

153 Don't provoke him.

The sudden pull on the arms sent Arwen stumbling, her ankle twisting painfully as she tried to regain balance. Before she could scream, another man caught her other arm, his filthy grin just a few inches away from her face. 1

"Aren't you a little too feisty?" he mocked, his breath reeking with the strong stench of alcohol.

Arwen struggled desperately, disgusted with the proximity. Twisting and kicking, she tried to free herself, but their grips were too strong on her.

"Let me go!" her voice pierced the air, but it only amused them further.

"We wouldn't have caught you if we had plans of letting you go, darling," another man sneered, bringing his face uncomfortably close to hers.

Arwen's eyes closed in disgust. But she could hear them stepping closer. Panic took over her and she felt her body trembling. What mess have I gotten myself into?

"Enough playing hard to get," another one of them jeered, stepping closer, his tone dripping with mockery.

Her eyes flew open, and defiance flickered through her fear as she locked her gaze on the one who spoke the last. "There is no play here.



Let me go now or you won't like the consequences later."

"Consequences?" he repeated with a laugh, glancing at his companions. "Oh well, we will deal with those. Don't worry — we are more than capable of handling one feisty beauty like you. Besides, it's once in a lifetime chance. How can we miss it? Women like you are not easy to catch. We will definitely satisfy ourselves tonight, sweetheart, so that even if we die tomorrow, we have no regrets."

The other laughed crudely, their tone dripping with malice.

One of them grabbed Arwen's chin roughly, forcing her to look into his predatory eyes. "But maybe you should start begging. We like it when women beg for mercy, but we offer none."

Arwen's heart raced, her breaths coming out in uneven gasps. As the seconds passed, panic clawed her heart. She wanted to break free from them but their grip on her arms was too firm to escape. She tried to twist and loosen their hold, but her futile attempts only made them tighten their grip on her arms more, painfully.

As she struggled, one of the men leaned closer, brushing his hands against her cheek. "Smooth!" he muttered, then turned to the others with a leer. "Let me have her first. I want to —"



Before he could finish, the low growl of an engine suddenly cut through the air, shattering the tense atmosphere like a clap of thunder.

All the heads turned toward the sound as the sleek black car approached at an alarming speed, its headlights slicing through the darkness.

"What the —" one of the men muttered, loosening his hold on Arwen slightly as he took a wary step back.

The car screeched to a halt just a few feet away, and the distinctive bonnet mascot of 'The Spirit of Ecstasy' came into view.

Arwen's heart, which had been consumed by dread moments ago, eased slightly as the recognition dawned upon her. "Aiden!" she muttered under her breath, before closing her eyes in strange relief.

The driver's door was pushed open, and Aiden stepped out. His eyes at once focused on Arwen, as if searching her source of discomfort. And it didn't take him long to recognize it. His gaze got fixed on the pair of hands that were holding her rudely.

His fingers clenched as his expression grew cold, making his jaws appear sharper than they truly were. He didn't speak but his presence had the effect that made the men flinch under his



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domineering gaze.

"Who the hell are you?" one of them barked while trying to mask his unease.

But Aiden didn't reply. His cold gaze flicked to the one who had spoken, silencing him immediately. "Let her go," he demanded, his voice calm yet carrying a dangerous undertone that held the promise of the worst.

Arwen felt a cold shiver run down her spine. She had never seen him angry before, but she could tell that his fury was past his records, simmering just beneath the surface, controlled yet terrifying.

The men exchanged uneasy glances but didn't release her. One of them smirked, trying to feign bravado. "You think your word is a command that the world needs to follow? F*ck off! Don't disturb our time here," he said, ready to ignore and get back to Arwen when Aiden's cold, humorless chuckle rang in the air.

"I wasn't asking," he said before lunging forward with a speed and precision that none of them had expected. Before any of them would have reacted, Aiden's fist connected to one's jaw sending him sprawling to the ground.

The man holding Arwen's left arm panicked and tried to use her as a shield, but Aiden reacted

faster. Grabbing him by the collar, he twisted him away from her. With another swift and calculated movement, Aiden drove his knee into the thug's stomach, forcing him to release her with a grunt of pain.

Arwen stumbled but at the right minute, Aiden caught her from falling. "You fine?" he asked. And even though Arwen tried to hide the discomfort from her expression, it still appeared.

"I am fine," she said, and Aiden visibly held in his fury. *She was trying to hide her pain from him.*

Maybe Arwen read the unease on his expression. Not knowing how to ease him, she simply wrapped her arms around his neck and muttered, "But it would be fine if we let the doctor check on my legs. Can we leave, please?"

Aiden didn't ease but something shifted on his expression. He didn't reply, but the next second, he bent a little before scooping her up in his arms. Arwen looked at him but when saw how cold his expression was, she moved to rest her head on his shoulders.

Though he looked handsome even when furious, she preferred his calmer version.

As Aiden walked the two remaining men walked in front of him to block his path. "Where do you think you are leaving? After seeing you beat our

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brothers, do you think we would just let you leave?" one of the thugs snarled, attempting to stand his ground despite the fear flickering in his eyes.

Aiden's gaze didn't waver. His arms tightened around Arwen as he spoke, "Step aside. I won't repeat myself." His tone was eerily calm.

Before the two could respond, a third voice called out from behind them, "Don't provoke him. Let him go."

"But —"

"I said let him leave if you don't want to die."

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