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"It is still there. I still have no idea what happened to me, or what the results might be. This means I'm going into battle wounded and that's that," I stated.

"Are you acting in the best interest of the Host," Elsa studied me.

"I am not sure," I confessed after half a minute's introspection. "So many of you are fuck-nuts; I'm not sure what acting responsible is for this set," I added jokingly. "As it stand, you lack the authority to pass judgment on me, Elsa. I promise you that if I feel I'm losing control, I will turn myself in."

"St. Marie would feel better if you stayed here," Elsa insisted.

"Is the SD declaring war on House Ishara?" Buffy rose to the challenge. "We (by that she meant my fellow Isharans) have discussed the matter and talked to our best neuroscientist. She cannot definitively tell us C  l isn't C  l, so there is no reason to constrain him."

Whoa. In our best prospect's educated opinion I was not-not me. Legions of English teachers weren't going to like that.

"I have the answer for that," Katrina spoke up. "I owe C  l and I would pay that debt now. He expressed a desire to see my niece, Aya. Do you still wish that C  l Ishara?"

"More than ever... but the Council is meeting," I sighed.

"Buffy is your *****, your apprentice," Katrina suggested. "Appoint someone to stand with her."

That was more than good advice. Buffy was a woman and, to those who knew of her, as fierce an Amazon as ever lived. That was what Katrina was telling me without telling me.

"I choose Daphne Pile, if she will accept, to stand by Buffy's side," I announced. Buffy would need someone who was passionate for my cause and who spoke Old Kingdom Hittite.

Buffy still didn't, and the chance of the Council speaking English on her behalf was non-existent.

"That is Daphne of House Cotyttia," Pamela corrected me.

Who Cotyttia was? I had no idea. I was stupid to think Daphne's actual Amazon surname was Pile. Daphne wasn't even around. Executive Services was functioning fine without me and that meant Daphne had a work queue.*www.noveltw@rm.c  m*

"The Thracian Goddess of Sex, Orgies, War and Slaughter," Krasimira gracefully filled in my ignorance.

Another whoa... why wasn't she my matron goddess? Tad  fi hauled off and slapped me. The action seemed to take everyone, Tad  fi included, by surprise.

"I don't know why I did that," Tad  fi wailed out in despair. I did. It didn't take telepathy to figure out what I had been thinking. To prove my point, Pamela laughed. I cupped Tad  fi's jaw.

"Worry not," I cooed. "I had that coming – Dot Ishara," I dodged another one, "isn't happy with me right now." Recall, Tad  fi was hooked up to an old-fashioned party line with the Beyond.

"Animaniacs," Pamela snorted. "I so love you. It is my deep and abiding pleasure to have you as my Grandson."

"I'm not your grandson," I countered.

"Well, I say you are. Now be quiet and accept the shame," Pamela's eyes danced with amusement.

"That makes me, Daphne and Brielle incest," I pointed out.

"Amazons don't have an incest taboo," Pamela retorted. Duh. They are all women – no chance of seven fingered, Cyclops babies.

"Ah... women, misunderstanding and pain – Buffy, would you check out Quebec and see if I'm still wanted in that province for bestiality. It could be important later," I commanded.

"Bestiality?" only one woman failed to mutter, sputter or exclaimed.

"The complainant in question is not that pissed at you anymore," Katrina's rolodex mind kicked in. "I believe she expressed a desire to question you about some missing accoutrements though."

My splitting headache meant I had to think about that – ah yes, her dress uniform. It was/had been Canada Day, thus her having an official function and thus me cheating with the girl from across the hall in the Mountie's bed. I'm an idiot alright and my ability to keep an eye on the clock needs improvement.

My last image of her, frothing at the mouth (she was a tad more possessive than I had anticipated) as she screamed out insults in Quebecois French concerning my lineage, personality failings and the treasured parts of my anatomy. She punctuated various parts of that deranged episode by hurling articles of her clothing over the border at me as I turned (once I had good Ole US soil

avement under my feet) and tried to get us back together.

Yes, I had them, just not in my Box of Failed Romances. Acting on hopes of reconciliation, I had the uniform dry cleaned, placed in a dress bag, and the boots polished; both currently occupying space in my closet. At least the Alburgh-Noyan Crossing guards (it is a dual Canadian-American post) appreciated me evading/begging forgiveness long enough for them to see her in only her bra and panties.

