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They left the apartment, and made their way downstairs to the car. The maid was just cleaning the room next door, so their timing was perfect. Richard eased the car out of the driveway of the apartment and onto the road. He turned left and followed the signs to Paphos. He came to a big roundabout, and turned left. It was a straight road; just lots of sets of traffic lights one after another. They continued on the road going straight, then they saw a sign post for Paphos and turned right, this brought them to a main roundabout on the highway. From here they joined the road and skirted the flyover above them, before moving onto the flyover road. The temperature in the car was cool, as the air conditioning was on full; outside the car the sun's rays beat down hard on the metallic paint, the brightness forcing Richard to push the visor down to shade his eyes. Julie donned her designer sun glasses and went back to her window gazing.

The journey to Kolossi was short, ten minutes on the motorway; they passed a number of houses, some of particular architectural interest, as their design was more futuristic in appearance than the usual Cypriot modern houses. Then they turned left onto Kolossi, which was another place that Julie had promised herself she would visit as this was the site of the famous Kolossi Castle, another Richard the Lion Heart haunt, rumoured to be the home of Richard the Lion Heart and the staging site for one of the Crusades. Yes; Julie would like to go there too. Richard accelerated a little and then slowed as he approached the road humps in the nearby village. This was a new introduction to Cypriot roads, he thought, and he hadn't seen many of these before. Once through the small village they drove out into the country, or it seemed that way as the place was surrounded by fields, the colour of the shade of terracotta. They reached a small junction. The signpost to Akrotiri was five hundred yards ahead. The area was screened by the base police force and the military; it was just one road in and out, and there was no mistaking or getting lost in Akrotiri. The radio masts towered above the road side and the myriad of aerial wires criss-crossed the sky above them. They drove slowly to the gate. Peter stood waiting outside.

He waved vigorously and smiled. The gate opened without ceremony, the sentry acknowledged them as they drove past him and into the base. Peter followed them in.

"I've sorted out all the formalities, I have an hour or so, so let's get going; it's just over here."

"Hello Peter. Good to see you, thank you for this. Where are we going?" Richard spoke through the open window.

"You'll see." Peter's all knowing smile suggested he had something planned. "Okay, park here, it's just over here." Peter was still smiling.

They all got out of the car, Richard followed with Julie as Peter walked across the concrete to a waiting helicopter.

"Get in. I told you I had to pick up something today, well this is it, a beauty isn't she?"

"It's a chopper?" Richard's shocked expression completed his surprise.

“Yes. That’s right. Now get in, strap yourself in, and we’re off.”

“But, it’s a chopper.” Richard’s last words were lost as Richard and Julie, took to the invitation without hesitation. Richard buckled her in and then himself and then the helicopter rose as the blades spun through the air. “It gets very noisy, so if you want to say something you have to shout; if there’s anything you want to see especially just let me know.” Peter issued his instructions.

The helicopter was above the ground and heading out over the land. It soared high into the air and moved forward effortlessly. The slow feeling inside the cabin did nothing to confirm the true speed that the helicopter was traveling. They moved high over the cliffs and roadside and straddled the area of Curium, Richard clicking furiously with his digital camera as he focused down the lens at the Curium Amphitheatre, as the copter moved effortlessly over the one time Roman villa to the shore line. The waves on Curium beach crashed into the bathers as several of them tried to jump simultaneously to avoid them. The beach below them was crowded but not excessively; the wind was stronger out at sea but the sun was hot, burning into the semi naked bodies of some of the sun lovers.

The helicopter moved along the coast line and as it did so a number of small boats were visible along the horizon, too far off to distinguish what they were. As they rounded the next cove they could see ahead of them the Rocks of Aphrodite. Richard asked for Peter to go closer. He acknowledged him with a nod of his head and moved the helicopter closer.

As they entered the now familiar scenic picture of the rocks, Richard clicked on the camera, indicating that he would like to fly over them. Peter pushed the lever into position and they steeped a little before moving over the rocks. The spectators below waved to them as they made a second pass. Richard noticed how the waves below him had subsided, the customary white horses that always edged them had become almost negligible from this height, the bluish colour of the waves created a transparent mirror - like effect that allowed him to take the pictures with little chance of a kick back reflection. The sun too was playing its part, not interfering in the framed picture. Richard signaled that he had enough and the helicopter moved away from the rocks, moving out to sea in the direction of Paphos, with the sun following them.

