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We did, Miyako looked exceptionally pleased and floated back to her seat. Charlotte had taken a middle seat so she could keep watch over both the cockpit and the rear of the plane. Rachel, Mona and Delilah had fallen asleep despite Miyako's and my voracious racket a few minutes earlier.

Saku (the genocidal maniac formerly known as Shammuramat) had pulled her armor out of storage and was getting ready to clean that and her hand weapons. She had the rapt attention of Aya and her Squirts, until my arrival brought Aya my way.

"Did you have good 'Daddy Time'," Aya smiled at Miyako.

"I had Great Daddy time," Miyako brushed some hair off Aya's shoulder.

"She's pregnant," Saku informed the plane. The look she gave me was a whole new expression for me to categorize... as I imagined the sublime horror etched on my face was new as well. First, Saku's expression – it was the 'how dare you fuck that woman to multiple orgasms with my boyfriend's body'.

Yep, I was pretty sure that was a new one.

For my part, well the 'practical me' knew I was trying to make little Isharans. But to the Man-Dog-Pig in me, the one who always insisted on wearing condoms, fatherhood meant... THE END!

I wasn't opposed to abortion. If she wanted one, I would back her up. If she didn't want to abort the pregnancy... well, time to 'Man-Up' and do the right thing. I absolutely knew it would end up in divorce, on grounds of my infidelity; but I'd try, damn it. I would do the best I could with my anemic, highly limited morality and unhealthy as well as unnatural sex drive. I would never miss a child support payment, or a minute of my visitation time.

Abortion, divorce and child support weren't going to be the issues of this union. I wanted to mock Saku's words, belittle her understanding of events and insinuate she was a cave-dwelling blockhead. The little excited squeeze that Miyako gave my hand trash-canned all of that.

"How do you know?" I tried to keep my panic from turning my calm voice into a squeak.

"I gave birth to three sons and two daughters," Saku studied me. "A mother knows these things." That, I didn't believe. Before I could take a deep, somewhat hurtful-to-Miyako, sigh of relief, she continued..."Also, having spent so much time among the dead, I am familiar with the sensation a fresh soul resonates with." I was Ahab, strapped to the Great White Whale.

I put my best 'Oh Yay, we are going to have a Baby!' face on. I would have rather chewed splinters at that moment than hurt Miyako's feelings. I had become a sap as well as a cad. How the hell did that happen?

"Will our child be a girl... or a boy?" Miyako became very respectful and demure.

Shammuramat studied Miyako for ten seconds then did the same to me.

"Daughter," she announced. What happened next caught us all flat-footed.

"We will name her Fushichou – Phoenix, after you, Sakuniyas," Miyako bowed to the Saku.

None of us were sure how Saku would take that. She had no immediate comeback either.

Eventually she gave a curt nod, then went back to her armor. Aya hugged Miyako, pressing her right ear against Miyako's belly – her very flat belly.

"What will her name be in our tongue?" Aya's precious eyes sought out an answer in mine. "Suwais-urāni." I wracked my mind for the proper word usage.

"Technically that means 'Bird that burns to ash' since there is no Phoenix in the Old Kingdom Hittite mythology. Neither flame – 'tāru', or fire – 'agnish' – convey the proper mystical meaning.

"Did you just name your first kid Su?" Pamela snorted while feigning sleep.

"It is 'A Boy named Sue', you 'Ghost rider in the Sky'," I grinned. Pamela opened up one eye. A smile blossomed slowly from her lips as she stood up.

"Yippie yi Ohhhhh," she said as I hugged her.

"Yippie yi Yaaaaay," I replied.

She wrapped up Aya and Miyako in a truly dysfunctional family momentWw.n@Vc/w@Rn).com

"How did you end up knowing Johnny Cash?" Pamela regarded me proudly.

"Dad loved the man and his music. He wasn't a cowboy, but he was a lineman and that's some hard, lonely work," I explained.

"Câel," Miyako tilted her head up and beamed me a serious dose of happiness. "Is this a happy moment?"

"It sure is," I grinned back.

"Can Mommy be next?" Aya hounded me relentlessly. I thumped her head.

"Ow," Aya pouted. "Should I take that to be a 'maybe'?"

"Why don't you go help Saku," I rechanneled her boundless energy. "Back in the day, every noble was attended to by squires who took care of their gear and served that noble as body servants. In turn, she taught them the art of war." Sakuniyas shot me a nasty look.

