

Chapter 853

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(Monday)

For some God-unknown reason I was showing up to work at 6 a. m. Monday. I swear, one of these days I'm going to show up to work naked. If asked why, I'll claim that it wasn't in my brilliantly scripted orders. I would then beg forgiveness for assuming I was allowed to breath, or even be conscious. We'd all laugh. Nothing would change.

They were never going to give me advance warning of what my latest errand entailed. I don't think it was in them.

"You've made to Week Three," Buffy sneered as we entered the garage beneath Havenstone's skyscraper. "I'm flabbergasted."

"So am I --flabbergasted that is," I nodded sagely. "I had no idea you knew what flabbergasted meant."

Punch. Definitely back to the old Buffy.

"You need a haircut," she commented. My phone beeped. I had data packet. I had received them before; just not from this place. I opened it up as we exited the car and made for elevators.

"Holy Bat-shit Bat-Bunny!" I gasped. "Hayden's written me a letter."

"Really?" Buffy was momentarily non-psychotic. I showed her my screen. Hayden had made an official declaration --something that would be in the records of the Amazons from now until forever.

Any and all males of Havenstone --specifically one Cael Nyilas --were to forthwith and immediately stop spiritually assassinating any and all Amazons and Amazon recruits. Furthermore, I was admonished for murdering Fabiola Dobrani and, under penalty of an unmentioned punishment, I was to publicly rejoice at her resurrection.

Life was relentless. Buffy's phone rang. She got the same message I did... as did every freaking Amazon in the building. I didn't think the guys would be getting this memo.

"I wonder how the Chicklettes are going to take this," I mused. The doors opened before Buffy could formulate her comeback.

Relentless may have not been a strong enough word. Waiting for us in two distinct groups were Constanza with two SD Playboy Bunnies; opposite them was Oneida. Oneida looked... enamored.

This wasn't curiosity about what my meat would feel like as it made her weep tears of rapture.

This was a weekend binge of watching some of the best received, twenty-something, romantic movies of the past ten years. It was hard for me to decide which group was more divorced from reality --the Amazon man-haters, or the 'Hollywood was real' babe.

"I'm going to get a bite to eat," Buffy announced. Entering the garage had completed her bodyguard duties. *w.u.r.n.o.V.él.WO.R.m.c.ô.m*

Oneida had the higher prestige so she came first.

"Hi Cael Nyilas," she stepped up and greeted

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me. She extended her hand --for me to shake. Amazons clasped forearm to forearm. I greeted her Amazon-style.

"It is good to see you again, Oneida of House Arinniti," I replied. She looked upset.

"You know who I am," she sighed with disappointment.

"Please believe me," I stroked the side of her left cheek to the top of her ear, "had I known Friday, I would have finished up by impaled myself on your spear and cleared up a whole manner of things.

Why does it matter to you that I know who you are?"

"I...I didn't want to be treated as anyone special," she gazed up at me with innocent eyes.

"That's not going to be a problem," I chuckled. "To me, you are nothing but another psycho-bitch that's trying to kill me. You are a black-hearted, soulless creation of Hell and I hate your guts, Oneida."

"But you saved my life?" she whimpered. She was a bit more unbalanced than the

normal babe employed here. Yay me.

"And? See, this is why my description of you and your sisters is so accurate," I smiled while I explained. "I would try to save almost anyone because it is the right thing to do. The only reason saving you was a mistake was that it caused me to fall further into Hayden's favor. Now she's going to expect that shit on a regular basis solely because you are of House Arinniti." *w.u.r.n.©.v.él.W(©).r.m.C©.m*

"Ah --I like you," Oneida pleaded.

"Why?" I asked.

"You risked so much for Aya. You made her laugh and smile. You... you acted as if you cared for her --as if you were her own mother," Oneida told me. "Was that a deception too?"

"Hmmm... not what I expected," I mused. "Fine, realizing that I was with Aya for her sake and hers alone raises you up a step in my estimations. I'm not being deceptive about how I feel about this place, Oneida. Here, let me prove it." I looked to Constanza. "Constanza, do I hate your guts?"

She glared at me. "Constanza, if I thought I could get away with it, would I shove a fragmentation grenade up your ass and pull the pin?" No response.

"See," I grinned to the gawking Oneida, "I'm not being deceptive about how I feel about this place. My opinion matters not at all to these women yet they know I'll never act on my hate because of my own, perverse Code of Conduct. I'm not going to run away and I'm not going to stop being me. I'm certainly not going to fall in love with anyone here."

"Oh," she muttered.

"I have to go to work now. Have a nice day," I turned to Constanza. "Are you my work buddy today?"

