



Chapter 2

"What? No! You can't make us!" Avia shouts in protest.

"Actually, he can." Milos chimes in.

"Everyone is required to join when you're 13 anyways. You may as well get a head start. Plus, you have no where else to go." Aspen tries to reason. "I know this is hard, but I don't really see any other option." He continues.

"Fine. We'll do it." I say, looking up at Aspen.

"What! No!" Avia says throwing me a glare.

"Come on then, back to your rooms, training starts tomorrow, rest today. Be ready by 6." Pierce says, opening the door to let us out of the room.

"Iris! What the hell?" Avia says as soon as the door to our room closes behind us.

"Shhh." I put my finger over my lips, and gesture for her to follow. I lead her to the bathroom and explain my plan.

"We can pretend to go along with everything, we could use the training. Then we could escape, and we can steal some food and money so that's taken care of. You know how good of a thief I am." I remind her of all the times I stole food or money for us.

"Fine..." She gives in a bit, thinking about it for a bit.

"Let's get some sleep." I walk out of the room.

"MOVE MOVE MOVE!" Milos shouts at me, Avia, and a few other young trainees. We are running laps around the building. I am in front with another kid. He has short blonde hair and brown eyes. I barely get any sleep last night because of nightmares, and I can really feel the lack of sleep right now. My legs are aching, I have a throbbing headache from all the yelling, but somehow I find the energy to speed up. One more lap.

Once I finish the last lap, I turn around to see Avia finishing right after me.

"Dad's training finally has some usefulness huh?" She says between breaths.

"Yeah..." I mutter, not really paying attention.

"You okay?" Avia puts a hand on my shoulder.

"Yeah, just tired." I wave her hand away.

"COME ON, LETS GO!! WE ARE DOING HAND TO HAND COMBAT!!"

"Uggghhhh." Someone groans.

"Really? I'm too sore for this..." Someone else whines.

"Why do we even need this? Once we get into higher ranks, we will have sources, and we will have swords." A boy with long brown hair asks to no one in particular.

"If you get to the higher ranks." I mention.

"And what if you are ambushed and don't have your sword or gear on?" I continue.

"ALL RIGHT, ALL OF YOU SHUT UP! FIND A PARTNER OR I'LL CHOSE ONE FOR YOU!" Milos cuts through all the complaints and groans. I make eye contact with a boy that has black hair. His dark brown eyes fit perfectly with his darker complexion. He nods and I walk over. We get into our stances. He smirks.

"This'll be easy." He whispers under his breath.

"You wish." I whisper under mine, except actually quiet enough for him not to hear. The sound of Milos giving the others advice, and the sound of fighting drains away as I tune it out. I'm completely focused on my fight.

The boy charges at me. I side step a punch he throws before kneeling him in the gut.

"Ack!"

He takes a few steps back and grabs his stomach, then he looks up and glares at me. I walk towards him and punch him in the face. My fist flies to punch him again, but he dodges and kicks my legs, trying to sweep them out from under me, but the awkward angle he was at made it so there wasn't enough power to knock me over. I stumble a bit before regaining my balance. He tries to kick me in the stomach, but I grab his leg and yank it up, making him fall over. My foot connects with the ground, missing him as he rolls out of the way. He gets up and runs to my left, because of my eyepatch, I can't see to my left. I feel him push me from behind.

"Really?" I say, disappointed in this kid, and I didn't even know him. I turn around and he throws dirt in my face. It gets in my eye and it instinctively closes and starts watering. He punches me in the gut while my eyes are closed. I take a few steps back, trying to buy time to tune into my other senses.

Stomping slightly to my left. One step with only one foot. A kick! I feel wind and his leg brush the tip of my hair only a second after I duck. I open my eyes, the dirt gone. Spinning on one foot, still crouching, I kick his other foot out from under him. He grunts and falls onto his butt. I get up and push his chest down with my foot. My fist comes up to punch him, but someone grabs my arm. I turn to see who.

"That's enough, you've won." Milos says. I turn back around to the boy, taking my leg off his chest. I offer him a hand. He smacks it away. Hearing a giggle, I look to my right.

"Guess he's a sore loser." Avia jokes. I smile and walk over to her, noticing everyone else was done as well.

"You win?" I ask.

"Hell yeah I did." She smirks.

"Let's go in for breakfast!" Milos shouts to everyone. Cheers break out before he shuts them up with a glare.

Once inside, me and Avia sit at a table alone.

"What do you think happened to the rest of the kids at the lab?" Avia asks.

"I don't know. Maybe we can check once we escape." I whisper my response.

