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The concept behind karma is as old as mankind. In Amazon philosophy, wrath, revenge, curses and vendettas had their opposites - kindness, toleration, blessings and hospitality. Within their anti-social nature, the Amazons attempted that karmic balance. Boyfriends.

"My name is Priya Guerrero, of House Andraste," the Amazon answered.

"I have mated on multiple occasions. I have no daughters yet." Pause. "Who was Maddox?"

"What do you mean?" Virginia studied Priya.

"Virginia, Andraste is her true family name, the name of her first ancestor, and the name of the matron deity of her House. As a divinity, Andraste is the Celtic Goddess of Victory."

"Does she... do you believe you are the descendent of a goddess?" Agent Maddox started with me, then turned to Priya.

"No," Priya snorted. "That is a silly notion. She is my guiding deity. My first Mother was as mortal as you, or I. Are you a Christian?"

"Yes, I am."

"Ha," Priya smirked. "My goddess would never let herself be captured by men, much less judged and then crucified." At that moment, Virginia truly understood she was at the mercy of killer cultists. Sure, she'd read the reports. Staring into Priya's eyes revealed the true nature of the beast.

"Christianity is about toleration and forgiveness of sins, especially the sins of your enemies," the federal cop countered.

"Of all the resurrection cults, we find Buddhism to be the least abhorrent. Even that suggests that divinity is merely a trick of the mind," Priya stated with conviction.

"Unlike you and your blind acceptance that weakness is strength, the very existence of my goddess stands before us right now," she continued.

"You?" Virginia grumbled. That offended Priya.

"No - him," Priya pointed at me. Virginia glared at me. I held up my hands to protest my innocence.

"Is there a woman around here you haven't fucked?" she snapped.

"I... no, wait," I stammered.

"I have not mated with Cael Ishara," Priya shook her head. "Fifty more days," she smiled at me. "What I meant was this - how many male Amazons have you heard of?"

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"None," Virginia was expecting some sort of trick.

"What is he then?" Priya motioned my way. Virginia groaned.

"This is too bizarre," Virginia conceded. "Maddox means 'Son of Madoc'. It can also mean 'fortunate one'."

"The second meaning is more accurate," Priya nodded. "After all, you are here walking around and talking, thus fortunate to be alive."

"You would kill us if we showed up without Cael?" Dellilah tossed us her input.

"Without a doubt. I am an Amazon... (sigh). That means I've trained for over a decade in as many lethal arts as possible. It is why I carry weapons."w@W.nDvefwotM.c@M

"Is it true you carry guns around without planning to use them?" Priya inquired.

"If you mean 'do I carry a gun as part of my job as a federal law enforcement agent', then the answer is yes," Virginia stated with trepidation. It was that 'old Martian' feeling - as if you were talking to a rational, intelligent person from another planet.

"Is it true that if you say 'freeze' and I stop moving, you will close to personal combat range instead of shooting me?" Priya appeared to actually be engaged in the conversation.

"Yes. It is part of 'due process' and not being 'judge, jury and executioner'," Virginia verbally tip toed forward. She felt she was making progress while speaking to an ESL (English as a Second Language) individual. Priya glanced at Dellilah.

"Oh, not me Luv," the Brit exaggerated her accent. "If I think I can get away with it, I put two rounds - center mass - and another in the head." The rest of the discussion was cut short by...

"CÁEL!" a feminine teenage voice shrieked. Someone was sprinting right at me. Quick reaction time - stop Dellilah then stop Rachel. In the midst of that, Loraine leapt on me.

I was knocked back when she rocketed into me, wrapping her bare legs around my waist and her arms around my neck. Somehow I managed to keep my feet. I was hampered in this endeavor by teenage kisses lavishing my face with underage fervor. I had to wedge one hand between us while resisting my instincts to get a free, oh-so-wrong, booby feel.

"I heard you were coming, but I didn't believe it," Loraine, Aya's eldest sister and Katrina's 16 year old niece, panted with far more passion than fatigue. "Aya wouldn't give up on you."wWw.NÓv@()wótm.c@M

"This is a counselor?" Virginia questioned.

"No, she's a senior, casted student; Loraine Epona," Priya informed the crowd.

"Now we can be back to 'us'," Loraine purred. That was the sound of the prison dimension of Tartarus opening beneath my feet.

"There is no us!" I vociferously articulated. "There is no us!" Then the pack of mid- to older teens closed in as well.

[OKH] "Oh! Loraine, is this your male?" "He looks so sexy in those shorts." "You are going to share him, right?"

"Bubba, you've got some explaining to do," Pamela chortled.

