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"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.*www.NovèlwOrms.com*

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

"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?"

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.

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.

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"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 'Câels' we'd gone to school with – because there weren't any. The same goes for 'Nyilas'.

I'd been shifting the boner in my pants for three solid years because of Cameron. She had been hot in high school and she was even better looking now – Brooke hot. For a second, my confidence wavered. In that heartbeat, I realized she was just another woman and I was no longer that guy.*www.Noël@Orms.com*

"Where you an upperclassman at Thornton Fractional North High School?" she queried.

"Hmmm... do you recall Jenny Forrester?" I countered. Cameron knew her African-American rival, no doubt. The tweak in her smile said as much. "I'm going out on a limb – you look like a DePaul girl." Cameron's eyes twinkled.

Her eyes flitted down to where her class ring normally held court. She had taken it off for work neutrality.

"How did you guess?" Cameron tilted her hip suggestively. Sex.

"So I'm right?" I reposed. I had 'guessed' right because Cameron crowed about her decision to go to DePaul over all her other offers.

"I have some family business to take care of, Cameron," I nodded. "Can we catch up later today and figure out where we've intersected before this morning?" Translation: I'm going to fuck you. Not 'I want to', but 'I will'. I could normally figure out a woman in an evening. I had a three year backlog of data on poor Cameron.

My Pivotal Goddess was an 'upfront' girl. Her façade was bravado backed by the fear of not measuring up – not being good enough. My mistake in High School was approaching her, hat in hand. Cameron felt best when someone took the tough choices away from her. If she didn't lead, she couldn't fail by her way of thinking.

Dad had stood by me that night when he came home from work. I was a broken wreck of a teenage boy. Dad hadn't told me to toughen up and he hadn't been sympathetic. All he wanted to know was what I was going to do about it. What was 'I' going to do, as if I could be the master of my own fate. That was my Dad.

The next day I started working out, eating better and taking better care of myself. He was dead – still dead yet my feelings over that had evolved. He was with my ancestors now, waiting for me and my sons and daughters. Looking at it that way, he wasn't really gone at all.

"I'll see what can be done," Cameron smiled. I was going to eat her up.

"Oh yeah, this plate was mistakenly delivered to my table," I indicated Pamela's illegal haul. "Could you see that it gets where it needs to go after we are gone?" Cameron shot me a sultry smile without even giving her task a casual glance. A hideous tip (kudos to Odette) was added to our over-priced bill and the ladies and I retired to our rooms.

It was routine heading to our room. Mona waved us to silence. Then the 'bug hunt' began. Like every Amazon persecution of opposing 'life forms', they didn't play fair. The Amazons had placed electronic surveillance in the room before they left so when unwelcomed guests showed up while we ate and Mona 'slept' we could watch where they placed their goodies in our rooms.

This was not a matter of throwing a fit and tossing the electronic devices down the garbage disposal. Oh no, not in Amazon battle lore. They found out what frequency your device was broadcasting on and backtracked it. According to Tiger Lily you can use a source point and a handheld device to triangulate the receiver.

Then the fun begins. First, keep the original signal going. Put a subroutine of... oh, all kinds of credit card fraud in this case with the video file then call the appropriate law enforcement agency to bust the place. The subroutine would have no point of origin, so the Amazons would be safe. The spying agency would have a headache on their hands.

Credit card fraud would require them to confiscate all the equipment because the threat posed was real, even if the tip was now suspect. This was the Amazon equivalent of fixating the enemy at one point – surveillance – while making their real move on another – the funeral. The average Amazon funeral was a private affair. My Security Detail was modifying plans for an Amazon dignitary's attendance of another Society member's funerary rites.

Halfway through the deception plan, Special Agents Brock and John showed up at our door. With two law firms (Pratt's and Nicole's) dancing on their foreheads, they were being polite today and inviting me down to be questioned. I asked for Detective Lisa and Investigator Horace to be there. One: I didn't dictate who investigated me. Two: they were under Internal Affairs review.

I agreed with 'one' – I would say 'nothing' to any number of highly qualified law enforcement operatives. I might give answers to the two I had mentioned. 'Two' was none of my affair. They could hope for some answers when they chose the review would be over. I was more than happy spending a lifetime not talking to them.

Legalize was tossed around to the point Nicole yawned, pointed out none of them were attorney's with the United States District Court of the Northern District of Illinois... damn, that's some letterhead, and they could make no deals, grant no immunities, on their own. There was no talking to be done except for the ass-reaming the Court of Appeals was going to give both the Federal attorney who applied for the surveillance warrant and the judge who signed it.

Low and behold, phones began ringing. As a patrol unit was making a raid on a room three floors down, a series of shots rang out. A gun battle ensued between the three armed men in the room, the two patrolmen (women actually) and the entire unfortunate event was caught on NBC Channel Five news. Occasionally I forget I work for fundamentally viciously sick fucks.

My 'team' had sent the cops and the news crew to the spot and even supplied the ignorant housekeeper with the room card-key for the cops to break in with – a hotel room is not a private dwelling. Cops break in, do their 'freeze, we are the police' thing, but before the three feds in the room could reply, 'their' computer audio equipment let off a sound of bullets firing and ricochets echoing across the room.

Nature took its course after that. The feds drew and both sides began shooting. No one died, but one ATF guy was going off to surgery. They would have all earned Purple Hearts if they had been in the military and a commendation no matter what... had two law enforcement agencies not shot each other up. The chase was on for the news crew who was desperately trying to get their station to show the footage before the feds grabbed the memory cards.

Despite having had no part in that fiasco, Nicole immediately clued in that the moment our two feds ran off to help their comrades it was our time to leave. Did we go to the vehicles we came in? No. That would have exhibited a lack of paranoia my guardians would have found appalling. Two new car waited a block away.