

## Poppy POV

"No, I can't go back!" I said in a voice filled with terror. "I don't want to." How could I tell Damon that I was wolf-less and that my grandfather sent me to the Umbra Academy to be killed eventually? It would paint me so weak.

Damon looked out of the window at the dark trees that were passing in the blur. The gibbous moon had risen in the sky, trying its best to dazzle the night. It looked like he was tamping his anger down. He sucked in sharp air and turned his intense gaze at me. "You don't have an option, Poppy," he said in a low, lethal voice. "You are coming back with me. If you won't, I will report to the security of the academy and that is for sure. So you only have one option—come back willingly. Else—"

"You are threatening me!" I spat. I wanted to slap him right across the face. I had looked forward to escaping from so long. It was like a dream come true and here he was—trying to pull me back in the misery I wanted to abandon. "I will not come with you. Go ahead and tell the security. I don't care!" I crossed my hands across my chest in that stubborn manner and gazed at him with barely controllable anger. Something snapped inside me. He could do whatever he liked. I was going to fight my freedom.

Damon shifted in his seat restlessly. He narrowed his gaze on me and said, "Then you leave me with no choice. I will have to physically take you back."

"What?" I retorted in disbelief. "Have you gone insane? You can't just take me like this!"

"Watch me," he said in an ice-cold voice.

The next I knew was that he got up and hauled me over his shoulder at lightning speed. My bun opened and the hair spilled down, my cap flying to the floor. He grabbed me under my thighs in a vise-like grip.

I squealed and fisted his back as hard as possible but it was like hitting a rock. "Put

me down!" I shouted. "Help!" I looked at the humans who seemed too scared to move from their places. "Help me!" I shouted again.

He was so intimidating that he growled at all of them as if accepting the challenge to fight with them, and goddess! I knew on an instinctive level that he was going to kill them if they stopped.

"Put me down!" I punched him on his back. "You are practically abducting me!"

He slapped my ass tightly. Pain slashed across along with delightful tingles that made my toes curl. What was wrong with me? I clenched my ass.

A brave soul got up. "Leave the girl!" he said. "Else we are going to report you! The police will get here and you will be taken to jail."

Damon hissed at him. "Fuck off!"

The man was riled up with his attitude. He got up and attacked Damon, but before he could get a few feet within him, Damon punched him hard on his chest. The man landed some twenty feet away, crashing against a few more people who all screamed and watched him in terror. Damon peeled his lips and with bloodshot eyes looked at all of them. They cowered under his gaze and he walked to the exit without interruption.

"Put me down, please," I pleaded. "I really can't go back. You won't understand." Tears ran down my eyes as all my defiance turned into pleas.

He didn't listen to me. I tried harder to get out of his grasp, but my strength was nothing in front of him. It wasn't the first time I felt weak, but it was the first time I felt so helpless and miserable.

He opened the door of the train. It was running at a very high speed. He jumped off the train as I screamed in horror, but he landed on his feet nimbly and rolled away from it. Dizziness got over me and I closed my eyes, bracing for the impact. But his hands were wrapped around me protectively and when we stopped rolling, I could feel that I was on him, over the rock-hard muscles of his chest and torso. The train





sped away, taking away my dreams with it.

Adrenalin gushed through me like a tsunami. I was panting and breathing heavily. I had never come across a situation like this. It took a long time for me to stop panting. He remained still till I lifted my head. I saw that we were lying surrounded by dandelions and tall grass. Realization hit me in the gut like a hammer. All my plans, all my efforts to earn money, had washed down the drain in just a few minutes. All because of the bloated ego of the wolf called Damon Lombard.

Panic turned into rage. I got up on him. My knees straddled his thighs. Anger blasted inside me and started hitting him with my small fists. "I hate you! I hate you!" I continued to bawl as I landed punches upon punches on his chest, his shoulders and his stomach. "This was my chance and you snatched it from me!" He took all my punches quietly, his hands on my thighs, his knees bent behind my back. When I ran out of energy, I closed my face and rested on his thighs and started crying uncontrollably.

Damon didn't do anything but he continued to watch me cry. I think he was watching whether I was trying to flee or not. But honestly, I didn't have the energy left to escape. I cried and cried until I couldn't. I don't know how long after, but he got up and picked up my satchel from the side. He took out the bottle of water and gave it to me. "Have it," he said. "We have a long way to go back."

I didn't want to talk to him. I took the bottle from him and gulped down half of it. While I had it, he curled his strong arm around my waist to support my weight on his thighs so that I didn't fall down. "Are you ready to go back?" he asked.

"No!" I replied grumpily.

He took a deep breath in. "I am going to shift. My wolf is fast. If you try to run away from him, he won't like it." There was a warning in those words. "So climb my back and hold me tight."

And Damon shifted.