

999

Finally, the Americans were in varying degrees of panic. They were not running around like chickens with their heads cut off. This flavor of panic was different and far more insidious. It was the creeping realization that they worked for political masters who placed a greater premium on how this would play out with the American public than on the death toll in another country.

Due to Javiera's pleas for cooperation, the British were being quiet for now, but eventually someone higher up at MI-6 in London inevitably would pass this on to a political appointee. Then all bets were off.

I was the bringer of bad tiding and the herald of the upcoming apocalypse. Perversely, the people I was causing anguish to were the people I wanted to help. I was deeply depressed, yet I had one more duty to perform - paying it forwardWw©.@ovel(w)öRñt.coM

"Deidre, can I talk to you in private?" I walked over to my Aunt and took her hand.

Her security detail had shrunk down to two. The rest were waiting in the lobbyWww.n(o)veIW.e.r.M.CoM

"Of course," she gave me a barracuda smile. I was angling for the closest bathroom. She was dragging me toward the nearest bedroom. We both had what the other wanted. Her drive was the stronger - we ended up in the bedroom.

I was thankful she didn't throw me down on the floor, or the bed. She slipped her hands around my waist, pushing her lower stomach against my crotch then tilted back so we could make eye contact. She inhaled deeply of my scent, trembled, and then addressed mewww.növv&fw©rM.cöM

"You want to know about the 'All Hallows' shootout," she turned serious, yet comforting.

"Are you in danger?" I asked. Of course I wanted to know about the firefight. My question did manage to make her happy. She brought up a hand to stroke my jaw from ear to chin.

"We really do care about you, Cäel," she insisted passionately. "With Father back, things will get worse, not better. In time, he will come for you and you need to be ready."

"You have no idea," I held her gaze. "He's been several steps ahead of you the entire time. He planned his death, succeeded in the purpose of dying and even engineered your murder of your brother - at your hands."

Deidre was torn between being older and wiser than me and the deep, ingrained suspicion of her creator's fearsome intellect.

"What do you think he's doing right now?" she hedged her bets.

"Reasserting his control over the Illuminati," I went with my gut instinct..."Shit!"

Buffy tumbled into the room, pistol out and pointed down, with two Illuminati goons piling up behind her.

"Cäel?" Buffy shot hate Deidre's way.

"Give me a sec," I kept my eyes on Deidre. I waited for the door to shut.

"Who were the people attacked in London?" I questioned her intently.

"If I tell you, you must agree to come with us," she proposed. "We can't keep you safe if you keep wandering about and I don't think you came back from wherever the Amazons took you because the weather was foul. Let us protect you."

"No... and that's because it wouldn't do either of us any good Deidre," I reasoned. "Assume he knows what has been going on the past thirty years and has taken the appropriate measures. The worst thing for you and my other aunts' survival is for me to seek shelter."

"Why? He's not going to kill us... he's going to enslave us again," she persisted.

"Nope. I think the Old Bastard may have found a way to procreate. And that means he doesn't need you around anymore, because you are a reminder of his failings," I lied.

It was a lie built on the foundation that this possibility was precisely what they feared worse than enslavement - obsolescence. Grandpa Cäel was a 'user'. He used people up, then moved on, alone in his immortality. "What happened in London?"

"It was a meeting between a Factor of the Illuminati Council and several key second-tier members. It was in complete secrecy. None of us were informed of the meeting, so we are still piecing details together even now," Deidre finally broke down and informed me. She also unintentionally informed me of something else: I was starting to look more and more like Grandpa in her eyes ... and not in a good, 'sex me up' way.

"It sounds like Grandpa had them killed, or more correctly, had the Condotteiri kill them for him," I guessed. How would he... Mom? Mom sent Delilah to me. Was she her Father's agent?

"I'll work with you because you are my Mother's sisters, Deidre," I asserted. "Like it or not, we are family and my betraying you at this juncture makes me more like your father and less like mine. So that ain't happening. Exactly how I'm going to stop Grandpa... I don't know yet," I sighed. "I hope you accept my reasoning that none of us are safe in the Illuminati."

"We won't give up our hold," Deidre grew fierce.

"Don't," I kissed her on her forehead. "Stay and fight for the O'Shea position. Keep your power and wait."

