

MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION

Written by

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FADE IN:

SCENE 1: INT. DELIGHT BUILDING - DAY

The lobby is abuzz with several ASSISTANTS that murmur, roam about, and use phones and tablets. There is a large map on a table in the center of the lobby which shows Danviet and Ocrella. Sunlight streams in through large glass windows. SENATOR WESTBROOK silently toys with a pin of the Danviet flag on his lapel. ASSISTANT 1 places a hand on Senator Westbrook's shoulder

ASSISTANT 1

Don't be nervous. There's no one better qualified for this conference than you.

ASSISTANT 2

(murmurs)

No one better qualified than a kid?

ASSISTANT 1

Senator Westbrook isn't just a kid. You know, just as well as anyone else here, that he's special.

ASSISTANT 2

But is he "special" enough to stop nuclear war from breaking out? The Ocrellans are heartless. They're probably here to twist our minds instead of talk about peace.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

You honestly believe all of that propaganda? The Ocrellans aren't monsters. The only thing you might find in Ocrella is ordinary people.

ASSISTANT 2

Ordinary or not, they certainly are arrogant. They invite us to this conference, but name the whole thing after a word from their own language. Ayden, Odin... I can't even pronounce it.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

Well whatever the pronunciation, it translated to "delight." That's hardly menacing. And doesn't it say something that they were the ones to think of a peace conference?

(MORE)

SENATOR WESTBROOK (CONT'D)
I wonder who's really arrogant in
this situation.

An ASSISTANT ON THEIR PHONE enters the lobby from outside.
The room suddenly becomes completely silent. The assistant
hangs up the phone.

ASSISTANT ON PHONE
Senator Westbrook, it's time.

Westbrook nods and walks across the lobby. He enters an
elevator. The door shuts.

ASSISTANT 2
We're doomed.

SCENE 2: INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

SENATOR STERLING takes deep breaths in her elevator. She is
clutching something in her closed fist. She closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OCRELLAN PRESIDENT OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA sits at his desk. Senator Sterling
wrings her hands as the president begins to speak.

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA
Senator Sterling. I must say it is
a pleasure to meet you. My offices
have been very impressed with your
recent accomplishments.

Sterling doesn't smile, but nods.

SENATOR STERLING
Thank you, Mr. President. I've
worked hard for everything that
I've achieved. I don't believe in
excuses.

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA
Based upon your background, I would
say you're entitled to an excuse or
two. I understand you've had a very
difficult childhood, senator.

Sterling tenses. She grows very still.

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA (CONT'D)

Your zeal is something that we need right now. I will be truthful with you, senator. Our situation is bleak. Danviet forces grow bolder every day. It's only a matter of time before they attempt to conquer us completely. Unless something is done, and soon...nuclear war is eminent.

SENATOR STERLING

I believe I understand our dire circumstances. What I don't understand, is my place in all of this.

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA

I have personally extended an invitation to the Supreme Chancellor of Danviet.

SENATOR STERLING

An olive branch?

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA

A peace conference. We must stop this madness before it destroys our world.

SENATOR STERLING

I thought previous negotiations with Danviet had failed.

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA

Previous negotiations were held earlier in the war. When we weren't as close to mutually assured destruction. This is our final chance.

SENATOR STERLING

And you want...me to represent Ocrella?

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA

I do not ask this of you lightly, senator. The task set before you is a difficult one. But I have every confidence that you are the proper choice.

The president stands and picks up a rectangular case from his desk.

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA (CONT'D)
When you go, the heart and people
of Ocrella will be with you.

The president opens the box to reveal a silver medallion with the image of a serpent. The president hands the box to Sterling, which she gently receives.

SENATOR STERLING
I won't fail you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA
This I know. Good luck, Senator
Sterling.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Senator Sterling's eyes open. She lifts her fist and unclenches it to reveal the president's serpent medallion. Sterling places the medallion in a clear case attached to a necklace chain around her neck.

PRESIDENT OF OCRELLA'S VOICE (O.S.)
When you go, the heart and people
of Ocrella will be with you.

Senator Sterling takes a final deep breath as the elevator door opens.

SCENE 3: INT. UNDERGROUND CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Both Senator Sterling and Senator Westbrook's elevator doors open in sync. They make eye contact. Senator Westbrook exits his elevator. Senator Sterling does next. They step into a conference room with a long table, two empty chairs, and a large television screen. The table has two manilla file folders and a bowl of apples placed in the middle.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Senator Sterling, I presume?

