

"There are military officers at the door." Tony stated seriously.

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"Good evening, Sir, Madam. We would like to invite Major Gordon for clarification of some issues concerning one of your properties in Laguna; Major Gordon alone." Though the words were spoken with civility, the face of the man was very serious and stern.

"Isn't it too late in the evening, Sir?" Lydia bravely asked.

The three men chuckled and looked at each other. "Madam, as you very well know, nothing is too late or too early when it comes to orders. I'm sure Major Gordon knows about that." The leader among them said.

Tony and Lydia looked at each other. "Why don't you please come in first and have some coffee? Perhaps we could settle this inside." Tony invited them in, much to the guarded look of Lydia.

"Well, we only conduct investigations in our facility."

"Could I at least change my clothes?"

The stern colonel looked at him intently. "Since you seem to be a highly respectable man, we will deviate from our protocol. Please be informed that your house is well-

surrounded by my men. Any attempt of escape is not possible and will not be forgiven."

Patiently Tony answered. "I am a man of my word. Just please let me change my clothes so I can have at least a sense of decency."

"In that case, we will have the coffee that you are offering." Without waiting for the couple's reply, the colonel stepped in with the two men.

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Lydia and Imelda welcomed the sunrise at Clark Air Base. The sound of a distant helicopter and early morning drill of the soldiers pervaded the air as they watched the rising sun from the berth.

"Mama, will Papa join us here?" Imelda asked her mother.

"Shhhhh... I hope so, baby. I hope so." Lydia pressed her daughter close.

"Lydia!" The familiar voice of a trusted friend since the start of their operations called her. She turned around to see Peter, a more mature person - looking more relaxed than when he was active in the military. Now he held an important position in the US Embassy.

"Peter, thank you for coming." Lydia extended her hand to greet him.

"Why don't we have breakfast and let Imelda rest in the safe house?"

"Thank you." Lydia and Imelda join him in walking towards a waiting car.

"All your personal belongings are in that safe house. We can also proceed with the agreement once we are there."

"I almost thought you wouldn't reply to my call. Good thing that you did. Mel and I would have been left there stuck and doing things by ourselves."

"First we'll have breakfast and then later we'll talk about that." Peter stressed. "You both need to have something in your stomach first."

Once settled in the safe house; Imelda was already resting in her room, Lydia sat down to discuss the details with Peter. They were joined by a dignitary from the U.S. Embassy, Mr. Nicholas.

"First of all, we are exhausting all means to locate where Tony is right now. Once we have the information, our men are ready to take him and bring here. We have also sent men to get Jennifer and your grandchild and bring them here." Peter announced. "Second, we shall issue you the Federal Gold Certificates once the gold bars reach the U.S. Treasury. But for now, you will be issued 10% of the face

value of the certificates. It will be transferred to your private account of choice whether here or whether one of your accounts in the U.S."

"Tony and I agreed that when this thing happens, we will be using the offshore accounts. Here are the details of the same." Lydia pulled out a file from the bag that she had been carrying.

"Then it shall be done." Mr. Nicholas nodded.

"However, we have just received bad news." Peter announced solemnly.

Lydia became alert and straightened up.

"We were just informed by the men we left behind to serve as look-out to your house that military trucks barged into your gates. We all know that we cannot compromise the embassy and the base in this particular endeavor; hence, instead of fighting the intruders, they made their escape from your property successfully. We all have a feeling that most probably the remaining half of the treasure in your massive vault may have been looted by them already."

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"We are doing our best, Lydia. I'll let you know at once." he left briskly.

Outside, he smiled to himself for having succeeded with his plans to get a hand on the treasures. How he would

have the other half, he would deal with later. What mattered now was that he could send his report regarding his achievement. He played a movie in his mind visualizing that at the very moment, all the people that matter at the organization were already talking about him. He entered the car and gave the driver his order where to go. Now, where could Tony be? He must be retrieved. He is still my friend, after all.