

## Poppy POV

Monica looked at Damon with hopeful eyes and said, "I wanted to tell you something. It is important."

Damon narrowed his eyes on her. "I am in a hurry. Maybe later." He started going but Monica caught hold of his hand.

"Please Damon," she pleaded with him with puppy eyes. She darted a glance at me. I was hating the contact that she made with his hand.

I wanted to peel her hand off and gouge those puppy eyes. Why the hell was I being so possessive about Damon? It was beyond comprehension. But I guess when you were in love irrevocably, this happened.

Damon growled at her and snagged his hand away. She clasped her hands, fluttered her eyes and requested. "Please Damon, just for old times' sake. I need to talk to you alone."

Damon looked at me and said, "You have another class right now?" I nodded. He turned his head back to Monica and said, "We can talk in Poppy's presence an hour later."

Monica gritted her teeth, but she gave him a terse nod. "Okay, how about we meet in the basement of the

cafeteria?"

"Okay," Damon replied. He caught my hand and pulled me to the corridor, tearing the crowd of the trio in front of us. I could feel their eyes on my back. The hair on my nape rose. I couldn't help feeling that something ominous was about to come.

When we reached my International Relations class, he stopped at the door and in a very low voice said, "Don't come out of the class unless you see me, okay?"

"Okay," I nodded as a raspy breath slipped my lips.

I saw Chris sitting in the last row of benches. He gave me a dirty glare for as long as I found a place to sit. I hated the way he was looking at me. I rubbed my neck and then focused on the class. Professor Higgins hadn't come so I took out my laptop and began searching for the last chapter that he had taught us. Suddenly, there was movement on my side and I found Chris sitting next to me. I gulped the surprise and avoided him.

Chris leaned over my side and whispered, "Why are you making a scene, Poppy?"

I clenched my jaw. I knew what scene he was referring to. They had started calling me the academy's slut.

"Why don't you go back to Nash and let Monica live happily ever after?" he continued. "You are making the lives of so many people difficult. Can't you see how pained Nash and Monica are?"

I snapped my head at him with a deep crease on my forehead. "How do you know Nash? And why are you so bothered about him?"

He jerked his head back. "I— I am from the Howlers Pack and Nash Dawson would be our future Alpha."

My surprise turned into pure horror. If Chris was talking like this, then surely Nash had told him that he was my mate. "I see," I replied and then averted my gaze as a thousand thoughts came into my mind.

Chris said, "Well, the thing is that with you going back to Nash, many things would be solved. Just let others live their life nicely, else you have to be prepared for the consequences."

"And what consequences would there be?" I snapped at him.

He shrugged. "Simple. First, we are going to tell everyone that you are wolf less. Then we are going to reveal that you are Nash's mate and that Nash has come here after you. And then the final blow would go to Damon Lombard. We will reveal how he is dating the—"

"Can we have your attention please?" Professor Higgins slapped the table, saving me from Chris's onslaught.

Chris scoffed at me and turned to the professor.

For an hour, I tolerated Chris next to me and as soon as I got up, I packed my satchel as he watched me. Before leaving, I said, "I challenge you to go and tell Nash what you just told me. If you won't, I will convey your words to him. I am going to meet him now."

Chris paled. His lies were caught. Nash would never ever declare that I was his mate.

With a smirk, I picked up the satchel and hurled it over my shoulder. I pulled the strap tightly and walked out of the class without sparing him a glance. I waited for Damon to come as he had asked me. "Ready?" he said cupping my cheeks.

"Always!" I replied triumphantly, tampering down the nervousness.

We walked hand-in-hand to the basement of the cafeteria. I was greeted by Joey who waved at me. I saw that Clyde too was present there. He gave me a mock salute and I saluted back. A soft murmur on the side caught my attention. Nash was sitting along with Monica and Cynthia. They were in deep conversation and stopped as soon as they smelled our presence.

Damon and I walked to the table where they were sitting and sat opposite to them.

"Thank you for coming to meet me," Monica said in her softest voice, fluttering her eyelashes and ignoring me completely. "I thought you wouldn't come..."

Damon remained quiet and shook his leg as if to say that he was in a hurry.

When she didn't get any response from him, she said, "Damon, I asked you earlier also and I am begging you again. For the sake of our families, please come back. You seem to have lost your way, which is fine with me. Every Alpha can't be satisfied with just one woman." She looked at Nash who nodded. "I know that most Alphas maintain a harem because they are too strong and their needs can't be satisfied with just one woman."

"That's right!" Nash supported her.

"Look at Cynthia and Nash. They are together in the eyes of the public. That's what should be done. The strong packs always make an alliance and that's what your father did with mine. We have formed an alliance by announcing that we will be married." She shot a dark gaze at me. "How can you go for someone—" she waved a hand at me. "Like her?" She leaned forward. "It is important that you and I are seen together in public, else—"

"Else what?" Damon snarled.

"I wouldn't have minded you being with Poppy but you can't." She sighed and gave a pitied look to Nash. "Did she tell you that Nash is her mate?" She said it casually as if she was just passing some information, but she peeped at Damon from under her eyelashes to see his reaction. She was sure that he would blast.

"Are you done?" Damon snarled, his lips peeling back.

"I— I—" she stuttered.

He slapped the table. "Yes, Poppy told me about it!" He squeezed my hand tightly. I could sense his anxiety. "So fuck off!"

Monica was stunned, as if someone had slapped her face.