

Chapter 1

"Today's the day huh?" Although it wasn't anything much, I instantly regret the moment those words left my mouth. If it was any other day, maybe it would have been fine, but not today.

July 4th. A day filled with double freedom as the history books teach us. Our first freedom was the independence from a place that used to be called Great Britain. The second is the reason today is so special. Today marks the 21st anniversary in fact.

"It's a beautiful sky isn't it?"

I turn to the sound of a familiar voice, and see a pair of blue eyes shining back. I allow my lips to curve into a small smile at the girl who proceeds to sit next to me. I nod at her. Cynthia Chen: daughter of a nurse and a therapist, able to read people, a Blue. She's probably the most tolerable Blue I have ever met. Most Blues are overly friendly and in some cases, kiss-ups, just everything that Cynthia isn't. Cynthia is friendly but isn't overwhelmingly so and is sassier than most Blues. She knows what to say, when to say it, and how to help. I have never met a person so fitting of their race.

"Yeah, sorry. I was just thinking. Let's go." She smiles back before taking my hand and dragging me in the direction of the seats. When it's time to split and go to our separate seats, she turns around to face me and for a split second her face is clouded in worry. She didn't even give me a chance to process if it was truly there or not before she was back to her normal carefree and cheery state.

"Please be careful out there. They're human too." She whispered the last part before letting go of my hand and running off into her assigned section. As with everything else, the seats were sectioned off by rank. Reds and Blues are on the higher balcony, with Reds on the right and Blues on the left, and Yellows are on the lower balcony. I scoff before going to find my assigned section. Even though Cynthia is my best friend, she's still a sympathetic Blue. Something that could get you killed these days.

"Human? Yeah, right." I muttered to myself. I walk up to the Shadow that is guarding the section.

"Name?"

"Aileas Leviten."

"Age?"

"18."

"ID." She doesn't ask for it but rather demands it. I am used to it, so, I pull my lanyard from under my shirt as usual and she quickly scans it before letting me in. I enter my section and find a seat in the front so I could see who was chosen clearly. As soon as I sit down, I hear someone plop down in the seat to my right, followed by a sigh. I turn to lock my eyes with green and red. Kain Pierce. Why am I not surprised? I roll my eyes before turning my attention back to the arena below me trying my best to ignore the presence next to me.

You know the heroes in those old hero comics and novels? The one who would try to rescue you at the risk of himself? The one who would try to befriend everyone no matter what? Well Kain is exactly that. He will get himself in trouble for that over friendly attitude one day and I would rather not be apart of that chaos when it does go down.

"Hey Aileas." Here we go again. Everytime we are in the vicinity of one another, Kain insists on trying to have a conversation with me with that cheerful tone in his voice. I ignore him.

" Happy 4th!"

Ignored.

"Are you excited for today?"

Once again ignored. He sighs and I internally release one too. He was finally finished with bothering me for today.

"I wish you would at least say hi to me for once A-Ali."

That catches my attention and my eyes quickly dart over to him unconsciously. 'Ali', huh? I turn my body towards him, fold my arms and cross my legs masking my confusion with an air of indifference. Kain hadn't call me Ali in ten years. No matter how many times he tried to get my attention, he never once called me by my old nickname. Why now? Why are his eyes so sad? Why did he stutter when called that name?

"How may I help you Mr. Pierce?" Keep your calm and respond as if he didn't say anything.

"Ali, I know you resent me from what happened 10 years ago but--"

"How may I help you Mr. Pierce?" I cut him off. I don't need him telling me how much he 'knows' me and how much he wishes he could go back to that day and all that bullshit. What happened, happened and right now I'd rather not be reminded of that.

"Ali--"

"My name is Aileas, Mr. Pierce. I am giving you the utmost respect, the *least* you could do is call me by my name." Maintain that distance that you had created. If not, all is for naught.

"Ali, would you just--"

"I believe I told you that my name is Aileas and I would prefer to be called by--"

"Would you god damn just listen to me for once *Aileas!*? Is it so hard for you to come off your high stool for one single second and just listen to me!?" The screaming attracted the attention of the rest of the Reds who were already there as well as a Shadow checking to see what the commotion was about. The Red viewing area was so quiet, that you could hear everyone's breathing. Surprisingly, however, I wasn't paying attention to that. I was paying attention to Kain's breathing. Ragged and gasping for air. Paying more attention to the hot angry tears that rolled down Kain's cheek. He took a breath trying to get some air back into his lungs.

"If you can't do at *least* that, then... then..." he was rasping, trying to find the right words.

"Then fine, you know what? I'll give you what you want. I'll give you what you want so bad. I no longer know you. I tried Aileas. I tried Scarlet!"

I flinched at the name and intensity behind his words. He sat back down and although we sat beside each other, there was this new wall that divided us. I took a deep breath and placed back my air of indifference. Eventually the people around me went back to whatever they were doing and left me to my thoughts once again.