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SA Street wasn't done yet.

"They will get away with it because I suspect they already have such a contingency worked out," Javiera educated him. Javiera was yet ANOTHER really clever lady.

"Call for our back-up vehicle, pull into a private driveway where you cannot legally follow us, abandon the vehicle, get picked up and leave the city on a private aircraft to another nation," Rachel sounded bored. That was so nice of her to assist Javiera out that way.

"Thank you," I told Rachel. "That was very helpful of you."

"I want the male to shut-up," Rachel answered. "He's grating. Worse, he's making me wish Pamela was with us and that is soooo wrong," I held up a finger to forestall Street.

"Honestly Dude, she's is not messing with your head. She wants you to shut up, so please be quiet," I urged him. I conceptualized the assessment he was making. Crap.

"Guy, whatever workout routine you think gives you the edge is what she does to warm up in the morning," I pleaded. Street had the 'she's only a girl' look about him. "Her combat training is with live rounds, real weapons and a plethora of scrapes, cuts and broken bones. I have little doubt that she's killed people, some in cold blood."

"You being Top Shot at the local range and a Judo Champ isn't going to cut it," I emphasized.

"You think she's some kind of Special Forces operator?" he mocked me. Javiera and Nicole got nervous. I didn't. Beginner's Amazon Psychology - male opinions do not matter. Rachel and Buffy weren't insulted because he was a chattering chimp and nothing more.

"Have you ever heard of an all-female Special Forces unit?" I prodded.

"No," he snorted. I kept staring... and staring... and then the idea began creeping in.

"Where do you train?" Street looked at Rachel. Rachel was looking at him, not 'at him.

"Please Rachel," I requested. That was really for Javiera's benefit.

"Physical training started at age five, weapons training at nine, survival testing at twelve, craft training at fifteen, and acceptance at nineteen," she rattled off in a monotone. "I am thirty."

"What is 'craft training'?" Javiera inquired.

"Learning to kill people and destroy things," she began.

"My specialties are small unit tactics, security operations, electronic countermeasures and Recon Sniper," Rachel replied. "I am an accepted close combat trainer and handheld weapon expert. Do I need to explain any of that?" Pause. Street snorted.

"Do you ever sleep?" Street joked. Rachel looked to me then rolled her eyes.

"Yes. Six hours - every day unless duty intervenes," she said.

"Right... so, what martial arts style do you practice?" he asked.

"Not one you have ever heard of," Rachel took a deep breath.

"Try me," Street entreated. "I've practiced with several.[wwW.Ni©xékw©rM.com](#)

"Male, do I look like I enjoy talking to you?" Rachel glared. "To alleviate your obvious confusion, I do not. If you wish to lower the hostility level, hand me your pistol and the sap at your back. Your possession of said weapons in the presence of Cael complicates my job. This is almost as irritating is restraining myself from taking them from you like the infant you are."

"You think you could?" Street challenged her. "I was with the 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan."

"Special Agent Moslin, she doesn't care. You might as well have told her you were a weekend security guard at an amusement park," I reasoned. "In her mind, being born with a penis renders all your accomplishments so much hyperbole - kind of how her having tits lowered your respect for her as a fighter." That successful ended that diversion.

(The wake)

Life was wonderful. I walked in the door of the Marshal Fields Jr. Mansion, Charlotte pulled me into a vacant side room and handed me a secure phone. She mouthed the name of the person on the other end.

"Hayden," I sighed to my High Priestess.[wwW.nove#wor@.coM](#)

"Ishara (not using my first name was a bad sign), I have heard a report that you have declared war on the Condotteiri," she gave me the 'I'm going to skin you alive' purr.

"Yep and I urinated on the Seven Pillars too," I confirmed. "Don't worry about the Illuminati. I've got that alliance sown up."

"I'm going to have a member of the Nine Clans give me my first born, Ishara daughter, so that prospective alliance looks good as well," I added. "I even managed to be diplomatic with Earth & Sky. It is not even noon yet either. No need to thank me. Knowing you are thinking passionate thoughts about me is enough." Charlotte looked like her eyes were going to bug out.

"We are clear on the fact that there are fifty two other houses in the House, aren't we Cael?" Hayden murmured.

"Hey now," I reposed, "you said to not pick a fight inside Havenstone. You didn't say anything about these sons of bitches on the outside. I also added nineteen new members. Ishara rejected one who I now think was a closet Man-hater's man-hater."