"Yeah." She looks down at her food. Stale bread and some old mushy vegetables in what looks like a sad salad. I eat my own food. Chatter floods the room as other kids sit down at tables.

"Who do you think is the oldest here?" Avia asks.

"That would be Harry! He's 15 and a half." I girl beams from behind Avia, blue eyes glowing. Avia turns around and the girl holds out her hand, her long blonde hair falling out of the way.

"Samantha. What's your name?" She questions us.

"Avia, and this is Iris!" Avia introduces us.

"Nice to meet ya! May I sit?" Her gaze moving to the spot on the bench beside Avia.

"Sure!" Avia scoots to make more room for her. We talk about random things, how Samantha got to be here, how we did, stuff like that.

Once breakfast is over, we have a learning unit. Me, Avia, and Samantha walk to it together and sit down. Avia is to my right, and Samantha is behind me. There is a boy with brown hair to my left. The room is small, and there is a board in the front. A man walks into the room as everyone is seated.

"Sources." A smack cuts through the room as the man, half balding, hits the board with a stick, pointing to the word 'Sources'.

"These are powers that are given to each soldier. They are called sources because most of them are resources that the Earth makes naturally." He paces and looks at us as he talks, before hitting the board again.

"Lightning, Earth, fire, water, wind, healing, and regeneration. These are the sources us humans can harness and use. Once you are assigned a source, you will be injected with the bone marrow of an Alphanian who once had that source. This will jumpstart your body into making that blood yourself."

"We know all this! Geez!" Someone cuts him off. He sighs.

"Fine." He wipes the board clean and writes 'Alphanians' at the top. "Let's talk about our enemy instead." He continues talking.

"Alphanians. Human-looking people. They look and act like humans, they started as humans, but then they got sources. There was a planet in space called Alpha. The Alphanians lived there until they destroyed their planet in war. They then came here, looking for more war, because that is all they know. Since they started a war so big, the entire human race has to fight, yet is still losing, so we have a law. Everyone 13 and up, unless they have kids under 13, have to join the military. Anyway," He sighs. "The Alphanians have sources, and are born with them. The sources they can be born with are..."

"Lightning, Earth, fire, water, wind, healing, regeneration, shapeshifting, shadow manipulation, mind manipulation, light manipulation, smoke, telepathy, nature, weather, blood manipulation, teleportation, and super senses." He writes it on the board as he talks.

"Why do we not have all of those ones too then?" One boy asks.

"What's the difference between Earth and nature?" Another asks.

"Yeah, and isn't weather part of wind or earth?" A girl asks.

"What is blood manipulation?" More questions are shot to me and right.

"Calam down. One at a time. First, we don't have all of them because some are so rare that we don't have any bone marrow of it, or there isn't enough to give to people. Second, Earth is rocks, dirt, clouds etcetera, and nature is flowers, trees, etcetera. Third, weather is changing the weather, technically yes, you can make it more windy or move clouds to make it cloudy with wind or Earth, but you can't make it rain, or thunder, or any of that other jazz. Lastly, blood manipulation is exactly what it sounds like. If you cut someone, then touch their blood, you can manipulate it. Make it hard, move it, stop it from moving. Things like that." He finishes his explanations.

"Then, there are also things like Anacias. Anacias are people that have both human and Alphanian blood running through their veins.

The difference between them and people who got injected with the bone marrow of an Alphanian, is that they don't need Alphanian bone marrow to have sources. They also were never injected with the bone marrow. The bone marrow we are injected with only produces a certain type of blood, which is different from straight Alphanian blood. However, Anacias have straight Alphanian blood. They are traitors and are to be killed." He looks at me and Avia as if he knows something. Shivers go up my spine.

He doesn't know, does he?

When me and Avia were in the lab, our father did experiments on us. One of them was him trying to turn us into Anacias. It worked. Me and Avia both have Alphanian blood running through our veins. Our other siblings do too. Pierce has the source of blood manipulation,

Avia has nature, and I have shapeshifting. Something went wrong when they turned me into an Anacia though, and now I can't use my shapeshifting too much, or else I get seizures and my eyes bleed.

"Well, our time is about up. Go ahead and leave." He stops pacing and puts his hands on an old and creaky desk, breaking eye contact with me.

"Hurry Avia, we need to talk before training starts again." I whisper. She follows me into our room then into the bathroom.

"We keep training like this for a few weeks, we stock up on food, only eating half our food, and saving what won't go bad. Then we plan, and look for escape routes. Okay?" I whisper as I close the door behind us.

"Okay." She nods firmly.

"Let's go."