

Chapter 75

Cullen looked up to see her examining her arms and legs. He smiled, but had to look away. It was far too tempting a site. I'm going to have to arrange the ceremony soon. He knew he wasn't going to be able to control his wolf's need for her to the extent that he should. Everyone is going to know, he thought with concern.

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"I heard that," Aislinn said. "How much trouble are we really in?"

"You heard that?" Cullen's brow furrowed and he looked at her. He crossed his arms over his chest to remind himself to not touch her.

"Yeah," Aislinn said haltingly. "I thought that was normal."

"It is. When I intend for it. But I wasn't projecting." Cullen's voice was overly serious.

"Is it a problem?" Aislinn asked. Her beast retreated into the back of her mind, grudgingly giving way to the serious conversation.

"Not a problem exactly. Just strange. Is it something druids do?" Cullen asked, trying to make his voice less serious.

"I don't really know," Aislinn said and her mind drifted toward her grandmother again.

Cullen sighed sympathetically and walked up to her. She had been through far too much lately and he wasn't helping. "Mo piseagan," he said softly as he wrapped his arms around her. "I'm sorry," he said softly and hugged her close. "I wish I could give her back to you."

She rubbed her tears on his shoulder and then pushed him away. "I'll be okay. Eventually." Cullen could feel that she didn't want to think or talk about it. So he let it go. "Anyway," she said getting a grip on herself. "I guess if we can pick up on more than we should from each other we'll just have to get used to it."www.NoVeIlwórm.com

Cullen was struck by how strong she could be when she wanted to be. He could feel how much pain she was in over her grandmother's death. But that last statement didn't hold a hint of it. "Don't sound like it's such a burden," he teased.

She gave him a visually convincing fake smiled back. "We'll figure it out. When I was told 'bond' I didn't really know what it meant, until now. You know you and everyone else I've talked to have a nasty tendency to explain things to me with terms that you get and I don't. I never know what to ask more about." They went back to trying to get their clothes on. Aislinn pulled her jeans up and fiddled with the destroyed button and zipper. That helped to improve her mood as she thought about how he had torn her clothes off, literally. "Hey, you still didn't tell me why I'm back to normal."

"Okay, first," he laughed, "you're not back to 'normal.' You have three forms all of which are 'normal.' Watch who you say that too or you'll start a fight," he said in amusement. He was staring at his own jeans. The seams were pretty much gone. Really he was holding some pieces of what used to be jeans. There'd be no wearing them. He desperately wanted to make a pretense of decorum when he walked back into the cabin. Oh well. "I'm just going to have to take the pieces back. And as far as being in your human form right now, we had a quite pleasant nap."

He sounded so off-hand about it that Aislinn found it infuriating. Is it so impossible for someone to just give me a straight detailed answer? "Okay, but I was still hybrid," she said with excessive stress, "when I woke up this morning."

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He cocked an eyebrow at the thought he picked up on. In conjunction with the obvious frustration, he couldn't help but find her cute. He hadn't realized how frustrated she was getting. It implied that she was looking for a great deal more information than she had actually asked him about and he wondered who she was talking to. "Yeah, but how did you feel?" He returned smugly.

"I guess I was still pretty upset."

"You'll have to learn to control how much you feel. It's an over simplification of the real explanation. But emotion effects the change quite a bit. Really it's about who's in charge at any point in time. The beast or the human. It's like there's two voices in your head. The one who doesn't care much for logic or reason and just wants what it wants and the one who is patient and considering and can deal with what life throws at you and move on. When you start to let things get to you it makes it easier for the beast to have its way. Anger, lust," he said with a smirk, "even happiness. Anything in an extreme can let the beast have more control than might be appropriate. You can also call it to you when you need it. Anyway it happens there's a moment of conflict and submission. Where the two halves of you decide who gets to be in charge for the moment. Human and wolf or cat are pretty straight forward. But the hybrid, well he can sorta go either way. It all depends what the situation is."

Aislinn nodded seriously, obviously thinking about everything he said. "You'll have to give me some lessons I think. I kinda get it. But understanding the explanation and controlling or experiencing it I think will be two different things."

Cullen walked over to her and pulled the neck of her shirt over the bite he'd left. It would need to be cleaned. "I intended to give you some lessons. The bond will help. Keep that covered up for now. When it's healed a bit more it won't be so obvious." He smiled. It would scar pretty badly. He hadn't intended to be quite that thorough. But his wolf probably would have been worse if given the chance.

"What are we going to do? About telling the pack I mean."

"I'll have the arrangements set for us to have a mating ceremony." His smile broadened. "And for you to get a lesson on what exactly will happen with that as well. I don't know when it will be set for yet. Don't worry about it. There are still a number of problems waiting back at the den to be dealt with. We won't have the ability to have the ceremony until after we clean up the mess."

"So when everything is said and done do I go back to sitting in the library bored to tears," Aislinn said. "You know I'm going to need a job or something to do. I can't just sit around all the time waiting to have sex with you," she grinned at him and he grinned right back.

"You sure?" he teased. Cullen thought about it. "Well, there are any number of things you could do now that Rafe isn't a threat. But there are some limitations, seeing as you're mine. Liam probably won't let you wait tables," he added, reading her mind and smiling at her. Cullen nodded in the direction of the cabin. "We'll figure something out if you're determined to do something other than hang out at the den. Maybe you can help Sarah out. That would probably be the most fitting job for you."

They started walking toward the cabin. "I just don't want it to look like I'm not pulling my weight."

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"When we run into Keith again you should ask him what he thinks your job in the pack is now," Cullen smirked.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Aislinn asked in bemused concern. He chuckled at her and when they got to the cabin he opened the door for her.

They walked up the path to the cabin. To look around you'd never know that there had been a battle there the day before, save the bloody spots on the floor. Cullen had her by the hand as they walked into the front room. Aislinn hadn't actually looked around before. There had been too much else going through her head.