

## Poppy POV

At 11Am we had the combat class. Professor Megan was explaining us all the rules. "You will jointly train with the final year students. They are very specialized and highly trained. They will have several tricks up their sleeves. Remember not to cross them, but learn from them. We will be paring you up with one senior. You have to display your team skills and cooperated with them." She swept her gaze around all of us. He eyes landed on me and I winced internally.

"Where is the list of partners?" A curious girl asked as other girls around her giggled.

Murmurs of seeing Damon Lombard in the arena reached my ears. They all wanted to be his partner. I didn't. So why was it that I was feeling upset?

Professor Megan clenched her jaw in anger. "The pairing is secret. You will come to know who you are paired with only when you enter that ring." She pointed at the door which according to Anna had a very complicated maze of woods. "You can't practice magic there and you can't shift. You have to fight in your human form. It is going to be a test of your wits and intelligence. Once you defeat your opponents, you will only make them kneel. No bloodshed. If a drop of blood is seen there, you would be disqualified for a week."

A shiver ran down my spine. This was going to be a show of power and muscles and training. And I was neither of it. All I had was my grit and wit. Either way, I knew I would never be

an asset to my partner.

"You can enter the door," said Professor Megan. "You will come to know who is your partner once you are inside. Your partner will have the same color of glow on his or heart as yours. We will be watching you closely through the cameras that are installed everywhere."

"Who are we going to fight against?" another student asked as he cracked his neck, turning it right and left.

"Your senior will have the names. They will let you know."

Anna was beside me. She clutched my hand and squeezed it. "Don't worry," she whispered in a reassuring tone. "If you feel you can't fight, just kneel down in front of your opponent. Don't get killed, okay?"

"Killed?" I rasped as my eyes widened.

"No silly. They won't kill you, but they will ensure that you get beaten up so badly that you don't come out of the hospital for a week."

"But Professor Megan said that you can't spill blood!" I squeaked.

She rolled her eyes. "You can't use magic or shift. But there are ways to defeat your opponent without spilling work."

My heart started beating wildly as anxiety filled me. I needed to run away tomorrow. "What do I do?" I asked nervously.

"Stay intact!" she said and the door opened.



There was a nervous energy amongst the students. They all were too excited to enter the maze and show their skills or see who they were pairing up with. When I entered, I could feel the icy chill down my back. This place was warded with spells. The door closed on its own.

The whole place was a labyrinth of forest. Dark and dense. It was day, but the overhead trees were so thickly woven that they didn't allow the sunlight to enter. Somewhere in the distance, I could hear a brook gurgling down. As I stepped further in, a soft golden glow formed on my chest. I took a ragged breath and looked around to see anyone else with the same glow. People had started running around to find their partners and in no time, I heard loud grunts and shrieks. Trees were uprooted and thrown around. Blood-curdling screams of shifters were heard as they were tossed, their limbs fractured.

I closed my fists as I hurried through the maze, my heart thundering in my ears. Where was my partner?

Suddenly, I was thrown to the ground as someone shoved me from the side. "Ahh!" I was thrown on my side and before I could get up, I saw a girl crawling over me.

"Monica!" I sputtered. She grabbed my hair and yanked me up and then slapped me tight. "What are you doing?" I shouted. I hadn't even found my partner and she was attacking me? And where was her partner?

"Bitch!" she hissed, baring her fangs. "You are wolf less, I know!"

I paled as I stared at her. Nash Dawson had told her. He

betrayed.

She pushed me away and was about to punch me when we heard a dangerous growl. Monica snapped her fangs at me and rushed away saying, "I will find you."

I whipped my head back and saw Damon. His chest had the same golden glow as mine. Damn it. My partner was Monica's betrothed. Why Moon Goddess, why? My throat went dry as he approached me with a lethal expression on his face. He narrowed his eyes on me.

He was wearing leather pants and when my gaze fell on his naked chest, my logic flew out of my brain and my breath lodged in my throat. He was chiseled to perfection. Every and each muscle beneath that silky skin was rippling with tension. My gaze drifted to the dusty trail of his hair in the middle of the chest that disappeared beneath the waist of his pant. I tore my gaze from there and looked up in his arctic blue eyes. My lips parted when I saw his perfect bow-shaped lips. How would they feel on mine? Goddess. Where were these wayward thoughts coming from?

He clenched his jaw and dug his pocket from where he took a note out. He handed it to me without speaking a word. I was sure that he had gathered that I was already shivering. With shaky hands I picked up the note and when our fingers touched, my skin tingled and little bursts of electricity sizzled where we connected. My body responded and I felt odd... as if I always belonged to him.

I yanked my hand away from him, feeling a thousand shades crimson. I think I was starved of male affection so badly that this was the result of it. I opened the note.



# "Monica and Chris."

