

Chapter 881

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"We were getting a little disappointed then you chose that chokepoint to make your stand. That was clever," she informed me.

"Actually it was the sight of the chains that set me off," I said. "Against seven of you I had no realistic chance. If I let myself get chained up, I knew I was completely out of options."

Several of the women nodded. Were any of them pissed? Apparently not. Even the one I'd cold-conked rubbed her temple and smiled at me. I worked in an insane asylum.

"Is there any way I could make a video message?" I inquired.

"No," was the reply.

"Please. Aya of the Epona is at Summer Camp and I want her to know that I'm okay, but won't be able to see her for a while," I pled my case.

"You will never be able to see her again, so why bother?" another asked.

"I love her. Better to give her the illusion I may one day return than the harsh reality that she is doomed to end up like the rest of you," I explained. [www.florinworm.com](#)

"Save some of that defiance for your relocation" [www.florinworm.com](#).

the leader snickered. "You'll need it."

"Thanks. I will," I sighed. There was a pause. They were being rather gregarious.

"You've accepted your fate?" the one I'd knocked out questioned.

"The fate you want for me? No. That this will mean my death-yes," I shrugged.

"Bravado," a different Amazon snorted.

"You think so? Once I am relocated I have nothing left to live for. Every ounce of my being will be devoted to ending the horrible parody of an existence I'm left with," I stared at her. "I've beaten your ilk enough times to know I'll escape that life before too long."

That earned me some silence. They began talking amongst themselves. The group was a mixed group of House Guard and Security Detail reinforcements from other facilities. They either knew each other, or knew someone in common. An hour in, this had become incredibly boring.

"When is the meeting?" I asked a woman temporarily not in a conversation.

She didn't look surprised. She hid it well.

"What meeting?" she countered. I lowered my chin to my chest.

"Do you know where I work, what I did yesterday, or how easy it was to figure this out?" I looked up.

"What do you know?" she prodded. The others were now watching.

"I work for Executive Services, I spent much of yesterday making housing arrangements for a ton of emergency visitors, and since I've been doing so many stupid things, plus my reception this morning, I assume the New Directive is under attack," I laid out my case.

"If you figured all that out, why did you show up today?" the leader wondered.

"I work here. I have a 6:00 am session on the firing range. Work starts at 7:00 and normally goes to 5:00 with a 3:00 pm break for knife training. Then I either bike home, or work out in the gym, or the pool. Barring being called back to work on a special order, I get a date, a meal and then sex until midnight," I mused.

"I came to work today for the same reason I came in yesterday and last week-I work for a bunch of homicidal lunatics, a few of whom I care for," answered. "Their friendship and affection is pointless. I'm good-looking and amusing, a passing distraction in their lives and none of that matters one iota to my survival. I face my condemnation alone and I am okay with that."

"You sound angrier than your words indicate," an

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Amazon noted.

"I am angry. I don't desire death," I shrugged. "I don't think I deserve this fate yet here we are. Personally, I know I put my hope in karmic rewards for all of us."

"What would that be?" the leader said. She was making small talk to alleviate the boredom.

"Today-today I think you deserve a lingering, 24-hour torturous death. Starting with the very youngest followed by the next youngest and the next youngest proceeding in quick succession so that the oldest of you watch your lineages waste away. I want you gripped with hopelessness and despair as you are rendered powerless to control your futures. That's a fitting ending for the Amazon race today," I stated.

"Does that fantasy make you feel better?" she pressed, somewhat amused.

"Of course not," I laughed. "That is surrendering to hate and that would make me as bad as all of you."

"You know nothing of us," she said and the others laughed. [www.florinworm.com](#)

"Yeah... right. So, how many of you have murdered your paternal unit? Did you herd them into gas chambers, shoot them in the head, or slit their throats?" I grinned. "Do you dump those men and your sons in a massed unmarked graves, or burn

them like rubbish? Those poor bastards have gotten the last laugh," I chuckled. "Sterile females, deformed babies... you taught those men a lesson alright."

