

Chapter 45

"A very dangerous kind. Aislinn you need to get very far away from this man."

Aislinn felt guilty that she was scaring her grandmother so much. That shocked her out of her desire to learn something new. Aislinn had been missing for seven years and here she was on the phone leaving her grandmother with no uncertainty that she was in danger. She owed her grandmother more than that. "Grandma, I really am okay. I'm safer here than anywhere else. These people can protect me better than running away can."

There was more silence. "You have a great deal of faith in these people you're talking about. And you seem to have acquired a great deal of knowledge about things I worked very hard to make sure our family wouldn't have to be concerned about. Who are you with Aislinn?"

Cullen was watching her. His heart jumped a bit each time she professed how safe she was with him. Keith could read the pleasure his friend was getting out of this on his face. He shook his head. Keith had never thought he'd ever see Cullen this gone over a woman. Aislinn was searching for the right words to explain the situation without making matters worse. Hell if her grandmother knew about druids and was maybe possibly a druid herself, then who knows what she might know about the lycans.

Brinah could almost feel the pause in the line. "Okay, child, you don't have to tell me. I'll just have to trust you. If you insist on staying where you are and you have Rafe after you, then you'll need to do something about his abilities. I can't help you from here. You don't know anything about mixing compounds." It had been a long time since Brinah had done anything remotely druidic other than hide and keep secrets. But she knew she needed to get to her granddaughter somehow.

"Grandma if you think for one second that I'm going to bring you here then you're crazy." Aislinn sounded like the original defiant child.

"Don't you dare use that tone with me, Aislinn Brianne. I'm still your grandmother and you'll do as you're told. Whether you think it or not this is partially my fault. If you look at it from the point of view that if I had remained with the Circle you would have known how to do these things yourself or if I had done a better job with leaving they never would have found you."

"Grandma," she tried to interrupt.

"No, you're my granddaughter. You need help. Whoever is protecting you won't be able to do it alone. Not if Rafe is doing what it sounds like. And I would have thought that with your curious nature you would want to know more about all this anyway. I guarantee you that you won't find any of the things I can tell you in a book." Brinah paused and her voice softened. "Besides. It wasn't all bad. Over the years I've regretted not passing it on. Maybe it's time."

"Hold on a minute grandma." Aislinn covered the phone with her hand. She looked at Cullen and Keith with raised eyebrows. "Well, grandma seems to know something about what Rafe is able to do. She wants to help. But that would mean bringing her here. I don't know if I like that."

Keith looked at Cullen. "You said to find the Senach and get what information we could. But, I personally don't want to lead Rafe to the woman. Especially if he doesn't know about her. He seems to be taking them out one at a time. She'll be in danger if we go there. She'll be in danger if we bring her here. And that will be one more non-lycan in the den. You're call."

"I don't see much choice in this." He looked at Aislinn. "What can she do here that she can't do over the phone?"

"She said something about mixing compounds, alchemy, and that I couldn't do it with phone instruction. She'd have to be here. But it seems that she can do something about Rafe's mind stuff." Aislinn's brow was furrowed and she was shaking her head. "I didn't even know that she was... How could she have kept this secret all this time?"

Brinah was getting tired of the silence on the other end of the line. "Aislinn," she called into the phone.

Cullen nodded to Aislinn. "Tell her we'll come get her. But not to involve anyone else."

"I'm sorry grandma," Aislinn said into the phone. "I was making sure it would be all right. I guess they're going to come get you. But you can't tell anyone what is going on. Not mom or dad or anyone."

"Child I've been keeping this secret since long before you were born. I'm not about to start sharing now. But I would point out that your family loves and misses you. Some day you should do something about that."

Aislinn couldn't bear to answer that comment. She nearly started to cry. I miss them too, she thought. Cullen cut in again. "Tell her that a woman named Sarah Arnauk will come to get her. If your grandmother is close enough I'll send her tomorrow." Cullen looked over at Keith with one of his looks that sent his friend into action without the direct order. Keith got up and pulled out his phone to call Sarah.

"Grandma, um, a woman named Sarah Arnauk is going to come and get you. She'll be there tomorrow. So get everything ready. Okay?"