SENATOR STERLING
Yes. And you must be Senator
Westbrook.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
(chuckles)
Well, that's the rumor.

The senators shake hands. Westbrook glances at Sterling's necklace.

SENATOR WESTBROOK (CONT'D)
Is that the Medallion of Ocrella?

Senator Sterling pulls her hand away.

SENATOR STERLING
You've heard of it?

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Well, I've read about it. Silver to symbolize the beauty and strength of Ocrella. And a serpent to warn the enemies of its people.

SENATOR STERLING
It would seem you've done your research, senator.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Research? No. No, it was more out of curiosity. And you're not the only one here with a memento of your country.

He gestures to the pin of the Danviet flag on his lapel.

SENATOR WESTBROOK (CONT'D)
My grandfather gave me this pin.

SENATOR STERLING
Your grandfather. You mean the Supreme Chancellor of Danviet.

Westbrook smiles.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
It looks like I'm not the only one that's done a little research.

SENATOR STERLING
I'm sure you would agree that some knowledge of your enemy can be useful.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Enemy?

SENATOR STERLING
Isn't that what I am to you?

SENATOR WESTBROOK
You're a human being. Just like me.

SENATOR STERLING
I assure you, Senator Westbrook, I
am nothing like you.

She gestures towards the table and the empty chairs.

SENATOR STERLING (CONT'D)
Shall we?

SENATOR WESTBROOK
I suppose we must. We both know
that time is of the essence.

They sit across from each other at the table.

SENATOR STERLING
Let's get right down to it. What is
it that Danviet wants?

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Danviet or my grandfather?

SENATOR STERLING
Your grandfather is the leader of
Danviet. Isn't it the same thing?

SENATOR WESTBROOK
A country is made up of its people.
The many, not the few.

SENATOR STERLING
But it's controlled by the few. Or
rather, the one.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
My grandfather's are...outdated.
Nationalistic dreams of conquering
the whole world don't have any
place in an advanced society.

SENATOR STERLING
And is that what the Supreme
Chancellor wants? To conquer the
whole world? To seize my country by
force?

Westbrook hesitates.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

If we can reach a peaceful agreement here today, my grandfather *will* listen. Even he understands that world domination is no good if there's no world left.

SENATOR STERLING

This war has gone on for forty years. Do you think he would even listen?

SENATOR WESTBROOK

I'll make him listen. My grandfather is the Supreme Chancellor today. But that role will pass to me when he dies. He has to listen to me.

SENATOR STERLING

Then what do you suggest? What will make him listen?

SENATOR WESTBROOK

You can't fight a war if you don't have any people left. What good is a country without any people left?

SENATOR STERLING

Yes, that's why we're here today -

SENATOR WESTBROOK

No, I don't mean from us bombing each other. I mean from drought. From starvation.

SENATOR STERLING

Danviet's experiencing a drought? I...I didn't know.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

My grandfather's done his best to make sure no one from Ocrella knows. He didn't want the enemy preying on our weakness.

SENATOR STERLING

I thought we weren't enemies. Just human beings.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

You're not my enemy. But you are my grandfather's.

SENATOR STERLING
That's something you don't have to
remind me of.

She touches the Medallion of Ocrella.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
What does that mean?

Senator Sterling takes a deep breath.

SENATOR STERLING
When I was very young, everyone in
my family was killed by a Danviet
air raid.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
I'm sorry. I understand that it
must have been -

SENATOR STERLING
No, you don't understand! You're
the grandson of a Supreme
Chancellor. My family was dying
when you were living in a mansion
with every advantage!

Senator Westbrook leans back in his chair. He removes the
Danviet flag pin from his lapel and places it on the table.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
It's true. I had the best of
everything, all because of the
family I was born into. But you
wouldn't believe how many times I
just wanted to give it all up.

SENATOR STERLING
No, I don't think I ever *could*
believe that.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
What good is a mansion without any
people inside of it? What good is
every advantage if there's no one
to share it with?

SENATOR STERLING
(mutters)
"What good is a country without any
people left?"

The senators look at each other.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

You weren't the only one with a lonely childhood, Senator Sterling. Endless hours of being shut away, all alone. That's what made me so interested in Ocrella. That's how I knew what your medallion meant. I read and learned about everything I could in the whole world. I would have done anything, *anything* to be different.

The two sit in silence for a few moments.

SENATOR WESTBROOK (CONT'D)

But I suppose that wouldn't make sense to someone that lost everything because of my family.

There is another brief silence. Senator Westbrook's head drops.