"Male, come with us," Constanza snapped. Off the four of us walked -- right back to the elevator.

Down we went, past any level my ID card could have accessed. Devo's Working in the Coal Mine song rang to mind, so I hummed it. I was feeling completely at ease. Constanza stood behind me, while the other two stood

at either side, but half a step back so they were right at the edge of my peripheral vision. I felt like a team player --an interregal part of my imminent demise.

The group marched past the Armory. I waved to my old friend, the Kindergarten Cop. She glowered. Amazons were not martinets. They were clean-cut and proud, but vigilance meant much more than a scuff mark on a boot, or a gaze locked on the farther wall. Our trip deposited in yet another room I could never access.

I was the first one through the door. I almost froze. For starters, the room was around 15 meters wide and 6 meters deep. In the center of the room was an 8x2 meter table. On the table where a wide variety of firearms and ammunition. Automatic pistols, revolvers, shotguns and submachine guns plus multiple clips, or speed-loaders for them all.

They hadn't brought me here to murder me with Death by multiple calibers. If they wanted me dead, they would have blown my brains out already then put a gun in my hand in a hopeless attempt to fool Katrina. The number of guns didn't even impress

me. The far wall was transparent and through it I could see multiple ladies in sports bras and boy shorts shooting away on a firing range.

Holy Mother of God! I was here for weapons training. What the Hell had gone wrong? As I moved deeper into the room, one SD Femi-Nazi moved down the left wall, the other moved down the right and Constanza remained two steps behind me.

"Please clarify my task for this time period, Constanza?" I requested. The look she shot me was lethal.

"The weapons present are ones you have stated you have a familiarity with as well as others in common usage here at Havenstone. All the rounds are hollow points, or slugs. Choose which weapons you wish to qualify in, load your clips and inform me when you have completed this part of the assignment."

"Thank you," I nodded then set to the task at hand. Constanza clearly had expected me to be a smart ass. I had used learning about guns to get tail. That didn't mean I disrespected the weapons. I picked up

several side arms, testing their weight and grips before deciding on the .40 Smith & Wesson Glock-22.

I felt the ammo, making sure I wouldn't be running around with blanks this time. This shit was real. Elsa had claimed she'd rather be skinned alive than let any man bear weapons in her Havenstone.

Maybe I shouldn't have felt her up, or given that massage to that med tech, or stripped in the elevator. I was a really, truly naughty boy.

Most women spank naughty boys. My tormentors tend to fuck with my mind because, ya know, it's harder to defend against that crap. Also, there is not a hand lotion made that will soothe the ravaged psyche. I began loading the clips.

"Is that the only one you are taking?" Constanza eventually broke down and asked.

"I don't want to waste your time," I replied. "This is my favorite pistol. I've shot .22, .38, 9 mm, and .45, but I'm most comfortable with this one. Maybe later I can work with the shotguns. I haven't a clue how to handle anything else." I could see it in her eyes --

'damn him; he's making sense.'

There was one final way I could fuck up. I didn't. I knew firearms etiquette. Don't load your gun before taking your station at the range. Sure, all the crazy chicks could do it, but that was part of their jobs--killing things. I was a novice. I picked out some ear protection and an adequate hip holster in case Constanza wanted me to fire from the draw.

I was clearly not making her day by not screwing up.

"This way," she barked. She accessed the door leading to the range and out we stepped. All around, the firing slowly died. For each of the women, there was a second of disbelief followed by several more seconds of outrage. *w.W.w.n.O.v.él.WO.R.m.©.m*

Lust was where the emotional landslide ended. I was "That" guy. I wasn't something they could codify. I made meaningful, defiant eye contact, I dressed to impress, and I was known to be courageous.

Having Hayden decide that she wanted to mate with me didn't hurt my appeal one bit. I could already tell they were figuring out

where to shoot me so that I could still have sex an hour later.

I was a man in Havenstone with a gun after all. I was the equivalent of the Pope in Mecca --it just didn't happen. My booth was nice and comfy. After placing my gear on the table,

"What do I do next?"

"Ear guards -- check weapon -- load, chamber, announce your preparation to fire -- fire as quickly and accurately as possible. Reload and fire until you have used all rounds," she commanded.

Hmmm... six meters. Standard human-scored target. I hadn't done this in a year. I shook my limbs out to get ready for the shock and recoil then steadied my breathing. Fifteen rounds, starting at the ready stance.

"Ready," I pronounced.

"Begin," was Constanza's muffled command. The report of the first shot, the sting of the recoil, the pull on the arm and the shell ejecting--all of those rolled over me before

I could count. I almost missed the automatic slide staying open. Down went the old magazine even as my left hand retrieved and leveraged the next one in.