"Are we waiting on you?" she seemed less than thrilled.

"No. You are waiting for your father to come back and then you are going to make yourselves damn useful to him," I stated. "If you are useful to him, he'll let you live. Staying alive is priority one."w(w)w.NövéLwo(r)m.CO(m)

"What's to stop him from destroying you when he wishes?" she questioned.

"Let me deal with him when the time comes," I grinned. We both knew that was a near-hopeless struggle. "Don't look so despondent," I chuckled. "I'm going to bring a freaking army for that final showdown - a big... no, a huge, massive freaking army. That way I'll actually stand a chance."

"You seem surprising optimistic," she noted with a reluctant grin. "Do we have time?" she looked to the bed then back to me.

"Not at this moment. Maybe on the plane. Right now I've got to get ready to eat dinner with my fiancée," I dropped my own little bomb.

"Really?" Deidre regarded me, looking for the joke.

"Not joking," I confounded her. "This is the real deal. We are going to become Magyarország es Erdely Herceg es Hercegnöje." Deidre exposed a hint of confusion. She didn't know Magyar - woot...

"What is that?" she grudgingly inquired.

"Proof that I'm an idiot, Deidre," I sighed. "Let's go embrace the crowd. Still a lot of work to do."

We did have a lot of work to do and it wasn't finished when I had to leave. Buffy was distracted. Having spent years admiring Katrina, she was now in a position similar to her mentor's. She had heavy responsibilities that interfered with her strong desire to spend some personal time with me. She was also the right Amazon for the job.

The Golden Mare had finally gotten in touch with Katrina. Together with Buffy, they wrangled a forty woman combat team of SD plus fighters from Houses Ishara and Durga (from Indonesia) together to send as aid to the ninja. It sounded like a tear-drop in the ocean. Katrina insisted it wasn't. The ninja wanted to keep their war as secret as possible.

The Amazons were trained killers and their loyalty was assured - they were loyal to the Amazons. They could be relied on to kill the people they were told to kill. That kind of 'direct action' wasn't the normal operating procedure for ninja. Unfortunately, the corruption of one of the seven families and a severe disruption of the Yakuza meant people had to die and die quickly to reset the balance.

Captain Moe had torn reluctant permission from his direct superior at Fr. Detrick to contact the World Health Organization about the vaccine scam. They would have to contact the PRC. It was late Thursday afternoon and the UN was about to call it a weekend. The UN was only in session currently because of another crisis.

[World News]

It was the happenstance of another conflict that encouraged Turkish solidarity and Khanate action - the Crimea. Russia had opened a serious door to the Abyss by annexing the Crimea from the Ukraine by force. Technically, Russia had violated Ukrainian sovereignty by seizing that region.

The Russians (with tacit support from China) put forth the political notion of 'lost territory'. Thus Vladimir Putin had unwittingly 'green lighted' the greatest consumption of 'lost territory' in the history of mankind. Following Putin's reasoning, all Temujin was doing was reuniting the widely separated pieces of the Great Khanate. His invasion of Xinjiang and Nei Mongol were also part of that policy.

The 'Carolina Reaper' spice in this chilli was a group called the Crimean Tartars. It didn't get too much press in the West, but in the spring of 2014, the Crimean Tartars - a Turkish ethnic minority - attempted to do to Russia and the new Republic of Crimea what those two had done to the Ukraine. They declared their own autonomous state within the Crimea.

Russian security forces quickly squashed that movement, and in doing so, managed to incite the Turkish Republics and the minority Turkish populations living inside the Russian Federation. It was a low grade irritant to the Turkish people that would, in time, have dwindled into being yet another indignity, much like the Uyghur struggles for independence. By the dictates of Fate alone, it was the right irritant at the magic time for the Khanate.

The Turkish people were being reacquainted with the clarion call of Pan-Turkish Nationalism. It was an idea that was over 100 years old and rather discredited in most circles... treated as an anthropological discipline - but not as a political ambition. But there were now three igniters for the Khanate Phoenix.

The dismissive treatment of the Crimean Tartars was the smallest spark, yet also the most crucial in that it reminded your average Turk that for 100 years, they had been the victims of secular, oppressive regimes - the Soviets (Russian) and the Communist Chinese. That oppression was still living its fifteen minutes of fame.