

Chapter 793

"Desiree, I wanted you here because you have always opposed my initiative to save our people. Unlike most of us, you have lived fully in their world. Because of our companionship and your knowledge, I have always valued your council. Has nothing changed?" Katrina kept her voice precise and level. Desiree stood up, clearly furious, and took a step toward me.

"You make no sense!" she shouted, pointing at me. A dozen comebacks welled up in my mind yet were discarded as inappropriate.

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"I apologize for causing you pain, Desiree," I met her gaze. Desiree gave a raw, guttural scream of agony and rage. She wasn't bawling, still tears rolled down her cheeks.

"I don't know why you chose me to hear this, Katrina. Our houses are not aligned. Still, if I get a vote, I say we find a way to make this work for us - our people and this directive," Daphne spoke up.

"Your bravery, wonderful attitude and ability to approach problems with an open mind is why I chose you, Daphne," Katrina explained.

"How long have you known?" Desiree muttered.

"Tuesday night..." Katrina began.

"Not you, Katrina...my apology. I meant...him," Desiree interrupted.

"About twenty seconds into the opening prayer at the board meeting," I tried to look inoffensive.

"He heard the Prayer of Ancestors?" Desiree wailed. "You haven't even taught me that yet!"

"Yes, he did. At the time, I had no idea that he knew our ancestral tongue. On the next recruitment drive we need to find a clever way to figure out if they do speak any dead languages so we can avoid this near-catastrophe," Katrina said.

"It is only the three - four of us who know?" Daphne asked. I was almost discounted.

"I believe Dr. Geisler suspects something is amiss," Katrina replied. "I impressed upon her the need for discretion, plus not to contact Cael for a week. I need the time to position us properly for when this issue comes out."

"They'll kill him," Daphne gasped. Wow, Daphne actually cared.

"We cannot save him," Katrina explained. "It is not within our power, or mandate. What we must do is figure out a way to make Cael acceptable to our people."

"Good plan. I like this plan. Why don't you let me go to the armory so I can do some last minute Christmas shopping?" I chuckled. "I'll be right back."

"If you make it to Christmas," Desiree sighed, "I will consent to a date with you."

"Desiree, I think that qualifies as assisted suicide," I teased. "If we make it to Christmas Eve, I'll let you push me off the Empire State Building to spare us both that agony."

"That's not nice," Katrina chided me. "Desiree is an excellent woman."

"Oh, I agree. My worry is that after one night of passion with her no other woman will compare," I looked worried. Desiree punched me in the upper arm. I grabbed one of her tits. I'd gone down this road with Buffy and I wasn't going to relent on my sexual stupidity now.

"You are grabbing her breast," Daphne gasped.

"Ow," I flinched then evaded her block for another squeeze of breast, "she's hitting me...Ow...so since she's enjoying herself...Ow...so I'm doing the same...Ow."

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"Grow up," Desiree growled but her eyes were shining with amusement.

"But if I remain a child I'll eventually evoke your mothering instinct," I snickered.

"Cael, you do realize that your life is hanging by a thread, don't you?" Daphne gawked.

"Daphne, you would be surprised how many chicks you can pick up with the line 'I laugh at death' when you really mean it," I smiled.

"Does that actually work?" Daphne was dubious.

"Daphne, I was romantically involved with four different women yesterday, not counting Aya, Europa, Loraine and Desiree," I enlightened her. I only had sex with three of them. That was only because I am trying to have something approaching a normal relationship with the fourth."

"You screwed Aya's teacher, didn't you?" Desiree glared.

"Ummm - I was applying positive incentives to induce Ms. Reichmann into taking special care of Aya," I elaborated. "Did I do wrong?"

"Cael, what is going to happen to Aya if Ms. Reichmann becomes upset with you?" Katrina posed.

"School is only going to last two more weeks," I assured her. "I can keep things going until then. I mean, eventually she'll hate me - all women do, but I can take care of things for two weeks." The women around me were curious about the start of that last statement. "I've had one female friend that lasted more than three months my entire life."

"Why is that?" Daphne asked. "I like you. You are good-looking, smart and funny if a bit too brutally honest."

"Believe me, juggling eight different romantic entanglements is hellish. Eventually some of them figure out what I'm doing with the others. Then it is Tartarus time," I sighed.

"What would you do if you discovered that along with having sex with you, I was also having separate liaisons with Violet and Buffy?" I postulated.

