separated by wooden screens, giving a stylish and open feeling. From the outside, one could catch a glimpse of what was going on inside the private rooms.

Shirley, accompanying Ava, entered a private room and saw an elegantly dressed old lady already seated there.

"Long time no see, my old friend! You still look so young!"

"Shirley, this is Old Madam Dawson."

"Hello, Old Madam Dawson," Shirley greeted the woman politely.

"Oh my, what a beauty! I've seen your photos from when you were young. I expected you'd grow up to be quite stunning," Lyra commented, thoroughly pleased, as she appraised Shirley from head to toe.

Shirley was happy to receive compliments. However, she couldn't help noticing how Lyra seemed particularly interested in her and was thoroughly inspecting her.

"What about your boy?" Ava asked.

Lyra smilingly replied, "He's on his way!"

Shirley was slightly surprised, wondering if more guests hadn't arrived yet.

"Come, let's order some dishes!" The older women began discussing what to eat. Tony happened to choose a solo spot where he could observe the situation in the private rooms. He wondered if Zacharias had overthought the situation, perhaps assuming Shirley was meeting a guy. However, she was simply having lunch with her grandmother. Since Tony was already there, he decided to have lunch in the restaurant.

Just then, another person entered the restaurant. This man looked quite handsome, and even Tony couldn't help but steal glances at him. As he observed, he saw the man heading toward Shirley's private room.

Tony's eyes widened, and his mental radar started beeping.

It seemed Zacharias had foresight! Did he guess that Shirley was here to meet a handsome guy? And that guy looked wealthy and successful. Although not as influential as Zacharias, he belonged to an elite group.

Surely Shirley isn't planning to ditch Uncle Zacharias! Tony quickly took out his phone and zoomed in, trying to capture the scene inside the private room.

Meanwhile, Shirley was also taken aback. She didn't expect the other guest to be a young man.

"Let me introduce you. This is my grandson, Carlisle Dawson," Lyra joyfully introduced.

Carlisle looked at Shirley, stunned. His grandmother had coerced him into this blind date, and despite his initial refusal, it hadn't worked. He didn't expect the blind date to be such a beautiful woman who radiated a healthy kind of beauty.

Chapter 2385

Tony happened to record it when Carlisle sat next to Shirley. He felt a bit anxious, thinking that Zacharias might have competition now. Tony bit his lip, thinking, They are already sitting together!! have to report this to Uncle Zacharias.

Carlisle's heart also started beating faster. The fragrance from Shirley's body was somewhat intoxicating. He thought it was fortunate that he came; otherwise, he would have missed such a wonderful woman.

"Carlisle usually lives with his parents at the base. It's just during his internship in the city. So, I thought of introducing you to each other. You can be friends," Ava explained. She could see that he liked her granddaughter. Furthermore, she knew about his excellent upbringing since childhood.

Shirley finally realized the reason her grandmother insisted on her dressing up; this was a blind date. She was too careless!

But she couldn't embarrass her grandmother. At least, she had to be polite.

"You are so outstanding, Miss Lloyd!" Carlisle praised.

"Oh, it's nothing, Shirley modestly replied.

"My grandson just obtained two master's degrees, and he returned to the country to inherit his father's company. I heard that the company's performance this year is even more remarkable!" Lyra complimented her grandson.

Carlisle seemed a bit shy. "Aw, shucks. Let's not talk about me, Grandma."

"They are both good kids. And at your age, you both look very compatible. I think you can be friends. Who knows? You might even become a family in the future!" Ava cheered.

Shirley swallowed hard, wondering why her grandmother didn't give her any heads up. She was caught completely off guard. "Grandma, I haven't had enough fun yet!" She laughed.

Lyra was broad-minded. "It's okay. Even if you decide to get married, there's no rush to have children. You can take a few more years to enjoy yourselves before starting a family. My grandson can share those enjoyable moments with you."

Shirley's face was filled with embarrassment.

Why did the conversation suddenly turn to having children?

