

The Unwanted Bride Of Atticus Fawn Book 2: Chapter 1

- Tips

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Reputation was everything to my family. The family that adopted me. And that is why they must never find out that the man in my heart is none other than my step-brother Damon Fawn.

His piercing blue eyes have always been able to see straight through me. He has always been able to read me like a book; there's just one little detail that he's never been able to read to this day. And that was how deeply I was in love with him.

I've been in love with him since my first day at the academy as the adopted daughter of the Fawns. I was bullied because I was not their real daughter, but Damon came to my rescue that day, and since then, he's been, my hero. My love.

I'd never felt this way for anyone but him, and I knew nothing could change that.

The Fawns were involved in a big scandal at the academy and used me as an opportunity to move everyone's attention from it. Luckily for them, their plan did work. Everyone forgot about the scandal as soon as the news of my arrival broke.

I wasn't happy to join their family, that is, until I saw him. He made everything better. He was my sunshine-a bright light in my life. I was happy just being by his side until that devastating day. It was the day I found out that Damon had found his mate.

I was heartbroken to see him with her. I still remember how betrayed I'd felt even though he didn't owe me an explanation. I should have been happy for him, but I was anything but that. It wasn't long after that I found out Atticus and Dante were also her mates. My other two step-brothers had the same mate as him. How crazy was that?

All of that changed a few years later.

Atticus married and fell in love with his wife, Autumn Rivera, leaving Dante and Damon fighting for Anya's love. Even though one of my step-brothers had been freed from her trap, it was still t*e to see the others continue to fight for her. She played with their feelings constantly. I saw it. I think Autumn did as well. I was happy that she was able to take Atticus away from Anya; I've never seen him happier with anyone else. They were destined for each other.

But this isn't about them. This is about me and the way my heart beats for a man that could never be mine. If my family ever found out, I would be banished from home; there is no question about that. They would not hesitate to kick me out. I've spent years with them, and I knew they loved me, but they also loved their reputation more than anything else.

If any reporter were even to have the slightest evidence that I was in love with Damon, that would destroy everything. I could already see the headlines: 'Clarissa Fawn in love with her step-brother Damon.' Knowing how much they enjoyed twisting stories, I'm sure they wouldn't even use the term step-brother; they would indeed say, brother.

I duck my head as I walk through the hallway of school-the Angelites Academy For Supernaturals. I try to keep a low profile as much as possible. Since I was the only adopted child of the Fawns, students loved to bully me even after my stepbrothers warned everyone to leave me alone.

Damon always came to my rescue, and many were scared to bully me, but there were still a few who didn't care. They tried to make my life miserable even though Damon had threatened to hurt anyone who dared to lay a finger on me.

I try not to melt at the reminder of his heroic acts whenever I am in danger. This was one of the many reasons why I'd fallen so hard for him. No one had ever protected me the way he had. And even though my other step-siblings were protective of me, none of them did it the way that he did. He was different. Everything about him was. Damon got aggressive whenever I was concerned; he would gladly k!ll anyone that tried to hurt me. He was always looking out for me and making sure that I was safe and happy.

I think Anya may have always sensed how much I liked him. And for that, she was never fond of me. She tried to keep as much distance between us as possible. But how much could she separate us when we lived in the same house? I tried my best to keep space between us ever since I realized I was in love with him and we could never be together. However, it hasn't been easy to ignore someone like Damon.

"Clarissa!" Atticus shouts as he spots me. I look up at him, searching for Damon; I know he's usually beside him, along with Dante. I'm disappointed when I don't see him anywhere.

"Wow" Atticus says. "I'm guessing I'm not the brother you wanted to see."

I roll my eyes, "you're reading too much into it. Where is Autumn?"

Atticus always teased me about Damon being my favorite but so did the others.

"She's already in class." He informs me.

"Speaking about class. Shouldn't you already be in yours?"

"You're acting as if you've never reached a class late before." I point out.

He chuckles, "you caught me there."

I notice the way his body stiffens, and I know why. Anya is walking towards us with Dante and Damon by her side. Things were still awkward, especially since Atticus rejected Anya to be with Autumn. She wanted him desperately, but he pushed her away so that he could be with his wife.

I've never been more proud of Atticus.

