

## Coffee Addict

### Chapter 19 - Evacuation

**'Chad Hudson was just two days away from his thirty sixth birthday. He was glad Kate had moved back in with him, realistically she'd never moved out. Seeing her things around his apartment, yet sleeping alone.....It hadn't lasted long; but it had been hell. Now Yoon was using Kate's place and he'd been warned to keep well away from Yoon Choi.'**

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Teresa looked across at Lidia, who was still fast asleep in their bed. Definitely their bed now, as Lidia had spent seven nights in a row sharing that bed with her. There had been some weekend shifts and an entire night on duty after Jess had killed one of the creatures that looked like a human. Lidia had a rare day off, a chance to get up late and be a sloth for the day. Of course, Teresa was thinking of ways to enjoy their only lie-in together for.....It had been a while. A sleeping Lidia was no fun at all. Teresa began to nibble at her lover's left earlobe.

"Are you awake?" Asked Teresa.

"Sort of.....I can think of ways to thoroughly wake me up." Said Lidia.

"You're sure no one will call and ask you to go in?" Asked Teresa

"I told you last night.....I'm yours for the day."

Teresa knew how to wake Lidia up and drive her crazy, both at the same time. Most of it involved the use of Teresa's experience with her tongue and fingers. Kissing was nice too; Lidia was a really great kisser. Some women went at it too hard, while some kissed too soft. Lidia got it just right, every single time.

"Oh, wow.....You deserve some kind of award for kissing." Said Teresa.

"I'll tell Mateo Rodriguez.....Maybe he'll give me a medal for it." Said Lidia.

Teresa was feeling mildly guilty, a rare experience. She'd told Lidia they had an entire day to get hot, sweaty and above all.....Satisfied. There was somewhere Jaimie had offered her, a solid and above all, currently unused barn. It sounded ideal as a new home for Rocky. Jaimie hadn't even asked her why she needed it. Jaimie was like that; he hated having to explain himself, so he didn't expect it of others. Softly-softly, gradually getting around to it, seemed the best way to introduce Lidia to the idea. If they looked at the barn today; Rocky could be living there tomorrow. Teresa very gently, kissed the nipple of Lidia's right breast.

"Oh, you can do that to me forever." Said Lidia.

It was the wrong moment, but it would be the wrong moment all day. Teresa needed to see the barn, get the keys and begin packing up Rocky's things. For a creature of unknown origin, Rocky needed quite a lot of things to live safely and comfortably.

"Jaimie called.....He has the perfect place for Rocky to live." Said Teresa.

"How does he have so much unused property?" Asked Lidia.

"The same reason the Wilkins family had so many empty barns." Said Teresa. "Most farms in the area have experimented with livestock, but it's rarely a success. The Wilkins farm tried cattle and Jaimie tried poultry. You need a lot of space to keep all those chickens. Now Jaimie makes far more profit out of his avocado plantation.....Hence....."

“He doesn’t need the poultry barns, I get it.” Said Lidia. “I’m guessing you want to go and see the barn today ?”

“Yes, please.....I promise to make it up to you tonight.” Said Teresa.

“Oh, you can twist me around your little finger.” Said Lidia. “How about we cuddle for a while, before sharing a long hot shower ? It seem rare for us to shower together recently. You’re busy with Rocky and I’ve had so many early morning meetings.”

Had she been neglecting Lidia ? Teresa felt that maybe she had, but it was unintentional. There was just so much stress recently, in all their lives.

“That sounds perfect.” Said Teresa. “I’ve missed us showering together. I hope you like Jaimie’s barn it sounds the ideal place to house our pet.”

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Changes always happened and life was always complicated. Luckily, most of the complications weren’t a problem for Yoon Choi. Kate had moved back in with Chad; actually most of her belongings had never left his apartment. That had meant Yoon could use Kate’s apartment, if she wanted to ? There was more space in Kate’s place than in her tiny room at Café Loco. True, she’d miss the burgers and nibbles being just downstairs, but she had taken the offered set of keys from Kate. Yoon was at Café Loco, looking at a genuinely upset owner.

