

Chapter 337 Rescue Plan

The soldiers on the plane eyed Marco with suspicion. Despite his tall and sturdy build, his suit made him appear ill-suited for combat.

"Hubert, is this guy really joining us? How's he supposed to help with a rescue? We can't afford to get distracted, and we certainly don't have the manpower to assign a guard to him."

Unfazed, Marco didn't argue. Instead, he turned on his phone and summoned Qbot.

"Qbot, analyze the route."

"Data analysis commencing."

As confusion spread among the soldiers, Qbot swiftly produced the results.

"Daddy, according to the data analysis, our destination is the mountainous region between Vagow and Bluhm."

Qbot projected a map onto the wall, outlining the precise area.

The soldiers stared in astonishment. What on earth was this tech? It was incredible!

Maintaining his composure, Marco explained, "This is Qbot, an artificial intelligence developed by Bryant Group."

Loraine acknowledged Qbot, adding, "Bryant Group's AI



technology is truly outstanding. It will be a great asset to us."

Witnessing Qbot's rapid calculations firsthand, Hubert began to recognize Marco's capabilities and took him more seriously.

"Alright. Let's devise a rescue plan."

This time, he held nothing back and divulged the mission's details. "Our target is a smugglers' hideout. Mr. Torres and our team underestimated the enemy's defenses during their infiltration. The enemy had more ammunition than expected, forcing Mr. Torres and the others to retreat. Unfortunately, they accidentally alerted the enemy in the process, resulting in his capture."

It was unusual for the experienced Cheetah Command to make such errors, but this mission had been unique. The smugglers had concealed themselves exceptionally well amidst the rugged mountain terrain, and with the mission's urgency, there had been no time to verify.

Loraine requested a piece of paper and a pen from the soldiers, then inquired about the route they had taken and the scale of the enemy's base.

After absorbing their information, she began sketching a topographic map based on their descriptions.

Gradually, a detailed map emerged on the paper, more accurate than the soldiers' accounts.

When Loraine was immersed in her work, her seriousness and professionalism shone through. Her furrowed brow while contemplating and her radiant smile upon solving problems captivated Marco's attention.

It was then that Marco realized her earlier claims had not



been an exaggeration.

It wasn't solely for Rowan's sake that Hubert consented to Loraine accompanying them. As a matter of fact, her exceptional skills had convinced him.

Marco found himself entranced by Loraine, his heart swelling with warmth.

However, the thought of her working so diligently trying to save Rowan left him disappointed.

Deciding not to disturb Loraine, Marco asked Hubert, "Do you have a drone?"

Upon receiving confirmation, Marco requested Qbot to control a drone, scanning the mountain and the specific camp.

Loraine looked up, concern etched on her face. "Will the drone be detected if it gets too close?"

Qbot replied confidently, "Don't worry, Mommy. I'll execute anti-reconnaissance measures! Leave it to me!"

The soldiers, stunned by the term "Mommy," and recalled that the AI calling Marco "Daddy" earlier. They then turned their glances toward the two.

Feeling embarrassed, Loraine feigned ignorance and resumed her mapmaking.

Marco grinned as he issued an order. Qbot soon guided the drone into action.

Anticipation filled the cabin as everyone awaited news.

Qbot announced, "I'm back!" The screen flashed, displaying

the captured images.

Using the visuals, Loraine confirmed the final layout and completed the map.

She massaged her wrist and circled a location on the map. "Based on their camp's layout, this is our optimal entry point. We can start here."

The soldiers listened attentively, trusting her judgment.

The smugglers' camp location proved strategically advantageous. To avoid detection, the plane landed on the outskirts of the mountain forest.

The soldiers prepared to disembark, securing ropes for their descent.

Loraine grabbed the last set of equipment, intending to join them.

Suddenly, a slender hand seized the body armor from her grip. Loraine turned to find Marco, who proceeded to remove her other gear, and wore the equipment himself.

Bewildered, she inquired, "What are you doing?"

Holding her hand, Marco gently guided her into a seat, his voice low and determined. "If you want to save him, I'll help you. Loraine, just stay on the plane and wait for me to come back."

He shared an intense gaze with her before turning and leaping from the plane, leaving her no chance to protest.

