

Poppy POV

When I disconnected the call, I looked at Damon who was watching me with furrowed eyebrows. "Who was that?" he demanded.

"Hilda, my nanny."

He cupped my cheeks and wiped my tears with the pad of his thumbs. Who knew that a huge Alpha wolf like Damon had such soft fingers.

"Why were you crying?" he asked.

I bit my lip as my cheeks heated. "It's nothing."

"Don't hide from me, Poppy," he said. "You know that I have very powerful sense of hearing."

I stiffened. "What did you hear?"

"About some tea that she was coaxing you to have."

I chuckled, relaxing. "It's just that she is very worried," I said and walked inside the living room where everyone else was having a rather zealous conversation. I headed for the

kitchen and prepared myself some tea that Hilda gave.

"Why don't you make it for me also?" Damon said, watching me prepare it.

I laughed. "No, it's not for those who can shift. It's for freaks like me."

Damon curled his arms around my waist and growled, "Don't you call yourself a freak!"

I hung my head as I leaned my hands on the edge of the kitchen counter. "I am a freak..." I said in a low voice. "One who can't shift."

"So what?" he countered. "Some are late bloomers."

I shook my head. "Hilda said that I can't shift now. And that I shouldn't dream about it. The sooner I come into accepting it, the better."

Damon turned me towards him and lifted my face up to his. He brushed his lips and said, "It doesn't matter. You are beautiful the way you are. Who the hell cares whether you can shift or not."

"Damon..." I whispered. Why was he so good to me? My lips quivered and he seized them with his. I was left breathless when he left me.

In > Bigger Danger

"Don't ever think like that again, okay?"

I chuckled. I turned back to sieve the tea leaves. After picking up the cup of tea that I was going to have after a long time since I came to the academy, I walked to the group along with Damon. I chose to sit next to Anna and Damon sat with Killian. The two brought more cans of beer from the fridge. As for Eliza, she and Anna talked about Monica and her minions.

"I have doubts about Gloria, you know," said Anna to Monica. "She looked stoned most of the time. And did you see how Nancy's hands were shaking today when she was trying to calm down—" Anna made apostrophe marks over her head with her fingers. "Poor, poor Monica."

Eliza laughed at Anna's antics. The two were becoming friends faster than I had anticipated. "Oh even I noticed that, but why would that happen?" Eliza asked.

"I feel that those are withdrawal symptoms" Anna replied.

"Withdrawal?" Killian said, narrowing his eyes and tilting his head.

"Yes, like she is on drugs and hadn't had them in some time."

"Oh that," Eliza said, waving her hand as if she already knew

about it. "I have pointed that out to Damon so many times, but he is not interested."

"Why should I be?" he shrugged. "I don't care."

"But, but—" Anna interjected. "It's not that they have drugs. It's that they are having withdrawal symptoms. It's as if they are not able to have them now. Their bodies are rebelling. Now I wouldn't be concerned at all, but coming from rich families meant that they should have a constant supply of money to buy drugs. Then why aren't they buying?" Anna said, like she was the protégé of James Bond.

"Maybe, they are trying to leave it," I said nonchalantly and sipped my tea.

"Bitch, give that tea to me also!" Anna snatched the tea from me even as I protested and the moment she tasted it, she spritzed it out. "Ew! What on the good earth is that, Poppy?" She stared at the contents in the cup with complete horror. Eliza had got into fits of laughter after seeing Anna's reaction.

I snatched my tea back from her and glared at her. "That is my tea. From Hilda. And don't you say anything to it."

"Bleh!" Anna tried to wipe the taste of his using her sleeve. "Disgusting stuff!"

"Would you like to have coffee?" Elia asked her.

"Yes bitch!" Anna said, twisting her mouth. "That stuff she is having is worse than horse shit!"

I rolled my eyes at her dramatics. I always liked my tea.

After Eliza left to make coffee, Anna donned her James Bond mode all over again. "So how is it that those girls aren't getting money for drugs?"

At this point, Damon leaned forward. He steeped his fingers and rested his chin over them, listening to Anna's theory.

"I am extremely sure that these girls were depending on Damon for money for their drugs," Anna calculated and slapped her thigh excitedly.

"What?" Killian spat. "That's a stupid theory, Anna!" He chugged more of his beer. "Why would Monica depend on Damon for drugs and it's a long shot saying that her friends also depended on Damon's money for it."

"Do you have any other theories besides it?" Anna said, wiggling her eyebrows. "Counter me."

Killian opened his mouth and then snapped it shut. He opened it again and closed it.

"You are looking like a fish out of water, wolf!" Anna remarked. "Say something."

Killian went all serious. "If this is the case, then Poppy is in even a bigger danger than I ever thought."

His words raised my fear a notch higher. I stopped sipping tea as I stared at Killian with my heart racing faster than that of a hummingbird.

Damon clenched his jaw. Sensing my anxiety, he pulled me in his lap. "You don't have to worry about it, Poppy."

At that point of my life I realized that if I was with him, I was going to drag him into a murky world that surrounded me. He would be in so much danger not only from his father's side, but also from Monica's side. My lips parted as a shaky breath left me. He was ready to fight the world for me. For me— a useless werewolf who couldn't even shift. My throat choked with emotions and I made a decision.

That night—

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