

CHAPTER 39

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39 Ava: Her Identity 39 Ava: Her Identity You have the potential, Selene says, her voice a cautious whisper in my mind. The arcane flows through your veins. But... My breath escapes me in a giddy rush. Magic. Real magic. Human magic. It's something out of a fairy tale, not something that should exist in my life. Then again, supernaturals exist—and we're pretty nonstandard, ourselves. It's not that simple, Selene continues, her tone growing more serious. Magic is not a toy, little one. It's a force of nature, raw and untamed. To wield it requires knowledge, discipline, and control. I swallow hard, feeling the warning in her words. "But how do I learn? I don't even know where to start." You would need a teacher, Selene explains, her voice tinged with hesitation. Someone well-versed in the arcane arts, who could guide you, show you how to harness and control your power. But magic is a lost art. Magicians were lost to the curse and became shifters. 14:55 177 39 Ava: Her Identity Talk about a letdown. O "So, I won't be able to do magic." Is that how you say it? Do magic? Cast magic? Spell magic? Cast spells? It all feels weird in my mouth. It is unlikely, Selene says, but she still has that cautious sound to her voice. "If I tried, what's the worst that could happen?" Death. A simple word, bluntly given, with all the truth in the world behind it. I shudder at the matter-of-fact tone. In times long past, many talented humans were lost to the recklessness of their magical talent. Until magicians began to teach each other, too many lives were lost in the pursuit of the power within them. Do not open that door, Ava. I rub my arms vigorously, trying to regain some of the warmth that fled my body as she spoke. "Okay," I say, shoving down the odd sense of loss. Magic would have been amazing to learn, of course. But—if Selene says it's too dangerous, I believe her. It isn't worth my life to try and grasp something so 39 Ava: Her Identity volatile. So I focus on a question that's been bothering me from the beginning. "Selene, you're my wolf, right?" Of course. "Then why are you separate from me? No shifter has a wolf with a physical body." Selene hums, a thoughtful sound that echoes through my mind. You were born bonded with the ancient magic, she explains in that non-explaining way, where nothing is really answered. We are both separate and one at the same time. I groan. "That makes no sense. You're being cryptic again. All shifters are bonded with www.NovelWorm.COM

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ncient magic, and they don't have any 'separate', only 'one'. Why am I different?" Crypticity is something that can't be helped, Selene sighs, and I can almost picture her shaking her head. It's the nature of what we are. "Crypticity? What are you, an English professor now? And what are we, exactly? Are you a Lycan or a shifter?" 39 Ava: Her Identity I am pure, Selene says, her voice filled with a quiet pride. I came to be with you of my own choice. I squint, as if that somehow makes my brain work better. "How is that possible? Doesn't the curse decide who is matched?" That is a story for another time, Selene says, her tone turning brisk. For now, it's more important that you take a cold shower before your heat starts back up. Clayton is near. The mention of the alpha sends a shiver down my spine, and I can feel the first tendrils of heat starting to uncurl in my belly. Selene's right; I don't want to be in a frantic state like yesterday. But I can't let this conversation go just yet. I'm finally getting answers. "But how can you just choose to be with me? And what do you mean, we're separate and one at the same time? I don't understand any of this." I know, little one, Selene says, her voice softening. There is much you don't understand yet. But trust me when I say that everything will be revealed in time. For now, focus on getting through your heat. We can talk 39 Ava: Her Identity more later. I want to argue, to demand answers, but the heat is building faster now, and I can feel my skin starting to prickle with sweat. I need to get this under control before I become a feral, slutty mess. One humiliation is enough. I head for the bathroom, tearing off my hospital gown and tossing it on the ground as I go. Niceties are foregone; I just want to get control of my body as soon as I can. I can sense the presence of a powerful wolf. I don't know how far they are, but they're close enough that I'm lifting my chin to sniff, trying to get their scent in my nose. There's two of them. One's a little weaker, but he'll do Ava! Shit. Right. I slap my nose, which of course does nothing to help but makes me feel better for at least trying, and turn on the water at its coldest setting. I'm shivering in minutes, huddled under that freezing 617 39 Ava: Her Identity spray, but it seems to help keep my mind clear to an extent. My teeth are chattering, so I talk to Selene through my mind again. Why is heat even a thing? This is ridiculous. I'm losing my mind because I want some dick? Who came up with this stupid idea? Selene's chuckle soothes a little of my annoyance. It is stupid, she agrees. But Lycans have a strong urge to breed, to perpetuate our kind. It's far more than you would find with any wolf, or any other animal. Unfortunately, it passed into our human bonds, and humans are weaker to it. It makes me a little sick. So that's why so many she-wolves mate before they're even adults? Many of those girls go into heat young, Selene says, regret in her voice. They also need to be mated to ensure their safety in some packs. Some packs. Like mine. Being protected here in this hospital makes me realize how differently other packs may treat their she-wolves. Alpha Renard would have mated with me in a 14:55 39 Ava: Her Identity heartbeat if I'd shown up in front of him in heat. I heave uncontrollably at even the thought of mating with someone like him. Harsh, cruel... old. He's older than my dad. I gag again. Yes, Selene says quietly. It was never safe for you to meet your wolf in that place. Comment 4 View All > R Post your first comment! Vote 11 Fandom Swipe left to continue >

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