I try not to act bothered by Damon's presence, but I can't stop myself as my lips part the moment his scent hits my nose. He always smells heavenly.

A fragrance that only he had. No one else.

"Are you keeping Clarissa back from her class again?" Damon growls. I try not to shiver in front of everyone. Even his voice has a strong effect on my body. And I fucking love it when he growls. It makes my knees weak. I can barely stand on them now that I've heard it.

"I swear you need to stop being so overprotective when it comes to her," Atticus complains. "She has her own life to live. She's allowed to reach late to a class."

I try to hold in my laugh. Wasn't Atticus the same one complaining earlier because I was late to class?

"She's a big girl." Anya points out. "She doesn't need her brothers telling her when to get to class. She can tell the time on her own."

I notice the way she says the word brothers. She's reminding me of what Damon was supposed to be to me; my brother.

She's so Wrong. We weren't blood-related, and it wasn't like I'd grown up with him. I've only known them for a few years and it was enough for me to fall deeply in love with him. And I hate her for having him. I hate her. But I love him.

Why is this so complicated?

I didn't trust Anya after everything that's happened in the past, but I couldn't deny that she's been nicer to all of us the past few days.

According to the witch that tried killing all of us, Anya had been under her spell the whole time. Apparently, that's why she was acting like a bitch. I was still trying to find out if that was the truth or a lie.

Only time will be able to tell.

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Dante seems to sense the tension between Anya and me. "Let's get to class, everyone."

He always tries to keep things calm between us. She may have the others fooled by her recent change in behavior, but not me.

"Take Anya with you," Damon tells Dante. The four of them have the same class, unlike me.

"Where will you be?" Anya asks him.

"I want to make sure Clarissa gets to class without anyone harassing her." He explains to her.

My heart does that little jump when he makes small gestures like this to keep me safe.

"I think she's old enough to care for herself, Damon." She tells him gently, but I can hear the edge in her voice.

"It is okay-"

"Shh," He shushed me. "I'm dropping you to class"

I try to hide my smile as Anya practically glares at me. I've managed to win this round.

"Has anyone been bothering you lately?" He asks me as Atticus, and everyone else separates from the two of us.

I try to walk as slowly as possible; I want as much alone time with him. I don't think he realizes how slowly I'm walking; he's too preoccupied with waiting for me to answer his question.

"No," I lie. "Everyone is behaving. They must after you threatened them about one hundred times already for the year."

He shrugs his shoulder, and I try not to stare at his bulging biceps, "I still think I haven't done enough to protect you from them. And I can't be by your side every second to keep you safe. It's been bothering me, especially since I don't know if you're lying to me to keep me out of trouble."

I bite my lip, and his eyes drop to them. His gaze lingers there for the first time, and I'm not sure if I saw the color fade from his face for a second.

He quickly looks away and scratches the back of his neck. "We're here. Remember to tell me if anyone is being an a*ss. I can be a fvcking bigger one when it comes to your safety."

Don't melt, Clarissa. Don't you dare melt! Ah- too late. I've already melted like ten times since I saw him this morning.

"I will." I attempt to walk around him, and he moves to block me from the classroom entrance. I gasp as my body bounces into his. My hands reach out for support; they're now pressed against his c.hest. My body freezes from the contact.

"W-what are you doing?" I stammer. I can barely breathe from how close we are. It's the first time that I've been able to touch him like this without using some excuse, and I love how warm his body feels beneath my hands. I never want to move from this position except to bring him closer to me.

"I mean it, Clarissa." He insists. "You must tell me if anyone is hurting you."

I gaze into his pretty brown eyes. What about him always makes my heart race like it's on a marathon? I could have fallen for any other guy in the world; why did it have to be the one off-limits guy?

I can't stop as my hand travels up his c.hest to his face. Damon's breaths are faster now that I'm touching his cheek. "I promise that I will tell you."

My eyes stare at his throat as he swallows.

That little movement has always been se.xy to me, but only on him. Damon clears his throat and puts some distance between the two of us, "I'll see you after class."

He doesn't say anything else as he storms away from me. It's the first time he's ever left without watching me walk into the classroom. Did I overstep my boundaries this time? It's not like I tried to k!ss him.

