

Chapter 81

Cullen looked over at Aislinn several times. He was getting the strangest sensations from her. He knew that she was concentrating very hard on something. There was curiosity and sometimes a little fear. Every time he felt the fear start he reached out and touched her hand or leg. She would stir in her sleep a bit and then settle and the fear would fade away. He just felt like she needed him.

w w . m o v e t o w O r M . c o M

By the time they pulled into the private garage attached to the Madadh-Allaidh Saobhaidh Cullen's stomach was growling as was his wolf. The few times he had touched her, combined with Aislinn's scent in the enclosed space of the car was starting to get to his wolf no matter how annoyed his human half might have been.

As the others got out of the car and started slamming doors Aislinn was shaken awake. Gaven and Hagan were still holding their tongues but they could feel their mates nearby and they were doing their best to be patient.

Aislinn's mind was exhausted. It took her a moment to come to herself. She saw Cullen slam his door as he got out of the car and she sighed. She wondered how long he was going to be angry at her. She turned to get out of the car and found her door already opening for her. Cullen was standing there waiting with his hand out to her. The look on his face was a combination of still unhappy and getting over it.

She smiled at him wanly and took his hand as she slid from the car. He pulled her into his arms and buried his face in her hair, taking in her scent. There's nothing quite as frustrating as being annoyed with the one person who always seems to make you feel better, he thought at her.

She smiled and cuddled against him. I am sorry. Maybe next time I won't be quite as direct.

W w . n o (v) E l W o t o . c o (m)

Then you wouldn't be you, he smiled back as they parted. I'd rather honesty.

When they started kissing a concerned, "Ahem," caught their attention.

The kiss ended reluctantly. Cullen let his head fall back onto his shoulder and his neck cracked before he looked to see who had interrupted. The impression was obvious annoyance. Cullen knew that he was going to have to spend some time alone with Aislinn before dealing with the problems here and get something to eat or he'd just kill everyone and be done with it so he could get to the time with Aislinn and dinner.

W w . N o v t o l w o r m . c o d m

"I am sorry to interrupt, General" came the voice.

Cullen finally turned to see who it was and released Aislinn from his grip. Cullen nodded at Tad. He was Liam's middle son. He had been left behind with Liam to help with keeping a handle on things at the den. He was smaller than most men, but took after his father in his intelligence. He had brown hair and dark brown eyes like the rest of the Arnauk. But he tended to dress like a young punk for the most part, in his baggy pants, oversized t-shirts and backward ball caps. He was a good kid though.

Tad lowered his eyes and bowed his head submissively before looking up again. Cullen growled possessively when Tad's eyes fell on Aislinn and he smiled. Aislinn touched Cullen's arm. She felt him force his wolf under control as Tad's eyes went wide with uncertainty. "What do you need Tad?" Cullen asked in a strained voice.

"Uh, Dad, sent me to tell you that everyone's in the holding area in the basement and you need to come down as soon as possible." He was shifting uncomfortably. Tad was smart enough to see the danger he was in, even if he didn't know why exactly.

Cullen cleared his voice and took a deep breath. "Tell Liam that there's no way I can deal with that immediately. I'm going for dinner, some sleep and then I'll take care of the mess in the basement. If Liam is interested I'd say the next hour I'll be in the Taigh-Oèsda. You can take Gaven and Hagan down to join the others. I don't think they'll give you any trouble." Cullen indicated the two cowed men who were standing with Sarah and waiting.

Tad nodded, though he still looked confused. "There is one thing you should probably know. About an hour ago a caravan arrived from the Tarineach and our missing people were returned."

Gaven and Hagan suddenly looked relieved and excited. Cullen asked the question they were restraining themselves from shouting out. "Where are they all?"

Tad looked over at the two men sympathetically. He hadn't taken account of all the women who had been returned but he had seen the injuries on a number of them. "They're all downstairs with the others. There really wasn't any keeping them apart."

Cullen nodded. "Then you better get going. Sarah are you coming with us?

Dinner?"*W (w) W . t o (v) E l W O R m . c o m*

Sarah headed toward Cullen and Aislinn. "As long as you promise to keep the touchy feely stuff to a minimum."

Cullen threw Sarah a glare and took Aislinn's hand, dragging her along with him as he headed toward the Taigh-Oèsda and Tad took Gaven and Hagan to the holding area in the basement.

The atmosphere in the Taigh-Oèsda was more sober than usual. All the waiting staff were uncertain. They had heard about the body count and the rumors about Aislinn were disturbing. Everyone had only met her within the past month. She wasn't forthcoming about herself and Rissa had been the only one she seemed to get close to. When Cullen and Sarah came in with Aislinn the weres all stared suspiciously, looking for signs that Aislinn was doing something to the two pack alphas. The looks were far from subtle.

They sat down and a young woman, who Aislinn knew as Marta, came over with menus. She was nervous as she bowed her head to the three of them. She didn't know how to respond to Aislinn. No one did. She wasn't officially part of the pack as far as anyone knew. But her status with Cullen was uncontested and those who had tried to question the situation had been dealt with. No one knew if that qualified her for beta status or not. She had beaten a beta. But there was no formal challenge for her position. Meredith was still doing her job as beta and hadn't been replaced.