

Chapter 170

Malik waited at the entrance to a large library. One by one each of the others arrived. He looked at the small group of men and women who had chosen to separate from the Circle at this time and he wondered if he was leading them all in the wrong direction.

Silently they walked into the large library and toward the back to a small study room that was set aside from the main floor. The smell of old papers permeated the building and comforted the group.

Cerdwyn was the first to speak. "I guess I'm not entirely sure what we're doing Malik. Have you called the lycans yet? Do you know where we are going?"

"Well," Malik shook his head. His striking blue eyes seemed dull and clouded with uncertainty. "Honestly I was hoping we could all discuss the plan before I did anything. I have several numbers I could call. Nora trusted the Arnauk most. But with the current situation I don't know how we will be received."

"True," Cerdwyn responded, trembling. She had been with the group of druids Jenna had held captive. "The lycans will want to question us all. I don't want to go through that." Nodded consent went around the room.

"I don't think, I mean none of us think, the Arnauk are like that. After all, none of us would be willing to help them if we really thought we could be in danger by doing it right?"

"We can't question ourselves now. It's too late," a rather pudgy man added. Nervous looks were exchanged.

Malik cleared his throat. "We know we are doing the right thing. Without our help those deformed men and women will never be able to return to themselves. If that is all they want then we truly should help. I know that the Circle believes it can't be remedied. But they also believed that Rafe couldn't create them from the old books to begin with. We could at least explore the possibility. And the lycans deserve to know they aren't the reason the others have cut off correspondence. And more than that, Nora said there is still something we need to finish with them. I can't ignore her last request." Tears formed in the man's eyes and a new confidence spread amongst them.

"Then I have a suggestion," Cerdwyn squeezed Malik's hand. "I say we go to Aislinn. I trust her. I believe she would be a good buffer between us and the lycans. And she has access to the stones. Perhaps she can reach Nora and discover what she felt we needed to finish."

"Telephones are too dangerous at the moment. The lycan Council is monitoring everything. It's difficult to say whether they would find out we were coming if we called her."

"Then we just go," Cerdwyn responded.

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Seeing Natalie asleep and knowing the long tiring drive ahead Tor decided to keep his mind active by making a couple phone calls. First was Mira to let her know that he had secured the tapes.

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The phone rang a couple times and Tor knew was waking her up. "Yes?" came a sleepy voice.

"It's Tor. I got the tapes. I haven't looked at them yet, so I don't know what's there. I'm on my way back right now. A few hours."

"Good. I'll sleep much better. Between that and Luther's news, it sounds like we are finally getting back on track."

"What has Luther found out?"

"It seems that Jenna and our rogue weres are working with the NSA. Puts all our eggs in one basket. It may be relatively easy to deal with that situation if you hand the information over to the Council. They are very likely capable of handling that mess, leaving us able to go after Jenna's notes and find Rillan."

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"Sounds good. I should be back in short order. I'll make a few phone calls and maybe I'll arrive with more good news."

"Good work Tor. I knew I could count on you."

Smiling Tor hung up the phone.

Next came the difficult phone call. Tor glanced over at Natalie. He could hear her slow breathing. He took a deep breath and his eyes turned. He growled, reminding himself yet again that she was a human and put his thoughts back on track. Confident that she was still asleep and figuring that there wouldn't be much said that would be a problem if she overheard it, he searched his contact list and chose an old number, hoping it was still correct.

The Council meeting had taken all day. It was well after dark by the time it adjourned. As far as Cullen was concerned they had gotten no where. They didn't see how locating an unknown woman from a random vision could be helpful at this juncture. Several of the elders were leaving at this point to pursue some leads on the missing weres. Cadifor still wanted to speak with a few more of the elders. His current area of concern was figuring out if one of their own killed Nora or if Aislinn's vision was correct and "it wasn't a lycan" and stopping the Circle from going underground again. Then there was also the group of elders who believed the top priority should be figuring out why the human contacts were suddenly so uncooperative. Last but not least everyone was concerned about locating the supposedly lost notes that were causing so much concern on all fronts. Whatever was in those notes, if the feds wanted them then they were worth looking for.

Upon leaving the meeting, Cullen immediately grabbed Keith and ushered him back to his room. "I apologize for insisting on sending you back right now."

Keith shook his head. "I understand. In your position, I'd do the same. Besides as much as I appreciate being included in on higher functions of pack dynamic, I'm looking forward to getting outta here."

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Cullen leaned against the wall with his arms crossed. He watched Keith packing his small bag. "When you get back I want you to talk to Aislinn and get all the information you possibly can from her muin visions. Who knows what detail might tell you where to locate Jenna or this Mira. The Council doesn't want to listen to the theories about a hidden faction or Mira. So that leaves us looking into those issues on our own."

Keith nodded. Hearing the rare upset in his friend's voice that seemed to be a constant of late Keith stopped his packing. "I'm saying this as a friend. You've never been so uncertain and let it show. You're making people nervous. Both the pack and the Council. You need to stop this. Too many people count on you to be strong and decisive in realistic ways. As much as I believe Aislinn has been good for you, she hasn't been so good for your confidence or leadership." Keith sighed. "Pull yourself together. You'll do her and yourself more good if you can at least look like your old self when people are paying attention."

"If you weren't my friend and I didn't know you mean well, I'd probably body slam you for that lecture," Cullen growled. "Still that's basically the same advice Cadifor gave me. I'll be better if you go home and then call me with some decent information."

Keith went back to packing as Cullen's phone rang. He grabbed it out of his pocket, hating the sound of that ring lately. It was never good news. His biggest fear being that the next call would be Aislinn giving birth. His heart sank as he realized that should be the greatest news he could get. When I lay my hands on Jenna no one will be capable of identifying her muin corpse.