“I’ll be back for meals so often, Howard.” Said Yoon. “You’ll never know I’ve left.”

Howard smiled, but some of the staff seemed unconvinced. That was how the place felt; not there long, but some of the staff had already started treating her like family. Yoon had left something in her room deliberately; it was one of her personal foibles. There was a paperback book in one of the drawers; she’d bought it at an airport in America, while travelling on business.

“We will all miss you, Yoon.” Said Howard. “Was it the soldiers outside ? Did all that scare you ? I can understand if it did.”

“No.....There’s just more space at Kate’s place.” Said Yoon. “I love Café Loco and as I said, I’ll be a regular for burgers and fries.”

A mixture of the truth and a lie, she really did love Café Loco. As for living there ? Yoon liked to live somewhere peaceful, somewhere her car wouldn’t be molested and the locals waved at her. Then she’d seen cops in body armour firing grenades at a huge creature; right outside where she was living. The windows had been blown in and Café Loco suddenly wasn’t a peaceful refuge any longer. Yes, she was lying to Howard, but it was better than upsetting him with the truth. And of course, there was more space at Kate’s.

“Did you leave anything in the room ?” Asked Howard, with a smile.

He was a good friend now; she’d even told him most of her personal foibles, her weird eccentricities. Even her family didn’t know some of them.

“Just an old, worn paperback.....The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown.” Said Yoon.

“I pictured you as a Hemmingway person.” Said Howard.

“Sometimes I am.”

In theory Howard owed her money, she had paid for the room for another month. They agreed the credit would stay on her account, to be used for future meals and bar bills. Yoon had to hug Howard as they said goodbye.

“Stay safe.” Howard called out, as she carried her bags to her car.

“You too.” She called back.

Kate had offered her the unofficial loan of her company car, as she was using Chad’s car more than he was. Tempting, but Yoon had become used to her long term hire. There had been a call to the

company to extend the hire even further. A hire car seemed a good idea. If it was blown up or stomped on, she could simply hire another one. She put her bags in the car and drove past Café Loco, where some of the staff waved at her.

"I love this place." She mumbled. "One day.....I really would like to permanently live here."

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Chad Hudson was just two days away from his thirty sixth birthday. He was glad Kate had moved back in with him, realistically she'd never moved out. Seeing her things around his apartment, yet sleeping alone.....It hadn't lasted long; but it had been hell. Now Yoon was using Kate's place and he'd been warned to keep well away from Yoon Choi.

"It's not a question of trust." Kate had said. "She will still have a little feeling for you and.....No use denying it, you'll still have affection for her. Opportunity is the thing, Chad. If you avoid seeing her, there won't be a problem."

Was he really that shallow and superficial ? Yes, if he was being honest with himself, he probably was. Yoon had designed the superguns, which meant they could, and had, kill the creatures. It would be strange if he didn't have a little crush on the woman. Kate was right; he had to avoid any situation where that crush might lead to something else, something physical.

"I've no one for the roof tonight." Said Craig. "I know it's not what you're here for, but can you help me out ? I can give you a radio.....Though be careful what you say, in case I've linked you through to being on-air. In other words, no fucking swearing."

Craig had a grin that made him look like about fifteen, but he did effectively run V-Boom radio. Chad was officially walking around most of the centre of town, looking for anything untoward. That tended to mean spotting any creature trying to cause mayhem in the village. What Chad tended to do was spend hours in the V-Boom office. They had real coffee and a vending machine full of choc bars and junk food. A trip to the roof was actually a good idea. The view from there was good; if anything nasty entered the village he'd see it.

"No problem.....Give me the radio and headset." Said Chad.

"Do you need instructions on how to use the radio ?" Asked Craig.

"I think I can manage that." Said Chad.

Everyone seemed to know he'd spent time in the army, even if they were unsure whose army. Then he's asked a damned fool question like that. Craig might have been trying to be an annoyance. Chad picked up the case which contained his supergun and a large amount of ammunition.

"I'll call you when I'm in position up there." Said Chad.

"Just remember.....No fucking swearing." Said Craig.