"I want you to come back to Havenstone immediately and keep your mouth shut," she commanded. "The Council will be rightly furious."

"With me?" I asked.[wW\(ω\).Ŋa©e#Wô\(·\)M.C0\(m\)](#)

"Of course with you," Hayden growled.

"With the aid of the Federal Assistant Attorney, I received computer discs with extensive and sensitive data on Havenstone, including pictures and locations of Sydney and Marilynn, your daughter and granddaughter," I lied. "The feds seized the Condotteiri's private jet." Silence.

"What? Why am I only now hearing of this?" Hayden inquired with a deathly calm.

"Do you want me to work with the feds to finish hunting down those last two killers while I send someone back with the data?" I persisted. An oddly longer pause.

"Katrina insists there is no data," Hayden seethed.

"Of course there is no data," I snapped back. "Unlike you, I'm loyal to EVERY MEMBER of the Host, not just the ones I approve of! If I had something that important, it would be on the way to you, if not already in your hands. My House Head has been murdered. Support me - don't support me. It doesn't change that reality. You have lowered your worth in my eyes, Hayden. We will talk of this when I return." And I hung up. Charlotte kept gaping at me.

"Do you think I was clear enough, Charlotte?" I asked her.

"Yes Ishara," she whispered. "I doubt a single ancestor misconstrued your wrath." That stopped me in my tracks. A rank and file Amazon using my house name was perfectly acceptable. A Council 'equal' saying it was the equivalent of your pissed Mom yelling out your entire name.

"You agree with me?" I blinked.

"Had it been Fatima, Beyoncé, or Ngozi there would be no debate," Charlotte answered. "I don't like you - okay, beyond your physical magnetism I do not like you. You are still the Head of House Ishara and we believe that the ancestors move through you." By 'we' I imagine she meant Rachel's SD detachment. A social paradigm presented itself.

Amazons were surprisingly democratic for such an ancient society. Their bonds of sisterhood gave them greater liberty than any other group I'd heard of. All could take their grievances to the highest authority. They could hate me and die for me at the same time, in the same way Charlotte could be honest at that moment. I was her superior in rank yet her equal in blood.

"You realize that if you tell Buffy about this she'll beat me black and blue," I teased Charlotte.

"No can do, Ishara," she chuckled. "She's your sister and, quite frankly, you wove this disaster and if anyone deserves to remind you of the trouble you've wrought, it is her."

"I would call you a heartless Amazon, but that's kind of redundant," I glowered playfully.

I couldn't hide with Charlotte in the side room forever. It was my father's wake after all. Out I went and there was Buffy waiting for me.

"We have a problem," Buffy murmured to me as I headed to the main reception area/family room. "There are some questions concerning your Aunt Stella and the Ishara legacy."[Www.\(n\)©\(©\)lw0rM.ô0m](#)

"Thank God," I muttered. My crisis was momentarily sidelined. I moved into the gathering, letting Helena and Buffy bring the Amazon to my corner. "Quick and easy," I stated as the last one joined us. "Okay, that's an exaggeration. According to the Shawnee Arinniti, the Ishara/Vranus line passes along the Y-chromosome."

"How that translates to my daughters having the Ishara bloodline... Shawnee smiled at me and said it would happen, by the Will of the Ancestors," I looked them over. They weren't born Amazons so they didn't bob their heads in blind acceptance. "Yeah, me to," I acknowledged their cynicism.

"Except I ended up on Day Two of this job, standing in the Havenstone boardroom, listening to women talking in a dead language I learned solely to arouse my first lover and mentor. Then I encouraged a little Amazon girl to shoot AT me while I stood next to her target. She was so nervous, her first shot fell short and skidded to my feet.

Her second arrow hit the mark - her first hit of the day. I didn't want that first arrow to remind her of 'almost' succeeding, so I picked it up. Because of that, an assassin barely missed her first shot at me. I stopped Oneida Arinniti's death curse - not because I had any idea there was such a thing, but because it felt 'wrong' to let her die. Make of that what you will.

You all have one incredible advantage over all Amazons born into the Host. Search back to your time before here and examine what you know about men. Then tell me why I would want this position? You are a legion of man-haters. At best, you do not want to understand me. At worse, you think I should be a pet with my tongue cut out.

Some of you may think it could be for the sex. No. I had over 200 sexual encounters over four years in college. If anything, Havenstone is slowing me down. After all, even the Havenstone women who do like me still consider me property half the time and some SD chicks swooping in during lunch can put a real cramp in my dating style."