As she watched his receding figure, Loraine found him more striking than ever, even compared to when he was wearing a suit. Her heart raced, unable to deny her growing

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feelings.

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Chapter 338 Venturing Into Danger

As Marco stepped off the plane and joined the soldiers on the ground, they dove into the mountain forest as one.

Hubert couldn't help but grin when he noticed Marco decked out in special equipment. "Nice look," he quipped.

Marco surveyed their surroundings, his face an emotionless mask. "Are we waiting for nightfall?"

Hubert nodded solemnly.

"After dark, they will drop their guards. But moving at night brings its own set of obstacles. Before you and Loraine joined, we had a fifty-fifty chance at success. Luckily, your artificial intelligence and Loraine's topographic map have boosted our chances."

Just then, Loraine's soothing voice chimed in through their earpieces. "Stay on your toes and be careful."

Each team member acknowledged her counsel.

Success seemed more attainable with Qbot's remote monitoring and Loraine's masterful planning from her airborne vantage point.

As darkness descended, the squad slipped into the camp undetected. SnORES echoed through the night, betraying the lax night watchmen.

Periodically, Loraine's steady instructions filtered through their earpieces.

"Two targets northwest."

"There's one more southeast."

The soldiers crept up to their marks and silently neutralized them.

Progress was swift and seamless, leaving the team exhilarated by the unprecedented ease of their mission.

Marco's performance astonished everyone. He was agile, stealthy, and swift, he consistently reached Loraine's designated locations first. Their teamwork was unspoken and efficient.

Genuinely awed, Hubert signaled his approval to Marco.

"Outstanding! You're nearly on par with the Cheetah Command. Have you had any training?"

"Yes."

Marco was reticent, and Hubert was left speechless.

Soon, the camp's guards were all but eliminated. The team scattered to search for Rowan.

Unexpectedly, it was Marco who discovered the imprisoned Rowan.

He overpowered the sentries and casually swung the door open. In the dim light, a tall, battered man came into view, bound to a chair.

The man's clothes were worn out, and blood seeped from

a gunshot wound in his abdomen.

"Mr. Torres? Rowan Torres!" Fearing that Rowan might lose consciousness, Marco called out to him repeatedly.

Upon hearing Marco's voice, Rowan lifted his head, dumbfounded. He then furrowed his brow. "What are you doing here?"

Swiftly moving to untie Rowan's bindings, Marco was anything but gentle, causing Rowan to wince as his wound was jostled.

"I came with Loraine. She was determined to rescue you." Marco flung the rope aside.

Mention of Loraine's name sent Rowan into a frenzy. "Is Lorrie here too? Where is she? And how did she find out I was in trouble?"

Rowan's anxious demeanor infuriated Marco. He clenched his teeth and snapped, "Now's not the time for this. If you're alright, get up. We need to get out of here!"

Rowan seemed to ponder something before deliberately provoking Marco. "Did Lorrie ask you to come? She doesn't love you anymore, Marco. This is all pointless."

Marco's face darkened with anger.

Clutching his injured abdomen, Rowan continued, "Marco, why are you suddenly so infatuated with Lorrie? Is it because she's now part of the Torres family? I suggest you give up and find someone more suitable to remarry. Lorrie isn't yours."

Fuming, Marco growled, "Shut up! If you and Loraine are truly together, why haven't you gone public?"

Rowan's reaction delighted Marco, who momentarily forgot the pain from his wound.

He merely wanted to rile Marco up and gauge his intentions. Grinning, he replied, "I used to worry too much. If I survive this, I'll return and announce my relationship with Lorrie."

Thinking of Loraine risking her life for Rowan and hearing Rowan's declaration, Marco grew convinced the two were an item. His eyes reddened, and he gripped his weapon tightly.

Bang!

Bang!

A series of piercing gunshots echoed through the air, even reaching Loraine in the plane.

Frantically monitoring the situation on Qbot's live feed, Loraine's heart raced.

Qbot tried to soothe her. "Mommy, don't worry. Everything is going smoothly. It'll be alright."

All of a sudden, Qbot fell into silence. Loraine's heart skipped a beat and she asked in a hurry, "Is something wrong?"

Without waiting for Qbot's answer, she felt compelled to get off the plane and didn't even bother to check her equipment.

Just before Loraine could jump off the plane, Qbot shouted, "Daddy is back!"