"Arsehole." Replied Chad.

None of the buildings in that part of the village were that high. The V-Boom office had three floors, four if you included the attic. There was a flat roof area at the front of the building, which gave an excellent view; all the way along most of Main Street. Chad was fit; he actually jogged up the stairs to get to the flat roof.

"In position." He spoke into the radio. "Looks like we might get a little rain later."

"I'll make fresh coffee in about an hour." Said Craig.

"Sounds good."

Chad decided that maybe Craig wasn't that much of a jerk after all. There was a fixed position telescope at a corner of the flat roof. The cover needed to come off and Chad used a tissue to remove any dust from the eyepiece. He used the telescope to look in the direction of Café Loco. It

was busy; the street was full of cars. The food was good and Howard was well liked. They also served the best coffee anywhere within miles. Chad pressed send on the radio.

“Café Loco are busy tonight.”

“I need an on-air piece in about half an hour.” Said Craig. “Just where’s busy, where isn’t and the weather. People love hearing about the weather.”

“Yeah.....No problem, I can do that.” Said Chad.

He pointed the telescope to look in the opposite direction to Café Loco. Whatever was down there looked busy too. It was the general store, of course it was. The best supermarket style shop in the village. They were never going to be open all night, but they were now opening until nine every weeknight. Something down that end of Main Street was sparking, bright blue electrical sparks. Probably nothing to worry about, the lights in the buildings near V-Boom, hadn’t even flickered. Chad decided to mention it to Craig, just in case it became an issue.

“There are electrical sparks, about three blocks past the general store.” Said Chad. “Is that a regular thing, Craig ?”

“No, but it’s probably nothing.” Said Craig. “The lights are on down here. I’ll need that on-air piece soon.....Lots on the weather, alright ?”

“Yeah, no problem.” Said Chad.

Kate called and the phone system was far from perfect. Nothing sinister, it was often only barely fit for purpose. It was a short call, with them both having to yell a lot and repeat a few sentences. It was almost a relief to share a ‘Love you,’ and end the call. When Chad used the telescope again, there was just darkness at the far end of Main Street.

“Craig.....The far end of Main Street has gone dark.”

“I’ll ask the listeners to call in if they know what’s happening.” Said Craig.

It really couldn’t be anything that bad, could it ? The street was packed with people out there and the lights in the building across the street hadn’t even flickered. Anything nasty happening would have been reported, by V-Boom’s eager and observant listeners. The loud crash, when it happened, sounded quite close, but everything still looked fine. Craig’s turn to call him.

“Did you hear that ?” Asked Craig.

“Yes.....Sounded like it was very close.” Said Chad. “I’d guess it was something happening behind the buildings over the road.”

“Keep watching.....Let me know if anything occurs.” Said Craig.

“Will do.”

It had that feel of unreality, as the creature just about flattened the building directly opposite V-Boom. A huge brute, which didn’t resemble any particular predator. If anything it was like a massive mole, tearing the building apart with its front claws. Chad remembered Linda’s Flowers being over the road and now it was a ruin, the rubble filling the street. At least Linda; would hopefully be safe in her own home at that time of night.

“Fuck.....What is happening out there ?” Asked Craig.

The power went out, all of it and seemingly everywhere. There wasn’t a light to be seen anywhere, no matter where Chad looked. There was a sound though, there was screaming somewhere, a lot of screaming. Their radios seemed to be working, though V-Boom had probably stopped transmitting.

“Chad, talk to me man.....What the hell is happening ?” Asked Craig.

“Run.....You can’t do anything here.” Said Chad. “Use the back streets and run home.....Be with your loved ones.”

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Maria and her friends often referred to themselves as the Muisca Brats. Above being school buddies, even more important than who was kissing who; they were all part of the village religion. It was probably why Alfonso had been forgiven so quickly. He might be an arsehole, but he was one of them. It was late and as often happened, the group of friends had split up. Maria had no idea where the others were, while Tilly and her eyed up the young men outside Meteors Bar. The place had been closed once for selling booze to minors. Being the village, that just meant they were now more popular than ever. The young men on the sidewalk outside the infamous bar had something the boys at Maria's school didn't have; they had transport. Scooters rather than cars, but any transport made them a little bit special.

