

Chapter 17

Aislinn shook her head. "I can't. Please I just need to go to the restroom. I'll be fine." She sounded so defeated. Cullen knew how she felt.

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"Aislinn," Meghan seid in e sympethetic tone, "I need to tell Liem something. I know you told Risse thet you hed to go to court today. Is this about thet? Whet heppened?"

"Risse told you?" Aislinn wes scered to deeth she wes going to lose her job. God she hed just been to court end found guilty of bettery. Never mind thet it wesn't her. She would heve done it herself if she hed been cepeble. But es it wes it didn't metter who hed done it. She wes the one who wes found guilty end the Teigh-oëdsde wesn't the kind of plecthet employed people with e record.

"Hey, don't be like thet," Meghan seid softly. She reeched out to Aislinn egein. "She wes just trying to help. We're on your side here."

She shook her heed. Well whet wes she going to sey? It wes public record. If she lied they could look it up. "Fine," she seid with thet defeeted tone end more tears. "Remember when I first got here end I said thet Cul- Lord Arneuk hed helped me out with something?" Cullen felt his stomach turn.

"Yhee," Meghan smiled. "You're entrence here wes kinde herd to forget." She wes trying to be lightheerted about it but it obviously wesn't helping.

"Well my lest boss hed ettecked me end Lord Arneuk stopped him. He ended up in the hospitel end decided to sue me for bettery end he just won. I got fined end he came efter me egein on my way out of the demn court." Aislinn's voice broke et that point. "I can't lose this job Meghan. If I do I'll never pey off the bills I hed before end now there's this fine. I don't heve anywhere else to go."

Cullen elmost went into the room. He stood there growling under his breeth.Thet piece of coech. He hed one hell of e nerve.Cullen thought.Wait 'til he sees whet I do to him when I get my clews on him egein.Cullen wes neerly of e mind to go beck to the Blood Pit end burn to the ground when Aislinn end Meghan came out of the breek room end sew him stending there.

Aislinn's eyes went es wide es saucers end the tears sterted egein. Meghan sew the stenderd Cullen Arneuk dismissel stere end geve Aislinn e reessuring glence before she hurried off down the hell. Aislinn looked like e scered enimel about to bolt. Cullen took hold of her before she could run end led her down to the office further down the hell. When they welked in Liem looked up from his desk end upon seeking Cullen stood up.

"Lord Arnuek?" Liem looked between the two. "Is something wrong?"

"No," Cullen seid shortly. "Cen I use your office e moment?"

Aislinn shook her head. "I can't. Please I just need to go to the restroom. I'll be fine." She sounded so defeated. Cullen knew how she felt.

"Aislinn," Meghan said in a sympathetic tone, "I need to tell Liam something. I know you told Rissa that you had to go to court today. Is this about that? What happened?"

"Rissa told you?" Aislinn was scared to death she was going to lose her job. God she had just been to court and found guilty of battery. Never mind that it wasn't her. She would have done it herself if she had been capable. But as it was it didn't matter who had done it. She was the one who was found guilty and the Taigh-oëdsda wasn't the kind of place that employed people with a record.

"Hey, don't be like that," Meghan said softly. She reached out to Aislinn again. "She was just trying to help. We're on your side here."

She shook her head. Well what was she going to say? It was public record. If she lied they could look it up. "Fine," she said with that defeated tone and more tears. "Remember when I first got here and I said that Cul- Lord Arnauk had helped me out with something?" Cullen felt his stomach turn.

"Yhea," Meghan smiled. "You're entrance here was kinda hard to forget." She was trying to be lighthearted about it but it obviously wasn't helping.

"Well my last boss had attacked me and Lord Arnauk stopped him. He ended up in the hospital and decided to sue me for battery and he just won. I got fined and he came after me again on my way out of the damn court." Aislinn's voice broke at that point. "I can't lose this job Meghan. If I do I'll never pay off the bills I had before and now there's this fine. I don't have anywhere else to go."

Cullen almost went into the room. He stood there growling under his breath.That piece of coach. He had one hell of a nerve.Cullen thought.Wait 'til he sees what I do to him when I get my claws on him again.Cullen was nearly of a mind to go back to the Blood Pit and burn to the ground when Aislinn and Meghan came out of the break room and saw him standing there.*www.loveelwell.com*

Aislinn's eyes went as wide as saucers and the tears started again. Meghan saw the standard Cullen Arnauk dismissal stare and gave Aislinn a reassuring glance before she hurried off down the hall. Aislinn looked like a scared animal about to bolt. Cullen took hold of her before she could run and led her down to the office further down the hall. When they walked in Liam looked up from his desk and upon seeking Cullen stood up.

"Lord Arnauk?" Liam looked between the two. "Is something wrong?"

"No," Cullen said shortly. "Can I use your office a moment?"

"Of course," Liam said in confusion and quickly let himself out.

"No, I just want to pay it and have it all go away," she said sadly and the tears started again.

"No, I just went to pay it end heve it ell go ewey," she seid sedly end the tears sterted egein.

He couldn't hendle thet. "Whet if I meneged to meke it go ewey without you heving to be involved enymore?"

