

Poppy POV

Along with Eliza I rushed to the dorm. My hands were clammy and my heart thundered against my ribcage. Who could have taken her out in a state like this? Sinclair said that she was unconscious. Why was she unconscious? Nothing made sense. I hadn't seen her for the whole day and I cursed myself for not even calling her.

Eliza and I reached my dorm in a record ten minutes. The door of the dorm was slightly ajar. With anxiety bubbling in the chest, I opened the door. "Anna!" I called her, but my voice met with silence. I rushed inside the dorm and scanned the rooms, but she wasn't inside.

"She's not here," Eliza rasped, sniffing the air. She grabbed my wrist and pulled me out. "We have to track her."

Anna's scent was fresh in the air and it was mingled with a plethora of other scents. We tracked her all the way to the woods. Anxiety morphed into something ugly when I saw that there was nothing out there. Her scent vanished over here. It was as if she disappeared into thin air. I whipped my head around as Eliza searched the nearby woods. Sinclair had said that he had gone to inform her coven sisters, but we should inform the security and to the Dean. All at once, I heard a blood curdling scream emanating from where Eliza had gone.

"Elizaaa!" I sprinted to where she was. Terror struck like a sharp glass shard in my chest when I found her lying on the ground,

unconscious. "Eliza! Eliza!" I called, my voice hoarse with shock and confusion. I picked her up in my lap and felt warm blood coating my fingers on the back of her head. She was hit by something very sharp and blunt. "Eliza!" My blood turned to ice. I snapped my head around to see the assailant but all I could see were the dark silhouettes of trees with dense overhead canopies.

The smell of her blood filled the area so strongly that I couldn't discern other smells. Maybe, my mind was going into a state of shock. I shook her shoulders but she didn't respond. A mixture of disbelief and confusion thudded through me. I had to get help or I had to drag her. The best would be to drag her out of the woods. On a quick decision, I got up and was about to pull her up, when a movement behind me raised my hackles. Before I knew it, there was a black bag on my head.

"Who the fuck—" My hands were grabbed by someone from behind and I instantly knew who that was. Chris. Enraged, I shouted through the cloth on my head, "Leave me, Chris! I will rip you into so many pieces that no one would be able to recognize you!" Iron shackles draped my wrists and I heard the key locking them with a click.

And it was then that through the cloth, I caught Monica's scent. I didn't sense any panic or fear from her, but only calmness. "You have set forth a series of events that will be too dangerous, Poppy. You've been the threat to the Shadow pack and to the Howlers pack. You should disappear. I could have killed you, but I am going to give you a worse punishment."

My protest stopped midway because someone tied a tight cloth around my mouth. And then pain exploded at the back of my head.

It was so sudden and so overwhelming that I succumbed to the darkness that followed it. I fell into... nothing.

'You have to stay here, Poppy,' Papa said. 'I am going to find your mother.'

'Take me with you,' Little Poppy said through tears.

'No, you will be the Alpha of the Shadow pack, unlike me.'

'Papa!'

My eyes peeled open and I sat up, gulping in deep air that smelled of mold and fallen logs. I was surrounded by a conifer forest, nearly black against the gray sky. The tall conifers were knitted close together, bounding the forest in an endless twilight. My head hurt horribly as I tried to get up. Dizziness got hold of me and I swayed a little. I tried to think where I was or what I was doing when memories of the previous night flooded me. "Who did this to me?" I rasped in a feeble voice.

With shaky limbs, I pulled myself up and walked on the forest floor that had an abundance of mushrooms and lichens. I slipped on an moss infested log and stumbled down. Fiery pain blasted through my wrists, drawing a hiss through my teeth. I lifted my wrists only to see angry red marks on them. They reminded me of the shackles I was made to wear. By whom?

I took a deep breath in to calm my flailing nerves. Throat dry, my gaze followed the twist of the conifers and where it connected with a clearing. Pulling myself up, I staggered to the clearing and found a brook gurgling a few steps ahead. I rushed to drink the water and ended up lying down beside it, curled in a ball, crying. I

didn't know where I was and the pain at the back of my head thudded. I was so confused and couldn't remember how I came here? Was I a prisoner? Or did someone take revenge? I closed my eyes and went off to sleep, caring very little about the wild animals.

A loud screech from somewhere inside the woods sounded and I jerked up. My clothes were tattered, my skin had bruises and I didn't even remember what my name was. It was the dream that said my name was Poppy. But Poppy from where?

The voice sounded near and it raised my hackles. I got up and hurried towards a thicket of trees. I had to at least save myself and try to find who my mom and dad were. My papa said that he was going to find my mom. Maybe, I came after him...

All of a sudden, there was a loud howl. I panicked and hid behind a tree. But the next moment a gray wolf emerged from the tall grass in front of me. It came nearer. I froze.