

Chapter 867

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"I have Hayden's permission, but feel free to follow your convictions," Katrina nodded.

"You have a daughter in outdoor training right now, St. Marie. It would be utterly tragic if she experienced a crippling injury," Katrina sighed.

"You wouldn't dare," St. Marie took a few steps toward Katrina who stood up from her desk.

"Dare? Hayden and I have tolerated your intransigence until now," Katrina glared.

"Keep to your beliefs. Now you know the cost of standing in the way of progress," Katrina continued. "We cannot afford to remove you, but we can end your counter-productive thinking at this generation."

"When the Council finds out you've overstepped your bounds it will be the end of you," St. Marie kept coming.

"We are a dying people, St. Marie. Hayden and I are willing to kill as many of you as

necessary so that our daughters will have daughters of their own," Katrina stated. "If you want to see who is truly overstepping, recall our oaths. We obey the High Priestess, the Council, our Houses and our duties. I am the Spear in Night and Death. You are the Golden Mare."

"You wage war upon our many enemies. I ferret them out, within and beyond our society," Katrina educated us. "If I determine an Amazon is an enemy, I bring their name to Hayden for a final adjudication of the Ancestors. If the Ancestors deny you, then I must remove the enemy. You know how that goes."

"My daughter is not the enemy," St. Marie spat.

"That is not our place to decide," Katrina gave a feral grin. "You should have been an Augur if you wanted that kind of knowledge. Besides, neither you nor your daughter are under sentence of death. She can live a long full life without an eye... or an arm."

St. Marie fidgeted, contemplating violence.

"Everyone, but Cael leave," Katrina ordered. St. Marie was staying as clearly intended. After Dora shut the door, Katrina added, "Touch my male again, and I'll do something worse to you."

"What I do to a male shouldn't matter," St. Marie growled. *Www.0riginalwork.com*

"The New Directive matters to us all and I think Cael Nylas will be the only one to pass the first round of the program, so Hayden thinks he matters--as do I," Katrina glared right back.

"He hit me," St. Marie grumbled.

"After you grabbed his jaw like you would an unruly child," Katrina countered.

"He was a rebellious male," Copper Horsechick kept coming.

"St. Marie, where did you confront him? It wasn't a basket weaving class--it was a firing range," Katrina sighed in exasperation. "Cael being on the range was the reason you came here. Why did you manhandle him?" A pregnant pause followed.

"I was an hour late so I missed his practice time," St. Marie admitted.

"Cael, I blame you," Katrina looked my way.

"Yes Ma'am--Katrina," I nodded. What did I do now?

"Cael's presence makes normally controlled, rational women act in an abnormal fashion," Katrina informed St. Marie.

"I prefer to believe that than think we are incapable of accepting a lone outsider male amongst us," Katrina added. "If we treat him the way we treated our old male population we would be perpetuating our mistakes. He doesn't submit because that was the type of male we selected. Why is he learning how to fight? That should be obvious to you."

"Care to enlighten me?" I requested.

"No," the two women replied. Ah, what the fuck.

"That's okay. I figured it out," I shrugged. "I was checking to see if I warranted the truth," Katrina put her face into her upraised hands. She may have wept a single tear.

"You know nothing," St. Marie stated dismissively.

"He knows enough," Katrina shook her head.

"Who would have told him?" St. Marie looked back to Katrina suspiciously.

"Why don't you ask him?" Katrina chuckled. St. Marie turned back to me.

"Was it Katrina?" St. Marie threatened.

"No and no 'one' person. It was two unrelated slip-ups by two unrelated Amazons," I said. "One referenced a previous time when the Amazons let men bear arms, which led to disaster. The other was the use of the term 'Ash Men' as a positive moniker."

"That's all I know. I suspect there was a time when the Amazons let down their guard and allowed men to be equals, or semi-equals, in their society. There was a rebellion that left a bitter taste on the Amazon racial psyche. Somehow the Ash Men played a positive role in Amazon society. For some reason, you exterminated them," I concluded. St. Marie flinched.

"Why do you say that?" she studied me.

"They are not around today and you are all hateful psychopaths," I explained.

"Again, you know nothing," St. Marie insisted.

"Katrina, unless you are not finished insulting my intelligence, can I use your bathroom so that I can get dressed and go to work?" I looked at my boss.

"Insult to your intelligence duly noted. When you are finished, report to Medical. They want to test a variety of gene-therapies on you," Katrina told me. I stumbled and stared. Katrina laughed. "Get to work." From the bathroom, I heard St. Marie question Katrina.

"Is he afraid of Medical, or is he worried about being a test subject?" she posed.

"Neither; he's surprised that he had his job explained to him before he actually got there. It has never happened before," Katrina replied.

"You send him on missions without him

knowing what he's going to be doing?" St. Marie grunted.

"Yes. It makes him think on his feet," Katrina noted. *Www.originalwork.com*

"That is probably why his work is so substandard," St. Marie remarked.

"Cael's work is not substandard. He may be the best new hire in the batch. I give him crappy reviews to keep him on his toes," Katrina snickered.