At this moment, Tony sent the video to Zacharias and simultaneously sent a voice message. "Bad news, Uncle Zacharias. My Goddess is actually on a date with a dude, and that guy is really hot and outstanding."

Zacharias had planned to rest at home today. However, when his phone kept ringing incessantly, he finally picked it up. It turned out to be a video from Tony. As he played it, his pupils immediately dilated.

Sure enough, Shirley went out for a date with a man. So that was why she dressed up in the morning.

Listening to Tony's voice message, Zacharias sighed. He pondered, She had just broken up with Cole. Now she's already interested in someone else! Am I not worthy of her affection?

"Uncle Zacharias, come quickly to assert your dominance! I'm afraid someone will snatch my Goddess away if you come too late!" Tony sent another voice message, accompanied by a photo of Shirley smiling brilliantly at Carlisle.

Zacharias, now dressed, took a glance at the photo. While dialing Roy's phone number, he fixed his clothes and hairstyle.

"Prepare a car for me; I need to go out for a while," Zacharias ordered before hanging up the phone.

Normally, Zacharias wouldn't pay too much attention to his hairstyle and dressing at home. However, today was different. Before he went out, he chose a more stylish khaki trench coat, which made him look several years younger.

Once in the car, he asked Tony to send him a location. Roy's car fleet immediately headed toward the given address.

At the same time, the atmosphere remained pleasant as the two elderly ladies chatted together. Shirley and Carlisle acted as listeners, hearing about the struggles of their grandparents' generation. When they heard certain stories that made them happy, they couldn't help but exchange smiles.

Tony felt the impulse to intervene several times, but he resisted it. After all, what could he do?

His uncle was the key!

Tony mused, Just wait a little longer. Uncle Zacharias is already on the way. Also, my Goddess doesn't deserve anyone besides Uncle Zacharias.

A black sedan, escorted by three SUVs, entered the street, drawing the attention of many bystanders as such a well-organized motorcade was a rare sight. The tight formation of the convoy didn't allow anyone to cut in.

Chapter 2386

Some people speculated that the person inside the car might be a big shot in some field. These people guessed right, but he was not just a big shot-it was more than that!

"Mr. Flintstone, are you sure you want to go up alone?" Roy asked, worried. In the back seat, Zacharias had already put on his mask. He nodded. "Yes, I'll go up alone. All of you can wait downstairs."

"But... your safety..."

Zacharias waved his hand. "No need to worry. I'm safe." With that, he pushed open the car door and stepped out, his tall and handsome figure drawing the attention of women.

Regardless of their age, women couldn't help but take a second look at him. Although his face wasn't visible, his presence alone exuded exceptional charisma.

Zacharias walked into the restaurant step by step. The waiter opened the door, and he ascended to the second floor. When Tony saw him coming and realized he was alone, he immediately stood up in surprise. "Uncle Zacharias! Where are your bodyguards?"

"I don't need them. Where is Shirley?" Zacharias asked, squinting.

Tony pointed ahead. "In that private room."

Zacharias let out a sigh. "Is her grandmother here?"

“Yup! There are four of them. Two elderly women, my Goddess, and a man,” Tony informed him.

After hearing that, Zacharias adjusted his tie slightly. It was evident that he was somewhat anxious about meeting Shirley’s grandmother.

“Uncle Zacharias, are you nervous?” Tony giggled when he saw through Zacharias’ facade. It turned out that even his usually confident uncle had moments of self-doubt.

Zacharias didn’t say anything. Instead, he walked toward the private room. Shirley stood up to pour tea, starting with her grandmother and then moving on to Lyra and Carlisle.

“Thank you,” Carlisle said with a gentle and joyful tone.

“You’re welcome.” Shirley smiled and poured tea for herself. At that moment, she noticed someone entering. She wondered if it was the waiter and glanced up. With a single look, she froze while pouring the tea, making it spill over the cup. She quickly put down the teapot as she gawked incredulously at the tall man standing at the door. She wondered why Zacharias was here.

“Young man, who are you looking for?” Ava asked curiously. She wondered why a young man suddenly came to their private room. Zacharias pointed at Shirley. “I’m here for her.”

