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"Specify."

"Caber tossing with real Sequoia. I'll wait for the ladies of Girl Scout Troop 666 to go get some - they have to be authentic; no substitutes accepted," I explained.

"That's not hyperbole," Sophia snorted. "Hyperbole would be - 'I want to use the biggest spears ever used by Amazons, or Goddesses'."

"My hyperbole wasn't the caber tossing, it was us 'waiting' for a set of circumstances we both knew wouldn't happen," I countered. Sophia nodded.

"I find that fighting with over-sized phallic symbols, or tongues for that matter, gives you an unacceptable advantage," Sophia stated. She was being a great sport about this.

"I bow to your obvious wisdom," I gave a reverent nod. "Knives, or unarmed combat? And if I lose, I get to go javelina hunting tomorrow. I've been told they are capybaras with an attitude problem." A pause then snickers behind hands raised to their lips.

"Counter-proposal: I select unarmed combat. If you can last five minutes, you may bow hunt our 'rodent problem' tomorrow." More snickers.

"I prefer to entertain our guest," Caprica spoke up. "Unless he wishes to withdraw."

"Huh? What? Caprica, with the size and firmness of your breasts, I'm all for some serious hand-to-hand contact." A slight intake of breath then the laughter began. My sexism wasn't an issue. It was my spirited pugnaciousness they were applauding.

We walked sideways into the rough, uneven-surfaced fighting ring. Caprica held up her hand.

"How much damage to your scrotum causes permanent injury?"

"I'm not sure," I remained wary. "I've had hot wax poured over them, and then my tormentors ripped the congealed mass off, along with all my pubic hair, without undue effect."

"I've had a shod mare kick me in the crotch - thus learning why you never stand directly behind any equine - and then had a successful oral encounter thirty minutes later. It was exceedingly painful, but I pulled through. We can't really count the butterfly knife to the penis... no blood/no foul."

"How much did that 'wax episode' hurt? Did you cry out?" Rachel's sister inquired.

"Not loudly. See, unlike the rest of you, I'm a man and men don't cry. We leave all those hysterics to the feminine gender," I grinned. The campers weren't pissed in the least.

"They gagged you first?" Delilah snorted.

"And how," I confessed. "In my defense, I didn't start begging for mercy until I saw the flames."

"How many opponents did it take to tie you down?" Sophia asked mischievously.

"One. It was an epic encounter. She said 'strip down, lay on the bed, let me tie your wrists to the bed posts, then I'll give you a big surprise'. Normally, I love surprise and I must confess, seeing her roommate, the one I had been cheating with, come into the room in a black basque, black panties and a riding crop was surprising."

"She beat you like a disruptive slave?" Priya gasped.

"Yep. They also removed all my body hair below the neck, dyed my hair bright pink and did a few things I find erotically confusing to this day," I elaborated. "Then it was two days of continuous sex and a late Sunday night stopover at the campus infirmary."

I didn't even look at the faces of the Amazons I gave my weapons to. We were Amazons. If I needed them, they would hand them over. Along with my growing confidence in them was their growing willingness to ignore my gender. My shirt came off quickly. When Caprica began removing her boots, I hurriedly did the same.

My boot had barely hit the hand of the lady I had tossed it to when Caprica came for me. All the relevant factors were the same. Was she better than me? Yes. I rated her as about the same level as Madi, but not as good as Elsa. For 45 seconds, it was a fantastic bout for both of us, then I fucked up. I knelt down for a sweeping kick at her ankle. I telegraphed it.

Caprica went high; the bridge of her right foot connecting with a solid kick to my jaw line. With that, so many things began going off in my mind, my fight plan fell to pieces. I managed to keep rolling over after that blow to end up on my back. My arms spasmed. My legs shot up of their own accord, curling back to protect my abdomen despite my desperate desire to stand up.

My move caught Caprica by surprise as well. Our kneecaps collided painfully. She bounced off and staggered away. I forced myself to my feet like some 70 year old arthritis sufferer. A hundred neuro pathways conveyed contradictory orders. Any kind of cohesive defense was hopeless. Caprica's piston kick caught me in the left ribcage. The ground felt like concrete when I crashed down on it.

My 'me' mental patchwork had jumped into a body-wide skirmish with either patterns 'B', or 'C'. The result was muscles twitching a few millimeters one way then another. It wasn't a do this, or that. The message was to do two different things at the same time. Muscles aren't into task management, mediating, compromise and division of labor. They can't work that way.