"He knows what I'm doing, but he still keeps trying harder despite that," Katrina sounded amused. "Cael is one of the few joys in my life... and if he doesn't finish getting dressed in the next 30 seconds I'm going to assign him to babysitting Marilyn at the hospital next." I hoped out of Katrina's bathroom--mostly dressed.

"Is Marilyn okay?" I worried. "I didn't get the call last night, but I never imagined anything bad happened to her." St. Marie appeared confused.

"Someone gave her a bad drug and she nearly overdosed," Katrina brought me up

to date. "That is where Desiree is. Now go to work." Off I went.

"He is enamored of Marilyn St. James?" I caught St. Marie inquiring.

"Oh no," Katrina answered. "He has rather a low opinion of her, but Cael would run into a burning ammo dump to save Constanza. He is stupidly enchanting that way." I had one last hurdle.

There were the new hires talking with Felix. They were captured in his orbit and he was having a blast soaking up the attention. He was making real inroads with the ladies but he missed a fundamental aspect of his environment--who hunted who.

"Cael," Felix parted the women as he came my way.

"How did you do last night? Didn't you and Gene hook-up? I'm done with her, so it isn't like you'd be poaching," he grinned. I sensed the emotional tidal shift.

"Nah, both Gene and I were of the opinion you dumped her to have a one-night stand. *Www.Originalwork.com*

with Brooke, break her heart then toss her back to me," I shrugged.

Felix glared. This wasn't how the 'game' was played. Where was my outrage?

"Are you going to take her back?" Felix went all alpha-predator on me. Bad move. The only predators around here had to have tits--bulging pectorals didn't count. "If you do, go easy on her. She's sore," he kept grinning like the wolf he was.

"Besides," he fished something flimsy and back out of his pocket. "He can return these to her." He tossed me Brooke's panties from last night. In Havenstone, Brooke was a 'nobody'--an outsider. She didn't matter. Felix taking a trophy from a woman did matter. I was different because I knew the score. Felix didn't have that luxury.

I actually held them up, displaying Brooke's rather daring choice in evening lingerie. A little bit of education was in order.

"Pretty clever--the old hiding the pantie trick so you can exhibit them later," I chuckled. "I use it to get a call back. You clearly get off on mailing them to her

parents, boyfriend, or husband as if having sex with you wasn't humiliation enough."

Felix moved to the very edge of my personal space.

"Now you are being a poor sport," he sneered.

"What do you mean?" I remained cool. "I went over to Brooke's this morning. We critiqued your sexual performance. She found you truly impressive--just a little weak down the closing stretch."

"She said that to make you feel less inadequate," Felix reposed.

"Nah; she said that so she could have sex with me," I sighed. "I fought her off as long as I could, but she wrestled me down and rode me like the pony express. If you wore her out... well... ah, she recovers quickly and vigorously." *Www.Originalwork.com*

"You are so full of shit," he laughed. "You gotta pity fuck. Accept it."

"Think what you will," I smirked. "I left her smiling. You left her in tears and isn't the woman's pleasure what it is all about?" Pandering to my audience.

"I agree," Felix took back in his surroundings. Nice recovery except for...

"So that's why you stole Brooke's panties and chose to publicly hurl them at me," I met his gaze, the bastard, "because she matters...most?" Felix could feel the room temperature dropping by the Kelvin.

"It is how the game is played," he snarled. He was starting to clue in that things had gone wrong.

How had they gone wrong? For starters, the only Alphas allowed in Havenstone didn't have dicks. Treating women, even outsider women, as if they were game pieces on a male's only board wasn't wash here. I had coughed up the name of every woman I'd ever had intercourse with--but that was for the job, not for general consumption.

Felix, by idiotically seducing all the new hires in Executive Services had showed them EXACTLY what he thought of them--outsider women to be taken as prizes. Reference the Greeks in the Trojan War for

how the Amazons felt about that. This was not sympathy for world-wide femininity.

This was terrorists attacking a school. When the Amazons found those terrorists, they killed them; not to save outsider children, but because the terrorist were fucking dangerous. Since Felix treated all women like trophies and conquest, he, by definition, would treat Amazon women the same way. Good job, Pinhead.

Felix was a pretty smart guy. He finally realized I'd kicked his ass without lifting a finger. Felix couldn't figure out why he'd lost, only that he'd lost. Then we were back to Felix being the man who always has to win. He couldn't let go. He couldn't let me have my moment and depart in peace. This was made all the worse for I was the Bumpkin--the guy he'd dissed from Day One.

"I guess I need to have another go at Brooke to set the record straight," Felix hissed quietly.

"I'll make it easy on you," I laughed loudly. "I am tired of you hiding behind my acquaintances to get at me. I have a friend

coming over at 5:10 pm, so give me an hour and I'll meet you on the mats."

"Why should I?" he sneered. "What's on the line?"

"Normally I fight for a cause, even if it is my own self-respect. I'm making an exception in your case--I'll fight you solely to kick your ass. Just cause you are a lousy human being. I know you are because I'm one too. Fight, or cluck--your choice."

"I'll fight you," he smiled confidently. "I'll break you for everyone to see and then I'll take that luscious blonde." I had to laugh.

"Good luck with that," I chuckled. I could see it now. Felix: "You are now my prize"; Elsa: "You are now in Intensive Care". Woot! I couldn't lose.