

## Chapter 4

Why did I feel that I was being watched? I had this feeling every time I came out of my dorm. Ever since I had come from my pack, I jogged at night when the moon was up in the sky. The cool rays of the moon calmed my frayed nerves. But this feeling was unnerving. Every damn night.

Tonight, while I was running, I stopped. The hair at the back of my nape rose and I snapped my head in all directions, perceiving danger. I think I was just imagining. I sank to my knees to the ground with a sigh. Looking up, I let out my usual plea to the Moon Goddess. "Please Moon Goddess, let my wolf out..."

Suddenly, I hear a twig crunching. Scared of the unknown, I bolted up and rushed out of the woods. Goddess, who was stalking me? When I reached my dorm, I stopped bending over by supporting my hands over my thighs. Panting, I looked around and didn't see anyone there. Quickly I walked into my dorm.

I chuckled when I saw my chubby little room mate Anna, who was a witch. Her hair was a beautiful shade of chocolate brown yesterday but today they were green. With a round face and two dimples on both her cheeks, she was adorable.

"You look nervous, Poppy," she said as she looked at me, lifting her nail pain in the air. She shook it a little and its color changed from brown to green.

I scratched the back of my neck, willing myself to calm down. I shook my head to shove the ominous feeling. "It's nothing." I breathed and headed for a shower.

"I've made some sandwiches for you if you like!" I heard her high pitched voice behind me.

Gosh, she was really a sweetheart. I grabbed a sandwich and prepared a cup of tea that Hilda had given me and then wen to take a nice long bath.

Over the past three days, I've been here, and she and I had become close friends. After taking a quick shower, I headed to the library, where I spent most evenings. I didn't want to mingle with others because I didn't want them to know that I was weak and wolf-less. I just needed a few more days to figure out how to escape to the human world. I figured out that the cash that Hilda had given me wasn't enough. It was only three thousand dollars. I needed to work somewhere for more. But where? This school was like a fortress and I needed a ticket out.

The smell of dust, paper, leather and ink invaded my senses the moment I opened the door of the library. A loud thud caught my attention and I saw that a girl had dropped her books on the rug. She glared at me as if I was responsible for it. Quickly, I made my way to the end of the library where I knew I would find the books on shifter history.

When I was alone there, I swear I could feel someone watching me. Again. The hair on my nape rose in a warning as a shiver danced down my body. I didn't want another shifter to take me to a dark corner and beat the shit out of me just because I was weak. So, I took the book and moved to where the witches were seated. No one even lifted their eyes to acknowledge me. Great.

"Did you know tonight the Umbra Wolves would be holding their party?" murmured one who was seated a few chairs away from me to her friend.

"Tonight?" her friend squealed.

"Keep it down, Nellie!"

Nellie whispered. "Tonight?"

"Yes! And unfortunately, I can't help at the bar. Can you go instead of me?"

Nellie's mouth downturned. "I can't, Jacky..."

“The cash is good. The man who owns the bar gives two grand for a few hours. All you have to do is serve them with drinks. You take the cash. And not to mention that you will get heavy tips.”

“Why would I need money, Jacky?” Nellie shrugged. “I would have gone to the bar, but then, what’s the fun? I would rather be with those wolves than get bored at the ar. That party is hosted once a month and people barely get the invite. I am going to coax my boyfriend to get one. He has contacts.”

Jacky pursed her lips tightly, looking helplessly around at other witches, but no one responded.

I kept my eyes low but the conversation caught my attention. I felt like this was my ticket out. With another two thousand dollars, I was sure I would be able to bribe the gatekeeper and get out of the Umbra School. But Hilda had said that the Umbra wolves were dangerous. What if they scented that I was wolf-less and killed me right there? Tremor of anticipation coiled down my spine. Suddenly, an idea struck me. I raised my hand and said, “I can help...”

The two witches narrowed their eyes on me. I was sure they were thinking that I was asking for a free entry to the party.

“Shhh!” The librarian’s harsh voice sounded and we became quiet.

“Come out,” said Jacky after a few minutes of awkward silence.

Anna had cast the spell on me so that no one could smell that I was.. weak. She had coated me with a sublime scent of citrus. Jacky had asked me to come to the basement of the only coffee shop that the Umbra School had.

“Remember not to look into the eyes of any wolf out there. They are very dark and feral,” Jacky said as she handed me an I-card. “The owner, Joey is a hard-task master tough soft in the center. Make sure that you don’t get into any argument and just keep doing your work.”

I exhaled roughly as I pinned the card to my dress, a black shirt and black pants. "Sure," I replied shakily. My decision to go there wavered by every second.

"You are never to reveal about this party to anyone, okay?" Jacky warned me. "Not many know. If you are seen talking about it on campus, you will be thrown out or—" her gaze darted between my eyes, "—you will be killed."

"How do you and Nellie know about it?" That was my natural question.

She chuckled. "We are cousin sisters and belong to the royal family of the Infinity Coven."

I stifled a gasp. Infinity Coven was the strongest witch coven with its headquarters in New York.

"Stay safe," she said in the end as she left me in front of the coffee shop.

I clenched my teeth. I looked up as the clouds darkened. The scent of rain filled the air. In the distance, the warning of thunder rumbled. And I stepped in. I had no experience of waiting at tables.

Two burly shifters were standing guard at the entrance. One looked at my ID and nodded while the other stamped at the back of my hand. "That way," he pointed and I hurried to a spiral staircase. It was so dark and eerie that.

I had to feel my way down but the more I descended, the more I could hear loud chatting, muffled music and beats of drums.

I reached the landing and opened the heavy double panel door. A burst of blinding light, blaring music and lots of entangled bodies hit my vision in a large room. A shiver ran down my spine. This place was full of debauchery and then some more.