

## Chapter 9

When Cullen had received word that Brennus wanted to speak with him Cullen had been surprised but happily went to visit the man. Initially Cullen had refused Brennu's request. But had noted the political turmoil in Tairneach territory. There were a number of lycans that were capable of overthrowing Brennus. The only thing keeping the situation from becoming volatile was a small group of loyalists who were backing Brennus. But their backing was contingent on Brennus finding a suitable mate for Jenna so that they knew, if a challenge for his position were to happen, there would be someone able to take his place who wouldn't punish them for their loyalty to Brennus. Cullen had left that initial meeting feeling bad for Brennus and guilty for not wanting the man's daughter.

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Cullen had done everything he could to help back Brennus but as the months wore on Brennus became weaker and Jenna was no closer to finding an alpha mate than she had been when Brennus had first summoned Cullen back at the beginning. Finally Brennus asked again and this time Cullen had been unable to refuse. He couldn't handle the idea of the once strong alpha begging for anything. Cullen owed the men too much and had too much respect for him to refuse.

Besides, he reasoned that if he hadn't found a true mate by now it was entirely likely he would never find one. Cullen had never put much stock in the idea of a 'true mate' anyway. He had always assumed that when he wanted a family he'd pick a woman and mate with her and have a family. He had recently been thinking about it anyway. All of his close friends had gone that path long ago. Raneid had two sons, Keith had a daughter, Shona had grandchildren already. Jenna was attractive enough. And if he mated with her then he could take control of the Tairneach problem and not have to worry about his border.

He set at his desk, rubbed his face in his hands and tried to not feel like his life was ending. Technically he should have been thrilled by this. A beautiful wife and an unchallenged addition to his clan holdings.

The truth was that a large part of the final decision involved the problem of who was most likely to become Tairneach alpha if he didn't. Gregorius was the best candidate. He was also the most likely man amongst the Tairneach to decide that he needed more territory and go after it. With the constant trouble to the south the last thing the Arnauk needed was to lose their strongest ally. Not to mention that Brennus may have been dying but the pack itself was still as strong as ever. The wrong men in charge of that pack could mean a great deal of trouble. So between the fact that there was no reason for Cullen to not want to mate with Jenna and the fact that he would be protecting the Arnauk in the process, he felt obligated to do it.

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There was another knock on his office door. Cullen looked up to see a blonde head poking through the cracked door. "Any chance you're going to be able to talk soon?"

Good, she thought, he may not like it but at least he had the right answer and maybe he's not as immune to my charms as I thought. There's got to be a man in the general somewhere. "At that point," she cooed and bent closer to him, giving him a delicious view of her cleavage. The pink blouse was low cut enough that Cullen could just see the tops of her delicate, pink areola. She reached out and ran her fingers along the side of his face and down to his chest, "maybe you could offer to let me stay here with you until the ceremony." She leaned down as her hand continued to travel along his chest, over his stomach, and toward his lap.

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Cullen suddenly had a flash in his mind of blue eyes, brown hair, and an electrical touch that set his wolf screaming for release and pushed Jenna's hand away. "If you want the mating plans taken care of and the time you made me promise to give you afterward then you'll get yourself home and deal with your end. I can't afford distractions. Especially if we're moving things forward." His tone was curt and he was rewarded with a pouty, annoyed look on Jenna's face. Then he reached down and moved her foot out of his lap.~~~~~Wfl0pE1W0rmm.c0m

"Fine," she answered. The soothing vixen tone dropped from her voice. "If you insist." She started to walk out, but turned and looked back at him. "So is this how it's going to be then?" She tilted her head haughtily and raised her eyebrows in a look that was cooling and Cullen though entirely unattractive on her pretty face. The girl reminded him far too much of her mother.

He sighed heavily and set back in his chair, meeting his gaze with an equally cold stare. "How what's going to be?"

"Us. Are you going to hate me forever for getting stuck with me?"

Cullen stared at her measuringly. Her tone said that she wasn't hurt by the idea just curious. "Hate is too strong a word. Last I checked you didn't want to be doing this either."

"Maybe not but I'm at least doing my best to make do. You on the other hand are being a complete bastard. If you think that I'm going to spend my young, energetic life attached to a guy who won't give me the time of day and not look elsewhere for company then you're sorely mistaken." Jenna's eyes held a strong warning as she spoke.

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