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They could dispatch the average Amazon too. The problem for those Special Forces would be in how every other Amazon around reacted. They would hit the deck, analyze the threat, organize and react - every time. The Security Detail would do it faster and with greater firepower, but the basic training in this martial society was the same.

Why wasn't every woman at Havenstone HQ packing heat? Why would they? It was very illegal and breaking into the building itself was insane - they would lock everything down then SD would go hunting. If it was an inexplicable total assault, SD would hold off the intruders long enough for the entire building to be armed. That was why the Armory was so big.

I learned all this while we worked. I was denied a Libra/Brooke lunch experience. Pamela did drag me off for our knife training session then it was back to Rosette until the end of day. Katrina gave me a pen-tip, indicating she wanted to talk after everyone else left.

"I've talked with Hayden plus a few others about your condition," she began.

"Okay," I shrugged.*(w)Ww.nOvélwOrm.(c)om*

"Many of us are your allies, Cael," Katrína reminded me. "What we don't need..."

"No, you are not my allies," I interrupted. "We had this discussion that first Tuesday night when you took me out to dinner."

"There are things going on you do not yet understand," Katrina tried again.

"Don't care," I stated calmly. "I told you that you thought you were better than the rest. You are not. I'm still your dancing bear; your horse that can count to ten." Katrina waited. "It is simple to prove. My 'allies' aren't talking with me, they are talking about me."

"Cael Nylas has to figure a way to survive this nightmare. Cael Ishara doesn't have that luxury," I informed Katrína. "That is not the Amazon way. Currying favor and acceptance from my fellow Amazons is not going to happen. If I do not have it, I don't have it. I won't beg for my damn birthright because it isn't something any of you can give. I am Ishara."

"Does this clarify things for you and YOUR allies?" I finished. Katrina nodded. This wasn't the answer she wanted. It was the answer she expected. Outside the office, my housemates, my fellow 'new' hires and four SD chicks were waiting. Buffy and Helena came first.

"I asked for a team from SD to watch over you," Buffy began. "Everything else is going as planned."

Helena gave a quick nod.

"Why do I need bodyguards?" I questioned Buffy.

"I don't know Boss," Buffy's eyes narrowed, "did you get in a fight this weekend?"

"Do you mean over something more important than the remote?" I grinned.

Buffy glared death.

"Yes... I was in a slight altercation Sunday afternoon and was threatened with ballistic violence early, early this morning - but it was in a good neighborhood," I tried to bring out the positive.*Ww.flvE()@Orm.CO=*

"You didn't mention a second fight," Buffy turned to Pamela.

"Despite the plethora of small caliber, fully-automatic weapons, he was in no real danger," Pamela shrugged.

"They had automatic weapons?" I gulped.

"Yeah - left side slings - MP-7's," Pamela informed me.

"Really?" I said. Pamela nodded. "Those things are big. How did I miss them?"

"You are not too bright?" Pamela suggested an answer. Sensing my depression, "I was joking. Only the guy at the passenger side door had one."

"You still missed it," Buffy seethed.

"Oh, come on Buffy," I groaned. "He was what... 2. 5, or 3 meters away, standing under a street lamp with a clear night sky and a half moon... but his left side was away from me."

"Cael Ishara, please go home before Buffy pops a blood vessel," Helena intervened. I beat a wise and hasty retreat. The number of ladies packing into the elevator with me was almost comical.

"So, what do you ride?" I asked the closest SD lady.

"Excuse me... I mean we will be taking an Armored GL550," she informed me. "Two of us will be in your vehicle and the other team with a combat package will be in the back-up vehicle, Ma... Sir."

"Call me Ishara if you must and Cael if you feel like it," I eased her discomfort. "What I meant was - what kind of bicycle to you ride because that is how I get to and from work?"

"Sir - Ma'am - Cael, we don't have any bicycles at this facility," she explained.

"Considering the five different routes I alternate with, a car isn't going to cut," I countered.

"We need to protect you," she insisted. "That should take precedence."

"Name?" I prodded.

"I am Rachel. This is Tiger Lily (huh?), Charlotte and Mona," Rachel introduced the team.

"Okay Rachel, let me put my refusal in perspective," I looked into her eyes.

[Old Kingdom Hittite/Amazon] "For the same reason we all speak this language, practice with spears and invoke our ancestors, I will not surrender my life because my existence had become more difficult," I said. "I am not blind to the danger. I'm not stupidly prideful. I believe that I cannot figure out who I'm supposed to be if I forget who I was - so I stick with the lifestyle that brought me here."

