Chapter 155

The obvious concern in Cullen's voice at the last piece of information had everyone in the room uncomfortable. Makeda approached Cullen from the corner of the room where she had been standing apart from the situation and placed a comforting hand on his shoulder. "I'm sure they will all be fine," she softly reassured.

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As the group mulled over what Cullen had said, understanding why he had been dubious about the information's usefulness, one of Rollo's men cleared his throat. "Everyone keeps talking about the 'government facility' that was broken into. Any chance it was an asylum?"

Considering stares were exchanged by Cadifor and Rollo. Cullen was ready to kick himself. He was so worried about the last part of the vision and so used to Aislinn's information not being important until it was too late, that he didn't even consider the possibility that the 'government facility' might be the asylum in Aislinn's dream.

Cadifor turned his intense stare back to Cullen. "So we need all the details about the part of the vision concerning this asylum."

Cullen shook his head. "There isn't any more than that. If the asylum that was in Aislinn's vision is

the facility that was broken into, then I would say that the real problem with that situation is that we're on the wrong track. Whoever broke in there wasn't after the weres, they were after this girl that Aislinn saw. Maybe the weres were collateral. Allowed to escape to distract from the real purpose of the break in."

Rollo went back to tapping his large hand on the table. "So we need to consider one more thing in

addition to everything else."

Maybe not, Cadifor suggested. "I have to wonder if the reason our meeting was interrupted was

because someone doesn't want the Circle and the Council jointly exploring whatever happened at the facility. Everything at the moment points to the NSA."

Rollo shook his head. "Why would the NSA break into their own facility?"

"No," Cullen interrupted. "They didn't break into their own facility. Someone else broke in. A faction that we're not currently seeing."

Cadifor and Rollo both gave Cullen a confused and dubious stare that he may have found humorous had the situation been different. $\mathbf{W}_{WW.m}\boldsymbol{\sigma}_{V}\mathbf{E}\ell w_{0}\mathbf{r}_{m}.$ (c)om

"Just consider," Cullen continued, trying to put his thoughts in order as he spoke. "They had

someone in custody that we didn't know about. The only reason we got involved was because one of our problems got out of the same place that this girl was being held in. From all the involvement we've had with the Circle recently, we know that they wouldn't attempt a break in. If one of theirs was captive, then they would have waited for the Fates to play out the situation. And from what we could tell from our government contacts when dealing with Aislinn's heritage, the government

could tell from our government contacts when dealing with Aislinn's heritage, the government doesn't know about the Circle. So whoever the girl was must have been important to someone else. But who else could be in play in this situation? And the real question would be, why do they not want the Circle and the Council comparing notes. Someone out there knows about us, even though we don't know about them. Not inconceivable, considering that the druids were in that spot until recently. I have to wonder how many weird groups are out there keeping tabs on us that we don't apparently know about."

"Okay," Rollo responded. "Not a completely outrageous theory, but still a bit of a stretch. We still have too many questions. Why do we even care about this girl? Our original intent was merely to get

our own escapes under control before the human populous gets a few too many clues as to our existence."

"I can't tell you that," Cullen said sitting back in his chair.

Cadifor breathed heavily and sat down in his own chair. "I would move on and say that we have

more important matters to deal with. But, Rollo," he added with emphasis, "we have learned that

disregarding Aislinn's insight ends up being a bad idea in the end. We may not know what this girl has to do with anything yet. But we should probably find out."

"Cadifor, if any other man suggested it, I may ignore him. I suppose it wouldn't hurt anything to look into it. But not at the expense of any of the other things that need done. First we need to put things

"We could be playing right into the hands of whoever set this up," Cadifor answered.

"I think we're going to have to risk that."

* * * *

If death had a feeling, this would be it, Aislinn thought as the cold swirled around her. Since the

other night when she had allowed herself to have that first vision, the Fates hadn't let up. Every

of bed.

tackled her.

but they left a phenomenal tip."

back up to my lonely bedroom."

following Aislinn into the kitchen.

okay, right?"(w) \mathbf{w} \otimes . \mathbb{N} \otimes \mathbb{V} $e\ell$ \mathbb{W} \mathcal{O} \mathbb{R} \mathbb{M} . \mathbb{C} \otimes \mathbb{G}

vision I had, that may be a pipe dream."

and I'll get some steak from the restaurant and bring it up."

cold. As she fought with the Fates, unsure whether she wanted to know what they were trying to tell her, she would wake up. It was as if she was in the middle of a circular argument with someone she couldn't speak directly too. The Fates only showed her the same disturbing scenes over and over again and wouldn't give her any more information. The harder she tried to let them know that she didn't understand, the less they showed her.

Aislinn tossed and turned in her sleep. She was once again walking down a hall of open doors toward the rune covered door left open at the end. Suddenly something changed. Jacob came running out of the door at the end of the hall, directly toward her.

time, Aislinn closed her eyes, she felt urgent pulling and prodding. She always ended up somewhere

At first Aislinn didn't understand why there were red tears running down his cheeks. As he barreled into her and they toppled to the ground, Aislinn found him in her arms clutching her desperately and screaming. His eyes had been gouged out.

in a vision. It took some time for her to calm herself enough to speak to him. "Jacob, hush, I have you." Thinking about what she had said to the man with no eyes, she added in a choked voice, "it's Aislinn."

