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"Hello?"

Sebastian was about to detonate another armory of the many checkpoints, but he paused when the man on the other end asked with a hoarse voice, "How many of my armories have you destroyed?"

"Eddie?"

The man on the other end guffawed because Sebastian's murderous intent was all over his callous tone.

"Yes! It's me! Answer me! How many armories have you destroyed?"

'What do you think?"

"Judith set up more than ten checkpoints throughout the route that was a few thousand miles. I think it's about time for you to take out the armory of the third checkpoint."

He carried on with the conversation in a casual manner just like he had nothing to do with the armories.

Sebastian sneered and announced, "I'm so sorry to let you down because I'm down to the last one as of now. You don't think I'm going to take it one at a time, do you?"

Eddie couldn't remain calm anymore. Gritting his teeth, he stuttered, "Y-You—"

The duo had one thing in common—the intention to take out the other party.

In order to provoke the already irked Eddie, Sebastian switched to speaker mode and detonated the armory after a few seconds.

Bam!

It wasn't even necessary for Sebastian to explain he had just blown up another one of Eddie's many armories.

Irked, Eddie yelled, "Sebastian, you're going to regret your decisions!"

Sebastian dismissed the man and hung up the call before casting the custom-made lighter toward the flushed away explosives.

The weapons wouldn't be much of a threat as soon as it was soaked. However, it was of utmost importance to make sure no one could get their hands on it.

The lighter had been custom-made to destroy the weapons once and for all.

After a few minutes, Sebastian received another call. As irked as he might be, he picked up the phone and asked, "What?"

"A-Argh!" someone started shrieking the moment the connection was established.

Sebastian looked at the screen of his phone and saw Jake yelling, "N-No! S-Spare my father!"

It turned out Jake and his father had been taken into custody against their will shortly after their departure from the hospital.

They were imprisoned in some sort of warehouse. Jake's father was on the verge of passing on while Jake was tied up.

"Sebastian, you should've seen this coming the moment you thought of picking on me!"

Shortly after the vicious man finished his warning, he launched a powerful strike in the direction of the barely conscious man with a hammer.

In split seconds, there was blood all over the place. The defenseless Jake continued yelling hysterically as his father passed on right before his eyes.

It was finally Sebastian's turn to yell at the man on the other end, "Eddie, set him free at once!"

"I thought of setting them shortly after our conversation, but you hung up on me! Haven't you had a lot of fun destroying my things? It's my turn to destroy the ones you hold dear in mind!"

As the heartless man returned to the side of the defenseless Jake with the hammer, Sebastian couldn't take it anymore.

Never would he think he had to grovel himself at the mercy of the vicious man. However, he wasn't given much of an option to keep his friend safe.

"No! It was merely a lie! There are quite a few left! As soon as you set him free, I'll return those to you!"

Scowling, Eddie stopped and asked, "Are you sure you're not lying?"

In an attempt to convince him, Sebastian showed him the map he had with his hands shivering against his will.

"See! You still have four armories at the underwater checkpoints nearby North Sea! I couldn't destroy them in time because I hadn't thought of the escape route for the team after detonating those checkpoints!!"

A few seconds of silence later, the man on the other hand stopped approaching Jake and returned to the phone.

"Well, you're quite an intelligent man, aren't you? Judith wouldn't have passed on there if only she put herself ahead of others back in the day!"

"What? Are you telling me she has passed on in an attempt to unveil your malicious plan?"

"Yes! We had quite a serious conflict because I was against the idea of setting up underwater checkpoints! I warned her of unforeseen circumstances wiping us out, but she insisted it was the right thing to do! I had to prove her wrong! Voila, she must've regretted her decisions when she was on the verge of dying!"

Is this some sort of confession? It turns out this jerk is also the one behind Judith's demise! I can't believe he has brought upon the demise of such an honorable woman merely because he's jealous!

Sebastian's bulging veins could be seen on his forehead because he was very close to losing his cool.

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In the end, Sebastian relented for Jake's sake.

Thus, the plan to destroy the other three bases was aborted.

