

## Poppy POV

With a roar that shook the cage walls, Damon landed blows upon blows in retaliation upon Gandal. Gandal was now winded out. And then I understood that Damon had made him tired. He had calculated Gandal's energy and enthusiasm to defeat him and then Damon had used it all against him. And while he was calculating it all coldly, he was letting punch him, let him think that he had an upper hand. Why? Because he knew that the more your hopes rise, the harder they crash when things don't go your way.

For the first time I realized that Damon was a cold, calculating, big bad wolf and I was about to fall in his trap.

At first, Gandal saved himself by keeping his hands in the front, but then he couldn't sustain the barrage of punches from Damon. Slowly, he started to backtrack as Damon beat the shit out of him. Eventually, Gandal couldn't take it anymore and he slipped to the ground.

"Do you want more?" Damon shouted at him as he spat blood. His face was cut at so many places that I felt like crying. One eye was already swollen shut. He was towering over Gandal like death.

Gandal stirred a little and then passed out. There was a stunned silence in the room and then Joey opened the cage



doors. He took Damon's hand in his and raised it up. "Ladies and gentlemen," Joey said with a grin. "We have our winner here! You can collect your betting money from the counter!" And that brought a wave of cheer in the room.

Anna was jumping out of pure joy because the witch was smart. She had put a lot of money on Damon. Her coven members were also cheering for Damon. The only people who were unhappy were the members of the Norse Pack. They slapped the money in Joey's hand and made their way out of there.

As for me, I stood there dumbfounded, watching Damon exit the cage, watching him glowering at Gandal, watching him coming to me. Damon had sealed my fate. Instead of going to the washroom to clean up all the blood, he came to me, and pointing at the bracelet, he growled, "Give me your hand."

I was shuddering like a dry leaf. When I lifted my shaky hand, he grasped it, yanked the diamond bracelet off it and tossed it inside the cage. It landed right on Gandal's chest.

Damon grabbed my wrist and pulled me out from the cheering crowd towards the bathroom. From the corner of my vision, I saw Monica. I froze in my spot when I found her glaring at me and if looks could kill, she would have killed me with sharp edged knives already.

Damon followed the line of my vision. He narrowed his eyes

on Monica and then tugged me towards the bathroom. When we were inside, the lone girl who was applying lipstick, scurried. He closed the door behind her and left my wrist. He picked up a towel and gave it to me silently asking me to wipe the blood from his face.

I poured cold water on the towel, wrung it and started wiping the blood from his face. He had too many bruises. His lips were split. The skin on his forehead and cheeks had ruptured. There was blood coated on his teeth and one eye was swollen shut. There were many cuts on his chest and biceps.

Something in my chest twisted. Was it pain? As I started wiping his face, he stared at me with one open eye so intensely that I started burning. "You remember the bet, don't you?"

I didn't reply and continued to wipe him. The forehead; the temple... the...

He curled his fingers below my chin and lifted it up. "Let me remind you then." I stopped wiping him as my lips parted and our gazes locked. "You will be staying with me in my apartment permanently."

I let out a ragged breath trying to face the reality of the situation. A bet that sealed my fate or catapulted me towards a new future. But— "What are we doing, Damon?" I asked. This question was inevitable.



His hand went lower to my throat where he caressed my pulse point. Delightful tingles ran down my body and my toes curled. Yet another wave of heat crashed in me and I am sure that it showed on my face.

"You tell me, dove," he said in a low voice that was full of lust and need. "What are we doing?"

"Surely, something forbidden." Forbidden fruit was enticing.

He didn't reply. His gaze went to my lips and then to my pulse point. I didn't dare to look down but the heat that radiated off him was enough to let me know that he was erect. He trailed a path to my arms and then wrapping his strong arm around my waist, he pulled me towards him. His hard cock rested against my belly like a brand.

Resting my one hand on his chest, I started to wipe the blood from his face as gently as possible. "Something so forbidden that it may turn out to be scandalous," I added.

His hand went down to my hips and he squeezed it. I gasped, my heat killing me on the inside. Goddess, please let me get over with my heats in a dignified manner.

"Scandalous, forbidden— you can give whatever name you like, but I am only trying to flush you out of my system."

Rage bubbled inside my chest. I looked at his bruises and

cuts and said, "Seems like you are making quite an effort!"

His lips lifted into a smile for a fraction of a second and disappeared immediately. "So about the bet. You will not be staying anywhere else other than my apartment. And you will not be dating anyone else."

"What? That is ridiculous!" I pressed on his split lips to make him feel the pain. He hissed. "The bet was to live in your apartment but there was no bet on who I could date."

His chest vibrated with a deep rumble. He squeezed my hips painfully and leaned over my ear. He said—