I take a deep breath, now was not the time to think about him and how he made me feel. The class had already started. I push the door open, and all eyes are on me as I apologize to the professor for being late. He doesn't scold me, but it's only because he's scared of the Fawns. I would be okay if he had something to say to me; it was my fault for being late. I didn't care that I was, however, because I'd gotten to see Damon. That was the real reason I was late for class. It's because I was waiting for him. I was waiting for him to drop me to my class, just like he's always done.

I sp0t the dirty looks from the girls in front of me almost immediately. I didn't expect anything less. They were the Gemma sisters. Gemma was their last name. And they

were rich, just like the Fawns. Everyone in this school was. There were very few poor students here who were lucky enough to get a scholarship from the principal.

The unlucky part was that they were all bullied by girls like the Gemma sisters. This is why I was also bullied. Because I was poor, even though the Fawns had adopted me and my life was much better than before, I was still initially from an orphanage. It didn't matter who I was now; I would always be the poor girl to them. I never knew who my parents were; I still don't know. And I don't want to. They gave me up as a baby. Why would I want to know the cowards that left me when I couldn't fend for myself?

I hurriedly walk over to my seat and bury myself in the chair; I hate how much they all stare at me. They always made me feel uncomfortable.

"Today's class is all about teaching you how to connect with your inner wolf," Sir Axel says for my benefit. "I've seen many werewolves make the mistake of not being one with their wolf, and in turn, it affects how powerful they can be."

Leslie Gemma pelts a paper at me when Sir Axel turns around to write on the board. I open it and am surprised to see what is written.

"I know your secret."

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My secret?

There was only one secret that I had, and that was my feelings for Damon. I never told anyone before. If anyone knew, it would only be because of how I acted around him. But still, no one would be able to know for sure.

She smiles at me, and I try to hide the worried expression on my face. I can't let her know that she was right. I can't tell her that I genuinely did have a big secret. She was probably doing this to mess with me, to get me to confess. That will never happen. This was one secret that would always stay with me. No one else must ever know.

Class finishes quickly after that, and I'm happy to be away from her. I'm happy to be away from all of them.

But I'm looking forward to seeing him more than ever now. I can't wait to be near him once more. I don't want to have to spend another minute seeing him with Anya. I saw how miserable she made life for Atticus and Autumn, even when it was clear he had chosen Autumn over her.

If she only knew how much I loved Damon, she would no doubt try to make my life miserable as well. I was surprised that they still kept her around our family after all she did to separate Atticus and Autumn. She was a very sly girl. How much could they believe it was a just a spell? I didn't trust her at all. I kept feeling that there was plenty about her that we didn't know about. And I also felt like it was my duty to find out what she was hiding from the rest of us. She still had to choose between Damon and Dante. While I was in love with Damon and didn't want him to be with her, I also knew that Dante was too good for someone like her.

I wish they would both get over her already, as Atticus did. If he could do it, why couldn't they as well? Atticus also pointed out that he didn't feel anything for her when he lost his memory after the accident. If she was his mate and he didn't officially reject her, how did he so easily move on from her?

How did Autumn become his mate?

I felt like everyone wasn't asking the important questions.

When I enter the cafeteria, I spot Damon, and of course, he's with Anya. Atticus and Autumn, as well as Dante, are also with them.

"Behave yourself, Clarissa," I whisper under my breath. I knew now that Leslie was keeping an eye on me. I still wasn't sure if she was referring to my feelings for Damon, but I couldn't take any chances.

Especially not with the number of people in the cafeteria.

"Someone's finally finished with her class," Atticus says as I join them at the table.

I smile and take a seat next to Autumn, even though next to Damon is really where I want to be.

"How was class?" Damon asks me; I can feel his intense gaze. I know why he's asking that question. He still wanted to know if anyone was harassing me.

"I had a great time." I lied. If I mentioned Leslie and her message, I risked him finding out I liked him. I still wasn't sure if that was what she was referring to, but I wasn't taking any chances. I didn't want the Fawns to kick me out and separate me from the one person that made me want to keep living. I never wanted to be apart from him.

"Are you sure?" He asks. I can hear the edge to his voice. He doesn't believe me. Of course, he would be able to see right through my lie. He was good at reading me.

I wasn't about to give in now and tell him the truth. I hate lying to him, but this was for his good as well as mine. There are things that he must never know, and this was one of them.

