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Devin knew he needed to make a trip to Coldbridge. Thus, he got himself ready and departed early in the morning.

"Are you sure you're going alone? Have you told Sebastian of your upcoming plan?" Sabrina asked when he shared his upcoming plan with her.

"I think it's better to leave him alone for the time being," Devin remarked with a frown when he heard Sabrina's question.

"He has quite a lot of things on his plate since Sasha isn't really feeling well. I don't wish to add to his burden with something as trivial as such," he added after pausing for a few seconds.

Devin thought he was accountable for Sebastian's misery when Sebastian went through an emotional breakdown shortly after the accident at the hospital.

He had never seen Sebastian so helpless throughout the years. All along, Sebastian was the most formidable corporate player in Avenport.

As a matter of fact, he was supposed to be having the time of his life with his family had he stayed away from the affairs of the Jadesons.

However, he got himself involved and braced himself through countless challenges for the sake of the family.

Therefore, Devin was against the idea of getting Sebastian involved again.

On the day he left, he told Sebastian he would return to Naval Base ahead of him to get everything ready.

Sebastian wasn't suspicious at all since Naval Force was greatly undermanned then. Since Xayden would be dropping by Oceanic Estate soon, he couldn't be bothered by other things as well.

Against the idea of Devin leaving without Sebastian, Sasha asked concernedly, "Are you sure it's fine for Devin to leave ahead of you?"

Her husband shook his head and assured her, "I'm sure it's fine. Have you forgotten he's an experienced combatant? Now, why don't you tell me if you're feeling unwell or not?"

Sasha found the man's response hilarious since she seemed to be the only one he cared about.

Chuckling, she announced, "I'm fine! You need to stop making a fuss out of everything! Have you forgotten I'm also a doctor? I've long gotten in touch with Xayden on the day I found out something was wrong!"

Her husband let out a sigh of relief when she told him she had everything under control.

In the afternoon, Xayden showed up with a pleasant surprise for everyone. He had returned with the three little ones.

"Mommy, we're home!"

"Mommy!"

"Mommy!"

Sebastian remained standing next to Sasha as their children rushed to Sasha's side immediately after alighting from the car.

lan returned to him shortly after he greeted Sasha, stopping Sebastian from overthinking things when he was about to get envious.

"Daddy!"

Ian was almost as tall as his father after being apart for such a long time. Sebastian caressed the hair of his son and asked, "Why have you guys tagged along with Xayden?"

His son looked at him and asserted, "Daddy, we wish to be of aid as members of the family! It's the least we can do in times of emergencies!"

Sebastian was startled as the nine-year-old little boy reminded him of his younger self when he was ten.

It was the same when I was young! Otherwise, Dad wouldn't have taken me in when he was aware of my actual condition!

Overwhelmed by emotions, Sebastian instructed Wendy to take their children away with her since it was time to get to business.

A few minutes later, he showed Xayden the way to the treatment room in Oceanic Estate.

Once Xayden retrieved the bottle of blue solution, he murmured, "I'm not really sure if it's going to work! Are you sure you wish to proceed?"

Sebastian rolled his eyes and asked in return, "Are you kidding me? Weren't you the one who came out with this?"

Xayden felt a chill running down his spine and knew it was time for him to keep his concerns to himself.

On the other hand, Sasha urged, "You need to stop startling Xayden since he's just in charge of the research! What are you expecting from him when he wasn't even given any sample to work with?"

She rendered Sebastian speechless because she had a point.

Actually, the goofy prodigy was the only member of SteelFort capable of irking Sebastian.

In the end, Sasha suggested conducting a blood test as a temporary countermeasure.

Those in the room were on pins and needles as the cells started regenerating at top speed under the microscope.

However, the cells spiraled out of control and mutated when they thought things would turn out fine.

What the heck!

Sebastian launched a powerful kick in the direction of Xayden while warning the goofy young man, "Can you be mindful of your actions? Aren't you aware you're conducting trials with my wife's blood? She's not a freaking lab rat!"

Xayden felt aggrieved and intimidated because of the man's merciless kick.

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Hello? I wouldn't even hesitate to run the trails if there were lab rats with similar conditions for me!

In the end, Xayden knew he had to start all over again because he couldn't allow anything to go wrong.

When Vivian found out the things going on, she approached the aggrieved Xayden with some light refreshments and said, "You don't have to be upset! Just finish this and try again! I'm sure you can save Mommy soon!"

Vivian was no longer the silly little girl she used to be. Instead, she seemed to have turned into an understanding little girl.

Xayden spent most of his time in the treatment room.

Sebastian and Sasha knew it was only a matter of time until she could get rid of the radioactive substances in her system.

Therefore, Sebastian knew it was time for him to join Devin at Naval Base.

