

## Chapter 136

Aislinn helped Sarah make most of the arrangements this time and she seemed okay if not pleased with all the fuss. That had been one more area of her alpha duties she had taken to relatively well. She was the one who kept pointing out that the two of them wouldn't get a chance to do anything in a small way. With Makeda around doting on Aislinn and Sarah pretty much using her as the right hand the rest of the pack had stopped questioning Aislinn's rank and motivation. It was as if she had been part of the pack all along. She had decided to put off dealing with her druid half until after the mating was finished. She wanted to make sure she was accepted by the lycans before exploring anything that would make her seem more distinct than she already was. The only druidic thing she did was take a couple trips out to the reservation to speak with Brinah.

Cullen put the last of the papers aside and pushed back from his desk. He had been feeling a bit disappointed that there had been no phone calls today to interrupt his nice normal morning with more normal hassles. It would be a while before any of the standard day stuff would bother him again. He got up and headed out of his office. It was time for lunch and he wanted to eat with Aislinn. That meant tracking her down though.

The phone in his pocket started ringing. Cullen pulled it out of his pocket and read the caller ID. He smiled as he saw Cadifor's name and flipped up the phone. "Yeah?"

"Hey, is Aislinn still willing to take Jenna out to talk to Brennus?"

Cullen stopped in the middle of the hall. That wasn't what he had been expecting. The last thing he wanted to do two days before the mating ceremony was revisit the last time. "I take it that you finally got the books back?"

"For the most part. We got the books back, but the suspicion is that the government has already taken what they wanted out of it. This isn't over. The only reason I asked about the Jenna thing is because when we turned the books over to the Circle they seem to think there's something missing that the Feds insist they don't have. I'm leaning toward believing them. If only because they would have just copied the information and given us the original back. The Tairneach are the only ones who could have it if it's still out there."

Cullen growled unhappily.

"You're too overprotective of her," Cadifor said in annoyance. "Jenna isn't going to tell us anything until Aislinn takes her to Brennus. I guarantee that she'd been sitting on this card since the beginning. Just in case we went back on the arrangement."

"Fine," Cullen agreed. "I'll talk to her about it. But you need to arrange to have Jenna at the reservation like tomorrow so we can get this out of the way and overwith before the mating. I'm not going to have any more ceremonies. This is it."

Cadifor laughed. "Alright. I'll see you there tomorrow round noon."

"We'll be there. Make sure you have enough guards to deal with her in case she decides to go dire and try to kill people again."

"No problem. I don't think that will happen. But I'll have the men to deal with her if it does." There was silence for a minute. "Are we sure that Aislinn's going to be able to do this?"

"Yeah, remember Peter?" Cullen sighed.

"No. Who was Peter?"

*W(n)ôVéLwérM.Côm*

"Was," Cullen said sadly. "Peter was the only one of my guys that Rafe had gotten to who tried to tell me what was going on. Rafe tortured and killed his mate. When we all got back and things settled down Peter asked Aislinn to take him out and let him talk to Zoe. We thought it would help him. He had been so depressed since Zoe died. So we headed out and Aislinn managed to bring Zoe. Shortly after that Peter killed himself."

"Caoch," Cadifor said softly. "Well, it's not that surprising. Too bad for the loss of a good man."

Cullen let the air out of his lungs in a long slow breath. He had been in such a good mood. "Yeah." He paused. "Anyway, make sure Jenna brings that ring. I suppose it should be expected. But just make sure she has it. Aislinn finds it easier to do if there's something that was important to the soul she'd trying to contact."

"Consider it done. I'll see you tomorrow." Then the two men hung up.

\*\*\*

Aislinn sat in the infirmary in the sub-basement, down the hall from the gym. She hadn't been feeling well all month. But she was pretty sure she knew why. Rhona came back into the room smiling at her. Aislinn nodded back. She had figured. She sat there trying to decide how she felt about the situation. It wasn't like the entire pack didn't know they were already mated at this point. They were all playing along with the pretense that Cullen and Aislinn still needed the ceremony. But it really had come to the point where it was entirely appearances. Most everyone was grinning and laughing about it when they thought no one was listening.

*Www.(n)oveôwôrm.cœm*

The one time she had walked into the great room while Terrick had been trying to turn the fact that they had jumped mating protocol into an issue, she had heard several of the others telling him to can it. Aislinn had even talked to Sarah about canceling the whole ceremony thing. But Sarah said it was more a matter of pack unity at this point than whether or not it needed to be done. To some extent it was their penance for having gone about things on their own. Besides they hadn't had much luck with having a good time lately and now that problems were solved they needed a good outlet.

Rhona stood there looking at the wheels turning behind Aislinn's blue eyes. "This is a good thing," she said as if she was trying to convince Aislinn.

Aislinn snapped into the moment. "I know. Cullen's going to be trilled." He put so much effort into to it after all, she thought with some annoyance. Then suddenly another thought occurred to her. "How many," she said already wincing.

Rhona smiled again. She had Aislinn lean back and she pressed on her still relatively flat stomach. Then she pulled out a strange looking box with a speaker on it and a cord that lead to a kinda probey looking thing on the end. Rhona squirted some gooey stuff on Aislinn's stomach and then pressed the probe around. The speaker on the small box started making swishy noises. Then she moved the probe around to the other side of Aislinn's stomach. "As far as I can tell only two."

At first Aislinn was relieved. Everyone kept calling pregnancies around here liters and that implied like six puppies. Two sounded great compared to that. Then the statement sunk in. "What do you mean 'as far as you can tell'?"

"Well it's an imperfect science. In the end there might be more than two. But it looks like there are only the two. I'm only hearing two heartbeats."*wWW.NÔv©lwÔRm.Côm*

Aislinn felt a kind of pleased feeling come over her all of a sudden. "Those were heartbeats?"

Rhona nodded and her eyes sparkled. This was really the best part of her job. She loved delivering babies. "Do you want to hear it again?"

Aislinn nodded and Rhona ran the instrument over the gooey stuff on her stomach again. Aislinn felt her own heart flutter a bit when Rhona found the swishy noises again. "There's one," she said and then moved the probe. "There's the other one."

*wWW.NÔvè(ï)wÔr̃m.Co©*

A small smile played on Aislinn's lips. "I suppose we should really get through the mating ceremony then," she said with a guilty look.

Rhona laughed. "Yeah, that might be good." She shook her head. "If you come back tomorrow afternoon I might have the ultrasound fixed. Sorry, it's on the fritz at the moment. I'm getting it looked at sometime this afternoon."

"It's only been a month. What are you going to look at?"