

Chapter 776

"It is a matter of respect," Katrina answered. "I am giving him an opportunity and he is grateful for the chance to prove himself." Not that I 'understood' her being nice to me – almost. Absently, Katrina reached out and caressed the top of my head. While not maternal, I definitely sensed this was something she might do to a favored child.

"What of his unrestrained violence? We are already working on turning the first one docile because he could not control his crude masculine instincts. Why should we diverge from the traditional treatment with this one?" A different senior, this one Egyptian maybe – spoke in Hittite.

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"Oh, really," Katrina mused – same language. "Cáel, hit Buffy," in English. Huh?

"Please explain why I would do that to one of your people, Katrina," I raised my head. That caused some murmurs.

"I wish you to do it, so hit her," Katrina insisted.

"No, that would be wrong," I kept studying my mentor.

"Fine, attack that woman over there," she pointed to the senior Egyptian. **wwW.NoV@lWorM.cOm**

"No, it is still wrong," I was getting worried.

"If she attacked me, would you defend me?" Katrina led me along.

"Of course," I nodded.

"Even with violence?" she inquired. I nodded. "Why?"

"You are my mentor. You've given me this chance and if it means I have to fight – I fight," I explained.

"What unrestrained violence?" Katrina stared down her Egyptian opponent - Hittite. "He is perfectly capable of understanding how and when to apply violence. When told to stop, he stops. When told to behave incorrectly, he restrains himself."

"Violence is our purview," a senior from Africa (accent suggested Cameroon) said...in Hittite.

"To let men hold the reigns of conflict is to invite disaster – again." I was getting an immersion lesson in Hittite, that's for sure.

"Cáel," Katrina's voice caught me off-guard, "did you like hitting Madi and Rhada?"

"God, no," I gulped. "My Dad would be furious with me for hitting a girl, even more for hitting two."

"Is that because you see women as weak and frail?" the Cameroon Senior addressed me in French, which my resume said I did know (along with Spanish and Russian).

"Women are smaller and weaker than men," I responded. That didn't go over well.

"Do you think we are small and weak?" Hayden asked.

"No," I smiled, "I look around this room and all I see is a host of Amazons." And then it all made sense. The women all stared at me intently trying to determine if I could have possibly pierced their veil of secrecy.

"Amazons?" Hayden prodded me – in Hittite. I looked at her but didn't reply.

"Amazons?" she repeated in English.

"Yeah – Amazons," I grinned. "Like Wonder Woman." There as an infinitesimal relaxation around me. They weren't opposed to disposing of me. Their worry was that if some jack-ass from Bumfuck Nowhere had stumbled up their true identity, other, far more competent agencies could as well.

Instead, I had simply tossed a word in common usage out there, like that legion of chimps writing Shakespeare. A DC comic heroine had convinced them I knew nothing.

"We have wasted enough time on this matter," Hayden intoned with authority. The women started to disperse. Katrina had to stay behind to deal with Madi and Rhada.

"Buffy, take Cáel to my office and don't let him leave. Take care of him," Katrina commanded. **www.nOvElwOrM.cOm**

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