

### Chapter 73

Aislinn could feel that he was trying to change the subject. He didn't want to mar what had just happened between them. She decided that she agreed and let him move on. "Oh, then why are you so amused by the idea? I just realized that we're going to have an awfully hard time lying to each other," she joked.

He smiled. "Do you intend to lie to me?"

"No, but we've built such a wonderful relationship on misunderstandings at this point. I'd hate to completely change the dynamic now," Aislinn said sarcastically.

"Too late. It appears as though you will know each and every time I say something stupid what I actually meant. No more excuses." He squeezed her tight.

She nuzzled against his arm. "So what happened to needing to set up a ceremony and now not being a good time?"

"Well, it kinda got away from me," he said honestly. "Maybe I made my wolf wait too long. Or maybe I just wanted you so badly I couldn't help myself."

Aislinn could feel the truth in what he was saying and was near tears of happiness that he really wanted her that badly. He hugged her closer and they lay there for a while just feeling how much they loved each other.

Cullen was still lodged firmly inside Aislinn when they heard the footsteps coming. He started growling a loud warning, praying that they wouldn't get caught quite this red handed.

"I don't think that's going to work," Aislinn said and felt Cullen's confusion and ego. She giggled.

"Are you really that full of yourself? What am I saying I can feel that you're that full of yourself." The footsteps were getting closer and Cullen increased his volume. "It's Keith," Aislinn said. "Last I checked he didn't care about your warnings. Why are you so concerned about it? Are we in that much trouble?"

Cullen grumbled. Now he was mostly annoyed at the interruption. "Trouble isn't the right word. But the elders won't be happy. Don't worry. I'll deal with it. How did you know it was Keith?"

"Yeah, how did you know it was me?" came a far too amused voice from directly behind them.

"Hard to explain. Go away," she said, voicing Cullen's feeling for the intrusion.

"I feel so unloved," Keith said. "You do know what this looks like don't you?" He walked around the two of them and then sat down on the toppled stone. *Www.novElworm.co(m)*

Aislinn growled at him and did her best to maneuver into a less exposed position.

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"Hey," Keith said in mock offense. "You're just lucky I came looking for you myself instead of sending an omega. I at least have the common courtesy to ask if this is going to be announced or if it's going to be hushed up until more appropriate arrangements can be made. Then again if I'm not wanted I can just head right back up to the cabin and-"

"Don't bother to finish," Cullen interrupted. "You're such a pain."

Keith smiled down at his friend. "Congratulations," he said in the most earnest tone Aislinn had ever heard out of the man.

"You have to be the most impossible person I have ever met," Aislinn said in exasperation. "You shift from bad standup comic to overbearing know it all to sentimental all in one breath. Is there a persona you don't make use of?"

Cullen started to laugh. "I was going to suggest that you get to know Sarah and Keith a bit better but you certainly seem to have Keith pegged." *wW@.mσ@éLwεRm.©Omm*

Keith raised his eyebrows. "And here I was trying to be nice. I guess I've learned my lesson. Be warned, kitten, you're fair game now." *wWw.noV@/w@()M.com*

Aislinn grumbled. "Is this really the time and place and situation for friendly banter?"

Cullen could sense her annoyance at the intrusion on their moment. A look at Keith and his friend stood up to make a polite exit. At least he knew when each different persona was appropriate. "I just needed to see if we would be headed back to the den before the funeral. I have to point out that there are quite a few people still missing. And I really should establish if this is to be public knowledge."

Cullen thought about it a moment. He didn't want to offend Aislinn by suggesting that they keep it a secret. But he thought that as far as the pack went, with everything that had happened the day before this wasn't the best way of handling his mating. Whatever his motivations had been. He was still the alpha and there was protocol to follow.

Aislinn nuzzled against him. "It'd probably be better to save the announcement for later," she said for him.

Cullen smiled and hugged her. She had caught his entire thought process. "Just make sure that people stay clear of the stones for a couple hours would ya?" he said to Keith.

Keith nodded. He started to walk off again, but stopped. "I suppose I should offer to make it official for you if you want."

Aislinn's mind drifted to the 'acknowledgement' part of the ceremony that Rissa had mentioned and then to Cullen's talk about lack of witnesses. He felt her unease at the suggestion. "No. Not yet. But thanks," he said. With that Keith headed back up to the cabin.