"I swear on my desire to not end up in a Canadian landfill, or an unmarked grave, that Loraine and I have a purely platonic, and fully clothed, non-erogenous zone touching relationship," I pleaded. Loraine started laughing.

"Calm down, sisters," she giggled. "I'm teasing him. He is no one's male. He is my friend and a pillar of iron-will - I know. I've tested him."

"Testing in a purely educational, non-touchy way," I clarified. I swear, women keep looking for ways to torment me.

"If that is so, why did you just mug this man?" Virginia rallied.

"I want him, but he's incredibly evasive," Loraine grinned. "You are an outsider. Where are you from?"

"I'm Special Agent of the FBI Virginia Maddox," the fed glared. "Care to dismount the man I was having a conversation with?"

[OKH] "Have you created your first born daughter yet?" a precocious brown-haired teen asked suggestively.

"English," I insisted. "For the sake of our guests, I would ask my sisters to use English."

"To clarify for my young sisters," Priya addressed the gathering of twenty some 'girls' and four instructor/safari guides.

"This is Cael Ishara, sister of House Ishara from Havenstone HQ," she enlightened them. Amazon etiquette placed me in 'a simple member of the Host' category. There was one slight flaw in the plan - caste, or my lack of one... kinda/sorta.

[OKH] "What do..." another girl, this one cocoa-colored with thick, kinky hair smiled up at me.

"Oh... Cael, what do you do?" she corrected herself.

"I teach Aztec Calligraphy to the color-blind," I answered with convincing seriousness, "as well as plotting terrestrial asymmetric numerology as exhibited by Imperial Penguin breeding pairs."

"Hold on," Pamela insisted. "Hold on. No one say anything. I have to write that one down."

"That sounds fascinating," several voices murmured. I could 'feel' Virginia's eyes roll back in her head in a silent display of disgust - with me, teenage fan-girls, or both. I wasn't sure.

"Wait," Dellilah stepped up. "Let me try this. Okay - okay. Cael is a replicon Mephistophelian moppet facilitating a fascinus-based solar illumination system to replace current quantum logic clock technology."wWw.NÓv@()wótm.c@M

No one knew what to make of that. Even my twisted, labyrinthine thought processes were hard pressed to understand everything she said in the proper context. Pamela and I took a step back on either side of her. We held our arms up high, then bowed at the waist in worship to Dellilah.

"We are not worthy," me and my mentor chanted and bowed three times.

"You three, promise to stop it right now, or the beatings will commence," Rachel menaced.

"As you wish, Buttercup," I bowed to Rachel.

"I was always partial to..." Pamela stopped because Rachel really did look prepared to dispense some violence.

"But what does it mean?" Mona broke down before the chat petered out.

"It means you lot - Havenstone - are planning to use this young man's cunningly constructed tireless cock as a Sundial, Luv," Dellilah smiled.

"Oh, I think we can find a better use for that piece of manly equipment than what you are suggesting," Loraine got one final tease in.

"Stop it," Rachel's voice slithered forth with a chthonic chill. Next stop - a major case of weapon malfunction/multiple people ending up in the infirmary. Thankfully for all concerned, it was approaching chow time and all the little groups began returning to the central camp area. Rachel sent Tiger Lily and Charlotte off to bed, now that we all knew basic security procedures.

Two events intruded between me and my rendezvous with Aya. First, I discovered everyone had on a series of patches. Being a Summer Camp, the girls had on a bunch more than the counselors. Still, one patch shown above all others: 'Camp Sahka Torchlight'. If you found yourself thinking of an Afro-American Jazz-themed playground, join the club.

Sahka isn't any part African. The Sahka are an aboriginal people. Since you are in North America, you would think Native Americans, and you would be wrong. There are tons of cool tribal names in the Americas... but apparently they'd all be rejected for a Turkish nomadic people who inhabit Northeastern... Siberia.

Torchlight? Rumor had it they ripped off some part of an Isis reincarnation ritual that had priestesses leaving a dark cellar/tomb/not-even-associated-with-Torchwood bearing torches they extinguished with the dawn. The Campies did it on special occasions... like orgies, or so was insinuated.

Camp? Well, one out of three ain't bad. Camp made sense which was an oddity in, and of, itself. What was Camp Sahka Torchlight? It was a scholarship camp for young ladies in the Lower-48 States Foster Care System. Okay... I couldn't find fault with that idea. Considering the chaotic jumble of neglected promises that is our childcare safety net, it was rather clever.

Have you tried to find anybody trapped in foster care? It isn't impossible, but it is a bureaucratic nightmare. For starters, why are you making your Freedom of Information Request... you get the picture. Havenstone cycled a never-ending stream of false girls and vacant foster homes through the government apparatus.