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"Who are you?" Brewster decided that I wasn't exiting the hospital gracefully so turned on Rachel. She didn't speak, choosing to be creepy and brandishing a wallet instead. I kept forgetting that most full-blooded Amazons had minimal socialization with outsiders. Having graduated elementary school, everyone else knew this was a bizarre reaction.

"Rachel Louis," Brewster read off the license in the wallet. A normal person would have acknowledged that somehow - not Rachel. "You are Rachel Louis, aren't you?"
"I don't know," I intervened. "Rachel is a co-worker at Havenstone and she is misanthropic misandrist."

There was a pregnant pause. The confusion wasn't with 'misanthropic'. It was a grown-up word in usage with colorful police-types. It was 'misandrist' that had them stumped.

"Rachel is an unsociable man-hater," I explained. "Standing at my side in this hospital is ten kinds of Hell for her."

"What kind of piece do you normal carry?" Rios asked her. Unsocial didn't mean stupid.

"I use a Glock-22 and Rachel carries a STI Perfect 10," I answered. "We have been experiencing quite a gopher problem around the office." I could have done better - I should have done better. I was just too tired inside to create an inventive lie.
"I don't know," I intervened. "Rachel is a co-worker at Havenstone and she is misanthropic misandrist."

"Do have gun licenses for those weapons?" Mr. ATF kept prodding at our cover story.

"It seems Ms. Louis - is it Ms. Ms. Louis?" Brewster continued. I flashed Rachel a look which she interpreted correctly.

"Yes, my name is Ms. Rachel Louis," Rachel replied. To me, "I find this distraction to be annoying. We should go."
"I don't know," I intervened. "Rachel is a co-worker at Havenstone and she is misanthropic misandrist."

"It would seem Ms. Louis has all kinds of..." Brewster got out before Rachel snatched the wallet from his grip with the speed of a Peregrine Falcon. Brewster had this stunned look familiar to crows, doves and starlings the world over as one of their kin passed into the next life in a flash. A combination of 'No you didn't!' with 'what the flock?'

"Aaahhh..." Brewster got out.

"On that note, I think we will be going," I shrugged. To Rachel, "You do not get out enough."

"Can I see your wallet again?" Brewster was still confused by Rachel's rudeness. He was a cop for the love of God. People not wanting to go to jail do not snatch things from a cop's hands.

"I gave you my wallet. I am not to blame if you used its time in your possession unwisely," Rachel counterattacked. "Unless there is a legal technicality, we shall be leaving. If there is a legal issue, here," she produced a business card with a flourish, "is the contact information for our legal department." Theodora took the card gingerly then read it.

"Havenstone again," she mused. "Are you sure this is the path you wish to take, Mr. Nyilas?"

"Are you insane?" I trembled with emotion. "I want to be back in New York, working my queue and thinking about what my date and I will be doing tonight. I want my Dad to be alive. I don't want to be thinking that the last time we talked I forgot to tell him I loved him."

"Path, you IDIOT!" I screamed at Theodora. Fuck it, I was crying again. "Not a damn thing any of you can do will bring my Dad back to me - so fuck off!" In a strange way, that was what they had been looking for. Not my wounded soul, but my rage and pain toward a World suddenly found to be cruel and pointless.

Behind my crumbling façade was another worry. Outside in the parking lot were three Amazons with weapons ready to rush to my aid. It wasn't that the Host was rash, or reckless, by nature. I was one of the fifty-six most important people in their society. Three other SD members had died in the defense of House Ishara already and they were damn sure those women would not have died in vain.

I wasn't leaving in federal custody willingly and if I walked out in restraints, I wasn't sure if they would decide offering some law enforcement agents and staging my kidnapping was the best course of action. Remember, I wanted to bury my Father. They wanted to keep me alive. If those two goals collided, they would apologize after the fact.

"Mr. Nyilas, I really believe we should..." Theodora got out then I brushed past her. It was a delicate moment and the chemistry between Rachel and I wasn't lost on most of them. She was a bodyguard yet my servant too. It was professional tribalism - two words that don't normally get along. Rios picked up on the other undercurrent.

He recoiled from Rachel, retreating to buy space when/if Rachel attacked. Unlike the rest, he sensed that aggression by law enforcement would be met with lethal force. The Amazon didn't care about the badge and the legions of fellow officers backing it up. She was fearless. Things weren't over yet.

