

## Chapter 111

Cadifor considered the appearance they were trying to give. "Would it be appropriate to invite Senach to the mating? The female is your bloodline."

Nora smiled again. "I'll provide you with a list of those who might be appropriate." She looked at the unhappy look on Cullen's face. But he wasn't arguing. "I'll make sure that they will all be people who can either be of use to Aislinn or will be helpful in the fight."

ww@.n@v)Elw@Rm.cOm

Cullen growled. "I thought druids didn't fight."

"We don't start fights. But we long ago arranged to be capable of defending ourselves. You are all proof of that."

\*\*\*

Jenna skipped up the steps to the front door of her home early that morning without a single sign of the fact that she'd had no sleep. The door opened for her and her heels clicked on the marble, echoing down the hallway as she headed for the basement.

Maon came down the main stairwell. He was rubbing sleep out of his eyes. He'd left standing orders to notify him the instant Jenna arrived. He was only half dressed as he descended the stairs to follow her to the basement.

WW(w).ÑOveLwo@m.co(m)

Jenna spared him a smoldering look. If he had done as well as he said then she would give him his reward in the middle of the great room if he wanted. A guard opened the door to the basement for her and she headed into the basement with a gleam in her eyes.

There were three men sitting about the basement. Two of them were in chains. Jenna looked at Maon in confusion. "I thought you said that it was ready. What is this?"WW@.noveLwOrM.co(m)

Maon nodded. "It is ready. But it took several volunteers to get it right. The first attempt," Maon pointed to a boy who was sitting in the corner in several layers of chains. "He didn't exactly volunteer. It worked, but at the sacrifice of intellect. I didn't think you'd want that. So I put them back to work. They made some adjustments and Raol tried the next batch. You promise a man that he'll gain strength better than any current alpha and he'll volunteer for anything. Raol was better. But his coordination wasn't what it should be and he's not happy about that. It took six men to get him down here. He's not happy." Maon signaled the third man. He was waiting for his turn. "Devon, however, is still fine, so far."

Devon approached them and bowed his head to Jenna and Maon. "Mistress," he said shakily.

"What's wrong? What do you mean so far?" Jenna said to Maon without taking her eyes off Devon.

"It was exceedingly painful. He writhed for hours. And the change itself is painful enough to cause screaming and a recovery time after it's done. He's still recovering. The druids said that it's a flaw they have no solution for. There's a price for what we're asking them to do."

"Rafe managed a muin polar bear lion thing without recovery time," Jenna snarled. "I want to see," she demanded.

Devon swallowed. He didn't want to go through that again. The pain was almost enough to cause him to never wish to change to any lycan form again.

"Now," Jenna demanded.

Maon gave him a look that reinforced Jenna's command and Devon stepped back from the two of them. As he began to change the cracking of bones was audible and his screams filled the room. The boy in the corner of the room stood up on his hands and knees and followed his lead like an agitated pet dog following its master. The two men howled in agony as their bodies rearranged. The sickening sounds of cracking bodies echoed up the stairs and people on the floor above them stared at each other in horror as they listened to the results of their mighty alpha's experiment.

The change took far longer than any change Jenna had ever witnessed. Even children on their first attempt could manage better. The men writhed on the floor. Tears gathered in the corners of their eyes and when they finally completed the shift they lay whimpering on the cold wooden panels of the floor trembling.

Jenna smiled at the result. Although the process had sickened her the end product was perfect. The boy in the corner had turned into a wolf three times larger both in height and width than any lycan she had ever seen.

He snarled and growled when she approached and Maon held her back. "There's a reason he's chained. Though he does seem to do as Devon tells him. There must be some kind of primal connection."

Jenna walked over to Devon. He had propped himself against the wall. He was in his hybrid form. He found that it was less painful than shifting all the way to his wolf. Sitting against the wall Devon was still shoulder high on Jenna. If he stood she would only come to his chest. He was built stockier than a standard lycan and he was more barrel-chested. He had virtually no neck; the muscles were thicker. He was panting and fighting off sharp pains that still shot through him. But he was definitely larger, stronger, and more formidable than any lycan she had ever seen. She stared into his eyes with excitement.

Jenna ran a hand across his check and then leaned in and kissed his muzzle. "You're perfect," she said softly as she stared into his swirling amber eyes. She stood up and turned to Maon. "Take me to the druids."

He led her upstairs to the room that he had put the druids in. It smelled foul, like burning flesh. Jenna nearly gagged as she entered the room. She sneered and put her hand over her face. Jacob and the others were seated in chairs, hunched over in exhaustion. Maon had ordered them to make as much of the stuff as they could and they had not been allowed to sleep or stop all night. They were so tired that Jenna and Maon's entrance didn't encourage them to budge even at risk of another beating.

"Ah," Jenna said sympathetically. She was too happy about the fact that she was so close to be angry right now. "It seems that my mad scientists need a nap. The first one to tell me how Rafe was able to manage his transformation without being in all the pain that the poor men in the basement are in gets to go to bed."Ww@.Nov@LwOrMm.Com

The druids looked at each other. They were truly beyond caring. Jacob sat back in his chair and called over to the woman on the far side of the room. She was in worse shape than the men. She was older and hadn't adjusted to their situation as well. "Cerdwyn," Jacob said. She looked up and Jenna could see the tear stains on her face. "Tell her, Cerdwyn. She'll let you go to bed." The resignation in his voice and the look on the woman's face almost plucked at what was left of Jenna's conscience.