

His Beta 325

Chapter 325

Braden

I'd known this conversation was going to happen, but I wasn't prepared for the look of betrayal in

I

eyes. I held myself back from pulling her into a hug.

It looked like she might bite me rather than let me do that.

"Were you...when we?" She wagged her finger back and forth between us.

I could tell she was struggling not to sound like she cared at all, but every syllable she spoke sounded

strained with effort.

I sighed and cast a surreptitious look around. "I don't want to talk about that here. Will you come with

me someplace more private?"

"I don't know if I want to do that."

There'd be no forcing her, so I waited as patiently as I could. She'd have to find out the truth sometime,

but I could tell I was going to have to let her be the one to guide this conversation.

“You asked me a question,” I told her quietly. “If you want an answer, I’d prefer we don’t discuss it in the

middle of the hallway.”

Several people walking past raised a hand in greeting and gave us curious looks. Lanie’s back

stiffened as she returned them. She turned back to me.

“Fine.”

Relieved, I gestured for her to follow me. I could tell she was looking around us with fascination as I led

her through a series of corridors and then down a short, nondescript hallway. When we stepped

through a small door at the end into a courtyard, I couldn’t help grinning as she gasped aloud.

“How is this Alaska?” Lanie spun in a slow circle to stare all around her.

Like the main courtyard, this smaller space was open to the sky above. Yet the air was temperate, even

warm. Lush greenery and flowers grew all over, and a small fountain tinkled in the center. Comfortable

outdoor furniture created conversation spaces, and we settled into chairs opposite each other.

“It’s a spell, right? She frowned. It has to be

“It’s a combination of spellwork and tech. We can’t be in the sunlight without something protecting us

Her eyes tattowed “All those other times we met in the woods?”

When we go outside, we have to wear something to protect us. Yep I wear mine in this amulet.”

Mine was on a thin steel chain and I pulled it out of my shirt to show her

“These spaces are too big for something like this, though the same tech that suelds Brightsky from

detection also provides kinst of

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you’d have to ask Malachi how it all works.”

Lanie so

back. “If it failed right now, would you burst into flames?”

“I’d burn. It would be agonizing. But I probably wouldn’t burst into flames, and I wouldn’t probably die

from

it, as long as I could get into shelter.” I eyed her. “Do you want to see me burst into flames?”

“I’m not sure. I don’t know how I feel about you now, Braden.” She crossed her arms over her chest,

I sighed. “I was not with Malachi when I met you.

Not like this, I mean. He was my commander, and I reported directly to him. But we didn't get together romantically until after the last time I saw you. I hope that makes you feel better."

"You kissed me," she said in a low voice, a little shaky.

"And now you're with my grandfather. I feel a little squicked, to be honest."

That stung, even though I knew where she was coming from. "It doesn't have anything to do with you."

"You wouldn't have met me if you didn't know him!"

I nodded. "And I don't regret meeting you. Do you wish you hadn't met me?"

She didn't answer for a minute. Then she sighed. "No.