"Leo's sister told me he'd bought a new Vespa." Said Maria.

"My mum would kill me if I came home on the back of a scooter." Said Tilly.

"It's exciting.....All that wind in your face." Said Maria.

"Ahhh.....Who has been taking you out?"

"That would be telling." Said Maria.

Meteors was down a back street; as were most of the places the young liked to gather. Café Loco wasn't far away, the light from the windows created a glow that was visible above the rows of shops and bars near Meteors. Café Loco was fun, but Howard refused to sell alcohol to anyone he wasn't sure was old enough.

"I fancy a burger." Said Tilly.

"Oh yes, a cheeseburger with fries." Said Maria.

"We could buy two bottles of beer here and sneak them into Café Loco." Said Tilly.

"Great idea."

Mexican beer of course, it was the bottle you wanted to be seen drinking from. There were better Colombian beers, but Mexican Corona was what all the cool kids drank. There was a counting of the money they had; which was just about enough for two bottles of Corona. Nothing left for cheeseburgers and fries, but as Maria pointed out....

"Howard knows my dad; he'll let me pay another time."

Or at least she hoped he would. If Howard said no, it would be embarrassing and Tilly would tell everyone she knew. Tilly might be a fellow Muisca Brat, but they didn't stop her being a bitch sometimes.

"Come on.....I'm starving." Said Tilly.

They were out of the back street, called Patrick Street, though Maria had no idea why. The crowd outside Café Loco was large, but usually friendly.

"It's busy.....We might need to wait for our burgers." Said Tilly. "My mum gets cranky if I arrive home too late."

"So does mine, but I don't think I can sleep if I don't eat." Said Maria.

They were right outside Café Loco when the lights flickered, but came back on again. The telephones might play up, but the power supply was usually fine. It was the noise that made everyone look down Main Street; in the direction of the V-Boom building. A huge creature was clambering over the building where Linda's Flowers had her shop. The creature was as tall as the building and using its claws to carve its way out of the collapsing shops. The sound reminded Maria of movies about earthquakes, or tornadoes.

"Come on, Tilly." Said Maria. "We need to get somewhere safe....My house is the closest."

Tilly looked dazed, which wasn't surprising. Maria grabbed her arm and led her down Main Street and away from where the creature was bringing chaos to the building opposite where V-Boom had their office.

"We can cut through Plantation Street." Said Maria.

"Fine." Said Tilly.

They'd barely gone fifty feet, when the lights went out. Every light was out, everywhere. All those reassuring glows had gone from every shop; even the famous Café Loco. To Maria it was stygian darkness, at least for a while. Gradually her eyes adjusted to whatever light was left. It was a clear night with a moon and the lights of cars in Main Street were still working. It wasn't much, but it was enough light to walk home by.

"What do you think happened to the power?" Asked Tilly.

"The plantation, all our power comes through the plantation." Said Maria. "Difficult to be sure, but someone, or something probably destroyed major power cables, maybe even the generators."

"Do you think it was them? They're creatures, Maria.....Just mindless animals."

Kate talked to her quite a bit about the creatures and the various theories the Tessera Coffee science team had about them. It seemed that both Luke and Chad thought they were far from mindless.

"They're watching and learning." Kate had told her. "Eventually they might be cleverer than us. By then they'll have spread right across the globe. They're waiting for their opportunity."

Kate had never quite said the words, but she obviously meant their opportunity to replace mankind as the dominant species on the planet. Maria thought it was the wrong time to introduce Tilly to that particular theory. Of course it might all be nonsense and they were mindless brutes who'd simply got lucky a few times.

"I'm not sure, Tilly." Said Maria. "We need to get to safety.....Then we can begin wondering about what happened."

Halfway home and a couple on a scooter went past them, the girl on the back screeching at them.

"Get out of the village." Yelled the girl. "Anyway you can.....Run; the creatures are attacking."

