

Chapter 39

Keith sat down across from him and waited until Cullen had put the first spoonful of food in his mouth before blurting it out. "So while we were in the meeting Aislinn got into a brawl with Meredith and forced Meredith's submission." Cullen virtually choked on the mouthful of food and Keith chuckled at his accomplishment. "Oh that's not the end of it. I guess she made a complete fool of Meredith in the process. It wasn't even a close fight."

Cullen wiped the food from his mouth and looked at Keith as though he had grown a second head. Keith grinned from ear to ear. "I take it you didn't know she was capable?"

Cullen cleared his throat. "The closest I ever came to finding out if she could fight was when she told me she had previously beaten up her asshole boss from the bar and once I snuck up on her and she managed to kick me hard enough to knock me backward several feet." Cullen thought about that as he said it.

Keith nodded. "Well from the sounds of things she may very well be alpha bitch material after all." He shrugged and stood up from the table to get something to drink out of the fridge.

Rissa and Aislinn were seated on the couch in the games room facing the large screen tv. Shortly after the fight with Meredith Rissa had given Aislinn a tour of the floor, just to get her out of the room with all the whispering and uncertain stares. It didn't take long for Rissa to realize that Aislinn just wasn't like the other women. She didn't see rank as an issue. She was too human in that respect and operated from the 'all men are created equal' point of view. Rissa didn't quite agree but she thought it was nice that Aislinn was so inclined to treat everyone nicely as long as they returned the favor.

They had spent some time in the kitchen since Aislinn hadn't eaten all day. Then they made some popcorn, picked out a movie, and camped out on the large couch to wait for the meeting to be over. Aislinn seemed disinclined to go upstairs to bed without Cullen. She didn't say why but Rissa got the impression that she was almost afraid to go to sleep.

They ended up watching some sappy romance story. It was just getting to the part where the guy finally realized he was in love with the girl and was going after her when Celia came into the room with her eyes on fire. She was accompanied by two of the women who had been with Meredith earlier that evening. Aislinn shook her head and went back to watching her movie. She couldn't believe she was going to have to go through that again.

Rissa leaned over to Aislinn and put her hand on her shoulder. "That's Celia. She's ten times worse than Meredith." Aislinn met Rissa's gaze and read the warning in it. Aislinn sighed heavily and tried to continue watching the movie.

Celia studied Aislinn for a moment. Celia was much more contemplative than Meredith. She was a planner. She didn't necessarily intend to get into a fight with the girl. If Aislinn could be put into line with the others then there wouldn't be a problem here. From what Celia could tell she didn't look like much. Her scent was confusing. But from what Cullen had said that wasn't surprising. Celia was trying to size Aislinn up physically when she noticed the mark on Aislinn's shoulder just at her neck.

Celia stormed over to the couch where Aislinn and Rissa were sitting and grabbed the sleeve of Aislinn's shirt, rage flaring in her amber eyes. Rissa jumped out of the way instinctively. Aislinn pulled away from the woman and readjusted her shirt. "What the hell do you think you're doing?" Aislinn said as she stood up and backed away from Celia. [www.novellworks.com](#)

Celia looked like she was about to explode. She took a deep breath and let it out. He took her to his room, gave her the key, and marked her, she thought. As she added it all together in her mind it came down to one thing. Cullen had chosen a true mate. If that was what was going on here, then Celia was about to be ousted from her position whether she liked it or not. "Did he mark you," she fumed.

The suggestion started the entire room buzzing with excitement. Cullen had been around a long time and had never seemed inclined to mate with anyone. Jenna had been a political convenience and wasn't inclined to disturb the order of the pack. But if he chose a mate then things were about to turn upside down. The pack was already dividing into the group that was happy for him and the group who was disgusted that he'd pick a non-lycan outsider.

"It's none of your business. If you don't want to end up like Meredith I suggest you leave me alone." The deadly calm in Aislinn's voice was almost enough to make Celia back down. Almost.

The last thing Sarah wanted to deal with was contention over pack rank right that instant. She was standing in the great room surrounded by the six women who were going to be directly affected if Sarah decided that Aislinn's fight with Meredith constituted a rank change. She growled with annoyance. "There are more important things to be dealing with right now. As far as I know I have not been told that the girl will be here permanently. I'll need more information before making that kind of decision. But if she's capable and wants to take up the challenge then you know full well how this decision will fall." [www.NovellWorks.com](#)

Sarah pushed her way past the frustrated women and headed down the hall to find out where Keith and Cullen had gone. She could pretty well guess. It was always the kitchen or Cullen's office. It depended on his mood. And since he had appeared to be in a decent mood, outside of the meeting, she figured the kitchen. She was growling to herself and almost missed the commotion that began emanating from the opposite direction. Sarah stopped and listened. She already knew what it was. Celia had gone looking for Aislinn. Sarah quickened her pace toward the kitchen.

She stormed into the kitchen in a rage that instantaneously started Keith laughing again. Cullen pushed the chili aside and got up, apologizing to his stomach as he did. He was already guessing what Sarah was going to say before she said it. When Cullen heard Celia's name in the same sentence as Aislinn's he stormed through the door of the kitchen and down the hall. If this was what was going to happen on the first night she spent with them he couldn't help but wonder what the future held. It's not like he could take her with him everywhere he went. [www.NovellWorks.com](#)

As the three lycans entered the doorway they heard Aislinn's deadly warning. Cullen started to head toward the women, but Sarah stopped him. This was a matter of female rank and none of his business technically.

Neither Aislinn nor Celia noticed the addition to their audience. They were too busy staring each other down. Celia growled low in her throat. Aislinn was good enough at sizing people up to know when to hold her ground and when to run and hide. This seemed to be a toss up. Celia wasn't rash like Meredith had been. And she wasn't mouthy. She was just angry. Aislinn watched the woman pace around her, thinking.

Celia's eyes were concentrating on the mark that Cullen had left on Aislinn's shoulder. It wasn't quite deep enough to scar. It would heal. But that didn't change the fact that he had done it in the first place. "How did it happen?" She asked in a dangerous low voice.