

Chapter 36

Aislinn was speechless. Her brain was trying to grasp what Rissa had just told her. Rissa continued in the silence. "But really the men around here, especially Lord Arnauk refrain from any number of things if they aren't serious about a woman. I mean take Lord Arnauk for example." Rissa thought she'd approach things a little differently. She figured that there really wasn't any way all of the mating stuff had happened. But everyone knew Lord Arnauk's normal habits. If he had taken her up to his room there had to be more to it than the two of them just having a nap in his bed. She reeked of him. "Lord Arnauk never takes women to his room. He almost never takes all his clothes off. He tends to like women who are strong, intelligent, and show as few signs of remaining interested in him as possible. He never sleeps with the same woman twice in a row. He tends to make it short and sweet with as little affection in it as he can manage. He's always on top, usually with the woman on her hands and knees regardless of the form he's in. And probably the most important thing is that he never marks women. He'll come on the floor before on a woman if he can help it. He never comes inside a woman. And if he does accidentally get some on someone he sends her to the showers immediately."

Aislinn couldn't believe how much she seemed to know about Cullen's bedroom habits. She held herself in check. Different cultures, she reassured herself. "So do you know details about the sex life of everyone around here? Or have you experienced him first hand?" *w ww. @ve @w @R @. cδm*

Rissa saw the hurt look on Aislinn's face and realized she might have gone too far. Not to mention her tactics didn't seem to be working. "No, Ais, I've never been with Lord Arnauk. He'd never lie with a theta," she said with a guilty tone. "But we do tend to be relatively open about this stuff. I could take you down the hall and show you a room where people who've gotten bored with waiting have started to entertain themselves in the mean time. We don't hide sex the way humans do. I mean we've all seen him with the women Lord Arnauk beds. Like I said, he doesn't tend to take it private. That's why we're all so curious about you. It makes it look a lot more serious than he tends to get."

Aislinn nodded and bit her lip. On the list of things that Cullen supposedly didn't do she'd managed to break the standard on more than half of them. Something about that brought a secretive smile to her face that had Rissa's curiosity back in full swing. Not to mention what he'd said to her in the shower. She really didn't think she had the right to hold his past against him. I guess maybe I shouldn't be too bothered by what she's saying. If this is the way they are at least I'm finding out before he wants to bend me over in the middle of the great room. God, he might want to bend me over in the middle of the great room. I guess we'll see if he wants me again. I mean it's not like I'm in love with him right? I mean right now we're just having a little fun. Right? No need to get panicky or jealous or bothered by the way things are around here. At the same time something about the idea of being 'mounted' made Aislinn a little heated.

At that point a woman who had been standing off against a wall and just listening stepped in. "Perhaps she has nothing to tell." The woman was one of the stand outs from before. She had three other women with her. She was the angry one while the others looked amused. She would have been easy to spot one way or another. She was blonde with green eyes as compared to all the dark hair and brown eyes.

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Rissa shifted uncomfortably. "Aislinn, this is Meredith." Aislinn smiled at the woman but didn't respond.

"Perhaps," Meredith reiterated. "Lord Arnauk took her up to his room for some reason other than what everyone is assuming and the girl has nothing to tell."

"He gave her the key to the penthouse Meredith," Rissa defended.

"So he's protecting her for some reason. That doesn't mean he's fucking her." Meredith walked over to the seating area. She looked down her nose at one of the women in a chair across from Aislinn and the woman did the head nod thing, jumped up from the chair, and allowed Meredith to have it.

Aislinn couldn't help the amused scoff and eye roll that followed. She had no intention of falling into a who-fucked-Cullen-better argument with this woman. Besides from what Rissa had said, Aislinn was fairly confident that she'd win hands down. Just know that gave her a little more confidence in dealing with this bitch. Bitch, Aislinn smiled, oddly appropriate.

Meredith tilted her head in a superior fashion so that she could look down on everyone even from her sitting position. "I'll ignore that seeing as you're probably ignorant of the way things work around here, this time. But for future reference little one, I'm a beta. That means that everyone less than that gets out of my way when I want. And you don't have any rank at all."

Aislinn caught the implication. But was not about to bow to this woman. She didn't spend the last seven years giving up everything save her pride to lose that now. She met the woman's gaze dead on as she talked. "I don't think that I'll be giving up my seat to you. But thanks for the warning just the same." Rissa gave Aislinn a warning look. Her eyes were like saucers and a little scared.

Aislinn's comment dropped the smile from Meredith's face. "I don't think you realize what you're dealing with here, little one."

Aislinn ignored Meredith and looked over at Rissa questioningly. "Okay that's several times I've been called 'little one.' Is that supposed to be an insult?" *w ww. N @Ve lWorm.δ@m*

Rissa swallowed and looked over at Meredith who was now fuming. "Yeah, uh, you are a little petite to be much of a threat to anyone Ais. And Meredith is a beta."

Aislinn heard the warning in Rissa's voice. But she just didn't feel threatened here. For seven years she had been warned ahead of time if she was in danger. And she had yet to get any warnings about this place or these people. Not to mention they had no idea what she was capable of. "Big things come in small packages," she answered Rissa and then looked back over at Meredith. "Did you want something or are you just in the habit of interrupting conversations you're not invited to?"

Meredith sat forward in her chair. "You must be pretty confident in your abilities to think you can speak to me like this and not have to worry about retribution."

"I guess you could say that," Aislinn answered. "Or you could say that it's hard for me to not be amused by the fact that someone so grand and mighty as you seem to think you are could feel so threatened by little old me. If you were confident in your position you wouldn't be bothering to try and find out who or what I am. You'd have moved on with your life, believing that no one like me could get in the way of whatever you had going on with Cullen. And I'm guessing that you must not be that important around here or you'd be in that meeting that Cullen called. So, no I'm not all that worried about you. It doesn't add up in a way that would make me."

Rissa couldn't believe what she was listening to. She had to admit that she didn't really know much about Aislinn. She knew that Aislinn had been nice and had learned her job quickly at the Taigh-Oèsda. She knew that Lord Arnauk had shown some favoritism toward Aislinn from the beginning and there were rumors that he had gotten her the job in the first place. Rissa knew that Aislinn had a weird scent and she didn't think that Aislinn was human. But if she wasn't human Rissa didn't know what she might be. In any case she had never actually had a personal conversation with Aislinn beyond the random chat in the break room or while waiting tables. This was definitely not something she had expected. She just hoped that Aislinn could back up what she was saying. She certainly didn't think that Aislinn looked capable of it.