Loraine breathed a sigh of relief when saw Marco get on the plane, wearing a calm, hard face. But then, her face

darkened.

"Is it just you?"

Marco stared at her intently before stepping aside, revealing Rowan, who was supported by a soldier.

Stunned, Loraine disregarded Marco and rushed to Rowan's side.



Chapter 339 Close Relatives

Upon seeing the bullet wound on Rowan's abdomen, Loraine felt overwhelmed and her eyes welled up with tears.

Rowan coughed and gently touched her hair with a hint of remorse.

"I'm sorry for making you worry, Lorrie. This is all my fault."

He had always been the one protecting others. Not once in Loraine's life did she ever see him this fragile.

Tears streaming down her face, she hastily called for help to get Rowan onto the plane and urged the pilot to head back to the city immediately.

Hubert contacted the hospital to arrange the surgery ahead of time.

Feeling neglected, Marco stood in a corner, his heart aching as he watched Loraine focus all her attention on Rowan.

Once Rowan appeared, Loraine seemed to have eyes for no one else. She barely acknowledged Marco's presence.

Had he made a mistake by helping her rescue Rowan?

Eventually, the plane landed on the hospital rooftop, and Rowan was rushed into the emergency room.

The emergency light illuminated the tense atmosphere as

a group of soldiers silently guarded the door.

Loraine sat on a bench in the corridor, her eyes red and swollen, her face etched with worry.

Feeling both envious and sympathetic, Marco fetched a bottle of water from a vending machine, opened it, and handed it to her. In a hoarse voice, he reassured her, "There's no need to worry. The bullet didn't hurt any vital part of his body."

Loraine managed a weak smile and thanked him.

As the door to the emergency room swung open, the soldiers clustered around the doctor, and Loraine hurriedly rose to her feet.

The doctor explained, "The patient was shot and needs immediate surgery to remove the bullet. He's lost a significant amount of blood and requires a transfusion, but our blood bank doesn't have enough supply. Does anyone here have O-type blood?"

Marco had researched Loraine thoroughly and memorized every detail about her. He instantly recalled that Loraine had O-type blood.

Caring for Rowan as deeply as she did, Loraine would surely want to donate her blood.

Marco's expression shifted. Before Loraine could respond, he stepped in front of her and declared, "You're not allowed to donate blood! You're always so fragile!"

Loraine looked at him, perplexed. "I can't donate blood anyway."

Taken aback, Marco quickly grabbed Loraine's hand. "What

happened?"

His mind raced with various speculations, fearing that Loraine might have an undiagnosed anemia preventing her from donating blood.

Loraine's confusion deepened. She pulled back her hand and explained, "Rowan is my uncle. Blood transfusion between us carries the risk of hemolysis!"

"Uncle..." Marco was so shocked that he froze, struggling to comprehend the revelation.

Meanwhile, the soldiers with O-type blood rushed forward to volunteer. Marco, on the other hand, stood in place, lost in thought and pushed aside.

Soon, the doctor selected two donors. Loraine implored, "Please do everything you can to save him."

The doctor nodded and led the two soldiers away.

Still dazed, Marco murmured, "I've discovered that Rowan isn't related to the Torres family. What on earth is going on?"

Overhearing this, Hubert explained, "Mr. Torres didn't want to use the Torres family's influence, so he concealed his identity when he joined the army. Later on, he was promoted through his own accomplishments and abilities. His identity became classified information, and he chose not to disclose it. To this day, very few people know that Mr. Torres is actually Loraine's uncle."

Marco's face was a picture of curiosity. It was no wonder that the only file that Jimmie could find was the fake one.

Hubert heaved a sigh.

"Mr. Torres has been very strict with himself since joining the army. The only time he lost control was when something happened to Loraine's parents. He used all his resources to find Loraine and bring her back. He doted on her so much that he wouldn't allow anyone to hurt her. It's a shame that Loraine ran away from home and married you."

Marco was speechless. Many questions in his mind were answered.

Now he understood why Rowan was so hostile toward him. Marco had once hurt his dearly beloved niece.

Loraine's closeness to Rowan wasn't because she had fallen in love with another man, but because he was her uncle.

With this realization, Marco's face turned pale.

He had nearly offended all of Loraine's family, including Wesley and Rowan.