The scooter turned the way Maria would go to get home, but she hadn't recognised the girl's voice. As soon as the scooter had turned the corner, they were relying on moonlight again.

"Will your mum mind me just turning up?" Asked Tilly.

"Of course not.....The streets aren't safe." Said Maria.

Her mum did have a bit of reputation for being fierce, but that night, with what was going on....She'd treat Tilly as though she was one of her own. Her mum might be strict and a little crazy, but she had a heart of gold. They came across the scooter again, the one with the girl yelling at them to get out of the village. It was on its side with the lights still on, though its engine had stopped. There was blood, which looked black in the darkness. There was no getting around the fact that it was blood, quite a lot of blood.

"Crap.....She'd been eaten." Said Tilly.

Half eaten actually, though it didn't seem the right time to start correcting her friend. The girl had lost about half her chest and one leg. As for the man who'd been driving the scooter? There was no sign of him, though some of the blood was probably his. Tilly began walking towards the scooter, as if seeing if the girl needed help. Maria grabbed her and shook her head in the glow from the bike's lights.

"No, Tilly.....No." Said Maria. "We're staying away from the scooter and going straight to my house."

"Sorry.....Yes, we'll go to somewhere safe." Said Tilly.

Maria had never been that decisive before. It was as if life with her mum had prepared her for just such a disaster. For a while at least, Maria knew she'd be in her element. They had storm lanterns in her house, just in case the power ever went off. Enough for a little light in every room, should the worst happen. It was nice to see the battery powered storm lanterns, giving their curtains a bit of a glow. It meant they weren't going into an empty house. Maria used her key to open the door, before beckoning Tilly inside. It was quiet, though someone had put a storm lantern in every room.

"Mum.....It's me; I've brought Tilly home with me." Yelled Maria.

Her mum appeared, like a genie let loose from its jar. There was a lot of hugging, for her and Tilly.

"Tilly will need to sleep here tonight." Said Maria.

"Yes of course.....I'll make up a bed." Said her mum. "What happened out there ? The battery radio is picking up a Jazz station in Manizales, but V-Boom must be off air."

"It's the creatures." Said Tilly. "They're attacking the village."

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Michelle Thorpe knew where Teresa was and she had a pretty good idea she'd be there with Lidia. Actually there were two places, but she couldn't tell Julie Yago about either of them. There was talk about looking over a new home for Rocky; somewhere on Jaimie's avocado plantation. The second place was Doc's old house, where Teresa was playing house with Lidia. Michelle was one of them of course, the people treating Rocky as though she was some kind of pet. That might mean her losing her job if it became widely known; maybe even doing some jail time. Harboursing such a dangerous creature.....There could be some very serious consequences. Julie had just asked if Michelle knew where her daughter might be. It wasn't the first time she'd asked that day.

"I'm not sure where Teresa is." Said Michelle. "She seems to be spending a lot of time with Lidia Fernandez. Lidia is an experienced cop and I'm sure she'll keep your daughter safe."

"If she's with her.....My daughter might be anywhere." Said Julie.

"Teresa isn't stupid." Said Michelle. "I'm sure that she'll be somewhere she feels safe."

The wrong thing to say, Michelle realised that as soon as the words left her mouth. Julie was giving her a look that said she might soon have to move out of Hacienda Yago. Michelle had one thing though, that just about guaranteed Julie wouldn't chuck her out. She had one of the new generation superguns. Gustavo arrived down the stairs at a run.

"I saw something near the back door." He yelled.

"Do you need my help ?" Asked Michelle.

"Stay here for now.....It might not be one of the creatures." Said Gustavo.

Gustavo ran towards the back of the house, leaving about twenty assorted Hacienda employees to be looked after by Julie and Michelle. The staff had sort of gravitated towards those with a large mysterious sword and a supergun. Julie was wielding the sword, while Michelle had the supergun in her right hand. Not just Julie's domestic staff were there, Michelle recognised two maids from a hacienda several miles away. It seemed they weren't stupid and had worked out where they stood the best chance of survival.