Prior to Sebastian's departure, Jonathan assured Sebastian the rest of his family was in good hands with him, "You need to take good care of yourself. Just leave the rest to me. I'll ensure everyone at home is safe and sound."

Sebastian nodded since he knew Jonathan would definitely keep everyone safe as long as they were at Jadeborough.

He departed shortly after bidding farewell to the ones he held dear in mind.

Sasha had her eyes glued to the man's departing figure until he made it out of the mansion. When she turned around, she found out her sister-in-law had a relatively odd expression.

She asked, "Sab, are you okay?"

"H-Huh? O-Oh! I-I'm fine!" Sabrina shook her head and assured Sasha everything was fine because she knew she had to keep the rest in the dark.

I need to keep Devin's actual whereabouts a secret from the rest, but is it possible when Sebastian is currently on his way to Naval Base? What if Sebastian finds out Devin isn't there?

Sabrina's mind was all over the place. Once she returned to her room, she accessed her phone to see if the man had reverted to her.

Unfortunately, it had been two days since she last heard from Devin. Therefore, she couldn't help but wonder if his life was in danger.

What am I supposed to do? Jake! Jake's at Coldbridge, isn't he? I'll call him and ask if he's aware of Devin's whereabouts!

She made the call seconds after she thought of someone she could rely on. Nevertheless, it was another futile attempt.

"The number you have dialed, cannot be reached at this moment—"

What is happening? Why can't I reach him at all?

Unable to keep herself calm anymore, she switched off her phone and rushed out of the room while yelling, "Sasha, where are you?"

"What's wrong?" Sasha rushed out of the room when she was about to doll Vivian up after the little girl's shower.

"Sasha, Devin's missing! What am I supposed to do?"

"Huh? What do you mean he's missing? Hasn't he headed to Naval Base ahead of Sebastian?"

"No! He headed to Coldbridge because of the marking he found on the piece of note your grandmother left behind! It turned out to be an escape route! He told me to keep everyone in the dark because he didn't want to trouble anyone! However, it has been two days since I last heard from him!"

Sabrina finally let the cat out of the bag. She could barely finish her sentence without cracking her voice.

Sasha couldn't even catch her breath due to the absurdity of the truth.

Oh, God! Can they stop causing us trouble when things are so chaotic? Isn't he aware we're going to be worried if something happens to him?

As infuriated as she might be, she reached for her phone and called Sebastian, who had just departed a short while ago.

It took the man on the other end a few seconds to snap out of bewilderment. He was equally confused and infuriated by the truth.

After suppressing to urge to go berserk, he instructed Sasha, "Alright, I'll take a detour to Coldbridge at once! I want you to tell Grandpa to send a team of fully equipped elite my way!"

"Alright!"

Sasha knew it was a serious issue. Thus, she rushed upstairs immediately after she wrapped up the conversation with her husband.

When she found Jonathan, she told him everything, including Sebastian's upcoming plan.

Jonathan couldn't suppress the urge to pick on Devin. He reprimanded his grandson for being a fool before instructing those from the military base to dispatch a team of elites to assist Sebastian.

Sabrina, who was there throughout the conversation, felt aggrieved and thought they shouldn't blame Devin when their safety was the sole reason behind his decisions.

Devin wasn't as incompetent as Jonathan remarked—he made up his mind to check out the hideout because he thought he possessed the capabilities to investigate it out without others.

After all, he was once the commander of the special forces.

They couldn't get in touch with Devin because he was out of range of the reception towers. He had long made it to the bottom of the river of Coldridge with Jake since that was the precise location of the hideout.

"Devin, where are we? Are we still going ahead when we've been traveling nonstop for a little more than two days?"

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Jake regretted his decision to tag along with Devin because there didn't seem to be an end to the alley. They were still in the middle of nowhere after walking nonstop for a long time.

Devin turned around after inspecting their surroundings with the torch. He announced, "If I'm not mistaken, this route leads us all the way to North Sea."

"Huh?"

Jake thought he had been hearing things. He asked, "Are you serious? North Sea? Isn't that a few thousand miles away from us?"

Devin found Jake hilarious because the man, who spent most of his time doing nothing, knew it was a mission impossible for him.

"I'm pretty sure there's a checkpoint for emergencies since it's such a long route. That's the destination of the trip."

"What are we going to do once we reach the first checkpoint?"

Staring at the map in his hands, Devin announced, "Once we reach the first checkpoint, we'll see if we can make our way up and hail a cab home."

Jake heaved a sigh of relief and thought it wasn't a mission impossible.

Devin paid Jake a visit to get himself familiar with the town, but Jake insisted on tagging along when he found out Devin was about to go on an adventure. In the end, Devin had to bring Jake along for the trip.

After another two hours, Devin finally came to the end of the tunnel when Jake was about to go through another emotional breakdown.

