

Poppy POV

As soon as we walked out of the door, I saw Professor Megan along with Professor Nag glaring at me. There were a few more staff standing behind them. None of them spoke a word but they surrounded Damon and Monica and hurried them to the campus health center.

"You!" Professor Megan hollered me. "Meet me at the principal's office in fifteen minutes!"

Anxiety came as an electrical storm in my brain and surged intensely in my body. I took a ragged breath as panic bubbled inside my chest. I would be okay if Professor Megan would just scold me, but I was afraid that the repercussions could be severe. I could be beaten because I had, after all, hurt Damon Lombard's fiancée.

I lifted my eyes to look at Chris who had a smirk on his face. He gave me a half salute and then walked smugly to the men's locker rooms to change. I trudged slowly over to the girls' locker room, every step feeling like a burden. I really wanted to get out of this place as soon as possible.

Fifteen minutes later, I was standing in the principal's room with almost every other staff member sending daggers at me. The principal's secretary, a young shifter, snickered, "So much attitude! She had the guts to go against the rules!"

Another one of her colleagues whispered, "She must be jealous of Monica." They laughed. "All girls want to be in her shoes. She has the hottest shifter as her betrothed. I hope Madam Lowe throws her in the dungeons for several days without food."

I balled my fists on my side. I wanted to lash at them and say I had no interest in Damon Lombard, but I controlled myself. They were all on the payroll of the Umbra pack. They wouldn't hear a word against him. I was soon called inside the principal's office. With my breath lodged in my throat, I entered and came face to face with a very stern expression of Madam Arwen Lowe. She was glaring at me so fiercely with her dark eyes that I clenched my teeth to stop shivering.



"You have broken the rules, Poppy. You were asked not to draw blood, yet you defied the order. You are so new and you have already shown your true colors?" she said in a low, menacing voice. "Do you know who you injured? That is Monica Dawson, Damon Lombard's betrothed. No one and I mean no one is allowed to even touch her and yet you managed to injure her! The Umbras are going to come after me if I don't deal with it right now."

"But Ma'am—"

"Shut up!" she shouted as she rose up, her voice booming in the small office. She slapped her hands on the table. "I should throw you in the dungeons and whip you till you come to your senses, but I won't!" She crossed her arms across her chest. "I am going to give you a worse punishment. You will be disqualified from this test and I am going to suspend you for two days. You are not allowed to enter the classrooms! If I see you sneaking inside, I will increase the time of your suspension. And—" she gave me another harsh glare. "I will inform your grandfather about your insolence!"

Stunned, I stared at her in silence. She didn't even want to listen to me. It was as if I had committed a heinous crime.

"Now get out!" she pointed at the door. "And don't show your face!"

With shame weighing on my shoulders, I turned to leave. Perhaps this was how the Moon Goddess wanted it. As soon as I opened the door, I saw a group standing near it and listening to the conversation. They dispersed immediately but not without scowling at me. I was sure I had become the villain of the Umbra Academy.

"Isn't that good?" Anna said as I was packing my bag. "Now you can easily sneak out!" she giggled.

Anna was such an optimist. "I know that Monica cheated," I cried, gulping down my tears. "This is humiliating."

Anna came and hugged me from behind. "I am so sorry about it, Poppy, but if it makes you feel any better, Monica is a bitch. I think she was extremely jealous that you were paired with Damon."



"But why is she jealous? I mean she is betrothed to him. He is practically hers." Even saying that kind of sliced through my heart. Stupid me. I smacked myself internally, wallowing in my misery.

"Forget her!" Anna said and squeezed me tightly. "I have some good news for you." She lowered her voice and whispered, "I have managed to bribe a guard of the main gate. He is asking for two thousand dollars, but he said that there would be a change of duty and there would be no one from 8AM to 8:05 AM. That would be your sweet time!"

I spun to see her. "Only five minutes?" Goosebumps lined my skin out of pure excitement mingled with fear. Would I be able to escape in that much time? And two thousand dollars for only this much?

Anna shrugged. "This was the best I could do. No one has ever escaped the Umbra Academy. It is warded pretty heavily by the spells, but the guards have access to the spells. Every shift the spells change and new spells are cast around it. It takes only five minutes to cast the new spells. Soooo... you only have five minutes!"

"Goddess!" A shiver ran down my body. I had to do it in five minutes. This was my only chance and I couldn't waste it in a million years. "I will go for it!"

Anna grinned. "Then get ready for the frat party. We are going to enjoy your last night in the Umbra Academy!"

I hugged Anna tightly. "I will miss you."

"I will miss you too, bitch!"

By 9PM, I had memorized whatever Anna asked me to do to run away, yet I was nervous. A thousand knots twisted in my stomach at the thought of it.

"What the hell are you wearing?" Anna squeaked, snapping me out of my reverie. She was holding two black dresses in her hands.



I looked at my long A-line green dress. "What? This is fine."

"Jeez! You need a total makeover."

"Anna, no!" I protested, but she had come right next to me by then. "Wear this one," she ordered, shoving a little black dress on my chest. "You are not going in that burlap sack." She rolled her eyes. "Gandal will be coming in half an hour." She turned to leave as I fretted. "Oh, by the way, you have become popular, bitch!" She giggled. And I giggled with her.

I was aghast when I looked at myself in the mirror after wearing the dress.