I imagine they didn't normally get much excitement there.

"Katrina..." I began.

"Yes, Maya forgives you too, though she scored an 'At Risk' for reliability. Anais sounded genuine," Katrina related. Anais was the Mountie. Maya was the Guyane Fran  aise university student from across the hall – the one I was caught cheating with. I had told her I was Anais's brother. Maya was also a super-exceptional cook.

"C  l Ishara, who are these women we are talking about?" Sikia demanded. 'We'... that didn't take long. We were now a 'we', which in Amazon meant 'male, you're my property'.

"I have a sideline job as an Amway distributor," I replied. "I give crappy customer service."*W(w)W  ovelW  rm.  m*

"You give awesome customer service," Katrina riposted. "That's the problem."

"Sikia, you are not the first Amazon C  l has stuck his dick into. You are probably not the tenth," Elsa dripped with frustration. Quick count: Rhada, Buffy, Oneida and Gael... I was only going to count the penile-vaginal penetrations.

"They are only numbers five and six, thank you very much," I defended myself.

"So much for your 'intern – no sex' policy," Desiree muttered.

"Cut me some slack – I work with stone-cold, Olympic level athlete foxes 24/7," I griped. "I am a sexual being too – I have needs."

"What about the 'End of Internship' hunting shindig?" Desiree pulled a flawless 'Katrina'.

"Oh, it is still on. With my 'do or die' learning curve, it is going to be so much more fun," I grinned. "And... okay, no more Amazon sex until then... sorry Rachel."

"Except for house members," Buffy insisted.

"No exceptions," Elsa demanded.

"I'll keep an eye on him," Pamela resolved the issue. "No more Amazon boinking for him." She was such a liar. She was also a highly accomplished liar because everyone bought it. On with my life. Stage one: exit Katrina's office. Done deal – no problems. Stage two: set up meeting with the Earth & Sky.

They wanted to meet on their ground. Since I was the uncertain factor in these negotiations, I agreed. I was bringing one... Pamela raised four fingers... four people with me. Who? Outside of Pamela, I had no idea. Stage three: going to medical and putting on my business suit... it was a new one and very, very nice. I was moving up into serious majestic magnate territory.

I also picked up buddy number two – FBI Special Agent Virginia Maddox. Why had I chosen a federal agent to accompany me to a meeting between two secret societies? I hadn't a clue. Sometimes you have to roll with these things. In the lobby, I picked up number three – Delilah, Mom's MI-6 operative/baby-sitter.

Compassionate, caring people were surrounding me all the time. It gave me this sensation of a 'down home' environment no matter where I went... if down home was Gaza, or Donetsk. I think my entourage/lifestyle observation teams had grown to encompass six cars. I was in no condition for riding my bike, so that recourse was denied me.

Taxi? One, most were hard-working stiff's like my family who didn't deserve to be caught in a noontime, drive-by assassination attempt.

Besides, with my luck I'd meet the guy from Qatar again – the one with the sister with cute eyes. That reminded me – I gave Nicole a call.*www.W  (r)oVIEI  rM.c  m*

"How are you doing?" she quickly inquired.

"Good," I lied to a past master of shattering perjury. Pause. "I'm surrounded by girls with guns, tailed by your clients, some part of a Federal Task force and some people who I don't know yet. Hold on." I put my hand over my phone.

"Delilah, are you packing heat?" I asked softly.*www.Noveltw  rm.c  m*

She opened her jacket revealing paired revolvers in shoulder holsters. I didn't recognize them so the Brit gave me the 4-1-1.

"Ruger Alaskans," she grinned. Bing! Now I recalled them. The girl who taught me to shoot once read some reviews of that beast on her laptop while I gave her a slow, passionate screw from behind. She became all hot and bothered, wiggling, squirming and generally having a grandiose time with my cock deep within.

I repeat, this girl really loved guns – a huge cerebral G-spot for her. Oh yeah – the Ruger Alaskan is what you get if you are worried about Grizzly bears popping their heads through the tent flaps late at night. Delilah was probably packing .480's. Her guns would turn 250 kilograms of pissed off ursine into an excellent throw-rug in about two shots.

In an urban environment... well, maybe she thought the New York Giants were actually giants, or something like that. Two were overkill, unless you expected someone needing to borrow one.