The hour was over sooner than it seemed and Peter turned the helicopter round to head back to Akrotiri, Julie was sitting as comfortably as she could in the back of the helicopter but it wasn’t the most pleasant experience. She would be glad to get out. Her bottom was sore.

The helicopter came to a complete stop, with the final remnants of the sounds of a spinning blade slowly ebbing away. As they climbed out Richard offered Julie his hand and he also thanked Peter, who immediately started the helicopter up again and rose into the air. They climbed into their car waving to Peter as he sailed over them and they drove back to the gate. Julie pushed the air-conditioning to full as the sweat dripped down her face, the heat inside the metallic box intense. If this is what it felt like now, what would it be like in the height of summer, when the temperature reached 38-40 degrees? The car moved away from the base and down the straight road, towards Kolossi.

“Do you want to stop in Kolossi, Jules?” Richard asked his wife, who was gradually cooling down. “No, not today; let’s just go back to the apartment and have a rest.” She held Richard’s hand, squeezed it and he returned her smile. The car joined the intersection and headed for Limassol.

Richard opened his laptop and switched it on it kicked in and the screen opened up on the desk top. He clicked his in-built mouse onto the icons he had selected and began to download the images from the camera. Julie undressed in the bedroom and prepared to shower. She had earlier called Molly who said that Uncle Simon was taking them all out for a meal later and that they wouldn’t be back till late. Julie liked Simon; he was Richard’s younger brother, but in many ways he was much more mature than Richard. He was more in tune to life than Richard. He never went off on tangents, or dreams. He seemed to know what to say and when to say it. Simon never interrupted people when they spoke unlike Richard, who seemed to have an interrupter button on every conversation; he always had to get in first or have the last comment. It was perhaps the most infuriating thing about her husband, but Julie had become accustomed to it. She donned her bath robe and collected her towel and walked towards the shower.

Richard was busy at the laptop; he waited as the images downloaded from the camera and then onto his desktop; he opened a folder and saved them. One by one he opened the images, scanning each one, before closing it. The aerial shots had been a fantastic way to view the island and he was really delighted that Peter had taken the time to arrange it. Peter was a skillful pilot; Richard knew that from the first time he flew with him because Peter had been the one who flew him out to the Gulf all those years ago, over the rocks where Richard said his prayer to the Goddess. So it was ironic all these years later the memory was repeating itself again, with two of the same players in the scene involved.

That wasn’t the only reason that Peter and Richard got on; they shared a good deal together during their time away, many a drink had been supped in the confines of Richard’s tent and much camaraderie had been borne out of their conversations that both of them wished they didn’t have to talk about. It was this affinity to a fate that neither of

them could predict that kept them close in the Gulf, an affinity that lasted long after the sands were clear of the evidence of any invasion. Richard had made friends in the army, but none quite as good as Peter.

He scanned another couple of the images and moved onto number sixty-five; this was the first set of images that featured Aphrodite's Rock. He opened the screen to view the images at 200% ratio. The Rocks were certainly impressive; flying above them gave a total different perspective of their surrounds. The waters below were blue out at sea then changed to green as they got nearer to the shore perhaps this was induced by the seaweed close to shore which affected the colour. The sandy almost orange coloured tops of the first big rock, the one that everyone called Aphrodite's Rock, glistened as the sun flashed across it and formed a long thin shadow like a pointing needle. Richard moved to the next image which was one of the smaller rocks, the second one, which sat in the water, embedded half-way in with the other half showing on the surface. The third rock was the smallest of all; at least it looked that way as the water covered almost to the top of it. It was furthest from shore and consequently in the deeper waters, though the clarity of the water didn't make it seem that deep. Richard clicked to the next set of images, the ones he had taken as they passed over the setting for the second time.

These looked different; the rocks were in the background. These were shots Richard had taken of the sea below the rocks, the ones that he had been able to shoot without any glare from the sun or the actions of the sea. The glass, almost mirror like surface of the water, showed something else below the water. Richard eased the magnifying glass symbol over the shape in the water. He zoomed it up, and up and up.