

Chapter 895

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Desiree's voice broke the silence. She must have come in with Elsa.

"Cáel," Desire e yawned."How do you wantto resolve this crisis? That doesn't involve setting off seismic sensors all over New York City, that is?"

"Hmmm... fine, every member of theSecurity Detail is to write a romantic poem then read it aloud to a 'Runner' while at that 'Runners'workstation," I invented apunishment. "Ishara is the Goddess of Love as well as Oaths. It is a fitting tribute to her that romantic verses from the heart be created and spoken aloud."

"It is also fitting that the recipients be'Runners', since it will unit e them in boththeir appreciation of love and their anger with me for throwing my weight around like every other Full-Blood who thinks they are better because of some quirk of birth," I concluded.

"It will be done," Elsa intoned. That part ofthe matter was settled. Elsa looked at my

gre nade launcher. An unha ppy sigh escaped my lips as I handed it over.

"Elsa, I'm coming for weapon's practiceagain tomorrow," I informed her. Now I was going to burn off some time in the pool then get to work, or so I hoped. I hadn't gotten away with this because I was Cáel Nyllas, or the Head of House Ishara. I got away with it because Elsa didn't want to see the faces of the Council when she explained what her people had done.

The Council members treating me like offal was their business. Other Amazons deciding that they could t reat ANY member of the Council that poorly wouldn't fly -reference to the fate of Leona. Why had SD treated me poorly? Constanza. If they repeated my conversation with Constanza that cost her an eye, the outcome was known by all. Constanza would cease being an Amazon right before she died.

I made it to Katrina's office four minutes before seven only to find Katrin a absent while Daphne, Brielle and Pamela were hanging around. Dora and Fabiola followed me in. Everyone made it before the deadline, Katrina last of all. As Katrina

began the meeting, Brielle left. Pamela and Katrina ignored one another.

My work review was far better than normal. I'd sold Anthrax to a terrorist cell, but it had turned out to be a mislabeled Anthrax antidote instead, so all was good. Daphne was trying to figure out how her glowing report over my efforts had been so misconstrued. My assigned boss for the day was Rosette, one of the senior members of Executive Services.

"Katrina, I need a moment of your time-inprivate," I requested as the meeting broke up.

"As Cáel, or the Head of House Ishara?" sheasked.

"Neither," I replied. She waved the othersaway with Tigger shutting the door. Pamela remained seated. Katrina shot me a look concerning Pamela's presence.

"I don't control her," I shrugged."She hangsaround me for her own reasons." Katrina nodded. I walked to the edge of Katrina's desk, put my palms on its cool surface. "Katrina, I am the Grandson of Cáel O'Shea,

I met Brianna O'Shea earlier this morning, she knows who I am and was brought to town because some genetic research done on me."

"Brianna knows where I work and who Iwork for, as in you. Pamela said the word 'Protocols' and Brianna backed off, but I'msure she wants to see me again . I've warned my Dad about what happened and to destroy everything associated with my Mom. By the way, Brianna looks exactly like my Mother did when I was first born-exactly," I emphasized.

Had the situation not been so completely fucked up, I would have treasured the steamrollered look on Katrina's face.

"She is with something called the Illuminati.She doesn't know about me and House Ishara. When Brianna tried to figure how this Protocol/Truce thing involved me, Pamela stonewalled her," I added.

"Pamela, I can understand Cáel notimmediately bringing this to my attention,"Katrina's cool exterior reasserted itself. "He doesn't know what's going on. You do."

"I didn't feel inclined to do your job for you,Katrina," Pamela gave a rapier-thin smile. "Besides, you are part of the brain trust thatsent him home Friday night cloaked in ignorance, not I."

"Cáel," Katrina turned back to me. "How didyou meet Brianna O'Shea?"www.NOVEL(w)orm.com

"I met a lawyer, screwed her to multipleorgasms in the Women's room of some bar, met her again plus her lawyer buddies and Sunday night she called me to her down town office to fuck her into enlightenment-which I did," I sighed.

"She was working on a case involving DNAownership, which is oddly germane to my current predicament," I grinned.

"Cáel, we need you to report to medical formore testing," Katrina ordered.

"I apologize, but House Ishara does notbelieve that would be in its best interest so Cá el must decline," I nodded. "Will there be anything else?"