On top of that, they heard the rustling sound of streams coming from afar. Thrilled, Devin announced, "We're finally here!"

Unable to contain his excitement anymore, Jake rushed to Devin's side and saw a dome that was about the size of a football field in front of them.

Jake was surprised by the sort of military equipment available in the spacious dome. He asked, "Are these military equipment? Is this some kind of armory?"

Devin was equally startled—he wondered if Judith had built such a magnificent hideout for her comrades-in-arms again.

Upon a simple inspection, he found out the equipment seemed to have been around for more than a decade. In short, it was safe to assume Judith was the brain behind everything.

This seems to be the contingency plan she has devised just in case of the worst. After all, there were countless variables because of the war.

It's time to leave since there's nothing else around here. If I don't hurry up and show Jake the way out, I'm afraid he's going to pass out for real. Where's the entrance or the exit of this gigantic dome?

Out of the blue, Jake, who was behind Devin, stopped him and asked, "Wait, Devin! What is that?"

Once Devin turned around, Jake added, "What's with the design of this grenade? Isn't this too modern? It seems just like the ones in my game!"

Jake was confused by the grenades he accidentally discovered when he was about to leave because grenades weren't really a thing a few decades ago.

Staring at the thing in Jake's hand, Devin was taken aback by the ghastly possibilities awaiting them.

"Devin?" Jake turned around and repeated himself with a goofy look because the man ahead of him failed to answer his query.

Out of the blue, the man ahead of him turned around and unveiled everything nearby.

Swoosh!

He felt a chill running down his spines because there were countless grenades with a similar design there.

Others might not be aware of the presence of these weapons capable of mass destruction since no one seems to be aware of the precise location of the route.

Colors drained from Devin's face as he continued unveiling everything nearby. He knew it was a dire situation the moment he found out the entire dome had been filled with similar weapons.

"Holy! What's going on? There's no way these have been around for more than a decade when they have such a contemporary design!"

It didn't take much for Jake, an outsider, to tell the difference between the grenades from the ones more than a decade.

It took Devin quite some time to gather his thoughts. He finally stopped himself from shivering when he recalled he had to leave and get in touch with others as soon as possible.

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Someone was here! They must've changed the weapons! Although those seemed to be weapons of the olden days, that's not the case!

They're merely trying to deceive others because these are precisely the weapons with nuclear waves we're searching for!

In other words, the vicious man has turned these checkpoints into his personal armories! This must be the reason we couldn't get our hands on these over the vears!

Beep! Beep! Beep!

Once Devin linked the missing pieces of puzzles together, the clamor took them by surprise when they were on their to the ladder to get out of the checkpoint.

The confused Jake stopped and asked in an attempt to figure out the source of the noise, "Devin, what 's with that alarm?"

It was then Devin grasped Jake's hand and rushed forward, urging with a serious look, "We need to hurry up and leave because this checkpoint is going to blow up soon!"

Jake finally figured out their lives were at stake. Therefore, he started climbing up the ladder with Devin at top speed.

Immediately after the alarm went off, they heard voices of the system counting down as if the entire armory was about to blow off.

"Ten! Nine! Eight!"

Holy! We need to hurry up!

Devin's concerns were the safety of those nearby. He had to reach others to prevent a catastrophic event from bringing upon the demise of those nearby.

Otherwise, countless innocent lives might be sacrificed as a result of his recklessness if the first checkpoint was built under a densely populated city.

"Devin, what's wrong with you? Hurry up and climb up the ladder!"

Jake, who was halfway through the ladder, yelled when he found out the man behind him seemed to have something else in mind.

Devin ignored him because his phone had finally regained signal to reach others. Without a second thought, he made a call and instructed, "I need you to check if there's anyone inhabiting my current coordinate! If there's any, evacuate the inhabitants at once!"

"Five! Four! Three!"

Seconds after he hung up his call, the weapons in the armory blew off and sent him flying away from the ladder.

Jake, who was slightly ahead of Devin, was sent flying in a similar manner due to the pressure.

Bam!

It was one of the most horrifying explosions Devin had ever encountered throughout his life. It wasn't much of a surprise since those were weapons made out of nuclear waves.

The explosion was on par with the ones caused by weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to classify those as one.

The base of the spacious dome cracked when Devin thought it was the end of their lives. It seemed as if the explosion had triggered the self-defense mechanism at the checkpoint.

Bam!

In the nick of time, water gushed in from the crack and washed away weapons in the armory with strong tidal waves. Jake and Devin were also washed away by the strong current shortly after the entire dome was filled with water.

Nonetheless, they thought it was a blessing in disguise since they might make it out alive once they braced themselves through the waves.

Devin tried to find his way to safety by running his hands across the wall shortly after he was washed away.

