

## Chapter 50

Brinah considered Sarah's tone during the little informative lecture as they got back in the elevator and wondered what she was missing. When they got out on the 13th floor the entire place was buzzing. Sarah explained to Brinah that the 13th floor was the main area of the den. She was telling Brinah about the different recreational rooms on the floor and was in the process of telling Brinah that Aislinn seemed to be spending a great deal of time in the library. Sarah felt like a tour guide. "I figure that Aislinn will be easier to find than Lord Arnauk. He's usually dealing with the latest conflict. Aislinn spends a lot of time reading." Brinah was smiling, eager to see her granddaughter.

When they walked into the library most of the crowd that had gathered for Aislinn and Cullen's scene had dispersed. There was one couple rutting in a back corner of the library. Keith was sitting in a large armchair near the door thumbing through a book with a devilish smile on his face. He had noted the time as Cullen and Aislinn had fallen asleep in the chair. But he wasn't about to be the one to interrupt. Not after the little argument that had preceded the show. When he saw Sarah and the elderly woman come in he jumped and ran to intercept.

Sarah looked at Keith with frustration as he tried to turn them both out of the library. Brinah stopped dead and turned on him. "Young man, I don't know who you are. But, you can stop what you're doing and explain yourself," she snapped.

Sarah glared at Keith. "What she said. But I would like to add, do you know where Aislinn or Cullen is?" She could tell from the look on his face that something was up.

"Uh, yeah," Keith fumbled. "Why don't you let me get them for you. Just wait in the great room. It'll only take a minute."

But Brinah caught sight of the back of Aislinn's head and refused to be ushered out of the room.

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Cullen's head was lounged back against the chair and his eyes were closed. His hand was trailing gentle petting strokes up and down Aislinn's spine. He didn't think he had ever been this comfortable in the whole of his life. Aislinn was still straddling him. He was still inside her and he was entirely unwilling to let her move. She had tried twice but he growled and pulled her back to himself. He was taking the afternoon off.

Aislinn had finally given up and had fallen asleep on his chest as he petted her. She was curled against him with her head snuggled securely against his shoulder and her arms folded against him at his waist so that she was almost hugging him. He held her tightly and listened to her breathing. He could barely make out what sounded almost like a purr each time she breathed. It had started when he began stroking her bare back. He was trying different patterns of stroking, trying to find one to make the sound louder. He didn't really understand why the little sound pleased him so much. But then again everything about her seemed to please him. He was listening intently to her and ignoring all else.

He had completely forgotten that they were expecting Aislinn's grandmother. At that moment he didn't care what Jenna or Rafe was up to. And he believed that he would be happy for the rest of his life if he could just stay there holding her and trying to make her purr.

The gruff throat clearing that caught his attention had him wanting to kill the owner of the voice. He ignored it, assuming that it was Keith. When someone tapped the hand he was stroking Aislinn's back with he got really mad. He opened his eyes to deliver one of his patented glares to the intruder only to find himself staring at an elderly looking woman with Aislinn's startling blue eyes.

Cullen took in a deep breath. This is probably not the best way to meet her family, he thought. When he started to move Aislinn rumbled her dislike of his change in position and he settled back down.

Brinah was obviously not happy. There were voices warring inside her head. One said that this was perfectly normal behavior for lycans. The next voice pointed out that Aislinn was not a lycan. Then there was the voice that said how much he appeared to adore her. That was countered with the fact that if he cared as much as he appeared to, by the look on his face and the way he held her, that he would not have put her in this kind of position. It had been a long time since Brinah had been exposed to this kind of behavior. She understood that this was the way lycan's behaved and if she had raised her daughter and granddaughter as druids then this type of thing would have been common place there as well. At the same time Aislinn had been raised human and this was not how humans behaved. She didn't know whether to admonish or accept. She settled on the one thing that would have been common to all three species. She softly asked Cullen a very simple question. She didn't want to wake Aislinn. Yet. "What exactly are your intentions toward my granddaughter young man?"

Keith thought he was going to die. The glares that Brinah was doling out were incredible. But the 'young man' thing was priceless. He was trying his best to muffle his laughter when Cullen started squirming. Brinah added, "You do that and you'll wake her up. Just answer my question."

Cullen felt trapped. He was pinned and being questioned by a girl's grandmother. How the hell did I get into this? He thought.