"Mr. Hayes, isn't that too risky? From what I've heard, the ammunition stored in these three bases is way more superior to what we just destroyed. If it ever falls into Eddie's hands, we'll be doomed."

Karl was worried sick when he heard the news.

However, Sebastian kept mum.

His face darkened as he stared at the base they just destroyed.

Karl was stumped.

What is he staring at? It's just a big hole.

Karl followed his gaze.

"Can a submarine fit in the waters below?" Sebastian spoke up as he was hit with a sudden realization.

"Huh?" Karl was stunned.

"I don't think so. The minimum water depth of most modern submarines is 400 meters. Even though we're at the sea bed, I don't think we're in the deep sea since they're capable of digging a tunnel here. Why? Are you thinking of making your way there using a submarine?"

"Yes." Sebastian nodded in confirmation.

Indeed, the seabed was the best route for them to get there since they were being blackmailed by Eddie at the moment. However, if submarines won't work, they would need to think harder for alternatives.

Restlessness engulfed Sebastian once again.

It was getting harder for him to keep his cool these days. He would lose his temper and get irritated very easily, especially after Felicity's incident at the hospital.

In the end, he gave up and opted to wait for Jake's news.

Meanwhile, Devin, who was at the hospital, had also found out about the unexpected turn of events. He found it hard to believe that they were going to hand the ammunition depot over to Eddie just like that.

"Did Mr. Sebastian not do anything about it? He's just going to allow Eddie to get away with it?"

"Yes. So far there's nothing from him. I've only heard Mr. Sebastian asking Mr. Frost if it's possible to make their way over with a submarine. Mr. Frost told him no and that was the end of it."

A member of the special forces reported everything that had happened in detail to Devin.

Devin found it even harder to believe when he heard the news.

Sebastian has no plans?

For real?

Is it because of Jake?

Well, he does look like someone who values friendship even though he appears indifferent. Devin couldn't stand sitting around anymore and left the hospital with his injured lumbar spine.

"Major, are we going to rescue Mr. Chandler?"

"Yes. Sebastian's hands are tied probably because of something Eddie had shown him. I need you to get me the advance team. I need to first pinpoint that old man's location," Devin said through gritted teeth.

Hence, he set off to hunt Eddie down after a few minutes of delay.

Sebastian wasn't made aware of Devin's plan since he was still in the tunnel. Nonetheless, he slowly came back to his senses after getting some rest.

"What time is it now?"

"It's been two hours. Mr. Hayes, are we really just going to sit back and do nothing? I have yet to hear back from Mr. Chandler."

Karl also felt as if something was off.

He would have blurted out his question if Sebastian didn't look so tired in the past two hours.

Luckily for him, Sebastian stood up right after he finished speaking.

"Yeah. Call Xayden. I need to ask him something."

"Okav."

Karl quickly pulled out his phone and dialed Oceanic Estate's number.

Sebastian was already reading the military map when Xayden picked up the call after about ten seconds later.

"Is there a way to make these bombs dissolve?" Sebastian asked the first moment the call went through.

"Pfft!"

Xayden wasn't the only one taken by surprise as he spat out the mouthful of water he had just drank onto the lab table.

Even Karl's eyes twitched and he looked away upon hearing Sebastian's request.

Let the bombs dissolve?

My dear, do you even know what you're talking about? These bombs have a boiling point of 1000 degrees Celsius. It's impossible to dissolve them.

For the first time ever, Karl felt as if the Mr. Hayes he had held in the highest regard was merely human.

"N-No, Mr. Hayes, you can't dissolve nuclear energy," Xayden replied.

"So is there any way to dissolve or destroy these bombs in the shortest amount of time? I noticed that even after I set them alight using the lighter you gave me, the weapons are not completely destroyed in the waters."

"That's for sure. The sea water will only crystallize part of the aqueous solution in the lighter and prevent the nuclear reactor core from having a meltdown. You're asking me to do the impossible right now."

Xayden explained everything to Sebastian in layman terms through the phone.

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Sebastian kept quiet after hearing him out.

On the other hand, Karl was hit with a sudden realization.

