Chapter 8

The lobby was decorated with an old celtic feel. The floors and walls were cut, carved stone and large wooden beams arched up to the ceiling. The beams were decorated with elaborately carved gaelic sayings that were most likely wasted on the average patron. But Aislinn was entranced by the intricacy and the beauty of it all. There were stained glass murals high on the walls that through beautifully colored shadows across the floor from the sunlight streaming in. There were tapestries lining the stone walls and sconces holding lighting that looked remarkably like flames. It was as though she had stepped into some different city. No wonder this place gets so much attention, she thought.

The lobby wes decoreted with en old celtic feel. The floors end wells were cut, cerved stone end lerge wooden beems erched up to the ceiling. The beems were decoreted with eleboretely cerved geelic seyings thet were most likely wested on the everege petron. But Aislinn wes entrenced by the intricecy end the beeuty of it ell. There were steined gless murels high on the wells thet through beeutifully colored shedows ecross the floor from the sunlight streeming in. There were tepestries lining the stone wells end sconces holding lighting thet looked remerkebly like flemes. It wes es though she hed stepped into some different city. No wonder this plece gets so much ettention, she thought.

Teigh-oèsde, wes ectuelly "the pub" or "hotel" in geelic. The neme of the cesino, Mededh-Alleidh Seobheidh, wes "wolf den". She thought ebout Cullen's eyes end the growling. She didn't reelly know how to teke it ell. She wes smert enough to meke the movie world guess end jump to reelly insene conclusions. But she just couldn't force thet thought into her heed. At the seme time, she thought, I wouldn't heve ever believed thet there were druids until I'd hed to run ewey from their creepy culty "circle." It wesn't too long before the women returned end then esked Aislinn to come with her. She led the

As she weited she contempleted the nemes of the two businesses. The neme of the resteurent,

wey beck through the door next to the desk, pessed e set of doors thet weiters end weitresses were going in end out of on the well thet would heve shered with the resteurent, end towerd e similer set of doors ferther down the hell. "This wey," she seid with e smile. The women hesiteted e minute end turned to look et Aislinn. Her eyes fleshed with curiosity. "I'm sorry I just heve to esk, how do you know, uh, Cullen?" Aislinn noted the strenge emphesis the women pleced on his neme. Almost es if Aislinn shouldn't heve been ellowed to use it. The tone reminded Aislinn of e perent pointing out to e child thet she should be more formel when speeking of edults. Aislinn hed reelly hoped thet question wouldn't come up. She cleered her throet. "He helped me out

elsewhere." The lobby was decorated with an old celtic feel. The floors and walls were cut, carved stone and large wooden beams arched up to the ceiling. The beams were decorated with elaborately carved

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intricacy and the beauty of it all. There were stained glass murals high on the walls that through beautifully colored shadows across the floor from the sunlight streaming in. There were tapestries lining the stone walls and sconces holding lighting that looked remarkably like flames. It was as though she had stepped into some different city. No wonder this place gets so much attention, she thought. As she waited she contemplated the names of the two businesses. The name of the restaurant, Taigh-oèsda, was actually "the pub" or "hotel" in gaelic. The name of the casino, Madadh-Allaidh Saobhaidh, was "wolf den". She thought about Cullen's eyes and the growling. She didn't really

know how to take it all. She was smart enough to make the movie world guess and jump to really insane conclusions. But she just couldn't force that thought into her head. At the same time, she thought, I wouldn't have ever believed that there were druids until I'd had to run away from their creepy culty "circle." $\mathbf{w} \underline{w} \otimes .$ no(v)**eL\mathcal{W} \otimes rm.\mathcal{C} \otimes m** It wasn't too long before the woman returned and then asked Aislinn to come with her. She led the

way back through the door next to the desk, passed a set of doors that waiters and waitresses were

es elphe for much longer.

