

## 1019

"Works for me. Hello Up."

"You two are being dicks," Up glared. "Do you have any friends?"

I looked at Pamela who looked back at me. We both looked back to Up.

"Just each other," we jointly affirmed. His reaction to a life-and-death situation was very different than ours and it was showing. It got better too.

[Hungarian] "Hi Cael and Cael's Grandmother," Monika called out as she and the other five girls entered the brewery

ub. Unlike us, the girls had made better time because they knew the town.

"Who are they?" Up whispered.

"Do I have to explain the Birds and the Bees to you?" Pamela responded in a loud clear voice.

"No," Up mumbled. [www.novelist.com](http://www.novelist.com)

"Then don't worry about them," Pamela smirked.

[Hungarian] "Cael, are you going to be long?" Orsi inquired. "The girls and I were thinking we could all have an early dinner together."

"I'm being debriefed by a deep cover NATO operative who is in this country illegally, so it shouldn't take too long," I enlightened her.

"Do you two want to get arrested?" Up groused.

"Nah," Pamela replied. "In case you missed it, no one here gives a damn about what happened across the bloody river. No locals got shot, so they are choosing blissful ignorance," Pamela taunted him. "Besides, there hasn't been a straight female law enforcement agent created yet who can resist Cael here. Me? I'm a contortionist. I'm not terribly worried."

"You should be," he grunted. "One call to the Terrorelhárítási Központ (TEK - the Hungarian National Counter-terrorism Centre) and you guys are going into a deep, dark hole. They have a different view of Civil Rights in this country."

"Scared?" I asked Pamela.

"Yes. You?"

"Terrified," I stifled a yawn. "Let's cooperate."

"Agreed. Okay Up, what do you want to know?" Pamela offered politely enough.

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"What can you tell me about the Metro shootout?" he began.

Orsi and Anya joined us with their beers, fresh from the distillery.

"Ladies, this is a private discussion," Up tried to dismiss my prospective fuck buddies.

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[Hungarian] "Is it possible you are incapable of a verbal exchange in the local language?" I asked Up. See, saying 'do you speak Hungarian?' was probably a phrase he'd memorized.

Up stared at me a few seconds too long.

"Let's keep the conversation to French, Mandarin, or Russian," Up countered. I guessed he was ignorant of Euro-Chick multi-linguicism.

[Russian] "Well, why don't you start with what agency you are with? It is painfully obvious you are not with the Central Intelligence Agency, that's for sure," I accused him.

[Russian] "Who I am with is not important," he declared. Pamela shifted around the table to make room for the arriving girls.

[Russian] "Do you feel that?" Pamela smiled at Up. "That's my knife pressing against your femoral artery." Pamela was beside him with one hand under the table.

[Russian] "Here is how it is going to go down; you will answer our questions and we are going to answer your questions. Or, I'm going to slice your femoral artery from mid-thigh to crotch with my blade while I crush your trachea so you can't scream, much less beg for help while we walk away. You will be dead inside a minute. How do you want this to play out?" Pamela laid out her proposal.

I noticed Anya blanch. She apparently understood Russian as well.

[Bulgarian] "It is okay Anya," I tilted her chin so that we were eye to eye. "We are trying to save lives, not take them. You saw how we behaved on your boat. In this fight, they are the aggressors and we are going to stop them."

[Bulgarian] "By threatening to murder that man?" Anya reposted.

[Bulgarian] "He either agrees to tell us what we need to know and will keep you and your friends out of this, or yes, Pamela will kill him," I explained. "You saved our lives. I cannot repay that kindness by letting these other people threaten you."

[Bulgarian] "Oh... okay." Anya gave me a weak smile. Back to Up.

[Russian] "Do you know what happens if I end up dead after coming to meet you?" Up grumbled.

[Russian] "I'll use an Ouija board and let you know how it turns out," Pamela gave a shark-like grin.

[Russian] "At the Metro," I decided to move things along, "me and the people I'm with were jumped by a team of mercenaries who belonged to an organization called the Condottieri. They were definitely second-stringers. They were sloppy, so they ended up dead."

[Russian] "And?" Up prodded.

