By SPECIAL AGENT

Maida Travers’ face was grave and intense. A thin line of sweat had run from her forehead. Her blue eyes were half-closed, and the glow of candlelight cast a reddish light on her brown hair.

"We're in trouble, Raclov," she said, her voice quivering. "We're going to be picked up by the Red Circle soon."

Raclov stood behind her, his hands clasped behind his back. He looked at her with a stern face.

"You know what they would do to us, Maida?"

"I know," she answered, her voice low. "But..."

Raclov nodded. "But we must plan for the worst."

"Yes," she said, her voice firmer. "I understand."

Raclov walked across the room, his steps heavy. "We'll have to think fast, Maida."

"I know," she said again. "I can help you, Raclov."

Raclov turned to look at her. "How?"

"I can help you think," she said. "I can help you plan."

Raclov nodded. "That's good, Maida."

"I'll do my best," she said. "I promise."