

Chapter 850

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"That's Libra Chalmers," Odette spoke upwhen the two girls wouldn't."Her sister and Cá el Nyilas were friends at college."

"The raven-haired woman is Brooke Leeand her boyfriend was a total do uche and made work difficult for Cá el Nyilas and life horrible for her," Odette finished. That was so sweet of her-it was almost'me'-like.

"Are either of you Havenstone?" Niki studiedthem.

"That would be me," Buffy spoke up. Sinceshewasn't dressed like a desperate cry for sex(like the other three women), Nikita hadn't truly soaked her in yet. For starters, Buffy was clearly older than the rest.

"Do you have any weapons on you?" Niki glared.

"Yes-do you want to see my ConcealedWeapon permits?" Buffy remained serene.

"Nice and slow," Niki told Buffy as her handcame to rest on the grip of her 9 mm. Nikita

was off-duty so this was an awkward situation.

"You have girlfriends with guns?" Brookegaspedit. She seemed excited. Libra was uncertain.

Nikita being Nikita, she took Buffy's word for nothing, using her cellphone to call in and check the three permits-gun, knife, knife. She wanted to card everybody, but I nixed that. These were my house guests. I put my foot down. Niki became truly angry with me.

"I need to talk to you-outside," Nikitainsisted. I didn't hesitate to go with her.

By outside, she meant to her car because she was sure my place was under surveillance. She was most likely right. As soon as I put my ass on the passenger seat, Nikita wrapped me in a smothering embrace.

"I've been so worried about you," shesniffled.

No, Nikita wasn't brain damaged, or forgiving. She knew that if I hadn't already

had sex with some, if not all, of the four women in my place, I most likely would in the next 36 hours.

Don't forget that she knew I was a philanderer, had come to grips with that, and was beginning to

count up my allowed indiscretions before she finally gave up on my worthless ass.

You shouldn't do that, Nikita," I hugged her tightly to me."You have a freaking dangerous job and I'm a big boy. I'll deal with my work problems. You deal with yours and we take what time together as we can."

"This is not how the World is supposed towork," she mumbled.

"There are two ways of looking at it, Nikita,"I stroked her hair. "Peace is merely the interruption of the otherwise endless cycle violence, or life is a constant struggle to avoid the inevitable slide into anarchy."

"For such a loving, joyous man, you have aterribly dark side to you," Nikita looked into my eyes.

"I read this in a book on the philosophy ofsocial collapse -Imagine that last

legionnaire standing at op Hadrian's Wall, his companions ready to march away yet knowing the Picts remained just out of sight, waiting for the last guardians to depart," I recalled."Did he contemplate that, despite generations of sacrifice, nothing had change, or did he realize that, with their lives, those fellow soldiers bought centuries of peace to an otherwise war-torn land?"

"Nikita, no victory is permanent," Iexplained."One day the lights will go out in this city and never come back on. One day everything you've worked for will fall. That doesn't mean what you are doing doesn't have value, or that I don't appreciate what you do. Every life you save is still precious-it is invaluable to that person, if no one else."

"Every day you take up the badge and gunmeans hundreds of others get to live their lives wrapped up in the illusion they live in a lawful society," I said."I say 'illusion'because people tend to not understand that nothing lawful is permanent. They don't understand that one day that last legionnaire will be looking out over their neighborhoods. It is inevitable."

"Is that why you don't give a crap about anyof your relationships -is this the excuse that you use to cheat-that nothing is ever permanent?" Nikita's gaze hardened.

"Remind me to never be honest with youagain,"I opened the door. Yeah, I was pissed. I'd broken my rule -lie to make the girl happy-and this is what it got me.

"Damn it," Nikita yanked on my arm, notletting me leave, "Cá el Nyilas, what am I supposed to think after you tell me that?" I hesitated. I hated honesty.

"I don't give a crap about some nebulous,transitory victory, Nikita," I kept looking away. "I don't see mon ogamy as pointless any more than I feel law enforcement as pointless."