Aislinn lay perfectly still. She had no intention of facing her grandmother like this. There was no way she was opening her eyes until she figured a way out of this. Even if she had to play dead. She had never been this embarrassed in her entire life. She hoped that Cullen wouldn't take offense but she wouldn't be doing this again any time soon and that was all there was to it. She felt like she was going to be sick.

Brinah just stared at him expectantly. Finally Cullen decided that honesty would be best. All he had was the truth. "I don't know. We haven't gotten to that conversation yet."

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Brinah's eyes flared with anger. "Don't you think that's something you should have talked about before turning her into the afternoon entertainment?"

"That's not what it was like," he whispered back just as angry. He couldn't believe how much of Aislinn's attitude was being handed to him through her grandmother. Well now I know where she got it, he thought. Brinah's eyes were flashing and she talked to him as though he was child. He felt like a teenager who had just been caught having sex with his girlfriend by the girl's shotgun toting parent. He had human television to thank for that image.

"Well I'm going to tell you what it will be like." Brinah fumed. "I am going to step out that door and you are going to wake her up and get her dressed so that when I come back in I can say hello to my granddaughter with some semblance of decorum. And at some point very soon you and I are going to talk about what you think you are doing with her." Then Brinah turned on her heel and headed out the door. Sarah followed her out into the hall but was smart enough to know to not say anything. Brinah was talking to herself angrily the entire time they waited.

Cullen could tell that Aislinn was awake. Her breathing had changed repeatedly throughout the short conversation. "You can open your eyes now possum," he said softly.

When Aislinn looked up at him she had turned a brilliant beet red blush that made him smile. "I can't believe grandma found us like that. I think I'm going to die," she said aloud. And what do you mean you don't know what you're doing with me, she thought.

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Cullen shook his head. "I won't let you do that. Just put your clothes back on. It'll be fine. I'll take the heat." Cullen saw the concern in her eyes and wondered if it was entirely her grandmother that had caused it.

Aislinn jumped up and grabbed up her clothes from the various locations on the floor where they were thrown, blushing repeatedly as she accidentally made eye contact with various people about the library. When she and Cullen were fully dressed Cullen went over to the door and pulled it open. Brinah glared at him heavily and walked into the room headed straight for Aislinn. Before anything could be said she pulled Aislinn to herself in a hug that nearly forced all the air out of Aislinn's chest. After some time she pulled away and just stared at Aislinn a moment.

"Well, child, you certainly do look to be in one piece. I have missed you so much," she said and hugged Aislinn again.

"I missed you too grandma." Aislinn said still blushing. "I don't even know where to begin."*www.n0velworM.c0M*

"Well," Brinah smiled at her, "why don't you introduce me to your friend and then we'll go find Lord Arnauk. It's been a long time but I do remember some of my schooling and pack etiquette says I should really have gone to talk to him first, seeing as I'm in his house. Then we can do all the story telling that needs to be done." She was standing there staring at Aislinn unblinking, as though Aislinn might disappear. Cullen, Keith, and Sarah were impressed with Brinah's statement. They never would have expected her to know anything about pack life.

"Uh, okay, grandma this is Lord Arnauk," she said, indicating Cullen.

Brinah's eyes caught fire again. "Now, I definitely want to know what you think your intentions are," she said angrily.

Aislinn blushed again. "Grandma, it doesn't matter what his intentions are. Can't we just go sit down and talk about what we need to talk about. I don't think-" Cullen didn't like the way she said that it didn't matter. The terrible feeling that his wolf was wrong started to creep into his stomach again. Way to ruin an afternoon, he growled at himself.

Brinah interrupted Aislinn. "Child you can't possibly know what you're dealing with here. It's more important than you can possibly realize. As far as I'm concerned I came here to protect you and it looks as though I'm a bit late. Rafe and now this?"*www.n0velworM.c0M*

Keith was chuckling and Sarah was looking pained. Cullen for his part was completely bowled over by the fact that now he had two women who didn't seem to understand that when he was in the room they were supposed be intimidated, let him talk, and behave with subdued respect. He had never fully appreciated that luxury of his position until now as all the lycans in the room looked on. "Enough," he said with emphasis and managed to get the women's attention. Brinah's glare got much worse and she placed herself between Aislinn and Cullen. That was a big mistake. Cullen started to growl. His wolf was concerned that Brinah may try to take Aislinn away. As far as he knew Aislinn might actually go with her. Brinah was her grandmother and so far Aislinn hadn't said whether she intended to stay or not. But the look on her face when she called her grandmother and talked about her family was plain enough.