

Chapter 162

“Where did they take Ava?”

He could sense she was in the building, but something was blocking him from pinpointing her exact location. That was very worrying because their bond should have allowed him to find her no matter where she was. Would they have taken her straight to Isolation? They wouldn't survive it in this state.

“You're in no position to ask me that, Mr. Michelson,” Dean Russell said. “I spent weeks organizing everything, and you and that human just went and desecrated the President of the Academy's accommodation.”

He should have 'desecrated' every room.

His eyes narrowed on the dean.

“You keep calling her that. You're a stupid fuck, Alpha Russell, but I'm sure even you've figured this one out. Where is my mate?”

He didn't miss how the dean's fist clenched on the table. Shadow had been alert since they had met the Head of Council's cold gaze head-on, so he wasn't taking any of this shit from the dean. He pushed forward and growled in warning.

Though the dean lowered his gaze, he said through his gritted teeth, "I am still the dean, and you have broken my rules."

"Rules you made to try to keep Shadow from his mate. I would tread very lightly if I were you," he growled back.

"You can't threaten me. The President approved the rules and gave me the Council soldiers to enforce them. If you have an issue with that, go and take it up with him," the dean said without raising his gaze. "And as for you unlawfully marking another student, that was a grave error on your part that you will see for yourself. There is a reason we have rules in place. You can't run around marking another student without following the proper procedure."

The cuffs were still on him, slowly poisoning Shadow. He hadn't wanted to break them off in front of so many Council soldiers because they were trained to eliminate any threat the moment they saw it. Kill first, ask questions later. Especially with their leader in their midst.

But he broke them off now and smelled the fear in the air when he raised his hands and snapped the silver from his wrists. He placed the useless silver on the desk in front of the dean and then adjusted the straps of his backpack. There were things in there that would prove he had been trying to escape. If they didn't bother looking through their bags, he and Ava would be just two students caught up in the heat. Even the academy

couldn't punish someone for that Sex was a very natural process and was not against the rules.

But he knew it wouldn't matter to the dean. He just wanted to get Ava by any means necessary.

“You can hide behind the guards and the Council all you want. You have put yourself in the middle of this because you don't like Ava,” he said as he packed the broken cuffs up as if they were nothing.

The smell of his burning skin made the dean look at his hands. Only Derek and Myles knew he could withstand much more than that, but they would never tell a soul. The dean was an Alpha, but this was beyond his capabilities. He dropped the silver again, his point made.

“Ava is mine. So if she's hurt in any way, I can still rip your head off your shoulders before those soldiers even realize what's happening.”

He stood, satisfied with how the dean flinched. The air was thick with the dean's emotions, so he took a deep breath. Fear was his favorite flavor.

“I might still rip your head off, just for the fuck of it,” he said. “Now tell me what you're going to do to Ava.”

“Nothing. The Council wants to punish her themselves; you can't stop them. And if you try, that's just a suicide mission.”

He got the feeling that the dean was hoping he would try. He was in his fourth year and had always assumed the dean was a fair man. But now, all of his prejudices had been laid out in the open since Ava's arrival.

He walked to the door and tried to sense how many guards were waiting outside—too many. He was too weak to fight all of them if it came to that, but not leaving without Ava.

“You had such a promising future. It's such a shame that you've allowed yourself to be brought down by someone not worthy of your attention,” dean continued.

Yeah, the dean had just earned himself a spot next to Jared on his bucket list.

Without looking back, he walked out of the office into the waiting area, Shadow ready for any trouble, but they found it empty. He was sure he'd sensed some guards there—dozens of them.

“What happened?” she asked Shadow.

“Magic,” Shadow answered easily.

He was right. He could sense the faint shimmer of it in the air. It felt like councilor Iulia had already started getting her hands dirty. What else was the messing with? He could sense Ava was here, but what if she wasn't? What if this was a trick to separate them permanently?

He barged out of the office and tried to catch a hint of Ava's scent. There was nothing. They had been brought over in the same car but separated

outside the dean's office. At first, he had assumed the dean was going to at least pretend this was still an academic setting and talk to them about what they had done wrong, but Ava had been carted further down the hall instead. He went in that direction, trying desperately to catch her scent.

Ava's scent shouldn't have just disappeared. What sort of magic was this that could mess with a mate bond

"We need to find her and then rest, Shadow said. "We can't fight the Council like this."

"We can't fight anybody," he said.

Two guards were standing outside a room at the end of the hallway. Though there was still the shimmer of magic in the air, he finally caught a hint of Ava's scent, and it led him to that door.

'We can take two,' Shadow said. 'Let's kill them.'

'Two here, hundreds outside. Not an option.'

But they would have to get Ava and worry about the other guards after.

The guards turned their heads as he approached, and he readied himself to fight. They looked at him and turned back to face forward as if he was of no interest to them. What?

He frowned as he approached the door, not trusting his senses or their reaction. He kept his movements slow, bringing his hand up to the handle. Still no reaction. Or would they attack him on his way out?

The door swung open, and the guards didn't move. But Ava's scent hit him in the face as if what had been blocking her was broken. Their bond was fully restored; he could sense that she was okay. He walked in, focusing on the guards until he'd walked through. And then, when he finally paid attention to the room, he saw his mate with her head on uncuffed arms on the table in the middle of the room, fast asleep.

“Ava?”

She lifted her head and looked at him with tired eyes.

“Are we free to go?” she asked.

“What did they do to you?”

“They uncuffed me and told me to wait here for you,” Ava answered.
“They said the dean can't deal with me now because it's a weekend.”

A mind game. This was just a mind fuck. The Council wanted to mess with his mind until they made their move.

“Can we go? I'm so hungry and tired.”

If it was the weekend, she'd been getting railed for days. That was an insanely long time to make love. He would feed her and make sure she slept before the Council came for them, hopefully after the weekend.

But what the hell did they want? To make them soldiers or to destroy them?

He hadn't sensed much from the Council members and their leader before their guards led them into one of the residential houses near the one he and Ava had desecrated. But he had sensed anticipation. A lot of it. Iulia and Andrei had been like children waiting to unwrap their Christmas presents, their eagerness so evident in their eyes as they looked at Ava up and down.

And that meant he and Ava were screwed

“Yes. Let's get out of here.”