There was a long pause before Brinah answered. "Druids and lycans then. Well at least it's the Arnauk. No wonder you think you're safe where you are." Brinah said to her granddaughter with a knowing tone. "I guess I didn't do a very good job at protecting you," Brinah said apologetically.

Aislinn almost dropped the phone. "You know about that too?"

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"Alright grandma," Aislinn said softly. "I guess I'll see you soon. I love you."

"I love you too," Brinah replied and they hung up.

Aislinn stared at the phone for a short time before she put it down. Cullen came up behind her and put his arms around her. "Grandma knows about your pack."

"We've been around for a long time Aislinn. There are a lot of people who know about it. We just do a very good job of making sure that the only people who know are people who won't say anything," Cullen said, trying to be reassuring but feeling a bit uneasy by it. Apparently the Circle kept tabs on the Pack. "Aren't you the one who pointed out that you seem to have been headed in this direction your entire life."

"Yeah, I guess so," Aislinn turned in his arms and rubbed her face into his chest. She always felt better when he was holding her. "Can we get dinner now? Before the next disaster strikes. And I need to figure out what to tell my grandmother about you."

At that Keith started laughing. The first real good laugh he'd had in days it seemed. It felt good. "That's the funniest thing I've heard all day."

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Rafe stood in the middle of the room surrounded by the sounds of people in misery. The lycans he was holding captive were Arnauk and Tairneach alike. He walked over to one of the women who was chained naked, on her knees, with her arms behind her. She immediately began growling at him and he smiled at her unimpressed. He pulled a dagger from his belt and slowly ran the blade across the woman's naked breast, cutting deep. She refused to give him the pleasure of hearing her cry out. He looked at her with amusement. "Maybe if you continue to behave yourself you'll get lucky and I'll keep you for myself." She spit at him. "It's either that or I give you to the troops. Trust me, no matter how unpleasant you think I might be, it could be worse. Have you ever considered what it would be like to be bent over by a were-elephant-bear? Just think, an elephant's size, strength of both, and the claws of a bear. It's an amazing sight." He grinned again and held up the bloody dagger. "A present for your mate. To keep him docile."

Rafe sheathed the blade and took it with him as he left the room and headed for the stairs. He had several meetings to attend to. Jenna would be mated to him that evening. Then the rest of the Tairneach should fall in line. He figured that he could keep her around until he had complete control of the dogs and then he could give her to one the men who had been eyeing her. She was attractive. She just wasn't his type. But she'd make a decent prize for someone.

Rafe intended to put the army together and head for the Arnauk reservation within the week. He'd been cheated out of his birth right for long enough. The stones were going to be his. He couldn't believe that the Circle had left it under the control of lycans all this time. The Circle Council would have to acknowledge him once he had possession of the stones. Then he'd force them to finish his training. One way or another. All that left was Aislinn and he was about to resolve that as well. He opened the door to a room where a large lycan was sitting. "You haven't brought me what I asked for," he said sharply.

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"Cullen hasn't let the woman out of his sight since she arrived. I need more time."

"You have 24 hours." With that he threw the blood coated dagger on the table. "It's still warm. If you return without the girl again it won't be." Then Rafe slammed out of the room.WwW.ñ.v(ε)/wOrt.com

Jenna was pacing her room. She couldn't believe how uneasy she felt in her own house. Tears streaked down her cheeks continuously. She couldn't stop them. Since Rafe had killed her father everything in her died as well. Her ambition to rule had stemmed out of the fact that her father had never believed she was capable. She had just wanted to show him. Now he'd never see and Rafe wouldn't have been here to kill her father if she hadn't brought him here. Jenna couldn't understand what the hold Rafe had on her was. But it seemed to wearing off because she could definitely see more clearly since she'd watched Rafe kill her father. More tears streamed down her cheeks.

The lioness was watching her warily. The girl was good. Kara saw the wheels turning in her head. When Rafe was present the girl simpered and pleased. Then Rafe would leave and she would turn into a plotting galla. Kara had told Rafe about the quick change behavior. But he had his mind elsewhere and he was far too confident in his own abilities to see it as a threat. Kara resolved to keep a closer eye on Jenna.

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