Jacob instantly stilled, even his body ceased trembling. "I shouldn't be here. Tell them that it wasn't

the Council. Find Mira." Suddenly, Jacob's body began to convulse and blood began running from

Frigid horror flooded her body. Jacob was the only druid to have ever been able to interact with her

his mouth.
"What do you mean," Aislinn began to panic. He seemed to be dying. "Who's Mira?" $\mathcal{W}w(w).novelwo\mathcal{R}m.c@m$

Jacob shook his head, blood pouring from a tear that appeared across his stomach. "I don't know," he coughed, and his body stilled again.

in and at the blood coating her hands. She knew that where ever Jacob was, he was dead.

Eyes wide open, covered in a cold sweat, Aislinn struggled her pregnant body into a sitting position

in bed. As much as she complained about Cullen when he was in bed with her lately, she couldn't

really sleep without him. Sighing heavily she forced her feet to the floor and decided to go down to

the kitchen for a midnight snack. Pushing the button for the 13th floor and the kitchens she couldn't

help thinking, I hope no one is around. The last thing I want right now is to get yelled at for being out

The form in Aislinn's arms vanished. Stunned Aislinn stared at the bloody puddle she was kneeling

No one had heard from Keith or Cullen yet and Sarah was getting nervous. That made Aislinn nervous. At this distance, she could feel Cullen's upset about something. That was compounded by the closeness of the birth and a strange feeling that something had shifted. Aislinn couldn't quite explain the last one. She just felt like something had drastically changed.

Walking out of the elevator, Aislinn turned down the hall that led to the kitchen, watching for people

only trafficked by omegas this late. They only tended to nod respectfully and keep going.

The more Aislinn did to try and stop thinking about the uneasy feeling she was getting, the stronger it seemed to become. Great, what if my visions start to influence my waking life too, she thought sarcastic at first and then her stomach turned as she considered the possibility more seriously.

Maybe the fates are trying to get my attention on something too important to wait until another vision

hits. Aislinn was so busy with her own thoughts that she didn't notice Rissa until the girl nearly

who might think she should have called for help instead of getting it herself. Mostly the halls were

"What are you doing down here," she nearly shouted and reached out to steady Aislinn when she jumped.

"I'm hungry. What are you doing awake?"

"I just got off work. We had a private party staying late for dinner. It took forever to get rid of them,

Aislinn almost missed waiting tables with Rissa. Learning how to be a pack Alpha was tiring, and she was pregnant. She thanked Sarah daily for all the help.

Rissa could see that Aislinn was extremely distracted. "Look, why don't you go back up to your room

Aislinn wrinkled her nose. "I don't want anything like that, but ice cream would be good. And I do

believe that's in the freezer in the room that's now only six feet away. So wouldn't it make more

Rolling her eyes Rissa backed out of the way, knowing full well by the tone in Aislinn's voice that there would be no convincing her to go back to bed right now. "So how are you feeling," Rissa asked

sense for me to go in there and get some and sit down, before making that long ride in the elevator

"I don't know," Aislinn said honestly. She knew that she could trust Rissa. Contrary to all pack standards for socializing between ranks, the two of them had become best friends.

Concerned, Rissa wasn't about to let Aislinn leave it at that. "What do you mean? The babies are

found a pint of chocolate chip. It had been kept in stock, primarily because the last time the kitchen ran out Aislinn nearly ripped the door off the freezer. "To tell you the truth," she grabbed a spoon and sat down at the table, "I've been having disturbing visions again. And I can't shake the feeling that I

should be on my way to the stone circle up at the reservation to speak with my grandmother." Aislinn

stuck her spoon in the ice cream and shoveled out a mouthful as if she hasn't said anything scary.

"You can't be serious. Aislinn," Rissa insisted in a tone that caused Aislinn to finally look her in the

face. "You can't say things like that and not expect me to get a little frightened. I thought we were

"Honestly Rissa, I don't think so." Aislinn pulled the freezer open and rummaged around until she

getting a break from all this caoch."

Staring Rissa in the eyes, Aislinn couldn't hide the harsh tone as she spoke. "Who are you kidding? I've pretty much decided that my life is never going to calm down. I'm only hoping that the Fates will deal me one crisis at a time for the moment. I'm too tired to handle much more. Judging from the

"Okay," Rissa said, sitting down and trying to be reassuring. "Firstly I want to point out that the Alpha is the one supposed to console the theta, not the other way around. But, since you're pregnant, I'll see what I can do." Rissa's little joke was just enough to make Aislinn smile for the first time all night. "Now tell me what happened and maybe we can think it through."

Aislinn wished desperately that she could have that conversation with Rissa, but the mention of

theta only reminded her that this was a conversation best had with Sarah. "I know you mean well

Riss, and I truly wish I could let it all out right here and now. If there was anyone around here I'd count as a friend above and beyond all else it would be you. But I think this one is going to have to stay in the upper ranks for right now. By all the Fates things were so much easier before everyone started insisting I play my role properly. I think this pack may have to come to understand that I wasn't born and bred here and I'm not always going to follow the rules appropriately."

Rissa smiled widely. "You'd be surprised how many people have already come to that conclusion."

She winked at Aislinn. "I understand. Let me help you get to Sarah's office and I'll send her in to talk

to you. I get the impression you're not going to sleep tonight until whatever the problem is, is dealt

with."