Chapter 340 The Wound

The doctor took away the two soldiers who would donate blood, while the remaining soldiers were instructed to wait outside.

With a furrowed brow, Loraine stared at the emergency room door, anxiety written all over her face.

Gently, Marco turned her around and reassured her, "Don't worry. Your uncle will be alright!"

"Yes!" Loraine nodded, her eyelashes quivering as she gazed into Marco's resolute eyes. Her worry began to dissipate.

Marco tenderly wiped the cold sweat from her forehead, guilt and remorse washing over him. "Loraine, I'm sorry. I... I misunderstood you again."

Loraine had fretted over her family all day, yet Marco had treated her coldly out of baseless jealousy.

Consumed by guilt, he wondered what to do next. Whenever it came to Loraine, he struggled to remain calm.

It took Loraine a moment to realize that Marco's odd behavior stemmed from not knowing Rowan was her uncle—a similar situation to what had transpired with Wesley.

She glanced at the ward and offered a faint smile. "Relax. It's not a big deal. I'm used to being misunderstood. It's better having rumors spread about me and my uncle than with other men."

Marco's heart ached. Loraine's indifference only made him feel more uncomfortable.

Unskilled at expressing himself, Marco pressed his lips together and sat beside her in silence.

After what felt like an eternity, the light above the door finally turned off. Loraine shot to her feet, and a group of soldiers gathered around the door.

The doctor emerged, a smile beneath his removed mask.

"Don't worry. The operation was very successful. The patient will make a full recovery after some rest."

Loraine exhaled a sigh of relief. The prolonged anxiety had taken its toll, and she nearly collapsed upon hearing the good news.

Thankfully, Marco caught her in time. It was then that she realized he had been by her side throughout the ordeal.

Gratitude swelled in her heart, and she said sincerely, "Marco, thank you for saving my uncle."

He said nothing, but his eyes radiated warmth.

Lowering her gaze, Loraine confided, "My parents passed away early. Uncle Rowan, Uncle Wesley, and Grandpa are the most important people in my life. I can't lose any of them."

This marked the first time Loraine had voluntarily mentioned her family to Marco and exposed her vulnerability.

Sympathy surged within him, and he yearned to pull her into an embrace. But as he lifted his hand, he hesitated and

frowned.

Lorraine sensed something was amiss and examined his arm.

His uniform was still on, the fabric damp, and dark, dried blood stained his sleeve.

Her expression shifted. "You're injured? Why didn't you tell me?"

Feeling guilty, she continued, "It's all my fault. I was so worried about Uncle Rowan that I didn't notice you were hurt too."

Marco pursed his lips. He had believed Lorraine only cared about Rowan and hadn't mentioned his injury because he assumed it was minor.

Upon noticing the anxious expression on Lorraine's face, Marco felt a sense of joy that softened his heart, and he couldn't help but smile.

"What's so funny? Did you get a concussion or something? You're injured. Stop laughing!" Lorraine's voice carried a tone of exasperation.

Marco immediately stopped smiling and reassured her, "I'm fine..."

But before he could finish, Lorraine led him to find a nurse for treatment.

The nurse cut away the fabric around his arm, revealing a bloody wound. Lorraine's heart ached at the sight, her worry mirroring the anxiety she felt while waiting outside Rowan's emergency room.

Anxiously, she asked, "How is he? Will he be okay?"

The nurse smiled and said, "He was grazed by a bullet. Your boyfriend was lucky that he didn't get directly shot."

Boyfriend?

Lorraine hesitated but chose not to correct the nurse, allowing her to continue tending to the wound.

As the nurse applied iodine and disinfected the injury, Marco winced slightly. Lorraine clutched her clothes, appearing more pained than he did.

When the nurse finished bandaging the wound, she offered a kind smile and joked, "It's all right. Your boyfriend is tough enough to handle this. But he should stay in the hospital for further observation."

Lorraine knew Marco's tendency to bear pain and refuse hospitalization, so she agreed on his behalf.

The nurse advised, "He shouldn't use his arm these days and should make sure to keep the wound dry. You may need to help him clean his body."

Lorraine listened carefully, her eyebrows raising in surprise. "Okay, I will... Wait, what?"

The realization hit her—would she be the one to help him clean his body?

She glanced over and saw Marco's intense gaze.