No wonder Mr. Hayes kept staring at the sea bed just now. He was wondering about the lighter.

My dear Xayden is so smart!

"So how do you prevent the nuclear core from having a meltdown?" Sebastian spoke up once again after giving it some thought.

Xayden quickly referred to his messy notebook.

"By freezing it. Mr. Hayes, it's still impossible to completely wipe off radioactive waste from the surface of the earth. Nuclear energy is so powerful that nothing on this earth can stop it."

"Didn't you stop it just now?"

"I just froze it. I'll give you an example, what can you do when you can't handle a live lobster in the kitchen? Well, throw it into the freezer and freeze it of course. It'll stop moving then."

Everyone was rendered speechless.

What a way to explain things.

Karl turned to face the other direction once again.

As expected, Sebastian's face darkened upon his explanation.

However, he quickly came up with another idea for Xayden to work on.

"Then why don't we just freeze it? Do you have a way to freeze this part of the ocean in the shortest amount of time?

"Pfft!"

Once again, Xayden spat out water.

He felt indignant. Does he think I'm God?

Xayden hung up the phone in the end. After a few minutes, Sebastian emerged from the tunnel and was back on land.

Fresh air rushed into his lungs in that instant and he became wide awake. It also made him feel a lot better.

Karl went after him. He spoke up when Sebastian kept forging ahead. "Mr. Hayes, what are we supposed to do now? Are we just going to sit around and wait for Xayden to come up with his new invention? Wouldn't that be too late? There's only one hour left before you have to meet up with Eddie."

He checked the time on his watch.

However, Sebastian wasn't particularly bothered.

"Did I ever say I want it now?"

"Huh?" Karl widened his mouth in surprise.

"I thought you want it now... S-So what are we going to do with the three bases?"

"We'll just hand it over to him. Wouldn't it be better if we can just wipe the slate clean? I wouldn't need to waste so much time and energy to capture them if everything works out."

Sebastian replied in a chilly tone as he climbed into the car.

Karl was at a loss for words.

He stared at Sebastian, who was seated inside the car by now, for a solid ten seconds as his brain went into overdrive.

What a crazy plan.

He wanted to beat Eddie at his own game by returning the bases back to him. He would then set up a trap to take Eddie out when he comes in to collect the ammunition stored in these three bases.

Will his plan really work?

After all, Eddie is a cunning old fox.

They never got anything out of him even after coming up with ways to take him down in this period of time.

Karl was worried sick.

Sebastian's plan was absolute madness. He was going against all the rules in hopes that Eddie would fall for it.

It would be best if Eddie falls into his trap.

If not, he would be suffering a huge loss when he could have destroyed the three bases with minimal cost and effort.

Karl couldn't seem to shake off the worry after thinking things through.

After one hour, Eddie finally contacted them. He kept his word and let Jake go.

"Sebastian, I will keep my promise since you kept yours. I've dropped Jake off at your first checkpoint."

Eddie smiled with satisfaction.

Sebastian tightened his grip on his phone as he stared frostily at his phone screen, whereby Jake was blindfolded and tied up in a chair. He kept quiet and hung up the phone.

Karl immediately called his men in Coldbridge to pick Jake up upon seeing that.

Suddenly, however, he received a call from one of Devin's men.

"Mr. Frost, any news about Mr. Chandler?"

Karl was stunned. "Yes. Eddie dropped him off at the first checkpoint just a moment ago. Why?"

"He's there? That's weird. We're looking for Mr. Chandler as well alongside the Major, but his phone signal clearly indicates that he's not there," one of the members of the special forces piped up.

"Really? Where is he then?"

"The North Sea!" he answered.

The North Sea?

Karl was completely caught off guard.

Why is he at the North Sea?

He frowned. "But Eddie just told us that he dropped Mr. Chandler off at the first checkpoint. Could it be that that old geezer purposely placed Mr. Chandler's phone at the North Sea to confuse us? Honestly, I wouldn't be surprised if he did that."

"You're right. Okay, we'll head over to the first checkpoint first to check things out."

"Okay."

