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A maniac conducted the orchestra, while every section fought for dominance without a thought to the opera unfolding under its twittering cacophony. That is how it felt as I steeled myself for the service, but my musings were a fantasy. I had a swirling company of my twenty inductees, two Amazons, plus Rachel's detail and Esmeralda coordinating all the traffic.

Pamela was absent. Buffy was the one in charge, deciding who got how close and under what level of scrutiny. The presence of law enforcement was made obvious by our vigilance, with mutual hostility being declared. The government was catching up with how they'd been fucked over. They couldn't prove a thing yet, although they had missed an entire day trailing after me.

They also had new leadership. Pamela had expelled Theodora with the simple application of Conflict of Interest. Nicole and Pratt had joined me in my suite, so I was suitably armored when the Feds made their next run at me. I had stepped up in the world, so I was rewarded with a new attack plan.

Her name was Assistant Federal District Attorney Javiera Castello, and two seconds of eye contact made precisely transparent what a hurricane she was going to bring to my life. Sex? Oh yeah, she was already figuring what penitentiary to send me to so she could make monthly visits. An impressive dicking wasn't going to save me this time.

She was professional, polite and courteous concerning my mourning without being false. Theodora's strategy assumed I was the man who graduated from Boilingbrook a few months back. My history was clear and muddy enough to be real. I was what my documentation said I was... until Havenstone.

Theodora had waved the flags and charged the barricades only to discover too late that my defenses weren't manned by a lone yahoo with a bow and arrow, but with mortars and machineguns and her troops had been scattered, her plans shredded. Javiera had my measure now. I was a Prince. Of what, she didn't know yet.

She was going to find out. Not out of some fatalistic curiosity, but because that's where the bread crumbs led. Dad was what he appeared to be, that plot of land was relatively worthless and two groups of professional killers had fought and died dragging my father either away, or to safety. I work with some scary-smart ladies.

"Ms. Castello, would you care to travel with me to the service?" I turned to her at the last moment. I was a clever puppy, good with women and I wasn't trying to be a politician. Javiera took my gesture for what it was - an olive branch. I was offering to be less of an obstructionist, and she was willing to forgo retribution for my earlier stunts.

Five minutes down the road in the stretch limo, I could see the question eating Javiera up inside. She was honoring my melancholy... I could almost hear Dad saying, 'Son, you have company' as a persistent reminder to his petulant teenage slacker that I was a member of the Human Equation.

"What do you want to ask me?" I gathered my civility to the fore. Nicole shifted so that we were making eye contact.

"Is there a limit to how many questions?" she started off with. I didn't say 'One and that was it'.  
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"I've been told it will take us thirty-two minutes to the cemetery," I looked at my watch.

"That gives us... twenty-six minutes," I offered.

"Why all the hostility?" I led the charge.

"A variety of people consider my life to have some value. For a few it is personal. For most, they attach a more esoteric price tag on my existence," I replied.

"That is vague enough to be useless," she gently scolded me. Oh, I could see that both Javiera and Nicole were about to play Nutcracker with my heritage until it was the consistency of warm peanut butter.

"I am the member of not one, but two secret societies," I kept steady eye contact with her.

Yes... there was that look I was slowly becoming accustomed to; that one that conveyed 'what you said made no sense, so why aren't you lying to me?'

"Which ones?" Javiera rebounded quickly.

"Perhaps we should discuss this at a later time," Nicole reposed.  
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"Nicole," I patted her knee, "how would you feel if you got Javiera murdered?"

"That thought shouldn't even be..." she stated.

"Nicole, I'm worried enough about you. People know I like you, so they may not kill you for looking in the wrong trash bin," I explained. "She doesn't even have that rather tenuous screen."  
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"Was it one, or both secret societies that shot and killed your father?" Javier continued.

"Without a doubt it was an accident. The all-female group was simply scouting the location out as part of forming a contingency plan," I said. "The other group showed up to kidnap my father to interrogate him - I'm not going to tell you why."

"The first group identified themselves and the second group began shooting. In the process of grabbing my father, they shot him three times. In the process of taking him to one of their cars, the living lady engaged them in a final firefight. They abandoned my father and left."