Feeling a sudden urge to exit, Shirley hesitated. Regrettably, the room’s layout forced her to navigate past Carlisle. With a polite smile, she murmured, “Excuse me for a moment.”

As Carlisle moved his legs aside, her leg brushed against his. However, a certain man’s sharp eyes narrowed dangerously as he noticed this.

She grabbed Zacharias by the arm and pulled him out, exclaiming, “Why are you here? Who told you to come?”

“It was I!” Tony chimed in.

She turned to him in surprise. "And how come you're here too?"

"Uncle Zacharias asked me to follow you early in the morning. He suspected you were going to meet a man, and it turns out he was right." Tony spilled the entire plan.

Shirley was taken aback. Looking at the man who shouldn't be in the restaurant, she couldn't help feeling jumpy. "Go home!"

"What's your relationship with him?" Zacharias stared at her face and questioned her.

"We are just friends!" she replied casually. After all, describing Carlisle as a potential partner would be even more inappropriate.

Chapter 2387

Lyra's surprise was evident. After catching Zacharias' last name, Carlisle fixed his gaze on the man, his mind racing. Wait a minute! That sounds familiar! Where have I heard it?

"Please scoot over a bit," Zacharias said to Carlisle. After Carlisle quickly moved over, Zacharias promptly took Shirley's seat. Upon entering, she noticed Zacharias seated and urged, "Hurry back!"

"I will after I finish the meal," Zacharias replied, moving her cutlery to his side as he used Shirley's fork and teacup.

"Shirley, what's going on? You have a boyfriend?" Ava was somewhat confused. Her granddaughter hadn't mentioned anything to her!

Meanwhile, Carlisle's eyes were fixed on Zacharias. At this moment, Zacharias removed his mask, revealing his face. Carlisle stared at him in shock. "Are you... the Vice President, Mr. Zacharias Flintstone?"

This question surprised the two elderly ladies on the other side. While their interest in politics was limited, it was evident from Carlisle's expression that the young man in front of them was, indeed, Zacharias.

"Please, not so loud." Zacharias smiled.

Shirley pulled a chair and sat down, unwrapping a new set of cutlery. Since Zacharias wanted to have a meal here, she might as well eat with him and accompany him back later.

"Hello, Mr. Flintstone. It's an honor to meet you," Carlisle stammered in excitement.

"Hello." Zacharias nodded and then turned to the two elderly ladies who were scrutinizing him. "Hello, madams."

"Cheri works for you, doesn't she?" Ava exclaimed in surprise. She never expected her granddaughter to be in a relationship with him.

Despite Lyra's confusion, it was evident that her grandson's blind date had not gone well. She acknowledged that Shirley had discovered a more remarkable and attractive partner.

"Cheri, sit down and eat quickly! We rarely get the chance to have a meal with Mr. Flintstone," Ava offered happily. At this moment, Tony approached with a plate from his table. "Do you mind if I join you?"

"And who is this?" Ava was surprised again.

"He's my uncle," Tony grinned. "I'm his nephew."

"Please sit! Let's eat together." Ava welcomed him.

Fortunately, the private room was spacious enough, and they had ordered plenty of dishes. However, Shirley's heart was in her mouth, as Zacharias' identity was too conspicuous.

"So, Miss Lloyd has a boyfriend now! That's wonderful." Lyra sighed. Zacharias smiled at those words. "Yes, ma'am. We've been dating for two months."

Carlisle completely had no intention of competing against Zacharias. He was just thrilled to be sitting at the same table with Zacharias. In fact, this was an experience Carlisle could boast about for a lifetime.

Feeling awkward, Shirley wished she could hide under the table. She pondered, What on earth is Zacharias up to? Why is he asserting that we're dating without my consent? Hold on, when did we even begin dating? When did he become my boyfriend? He better not be spouting nonsense! It's not true at all! Internally, she vehemently denied his claim, but externally, she simply obediently continued eating her food. Revealing his lie in public was not an option; after all, Zacharias held the esteemed position of Vice President. Considering his high-profile identity, Shirley opted to spare him the embarrassment.

