

Immaculate Spirit

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Nathaniel had learned that in a psychology book regarding hostages taker, by killing the first person in such a brutal way and without mercy, Nathaniel was in fact torturing psychologically the others four as well. Not far from him, Ethan and Keith start talking in a low voice using their earpiece.

"I understand why he asked for men with strong stomach only, my god that was gruesome." Ethan said.

"He just cut that man head off like it was nothing, look at how he speak and how he walk, he's too calm! I saw CIA interrogator not as composed as he is right now. Yes, he met some who like inflicting pain and other were just blasé after conducting too many of them, but never he met one who was that composed after doing that. "He's giving me the creep to be honest." Keith answers, if he did not had his hood on, everybody would see that he was very pale right now.

"Wait, what? Who cut who's head off!?" Someone asked in the com.

"Williams shut your mouth!" Ethan rebuked angrily. "Echo teams, sitrep!"

"Echo one, clear."

"Echo two, clear."

"Echo three, clear."

"Rodger, keep radio silence unless you have something to report." Ethan order cooly.

"Oh my god, Ethan he just cut the woman leg off!" Keith almost shout in the com.

It was only forty five minutes later than Nathaniel was satisfied with the answers he receives. At that point, of the five that was here initially, four of them had died and Bernard was the last to be alive even if he was missing a foot and most of his fingers. Nathaniel finally walk away and signal Ethan and Keith to come over. Once they were

here, he immediately start speaking.

"Something is bothering me about this."

"Yeah, you just torture and killed four people!" Keith answers almost instantly.

"No, not that, they were scums and they deserved it, you heard what they confess doing. No, something is not right with Bernard. Tell me, if you were to be taken, forced to see your entire team get tortured and killed in front of your eyes and then also being tortured with no hope of escaping or surviving, what would your reaction be?"

"I don't know, I think I would be despaired, I would scream in pain." Ethan start answering.

"I would begged anyone to release me." Keith add.

"I would want to die." Ethan also add.

"Exactly. Now, look at him and tell me what you see." Nathaniel instruct to the two ex-Seals members.

"Anger, Rage." Keith answers.

"Pain and... wait! Glee? What the hell?" Ethan shout surprised.

"Bingo, based on my basic understanding of human psychology, there is only two reason for someone to experienced that kind of emotion in this situation. First, he currently suffering from a psychotic breakdown and he's delusional or he believe that someone is coming to save him and the glee is there because for him, we are already dead."

Nodding, Nathaniel walk to the entry of the barn where the bag containing all their belonging was resting. Opening it, he start rummaging through it and saw the man's phone turn off with the battery out like Ethan told him. Looking at the others phone, he could see that they were all turned off with the batteries out. Not discouraged, he kept looking until he find the electronic watch of Bernard in it. Looking attentively, he find a small panic button on the side of it. Lifting it off the bag to show it to Ethan and Keith, he spied Bernard giving a pained smile.

"Electronic watch with GPS, he must have pressed the panic button on it before being knock out. We are going to have company very soon." Nathaniel said.

"Echo team, report, do you see any contact?" Ethan asked into his earpiece. "Sir,

everything is clear, we should leave now."

"No, we are going to stay. You see, I knew something was not right from the beginning. Despite what Bernard here try to demonstrate, he's not sophisticated. In fact, he lack the smartness, the education and the charisma to be the head of anything. Even being the leader of these five was not logical, he's not a hunter, the man on the left was smarter and the woman more aggressive than him. No, I believe he was the lieutenant because he's from the same family as the one who run the entire show." Nathaniel said before taking his phone out and dialing his favorite number.

"Genius of the immaterial, you can speak mortal."

"Lina." Nathaniel laugh. "I didn't know you had a title now, I should think about having one also."

"You already have one but I'm not supposed to tell you about it, in fact let's act like I didn't said anything. What do you need sir?"

Nathaniel was curious to know his title but decided wisely to let it go.

"Geolocate my position and use the NSA satellite above LA right now to search for vehicles in formation coming my way."

"Alright, wait a minute." Lina said before being silent for a few moments. "I got it! Four cars are coming your way, they are four miles to your west. Based on their position and their speed, they will be to your position in five minutes. I'm picking eighteen different heat signal in those cars. Do you need help?"

"Can you make sure that no calls coming from this area is going to connect to 911 for the next ten minutes? I'm going to try to keep everything silent but there is no telling what they are going to bring in term of firepower."

"Sir, this is going to be difficult. If they call from their cell phone, I can filter those calls easily but landline are completely different. I'm going to do what I can." Lina said hesitantly.

"Thanks Lina, you are the best." Nathaniel said affectuously before hanging up. "Okay guys, we have eighteen hostile approaching the property. Ethan, I want you and Keith to join the others outside and form two teams. The entry of the ranch is located to the North East, I want one team to the North and one team to the East. Don't try to defend the gate, let them enter the property and make their way to here, I will stay in the barn and take the last information that I can off of Bernard before they arrived. Once it's done, take them in a crossfire, put suppressor on your weapon and don't let anyone get away, got it?"

"Yes sir." They answers at the same time before Ethan add. "But sir, it will put you in arm's way, you are sure you want to do this?".

"I do." Nathaniel nodded.

"Sir." Ethan also nodded, taking his sidearms and presenting it to Nathaniel which smile in return.

"I won't be needing it, you should keep it. Twenty five feet Ethan, that's the only thing I need. When I will need a gun, I will just pick one on the ground. Now go, we wasted too much time already." Nathaniel said, sending them out.

Once they were outside of the barn, Nathaniel got back to interrogating Bernard while Ethan start giving order.

"Echo one, Echo two. Assemble, find a hiding place to the North side of the property and wait there, we have eighteen hostile approaching the perimeter. Our orders are to let them through and then strike them from the flank. Echo three, with me to the East of the property. ETA, four minutes. Everyone put suppressor on your weapons, even your sidearms, let's try to be as quiet as possible."

"What he was talking about twenty five feet?" Keith asked while running to the East.

"Not now Keith!" Ethan answer while also running.

Once they found a good position to see without being seen, Ethan briefed his team.

"Okay boys, you know your job. We have no idea who is going to come, we have no idea their training or what firepower they are going to bring. It's almost like we are still in operation for the military." Ethan chuckle darkly, a few of them joining in the com and near him. "But we know they will be twice as more than we are. Let me be perfectly clear, even if we are home, these people don't care, we are going to shoot to kill, no mercy."

Hearing that everyone was on the same page, Ethan kept radio silence, waiting for them to arrived. That's when he remember something and turn to Keith who was lying down, alert and his M4 ready.

"When I was training, we had an instructor who was a Native American. He had a name unpronounceable but his tribe was the more fearsome in knife fight and he was teaching exactly that. He used to say that anyone who was at less than twenty five feet from him was in his killzone because whatever weapon you had in hand, you would never had the time to take it and aim it at him before dying. That man was a serious

badass." Ethan said.

"But, he doesn't have any knife on him." Keith answers.

"Does he? I guess we will see very soon if he had one of not. They are here." Ethan said, seeing the car headlight approaching the property.