"There are so many of them." Said Julie. "There were only ever a few.....Now the plantation is full of the brutes."

Julie had decided to install backup generators for the plantation buildings. While she was it, she'd had a powerful generator installed in an outhouse of Hacienda Yago. It not only supplied enough power to keep everything running in the Hacienda; there was enough electricity to keep the outside lighting turned on. By the lights in the trees about halfway along the driveway; they could see a lizard like creature, chasing a dog. A big dog, but the lizard was much larger.

“Crap.....Is that one of your dogs ?” Asked Michelle.

It was never a simple thing to know, Gustavo liked dogs and he seemed to turn up with a new one; at regular intervals. Luckily for the dog, it seemed a little quicker than the monster chasing after it. Michelle didn't offer to rescue the dog. It didn't belong to Julie, and anyway.....There were twenty or so people near her; who needed protecting.

“Fuck.....Did you see that ?” Someone asked.

The lizard creature had caught the dog. It was one of those sights no one wants to see, yet can't stop watching. The poor dog was still alive and making screaming noises, as the creature began to eat it.

“Oh, I think that was one of ours, the one my husband called Rory.” Said Julie.

Poor Rory was just a bloody heap near where the family played the occasional game of croquet. Something inside her snapped, or reached a point where she couldn't take anymore. For some reason most of Julie's assorted domestic staff followed Michelle out of the front door. Two hung back as she began to cross the lawn, but the majority stayed with her; and her supergun.

“What are you doing ?” Screeched Julie Yago.

“Time for the brute to die.” Shouted Michelle. “I'm going to kill it.”

It was a bit surreal, to walk past croquet hoops, while aiming a hugely powerful gun at a fully grown version of Rocky. Not that Michelle wanted to hurt Teresa's pet. Rocky was fully socialised now, even Michelle was rather fond of her. It was like comparing a rabid pit bull to someone's much loved emotional support dog. Michelle stopped and aimed her gun from about twenty feet away from the creature.

“You're not welcome here.” Shouted Michelle.

The idea of emptying a supergun into the face of a creature, had yet to appear in any training manual. That didn't stop everyone with a supergun, knowing that it seemed the best way to kill the brutes. Michelle held her gun firmly with both hands. When the end of her gun was steady, with no wobbling at all; she fired. No counting shots, she fired until there were no bullets left in the clip.

“Damn thing.....Die.” Yelled Michelle.

It was finished, yet it was still making bird like noises and trying to move. Julie's sword seemed to come out of nowhere, as Julie hacked at it. No severing its neck, but she did manage to cut through a lot of arteries. The creature died squawking in a pool of its own blood.

“Are we going after the other monsters ?” Asked Julie.

“No, there are too many.....We'll die.” Said Michelle. “Get everyone back inside the Hacienda.” Michelle put a fresh clip in her gun and one of the kitchen staff offered to cook a meal for those who wanted one. Hardly life as normal in Hacienda Yago, but it was better than being outside with the creatures. Julie spent a long time looking through the windows at the brute they'd killed and what was left of poor Rory.

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Mateo Rodriguez had once been a full general in the Colombian army, until a personal weakness had ended his career. The knowledge doesn't go away with the job though; there is no unlearning the huge amount of experience. His force of weapons trained cops and special-ops soldiers were the best Bogotá could find, but there weren't that many of them. If he did whatever it took to protect the plantation and the village; he'd soon deplete his forces. On the other hand, if he concentrated on keeping his troops alive, a lot of civilians were going to die. There weren't going to be any air strikes, he'd already requested those. Bogotá wouldn't approve bombing areas of the village which seemed infested with the creatures. He'd been firmly told that him and his troops, were effectively on their own.

“Creatures have been spotted near Manizales.” Said Captain Sánchez. “They’ve been close to two villages, but haven’t attacked anyone.”

“How close to Manizales ?” Asked Mateo

“About thirty miles.”

“They’re clever Sánchez, or whoever’s controlling them is.” Said Mateo. “If they attack other towns they’ll be attacked from the air. The bombers will be sent to destroy them. As long as the attacks here look like some kind of one off; Bogotá will hold back from using an aerial bombardment.”

