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From time immemorial, male kin of the flesh and spirit had piled their corpses one upon the other, refusing the verdict of combat for the sake of brotherhood and every imaginable ideal. It was hardly a trait worth sharing with the sisters. They would understand the pieces; not the result. My lack of political ability would not be disability. I simply had to learn to fight – a lot better than I did at that moment.

The echoes of this message inside my head, the chilled air that filled my lungs and balance restored to my heart was bizarrely unfrighting. It would be an affirmation of the 'first directive' oaths all the houses had sworn. It wasn't my place to raise all the 'Runners', or even a single one. It was my duty to initiate the 'Worthy', no matter their number.

My actions were mine. I would not shame the other houses. I would not consider their prestige at all. It was not my place in the same way it was not their place to tell me what I could and couldn't do. It was a divine 'Go get 'em' and it felt pretty, freaking awesome.

"Cáel, are you okay?" Nicole asked in a worried tone. She squeezed my thigh. I looked down at my hands. I was okay.

"Nicole, I have the blood of Ahhiyawa champions on my hands. I feel it's sticky, sickening ichor and smell the copper-laden, metallic odor," I smiled. "I think I'm going to be just fine."

"Who?" Nicole was even more concerned.

"Someone who fucked with me a long, long time ago. They are all dead, but don't worry about the bodies showing up to bother anyone," I grinned.

All the full-blooded Amazons had been very still. The word 'Ahhiyawa' appeared to scare them even more than my haunting actions. To the Amazons, the Ahhiyawa were the Mycenaean in the time of the Iliad. The problem seemed to be that I had never heard any member of the Host use that term and I was suddenly curious as to why.

"You seemed to have went away for a few seconds," Nicole joked lightly. "You do appear better rested, which is good. What is on the agenda for today?"

"Get my Father's body, prepare for his cremation, arrange for the last Roman Catholic Church we attended to send somebody to the service and prepare my parent's plot," I ran down.*wuw.nôvElw(ó)rM.com*

"I imagine the police and feds will want to contact me again," I piled it on. "I want to see my home if the forensic guys let me. What do you think will be aimed at me?"

"We'll check up on any family attorney you may have had along with probating your father's Will, if he had one," Nicole assured me.

"As for the authorities, let's see what kind of warrants they are asking for before we move beyond a 'denial' defense."

"Denial, as in me claiming I didn't do anything because, ya know, I didn't do anything," I gave her a sleepy smile. "How about we eat first?"*wWw.nOv©llwOrM.cOm*

We ordered, drank our coffee, tea and juices while remaining largely non-communicative. It wasn't until the food began arriving did I realize I'd 'misplaced' Pamela once more. As I tore into a big slab of ham, I looked over my surroundings for the first time. I gave myself a mental pat on the back when I spotted Pamela then the 'big picture' kicked me in the nuts.

Pamela was dressed as a server, coasting about the room, filling drinks, getting appetizer and performing the tedious little chores that waiters and waitresses had to pull off flawlessly. The other wait-staff noticed Pamela, but since she was making their jobs easier and not taking their gratuities, they ignored her. They probably thought she was some industry expert*wWw@.nO(v)el©orm.coM*

The plates were being cleared away when Pamela returned, back in normal clothing. She dumped a pile of ID's on the table. Nicole picked them up.

"Chicago PD – Organized Crime Taskforce," Nicole read off then glanced to Pamela. "ATF, Homeland Security, FBI, FBI, Chicago PD – Homicide, Federal Marshall and Federal Marshall."

"What?" Pamela said between bites of her veggie omelet. "I took their identification, not their wallets. Do you want me to go back for those too... and their keys?"

"No. We have risked Mr. Nyilas' freedom enough for one meal," Nicole shot back. She took Tiger Lily's empty plate, dumped the ID's on it then covered the pile with her handkerchief.

"Hello," this officious young lady greeted us. I'd been distracted by Nicole's malfeasance so I missed the hotel's new Assistant Manager's approach. It was turning out to be a great morning for visitations from my past. This ghost was much younger than the last ones. Our eyes met. It was easy to see that I was the man in charge being the only man at the table.

"Director Nyilas, I hope everything is going well for you and your staff this morning," she smiled. "I would also like to convey the Hotel Burnham's condolences at the passing of your father. I too was born and raised in Burnham." I already knew where she'd lived most of her life. Most critically, I very strongly recalled where she'd gone to school – all 12 grades plus K.

"Cameron Sanders," I stood and extended my hand across the table. "You look familiar." Of course she looked familiar. Cameron had publically ground my soul into the grit that ants stepped upon. Her verbal rejection had been a pivotal moment in my life. After that day, I had taken responsibility for my life both anatomically and academically.

Recall how I had said I was once a 'nobody'. Here was living proof. Cameron and I had gone to the same schools from Kindergarten through our senior years. We'd even shared classes and it wasn't like I could be confused with all the other 'Cáels' we'd gone to school with – because there weren't any. The same goes for 'Nyilas'.

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