

## Poppy POV

"You know what I want!" Nash said in a breathy voice and holding my upper arm, he guided me all the way to the rear side of the cafeteria. When Cynthia followed us, he didn't even protest. It was so disgusting that I felt like shaking loose from him and running away, but he was an Alpha and his strength was much more than mine.

When we were in the back alley of the cafeteria, he pinned me against the wall and slapped both his hands on either side of face on the wall to cage me. He pressed his thigh against my legs. "Do you know that ever since I have rejected you, my wolf is restless? He claws at me from the inside every damn day and every damn night to be with you. I am unable to live peacefully and I can't think straight!"

His blond curls fell over his forehead and I had this strange urge to rake my fingers through them. I fisted my hands and locked my jaw so tight that it hurt.

After a while of a glaring contest, he said, "Poppy, even though I have rejected you, it is not that you can't come with me. You can stay in my home, enjoy everything under the earth and have a luxurious life. So what if I can't marry you, I can keep you and trust me I can keep you so beautifully that you wouldn't feel any emptiness. I will give you whatever you want, anything. If you want, I will stay in

your quarters and not with Cynthia, but please—" he begged. "Please come back to me. I am desperate without you!"

My lips quivered when he pleaded like that. I felt like cupping his face and kissing him. All at once, I saw Cynthia in the line of my vision, staring at us with helplessness. I pitied her, but I recalled how she affected Nash's decision when I saw them for the first time. I brought back my gaze to Nash. I lifted my fingers to his forehead and gently brushed his curls away to his forehead. He closed his eyes as he let out a rough exhale of satisfaction and relief. I trailed my fingers to his face and when my hand was against his chest, I pushed him slightly. He softened and moved a step back. I ducked under his arms and stepped aside. "You should have thought that before rejecting me, Nash," I said as my gaze darted to Cynthia and then back to him. "I am sorry but that ship has sailed." Saying that I flicked my hair, turned sharply and hurried to my next class.

"I am going to make you submit to me, Poppy!" he called out from behind. I heard his footsteps closing in. I increased my pace and as soon as I rounded the corner, I bumped into a heavy chest. When I looked up, I saw Damon. His eyes flickered amber when he saw whom I was running away from. I knew that another confrontation was in the making, so I grabbed his hand and pulled him away inside the cafeteria.

The cafeteria was bustling with activity. I took him to the farthest corner. "What did he do?" Damon growled.

"Nothing. He couldn't do anything," I replied as I sat next to him even though people were stealing glances at us every now and then.

"But I smell him on you," he snapped.

I took his hand and put it on my thighs. "He tried to give his mate bullshit, but I am not interested."

A dangerous growl emanated from his chest and he tried to get up. "I am going to shred him into pieces, Poppy!"

"Calm down," I said. But even as I said that I saw Nash entering the cafeteria with Cynthia. Our gazes locked. But what happened next was what I expected from the douche bag. He didn't come near me, but he sat with Cynthia a few tables away even as he continued to look at me. It meant only one thing – he didn't want to accept me as his mate in public. How could he demean me so much? I felt so low that it affected me on the inside. I closed my eyes as I took the insult. And then thanked the Moon Goddess that he rejected me.

When we exited the cafeteria, I intertwined my fingers with Damon's and with my chin up, as Nash watched me with his shoulders drawn back in tension.

Damon too had to make a show. He removed his fingers from mine and took his hand to the small of my back. But his hand didn't remain there. He slipped it lower, lower,

lower, till it rested on my ass. He squeezed it lightly once our backs were in full view of Nash. I heard a hissing sound and a low growl, but who cared.

My next class on astronomy was a breeze. Almost every witch and wizard out there attended it and I was the only shifter. I loved it as Professor Hanna hurled jokes at us and also at me saying that all the witches and wizards have got their guinea pig for experimenting. And gods above! I ended up wearing every damn Disney dress that existed on the planet. They would use their magic and my dresses would appear one after the other. At first, I growled and snarled, but they all found it cute and then I just left it.

Damon was waiting for me, leaning against the pillar just outside the class with his arms crossed against his chest. Anna winked and left with her coven sisters. He grasped my hand and said, "I didn't want to take the chances!"

I giggled. "I don't think Nash would come here now. I checked his schedule. He has classes till 6PM." His growl was my answer. We headed towards the next class, however, the moment we rounded the corner, I saw Nash advancing towards us along with Cynthia and Monica. Monica's gaze landed on our intertwined fingers and her expressions tightened. Nash, on the other hand, looked like he wanted another fight with Damon.

Damon glared at them as they came nearer, his full intention on confronting them, but I tugged him to walk with me past them. As my luck would have it, Nash stopped

right in front of us like a wall with his arms crossed across his chest, flanked by Cynthia and Monica.