

Chapter 811

"Nice to know," I murmured. "Pity about Leona."

"We do not allow infighting, C  l," she regarded me. "The Council decides - the High Priestess rules." I was digesting this information glut. I smelled Katrina's hand in all this.

"Are you the next High Priestess?" I went fishing.

"That's not how we do things. We search for birthmarks, auspices and celestial signs to lead us to the proper candidates," Sydney grinned.

Wait; that was the truth! These nuts used astrology to pick their Supreme Leader...wacko.

"Candidates with an's? Let me guess, they don't know it yet. The Council makes them run a gauntlet of tests to determine who gets the final nod," I reasoned. The guard jerked and Sydney stared at me.

"I see why Katrina wants you to breed with her house," Sydney mused.

"That's a pity," I sighed. "I'm devoting what's left of my short life to the Art of Masturbation."

unexpected. Despite the pain and blood loss, I began to work out some things.

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breeding females in House Epona - Caitlyn, Desiree and Aya. Desiree's mother could bear children and she had mated outside the program to conceive Desiree. The two adult women I'd seen at Caitlyn's house had no children, nor did Katrina herself.

As prestige conscious as these women were, being capable of bearing children was most likely the deciding factor in letting Desiree come back - instead of being murdered. Likewise, the way they all circled wagons around Aya spoke to more than their compassion and sisterhood. It was unlikely due to their militancy they would force one of their own to breed, so Desiree was abstaining due to a host of mental health issues.

And Katrina had made a point of me making Desiree smile. I couldn't confirm any of this with Desiree. If I showed her an ounce of pity, she'd either throw up a wall, or beat me senseless. I wasn't going to touch Aya until she was eighteen. Caitlyn would be a more delicate issue. Delicate as in 'how many women was I seeing again'.

I missed my entry to the infirmary. I was returned to clarity by the two female attendants. The younger went straight to cutting my left pants leg off while the oldest Amazon I'd seen to date began an excellent rendition of 'beef' inspector while pretending to be a physician. It was almost hilarious when she looked to Sydney, addressing her in Old Kingdom Hittite.

"Was he being disciplined, or did he do something stupid?"

"I did something stupid," I griped. "I showed up to work today." Since it was their native tongue, both of the medical attendants' eyes bugged out.

"He volunteered to help Aya of Epona with her archery lessons by letting her shoot at a fruit out of his hand," Sydney related.

"This...this isn't a wound caused by a practice arrow," the physician observed.

"No, that was from Leona of Marda. She attempted to kill him. When Leona threatened his controller, he presented himself for slaughter," Sydney clarified. "Hayden stopped Leona, Leona disobeyed and we need to plan Leona's funerary arrangements now."

"How did you come to speak our language?" the junior attendant asked. The tone of her voice and the look in her eyes was chilling and sensual at the same time. It was chilling because of the transformation she went through as I went from a piece of equipment to a close approximation of a human being in her eyes. I was getting tired.

"Erotic poetry," I humored her. "I had a lover some time ago - a scholar - who wanted to share Old King..Amazon love poetry and songs in the voices of their creators. I know multiple languages no longer spoken."

#Your eyes are stolen from the waterfalls descending from the highest mountains#

#Your hair rubbed from the threads of the night cloth#

I recited it in the original Chaldean Babylonian. They were all staring at me, so I translated it into

WALLACE, J. L., J. L. COLEMAN, and J. L. COLEMAN. 1990. The effects of the 1989-1990 El Niño on the distribution and abundance of the California halibut, *Paralichthys californicus*, in the central and northern California Current. *U.S. Fish. Bull.* 88:103-115.

"Chaldean Babylonian. It is a love poem from a prince to his dead wife," I

"I am pretty sure every woman in this room has been with a man before," the security guard

"That's not what we use men for," the doctor spoke up while she began examining my wound. Pain.

"We use artificial insemination and surrogates for procreation. Beyond directing them in our physical stimulation, there is no need to talk to men."

"Oh," I mused sadly. "That makes sense and is richly rewarding to know. If I was more like the rest of you, I'd be laughing. Unfortunately, I have a heart and compassion, so I'll pity you all instead." The doctor didn't take my honesty well. "Ow! Good bedside - Ow! - manner there. Doc."

"We don't need your pity," the security guard threatened.

"Sure, but then I've not bred myself into extinction out of fear of cuddling either," I grinned. "Treating men like livestock makes sense - if you are evil. You refused to allow yourselves to get attached to

"Tread carefully," Oudney cautioned me.

"Okay Sydney. Since you are the only female present capable of having offspring, I'll be good," I got up in my parting shot. By the silence in the room, I had hit the nail on the head. "I apologize for disturbing your business. I'll be on my way and hope you get the shot."

That declaration didn't last long. Apparently pain-killers were not part of their medical credo. When I asked, the doctor implied I wasn't hurt nearly enough - in other words, not being amputated or decapitated. I asked if being castrated would earn me a hammer to the head. They smiled. They thought it was funny.

This tender, motherly moment was punctuated by the doctor's application of the staple gun (instead of stitches) to both entry and exit wounds. Sydney offered to give me something to bite down on. I

"And not screaming would have made me tough? Bitch, those are some fucked-up priorities. Screaming meant I didn't jolt when she was stapling my wounds shut. I've been stabbed and

The assistant had been walking her hands over my body during the

"You missed the one on the right foot," I corrected.

"You've been stabbed fifteen times? What do you do?" Sydney wondered.