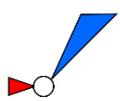


1442 BB1

bncdoc.id	JY8
bncdoc.author	Browning, Amanda
bncdoc.year	1992
bncdoc.title	The stolen heart.
bncdoc.info	The stolen heart. Sample containing about 55294 words from a book (domain: imaginative)
Text availability	Worldwide rights cleared
Publication date	1985-1993
Text type	Written books and periodicals
David Lee's classification	W_fict_prose

<p><1442/c></p>  <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>rope that bound them. Travis freed her first, and after stretching cramped limbs she cut the rope about his wrists, then about both their ankles. Free at last, they sat up. It was pitch-dark by now, and cold. It took a while to get their night vision, then Travis crossed to where their packs lay. A second or two later the powerful beam of the flashlight cut through the darkness. ‘They haven’t touched a thing.’ Travis’s voice sounded uncanny in the darkness. ‘I think we must have interrupted them; that’s why they left us here.’ Paige made her way over to him. ‘What do we do now?’ ‘We put as much distance between ourselves and our martial friends as possible.’ She shivered. ‘I don’t want to meet them again in a hurry. But where do we go?’ ‘In the opposite direction to them,’ he said succinctly. He pointed the flashlight across the clearing. ‘We were over there. Whichway did they go when they left?’ Orientating herself, she pointed behind him. ‘That way. Probably back to the river. It’s where we met them.’ ‘East, to go north, at a rough guess. We’ll go west. We’d better not waste any time. I don’t want to be anywhere near here when the sun comes up. Take your bag and hold on to me.’ That wild flight through the night lived in her memory for years to come. Tired as they were, they stumbled through the dark hours, picking themselves up when they fell, keeping up a pace that left no time for thought or speech. As dawn began to lighten the sky they topped the rise of another <u>mist-shrouded</u> valley and began to descend the other side. As they stumbled lower one sound rose up to meet them. Travis halted and Paige staggered to a halt swaying on her feet. ‘Listen; there’s water ahead of us,’ he declared. At her lack of response, he turned the yellowing beam of the flashlight on her white face. Immediately he slipped his arm about her. ‘You’re all in. But it’s not much further now. If it’s a river we can find a place to hole up and get some rest. Do you think you can make it?’ She straightened her spine. ‘Do babies cry?’ He laughed briefly. ‘OK, come on.’ The river, as indeed it turned out to be, was wreathed in</p> <p><u>wispy tendrils</u> of <u>mist</u></p> <p>. ‘With luck we’ll be able to follow this down to the coast instead, and I do believe I see a cave just up ahead,’ Travis said encouragingly. Cave, perhaps, was a misnomer. It was a cavity made by the tumbling together of several large boulders, and roofed by the encroaching undergrowth. The floor was sandy, and Paige sank on to it in relief. Curling up in a ball, she rested her head on her arm and closed her eyes. Travis watched her for a second, then eased off his load and knelt down beside her. She was already asleep, and even the manoeuvring he had to do to remove her pack and settle her in his arms failed to rouse her. An admiring smile curved his lips as he rested back against the boulder and closed his eyes. ‘You’re something else, Paige Emerson,’ he murmured into her hair, and slept. Hours later Paige was roused from a deep sleep by a hand on her shoulder. Disorientated, she took a while to realise where she was. The cave might have been unfamiliar, but Travis’s face wasn’t as he knelt beside her, holding out a cup. ‘Coffee.’ Straightening, she winced, brushing the hair out of her eyes before accepting the cup. ‘What time is it?’ Travis squinted out into the sunshine. ‘About midday. How do you feel?’ ‘Stiff,’ she</p>
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	<p>confessed. ‘Are we safe?’ He picked up his own cup and sat down opposite her. ‘I think so - that’s why I chanced a small fire. My guess is they’ll leave us to the forest. All the same, once we’ve eaten we’ll head downriver again for the night.’ She shuddered. ‘Once upon a time I thought I’d like to go on a trek through a jungle or rain forest. I don’t think I’ll bother now,’ she said drily, and smiled. ‘What’s for breakfast, or should I say brunch?’ Travis handed over some biscuits topped with slices of tinned meat. ‘You didn’t complain once yesterday, or last night,’ he observed conversationally. Paige swallowed a mouthful before answering. ‘We hardened criminals learn to take the rough with the smooth,’ she joked, then could have bitten out her tongue, because it had been a friendly overture, and now his face had closed up. ‘You’ve been on the run before?’ ‘I’m not on the run now,’ she pointed out.</p>
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