Thankfully, he managed to hold on to the rail in the middle of nowhere and stopped himself from being washed away by the strong current.

The weapons were washed away by the strong current within a few minutes. A muffled bang could be heard from time to time since some of those continued detonating in the water.

Holy moly! Was I merely a step away from hell?

Jake, who managed to stop himself from drowning by holding on to a net, was on the verge of breaking down once he gathered his thoughts.

"D-Devin, what the hell is going on? Are we still alive or not?"

It took Devin some time to gather his thought and verify the fact they were still alive. He remained silent while hanging to the wall.

Once he had a clear glance, he figured out the honorable woman had built the checkpoints nearby the sea.

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She must've taken everything, including potential accidents of the armory, into consideration! It was one of her many countermeasures to build the route next to the sea to prevent catastrophic events in times of emergencies!

I'm sure the vicious Eddie isn't aware of these! He thought of making use of the route to store the weapons for his personal gain, but he had never taken Judith's countermeasure into consideration!

These are precisely the things setting them apart from one another! This is the reason he will never be a match for the honorable woman! She was the sole reason the nation triumphed in the war of North Sea!

By the time Devin returned to the ground, there was only a pile of rubble next to the seemingly bottomless hole in the middle of the dome.

Seconds after Jake rendezvoused with Devin, he asked, "What are we going to do next? Shall we head upstairs?"

Devin nodded and started climbing his way out of the dome with Jake again. It was another tedious journey, but they finally made it to the surface.

They secretly gulped when they saw skyscrapers all around them when they finally made it out of the dome.

It turned out Sebastian was nearby when he received the call from Devin. After conducting a thorough analysis with the copy of the military map he had, he concluded the first checkpoint of the route was somewhere nearby the coastal city.

Therefore, it didn't take long for him to reach the duo shortly after the call from Devin.

Standing next to the ladder with his eyes glued to the bottomless hole in the middle of nowhere, Sebastian asked, "What just happened down there? Is everything fine?"

Devin could no longer pull himself together after making it out alive. He summarized the series of incidents he had just gone through with Jake and shared his speculations with Sebastian.

Sebastian couldn't believe the duo was almost dead a few minutes ago. It took him some time to snap out of bewilderment.

Judith was truly an awesome woman!

Seconds after he climbed down the ladder to the dome and inspected the surroundings, he dispatched a team to investigate the rest of the checkpoints.

Another team was also dispatched to inform the authorities of the cities along the route because there might be similar armories throughout the checkpoints along the route.

He returned and helped Devin up after ensuring he had everything in place to ensure the safety of the innocent inhabitants.

Sebastian asked in a sarcastic manner, "Shall we rush you to the hospital?"

"That won't be necessary," Devin announced while shaking his head. He turned around and looked at Jake.

A few seconds later, he burst out laughing because Jake wouldn't stop muttering to himself. Devin suggested, "Why don't you rush him to the hospital instead? He must be horrified after going through such a life-threatening incident."

Jake complained with a frown, "Sebastian, he's making fun of me again! I'm not as wimpy as he says!"

"Indeed, it was very courageous of you to keep him company for the mission." Sebastian thought Jake deserved to be complimented.

The trio leaned against one another since two of them were heavily injured and unable to move around without others' support.

"Shall we send you home tonight?" Devin asked.

"Can we not? I'm afraid Dad's going to pick on me for trying something reckless if he's aware I've accidentally injured myself again!" Jake rebuked.

Seconds after Sebastian heard the bickering duo's conversation, he offered, "If that's the case, I'll check all of you into the most luxurious wards available in the hospital."

The trio thought it was great to gather around after being apart for such a long time. They couldn't help but recall the good old days they spent together.

Unfortunately, things would never be the same because there were merely three of them left when there were once four of them.

The one supporting the heavily injured duo fastened his grip in silence and warned himself to keep his friends safe at all costs.

Sebastian headed out early in the morning after spending a carefree night with his friends. He was set on a journey to destroy the rest of the armories as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the injured Devin had to stay in the hospital due to the aftermath of the catastrophic event.

On the other hand, Jake's father had shown up and brought him home shortly after Sebastian's departure in the morning.

He asserted in a serious tone when he was at the hospital, "Devin, if you truly consider Jake a close friend of yours, please stop getting him involved in something similar in the future."

Jake's father and Jake were also members of the army years ago. As a matter of fact, Jake and Devin became acquainted during their time in the army.

When Jake's father realized the risk associated with the occupation, he thought of dissociating himself from the members of the army. In the end, he joined the corporate world.

Devin would never resent his friend's father in spite of his harsh remarks. After all, the man in front of him had tried his best to stay away from the army over the years.

In the end, Jake had no choice but to leave with his father.

It was meant to be a trivial incident, but the call Sebastian received unveiled the serious accident going on behind the scene.