"You've been dating for two months, Cheri. Why didn't you tell me?" Ava reproached her granddaughter. She wouldn't have arranged this lunch if she had known earlier. She would have spared the Dawson Family the embarrassment.

"Grandma, we... we haven't officially started dating."

"They've just slept together," Tony quipped. Shirley was so close to covering his mouth with her hand. Blushing, she complained, "Tony Flintstone, please shut up."

Zacharias chuckled. "Grandma, due to my position, Shirley hasn't made this public yet."

Ava immediately understood what he meant. "Oh! I see! It makes sense. After all, your focus is on work right now. No hurry. You can take your time." As she spoke, she couldn't stop smiling

Lyra was also happy for her. Although Carlisle liked Shirley at first sight, he didn't dare to express it now. Moreover, the more he looked, the more he felt that Shirley and Zacharias were a better match.

Chapter 2388

"Grandma, we're done eating. Mr. Flintstone, don't you have a meeting to attend?" Shirley smiled at Zacharias, her eyes hinting at something.

Zacharias nodded. He, too, didn't want to disturb their lunch any longer. "Yes, the meeting is about to start."

“Grandma, Old Madam Dawson, Mr. Dawson, we’ll take our leave. Mr. Dawson, could you please take my Grandma home? Thank you.” She stood up, reached out to grab Zacharias’ arm, and called Tony to come along. “Tony, let’s go!”

She couldn’t leave Tony here; otherwise, her grandmother would overhear everything about her and Zacharias. Tony smiled, said goodbye to everyone, and left. Then, Shirley turned around and reminded Zacharias, “Put on your mask.”

After watching him obediently put on his mask, she nervously looked around before accompanying him downstairs.

Inside the car, Zacharias took off his mask. Shirley let out a sigh of relief and turned to him, scolding him in a low voice, “Why did you come over?”

Seeing her genuinely upset, he replied truthfully, “I didn’t want someone else to take you away.”

She choked and said, “Take me away? What are you talking about? I have a mind of my own. I’m not a commodity that can be taken away with just a glance!”

Zacharias let out a chuckle. “Are you trying to comfort me?”

“Absolutely not.” Shirley flushed red. “You shouldn’t have come. Now that my Grandma knows, my parents will also know tomorrow. The day after tomorrow...” She felt a bit overwhelmed. After all, this was an extremely awkward situation as she had never openly discussed her relationship issues.

“So, what if the whole world knows? Can’t we love each other?” he asked with his eyes narrowed.

“When did I fall in love with you?” She expressed that she didn’t even know something like this had happened. He reached out and rubbed the back of her head. “You will sooner or later.”

Biting her red lips, Shirley chose not to argue with Zacharias for now. She would deal with it when they got back. After all, there were bodyguards in the car, and she didn’t want to talk to him at the moment.

Throughout the journey, his gaze frequently fell on the girl beside him, appreciating her elegant and beautiful profile. It was like admiring a static painting; the view gave him the urge to make a drawing of her and preserve it.

Finally, they arrived at the Flintstone Residence. After getting out of the car, she opened the door, inviting the man inside before entering herself.

“All right, scold me however you want!” Zacharias opened his hands. Shirley looked at him with strange eyes. “Why would I scold you?”

“Didn’t I ruin your blind date today? Aren’t you angry?”

She had been quietly pouting during their journey home. With his chest tightened nervously, he wanted to let off some steam when they came back to the residence. She shook her head. “No need. I’ll explain this to Grandma later.”

“Why do you have to do that?” He raised his eyebrows.

“Do you think now is the right time to be in a relationship? You better focus on your work!” Shirley advised. Zacharias had just taken office. If rumors of their relationship spread, it would surely affect public opinion.

It could also provide an opportunity for those who had objections to him to use this as a pretext to suppress him. She hoped he would consolidate his political power before diving into a romantic relationship.

This was what she had been thinking about throughout the journey. Everything was for his sake.

