

## Chapter 68

Keith approached them tentatively. He could tell from the expressions and the way Aislinn was holding Brinah that he needed to be careful. He knelt next to Cullen. "You got hit hard. Are you able to make to the cabin on your own feet?"

Cullen didn't answer. He just stared at Aislinn's back.

"Alright," Keith said on a long tired breath. "I'll send someone over to get you back to the cabin. I know you haven't bothered to pay any real attention but you don't look like you should be conscious." He cleared his throat and looked at Aislinn's stooped form over Brinah's body. He lowered his voice, hoping he wouldn't upset Aislinn more. "Didn't Brinah say that she made something to help with healing people?"

Aislinn couldn't help but hear the conversation. Her ears seemed impossibly better than they had been before. She wished she could turn off all her senses. It was overwhelming. Without looking at them she grabbed the bag that Brinah had been carrying and shoved it toward them. Then went back to mourning over Brinah's body.

Keith took the bag with a sympathetic look at Aislinn's back. He opened it up and looked at the assortment of small bottles and jars. Some of them held left over reagents. But most of them were full of foul smelling liquids. He wasn't sure what exactly he was looking at. "Well," he said with a shrug. "What's the worst that could happen?" He picked one of the corked bottles out of the bag, popped the cork out of the bottle, and took a small sip from the bottle. A gentle cooling sensation seeped into his muscles and he felt a great deal more awake than he had felt previously. He tipped the bottle up and drank down the rest. His entire body began to tingle pleasantly. The scratches began to knit back together before their eyes.

He pocketed one of the full bottles, hating the fact that he was being so practical as he looked at Aislinn and Brinah. He figured that the stuff would be useful. But with Brinah dead they were going to have to figure out how to make it again on their own. He uncorked another of the small bottles and handed it to Cullen. "I hope this is the same stuff I just drank. It looks and smells the same. It's foul but it feels nice once it's down."

Cullen didn't respond at first. His eyes hadn't left Aislinn. Keith got the distinct impression that he was on his own for the rest of the evening. But one look at Rafe's dead form and he figured that Cullen had earned the evening off. He nudged the bottle in Cullen's hand and finally got his friend to drink the stuff before he left Cullen alone and took off with the bag to deal with the worst of the injuries and to figure out what to do with the large number of were-beasts that they had taken prisoner. It wasn't as if they had facilities to keep these guys captive.

Aislinn sat there, crying over Brinah, for what seemed like an eternity to Cullen. But he wasn't going anywhere. He figured he could wait. All around them the bodies were gathered and the battle was cleaned away. There were even omegas cleaning the broken jars from around the stone circle. They moved quietly, not wanting to disturb the angry looking alpha or Aislinn. Eventually Sarah approached Aislinn. The crying had stopped and now she was just stroking Brinah's hair gently and staring off into the woods.

Sarah crouched down next to Aislinn. She looked over at Cullen but was greeted with a blank expression. Sarah was tired and finding it difficult to be sympathetic, but forced her voice to be gentle when she spoke. "Aislinn, can you let us take Brinah with the others? You need some sleep. There will be a memorial to honor all the dead in a couple days and all the bodies will be burned."

Aislinn took one last look at her grandmother. "I want to be there when her body is prepared." Her voice was devoid of emotion.

"I'm sure that can be arranged. Can I get you to go up to the cabin now?" Sarah suggested and looked over at Cullen again.

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"Where can I sleep?" Aislinn asked.

Sarah's features took on an unsure and concerned look as her eyes met Cullen's. He didn't respond. "There are plenty of rooms. I don't think anyone is worried about assigned beds tonight. If you won't be sleeping with Cullen then I'm sure you could take any room on the main floor." Sarah watched Cullen's jaw tighten. Aislinn stood without looking at either of them and walked away toward the cabin.

Cullen rubbed his face with his hands and growled. His body wasn't nearly as painful as it had been but he still felt as though he was being torn apart. He stood to follow Aislinn and a couple omegas instantly appeared to try and help him. He waved them off angrily. He wasn't about to let Aislinn see him weak right now. But, he didn't want to let her out of his sight. He limped along after her with the concerned omegas cowering behind.

Sarah caught up and grabbed his arm and pulled him to a stop. The glare that he level on her would have sent most lycans to bowing and scraping. Or at the very least another lycan would have released his arm. But Sarah had known him too long and wasn't giving way. "What the hell?" she asked.

Cullen wrenched his arm away. "What do you think?"

"I think you haven't bothered to say the two things that might magically fix the entire situation. I think men are morons and you Lord Arnauk are no exception," Sarah growled at him in frustration. Ww.n@velw@rm.c0m

"Difficult to say anything when she tells me to stop and not touch her or talk to her," he growled back.

"And of course you listened." Sarah said incredulously. "Because you always listen when someone tells you what to do. By all the Gods I need to figure out what she says and how she says it." wWw.n@velWorm.c0m

"So how do you think I should fix this, oh magic guru," Cullen said sarcastically, still glaring and snarling. But his mind was grasping for anything that might work and rid him of his uncertainty. wWw.n@velWorm.c0m

Sarah leveled her tone. She could hear how much he was hurting. "Tell her that you're sorry and that you love her," she said simply. Then she walked away.

Cullen sent the omegas off and hurried after Aislinn, following her scent through the cabin to find what room she went to. He was just grateful she hadn't decided to run off again. He stood outside the door to the room aching to go inside. He knocked, but there was no answer. A few lycans passing by were trying to ignore their alpha politely. He tried the door and found it locked. So he knocked again. "Aislinn I need to talk to you," he said through the door. There was no answer and there were a few more people pretending not to stare. Cullen's pride was getting to him and he couldn't take doing this in front of the pack, not after the display he had made of himself over her already. He growled and headed down the hall, up the stairs, and went to his room.

Aislinn stood on the other side of the door listening to his footsteps retreat down the hall. She went over to the bed and laid down. She was trying desperately to not feel any more. All she wanted was to be in his arms, but she didn't think she could handle leaving if she gave in now and spoke with him. She figured that he wanted to explain, tell her why he didn't think she should stay with him, how it would be better for her to leave. She didn't care what his reasons were. She kicked the blankets back and then pulled them over herself.

Aislinn didn't sleep very well. Every time her eyes closed she was plagued with nightmares. She dreamt about Rafe, about Jenna, about her grandmother, but the worst part was that in all the dreams she was alone. She wished she had never met Cullen. Maybe she wouldn't feel the loneliness so badly if he hadn't shown her what it would be like to be with people again.

Cullen lay awake as well. He was afraid that she'd take off and he wouldn't get a chance to do anything about it. He was pissed. That was easier than being hurt. She over reacted. It's her own fault for taking off like she did. She won't even let me explain. And how dense does the woman have to be that she can't see what I did to get her back. Cullen's mind reeled all night long.