

Chapter 166

Devon had been very clear about how many different torture tactics he had learned while working for Rafe. She had been given an hour to remember where the rest of the paperwork was and to become more cooperative.

She briefly considered her chances of escaping if she shifted and tried to fight her way out. They have guns and superior numbers, a superior voice growled in the back of her head.

"So you're talking to me again?" Jenna questioned sarcastically. "Just say 'I told you so' and be done with it."

I'm too busy trying to think of a way out of this to mince words. I think you're only real choice here is to cooperate with them and hope that the maniac in charge is good to his word. Give them the information they want and I suggest making it clear that the circle on Arnauk territory is more than a little helpful. Maybe we can still get out there in time to catch the birth of Aislinn's child before our chance is lost and we end up together permanently.

Jenna actually flinched as her door slammed open. Devon was pissed. "Now, Jenna. It seems that I have been given a very tight deadline to start producing quality work or my funding and backing is going to be revoked. That means in it's simplest terms that your time is up. So what will it be?"

"I get it Devon. I've got no choices here. I'll give you what you want. But I'm hoping for some help in return."

"You seem to be mistaking yourself for someone in a position to negotiate," Devon hissed. One of his apelike cronies grabbed her from behind, holding her arms down in a steal like grip and squeezing most of the wind out of her.

Jenna had never found any type of were she had seen shift frightening, until now. Devon's face elongated, his scales spread, his eyes enlarged and his mouth seemed to unhinge as he bared a set of fangs at least three inches long. A wicked hiss accompanied a flicking tongue as he stepped up to Jenna. Opening his mouth again to give her a better look at his impressive fangs, she could see venom dripping from the tips.

Devon's fang's retracted again as he spoke. "Where are the paperssss?"

Jenna stammered, "I'm gonna end up dead one way or the other. Why would I want to help you on my way out?"

Jerking his head toward the door, Devon walked out, leading the way as Jenna was dragged along by the ape-tiger man. He opened a door at the back of the warehouse and Jenna was virtually thrown inside.

Then Jenna spotted the cages at the back wall. Several of her own men who had been turned into dire lycans were locked up as well as a couple mixed weres that she didn't recognize. She took a closer look at the men in the cages. It was obvious that they weren't fairing well. They gave the distinct impression of insanity meets wild kingdom. A small twinge of guilt passed through Jenna as she realized that she was responsible for a majority of the caged men in this room. Devon watched her and waited.

"I want to be there when you change them back," Jenna said, managing to sound remorseful. She could feel Brennus' approval to her idea in the back of her mind.

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Shifting back to his more human looking for Devon tried to read her intentions. He wasn't sure if she had an ulterior motive to the suggestion. Still if she was willing to divulge the location of the missing notes then it was a simple enough thing to agree to. "I suppose that is not out of the range of possibility. You tell me where we can find the notes we need and I'll see what I can do."

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"The rest of the notes are hidden at the manor. I assume if you're working with the feds and they are still looking then they simply haven't been found yet." Jenna continued to stare at the man in the cage and managed to generate a tear that wasn't entirely faked. "There is a pond behind the manor and several gazebos surround it. I buried the missing notes in the ground beneath some loose boards in the floor of the northern most gazebo. It's the one that is tucked into the trees toward the back of the main property. I figured that everyone would ransack the house, but they might miss searching the grounds too thoroughly."

Devon seemed satisfied with her sincerity for the moment. "It seems you may be right. I'll send someone to locate the notes. I'll let you know how that turns out. Then we may discuss whether or not you live."

It took over an hour of arguing and reassuring to get Aislinn to calm down and accept returning to the Madadh-alluidh Saobhaidh. Aislinn rode in the SUV silently, clutching her stomach, tears running down her face. The only thing stopping her from insisting on remaining at the circle was that she realized it wouldn't matter whether the babies were born there or at the den. If they didn't have Brennus to exchange, one would die regardless. She needed to call Cullen and she would have a terrible time managing that from the reservation.

Rissa attempted to comfort her, but Aislinn simply wasn't ready to discuss what she had learned. She was afraid that if she said it out loud she might break down completely again.

The trip was agonizingly long. It was already dinner by the time they were home. Rissa held Aislinn's hand as she walked through the parking garage and into the elevator. Sarah met them as they arrived on the 13th floor.

One look at Aislinn's pale face and defeated expression had Sarah on her cell phone to Rhona. She glared at Rissa and Drake, "You should have taken her to the infirmary."

Drake glared right back. "She crying and upset, but not hurt." He looked to Aislinn uncertainly. "As far as we can tell," he added. "She won't say what happened."

"I don't need Rhona. There's nothing she can do. This is my fault. I should have listened to Cullen." Aislinn started to sob again. Rissa helped her to the nearest sofa in the great room. Drake managed to shoo most of the concerned onlookers out of the immediate area.

Sarah sat down next to her and wrapped an arm around her shoulders comfortingly. "Try and calm down. I need to know what's wrong so I can help."

"Is there any chance at all that Cullen and Cadifor have managed to catch Jenna yet?" Aislinn asked knowing what the answer would be.

Shaking her head, Sarah urged Aislinn, "No, but what difference does that make?"

"It's difficult to explain. If we want both of my children," Aislinn could barely say it, "to survive birth," she continued through heavy sobs, "we need to get Jenna and take them back to the Circle."

Rissa jumped up and fetched a box of tissues that was on a nearby counter. She felt like she needed to do something and that was the only thing she could see to be helpful in any way.

Sarah and all the others went cold at the statement. No one was able to speak or think much beyond what she said.

w@w.novelw@RM.Com

"I need to call Cullen," Aislinn added.