

76 Would she ask him to stop? Definitely not.

Arwen looked up when she heard the bathroom door open. Aiden came out, dressed in his grey joggers and a black pullover. 1

"You are done?" she asked, and Aiden hummed in response as he walked to his side of the bed.

"You are reading?" he asked, glancing at the novel in her hand.

Arwen followed his gaze and looked down at the book "Oh, yes. I have a habit of reading novels before bed," she said, quickly closing the book and putting it in the drawer next to her bed, almost as if she was hiding her biggest secret.

Aiden wanted to chuckle. If only she knew that he was well aware of the kinds of books she enjoyed. He knew all the romances she read, all the desires she harbored. He knew it all.

"Is your wound better?" Arwen asked, her gaze flicking towards his shoulders.

"It's better," Aiden replied.



Arwen nodded to him in understanding, "Good that it is getting healed; otherwise, I wouldn't have known what to do."

"It's not difficult."

"Huh?"

"If my wound hadn't healed, you would have taken the responsibility. It's easy," he said, before slipping inside the duvet beside her.

Arwen blinked. *Would it have been really that easy?* "You seem uncomfortable with me in bed," she said suddenly, and Aiden turned to her, raising his brows. She clarified her thoughts. "I may not be an expert at reading your expression all the time, but your discomfort is pretty evident."

"If you are uncomfortable, I can sleep on the couch. No one will know that we are not sharing the same bed. You don't have to force yourself, you know," she offered, gesturing toward the couch. Before she could move further, Aiden tugged her back onto the bed.

The next thing she knew, she was under him; and he was hovering over her.



Aiden stared down at her with an expression that was hard to read.

"What are you doing?" Arwen asked, unsure of the sudden proximity between them.

"You don't make me uncomfortable. You never did," he said softly.

Arwen nodded, not knowing how to respond. His closeness was making her thoughts a jumbled mess. She didn't know why, but their position was reminding her of the scenes she had read in many of her novels.

Aiden, on the other hand, was also feeling conflicted. He had envisioned her beneath him like this countless times in his dreams, but now that she was finally here, he wasn't sure what to do next. There was so much he wanted to do, but would she allow it? Or, would his desires scare her away?

His eyes locked onto hers for a moment before drifting down to her lips. He remembered how soft they had felt against his cheeks earlier that evening. A sudden urge to feel them against his own took over, and he leaned down.

Arwen's eyes widened as she realized what was coming next. Although everything seemed rushed, it still felt all-natural. His closeness, his kiss —everything. It sent tingles through her, but she wanted it as much as he did.

"I can feel your heart is beating fast. Are you nervous, Moon?" Aiden asked, halting just inches from her lips. He was trying to maintain the fragile edge of his self-control, which was quickly slipping away.

Arwen's breathing grew heavy. She nodded. "A little," she admitted, but even as she spoke, her face tilted up, trying to close the remaining distance between them.

"Do you want me to stop?" he asked again, and Arwen felt her cheeks flush red.

Yes —she felt it rushed.

Yes —she was nervous.

But did she want him to stop? No.

Would she ask him to stop? Definitely not.

Shaking her head, she said, "It's fine. We are husband and wife. We agreed to do this." She

was reasoning not just with him but with herself. She needed something to make sense of how she was feeling. The way she responded to him when he was close like this didn't align with her usual rationality.

When Aiden heard her answer, he smirked. It was as if he had read something she was trying to hide. *No, Moon. I wouldn't let you hide. Not from me. Never.*

He brushed a few strands of hair off her face, his touch lingering. "Yes, we are husband and wife, Moon. We have signed the papers. Good that you remember it at a moment like this. But are you saying that what we are feeling right now is just an obligation for you?"

His voice held hints of teasing, but it came firm. It made Arwen nervous.

She stared at him, considering his words before nodding. "You said you wanted a wife when you agreed to sign the certificates. You said you would share a bed with her and ... ah"

She yelped as she felt his hands at the side of her waist. His touch was cold, but the skin where he touched felt like it was burning. Maybe when he



had pulled her down earlier, her clothes had shifted and dishevelled slightly.

"So, you think I would force you into bed if you didn't agree to any of this?" Aiden asked, his voice carrying a faint hint of warning. Arwen realized she had phrased it wrong and was about to shake her head, but before she could, Aiden added, "Moon, I won't force you into anything that you don't want. If you don't want me around like this, close to you like this; you just have to tell me and I won't come close to you. I will keep my distance. I will never force myself on you. Not until you want me to."

Arwen's heart skipped a beat. She wanted to shake her head and tell him she didn't mean it like that, but the intensity of his gaze pinned her in place, making her unable to move. Her chest tightened when she saw a flash of disappointment appear in his eyes.

It was then she realized that seeing him in disappointment hurt her the most. 1

"Sorry, if this made you feel uncomfortable," Aiden said softly, already shifting to move off her. 1

