

Chapter 788

"Stand. Get off the elevator on the fourteenth floor and go to Conference Room L," Desiree commanded. "Do you need to write out your orders in crayon?"

"I'd prefer you use body paint," I bantered. The ladies around me didn't know what to make of the exchange.

"81 days, Jackass," Desiree promised balefully.

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"I tremble in anticipation - no, wait, that's fear," I snorted in amusement.

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"You are very irreverent," a lady onboard observed. This wasn't a good thing in her mind.

"I apologize, Ma'am. Reverence required me to become a eunuch and no job is worth my jewels in a jar," I bowed.

"I will report your poor attitude and mockery of your assignment to Tessa," she vowed.

"Very well, Ma'am..." I started.

"Astarte," she gave her name.

"Very well, Astarte."

"Please consider that I am doing precisely what I've been told to do and that my humor has made multiple travelers on this elevator smile," I continued. "Happy employees are more productive employees and barring being given something productive to do with my time, I've decided to give busy women a small bit of amusement."

Astarte had no good comeback to my defense. I didn't doubt Katrina and Tessa would get hate mail no matter what I said. The fourteenth floor job turned out to be transporting something from a director's safe to a bank vault. Drudgery followed - laundry, dinners, delivering a new car (I drove the company car back; Desiree drove the new car), picking up my suits and ending off where the day began - school.

I had barely exited the car when I heard a little girl scream "There's my Daddy". I sensed this was going to be a problem in the future. Aya didn't come running up to me. No, she made sure every classmate she could reach knew her 'Daddy' was here to take her home. Things got 'better' when she and some friends approached.

"Mr. Ruger (Aya's family name), is it true you are a spy?" a rather aggressive male classmate asked. I took a deep breath. My gaze made Aya looked down, embarrassed. I could sense her tormentors closing in. I knelt in front of Aya and tilted her chin up so we were eye to eye.

"Now, Sugar," I addressed her, "we've had this discussion before. You can't tell people what Daddy does. That would put a lot of good people's lives in danger."

"I expected better of you, Aya. You must never tell strangers what I do for a living. Don't forget that," I chastised her. Turning my focus to the surrounding children, "Forget that Aya ever told you I was a spy. Otherwise, bad things might happen to our family. Understood?"

They nodded, eyes wide with shock and fear.

See, Aya's Daddy WAS a spy, but no one could talk about it or people would die. In the eyes of a nine year old, that was so cool, if scary. The thing was, I hadn't lied. I had been evasive. We had been on the road for two minutes when Loraine conveyed a concept she was having difficulty with.

"Thank you, Cael," she told me. "That was a very nice thing you did for Aya." I had to think of the clearest way to express why I had done what I had done, circumstances included.

"I'm not a father, but if I was and Aya was my daughter, I would defend her as the situation warranted - physically, or verbally."

"They pay you to be with us," Europa grumbled. I laughed - hard enough to hurt my sides.

"Europa, Havenstone doesn't have enough money to keep me on this job," I chuckled.*Www.love.no(v)(e)©wôrM.c(©)©*

"Why do you do it then?" Loraine leaned forward.

"If I make it three months, I get a date with Desiree," I lied.

"Do you think she's pretty?" Europe prodded.

"No. She scares me. If I quit, I have to take her out on a date the next day," I continued fibbing.

"Stay at Havenstone. You can do better than dating a half-breed," Loraine stated. I digested that.

"Loraine, your weakness sickens me," I gave her a pained look. "Unsettling an opponent is acceptable. Insulting an ally is a quality of an immature and insecure mind."

"You don't talk to me like that," Loraine spat.

"Or what?" I mocked her. "Are we going to stop the car and take this fight to the sidewalk?"

"If we do that, I'm going to spank your pathetic ass and we both know it," I grumbled. "No, you'll have to hide behind Desiree and her sisters - the women you just insulted with an issue that is no one's business but hers. Are you going to show some courage and agree to fight me, or are you going to be worthy of your family, show some respect and apologize?"

"I don't want her apology," Desiree stated blandly.

"I'm not doing it for you," I told Desiree. "I'm doing it for her. She should have the chance to not grow up ignorant and rude." Loraine was forming up an angry retort.

"Cael, please stop," Aya pleaded.

"Of course, Aya," I smiled at her.

"We are not finished. You are the one who is rude and ignorant," Loraine persisted. I ignored her.

"I'm going to get you fired." Ignored again. "Say something!" Kept ignoring her. She hit my shoulder. Ignored yet again. She finally sat back in her seat, crossed her arms and sulked.

"Why won't you talk to my sister?" Europa inquired. I assumed she meant Loraine.

"Economy of motion," I answered. "She's not listening to me and she's upsetting Aya. Arguing with Loraine would only upset Aya more while accomplishing nothing."

"You are a jerk," Loraine seethed. Oh fuck...I knew that tone. How could I have missed it?

"She thinks you are hot," Europa smirked. Ah, sibling rivalry. Loraine prepared to hit Europa.

"In two more years I can tell her what a beautiful young woman she is," I 'told' Europa. "For now, I work for her family and she's underage."

"You think I'm beautiful?" Loraine perked up, anger forgotten. The wonder of teenage hormones.

I didn't respond to Loraine, which renewed her fury.

"Do you think I'm prettier?" Aya jumped in.

"Well, you don't have Loraine's deep blue eyes and Junior Miss physique, but you have the cuter smile and the boundless spirit of a winner," I winked at Aya. Loraine flipped back to pleased.

"What about me?" Europa prodded.

"Oh, you are a total hag," I sighed sadly. "It hurts me to look at you." Europa's jaw dropped then she hit me repeatedly.

"I give. I give," I surrendered. The conflict was resolved for the rest of the trip.

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