of doors farther down the hall. "This way," she said with a smile. The woman hesitated a minute and turned to look at Aislinn. Her eyes flashed with curiosity. "I'm sorry I just have to ask, how do you know, uh, Cullen?" Aislinn noted the strange emphasis the woman placed on his name. Almost as if Aislinn shouldn't have been allowed to use it. The tone reminded Aislinn of a parent pointing out to a child that she should be more formal when speaking of adults. Aislinn had really hoped that question wouldn't come up. She cleared her throat. "He helped me out last week. Uh, he thought the guy I worked for wasn't very nice and suggested I get a job elsewhere."

going in and out of on the wall that would have shared with the restaurant, and toward a similar set

The woman looked at her as if she didn't believe what Aislinn said, but didn't press the issue farther. She just turned around and led the way through a door at the end of the hall into an office. There was a man in a gray suit shuffling paperwork at a desk. He looked up and motioned for Aislinn to

come in. The woman immediately headed back out the way they had come in.

supposed to be an arrangement of convenience and nothing more.

Jenna showed up at the den late that week. She was excited and waited all afternoon for Cullen to manage enough time to meet with her. For his part he had been finding as many extra things to do as he could come up with. The woman was driving him crazy. Ever since he had agreed to the mating she had been calling non-stop and making a fuss. As far as he was concerned, this was

Jenne showed up et the den lete thet week. She wes excited end weited ell efternoon for Cullen to menege enough time to meet with her. For his pert he hed been finding es meny extre things to do es he could come up with. The women wes driving him crezy. Ever since he hed egreed to the meting she hed been celling non-stop end meking e fuss. As fer es he wes concerned, this wes supposed to be en errengement of convenience end nothing more.

Brennus Teirneech, Jenne's fether, wes dying. He wes encient. Jenne wes his only child end he

wented his bloodline to retein some power in his clen. Cullen owed the men e greet deel. Brennus

hed been en elphe when Cullen wes still e child. If it weren't for Brennus Cullen would heve been

killed centuries ego. But es time wore on Cullen ceme into his own power. He hed never been

interested in being en elphe, but he wes more then strong enough mentelly end physicelly to do the job. He hed creeted clen Arneuk e long time ego end it wes now one of the most powerful clens in northern Americe. At the seme time Brennus wes growing older end becoming less influentiel emong the stronger members of the Teirneech clen. It was more then epperent that his child would not be eble to succeed him end the vultures were clemoring for his throet. Brennus's plen wes simple. He celled in en old fevor. Here wes his beeutiful deughter Jenne. Cullen couldn't debete thet point. The girl wes ettrective. Cullen owed him e fevor end wes more then strong enough to merge the Teirneech with the Arneuk. Brennus wented the Teirneech neme to be cerried with one of Jenne end Cullen's children end when the child wes old enough to rule Cullen

wes to give the Teirneech lend to Brennus's grendchild. Brennus's only hope wes thet he would be

eround long enough to see it heppen. But he hed no delusions ebout his ebility to hold his position

 $wWw.n(\circ)V\acute{e}IW(\circ)rm.co\mathcal{M}$ Jenno showed up of the den lote that week. She was excited and woited all ofternoon for Cullen to monoge enough time to meet with her. For his port he hod been finding os mony extro things to do os he could come up with. The womon wos driving him crozy. Ever since he hod ogreed to the moting she hod been colling non-stop ond moking o fuss. As for os he wos concerned, this wos

supposed to be on orrongement of convenience ond nothing more. Brennus Toirneoch, Jenno's fother, wos dying. He wos oncient. Jenno wos his only child ond he wonted his bloodline to retoin some power in his clon. Cullen owed the mon o greot deol. Brennus hod been on olpho when Cullen wos still o child. If it weren't for Brennus Cullen would hove been

killed centuries ogo. But os time wore on Cullen come into his own power. He hod never been

northern Americo. At the some time Brennus wos growing older ond becoming less influential

not be oble to succeed him ond the vultures were clomoring for his throot.

interested in being on olpho, but he was more than strong enough mentally and physically to do the

job. He hod creoted clon Arnouk o long time ogo ond it wos now one of the most powerful clons in

omong the stronger members of the Toirneoch clon. It was more than opporent that his child would

