

Agnew Abandoned

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Vice President Spiro T. Agnew strode quickly down the hall towards his office in the West Wing of the White House. He was flanked on each side by a Secret Service agent who matched his pace perfectly. Spiro clenched his jaw as he saw Bob Haldeman approaching from the end of the hall. The man's flattop haircut had become something of a trademark, making him instantly recognizable. It was also an indicator of the rigid way he handled his business as Nixon's Chief of Staff.

The two locked eyes but Haldeman quickly looked away.

"Heading to your meeting with the President?" Spiro asked.

Bob didn't slow as they got closer.

"Good speech today Mr. Vice President," Bob said, ignoring the question he had been asked. "No one manhandles those anti-war people the way that you do."

Spiro frowned.

"I could care less for those perfunctory pundits and their halfcocked crackpot ideas," Spiro said. "What I do care about is meeting with the President."

Haldeman shook his head.

"I'm afraid that's not possible this week, Mr. Vice President."

Spiro grabbed Haldeman by the arm as they passed. The two stopped and glared at one another. The tension was so thick that even the well trained Secret Service agents shifted uncomfortably. The staring contest went on for over a minute.

"I've got a meeting to get to," Haldeman said finally.

The Chief of Staff tried to pull his arm free but Spiro held tight. Haldeman's carefully kept look of contempt morphed into pure rage.

"You'll unhand me this instant if you know what's good for you!"

“I don’t care about what’s good for me, Bob,” Spiro said. “I care about what’s good for this country, and this planet. And if you care about that too you’ll grant me an audience with Nixon. Today.”

Haldeman yanked hard and freed his arm. He stumbled a few feet from the effort before regaining his balance and composure.

“The President and I have listened to enough of your insane theories,” Haldeman said. “Now if you’ll excuse me I’ve got real work to do.”

The man turned and left. Once he was out of sight Spiro continued on to his office. He swept past his secretary, holding up his hand to shush her right before she began reading off the long list of messages that were waiting for him. Spiro could feel the presence of the two Secret Service agents as he entered his office. They closed the doors behind him and took up positions to each side. Spiro collapsed into his comfortable desk chair and rubbed his temple.

“It didn’t go well,” he said. “Nixon isn’t going to meet with me.”

The two agents looked at one another, puzzled. One of them, a burly man named Ned, cleared his throat and then spoke.

“I’m sorry Mr. Vice President, are you speaking to us?”

Spiro glared at him.

“Could you go away, please?” he asked.

The two agents again looked at one another. After a moment of silence, Ned again cleared his throat. He stepped into the center of the room.

“Mr. Vice President, that was a heated speech you just gave to some very angry anti-war protestors,” Ned said. “The Secret Service feels that it would be best if we remain in close contact for the duration of the day.”

Spiro looked into the corner of his room. A half bookshelf sat there, filled with legal texts, but he stared at it for several long moments before returning his attention to Ned.

“I assure you, I’m quite safe in here. Now please, leave my office at once.”

The two agents did as they were asked and left. As soon as the door clicked shut Spiro got to his feet and walked towards it. He twisted the lock, then pulled on the door to be sure it was secured. Then he looked back at the corner bookshelf.

There was a low hum, then a rush of familiar warm air as the invisibility field disappeared. Crouched on top of the bookshelf was a creature, a woman, that Spiro had come to know as Xen'tul. Her well toned humanoid body was barely covered, showing a nearly scandalous amount of her gray hued skin. Only the smallest of garments covered her private areas, and Spiro could see her battle armor and cloak stacked neatly beside her on the bookshelf.

Xen'tul dropped onto the floor gracefully, making no sound. Her violet tentacles, looking almost like hair as they sprouted out of her forehead and fell across her shoulders, swayed as she stood. As alien as she was, she remained the most beautiful female Spiro T. Agnew had ever laid eyes on.

“I told you he wouldn't agree to a meeting,” Xen'tul said.

Spiro frowned. He had hoped they would talk of more pleasurable things before moving straight to business. He returned to his desk and again collapsed into the comfortable chair behind it.

“I didn't even see Nixon, it was Haldeman who said no,” Spiro said. “My speech ran a little long.”

Xen'tul moved towards the desk, her hips swaying seductively with each step.

“What was it you called the war protestors?” she asked.

“Nattering nabobs of negativism.”

Xen'tul threw her head back and laughed. It filled the room with a low buzz, like a radio station that wasn't quite tuned in all the way. Spiro smiled at her.

