

Poppy POV

My house wasn't so big, but it turned out that it had two passageways. "Goddess, I feel like these go to some crypt!" My voice boomed when we opened the door of the tunnel that was in James' room.

Damon and I were searching his room for any clue on his business. We were specifically looking for diaries or folders or papers. Almost anything, but his room was very bland. Other than a closet and a writing table, there was a big four poster bed. The last time I entered this room was when I was only nine and that too because he was ill and he had called me. I don't remember the reason though.

We searched his writing table and the closet, picked up the mattress and wondered if there were any secret compartments, but there were none. If Anna hadn't used her magic, we would have never come to know about the secret door that blended with the wall paper of his room. I pushed open the door and a musty smell blasted in my face.

I started going down the stairs as Damon flashed a torch to show me the way. The stairs ended in a basement. "Wow!" I said in a breathy voice as I scanned the area. "I never knew it existed."

As Damon flashed the torchlight around, I saw that the place was covered with white sheets and for a basement that I thought was forgotten and must be filled with spider webs and dust, the entire

place was... neat. It was like someone had cleaned it just yesterday. Carefully, I stepped towards whatever was hidden beneath the sheets.

With a bated breath, I pulled one out and saw a couch beneath it. "What the hell!" I was irritated because I wasn't shocked. I was expecting a treasure trove or something in gold, but all I got was a couch.

"Why don't you pull out all the sheets?" Damon suggested with a chuckle.

I pursed my lips and pulled them all out. There was only furniture. I sat down on a leather sofa and grunted. "So much for the basement! Why would James have a basement filled with furniture? This is so ridiculous!" I scanned every piece of furniture as Damon and Anna admired the craft of the wooden furniture. All of a sudden, something flashed in my mind. I jerked my head back and gasped.

"Poppy, your eyes flashed golden!" Anna pointed, shocked.

Ignoring her words, I pressed my hand on the couch and then bobbed my hips. Something clinked. I pressed it further and more stuff squeaked and clinked. My heart sped as I clenched my jaw. I clawed the couch even as Damon and Anna protested because according to them, I was clawing at very expensive fabric.

I stripped the couch of its fabric and then the sponge, ultimately reaching... nothing. In frustration I kicked the couch with my boot. It hit the wall and cracked and the metal clinked again. With my

breath lodged in my throat, I stepped closer and saw a small box at the bottom. I detached the box from there and opened it. "There's a bloody key in it," I announced. "Could James be any more dramatic?" I growled as I held the little gold key, the size of my thumb, at my eye level.

Anna laughed. She came to stand behind me and remarked, "I feel like Nancy Drew."

"What does this key do?" I was bewildered.

"Let's try and open every lock here and also in your house," Damon proposed.

"Hmm..." I rubbed the back of my neck, feeling too tired. I tried the key on every lock but it didn't fit anywhere. Eventually, we just gave up and came back to my room and Anna retired to hers. As we both lay beside each other, covered in blankets, I wondered, "What is that key for?" Damon had put it in a chain and made me wear it.

Damon stroked my hair. "Sleep, Poppy. We will think about it tomorrow."

I buried my face in his chest and went off to sleep. I was too tired to bat an eyelid also.

On the computer was a folder that had names of every pack member and their history. Based on that I called five wolves to form my own council. Jose, James' gamma was also there, but I told him clearly that I won't be using his services. Though I asked

his son, Cole, to come and join the council. These five people were the only trusted ones with no criminal history. I wanted a clean pack who was more focused on protecting itself rather than getting in the politics of other packs.

Very important matters were discussed and I assigned them all their duties, but I still didn't have my Beta. And that was the most important position. Had Sinclair behaved, I would have made him the Beta but he turned out to be a greedy mutt.

"Maybe, you should hold trials for Beta selection?" Damon said over lunch.

My brows furrowed. It wasn't a bad idea at all.

"Yes, that's a great idea!" Anna chimed in.

I pinched my brow. "Okay... I will have to make a list of potential candidates."

"Make that list and hold the trials in the evening," he said.

"That would be too early... I will hold the trials next month."

"But you are coming with me tomorrow, Poppy!" Damon almost growled.

"I will come with you, and it's not that I will be waiting for a month over here, but that doesn't mean that the trials can't be held a

month later.”

My words calmed him. “And until then?”

“Do you have anyone to help me out here?” I asked politely. I could use all the help.

“Of course!” Damon beamed with a smile. “I can depute a few wolves to come and stay here.”

“Wonderful!” I said. I trusted his men. My pack members couldn’t be left alone at this time. “Did you call Nash Dawson?” I asked a few moments later.

“Nope!” he gritted. “But I have sent my spies there.”

After lunch, I decided to go to my parents’ room on a hunch.