Aya poked her head between Pamela and Miyako.

"That sounds like fun," she met Saku's glacial chill with a warm spring breeze.

"I don't want their help," she grumbled.

"It sounds like free labor," Pamela smirked.

"I said I don't want their help," Saku snarled.

"Okay," I rolled my eyes. "Aya – Fatal Squirts – attention!" They all looked at me. "I command you, as your Celestial Potentate Poobah, to stare at Sakuniyas until she gives you a task of a personal – to her – nature to do. Get at it."

Four sets of precocious, will-eroding cuteness assaulted the Assyrian Queen, victor of a hundred battles and skirmishes.

"You are despicable," was Saku's chosen acidic barb.

"I second that motion," Pamela patted me on the back. "I keep finding myself being prouder and prouder of you, every day. Stop it," she teased me.

None of those words dampened my mood, or my plan.

"How much longer is this flight going to take?" Saku grouched.

"Four hours," I lied. It was way closer to two.

To my way of thinking, it wasn't like she could get much angrier with me after she discovered my ruse. (I was wrong. She could and did. I'm an idiot.) Saku shook her head... and the task-mastering began. An hour and forty-five minutes later, the pilot alerted us that we were ten minutes from our final approach. Bits and pieces of her armor were all over the front seats and the floor of the exit-way space.

Diligent little fingers were still polishing and checking straps for signs of excessive wear or fabric fatigue. Their 'noble' hovered over them, pointing out the right way to do things and what they were doing wrong. Her congratulating them for doing a good job was rather non-Amazon of her, but the kids ate it up.

With the ten minute warning still hanging in the air, my duplicity inspired Saku to finally flip out. I was pretty sure she didn't think through what she was doing. She simply drew her 22cm/9in blade and threw it at my face. Miyako caught it between her hands... an effortless clap... fuck.

"Four hours!" Saku howled at me. "You said we had four hours... I could have held them off for two!"

"Why do you think I lied to you?" I kept my amusement out of my tone because I was rather attached to the idea of my wagging tongue not being cut out of my mouth.

It wasn't lost on us that every member of my SD team was alert and had blades drawn (firefighats on planes in mid-flight is severely frowned upon) and were staring at her. I wanted to tell Rachel to 'stand down', except that would be unfair. I wasn't 100% sure Saku was done being furious with me.

Telling Rachel to set aside her instincts was something I tried to keep a minimum, only to be used when it I was forced to take in the bigger picture.

"What is going on here?" Rachel asked with professional calm. So, I told her the truth... the real truth.

"Oh," Rachel grunted. She gave a motion for her team to rest easy then came my way.

"Knife," she held out a hand to Miyako who instantly gave it over, pommel first. Rachel deftly flipped it over so she was holding the razor sharp blade then smacked me on the top of my head – hard.

"Ow..." I whined. "That hurt.Ww.novelWorM.©Om

"It was supposed to," Rachel glared. She walked down the aisle to Saku, returning her blade.

"Did you just smack him in the head?" Saku was trying to make sense of what she'd seen.

"Yes," Rachel nodded.

"He screwed up and I impressed upon him to not do it again. As you might guess, this is a fairly regular occurrence with him. We all take wicked-fine pleasure in that part of his education."

"But you are his bodyguards ... is he really the Head of House Ishara, or was that a lie as well?" Saku was still confused by her prideful arrogance and how I was misplacing my own.

"Sakuniyas, Câel was not raised in our culture. He has only been a member of the Host for a few weeks. This is not to belittle his impressive education," Pamela intervened. "Both he, and those of the House who know him, agree that the occasional physical chastisement works better than words alone."Ww.novelWorM.COm

"You could reward me with sex," I muttered. "Positive reinforcement..."W(w).novelWorm.c()m

"Forty-six days, Bitch," Rachel growled.

"You are ferocious in battle – fearless and clever," Saku turned back to me. "Why do you put up with this constant degradation?"

"Degradation? I'm not insulted by what Rachel did or said," I retorted. "She is trying to teach me things I need to know if I'm going to survive. I respect her superior knowledge in her professional capacity," I continued. "I don't get upset when people tease, taunt, or challenge Câel 'Wakko' Ishara... that's me, if you are confused.