

I laughed. I had never felt this wonderful in my life. The ice between us had melted a little and I wondered what would happen if the ice turned into a crazy wave of ocean that would sway me away. What would happen when reality would crash in?

"I have got more stuff for you, Poppy, but for that you have to wait for the night," he said, his voice full of lust.

"What kind of stuff?" I asked curiously.

He lifted himself off me and I already missed his warmth and weight. "You have to wait for it," he said with a smirk. He pulled me up and when I was on the floor, he slapped my ass again.

"Damon!" I shrieked.

We came down with Nomad curled in a fluffy ball in my arms and Damon behind me. Downstairs the party was in full swing. The witches and warlocks were showing their magic by creating various hued orbs that floated to the ceiling. The shifters were looking at them with wonder. Anna was sitting in a corner talking to Killian and Eliza dramatically. As soon as they saw us, Anna called me. "Poppyyy! Come here!"

I walked to them with Damon on my heels. I placed Nomad on the table and gave him a biscuit. As he made a mess out of it, Anna said, "We all are planning on going to the beach this weekend. Wanna join us?"

"No, we have plans!" Damon replied even before I could say something.

My lips downturned. I had never been to a beach. When Damon saw my expressions, he said, "Okay, we can join you for an hour."

"And since when have you two become 'we'?" Anna asked, wiggling her eyebrows.

"Since you connived with me to celebrate her birthday," he replied with a poker face and picked up cold meat to eat.

Anna poked her tongue in her cheek as I gave her my best glare. She was asking me all the while as to what was going on between the two of us while she was in cahoots with him for the birthday celebration. A warm, fuzzy feeling spread in my chest. "This was the best birthday celebration I have ever had in my life," I said to both of them. "Thank you." My throat choked with emotions and tears that I didn't want to spill.

Damon curled his hands around my waist and they slipped to my hips. He cupped my hips in his large paws and said, "You're welcome, Poppy." His eyes swirled with tenderness that was so unusual to his hard exterior. I felt my cheeks warming up.

As the evening melded into night, the guests started leaving.

I helped Eliza clear up the place. She talked about her family, the Umbra pack and so many other things all the time. I didn't know that Eliza was such a chirpy girl. In the end when the two of us were having tea and the boys were upstairs discussing something, she said, "Do you know that it was Monica's birthday two months back and he didn't even remember it?"

My lips opened in surprise. I didn't know what to answer.

Eliza continued as she sipped her tea. "And Monica asked him to buy her a diamond pendant so that she could show it to others. He bought it for her. In the market, I remember her coaxing him to buy diamond earrings too. He bought them for her without any resistance. Not only that, he bought her friends, Gloria and Nancy gold earrings." Eliza sighed. "Those girls are into drugs, something I pointed out to Damon, but he was least interested. He said that Monica wasn't into them and that he didn't bother about her friends."

"Drugs?" I said, my eyes going wide.

Eliza chuckled. "They think that the academy students don't know about it but it's like an open secret. I don't like them at all. But I had to bear them because of Monica."

I lowered my head and stared at the contents in my cup. "Monica is the choice of his family... I don't know where I will fit... I mean this is all so... wrong..." Was I heading into a

bitter heartache? Even the thought was so abhorrent that it constricted around my heart like a vise.

Eliza placed her hand on mine. "Poppy, I haven't seen Damon doing so much for any girl. He has bought gifts for sure but only when they asked him to buy for them." She paused and curled her fingers beneath my chin and lifted my face to see her. "For the first time he bought a gift. I didn't know that he would like to gift someone something as simple and adorable as a puppy. Both Killian and I noticed the affection he had in his eyes when he gave it to you. When he told Killian what he wanted, Killian was jolted. I mean can you spot the difference here? Diamonds versus a puppy?"

My lips curled up. "Nomad is adorable." My eyes went to him. He was sprawled in his basket, sleeping.

"It's time you are in bed, Poppy!" a growl sounded from the stairs. I sighed.

"Thanks Eliza," I said to her and got up. "My police is here."

Eliza giggled. "Go, I will finish the rest of it."

When I walked up the stairs, Damon was waiting for me on the landing. He caught my hand in his and whispered, "Remember what I said to you about other gifts?"

"There is more?" I asked, bewildered.

He gave me a mysterious look and led me inside the bedroom. We walked to a cupboard. It wasn't there earlier. I frowned and gave him a questioning look. He handed me the golden keys to the cupboard. I took it from him and opened the cupboard. The moment I opened my jaw dropped. There were flogs, whips, shackles, gags and a lot more stuff out there. "This is all—" I snapped my mouth and opened it like a fish. "This is all—" My cheeks heated like a puddle of tomato.

"BDSM."

Oh. My. God.

With my eyes wider than the moon, I turned my face to him and found him standing with deep lust and darkness. Damon was trying to pull me into his darkness. But was I ready?

"Only if you want it, Poppy," he said in a low husky voice that made my thighs clench.

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