



Cast of Characters

Khalen (Kay-len) — North America's regional leader of the Grandhun clan; Skye's mate; father to Kaili, Shaiya, Gabrihen, and Zhentu; reaper.

Skye — Khalen's mate; mother to Kaili, Shaiya, Gabrihen, and Zhentu; legendary healer.

Kaili (Ky-lee) — Eldest daughter of Khalen and Skye; animal communicator.

Shaiya (Shy-ya) — Kaili's twin; healer.

Gabrihen (Gay-bre-hen) — Khalen and Skye's eldest son; wizard.

Zhentu (Zhen-tu) — Khalen and Skye's youngest son; wolf shifter.

Seth — Khalen's nephew; leader of the Uig clan; mated to Rae; Elle's templar; reaper.

Connor — Eldest son of Elle; guardian son of Drew; Gabrihen's closest friend; alchemist.

Shifter

Ian — Khalen's closest friend; Aidan's younger brother; mated to Arcadie's daughter, Erika; Sunjia's templar; illusionist.

Aidan — Ian's older brother; Khalen's closest friend; Skye's templar; mated to Sunjia; illusionist.

Arcadie (Ar-cay-dee) — Spirian Elder; mated to Kitta; Skye's uncle; eldest son of Shanuk; elementist.

Case — Khalen's guardian father; Spirian Elder; son of Shanuk, Arcadie's younger brother; mated to Eve; elementist.

Tetris — Gabrihen's teacher; Case's closest friend; third-generation wizard.

Tiban (Ti-ban) — Leader of the Northern territories; Zebastian's father; mated to Shinda; mountain lion shifter.

Shinda — Tiban's mate; mother to Zebastian and deceased son, Carter; fox shifter.

Zebastian — Eldest son of Tiban; wolf and panther shifter, and a reaper.

Ren — Elder; Shanuk's youngest brother; guardian father to Teak; eagle shifter.

Teak — Son of Ren; Zebastian's closest friend; eagle and bear shifter.

Bennet — Shadow leader of North America; evil to the core; elementist.



Prologue

- K a i l i -

OVER FIVE YEARS HAVE PASSED since my brother, Zhentu, was abducted. He's the youngest of my siblings and a shifter.

Not much is known about shifters and why they are so different from other Spirians. It is believed that Fae blood is required to produce shifter offspring. Legend claims that when the first Angels descended from heaven to live as Spirians, they coupled with the Faeries, thus making the Spirian bloodlines strong and diverse in gifts.

Despite my attempt to learn more about shifters, their origin remains a mystery. Unlike typical Spirians, shifters have an animal spirit, making them wild and unpredictable at times. They are stronger than other Spirians, and often struggle to control their instinct to fight. Something about them fascinates me, but I can't say what intrigues me the most. When they shift into their animal form, I feel their thoughts as if they were my own as I do with any animal. It's my gift, though I'm not sure how useful it is.

Shifter

Zhentu's spirit was the wolf. Because shifters' have unique blood, they have gained the attention of the Shadows, dark Angels who seek to imbalance the scales that monitor good and evil.

Bennet Graves, is one such Shadow and a powerful leader who is not used to being thwarted. The rare female for whom he paid a lofty sum became the mate of my Uncle Seth. When Bennet had tried to take her back, my father, Khalen, defeated him in battle. This makes Bennet the prime suspect behind Zhentu's abduction. The Shadow remains recluse, however, and hasn't made any demands. Why?



Chapter 1

- Z e b a s t i a n -

THE FURY IN MY FATHER'S gray eyes sparkled like demons threatening to break free to stab me in the heart. I had not seen him this angry since I was nine when my brother, Carter, and I wandered too far from camp and became lost. It took Father three weeks to track us down. Today, the anger resided deeper, visceral and unrelenting.

"You had one job, Zebastian: keep your brother safe. Now I discover that it was you who killed him—to save yourself?"

He paced before me, eyes narrowed, mouth held firm and straight—his pondering stance, a posture he took when making a tough but necessary decision.

"Your actions portray those of the Shadows, and are unforgivable."

"Father, I—"

As clan leader, he harnessed the ability to bind people in an energetic hold that could kill if necessary. The pain of it now gripped me like the claws of his shifter animal, the mountain lion. I couldn't breathe, let alone explain.

Shifter

Even if I could explain, my father spoke truth. Carter lay dead, his blood still sharp in my throat. No longer able to hold myself up, I sank to the ground, grateful to land on the cold snow-covered surface.

When Carter and I escaped from the group of Shadows who took us twelve years past, the rage took over, darkening my soul to match that of our torturous captors. The only memory remaining was my brother's throat in my mouth, his copper-tasting blood coating my tongue.

"You have disappointed me, Zebastian. I was wrong about you." Father's energetic hold choked my air and constricted my organs, but hearing the words he spoke hurt like the lash of a soaked bull whip over and over as it tore through my soul, ripping the flesh of my pride.

My father meant everything to me. He had trained me to lead this clan since the time I could walk. Now, I had let him down, being every bit the monster he claimed me to be.

"I ban you from this clan, Zebastian. You are no longer—my son."

Death held mercy, but this—this was unbearable.

"No, Tiban!" Mother screamed. "You can't."

Ren, our clan elder, held her back. "Stay back, Shinda, leave him be for now." He was a man of stature in his own right, adoptive father of my closest friend, Teak.

The elder had led this clan for many years before relinquishing it to Father. Pain laced Ren's voice, yet he supported Father's decree, pulling my mother back, keeping her from reaching me. Red hair clung to her tear-soaked face as trembling hands reached toward me. Her image etched my memory; the last I would see of her—the last I would see of our home in Canada.

Father turned to step away, then hesitated to add, “You are Khalen’s problem now. He will address your Shadow soul as he sees fit.”

Father’s regal, departing form blurred through my tears. My spirit wavered, teetering on the brink of desertion. I had been banished, removed from my clan. At twenty-four, I would not survive for long.

As Father so bluntly pointed out, I was Khalen Dunning’s problem now. The regional leader of North America had a reputation—all bad if you were considered a Shadow. He made Father’s wrath seem like a hand slap.

Teak reached down to lift me.

“Take him,” Ren ordered. “Stay with him. Keep him safe.”

