

Poppy POV

It was a relief that I had come out with Anna to the main market. It was situated two miles away from Umbra Academy and catered mostly to the shifters, witches and other supernatural beings. Humans didn't know that this market existed because the witches had covered it with layers of magic.

We were both sitting under an alfresco bar, sipping coffee. She had done lots of shopping and it was mainly the books and wands. As for me, I ended up buying one dress. Ever since I had come to the academy, my grandfather would send me the allowance which was a paltry sum that covered very little extra expenses. So one dress it was. Anna insisted that I buy more because she had money, but what was the use? I didn't want anyone to pity me.

All the while we were shopping, Anna talked about her sexcapades with shifters and warlocks and tried to explain to me the difference between her encounters. Honestly, it was so hard to focus on what she was saying because of what happened with me last night and then in the morning.

"So what is going on, Poppy?" Anna asked. "You've been so quiet while I am practically blabbering about my sex life."

I don't know what was going on. Why was I so bothered

about Damon when every logical part inside me screamed that I was treading on very dangerous grounds. "All this..." I looked away. "The thing with Damon... it's just a mess."

"Then get out of it!" she shrugged. "It's that simple. "Why get into a mess and complicate your life when there are simpler options?"

"It's not that simple..." I sipped my coffee. I missed my tea. I hadn't had it for the last few days.

"Do you have feelings for him? I hope you aren't serious about Damon. He was practically the academy's playboy and is Monica's betrothed."

"Well, he has blocked Monica's number."

Her mouth fell to the floor. "Oh. My. God."

I shook my head. "I have no idea what to feel about him. There is so much bad about him, yet I— I—" I didn't want to admit that I was strongly attracted to him and that he and I had sex yesterday. Thinking about him made me clench my thighs.

Anna sipped coffee while she stared at me to finish my sentence. When I didn't, she said, "Poppy, while I am no relationship expert, there are too many red flags in this relationship. However, if you feel for him, maybe you

shouldn't fight tooth and nail against your feelings. He was the academy's playboy but when I see him around you, I see that he has eyes only for you and over the last few days, I have heard that he hasn't seen or talked to any other girl. You have become popular in the academy as the girl who he won in a bet. Because Damon is not the type who would fight a match for a bet on a girl. I mean why would he? Every girl out there wants to be his girlfriend."

I took a ragged breath. This situation was only going to lead to a broken heart. "I don't think that Damon is the man for me. He would never be able to be faithful to me. And it's not because he wants to be, it's because we belong to enemy packs." Tears stung at the back of my eyes just thinking that I won't be with him forever.

"I think this phase will get over soon and our relationship will convert into friendship."

"You will be friends with Damon?" Anna said, her eyes mocking a surprise. Then she tipped her head up and laughed. "You both can never be friends. The way he looks at you is like he would rip apart anyone who messes with you."

I scratched the back of my neck as a smile tugged my lips up. Yes, he was becoming too protective about me and that was confusing me as hell. I think I should safely blame it on the heats.

"You know what?" Anna said, thumping the table. "Let's go to

the parlor and get our hair and makeup done!"

I chuckled. "Yes, that is going to clear my mind."

Just as we were picking up our bags and going to get our makeup done, I saw a familiar figure darting in my direction. "Damon?" Shocked, I froze in my place while Anna turned sharply to look at him.

He came and stood in front of me, panting, with his hands on his waist. He glanced at Anna and then his gaze fixed on me. "Why didn't you say that you were coming to the market?" he growled. "I came to fetch you after the class and you weren't there?" He looked so dangerous that he looked like he could kill people. His muscles had bulged and there was a menacing aura all around him. "How dare you get out of the academy without telling me? Are you again trying to escape from me?"

Was he finding me? And what did he mean by saying 'escape from him'? "I..."

He closed the little gap between us and grabbed my waist. "Don't you fucking disappear on me? Do you get that?" His eyes flickered golden as if his wolf was trying to come out.

I lifted my face to meet his gaze, totally dumbfounded. My eyes rounded at the corner when I realized that his aura wasn't menacing. His panicked eyes met mine. His heart thundered against mine. A surge of restless energy that

came from him, poured into me. I placed my hand on his chest as he pressed me hard against him. "Damon, I wasn't escaping..." I said softly. "I had come with Anna to clear my mind..."

That seemed to calm him. But soon he narrowed his eyes. "Clear your mind of what?" His fingers dug into the flesh of my hips painfully. "Of me?"

I opened my mouth to say something but closed it again because I didn't want to commit anything.

"Are you trying to get rid of me?" he said and, in that moment, I realized how insecure he was. But was it because of me?

"Not until you want to get rid of me. Remember, you won me in a bet?"

His Adam's apple bobbed and he calmed down a lot.

Anna came in the corner of my vision and said, "Seriously, what is going on between the two of you?"

I suppressed a grin. Damon caught hold of my hand and pulled me to the parking lot where I sat on his motorcycle and came back to the apartment where another surprise was waiting for me.