After their brief discussion, it was decided that Devin and his men will head over to the first checkpoint to check things out.

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Karl got into the car, planning to leave the site alongside Sebastian.

"Mr. Hayes, where are we going now? Mr. Jadeson called to inform that they will pick Mr. Chandler up instead. Are we staying here for the night or are we going back to Oceanic Estate?" Karl asked.

"Back to Oceanic Estate." Sebastian replied without missing a beat.

Karl was stunned for a moment.

So fast?

Sebastian wouldn't have been so decisive in the past even though he missed Sasha and the kids. He would usually take into account the bigger picture and make his decision for the betterment of everyone.

In the end, Karl drove him back to Jadeborough.

They also received news from Devin when they arrived at Jadeborough saying they had found Jake. He was in shock when they found him and had been sent to the hospital.

Karl heaved a sigh of relief upon hearing the news.

"Mr. Hayes, we've found Mr. Chandler. He's fine." Karl told Sebastian the good news as he alighted the car.

"Okay. Tell everyone to pull back and wait for my orders."

Sebastian relaxed as he got down from the car. He stared at the castle basking in the soft glow of the evening sunset and immediately made his way in.

Karl was rendered speechless.

Mr. Hayes seems different now.

He's turning into a family man.

Is it because he's getting older now?

Karl stared at him in confusion as Sebastian made his way into Oceanic Estate.

Meanwhile, inside Oceanic Estate. Sasha, who was busy pruning the flower bed, stood up in surprise when she saw Sebastian standing before her.

"Sebby, you're back so soon..."

Sebastian pulled her into his arms before she could even finish her sentence.

"Darling, did you miss me?" Sebastian asked as he placed his chin on her head and hugged her.

Sasha blushed.

When did he become so cheesy?

Haven't you noticed that the kids are still around?

The kids were stifling their giggles as they stared at their parents smilingly. "Let go of me, the kids are here." She nudged.

"So what? They're our kids."

Sebastian couldn't care less.

Sasha broke out into cold sweat and let him be in the end.

Sabrina also brought Jaena over when she saw Sebastian. "Why are you back so soon? Where's Devin?"

"He'll be back soon, don't you worry."

Sebastian then carried Sasha upstairs before Sabrina could even come up with a reply.

That night, a scrumptious meal was prepared at the Oceanic Estate. Everyone felt relieved since the main pillar of Oceanic Estate was finally back, including Jonathan.

Hence, dinner ended on a high note that night.

However, Sasha noticed that Sebastian stayed at Oceanic Estate for the next few days. He would either spend his time playing with the kids or just follow her around everywhere she goes.

"Darling, where are you going?"

"I'm going to see if Xayden is done with your request. Aren't you in a hurry to get your hands on it?"

"Okav."

His enthusiasm dampened upon hearing that and he let go of her hand.

Sasha was at a loss for words.

She gave him a good look before making her way downstairs.

What's happening?

Why does it seem like he's turning into an entirely different person all of a sudden?

Sasha was puzzled. However, she let it slide because she thought he simply wanted to spend more time with her and the kids after being out of town for some time.

After a few days, Devin was also back at Oceanic Estate. He was very surprised to see Sebastian still there.

"Sebastian, why are you still here? Don't you know that something big has happened at the Naval Base?" he asked in anger and frustration.

Devin rarely gets mad at Sebastian. However, things seem different this time around. Something very serious must have happened for him to question Sebastian the moment he stepped foot into Oceanic Estate.

Sasha and Sabrina were so shocked that they didn't dare make a sound.

Even Jonathan kept his gaze on Sebastian as he waited for an explanation.

Everyone's heart sank when they saw Sebastian's response. He would never allow something like that to happen in the past. However, a look of annoyance flashed across his face when he heard the news.

"What happened? Did that old man empty the Naval Base?"

"Yes, it was emptied." Devin held back his anger as he spoke through gritted teeth.

At that moment, pin-drop silence ensued in Oceanic Estate.

What did getting emptied meant? It would mean that all of Eddie's undercover agents escaped. It was devastating news considering they already had everything under control before this.

How could he make such a rookie mistake?