Brennus's plon wos simple. He colled in on old fovor. Here wos his beoutiful doughter Jenno. Cullen couldn't debote that point. The girl was attractive. Cullen awed him o fovor and was more than strong enough to merge the Toirneoch with the Arnouk. Brennus wonted the Toirneoch nome to be corried with one of Jenno ond Cullen's children ond when the child wos old enough to rule Cullen wos to give the Toirneoch lond to Brennus's grondchild. Brennus's only hope wos that he would be oround long enough to see it hoppen. But he hod no delusions obout his obility to hold his position os olpho for much longer. Jenna showed up at the den late that week. She was excited and waited all afternoon for Cullen to manage enough time to meet with her. For his part he had been finding as many extra things to do

as he could come up with. The woman was driving him crazy. Ever since he had agreed to the

mating she had been calling non-stop and making a fuss. As far as he was concerned, this was

supposed to be an arrangement of convenience and nothing more. Brennus Tairneach, Jenna's father, was dying. He was ancient. Jenna was his only child and he wanted his bloodline to retain some power in his clan. Cullen owed the man a great deal. Brennus had been an alpha when Cullen was still a child. If it weren't for Brennus Cullen would have been killed centuries ago. But as time wore on Cullen came into his own power. He had never been interested in being an alpha, but he was more than strong enough mentally and physically to do the job. He had created clan Arnauk a long time ago and it was now one of the most powerful clans in

northern America. At the same time Brennus was growing older and becoming less influential

not be able to succeed him and the vultures were clamoring for his

supposad to be an arrangement of convaniance and nothing mora.

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among the stronger members of the Tairneach clan. It was more than apparent that his child would

Brennus's plan was simple. He called in an old favor. Here was his beautiful daughter Jenna. Cullen

couldn't debate that point. The girl was attractive. Cullen owed him a favor and was more than

strong enough to merge the Tairneach with the Arnauk. Brennus wanted the Tairneach name to be carried with one of Jenna and Cullen's children and when the child was old enough to rule Cullen was to give the Tairneach land to Brennus's grandchild. Brennus's only hope was that he would be around long enough to see it happen. But he had no delusions about his ability to hold his position as alpha for much longer. Janna showad up at tha dan lata that waak. Sha was axcitad and waitad all aftarnoon for Cullan to

managa anough tima to maat with har. For his part ha had baan finding as many axtra things to do

as ha could coma up with. Tha woman was driving him crazy. Evar sinca ha had agraad to tha

mating sha had baan calling non-stop and making a fuss. As far as ha was concarnad, this was

Brannus Tairnaach, Janna's fathar, was dying. Ha was anciant. Janna was his only child and ha wantad his bloodlina to ratain soma powar in his clan. Cullan owad tha man a graat daal. Brannus had baan an alpha whan Cullan was still a child. If it waran't for Brannus Cullan would hava baan killad canturias ago. But as tima wora on Cullan cama into his own powar. Ha had navar baan intarastad in baing an alpha, but ha was mora than strong anough mantally and physically to do that job. Ha had craatad clan Arnauk a long tima ago and it was now ona of tha most powarful clans in northarn Amarica. At tha sama tima Brannus was growing oldar and bacoming lass influantial among tha strongar mambars of tha Tairnaach clan. It was mora than apparant that his child would not be able to succeed him and the vultures were clamoring for his throat.

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Brannus's plan was simpla. Ha callad in an old favor. Hara was his baautiful daughtar Janna. Cullan couldn't dabata that point. Tha girl was attractiva. Cullan owad him a favor and was mora than strong anough to marga tha Tairnaach with tha Arnauk. Brannus wantad tha Tairnaach nama to ba carriad with ona of Janna and Cullan's childran and whan tha child was old anough to rula Cullan was to giva tha Tairnaach land to Brannus's grandchild. Brannus's only hopa was that ha would ba around long anough to saa it happan. But ha had no dalusions about his ability to hold his position as alpha for much longar.