"Damon, the girl said she had a great time," Anya says. "Why are you trying to force her to say something else? If she says she had a good time, she did. Let's talk about something else. Let Clarissa live her life; I'm sure she feels stifled by how overprotective you are."

My lips part. Why the hell would she say that? I loved his overprotective side. Autumn gave me a look, and I felt the same way that she did. We both didn't like Anya at all.

Autumn had more reason to dislike her after the many, many things she's done to try and cause problems between her and Atticus.

I was happy that she wasn't trying to pull them apart anymore. She did apologize, but that apology seemed fake to me. She blamed it on the spell and claimed she wouldn't have acted that way otherwise.

At least Autumn trusted Atticus enough to let him sit at the same table with her.

Dante clears his throat and kisses Anya on her cheek, "we can talk about anything you want us to"

I try not to gag at that sight. Damon gets noticeably irritated that he'd just kissed her in front of him. I try not to get upset by his reaction. It's normal for him to react like that when she is supposedly his mate. I still wasn't sure about that.

I believe that both Damon and Dante hadn't found their real mate, just like Atticus hadn't until he married Autumn.

I just needed to find a way to prove it. And I was planning on doing it the first chance that I got. I just wasn't sure if doing that would make Damon upset with me. That was the last thing I wanted to happen. He's never been angry with me, and I didn't want to change that.

Whatever I had planned, I had to be smart about it.

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Today was our first day home after the fire had almost burnt it to the ground. I was happy to be home and to celebrate, my family was having a party tonight.

Autumn smiles as she points to the dress in front of me. "I think you have to go to the party in that dress"

"Wouldn't it be scandalous if I wore something so short?" I ask her.

I always tried not to do things that would get me on the front cover of a magazine. I wanted to try my best to stay out of trouble. I knew that liking Damon alone could get me into more trouble than I was prepared for.

"You're going to be around your entire family. To hell with what any idiot has to say about your outfit. It's your body; if you want to wear it, go right ahead." She tells me.

I smiled; I had to agree with her. It should be my choice. And I loved the silver dress that sparkled under the yellow lights above it.

"I told the guys we would meet them after the party begins," Autumn tells me. "I want everyone to be surprised when they see us. Well, mainly you. I want them to be surprised when they see you and how beautiful you look. I've made some calls, and I have a hairdresser and a makeup artist on their way to dress you up."

Something about how she said those words to me made me feel like she had an idea that I was in love with Damon. That frightened me. I never wanted anyone to know how much he meant to me.

"is something wrong?" She asks me; she must have noticed the fear in my eyes.

I shook my head, "I've never really known how to do my makeup."

She grins, "well, it's good that I hired someone. You don't have to worry about that at all. Everything is already taken care of. I've thought of everything to make this night perfect for us."

I laugh, "you have thought about everything, haven't you?"

She nods as we make our way back into my room.

Autumn gets dressed first. The white dress looked amazing on her. But anything looked beautiful on Autumn; she had the kind of face and body to make the ugliest dress look gorgeous. Not that this dress was ugly, it was absolutely stunning, like her.

She helps me get dressed next. The makeup artist enters the room with the hairdresser, and they both work their magic.

"I think you are going to have a hard time tonight," Autumn says as we exit the room after we are both finished.

"Why?" I ask, confused.

"Your stepbrothers will have to send away many guys who will try to flirt with you tonight. You know they tend to get a little overprotective when it comes to you, especially Damon."

I swallow at the mention of Damon, I was always looking forward to him being overprotective.

It didn't make me feel uncomfortable or unhappy; the exact opposite.

But why did Autumn mention Damon out of everyone else? It was true that he was the most protective when it came to me, but I didn't think that she would notice something like that. Could I be right all along? Did she know that I was in love with him?

I had to find out. Unlike many others, I trusted Autumn. I wouldn't mind her knowing the truth even though it terrified me

My hands shook as I mustered up the courage to ask her whether or not she knew the truth.

"Do you know the truth?" I whisper. There was no point trying to sneak it out of her. I wanted to ask her directly.

"The truth?" She asks, startled by my question.

"About what exactly?"

I can tell she already knows what I'm talking about, but she doesn't want to startle me.