Zacharias’ handsome face froze for a few seconds. Eventually, he stepped forward, hugged her, and uttered, “Okay, I’ll listen to you.”

Shirley pushed him away, or at least she tried to. But since he didn’t budge, she stopped resisting. As she let him hold her, she felt the collision of two hearts in the quiet hall.

However, good things are always short-lived. Tony, who had just arrived, pushed open the door and saw the two people embracing in the hall. "I caught you again. Are you going to keep refusing to admit it?" he teased with a smile, his arms crossed.

"We are doing it openly. How are we not admitting it?" Zacharias grumpily looked at his nephew. He felt like the younger man had disturbed him at the wrong time.

Shirley had nothing to say to this uncle-nephew pair. What kind of uncle would tell his nephew to follow her anyway? They were definitely on the same side!

Chapter 2389

"I'll go to my room first," Shirley said. After she went back to her room, she called Ava. At this moment, her grandmother had just been sent back home by the Dawson Family.

Ava was happy to receive a call from Shirley.

"Grandma, there is something I need your help with." Shirley went straight to the point. Ava smiled and asked, "Oh? My help? What is it?"

"It's about me and Zacharias, Grandma, please don't tell my parents about us. I don't want them to know just yet. Also, don't tell anyone, especially because of Zacharias' identity. We should keep it to ourselves."

Ava had been through a lot and understood what Shirley meant. "Don't worry!" She nodded. "I will keep it a secret for you. Whenever you want to talk about it, just let me know! But you and Zacharias are really in a relationship, right? That part is true, right?"

Shirley hesitated. "We..."

Ava knew Shirley was shy and reluctant to admit it. With a smile, she reassured her granddaughter, "Alright, I won't inquire about what is going on between you youngsters. But I hope you don't miss out on such a good man. I would like it if he were my son-in-law."

Shirley could only whisper, "Grandma, is it settled then? Don't tell anyone, okay?"

"Okay, trust me! I will also remind the Dawson Family."

"Alright. Thank you, Grandma."

After soothing Ava, Shirley couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. In the evening, after the servants prepared dinner, Shirley accompanied Zacharias and Tony for dinner. Zacharias' phone rang then. "Hello?" He spoke into the phone after picking it up.

"The preparations for the trip abroad three days later are ready." Freddie's voice came through the phone.

"Good," Zacharias replied. Shirley glanced at him, wanting to ask but feeling that she shouldn't interfere. After all, this was about a man's job.

His gaze also turned to her. He had no intention of telling her about the upcoming trip abroad. He wouldn't allow her to accompany him because it would be a risky trip.

In the evening, Shirley was lying in bed when Imogen's text suddenly arrived. 'Shirley, did you bring your passport?'

Bewildered, Shirley replied, 'No, it's with my parents.'

'How are you going abroad then? You will need it in three days, won't you?'

'Why would I be going abroad?' Shirley asked in reply.

'To accompany Mr. Flintstone abroad! Didn't you know?' Imogen was surprised. Since she had the opportunity to go abroad, she assumed Shirley would be joining. They would be able to watch each other's backs that way.

Shirley immediately sat up, her mind buzzing. What? Zacharias is going abroad in three days? He didn't even tell me.

She looked at the time and saw that it was already 11.00PM. However, the thought of Zacharias not informing him about the trip got her fuming. She didn't even care about the time as she proceeded to lift the covers, get out of bed, and head to the third floor.

She arrived at the study first, only to find the room empty. She thought, He must have returned to his room to sleep. So, she knocked on his door.

Before the third knock, the door suddenly opened from the inside. Zacharias, only wrapped in a towel, looked at Shirley with surprise.

"At this time of the night? Is something the matter?" His eyes held a hint of a flirtatious and somewhat expectant smile.

"Yes. Are you going abroad in three days? Why didn't you inform me to accompany you?" she asked directly.

He intended to secretly go abroad without telling her, but he didn't expect that she would find out. He cleared his throat and explained, "I have enough bodyguards; there was no need to inform you."

"Then, include me. I want to go with you." Shirley looked at Zacharias firmly.