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Color gradually drained from Sasha's face.

After staring at the man for a long while, she questioned, "Sebby, how could you let all of them escape? You..."

"Alright! Drop the subject! I'll head over there to check it out."

Unexpectedly, the man flew into a rage and interrupted her.

Reluctant to explain himself to anyone, he turned around and stomped away with a surly face.

Sasha, Devin, and everyone else at Oceanic Estate were baffled, standing rooted to the spot.

Even after Sebastian had left and gone out of sight, they still could not pull themselves together.

Why did Mr. Hayes seem to turn into a different person suddenly?

A sense of foreboding overcame them, especially Sasha.

When she recollected herself, her hands and feet couldn't stop trembling.

"Devin, did he get hurt or meet any accident when he went out with you?" The woman turned to ask the man next to her in a quivering voice.

Only then it dawned on Devin that something was amiss.

His face went pale at her question. Shaking his head, he answered, "No, I've sent people to guard over him, so nothing unusual happened."

"Did you keep a close eye on him at all times? How did he end up this way all of a sudden? This is unreasonable," Jonathan asked anxiously.

However, no one knew the answer to his question, as there was no accident of any sort.

The only strange thing that happened was that he stayed in the military underground tunnel for quite some time.

That was right!

Karl thought of this and interjected right away. "I remember now. When he was there, he suddenly stopped doing anything after negotiating with Eddie."

"What? What do you mean by that?"

Everyone's eyes landed on him at once.

Karl gulped and told them everything that had happened in the military underground tunnel, including the crazy deal between Sebastian and Eddie.

Afterward, the entire Oceanic Estate fell into pin-drop silence.

This is not like him at all. Has something gone wrong? Previously, he would never allow such a thing to happen. Why would a wise man like him make such a hasty decision?

Sasha's heart sank at this thought.

The next morning, Sebastian returned. It took at least five to six hours to travel from Jadeborough to the Naval Base. He left the day before in the evening, but now he was back.

How long did he stay at the Naval Base?

Gazing at the man who showed up in front of her early in the morning, Sasha was so distressed that she could not utter a word.

"What's the matter? Aren't you happy that I'm back?"

Sebastian's brows knitted together.

I only stayed at the Naval Base for a short time and rushed home overnight straight away. Still, she's unhappy about it.

"No, I'm not unhappy. My heart aches to see you rush home this way. Sebby, how are things at the Naval Base? Are they settled?"

Sasha suppressed her feelings, made her way to the man, and wrapped her hands around his arm.

Sebastian appeared nonchalant as he answered, "What's there to settle? Everyone has run away. Just let it be. Now the Naval Force is free from parasites like them. I've asked Devin to reorganize the team."

Are things really that simple?

Sasha's heart grew heavier.

In the afternoon, Jonathan came home from the White House. The Congress had found out about the incident, questioning him what had happened and how such a major mistake came about.

"Has anything gone wrong with him again? Should we ask Grayson to check on him?"

A sudden realization hit Jonathan

Sasha's face turned as white as a sheet.

Though she had thought of this possibility, she refused to accept it.

That very afternoon, after Sebastian fell asleep, she asked Grayson to come over to examine him thoroughly.

In the end, Grayson found nothing abnormal about him, but asked Sasha a question instead.

"When you researched his hereditary disease, did you conclude whether it's recurrent?"

"What?"

The woman's expression changed drastically.

"I-I've never heard about that. Are you suspecting that he's fallen sick again?"

"I'm not sure, but according to my experience with mentally ill patients, they would relapse if they're triggered."

No one spoke a word, and the temperature at Oceanic Estate seemed to have dropped all of a sudden.

Has he been triggered?

Of course he has. On top of the recent issue about Felicity, I was kidnapped by Eddie from Aquene Temple and almost died in an explosion. Each incident alone is enough to trigger him.

"I heard that when Jake and his dad were kidnapped by Eddie, Sebastian saw Jake's dad being hammered to death. Though he wasn't close to the old man, Jake was still in Eddie's hands at that time. I guess this was the trigger," Grayson concluded.