“You love it when I use wordplay,” he said.

Once she stopped laughing she nodded.

“You know I do,” Xen'tul agreed. “But there are more important things happening today.”

The Vice President's face fell as she turned serious. He looked down at his desk, feeling defeated.

“My people are being slaughtered out there, Spiro!” Xen'tul shouted. “We can't hold back the Zedataari much longer, and once they're through with us humanity is next.”

His eyes were filled with sadness as he looked up at her.

“I know, my love, but what am I to do? I’ve worked from the shadows for too long in my quest to save your people, to save you, and now I’m coming under suspicion,” Spiro said.

Xen’tul scoffed.

“You speak of your society’s petty laws? Are you really mentioning the accusations that are emerging about you at a time like this? While my people are fighting and dying in defense of your world!”

Spiro stood up and pointed at her angrily.

“Those petty laws are going to be enough to get me thrown out of office! And then I’ll be of no use to you and your people at all!”

Their eyes met and Spiro’s mood softened. He saw a deep sadness in Xen’tul’s triangular pupils and it pained him greatly. She slowly walked around the desk and then stepped behind him. Xen’tul placed her hands on his shoulders and pushed down gently, causing him to return to his desk chair. She started massaging his tense neck and shoulders and he closed his eyes.

“Nixon is the key,” Spiro said. “If I can get him to just listen to me, to hear what I’m saying, maybe he’ll come to understand the grave threat the Zedataari pose to America and Earth.”

He paused and let out a quiet moan as she expertly worked the tension from his muscles.

“The President won’t respond to much these days, and you already told me that the Zedataari won’t assassinate him.”

“They’re not ready for such a big move,” Xen’tul said. “But that doesn’t mean he’s safe from their influence.”

She leaned down as she continued to massage him, her lips just inches from his ear.

“Have I ever spoken to you of the battles I’ve fought?” Xen’tul asked.

Her breath was warm on his ear and he had to fight to stay focused on what she was saying.

“Not really, you said being with me was like a vacation from all of the death.”

“That’s true, but Spiro, you should see me on the battlefield. It’s where my true talents lie.”

She stopped massaging his shoulders.

“And yet my people chose to remove me from the front lines and send me to you,” Xen’tul continued, her voice taking on a dark tone. “Because they believed, and I believed, that you were a man of power and vision who could aid us.”

He twisted in his chair to look at her.

“But I have aided you dear. I deployed that small military group to aid your people outside of Baltimore, and I’ve overseen the destruction of fifty Zedataari satellites!”

She stood up suddenly and took a step away from him.

“And yet my people are losing the war.”

He had come to learn that Xen’tul was a sensitive creature and knew that the suffering of her people pained her greatly. Spiro stood up and reached out to her, but she moved away from his touch. He watched her walk across the office to the bookshelf where she picked up a piece of her armor and began fixing it into place.

“I can still be of assistance to your people,” Spiro said confidently.

“Can you?”

She hadn’t looked up at him and hadn’t stopped putting on her armor. It filled him with a sharp edged confidence and he strode across the room purposefully.

“I’ll go speak to Nixon right now,” Spiro announced. “I’ll make him listen.”

He paused in front of the door and gestured towards the bookshelf. For over three years it was where he always found her without fail.

“Wait here for me,” he said.

He grabbed the door handle but she approached him quickly.

“Wait,” she said.

Her well toned arms encircled him and pulled him into a passionate kiss. Spiro’s hands explored her muscled back as they continued their long embrace. Finally she pulled away slowly. Their eyes remained locked for several moments until she at last looked away. He took several deep breaths to regain his composure, then opened the door and left the office.

Ned and the other Secret Service agent kept pace with him as he stalked through the halls of the West Wing, trying to remember exactly which meeting it was that Nixon and Haldeman were supposed to be in. He took an abrupt turn as the information came back to him, picking up the pace so he would get there before the meeting ended and Nixon left.

Generals and diplomats were just filing out of the conference room when Spiro reached it. He pushed through them, ignoring their salutations. He emerged into the room to see Nixon and Haldeman still seated at the table. The President was eating a triangle of toast with cottage cheese spread.

“I didn’t realize I had agreed to meet with you this month, Spiro,” Nixon said with a full mouth.

“You didn’t,” Haldeman said angrily as he stood up, prepared to remove Spiro by force.

“Mr. President, it’s urgent that I speak to you about the war,” Spiro said.