“Are they really that clever ?” Asked Sánchez.

“From day one Jorge Alvarez has been saying they’re smart.” Said Mateo. “The problem is that no one wanted to listen. Monsters with intelligence are too much of a nightmare.”

Mateo had an armoured personnel carrier to go around in, but Bogotá hadn’t promised him any more fighters, or better weapons. Unless they looked likely to be overrun and the village destroyed, his bosses seemed content to see how things played out. It was the media of course; no one in the military wanted to see troops fighting monsters on the evening news. If it all ended up on social media, Mateo might end up in parking fines enforcement.

“If you had full control.....What would you do ?” Asked Sánchez.

“Evacuation of everyone in the plantation, the village and anyone else within ten miles of here. I’d commandeer any vehicle that can hold passengers and get them right out of the area. It’s the only way to do it. Even if they ended up sleeping in tents.....I’d evacuate everyone.” Said Mateo.

“Even Julie Yago and her family ?”

“Oh yes, especially Julie.” Said Mateo. “She knows too many influential people in Bogotá. Personally I blame her for much of the misinformation reaching government ears.”

Mateo’s APC was parked quite close to the V-Boom building, or at least as close as the rubble would allow. V-Boom was gone, though it was hoped they wouldn’t find too many dead among the rubble. The shops on the other side of the road had gone too. The creature responsible was still there, the largest truck in the area wouldn’t be able to move it. A huge mole type creature, it had to weigh several tons. It had used its weight and claws to demolish a large section of Main Street. Grenade launchers and emptying assault rifles into the beast had killed it, but it had taken a while and used a staggering amount of ammunition. Worst though, three of his people had died during the battle. With no promise of reinforcements, they couldn’t afford to lose those three fighters.

“There’s another dead huge mole creature at the power plant.” Said Cesar. “It killed itself while destroying a couple of generators. How are we going to get rid of them ? They can’t be left to rot where they died.”

Cesar De León hero of the village and about to be a hero again. There were stories about him emptying three assault rifle clips into the face of the mole creature. Killing it singlehandedly of course, or at least that was the gist of the various stories and rumours. Mateo hadn’t witnessed the act of heroism, but even if it was total crap; he was happy to see the story spread. It was one of those moments in history, when people needed a hero. Having Cesar by his side in the APC, wouldn’t do Mateo’s reputation any harm either.

“We burn them, but not today.” Said Mateo. “When we’ve got the creature infestation under control; we’ll begin burning their remains. The Canadians want a few samples first, that should be easy enough.”

There was a rumour Mateo didn’t want spread; a few bits of gossip that David Sullivan and a few of his team, were being sent to sort out a problem in another continent. If it was true, it would really damage the war effort against the creatures. That was how Mateo was thinking of it now, as a

potential world war against the brutes. There was yet another message coming in to the radio guy in his APC. The messages always made Mateo feel as though he wasn't doing enough, but he really was undermanned and massively under resourced.

"Read the message, Sánchez." Said Mateo. "Then sugar coat it and make it more palatable."

Captain Sánchez was looking at him, as though the message could never be made palatable, or even improved in the slightest by gas lighting.

"Jaimie and a few of his friends are at his house." Said Sánchez. "A message was passed to us via the Canadians. Two wolf like creatures are attacking the house. Without help, Jaimie and his friends are not likely to survive to see another sunrise.....Obviously we have to go and help them."

"Nothing obvious about it." Said Cesar. "Move our forces to save Jaimie and his pals.....And many will die in the village."

"The message says Teresa, Julie Yago's girl; may be at Jaimie's house." Said Sánchez.

"Just maybe?" Asked Mateo. "Or are they certain she's there."

"Only a may be there."

Right or wrong, win or lose....Mateo knew he was going to emerge from it all as the villain of the piece. It really was an impossible situation, but there really was only one possible way he could jump.

"Get a message about Jaimie to the local police." Said Mateo. "Our main objective is to protect the population of the plantation and the village. We're remaining here until the threat from the creatures is over."

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