

## Chapter 139

“You can’t hand yourself over. Ava” Mr. Patrick said quietly

Ava opened her eyes and looked at the professor who’d sat in front of her on the floor the moment her father had gone to help Zeke clear his head.

“You really need to stop doing that,” she sighed.

“I can’t help you if you remain so closed off. I have to do it.”

“That’s what this is about, isn’t it?” She frowned in irritation. “This isn’t about meditating; it’s about you having free access to my thoughts.”

“Something is blocking you from your wolf, probably something to do with the trauma of your first shift. If you don’t let me do this, you’ll need a for longer than this week to figure it out,” Mr. Patrick said, without even an ounce of remorse. “You don’t have time to mess around, Ava”

He had no right to look into her head! She couldn’t hide her anger as she stood and walked out of the living room. She didn’t know how she was

feeling, and Mr. Patrick was sorting through that mess in her head anyway.

Without another thought, she went out to the back. She was barefoot already, so she just sat down at the edge of the pool and put her feet in the water. This was pointless. Zeke was right about that. Wasting time for nothing. She should have gone to the dean as she had planned to.

“No. Ava. That’s a bad idea.” Mr. Patrick said from behind her.

“Stop!”

She hadn’t heard him follow her out, so she wondered if he had just appeared like he had done last night.

Mr. Patrick sighed and then bent to take his shoes off.

“What are you doing?”

“I need a break, too,” he answered as he took his socks off and carefully folded his trousers.

The man had come to meditate in a suit as if he was lecturing his students.

“Well, someone has to look good around here,” he said as he sat beside her and put his feet in the water.

They remained silent for a while, but she knew she might as well have been having a loud, one–sided conversation with him. Her head was too

messed up to allow her to shield her thoughts from him as well as she usually did. Or at least she thought she used to shield them well. She wasn't sure how much he'd still managed to read.

"You can't hand yourself in," Mr. Patrick repeated.

"I killed people."

Hearing those words come out of her mouth brought all the guilt back again.

"How am I supposed to live with myself if I don't own up to that?"

"I understand where you're coming from, but Ava, it's not just you anymore," Mr. Patrick said.

"If you find a way to keep Zeke out of the way, he will be fine after some time. He can find someone else to mate with eventually."

Mr. Patrick looked at her as if she had said something strange before he looked at the water in the swimming pool again.

"Do you know what a true mate is?" Mr. Patrick asked.

She shook her head

"Not many people do these days. Whether that's a blessing or curse. I'm not sure anymore." Mr. Patrick said.

He said it so quietly that she knew that whatever he was saying was related to him, too. A true mate? There were variations? She read a lot but had never come across that term. Whatever that was, she hoped Zeke would find it after she was gone.

“I taught your father, you know,” Mr. Patrick continued. “And your brother, Caleb. You may not be related to them by blood, but you’re all as stubborn as each other.”

She was glad to be pulled away from thoughts of Zeke finding another mate.

“You said you taught Caleb to meditate?”

“He struggled to find his place here in the beginning, too, but I taught him to focus. I wish I had as long to teach you because I think you’ll only truly understand why the Council wants you when you’re in touch with your wolf.”

She was about to protest that he was still bringing that topic back up when he cut her off before she’d voiced her thoughts.

“I don’t think they brought you here by accident. I think they already knew about you and have been testing you from the beginning” he said. “Why else would they invite a human to this academy?”

“That’s ridiculous. They invited me because I’m registered as an Alpha’s daughter. A simple mistake that they were too proud to correct,” she argued.

“But they didn’t make a mistake, did they? You’re not human.”

She sighed and lifted her feet out of the water. It didn’t matter what she was now. She’d killed people.

“If you turn yourself in, you’ll make it easier for them to do whatever they want with you. They don’t care about the missing students, Ava. They just want whatever or whoever did that to them.”

“And they can have me. I deserve it, she said as she started to walk in.

“They want you because you killed people, Ava. Think for a moment, please. Do you know how such a small group of people have so many of us under their control? Because they take people like you and Zeke and train you to keep us in line.”

She paused and turned back. Would the council still take Zeke?

“You think you feel guilty now, but they will turn you into a real killer, Ava. It will be your life. You will be their little soldier, doing as you’re told. And Zeke will be right next to you because you’re mated.”

She took a step back. That couldn’t be right. The Council didn’t just blatantly kill people. The system was flawed but that was because it was full of ignorance and separation.

“The system is flawed because it is run by egomaniacs who think nothing about throwing children into isolation so they can mess with their minds. It’s flawed because the Council has absolute power that has corrupted them to the core,” Mr. Patrick said. “It is flawed because they

can select anyone here to do their dirty work, whether they want to or not. Do not give yourself to them, Ava.”

And it wasn't just isolation; it was the forest full of dark magic that surrounded them—the Council's magic. She had known from the beginning before she'd had first-hand experience with it, that it wasn't right. But what was the alternative? Who was she to be able to stand up to the Head of Council

“But you said being a threat to them is also dangerous,” she pointed out.

“Dangerous for you. But being their asset makes you a danger to everyone else, including your family. Which would you rather pick?”

Mr. Patrick stood and walked towards her.

“Look, I know what I'm asking of you is a lot, but you are not alone. You mated the strongest Alpha that I have seen in a while. Then you have people like me who've hidden from the Council in plain sight all their lives,” he said. “I can't make this decision for you; you're right about that. So I hope you at least think about what I said. Whatever you decide to do, you need your wolf.”

He picked up his shoes and socks and looked at her before he walked back into the house.

She needed to atone for her sins, but would it really put everyone else in danger? And what if she didn't want to find her wolf? Wouldn't it be safer for everyone that way?

She sighed and turned to follow but stopped when she saw movement somewhere near the trees. More wolves? She was surprised she didn't feel any fear as she stood, trying to confirm if she had seen something.

“Get into the house, Ava. Now!”

It was Mr. Patrick's voice that brought that fear crashing down on her.