"I would be okay with it. You're a male - sex is your primary function," Daphne related. I had the feeling she'd been waiting to get that last bit off her well-endowed chest.

"What would you do if I was also having a relationship with Rhada?" I tossed out there.

"I'd kill you," Daphne's certainly pierced me. Good to know.

"Cael, are you having sexual relations with Rhada?" Katrina prodded.

"I'd rather pull out my shoelaces and go hang myself in your bathroom than discuss that, Katrina," I stated as I looked down in shame.

"Don't worry about it," Katrina assured me.

"What?" Desiree snarled. "He's having sex with Rhada and you want to ignore it?"

"Desiree, what do you want me to do? Acknowledge an affair that NO ONE wants to acknowledge," Katrina pointed out. "It isn't as if he is unaware of the delicacy of the situation, either, or can do anything else to make him more dead."

"Desiree, let the rest know they can come in as you leave," Katrina concluded the matter. Desiree swept out like an atomic monsoon (I wasn't sure what one would look like; Desiree was otherwise indescribable). Somehow the other new hires figured out that Desiree's primal scowl of outrage was their invitation to return to Katrina's office.

The meeting began the way it always did. Stunningly, Desiree gave me yet another horrific job review. The mockery aimed my way was dampened by the reality that I was involved with something Katrina didn't want me to talk about. Getting Desiree to talk was hopeless so I could see the others ready to pounce on Daphne when we headed out to fulfill our daily cue.

I had Desiree and school duty again. This time, I didn't have a gun. I did get mugged - on the landing. Aya wrapped her arms around me. Thankfully she squealed "Cael!" not 'Daddy'. Desiree was impassive. Aya's two sisters were happy, yet more controlled in their enthusiasm.

"I'm glad you showed up," Europa poked me. "Pint-sized was freaking out during breakfast."

"I must admit I'm very happy to see you three this morning," I looking over the back seat and addressed Europa. "You might want to tell your sister her make-up is very tastefully done." Loraine attempted a sultry look.

"Wait, are you not talking to me again?" Loraine blinked.

"I'm talking to you, Loraine," I winked. "I was teasing."

"Am I still an old hag?" Europa bantered.

"Not sure, Europa. Aya is soaking up all the pretty," I teased. "It is so hard to tell." Fortunately, Europa was a good sport and Aya loved the praise. Less good was...

"Girls, don't look over your shoulders," I ordered calmly. "Desiree, a maroon van three cars back. They keep turning with us."

"Test." Desiree informed me. Saying 'it was a test' was too wordy for her. I didn't bother to ask her if I'd done well, or not.

"Please, please, please," I begged Desiree. "Can I have a sunroof and a rocket launcher? Please."

"Grow up," she grumbled.

"Yes, Mom," I groaned.www.novelworld.com

"You are the best," snickered Europa. "I wish I could go on dates. Loraine does too...with you," she got out before Loraine popped her.

"Do I get to be in the room when Loraine has that conversation with her Mother?" I mused.

Desiree snorted. I was in for it now.

"Maybe Cael can ask Momma out on a date and become our real Daddy," Aya suggested happily. I was going camping with this family. It would solve all my worries about my burial service.

"Momma is too old for Cael," Loraine countered. Oh, joy.

"I'm not the best 'first date' material," I evaded. "Ah...what is your Momma's name?"

"Caitlyn," Europa provided. "Does that mean you will ask her out?"

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"Not necessarily - see, I have the annoying habit of being amorously attracted to every woman I meet, so I'm not very romantically reliable," I explained.

"Does that mean you are sexually proficient?" Loraine inquired eagerly.

"Does that mean you are a slut?" Europa teased.

"Does that mean you'll sleep with my aunts, too?" Aya wondered.

"It means you are an idiot," Desiree muttered under her breath.

"I'd like to think so," to Loraine, "I hate labels," to Europa, "I have no idea," to Aya, "and thanks, Des," to finish things off.

"Maybe we could go on a test date this weekend," Loraine suggested.

"Why?" I grinned. "Are trying to see what I would look like 'test' dead?"

"No!" Aya blurted out. "They want you to be Daddies." Aya had screwed up, most likely relaying with her limited understanding what she'd overheard. Two female family members in the same house, yet no other children. Buffy and Helena...and Desiree being brought back in despite the shame to her prestige aka genetic purity.