"You don't need to come along." He was quite insistent on this matter. He wanted to leave her in the country.

"I want to go." She behaved like a stubborn child, her gaze determined.

"I am going for work, not for leisure. I can't take you with me." He tried to persuade her.

She felt even more reluctant to back down upon hearing this. "Are you underestimating my abilities? Zacharias Flintstone, if you don't take me, then I'll go abroad on my own to find you."

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Shirley could do anything. Stunned, Zacharias gazed at her, wondering, Is she genuinely insisting on accompanying me? "Why do you have to come with me?" he asked with his arms crossed. His dark hair was still dripping with water, giving him a sexy and enticing look as the droplets fell on his strong and full chest.

"Because... I..."

"Because you like me and care about me, hmm?" He finished her sentence. Shirley's eyes widened, but she nodded to express her willingness to accompany Zacharias abroad. "Yes, that's the reason. Can I come with you?"

His lips curled. Although he forced her to admit it, he was still happy. However, he answered her question with a touch of indifference. "No."

"You..." She clenched her fists in frustration. Zacharias began closing the door. In response, Shirley extended her hand to push it. Just as the door was about to shut, he swiftly reopened it, causing her pushing motion to transform into a dive directly into his embrace.

The man was clearly doing it on purpose. He opened his arms and embraced her, pressing her face against his warm and solid shoulder.

Even though she was annoyed, the arm tightly wrapped around her waist prevented her from escaping.

He grinned. "Do you have any ulterior motives for coming to me so late at night?"

Shirley thought, He's obviously the one with ulterior motives, and yet he is pushing this onto me. How despicable. "Let me go abroad. Still wanting to fight for this, she stayed in Zacharias' embrace without struggling.

“The situation abroad is a bit messy. I don’t want you to go,” he honestly expressed his concerns. He was trying to protect her.

“I’m still going. I’m not scared of death,” she said, raising her head. In her heart, she added, I’m not afraid of death, but I’m scared of you dying.

He was taken aback by how stubborn she was. He reached out and caressed her head. “Your father wouldn’t let me take you either.”

“I’m an adult. I can take responsibility for my actions,” Shirley refuted a bit impatiently. “I don’t need my dad’s approval for everything I do.”

Zacharias couldn’t help but kiss her forehead. “Can you promise to stay by my side and not wander off?”

Seeing that he seemed to be agreeing, she immediately nodded. “I can promise not to cause trouble.”

Reluctant to bring her along, he found it hard to resist her imploring gaze. In the end, he yielded. “Fine.” He nodded.

Shirley breathed a sigh of relief. As she only then realized that she was still being held in Zacharias’ embrace, she couldn’t help but ask, “Can you let me go now, Mr. Flintstone?”

He suddenly spoke in a low voice, “If you want to go abroad with me, I have a request.”

She was slightly taken aback and wondered why he had so many demands. So, she looked up and expressed her acceptance. “Okay, go ahead.”

“Will you say yes to anything?” he asked in a low, hoarse voice.

“Yes, I promise you.” She was still too naive.

“Let me kiss you for ten minutes.” Zacharias smiled, very pleased with himself.

“No...” Shirley attempted to refuse, but it was too late. He swiftly grasped the back of her neck, his thin lips silencing any protest she tried to voice.

At that moment, her mind was tinged with regret. Ten minutes! Is he trying to kill me?

As the man’s lips drew near, she experienced a delightful surge of electricity coursing through her body. The room appeared to stand still in time. The connection evoked an indescribable sensation of sweetness and pleasure.

Shirley’s senses spiraled into chaos. The figure beneath her touch wasn’t clothed; it was a man with firm muscles, emitting warmth like a blazing fire. Inexplicably, she found herself enjoying Zacharias’ kisses, craving even more intimate contact.

The man’s kisses expressed love and tenderness-alternating between swift passion and deliberate slowness as if savoring his most cherished possession. Her tongue was numb, and her breath was growing shallow. A pervasive sensation of restlessness and indescribable pleasure overcame her as the man’s lips met hers.