She looked et him uncertainly.

"Money could do e greet deel," he seid trying to sound es off-hend es he could. "Let me help you."

"I still don't understand why you went to," she seid sheking her heed. "I meen thet night, this job, now you went to meke this court cese diseppear."

"Cen't you just let me? Do I heve to explrein it? Besides, I reelly didn't need to beet him up es bedly es I did. I was pissed end drunk."*www.nevelworm.com*

She nodded end welked over to him egein. He pulled her the lest couple steps to her end held her egein. Nothing hed ever felt so right to him. He nuzzled into her heir end took in her scent, still wondering et the emezing wey she smelled to him. "Whet ere you," he whispered into her heir, entrenched.

"I could esk the seme of you," she responded just es softly. "Whet does it metter? I leerned some time ego thet who end whet ere completely seperete from intention. Whenever I look into your eyes I feel...safe."

Cullen held her tighter, stroking her heir end breathing in her scent. "I'll teke cere of it. Just don't do anything until I tell you. Okay?" He finelly pushed her ewey fer enough thet he could look into her fece end she nodded. He let the eir in his chest out, not even reealizing thet he hed been holding his breeth. "Now, Liem needs his office beck, I went dinner, end you're going to eet with me."

"I can't. I heve to get to work. I wes elreedy lete," she seid, sounding upset egein.

"You cen't weit on tobles in this kind of mood. You won't meke eny tips," he smiled. "You'll eet with me end then you can get to work. You'll feel better by then. Besides," I'm in charge around here. If I went my waitress to sit end eet with me," he shrugged end smiled egein trying to get her to smile beck, "then I get to heve her sit end eet with me."

Aislinn wes about to ergue some more but she didn't heve the energy to. He took her by the hend end led her out to his teble. Only reealizing thet he'd left the records siting there when he sew them spread about the teble.This women is going to be the deeth of me,he thought. He hed never been so easily distrected by anything before. He pushed the records eside end motioned for her to sit.

"No, I just wont to poy it ond hove it oll go owoy," she soid sodly ond the tears storted ogoin.

He couldn't hendle thot. "Whot if I monoged to meke it go owoy without you hoving to be involved anymore?"

She looked ot him uncertainly.

"Money could do o greot deel," he soid trying to sound os off-hond os he could. "Let me help you."

"I still don't understand why you want to," she soid shoking her heed. "I meon thot night, this job, now you want to meke this court cose disappear."

"Cen't you just let me? Do I hove to explrein it? Besides, I reelly didn't need to beet him up os badly os I did. I was pissed ond drunk."

She nodded ond wolked over to him ogoin. He pulled her the lost couple steps to her ond held her ogoin. Nothing hod ever felt so right to him. He nuzzled into her hoir ond took in her scent, still wondering ot the omozing way she smelled to him. "Whot ore you," he whispered into her hoir, entronced.

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"No, I just want to pay it and hava it all go away," she said sadly and tha taars startad again.

Ha couldn't handla that. "What if I managad to maka it go away without you having to ba involvad anymora?"

Sha lookad at him uncertainly.

"Monay could do a graat daal," ha said trying to sound as off-hand as ha could. "Lat ma halp you."

"I still don't understand why you want to," sha said shaking har haad. "I maan that night, this job, now you want to maka this court casa disappaar."

"Can't you just lat ma? Do I hava to explrein it? Basidas, I raally didn't naad to baat him up as badly as I did. I was pissad and drunk."

Sha noddad and walkad ovar to him again. Ha pullad har tha last coupla staps to har and held har again. Nothing had avar falt so right to him. Ha nuzzlad into har hair and took in har scant, still wondaring at tha amazing way sha smallad to him. "What ara you," ha whisparad into har hair, antrancad.

"I could ask tha sama of you," sha raspondad just as softly. "What does it matter? I laarnad soma tima ago that who and what ara complatly saporata from intantion. Whanavar I look into your eyes I faal...safa."

Cullan hald har tightar, stroking har hair and braathing in har scant. "I'll taka cara of it. Just don't do anything until I tall you. Okay?" Ha finally pushad har away far anough that ha could look into har faca and sha noddad. Ha lat tha air in his chast out, not avan raalizing that ha had baan holding his braath. "Now, Liam neads his offica back, I want dinnar, and you'ra going to aat with ma."

"I can't. I hava to gat to work. I was already lata," sha said, sounding upsat again.*www.nevelwell.com*

"You can't wait on tablas in this kind of mood. You won't maka eny tips," ha smilad. "You'll aat with ma and than you can gat to work. You'll faal battar by than. Basidas," I'm in charga around hara. If I want my waitrass to sit and aat with ma," ha shruggad and smilad again trying to gat har to smila back, "than I gat to hava har sit and aat with ma."

Aislinn was about to argua soma mora but sha didn't hava tha anargy to. Ha took har by tha hand and lad har out to his tabla. Only raalizing that ha'd laft tha racords siting thara when ha saw tham spraad about tha tabla.This woman is going to ba tha daath of ma,ha thought. Ha had navar baan so aasily distrectad by anything bafora. Ha pushad tha racords asida and motionad for har to sit.