"About my feelings for someone," I say. "I've been trying to keep it hidden because I know how wrong it is, but I think you've been hinting that you know the truth to me for the entire day now."

She sighs, "you picked up on it. It is true. I do know the truth about your feelings for Damon."

My cheeks are red at her confession; I'm the one that asked the question but hearing her say it aloud was alarming to me. It was the first time anyone had said those words to me.

She was the first person I was sharing my dark secret with, and it made me feel vulnerable. At the same time, I felt relieved to know that someone else knew how I felt about him and she was someone that I could trust.

“I promise that I won’t tell anyone. Not even Atticus. This is something he needs to hear from you. I won’t tell him even though we promised each other not to have any secrets between us. I think he would understand why I kept this from him.” She assured me. “You can trust me, Clarissa. I know this isn’t something you want others to know about,”

I was happy that she was so considerate to keep it from him. I wasn’t prepared for my family members to know the truth. I couldn’t imagine what Atticus would think of me if he ever found out.

“How did you learn about my feelings for him?” I ask her. “I’ve been trying to hide it since my feelings for him began. I’ve managed to keep it hidden for so long. What made you notice?”

I had to know never to make the same mistake again. If she could find out, anyone else could if they paid good attention to me.

“Remember that day when Atticus made me sleep in your room?” She asks me.

I nod; I remember that night quite well. Atticus had asked me to keep her in my room. I remember how troubled he’d looked that night. I remember wanting to help him with whatever had him so uneasy.

“I’m still sorry about that day.” She apologizes.

“I saw something that I shouldn’t have seen the morning after when I woke up. I was able to see a tattoo. And I think you know what that tattoo was.”

I cover my mouth with my hand. Of course, I knew what she was speaking about. Two years ago, for my sixteenth birthday, I did something without thinking clearly. I got a tattoo with his name on my as*s. The left side. It was right at the center. Damon.

That’s what the tattoo was. I knew it wasn’t the smartest thing to do, but I was so in love with him that I wanted his name on my body, anything that made me feel closer to him.

I remember staring at it in the mirror every day since the day I’d gotten it done. I was so happy. But it was a dumb decision. I’d stopped wearing revealing bathing suits to the pool or the beach ever since then. I always had to keep it hidden from everyone because I knew they would find out the truth the moment that they saw it, just like Autumn had found out the truth just by seeing it.

I don’t know what I was thinking back then. I was thinking irrationally. How did I explain this to Autumn? She must think that I’m crazy!

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"You must think that something is wrong with me for liking someone I can never be with," I whisper nervously.

She gently takes my hand in hers, "no one knows more than me what it means to like someone you're not supposed to want. I have been in love with Atticus since the first day I met him. I was never supposed to have feelings for him, not when he was dating my best friend. It's crazy to know I was in pain because of Anya, and now the same is happening to you. Because of her."

"It's not just her," I admit. "I know Anya is a pain in the as*s, but I would feel the same way if it was any other girl. I hate seeing him with any woman that's not me. I know it's selfish and wrong, but I don't know how to control my feelings."

She gently rubs my back, "I know what you're going through, Clarissa. I'm here to support you through it all. It will not be easy, especially since he's your stepbrother."

I nod, "I know that. I know getting a tattoo with his name was stupid, also. Everyone would freak out if they knew what I truly felt for him.

"As I promised you, no one will ever hear it from my mouth." She promises me.

I smile and hug her, "I wish we were this close since the first day the Fawns adopted me. I wouldn't have been so lonely."

"I wish the same." She admits. "But at least we have each other now."

"Why are you always trying to steal my wife from me?" Atticus asks as he spots us.

Autumn gapes at him, "you promised me that you would wait instead of coming to see me without a single warning.

He chuckles and pulls her into his arms, "I couldn't wait. I wanted to see you in this dress. I can't wait to get it-"

I clear my throat, "I love that you're together for good now, but I don't need to hear the rest of that sentence."

Autumn blushes and playfully hits his shoulder, "come on, let's get Clarissa to the ballroom so that she can find herself a date for tonight."

“A date?” Atticus asks. “She doesn’t need a date. I’ve seen all the men present tonight; none of them are worthy of my sister.”

Autumn rolls her eyes, “we are not looking for a husband for her, Atticus. Just someone to dance with for the night.”