"That doesn't mean I want to be a cop, or inonly one relationship. My Dad loved my Mom. He never dated after she died. He loved me and raised me the best he could. That is one of the best examples of mon ogamy I've ever witnessed. It simply isn't me," I told her. "Of greater relevance is my initial comment about the value of victory."

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"You think you can 'fix' my situation; thatsomewhat the rule of law can apply to people who live outside of it," I turned around. "That isn't happening. You are more likely to convict every banker that had a hand in the 2008 housing loan collapse than you are to ever bring a single senior Havenstone employee up on any charges."

"It is wrong," Nikita insisted. "I'm not beingnaive. No criminal conspiracy is ever impenetrable."

"They are not a criminal conspiracy," I sighed. "They are a nation-state without demarcated borders. Criminals are fixated on making money."

"Havenstone uses money as part of theirarsenal to get what they want," I said.

"What is that?" Nikita.

"I'll never tell you," I put our faces withinmillimeter of each other.

"Cáel, I want to help you," Nikita persisted.

"You can't, Nikita," I stared. "Rome calls andyou will obey. It is who you are. It is what I

like about you. It also means you won't break the law for me, which means, in the terms of rescue, you are useless to me as anything except a friend. Personally, I suggest you appreciate the next 70 days with me, then find someone who will take care of you, marry them and raise the next generation of policeme n and women."

"Are you a police officer?" she altered herapproach.

"No," I played along.

"Then don't assume you know what I canand can't accomplish," Nikita grew fierce. "Al-Qaeda thought they were untouchabletoo. As did the KKK and the Mafia."

"Right, Nikita, except there are stillterrorists, violent racists and organized crime-different faces but the same hydra,"I relayed."That is what I'm trying to tell you -these ladies are not

conventionalcriminals. They are not going to flip on each other. They aren't afraid of drone attacks, wiretaps, or video surveillance."

"If the Justice Department goes after them,they'll strike back. Don't think assassinations

and bombings-think 'Tail-hook' and 'Fast and Furious' . The problem is they already know what rules you play by and how law enforcement works. You won't be able to get your side to understand how Havenstone works until it is too late," I stressed.(w)©©.n.v.eIwôRŴ.cOm

"Your side? We are your side, Cá el Nyilas,"Nikita insisted.

"No, you are not," I responded."My sidewants to deal with this himself, only risking his life and earnestly not wanting to have my actions resulting in hundreds, if not thousands, of deaths. Your gang wants to enforce the law and turn this problem into a nice, tidy bundle. Making twenty arrests and confiscating a few million in assets will not make Havenstone go away."

"They will fade back into the shadows andthen wreck vengeance upon you all when it is convenient for them," I stated confidently. I had sat in on exactly one board meeting. That had been enough of an education to figure out how they operated and how long-term their planning was.

They wouldn't put a bullet into the head of the lead investigator. No, fifteen years later,

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while having a routine medical procedure, there would be a mix-up with his medication and he'd die. A few months later, his son, that man's wife and two children would all be involved in a fatal car accident. Yes, they wiped out your family.

My be t was they had already done something like that. They'd find a weak link in the investigative team, show him/her the evidence of past misdeeds and impress upon them that they would be next. Witness Protection? Over a twenty year old string of accidents? The fed either played ball, or waited a decade, or two, for their loved ones to start dropping.Ŵŵw.n.vêLwôŴ.rŴ.coM

Havenstone Commercial Investment s was only 22 years old. Without a doubt, there had been other incarnations built up then discarded only for some new front to take its place. As for grudges; the Amazons took it as a personal affront that an independent Hellas existed today, despite the reality that those Greeks had little line age in common with the Greeks from the time of Achilles.

The conundrum was I couldn't use the word 'Amazons', or refer to the board meeting. Icouldn't talk about the armory, Buffy, or

Desiree's backgrounds, or truly impress upon Nikita the absolute level of fanaticism Havenstone engendered in their congregation. If I hinted at it, she'd think of Jonestown, not the Karen Insurgency in Burma.