“Vietnam’s going just fine,” Nixon said as he took another bite.

“Not Vietnam, sir, I’m talking about the war happening right here in our country beneath our noses.”

Nixon dropped his toast and laughed. He continued for a full minute and had to take several drinks of water before he finally calmed.

“Spiro Agnew and his extra-terrestrial war,” Nixon said, shaking his head. “How on Earth did I end up with a complete lunatic as my VP?”

Spiro took a step forward but Haldeman pushed him back, keeping him near the door.

“I’m not insane, Mr. President. This war is happening and if we don’t intervene soon it’s going to spell the end of humanity as we know it.”

Nixon was no longer amused.

“I’ve got more plausible things to consider today like a unicorn invasion and a tsunami of chocolate milk, so if you don’t mind,” Nixon said, pointing towards the door.

“Richard!” Spiro yelled. “This is our last chance. Without us they’ll all die, and humanity will be next to fall against the might of the Zedataari empire!”

“Bob, please take Spiro into the hall and explain to him our new plan,” Nixon ordered.

Haldeman smiled.

“With pleasure Mr. President.”

He shoved Spiro hard, sending him stumbling out into the hall. The Vice President tried to rush back into the room but Haldeman was already there, blocking the door.

“This is how it is, Spiro, so listen up,” Haldeman said. “You know those pesky accusations that you’ve been dodging since your time as Governor of Maryland? I’ve provided some new information to prosecutors in those and other related criminal matters.”

Spiro knew of the efficiency at which Haldeman and his cronies could make anyone look guilty of anything. His spirits came crashing down as he realized that if what Haldeman was saying was true, his time in politics was truly over.

“I’m not a monster, so I’ve designed the evidence against you to release at a slow pace,” Haldeman continued. “You’ve got a few months to get your affairs in order and then you will resign your office as Vice President. During these months, all of your powers are stripped of you. To the American public you’ll still be the VP, but in these halls it’ll be known that you’re just a man in a suit.”

Despite himself, Spiro felt tears filling his eyes.

“But...” he gasped.

“Get lost,” Haldeman interrupted.

Spiro felt his legs growing weak and he knelt down to keep from falling. Haldeman scoffed and then returned to the conference room. Sobs threatened to escape from him and Spiro was breathing rapidly, fighting with all that he had to keep his composure. A minute later he stood slowly, determined to make the walk back to his office with dignity. He turned to leave but paused as he listened to what was being said inside the conference room.

“... doesn’t explain how this Watergate thing just appeared out of nowhere!” Nixon shouted.

“Someone’s designing it against you, that’s for certain,” Haldeman said.

“Who? Russia? China? Surely not the Cubans?”

“It’s none of them, Mr. President. This thing is so well formed and it dropped out of nowhere, someone more advanced is putting this into motion in order to get you out of office.”

There was a silence before Haldeman spoke again.

“And it’s going to get much worse.”

Spiro walked away, his thoughts racing in a hundred different directions as he went back towards his office. He silenced his secretary with a glare, and gave a similar one

to the Secret Service agents that told them not to even dream of trying to come inside his office with him. He stepped inside and closed the doors, then walked slowly to his desk. He didn't have the heart to face her so he leaned down and placed his hands on the desk, his back to the bookshelf.

"I failed."

Saying it out loud caused a few tears to fall from his eyes.

"I've failed you, my love."

He stood there for several minutes, silently sobbing, fighting desperately to keep himself from breaking down, waiting for Xen'tul to say something, anything. Finally he turned towards the bookshelf. The invisibility fields that Xen'tul's people used were like magic to him, making it appear to the naked eye that truly no one was there.

Spiro wiped his eyes and stepped towards the bookshelf.

"I'll still find a way to help you and your people, I swear it."

When she didn't respond he took two more steps.

"Don't you believe in me? Don't you trust me?"

Again he was met with silence and he took three more steps until he was right in front of the half bookshelf.

"Please, my love, say something."

He slowly reached out towards the spot where she always was. His hands shook, a fear running through him. Spiro gasped as he felt the wall.

"Xen'tul?" he asked. "My love?"

He dumbly waved his arms back and forth over top of the bookshelf, thinking that perhaps she was there and he had somehow reached around her. He then turned in a slow circle, examining the room, praying that she was simply somewhere else in the office. Spiro stumbled as he moved, clumsily waving his arms through the air as he checked every inch of the office for her.

Ten minutes later he stood alone in the middle of the room. He let the tears fall freely now.