

Chapter 807

My rational mind didn't desert me, despite the hopelessness of my situation. My eyes stayed over the curve of the target. I presented her with a shot. The trade-off was I knew what she was doing. She shot, burying a shaft a centimeter below the rim; nearly punching through and into my face. She was a really clever lady.

Her next move was to stalk me. Someone shut Aya up. I couldn't spare a glance to see if she'd been taken away. My unknown assassin was confident, not gloating. She didn't have much respect for me. She undoubtedly had read my Havenstone file, even Elsa's report. I had no tricks. I had Aya's arrow and that wasn't even a real arrow - it was for target practice.

The other Amazons used diamond-shaped hunting arrows which they were clearly qualified to use. The brutal reality was I was going to die. A female warrior from a martial culture versus an adventurous college graduate - no matter how you worked the math, I wasn't going to make it. The Blonde Death wove between the targets, forcing me back until I had one target left to hide behind.

Fate was one fickle bitch, or maybe they don't teach Amazons political science in Assassin School. She chose her final approach from down range. She circled around, waiting for my final doomed rush to an adjacent archery target. I'd never make it, but that no longer mattered. I took off my shirt.

I let the shirt and arrow fall to the ground. I laced my fingers behind my head then stepped out to present her a clear shot. She drew back, a slight smile on her face. I went to my knees, closed my eyes and waited. In five seconds, I wasn't dead so I opened my eyes. That is what she was waiting for, for me to see my death coming. She finished her pull. I grinned triumphantly.

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Amazons don't train with compound bows. They go old school; composite bows only. While quiet, when a dozen are drawn at once, the sound is distinctive. By Blondie's look, she realized she wasn't going to be celebrating my demise for long. See, if by some galactic calamity she missed me at this range, she'd be shooting into Katrina's crowd.

That was why I had surrendered myself. I wasn't tired of living. I had sworn my life to Katrina and when she was put at risk, I had put my life on the line to protect her, thus making myself an easy target. Why was Katrina aiming at her?

"What are you doing?" one of the elders cried out - to Katrina.

"Leona is threatening my people," Katrina answered.

"That man is not your people," that woman insisted.

"I am not talking about him. I have children among us and she's hasn't proven to be all that accurate," Katrina explained.

"She is..." the woman started.

"She missed a man three times - twice in the open," Katrina snapped. "My youngest has a better success rate!" Katrina must have been referring to Aya. It was a lie, but still.

"I will not permit..." the unknown elder began. Suddenly every woman was aiming a bow at someone else.

"He is a man!" Tia Pharos, Felix Melena's boss decried.

"If a man pulled your child from a burning house, would you kill him for touching your offspring?" Beyoncé countered. "Better yet, would you shoot him as he ran into your house to save your child - kill him for trespass? This kind of insanity is why we are where we are today."

"Beyoncé," Tia shouted. "You are not one of them."

"I was opposed because I saw no hope in this scheme," Beyoncé responded. She pointed to me, "Now I have hope."

"Refrain!" Hayden thundered as she strode into the room, trailed by a dozen women I didn't know and one I did; Marilyn. I enjoyed that moment right up until the arrow entered my thigh.

I started screaming. GI Joe, James Bond, and Mathew Bourne, I'm not. I couldn't even fall backwards. I had to fall to the side because of the angle the arrow in my leg was in. I had been looking over my shoulder at Hayden when it happened so I had no warning.

"Gentlemen, you will be escorted from this room and events explained to you. Now!" Hayden snapped.

In the periphery of my pain, I saw members of the various departments detach from their Houses and lead my three remaining brethren away. I couldn't read their faces yet I imagined their expressions ranged from fear to bereft of any logical explanation of events. They were waking up to the reality they lived and worked in a madhouse where their worth was measured on the whim and patience of others - welcome to my childhood. WwW.nÓvélwôrM.cOm

The moment the door closed, wwŴ.nov@ŁwOr(m).cÓ©

"Cáel Nyilas, to my side," Hayden called out profoundly. As I clamped my teeth down to keep my howl of pain contained, Leona, the blonde assassin began to return to her group.

"Viper," Hayden snarled in Old Kingdom Hittite. Instantly three guardians had pistols pointed at Leona. wwW.nOp©ŁW(o)ŁM.(c)σM

"Leona," Hayden beckoned over politely now that the girl knew that disobedience meant death. Without difficulty, Leona made it to Hayden first. They waited until I limped over. My pain amused Blondie. "Cáel, kneel," Hayden directed. I'd thought this one out and neither choice was pain, or worry, free.

I put the knee of my wounded leg to the ground and rapidly shifted as much of my weight as possible to my kneeling leg. The pain sucked but I didn't topple over screaming so I racked this one up as a victory. A minute ago I had faced a quick death. Now I felt I was staring down a lingering one.

I was not an EMT, paramedic, or physician's assistant. I had no clue if I had major damage and was slowly bleeding to death. I'd have clubbed a baby seal in front of Aya for some codeine at the moment. The conversation turned to Hittite. I was not privileged to hear my fate.