He shrugs, “I’ll love to see what Damon has to say about this.”

My heart skips a beat at the mention of Damon.

“Damon?” Autumn asks. “Why do you think Damon will have to say anything about her dancing with a man tonight?”

Atticus looked at her like she was crazy, “have you not been around him? Damon gets crazy protective over Clarissa; sometimes, even I need to tell him to lighten up. Ever since that witch almost killed her, he has become even worse. He’s always making sure that she’s out of danger.”

My heart skips yet another beat. It was true. Damon has become even more overprotective ever since that awful day. I’d never seen him so scared, but even I was terrified of never seeing him again. I thought she was going to kill me while my family watched.

I’m not sure what happened that night. Everyone was bound by spell-filled chains, but somehow, we all broke free from them. Autumn wasn’t there to help us, and I’m sure none of the witches there were responsible for freeing us; nothing made sense. I’m happy that we were released, but it still bothers me that I didn’t know what truly happened on that night.

I also couldn’t explain why my arm had been sore lately since that night.

“Are you ready?” Autumn asks me as we near the entrance of the ballroom.

I wasn’t ready, but as long as she remained by my side, I should be okay.

“How many people are here already?” I ask Atticus.

“Hundreds.” He informs me. “Just stick by our side, and tonight will pass quickly.”

Autumn sighs, “are you truly going to stop her from dancing with someone tonight?”

He smiles, “I would rather step in and stop your plans than watch Damon beat some poor guy up today and spoil our party.”

Autumn looks at me and smiles. She knows what hearing him say those words would mean to me. I think she's intentionally trying to provoke Atticus so that he would say exactly what I wanted to hear.

She hooks her arm through mine, and Atticus sighs behind us. "I miss the times you couldn't stand being away from me."

"What are you speaking about?" Autumn demands. "I'm right in front of you."

"As long as we aren't touching, it isn't close enough." He complains.

She laughs and pulls me along with her. I search the room for Damon; it's packed, just like Atticus said earlier.

Where is he?

"His eyes are already on you," Autumn whispers, so only I can hear.

I try not to show my excitement at her words.

"He's to your right, don't look at him. Pretend you're interested in someone else." She orders me.

My eyes snap to hers, "I don't know if I could do that."

"If you want a reaction out of him, you will have to push out of your comfort zone. So far, you're too nice to him. Make him uncomfortable; make him terrified of losing you to someone else." She tries explaining.

Would this work?

I didn't want to entertain anyone else but Damon. But maybe Autumn did have a point. I've tried it my way for years, and nothing has changed between Damon and me. He's never touched me inappropriately.

Not one k!ss. Not one se*xual touch. Just h.ugs.

That was all. He's always kept a distance between us which was expected since we were supposed to be step-siblings and he was dating Anya.

I'm the only one between the two of us with dirty thoughts. I can't stop picturing him k!ssing my neck, his hands on my b.reasts, and between my legs. I inwardly gr0an. Why do I have to be the only one between the two of us with these thoughts?

"Who are the two of you whispering about?"

Atticus asks. "Are you keeping secrets from me, Autumn?" Her face turns red, and she quickly grabs him for a dance. "I'll return to you after just one dance with Atticus." She apologizes.

I nod. I knew she pulled him away to distract him from our conversation.

"Who did you dress like this for?" Damon asks.

I bite my lip to keep myself from telling the truth. How long has he been standing behind me?

It couldn't be long. Whenever he was near, I felt this warmth inside of me, just like I do now.

"Does it matter?" I ask as I turn around to face him. My breath gets stuck in my throat as I see him in my favorite white shirt. It's one that I got him as a gift a year ago. The first two buttons are undone, and I can't stop staring at the exposed skin.

"It matters to me." He confesses as he takes a step toward me.

I can't breathe. Not when he's standing this close to me.

"I'll rather not say," I tell him.

He quirks a brow, "is it someone I'm not fond of?"

I try not to laugh at his question.

"I'm not sure," I whisper.

"Give me a description of him." Damon insists.

"Let's see," I say as I place a finger on my lip and pretend to be deep in thought. "He has on a white shirt tonight. It looks so good on him. He has piercing blue eyes and surprisingly soft hair."

He growls at my last sentence, "you've touched his hair?"