

Chapter 37

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Meredith's eyes virtually bulged out of her head. "Have you no respect for Lord Arnauk? You've no right to use his name."

Aislinn looked over at Rissa, who was wincing a bit and looking at her as though Meredith was right. But Rissa was keeping her mouth shut on this one. "Well," Aislinn said, "he told me to use his name. What? You slept with him and you never earned the privilege?"

Rissa leaned in conspiratorially. "You didn't tell me you could use his name."

Aislinn shrugged. "What's the big deal?"

"No one but a few of the elders get to call Lord Arnauk anything other than Lord Arnauk or General. He's the alpha Aislinn," she said as if Aislinn had missed something very important about the word alpha.

"Okay, but I'm new at this. I don't get all the rules here. I just do what he told me to do. He's never once told me to not call him Cullen. And frankly if I slept with someone," she added looking at Meredith incredulously, "and he didn't let me use his first name, I wouldn't be continuing to sleep with him, whatever he was." *wW.N0velw0rm.c0m*

Meredith couldn't take the condescending tone any longer. "That's enough. If you don't adjust your attitude then the little bit of his scent that still clings to you won't be enough to keep me from teaching you a lesson about pack etiquette."

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Aislinn shook her head. "You don't intimidate me. Either do what you think you want to do or go away."

At that Meredith began growling. Aislinn just continued to glare at her sharply. With no warning Meredith shifted into her hybrid form, and then leaped at Aislinn where she sat. Aislinn only had a second to contemplate the change she saw with fascination before the woman was on top of her. Rissa barely managed to get out of the way as Meredith grabbed hold of Aislinn on the couch. The force of the attack caused the couch to vault backward and both women went rolling to the floor. A circle cleared around them in the room. Great, Aislinn thought, Cullen tells me to avoid fighting and the first thing I do is get into a fight. With that thought in mind Aislinn used the momentum from the roll off the couch to continue the roll until she was on top of Meredith. The shocked lycan pushed Aislinn off and then got to her feet and turned to continue the attack. Aislinn was on her feet as well and faster than any of the people in the room expected launched her own attack. Meredith was thrown completely off guard as the smaller woman began a volley of punches and kicks that quickly had her backed against the wall. Before Meredith could get her mind back in the situation Aislinn managed a punch to her face that had blood pouring from the lycan's nose. If Meredith hadn't changed into her hybrid form the blow probably would have broken her nose. Meredith was blinded by the pain and let out a growl that caused the onlookers to step back. She started flailing at any shape she could identify. Aislinn dodged each swipe as though she was bored with it. She had figured that a lycan would be faster than this. She led Meredith around the room ducking out of the way of each clawing attack and taunting the woman as they went. The room of people had fallen into deadly silence. They couldn't believe that this outsider was making such a fool of one of their betas.

Finally Aislinn grew tired of playing with Meredith. She grabbed Meredith's arm as the woman tried to claw at her again and flipped her so that she landed face first on the floor. In a blur of movements Aislinn had the woman pinned. Meredith growled furiously. Aislinn was impossibly strong and the angle at which she was holding Meredith's arm left the woman incapable of getting any leverage to change the situation. Not to mention it sent shooting pain up the woman's back and felt as though Aislinn was about to rip it off. "You shoullldn't be abllle to do thiiis," Meredith hissed through clenched teeth in a guttural voice that shouldn't have come from her throat as she struggled to get control of the situation.

Aislinn's voice had a deadly quality to it. "Don't make assumptions about things you know nothing about. I suggest that you submit to the superior fighter here."

Cullen took his place at the head of the table. Nearly all of the pack elders were present. The few that weren't there were still at the reservation cleaning up after the failed mating ceremony. "Alright Terrick, you were saying?"

"I was merely voicing a concern about why no one bothered to look into Jenna's supposed disappearance. It just seems strange to me that she would vanish into thin air. All of you seem to think that there was nothing wrong with that." When Terrick said that there were concerned looks exchanged around the table. It was as though something in their minds clicked all at once and they realized that they should have arranged a search party or something. As Terrick continued an uneasy silence enveloped everyone. "Not to mention the insane way you came up with the idea that you were going to be attacked and then there was no attack." Cullen glared at him for the way he phrased that part. But he didn't interrupt the man's tirade. Terrick was making valid points. And one of the things that kept Cullen in charge was his willingness to listen when other alphas might not. " And I heard that Jenna was stopped from killing you because several people had dreams that warned them it was going to happen? Are we going to get a real explanation?" The people in the room were looking at each other with concern. They all agreed with Terrick. But what was worse was that most of them had been there and they had seen Jenna vanish and none of them had been bothered by it. Why didn't they go looking for her? "Why don't I start from the beginning and maybe by the end some of the questions you're asking will be answered," Cullen replied calmly and then launched into a rendition of the story starting with the night that Keith had brought him the information about the Circle being behind the raids, including some of the information about Aislinn, and ending with the ceremony.