



The musty-sweet odor of concrete irritates my nostrils as I wait for the elevator doors in the parking garage to open.

“Mr. Greenstone?” I ask each time a man emerges. I worry one of them will recognize me, even though the hood on my navy blue windbreaker covers most of my face.

On the fifth opening, a stocky forty-something man dressed in a gray seersucker suit, bolo tie, and cowboy hat responds, “Yes?”

I pause until the three women who rode the elevator with him are out of earshot.

“I’m Bere Baudin,” I whisper, lowering the hood.

His broad face is expressionless, so I assume he doesn’t recognize me.

“What can I do for you, Mr. Baudin?”

My heart is pounding so hard I can feel it in my fingertips. I draw a deep breath. “I — I want you to kill me.”

Greenstone stiffens his posture. “You what?”

I glance around to see if anyone heard him. “Would you kill me, please?”

He shrugs. "I'm sorry. You have the wrong person. I'm a stockbroker, not a killer. But I can refer you to a good therapist."

I chuckle. "Sorry, I should have mentioned that my father, Bryce Baudin, referred me to you."

"The professor?"

I nod, relieved he remembered my dad.

"How is he?" Greenstone asks.

"Missing."

"What?" Greenstone's brow furrows.

"My grandma and I haven't heard from him in a couple of days. But he gave me a message to give to you." I lean toward Greenstone and whisper in his ear, "'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains.' Now will you kill me, Mr. Greenstone?"