Will battled Will to no outcome. She nodded and I left. Pamela ghosted along

behind me. Rosetta intersected my path and off we went. I was given no clue as to my assignment-no surprise. I texted Buffy: Nothing new happening. Pick me up at 6:30 Wed. morning."That meant there was no new development on the committee to help House Ishara pick 'Runners'.

I had played nice. Katrina and Hayden had dodged me on Friday afternoon. This morning, she owed it to me to show some kind of progress. That wasn't what she offered. I had made a concession, they refused to reciprocate, so now I was free of any obligation to consider their wishes. I wanted more'Runners' and come Wednesday morning, I was adding twenty.

Working with Rosette(and Pamela) was a triple-barreled experience. Errands were the largest bulk of our time, but the rest was other mu ndane tasks of the most basic sort. Within the workload were instructions in the craft of being unseen. Executive Services was more than laundry and daycare; it was about not disrupting the lives of clients.

A side benefit of that was learning how to move through any group and not be

memorable-to not give off the subtle clues that you were an outsider. Not only could a group of executives hold a conversation without an ES person disrupting their trains of thought, people trained to look for threats wouldn't be tipped off to your presence either. It was peon-craft for beginners.www.NOVEL(w)orm.com

Executive Services personnel weren't ninja-they were inconsequential. As I had bubbled to Katrina on day one, Executive Services got to go everywhere and learn how everything worked. What I didn't appreciate was that was how Counter-Intelligence worked too. From what I wedged out of Rosette, Counter-Intelligence had never uncovered a successful internal conspiracy.

They had ferreted out multiple peripheral programs meant to gather information on Havenstone, but no Amazon had been critically compromised-which meant several Amazons had been blackmailed yet gone to ES before doing any damage. Rosette appreciated that fanatic devotion, but she'd never hold complete faith in it. Her job was vigilance.

(What is really going on?)

The third barrel was the real unhappy news. For all their illegal activities, Havenstone was not the Sinalo a Cartel. There were not a global criminal organization that invited international law enforcement scrutiny. So why did they devote so much time and energy to security? They weren't alone in the shadows of world-wide civilization.

At the top of the pile was the Illuminati. They were a hydra controlled by a ruthless, cutthroat conclave-membership uncertain. They were a Darwinian meritocracy until the top tier of leadership, where a group of smaller secret societies and families monopolized the real influence. Their biggest strength, and weakness, was that most of the people in the organization didn't even know they were part of the Illuminati.

After that was a mishmash of groups with different abilities that made rating them difficult. The Condottieri were rather simple -they sold mercenaries and weapons toanyone with the coin with the sideline of promoting conflict by any means necessary. The Nine Clans... that sounded familiar... were assassins in the truest sense of the word.

Hashshashin, Ninja, Thuggee, Black Lotus, Coils of the Serpent, Brotherhood of the Wolf, the Black Hand, Cult of the Jaguar and the Ghost Tigers. They were not just murder for hire, but murder to advance their cause. Harmonious existence was bad for business, so they stirred up rivalries and conflict in every corner of the globe.www.NOVEL(w)orm.com

The Egyptian Rite Masons sounded sublime. They weren't. They may have been a secret order older than the Amazons, claiming descent to the days of Imhotep. The Egyptians were the oldest enemy of the Illuminati. The Egyptian Rite's goal was a global autocratic government, were the Illuminati wanted a capitalist oligarchy in charge of global commerce-with the Illuminati pulling all the strings. The Egyptian Rite were not restricted to Egypt anymore; membership was open to all races and genders.

The Earth and Sky Society were not New Agers. They were the descendants of Genghis Khan and were devoted to the reincarnation of the Greatest World Conqueror of all time. Before tossing them into the rubbish bin of bad ideas, know that Genghis was the largest single genetic

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contributor(via rape) to the human gene pool since the mystical Eve. To be a member you had to have a genetic link to ol e Genghis.

The Seven Pillars of Heaven were an ancient Chinese Secret Society out for-you guessed it-World Domination. To be a true member of this group you had to be Pure Han Chinese and a man, or bound to one. Needless to say, Havenstone and the Seven Pillars did not get along. The final bit of information -these groups were what was left of the Great Secret Societies - the survivors.

Havenstone's place in all of this chaos was complicated. By mid-5th century BCE, the Egyptians were aware of the Amazons. The Amazons were not causing problems for the Egyptians, so they parted on decent terms and that was that. By the first century ADE, the political landscape had changed. Amazons had penetrated Roman society and brought Latin houses into their structure.