[Russian] "And either the next words out of your mouth had better be useful to us, or be what you want said over your unmarked grave, Asshole," Pamela purred.

[Russian] "I can't tell you that," he stated. I shrugged.

"Ladies, it is time for us to leave," I addressed my boat-buddies as I stood to leave. "Say good-bye to Mr. Up."

[Bulgarian] "Is she going to kill him now?" Anya's eyes were wide with worry.

[Bulgarian] "Yes; yes she is, Anya. This is not a game. This is very harsh reality and I'm sorry I've gotten you involved in this mess," I sympathized.

"G... good-bye Mr. Up," Anya said softly as a tear escaped down her cheek.

With that incredibly human reaction, it dawned on Up that Pamela was an assassin with ice-water in her veins and that his intransigence was about to cost him his life.

"Wait," he called out. [Russian] "I am with the National Security Agency. I've been assigned to track major financial transactions between key global financial institutions."

We discovered funds from Intesa Sanpaolo, a major Italian banking institution, had been involved with numerous work permits for properties in London we've associated with those so-called Ukrainians in the All Hallows Shootout," he confessed.

[Russian] "I know those guys," Pamela laughed. [Russian] "They used to be Banco Ambrosiano Veneto. They were called 'God's Bankers', and not for being even remotely holy. Their leadership consisted of corrupt Masons, so I think that points to the Condottieri, not the Egyptians."

[Russian] "Egyptians? What Egyptians?" Up got interested. "Muslim Brotherhood?"

[Russian] "No. Contact Federal Prosecutor Javiera Castello for the details on the Egyptians. We don't have the time to bring you up to speed," I told him. "Suffice it to say, you are on the right path and watch your ass. These guys have no problem shooting up a crowd to kill one person."

[Russian] "Fine. What does any of that have to do with the bomb threat today?" Up requested.

[Russian] "That was totally fabricated by me," I confessed. "It turned out there was a top flight hit squad in Budapest. They bribed a member of a covert operations group to betray the group's leadership whom I was meeting with to discuss regional security. When they attacked, my friend here and I provided a distraction so that leader could escape."

That left us with our backs to the River Tisza. We met these fine young women, who saved our lives by taking us onboard their boat and bringing us here. Since the opposition was quite large and on the west side of the river, I needed to keep the ferry on the east bank," I brought Up up to speed.

[Russian] "Don't forget the parlay and you nearly getting killed," Anya interjected.

[Russian] "Parlay? What is that code for?" Up asked.

[Russian] "It is code for Cael doing stupid shit," Pamela chastised me.

[Russian] "He was trying to save a girl - a girl running with a dangerous crowd," Anya insisted.

[Russian] "We ain't too pretty," Pamela hummed.

[Russian] "We ain't too proud," I completed. Crickets.

[Russian] "You are very pretty, Cael," Anya complemented me and squeezed my hand on the table.

"Oh my God," Pamela gasped. "We are living in an anti-Billy Joel wilderness."

"Don't sweat it," I grinned. "You are just as cute as Christie Brinkley."

"That's nice of you to say," Pamela smiled, "considering she's younger than me."

"Oh! You are finally saying something I can understand," Monika yelped. "I know Ms. Brinkley. She's an environmental activist, but she's old," I chuckled.

[German] "Monika, I swear to you, Cael and I are not romantically, or physically, involved," Pamela addressed the issue. "Call me old again and I'll cut your hair off while you are asleep. Are we clear?"

"Yes Ms... Mrs... I don't know your name?" Monika paled.

"Don't!" Pamela fixed me with a spooky glare. I was about to call her 'Honey Boo-boo.'

"That's what you were thinking," Pamela eyes narrowed. She looked over at the girls. "Cael and I are not physically linked."

[Russian] "That's what you were thinking," Pamela eyes narrowed. She looked over at the girls. "Cael and I are not physically linked."

[Russian] "Have you told me everything?" Up persisted.

"The key words you might want to be looking for are Ajax, Alal, Baraq and Cael," I suggested.

"Barak? Is there an Islamist angle?" Up noted his mind was stuck in 2013.