"Mr. Nyilas, were are you going next?" Detective Lisa came after us.

"I... I don't know," I muttered. "Where is my Father's body? I know he wanted to be cremated and buried beside Mom... I guess." Brewster came hurrying along.

"He is at the Medical Examiner's Office," Lisa informed me. "Come with me."

"Why don't you give me the address?" I sighed.

"Do you and your buddy know your way around Chicago, Hometown Boy?" Lisa kept it up. She was hitting on me and lining me up at the same time.

"How about we cut to the chase?" I looked at her with tear-soaked eyes.

"We'll take my cars - cars with an 's'," I offered. "I am a hometown boy. I've never had a reason to locate the Medical Examiner before. Since I have a boatload of angry women with guns who will not fit into your sedan and leaving them behind isn't an option, mine is the only means of travel that makes sense."

Low and behold, the two cops looked at each other then followed Rachel and I to our little caravan. We were too close for the officers to have missed Rachel snapping off some quick, coded instructions to her team - most likely to hide the seriously illegal firearms. To say the Amazons were not pleased with my decisions spoke volumes to their concern for me and lack of police experience.

Pamela, who had beaten us back to the cars, seemed privately entertained as always. Rachel was reluctantly sitting up front. Lisa, Brewster and I were in the second row and Pamela sat in back. Not only did the two not get a good look at Pamela, she was perfectly placed to do all kinds of mischief unseen.

"So the woman upstairs works with you?" Lisa asked as we pulled out.

"Where to?" Tiger Lily (I still wasn't used to that name) requested of our Police 'buddies'. Lisa popped off the address. It was 'I'll scratch your back, you'll scratch mine'. Tiger Lily entered the data into the onboard computer and off we went.

"No. She does not work for me, or my boss, directly. She was at my Father's on my behalf though I was unaware of it," I related.

"Are you going to tell us what the hell happened?" Brewster prodded.

"That I don't know. I am not personally aware of anyone who would want to kill my Father, or me," I answered.

"Anyone who would want to get at me would come at me, not Dad," I continued. "I don't live in a fortress. It is a hardly spacious apartment near the East River. I share the place with my roommate, Timothy Denver, and a... companion by the name of Odette Sievert."

"Companion? Is she... a working girl?" Lisa went searching.

"No, I use the term companion to indicate she's too nice a girl for me. She's sweet, conscientious and giving. My only wish for Odette is that she finds a guy who can appreciate her a hell of a lot more than I do," I explained. "Timothy is my gay, body-building tattoo artist best friend. I've gotten the feeling he's busted some heads in his time. Hardly anything noteworthy."

"Mr. Nyilas, have you ever considered that you live a very messy life?" Brewster pondered.

"One does not 'consider' what one knows to be true. One knows it to be true and moves on," I grumbled. "Yes, I know I live a screwed up life."

"What about your friends here?" Lisa indicated the other three women in the vehicle. This elicited another groan from me.

"Investigator Brewster - Horace and Detective Capella - Lisa, please call me Cael. This is the point I accept that I am exhausted and not in any shape to make good decisions. I'll plead the Fifth," I confessed.

"We already know you were in New York when your father was murdered, Mister... Cael," Brewster stated.
"I don't know," I intervened. "Rachel is a co-worker at Havenstone and she is misanthropic misandrist."

"Everyone we've talked to says you and your father were very close. Baring some expensive Life Insurance policy being taken out on him, we have no reason to suspect you had a direct hand in his death. Not being a suspect, that implies you have no Fifth Amendment, or Miranda Rights to hide behind - just so we are clear," Brewster schooled me.

"I can make this game of footsy easy on all of you," Pamela whispered. The officers jolted in their seats. "Cael cannot talk to you for the very reason the Fifth Amendment exists."

"You are not like the rest of this menagerie," Lisa noted.

"Nah, I kill people for a living. The rest of the group has some code of conduct that keeps you two alive," Pamela smiled.

Those two didn't know what to make of Pamela's statement because it was so sincere yet incredible.

"If Cael tells you anything else he will be admitting to his involvement in a criminal conspiracy. Said conspiracy is why Ferko Nyilas is dead, but Cael had nothing to do with it," Pamela enlightened them.