

Chapter 40

"Why are all of you so stuck on how exactly we had sex? I don't get it," Aislinn glared at her. "And it's none of your business." Cullen stiffened and Sarah gave him a harsh glare at that.

"On the contrary. They're stuck on it because what the alpha does with his women is everyone's business." Celia grinned. Sarah had to hold Cullen back as the face off continued. Celia leaned in closer to Aislinn. Neither woman was willing to drop her gaze from the other for an instant. "Did you bite him back? Taste him?" Aislinn didn't answer. "No? Shame. I would have. Did he do it on purpose? Did he tell you what it means? Do you have any idea what it takes to be the alpha bitch?"

Suddenly Celia stopped. She tilted her head and her eyes looked over Aislinn's shoulder and stopped on the three elders that had been watching. She smiled broadly. "Have you come to make sure I didn't hurt her?"*ℳWw.NOVeI@oRmm.com*

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Aislinn wasn't sure if Celia was trying to distract her so that she could attack or if there was something that was actually drawing her attention. Celia stood upright and dropped the threatening demeanor as though it had never been. She looked at Aislinn with more hatred than Aislinn had ever seen and at the same time there was a tear in the corner of her eye. She stepped in closer to Aislinn. Speaking in a whisper so low that Aislinn could barely hear what she was saying. "Do you love him?" she asked.

Aislinn swallowed hard. She didn't have an answer.

"Then you and I will have to finish this later," Celia said.

Aislinn looked at her in confusion. Then followed her gaze to the group in the doorway. Cullen was eyeing them both cautiously. The woman with him looked pissed and Keith had a disappointed air about him. He obviously wanted to watch a fight. Celia nodded in submission toward Cullen and then headed out the door. A man who had been standing against the wall immediately followed her. He had an annoyed air about him and Aislinn shortly heard arguing from down the hall.

She was waiting to see what Cullen was going to say. She was pretty certain that he wouldn't be happy with her. To her surprise he came over to her and started looking her over for injury. "Are you alright?" The rest of the room stared on in shock and amusement.

Aislinn tried to stop his fussing but wasn't very successful. "Yeah, I'm fine. I told you I would be."

Cullen stopped as she growled at him and he grinned at her. "Picking up bad habits," he said.

"Huh?" Aislinn was frustrated. It had been a difficult evening.

"The growling. Not generally a human habit." He smiled at her. He was greatly amused by the fire in her eyes. And the idea that she had held her own against Meredith made him feel better about her fitting in. Then there was watching her with Celia. No matter how concerned he had been for her safety he had to admit that she had looked and sounded impressive. He leaned in and kissed her. It took her and all the others totally off guard.

Aislinn could feel his fingers on her chin gently guiding her mouth to his. His lips burned against her and she felt passion rolling in her stomach. She reached up and took hold of the material of his shirt. Partially to keep herself from falling over. When he ended the kiss she stood with her eyes closed for just a second longer and took a deep breath, feeling his scent seep into her and wash the frustration she had been boiling with out of her system.

He ran his fingers over her face and smiled at her. "Have you had enough for one evening?"

"What?" It took Aislinn a moment to catch what he was saying.

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"Would you like to go to bed?" He added and his eyes swirled with the suggestion.*W(°)Ŵ.n@veℓw°Řm.c(°)(m)*

Aislinn couldn't help but join him in the smile at that point. "Sounds nice."

Keith and Sarah approached the two. "We hate to interrupt. But," Sarah said. She looked considerably less pissed off than she had a minute ago. The anger had been replaced by a bemused resignation. She reached out and pulled the neck of Aislinn's shirt aside to see what Celia had been ranting about earlier. Then she gave a motherly look to Cullen. "I take it that Aislinn will be staying with the pack on a permanent basis?"

Cullen cleared his throat and, upon seeing Aislinn's uncomfortable stance with Sarah examining the mark on her shoulder, he pulled Sarah's hand away. "Aislinn has been told that she can stay as long as she wants. Anything more has yet to be discussed in detail."

Sarah crossed her arms and her tone adjusted to match the motherly look in her eyes. "You were behind her when you did that."

Cullen looked around to see how many people were witnessing the conversation and he watched Aislinn carefully. He had started to explain it to her but she just didn't seem to understand the significance and he was certain she wouldn't completely get it until she was dealing with it first hand. "This isn't the place to talk about that," he said and eyed the onlookers suggestively.

Sarah shook her head and then she looked over at Aislinn. "Are you okay with being in his rooms or do you think you might want rooms of your own at some point? I mean, he's only likely to get more aggressive and if he takes the play too much farther then you may end up stuck with him whether you like it or not." Then she looked at Cullen. "But if he's smart he'll do it by the book instead of taking things into his own hands." She looked back at Aislinn. "I know you probably don't get this right now. But if he gets out of control there won't be a way to stop him and the entire pack should be involved if it really does go that far."

Aislinn looked at Cullen and then at Sarah again. She was sounding more and more like his mother. Aislinn's brain was wheeling. Everyone seemed to be awfully concerned about this and she was starting to join them. The real problem being that the entire explanation was more than anyone was willing to say in detail and all the veiled information wasn't going to help. She looked over at Cullen. He looked concerned. She smiled at him. Hell, I haven't felt this good about someone ever. "No, I'm okay in his bed. As long as I'm wanted."

Sarah looked at Cullen then back to Aislinn. "Girl, if you are actually doubting whether or not he wants you there then I can think of a few elementary classes we give to the children that you need to sit in on. My concern is more that he doesn't seem to have a grip on where to draw the line." Cullen growled at her. "I am happy for you," she responded to the growl with a sincere tone. "Just be careful. And get around to making sure she knows what she's in for. I'm only half kidding about sticking her in one of the classrooms." Then she walked off shaking her head.

Cullen watched after her like a child who had just been scolded for doing something he knew he shouldn't have. "Well that went well."