SENATOR STERLING

It makes just about as much sense as holding a grudge against your enemy's blameless grandson.

Westbrook raises his head.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

What?

SENATOR STERLING

Maybe we were both wrong. But we can do something right today. What will it take for a cease fire?

SENATOR WESTBROOK

(stunned, speaking slowly)

The people of Danviet are starving.

SENATOR STERLING

Because of the drought?

SENATOR WESTBROOK

All of the nuclear weapons testing has taken a toll. It's polluted the atmosphere. Made the land dry. It's impossible to grow anything.

SENATOR STERLING

Then it's only a matter of time before you run out of food and resources.

Senator Westbrook nods.

SENATOR STERLING (CONT'D)
Ocrella will supply Danviet with
resources in exchange for peace.
Until your land becomes fertile
again, we will export necessary
goods. Do we have a deal?

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Why are you doing this?

There is a brief pause.

SENATOR STERLING
What good is a world without any
people in it? The war has taken
everything from us. I think it's
time we learn how to give. And that
starts with us. Today. Put down
your weapons, and we will help you.
Do we have a deal?

She extends her hand. There is a long pause.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Yes, senator. We have a deal.

Westbrook reaches out, and the senators shake hands. Senator
Sterling breathes a sigh of relief. Senator Westbrook smiles.

SENATOR WESTBROOK (CONT'D)
I'd say this is cause for
celebration.

He takes the bowl of apples and offers it to Sterling.

SENATOR STERLING
It may not be champagne, but it'll
do.

Senator Sterling bites into the apple. The television screen
suddenly turns on and begins flashing red. The room begins to
shake as a Broadcast plays across the television

BROADCAST
Attention. Attention. Nuclear
weapons have been fired. Take cover
immediately.

The senators look at each other in horror, before Senator
Sterling begins to shout:

SENATOR STERLING
You tricked me! I offer you our
help, and this is what happens?!

SENATOR WESTBROOK
I tricked you? How do I know this
whole conference wasn't a set-up
for you to attack us?

SENATOR STERLING
I would never -

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Well neither would I!

The rumbling and shaking stops.

SENATOR WESTBROOK (CONT'D)
Look, no matter what happened up
there, I don't think either of us
had anything to do with it. Why
don't we go upstairs and take a
look?

Senator Sterling finally nods, and the two walk into
Westbrook's elevator together. The door shuts.

SCENE 4: EXT. A BARREN WORLD - DAY

The elevator opens to debris of concrete and rubble. Senator
Westbrook moves aside the debris, and the senators step
outside. Senator Sterling gasps.

SENATOR STERLING
It's gone. It's all gone.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
My God. What happened up here?

The senators take a few steps, poking around the debris
silently.

SENATOR WESTBROOK (CONT'D)
My grandfather, it must have been
my grandfather! He never meant for
us to reach an agreement. He just
needed a distraction. Look what he
did! He's destroyed everything!

SENATOR STERLING
What good is yelling going to do
now? It's already happened. There's
nothing we can do.

Sterling sits on the remnants of the Delight Building's outside steps. After a moment, Westbrook joins her.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

What are we going to do? We're the last humans on earth for God's sake.

SENATOR STERLING

We'll think of something. Tomorrow we can -

SENATOR WESTBROOK

How can you be so calm? The entire world has been destroyed!

SENATOR STERLING

This isn't the first time *my* world has been destroyed. We'll get through this as long as we stick together.

Senator Westbrook darkly chuckles.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

Ironic, isn't it? That the Delight Peace Conference ends with the destruction of everything.

It is quiet for a few moments.

SENATOR WESTBROOK (CONT'D)

Before the conference started, one of my assistants was saying that "delight" was a translation from the conference's original name. It was a word from Ocrella's language. What was it?

SENATOR STERLING

Eden. Delight means "Eden" in native Ocrellan.

SENATOR WESTBROOK

Well, then, that's what we'll call this place. Eden. We can start over. Build a world without war and nuclear weapons. What do you say, Senator Sterling?

SENATOR STERLING

I say...we don't have much of a choice.

The senators laugh in spite of the situation. They both stand. Senator Sterling takes off the serpent medallion and tosses it to the ground.

SENATOR STERLING (CONT'D)
Although, we might stop calling
each other "senator." I don't
believe I know your first name.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Adam. My name is Adam. And yours?

SENATOR STERLING
Eve.

SENATOR WESTBROOK
Well it's nice to meet you, Eve.

The senators smile and shake hands. The image of the serpent medallion is seen in the ground.

FADE OUT.