"You seem to know a great deal about what happened," Javiera noted.

"I've seen the footage the first group took from their helmet cams," I told her.

"Is there any way I could see that?" she prodded.

"By no human means I can think of," I shrugged. "Feel free to ask that extremely venomous lady sitting next to you. Her name is Rachel," I made the introduction.

"She remains under the impression that killing people around me will somehow save me from myself," I added. "I not only trust her, I trust her with the lives of my daughters."

"You don't have any children we are aware of," Javiera wondered.

"Rachel knows what I mean," I gave a lopsided grin.

Rachel knew alright. I wasn't asking her to save me with that statement. I was asking her to save my future.

"What is with all the women? I'm a believer in gender equality. You seem to lack any male employees, period. Is this a permutation of a harem?" Javier opened another line of investigation.

Rachel and Buffy quickly snorted their amusement then returned to their not-so-subtle aggression. I was sure my chauffeur, Tiger Lily, was snickering it up too, beyond the glass. Sigh.

"That was uncalled for," I frowned at the Fed. "Five Google searches and you should know all about Havenstone's hiring practices. Ask what you want to ask. Don't try to trick me. I am definitely not in the mood."  
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"Why are you in charge - a male over Havenstone employees that certainly have more skill and experience at... just about everything?" Javiera came clean.

"Put on your hip-waders," I groaned. "This is going to suck." I waited until I had her undivided attention.

"A long time ago, I killed a group of really bad people," I grunted. I could see that she wasn't buying it despite her interrogation senses saying I was being truthful. "When I say a long time ago, I mean about 2500 years ago." Sigh. "Before you start tossing Thorazine at me, all you need to accept is that every one of those women around me believes that to be true."

"So this is a cult?" Javiera inquired bravely.

"Put it this way. I'm sure you practice a martial art of some kind. You probably have a chromatic belt that you are rather proud of. It will not help you. These women are professional killers. I'm pretty sure there are a dozen unidentified corpses that could be attributed to these two."

I already knew that Buffy killed some guys. Rachel? She was a team leader, so I was willing to have faith in her ability to remorselessly end another person's life. Javiera must have volunteered for my personal fiasco.

"Are you being held against your will?" she looked so vigilant and intent. "I can get you out."

"No," a dry chuckle. "I'm... not good - getting by. There is no way in Hell I'm leaving Havenstone. I can hardly kill all the people responsible for my father's death if I did that."

"If you seek personal vengeance, I will be forced to bring every legal power to bear to stop you," she felt bound to threaten me.

"Don't stop being you on my account, Ms. Castello," I finally managed a smile. It was sincere and Javiera knew it.

"Who? Maybe I can catch them before you do?" she offered me an escape clause.

"You will know it when you see it," I took a deep breath.

"Do not try anything at the funeral," she warned me. "Law enforcement will be all over the place." She really wanted to fuck me in prison. I knew those things.

"I'm not going to kill them there," I assured her. "They will be the ones running for their lives though."

"How is that going to work?" Nicole finally broke my silence.

"I have 27 ladies willing to kill on my command," I exaggerated. "When I tell those men I know they were responsible and that they should run for their lives, they are going to run for their lousy stinking lives."

"But you are not going to give the order to have them killed," Javiera stated. She was getting my measure now.

"No, but they don't know that and being horrible human beings, they will assume that I will have them murdered over my father's grave," I turned positively wolfish.

"They will run and they will keep running because of you and yours, Javiera. They won't have guns because they don't want to be arrested," I finished.

"Why are they afraid to be arrested?" Javiera was putting the puzzle together. That was our deal after all.

"I can have repeated, heavenly sex on a train with a nun," I confessed. "I'm pretty sure I can arrange to have a scumbag killed in prison."

"I think we can both agree my client is under a great deal of stress at this time," Nicole intervened.

"I think we can agree your client is not Al Capone, much less Osama bin Laden," Javiera allowed. "I still think he is exceedingly dangerous."

"Dangerous? Dangerous is dating in this town," I groaned. "Went out late last night to a dance club, met two sweet girls visiting the Windy City, stepped outside and they tried to kill me."