

Chapter 8: Bridget/Rhys

Chapter 8: Bridget/Rhys started with chaos that neither of them could have predicted. One moment, Bridget had been standing, and the next, she was flattened against the grass, shielded by Rhys's solid body as gunfire shattered the peaceful night. Instinct took over, but fear gripped her chest like a vice, refusing to let go as screams echoed all around. Rhys's calm orders to run and hide steadied her trembling limbs enough to move, even though the entire world seemed to blur. From the moment she saw the shooter, a terrifyingly ordinary man, to the sight of Rhys's gun drawn with chilling precision, the night morphed into something out of a nightmare. The reality that danger could come so quickly and without warning lodged deep inside her mind, replacing the evening's earlier lightness with a raw, biting fear that refused to loosen its grip.

Chapter 8: Bridget stayed hidden behind the tree, watching helplessly as Rhys approached the armed man. Despite all logic screaming at her to stay still, she couldn't tear her gaze away from the unfolding scene. Seeing Rhys put himself between danger and an innocent child stirred something fierce inside her, something that made it impossible to remain passive. Memories of her own loss, so vivid and paralyzing, mingled with the current horror of the moment, making the past and present collide. When gunfire erupted again, time seemed to freeze, each second dragging painfully slow until she saw Rhys stagger but stay upright. Relief and panic fought for dominance inside her, and the instinct to run to him overrode every other thought in her mind. She wasn't just worried about her safety anymore—she was terrified for him.

Chapter 8: Racing to Rhys's side, Bridget found him already tending to the downed shooter and the wounded father, who lay bleeding on the grass. A child clung desperately to his injured parent, and the scene pierced Bridget's heart with brutal

clarity. It wasn't just about survival anymore; it was about protecting hope, love, and the bonds that tethered people to one another. Kneeling to comfort the boy, she used every ounce of strength she had to project calm and reassurance, even though her insides were trembling. She saw a side of Rhys she hadn't fully glimpsed before—gentle, fiercely protective, and surprisingly tender when he reassured the child. As police arrived and demanded compliance, reality snapped back into focus, but the emotional impact of what had happened left an invisible imprint that would linger long after the sirens faded.

Chapter 8: Rhys endured medical checks and endless questioning from the authorities, all while growing increasingly frustrated—not for himself, but for Bridget's safety.

Watching her ignore his order to stay hidden had almost driven him insane with fear, and though he masked it with gruffness, the depth of his concern for her could not be denied. Bridget, equally shaken, confronted him with the harsh truth of what it had felt like to believe he might have been shot. For a man so used to carrying burdens alone, hearing Bridget's raw concern rattled the iron walls he usually kept around his emotions. Her touch, light and careful against his bandaged wound, spoke volumes more than her words ever could. In that moment, something silent passed between them, a deeper understanding that neither dared name but both clearly felt.

Chapter 8: As they sat in the aftermath, Bridget gently coaxed from Rhys a glimpse into his haunted past—the guilt he carried from witnessing a friend's death as a teenager and the vow it had etched into his soul. His confession about standing frozen while someone he cared about died explained so much about the man he had become: the relentless protector who would rather risk his life than allow history to repeat itself. Bridget, moved to tears she tried to hide, saw not just a soldier or a bodyguard, but a man scarred by grief, regret, and a fierce sense of duty. She understood now why Rhys had been so determined to save the child and his father that night. It wasn't about heroism or glory; it was about keeping a promise to himself that no more lives would be lost if he could prevent it.

Chapter 8: Unable to hold back any longer, Bridget stepped into Rhys's embrace when he opened his arms, seeking comfort in the steady strength he offered. The hug was awkward and brief by normal standards but monumental for them, breaking down the final slivers of professional distance that had stubbornly persisted. In his arms, Bridget felt safe in a way she hadn't since her father's death—anchored against a world that could change in a blink. Rhys, for his part, allowed himself a rare moment of vulnerability, feeling the weight of his emotions shift slightly with her tucked close. Both of them knew reality would come crashing back soon—filled with royal duties, expectations, and lines they shouldn't cross. But for now, in the cool night air heavy with the scent of rain and gunpowder, they found solace in each other, however fleeting it might be.

