

939

This morning, they confronted me with their defiance. I took some pictures and sent them to a colleague..." I was saying.

"Who? Give me their name," Jormo got in my face.

"I can't recall. It is probably filed away with every other crime you've bought and paid for that Brennan has committed," I was only a few centimeters away.

"Give me the..."

"Shut up and listen," I moved in, suddenly cluing the old guy into me being several inches taller and broader in the chest. "You don't get a name. I didn't break the law - you and your son did. I am hoping that pain and blood is answered with pain and blood - a balancing of the scales of justice.

You don't want that and now you don't want to face the fact that his latest stunt has gotten way beyond what you want to pay," I insisted.

"You won't get away with it," Jormo glowered. "This is my family. This is personal to me."

"Personal... personal, Mr. Sulkanen? No; personal is not you and me," I clarified.

"Personal is your other two sons, a baby daughter, three step-children and a young wife," I laid it out. "You come after me, the parties concerned will go after them - and you. Not on my orders, though. They will act upon a different social agenda which you know nothing of. In the end, you will save no one and fill a few more graves."

"I won't back down," Jormo flared.

"Fine. I don't care," I turned to leave.

"Wait, Cael, how bad will this personal vendetta get?" Hana pleaded.

"Not sure. I would imagine two generations around - grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews, sons, daughters, sons and daughter-in-laws, children and grandchildren," I mused.

"Father," Hana pleaded. It was Deoxyribonucleic acid test time. "Cael, I saw something last night my father needs to see. Please take off your shirt."

"What will that prove, Hana?" Jormo rumbled.

"Look at the man's body. See his scars. Father, Cael isn't kidding. You and I both know he's not bluffing. This is some Old World madness that... that Brennan has stepped into and... I want to know if you are going to bring down this family because of him," Hana made her stand as my shirt came off.*Ww(w).(n)ovEⓈⓈ©©Rm.ôðm*

"All those scars and bruises," the Sulkanen patriarch muttered. "How?"

"I'm a rather disreputable and dishonest man, Mr. Sulkanen. I would rather treat life like a sexually-explicit romantic comedy instead of confront the darkness that is all too fucking common. Turning my back is easy... but that is not how my father raised me. He never told me to be a crusader of any stripe. He did tell me to live with my decisions. I have recently come to realize that includes me being unwilling to bear the burden of refusing to stop wickedness I could have prevented. No fear, Mr. Sulkanen and no regrets. Flesh heals - memories are eternal."

"Father," Hana stood silhouetted by the flames flickering in the fireplace. "What is this man's price? What threat can you make to deter him that he most likely has already faced and defied? I believe him. I believe he has sent events in motion and are now beyond his control. Mr. Keys and the others are dead because of what Brennan and Anima conspired to do and the blood-letting will go on longer than we can afford."

"Run, you fucking slut-coward!" Brennan screamed at her. He was now standing, and very scared. "You've never been a part of this family."

"Father, if you give your life for Brennan, I will understand. I would be heartbroken, but understand," Hana picked up her appeal. "If you sacrifice everyone else for him - that I do not understand.

I can't follow you in that course of action - not and be the woman you have raised me to be. You taught me to protect my family and this is not what you are doing. You are throwing the rest of us away for something that is ENTIRELY Brennan's fault," she said.

"Shut up, Bitch!" Brennan howled.

"Father, if you proceed down this road, then we must part ways. You will have my resignation on your desk Monday morning and I will begin the legal proceedings to return your surname - one of my most treasured gifts, Father," she concluded.

"Cow," Brennan hissed.

For some, blood is thicker than water. In this case it was a matter of the child you have versus the child you wished you had. Even the way Hana stood by the fireplace was a close mimicry of the Old Man. At some point early in her development, Jormo had given Hana guidance and direction. She had repaid that with daughterly devotion.

The guy's first marriage had been a disaster - strong hints of an affair then a fatal car wreck. During the second marriage he had formed an emotional anchor with Hana. As the marriage unraveled, they had become mutually supportive. There was nothing sexual. It was something stronger - shared trust. When the second marriage failed, Hana had stayed behind. She got along well with wife number three because that was what made Jormo happy, and that mattered to Hana.

Brennan was the opposite. He took everything for granted and repaid every gift with mockery and hostility. He was 'owed' this lifestyle. He was anointed at birth to be a person of privilege and the lesser folk best beware. Except now, someone was handing his dad the bill for Brennan's misdeeds and Dad was balking.

"Brennan, be off the grounds by noon tomorrow," Jormo painfully dropped each syllable. "Your trust fund is intact. Stay away for a few months. I will let you know when I have made suitable arrangements."*wwWw.nôVeLwôRM.C(ø)/m*

"Dad... what the fuck?" Brennan was confused.

"Your mother, half-sister and I could have been on that flight as well, Brennan," Jormo's eyes drilled into his son. "Stay away from the rest of the family. You can use any family property, but be gone within 24 hours of any of our arrivals."

"Fuck you, Dad! This was a freak accident," Brennan tried to rally.

"Then this will be a lesson for you in building and keeping an itinerary," his father retorted.

"Bullshit. This is Hana's doing, Dad. She wants your money and wants to shut the rest of us out," Brennan kept attacking. Even I could tell that was the wrong move at this juncture.

"Brennan, Hana gets it all. I re-wrote my will after your youngest sister, Karvala, was born," Jormo glared at his boy.

"Hana gets all the assets. The rest get some level of addition to their Trust Funds, but Hana gets the company. This was decided a year ago. Hana and I didn't tell you because we both hoped you would turn your life around. That hasn't happened. Now, you've revealed yourself as a selfish spoiled child, willing to risk your own family in your wrong-doing."*W(w)W.nôv©(wôRM.cøM*

Do you know what the only thing worse than being called a beast in your own home is? It is acting like a beast. A Man treats each guest like family. A beast ignores the cries of those guests for justice. Damn it, Brennan. I saw what you and your carrion-feeders did to that girl," he was starting to redden with rage.

"Dad, who the..."

"Shut up!" Jormo was now trembling and livid. "You violated her trust in the safety of my house, you violated your responsibilities as a host and lastly, you violated my word as host that she'd BE safe here. And you laughed about it, Brennan - you and your friends laughed about it."*W(w)w.nôvEL(ø)orm.©©©*

If I was more the man I wish I was, I'd throw you off the damn cliff. If I was more of a father, I would have the police here by now to arrest you. I'm not. I'm giving you a chance to run away. You can make your own arrangements, or Hana can make them for you - your choice," he suggested.

"What if I don't run, Pops?" Brennan sneered at his father.

"Then everything comes out Monday morning. I'll be in trouble, you'll be in serious trouble and you will also be a colossal disappointment, guilty as sin, and broke - as I will freeze all your assets," Jormo stated matter-of-factly.

"You'll go down for this," Brennan threatened.

"This time, Brennan, it is a matter of family. I have sons, daughters and a wife to protect. Hana will take care of the corporation while I'm otherwise occupied," Dad said.

"She'll steal everything," Brennan pointed at Hana.

"There is nothing to steal, Son," the old man shook his head.

"It is hers. Unlike all my other offspring, she's earned it. She's learned the company starting at the ground floor, so she knows what she's doing. No one else has shown the slightest interest. Best of all, I know I can rely on Hana to look after the rest of you once I'm gone. She's never been jealous of any of you, though the reverse isn't true.

We are done here," Jormo sighed. "Brennan, you can go. Mr. Nyilas, you too." I left at a crisp pace. I wasn't running away. I was hurrying back to Casper, to comfort her, and to the rest to give them the news. An hour later, we were all on the road.