To any sane individual, that speech was idiotic. Had I delivered an heiress to House Ishara yet? No. I wasn't even having unprotected sex. Was I in some serious danger? Absolutely. Did you want to start with my dating history, the violent gang I had beaten up Sunday, or the Illuminati? I was behaving irrationally - stubborn to the core.

The Amazons in the elevator nodded with reverence to my insightful revelation. I wasn't some idiot male with his reason clouded by heedless pride and a bizarre sense of honor. I had reached deep into my spirit uterus and spewed forth the battle anthem of a multitude of ghosts and an army of Ishara yet to be born - 'we (Ishara) could not forget where we came from'.

The Security acceded to my demands and let me go home alone, if I ignored the tail, or the team of female professional wrestlers moving in across the street. Rhada's next state visit was going to be Armagedd-orgasmic, that was for sure. With that happy thought, I walked into my apartment and another unwelcome guest.

For the love of God! Did they teach lock-picking at all the local community colleges, or what? As I shut the door, she came out of my bedroom, holding the sleeve-less T-shirt I had worn at the basketball game yesterday. She was breathing in my shirt's... aroma.

"Hey Brianna," I greeted my gorgeous, well-endowed, red-haired, emerald-eyed, grandfather-fucking aunt.

"I'm Deirdre," she purred. Ah... one of those identical, numerically-more-than twins I'd been warned about.

"I'm Cael and I'm pissed off that you broke into my home, Deirdre," I tried to sound angry.

"Brianna said you were spirited and witty," Deirdre came closer.

"I'm also all over Taurus with a preference for Gemini crossed with Leo-ines," I held my ground.

I hoped that was my own way of saying I was full of bullshit and loved twin pussies. Clearly, I was combining my complete lack of knowledge in Astrology with my propensity to babble under stressful conditions.

"I only came to talk," she pleaded innocently. Kind of like me when I was lying to a girl about coming over for a sexual romp.

"Does that mean your bodyguards haven't killed the people in whatever apartment you've stashed them in?" I queried.

"Are you the kind of man that worries about the 'little people'?" Deirdre mused.

"Actually, if you kill the neighbors, I can buy it, knock down the... yes, I'm that kind of man," I stopped obfuscating *Ww.nOvElworm.coM*

"That makes you vulnerable," she pointed out.

"Thank you," I smiled. That confused her. "See, I can be heartless, or compassionate, as I need to be where as you can only be heartless, or patently false."

"I've managed to get by for some time now being the way I am," Deirdre reposed.

"Glad to know you are getting by without me. That means I can show you the door and not be a bad person," I smirked. "Get out." I slipped to the side so that she could exit the portal.

"That's not what I meant," Deirdre retreated.

"So now you are showing vulnerability," I grinned. "How does it feel, being like one of those 'little people' you despise?"

I was expecting anger. The only question in my mind was how raw the anger would be.

Deirdre got all misty-eyed and blissful.

"Father was just like that," she sniffled. Against all permutations of common sense, I pulled Deirdre into a warm embrace.

"He was always testing us like that, turning perceived weaknesses into strengths and knocking down the foundations of our strengths," she breathed deep of my bicycling derived musk.

"I miss him so," she moaned. Wonder-fucking-ful.

"You need to go right now," I gently shook Deirdre. "I'm getting really horny and that means I need to go somewhere else."*www.N@vElwORM.com*

The look she gave me as she met my gaze told volumes about how I could exercise my 'horny'.

"Let me rephrase - If I have an unexpected sexual encounter with a family member, I'm putting in for a transfer with Havenstone and that's that," I threatened. The downside of that threat was my 'Aunts' could decide to kidnap me first.

"I understand," Deirdre struggled to contain herself.

"Oh, the reason I came by was to warn you to avoid your Uncle. He will kill you if he can. He doesn't want Father to come back." I could empathize with my Uncle in that I didn't want Grandfather back either. I had the feeling my Uncle was looking for a more concrete solution to that gnawing fear.

With a bit of effort, I untangled her fingers from engulfing my waist and ushered her out the door. I had avoided incest with my theoretical Aunt and was jonesing for a sex-fix. The issue was who did I call that wouldn't leave me feeling like a complete douche afterwards. I figured Brooke owed me one so I made the call.