"You are all such epic bad asses, you've butchered your way to extinction. But, hey, you've got your racial superiority, right?" I chortled.

"You should shut up now," the leader's eyes narrowed. I shrugged. This time, I had killed the mood so we sat in silence.

An undetermined time later, Constanza stormed in and threw my clothes at me-no sign of the rest of my gear, or valise.

"Get dressed," she ordered.

"Why?" I asked. She kicked me. The kick was aimed at my ribs, but I was able to set up a knee block up in time.

"You will do it because you've been told to do it," Constanza snapped. I stayed where I was. "Help me get him dressed," she addressed the room. I lost the fight if there was any doubt. I looked like a red-dressed corpse. No one would think I'd dressed myself. A few minutes later, the whole troupe plus Constanza frog-marched me to the elevators. I was shackled up thus taking small steps.

I ended up farther down that I'd ever been before. Along the way I was given several quick

examinations before being taken to two massive wooden doors with two SD guards, one being Naomi. She looked at my chains speculatively.

"He has been summoned," Constanza informed the door guards.

One of my initial capturers began unlocking my restraints. I debated putting a knee to her head. That seemed rude so I refrained from violence. Naomi took me by the elbow while the other guard opened one of the doors. She led me into the nearly empty, cavernous room. Eight SD troopers were along the walls and Elsa stood at attention close to what I reasoned was Hayden's chair.

"Stand there," Elsa pointed to a large piece of slate with a rune upon it.

"Sure," I did as I was instructed. "Why am I here?"

"Your only real hope is to be quiet and well-behaved, Cael," Elsa told me, resuming her statuesque stance. I honestly figured this was it for me.

My jacket came off. I threw it to the closest chair. The tie came off next, looping it through my belt... because it looked weird. I kicked off my shoes and removed my socks, stuffing the socks in the shoes and tossing them to the chair with my jacket. Then I started my morning warm up routine.

Sure enough, groups of paired women began entering the room, giving me odd looks before taking their seats. I was doing some handstand push-up (thanks Yasmin) when Katrina walked in with a woman I didn't know.

"Good morning Cael Nylas," she said. "This is my cousin, Arwen."

The push-up, tuck, flip and finishing up with landing on your feet ain't easy. I added to the difficulty by successfully landing on my designated piece of slate floor.

"Did your clothing magically fall off, or did they fail to finish dressing you?" Katrina smirked.

"Cut me some slack, Boss. I'm three insults away from slinging poo," I grinned back.

"Nice to meet you, Arwen," I offered my hand. She looked at it, but didn't shake. "She's your apprentice?" I groaned to Katrina. She nodded. "That is so not good for me. What did I do wrong this time?"

"She thinks I have invested too much of our House prestige in this New Directive and you in particular," Katrin enlightened me.

"What is her survival stratagem then?" I ignored Arwen while addressing Katrina.

"Have her cake and eat it too," Katrina mused. "She

thinks we recruit males then kidnap them and make them our slaves... because that has worked so well for us until now. To be fair, she favors genetics while ignoring such things as spirit, courage and loyalty."

"I'm about to die so any insight I might provide is pointless," I shrugged. "Take care Katrina."

"Male, we are not here to kill you. You will be taken to a facility for breeding," Arwen clarified things for me. Katrina and I both broke out in laughter. Arwen didn't get it. More and more women came in. With them arrived more House Guard. Soon the once vast room seemed to not be big enough.

Among other fans of yours truly was Ursula, the woman who sent Leona to kill me with her bow. It didn't take me long to determine there were four distinct groups. The smallest group hated my heart for daring to beat. The largest group seemed uncertain that me having a functioning cerebral cortex was a good thing.

The second largest group was worried about their very existence, but weren't sure I was the answer. The final group, nearly as big as the next largest group, was Hayden's pro-New Directive faction. As a plus, they also weren't afraid to show me some affection personally. When there were only seven chairs left unfilled, Hayden rose for the opening prayer.