

Poppy POV

Stunned, Monica stared at Damon as if he had gone insane. "But Damon, she is Nash's mate. How can you—"

Damon snarled, "What has Nash done to her?"

Monica's mouth opened and then closed as Nash shifted in his place uncomfortably.

"Answer me!" Damon growled and Monica winced, submitting to his Alpha command.

"H— he re— rejected her," she answered him with a quivering voice. She glanced at me and then swallowed down. "He shouldn't have, but his circumstances were different. You have to understand that he—" she peered at me again. "He can't—"

"Shut the fuck up, Monica!" Damon shouted, thumping the table with his fist.

Monica jumped as Cynthia whined and got up. Damon's Alpha voice was like a roar that was enough for a she-wolf like Cynthia to run away and that's what she did.

Nash growled and thumped his fist on the table too. He was also of Alpha blood and he was ready for a challenge thrown at him at any point of time. He snarled, "But I have come here to rectify that. I want my mate back!"

Damon narrowed his eyes on him. He was about to say something when I stopped him by touching his back. Then I leaned forward and said to Nash, "If you want me to come back to you, then you have to accept me as your mate and reject Cynthia. Will you accept my condition? If you will, let me know!"

Nash's mouth dropped to the floor as his eyes fixed on me. A while later when the weight of words came down upon him, he said, "You know I can't!"

I grabbed Damon's hand and got up. "Let's go," I said to him. "I am done here."

Seeing me pulling Damon across the room, Monica shouted from behind, "Damon! I am warning you!"

Damon whipped his head to her, his eyes flickering amber, his Alpha wolf hating the warning in her voice.

"I am going to report it to your father!" she said, lowering her voice immediately. "And he will take it badly."

"Before she tells it to your father," Nash interjected with his

fangs elongating. "I will report to my father. And if George Dawson comes to know about it, there would be an unnecessary war between the Howler and Umbra pack!"

Damon's fury was palpable. He clenched his jaw tightly as he studied the two in front of him. They thought he had submitted, so Monica said to me, "If you don't leave Damon, I will— I will reveal your secret that you are wolf less." After saying that to me, she couldn't look at Damon again and I knew that she was too scared to even glance at him.

I was so done with this crap. After giving a withering look to Nash, in a low guttural voice, I said, "Then go ahead and say that I am wolf less. But before you do that, tell me how you came to know about me?" When my eyes went to Nash, I found his cheeks becoming slightly pink.

Monica reddened. "Nash told me."

I scoffed at him. "You had promised that you wouldn't say that to anyone if I kept quiet that I was your mate. But what is the meaning of that promise?" He opened his mouth to say something, but I cut him off immediately, "When you can't keep only this much promise, you don't deserve a wolf-less girl like me. After all, it would be such an insult to you, won't it?" Then I turned my attention to Monica. "You may go around and announce it to Monica, because then I will have to announce how he rejected his mate." Monica gaped at my threat. I added, "Trust me, this isn't a warning unlike the ones you've been throwing at me. You can test it!" After that I just turned and dragged Damon with me out of

the room.

Nash shouted after me. "I will announce that you are my mate to the entire academy!"

Hollow threats. He would never do that. However, if he did, I would be further shamed.

When we reached my last class for the day, I hugged Damon and stood there in his arms for a long time. I was so tired of all the bullshit that was happening around me that something inside me snapped. I didn't want to be a victim anymore. I didn't want Damon to protect me all the time. I wanted to stand on my own and fight these bastards. I didn't know if I would be able to, but I promised myself that I would at least give it a try.

He kissed the top of my head. "You sounded so brave out there, Poppy. I am so proud of you." He moved back and cupped my cheeks. "I am always there with you."

I leaned in his large hand and closed my eyes. "Thank you..."

I went for the last class where Professor Reyna taught us the mechanics of the various forms of combat. Later in the night, Anna came over to exchange notes with me. While we had our dinner together, she talked about her research and said that she was able to isolate all the chemicals of the tea and now her coven sisters were having a ball of a time.

Ann Jote
"I have to thank Hilda for her great readymade research that she handed over to us," she laughed. I shook my head. Anna was always such a positive girl. I wondered what kind of an environment she lived in. Her parents must be so proud of their daughter.

"Also," she said, plucking meat from a chicken bone. "We have all come up with an antidote for you." She picked up her satchel from the side, opened the zip with her greasy hands and took out a bottle with orange liquid.

"What is that?" I asked, scrunching my nose.

She laughed. "Don't worry, I have added an orange flavor to it so it won't be as terrible as it was initially." She handed it to me, but Damon grabbed it and examined it first. He opened the lid of the bottle and smelled it.

"This smells like a thousand oranges with bitter gourd!" he remarked.

I took the bottle from him and sniffed it. "Ew!"

"Poppy," Anna said. "This was 'ew' but now we have converted it into something fantastic, like Fanta!" She chewed the meat. "You have to have two spoons of that every day for the next week. This antidote is so strong that it will remove all your toxins, but there will be... aftereffects."

"What?" I blurted, my eyes going wide.

"You will sweat a lot!"