There was no follow-up attack.

"Stay back," I heard Pamela shout. Later I was told that Caprica was getting ready to kneel by my side to assist me. I could have lashed out the moment I saw her and that would have been all kinds of bad. "Aya..." Pamela summoned the aid I needed.

"Cáel?" Aya called to me softly. Her voice wasn't a miracle cure, it was a reminder of what was truly important to me. Humans prioritize stimuli and Aya was close to the top of my list. My 'fight' impulses receded and the 'worried about Aya' instincts took control. My epileptic-like seizures ceased as I propped myself up on my elbows.

Caprica was still a problem. We hadn't concluded our fight.

"What happened to you?" the Camp Leader demanded to know.

"Ah... It is complicated," I struggled.

"One second you were fighting well - the next? Are you diseased?"

"See this?" I pointed to the tiny scab on my forehead. "Someone shot an electric charge into my brain. It confuses me at times."*Ww.n0v@lw0rm.c0m*

"You could lash out at my campers," she deduced from the absence of information.

"That's rubbish..." Delilah rumbled.

"This is none of your concern," Caprica menaced right back.

"Caprica, you are worried... why? Because he lost his wits when he was attacked - twice - in the garage? Or was it the way he threatened Loraine when she jumped on him?" Rachel came to my defense. "Sophia and Aya were never in anymore danger than you were."

"He is crazy," Caprica insisted. A few people chuckled*Ww.w.(n)Op@lw0rm.C0m*

"Oh, I agree," Rachel nodded. "He is very, very, very crazy. No one who knows him for more than a day can truthfully deny that. He's mad, cracked, insane - and he laughs at death. He laughs at life. He mocks condescension and helps alleviate ignorance through comedy.

He never surrenders to despair, or hardship. Cáel does that and more because his mind has always been the child who took joy from playing in the mud and sought solace alone among the craggy peaks. Even if he was a woman born in a freehold, he would not be one of us. I take great comfort in his quirks and oddities.

Too often, I am playing mental catch up. That encourages me to think faster and outside our normal means of resolving a conflict," Rachel explained her viewpoint.

"I disagree that his merits outweigh the danger he represents," Caprica pronounced her judgment.

"Then we have a problem," Rachel began putting her weapons aside.

"If you insist," Caprica smiled like she was some cunning fox. Delilah and Mona joined with Rachel as did Loraine, several of her friends and the young twins and their two compatriots. Sophia edged around the circle to hold Aya and her Squirts back. They weren't old enough for this sort of thing. As I crab-walked toward Rachel who helped me stand, two dozen camp counselors rallied to Caprica's side.

"Campers are forbidden to engage in sparring unless supervised. No permission has been given," she crushed the odds. It was within her rights to reminds us of regulations. Our only potential ally in this was Rachel's sister, whose name turned out be Genève, and she didn't dare go against Caprica on that. Instead, Genève joined Rachel, Mona, Delilah and I in a personal defiance.

Our five to Caprica's fifteen was looking awful bleak, unless I considered who WASN'T at my side. Pamela had remained quietly seated throughout this debacle@*ww.n0v@lw0rm.c0m*

"Pssst," Pamela motioned to Rachel. Rachel side-stepped and took what Pamela offered. It was a small, wooden match.

Rachel was struggling to piece things together. Caprica's crowd began advancing.

"Give up, you've lost," Rachel snorted in obvious triumph. That didn't slow the enemy down in the least. Rachel brandished the single match. Shouldn't there been a box of them? They didn't slow down. Rachel wasn't worried.*wVW.Nov@lw0rm.c0m*

"Thirty seconds after the first blow is landed, the fuel depot will explode," Rachel grinned. "Give up while you still can."

"What? You wouldn't dare? That is lunacy!" Caprica and her team stopped advancing and went to defensive stances. Then it dawned on Caprica. Where was the ninja? Where was that box of matches?

"The depot is well guarded," Caprica sounded less than absolutely confident.

"Cappy," Delilah mocked the leader, "she's a ninja. Breaking into guarded places is what they do."

"Call her off," Caprica snapped at Rachel.

"Of course," Rachel responded. "Quit the field and I'll ask her to come back."

"I am telling you to recall her right now," Caprica growled.

"Of course," Rachel grinned. Success. The fight was over. Rachel didn't do anything for a minute.

"I said..." Caprica remained pissed.