

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 201: The rumors[1,746 words]

Chapter 201: The rumors

Sebastian took a quick hot shower to wash off the oil and then threw on a robe as he stepped out and opened the door for Matt and the unwelcome woman who had come to him at the very wrong time of day, when not even the shower seemed to help calm the annoyance or the desire for his wife that still burned like hot coal beneath his skin.

The moment Sebastian opened the door, Laila threw her arms around his neck and complained, "What took you so long to open the door? I have been standing out here ringing your door until Matt came. You even changed your password!"

Sebastian glared at Matt over Laila's shoulder and said through their mind link, "You couldn't have come to me at any other time but now."

Matt felt his friend's glare like acid and quickly defended himself, "Hey, hey, it's not my fault. I came here to tell you something important but then I found Laila already standing here ringing your door. She was here before me and you weren't answering so I had to connect through the mind link. Don't blame me."

After what Sebastian had done in his wolf form, Matt didn't think their discussion could wait for another time, not unless he wanted to find his mate gone by morning, kidnapped and taken somewhere he wouldn't be able to reach her, tortured to weaken him. Something like that wasn't so farfetched when it came to people who were desperate enough for the supreme Alpha's power.

Sebastian subtly pulled away from Laila's embrace as he closed the door behind them and said, "I change my password every time I marry. It's nothing new." He told her with a straight, emotionless face that was completely different from the warm expression he wore when he was with his wife. "What brought you here?" He narrowed his eyes at her as she made her way over and threw herself onto his couch.

"You don't want me here?" She asked him, smiling up at him where he stood in his robe, looking deliciously enticing and arousing, turning her on unexpectedly. "Can Matt leave us alone?" She asked, twirling a strand of hair around her finger.

"No. Matt can't leave and you can't stay here." Sebastian said flatly, knowing exactly what she was trying to imply by wanting Matt to leave. "You know my motto, Laila. Once I marry I do not sleep with another woman, nor do I keep her in my place. It has been like that with Natalie and Evangeline and it will be the same now."

Laila's smile fell. She had known he was going to be like this. Though she hadn't been around during his marriage with Natalie, she had been here during Evangeline, and she knew how he had paid her no attention even when she was his mate.

Not until his second wife died did he come back to her like a lost puppy, cuddling with her on the bed at night and not wanting to let go, or stop burying himself inside her all night like he wanted to pour out his hurt and grief through his body.

However, unlike Evangeline, this Viola was giving her the wrong signal, and the rumors already circulating through the building were enough to make her come here seeking not only validation but the truth of whether they were real.

"I know you don't sleep around while married, Seb. But tell me why everyone is saying you carried your Luna on your back this afternoon. You've never even carried me, your mate, on your back. People are saying not even Natalie had sat there, so why did you carry Viola?" Laila asked, feeling the same anger and jealousy she had felt the first time she heard the rumors rising all over again inside her.

"People are also saying she is one of your mates. Is that true?" She added, looking at him with curious emerald eyes. It had better not be.

Laila had intimidated many others who turned out to be Sebastian's mates and driven them away until she was now the only one who remained close to him. If this little wolfless woman turned out to be another one, Laila found the notion laughable, but it would be a simple thing to have her uncle get rid of her in the blink of an eye before the curse even got the chance to.

Sebastian let out a humorless laugh. "What made anyone think she is my mate? She is nothing but my Luna, and whoever holds that position will naturally receive my protection. That is why she rode on my back. If she were my mate, I wouldn't have married her and made her my Luna. Nobody wants a weak mate who can weaken them standing beside them, so drop the notion that she is anything other than the Luna and stop overthinking things."

'Man, you are over explaining.' Muffin groaned inside him. 'You never explain yourself that much.'

'Laila might be smart about some things, but she is as dumb as a chicken when it comes to matters like this. She won't catch on to anything and take my words for it.' Sebastian replied calmly.

Laila looked thoughtful for a moment before she let out a slow sigh of relief. "I knew there was no way someone like that would be among your mates. The moon goddess wouldn't add a wolfless woman to be the supreme Alpha's mates. The guests were just exaggerating everything that happened earlier." She said, and then she got up and walked towards him, adding,

"My uncle from the Red Moon Pack asked if you were treating me right because he was thinking about withdrawing his agreements with your pack since I didn't win the competition." She let out a soft sigh, touching Sebastian's chest with her palm and looking up at him with a coy smile.

"But of course I told him you are still treating me well and encouraged him to sign the contract this year. After all, you and I will be married next year and I can't afford for us to lose all those lands when I become Luna."

Sebastian knew exactly what Laila was trying to do. She was trying to remind him of the benefits of keeping her close and how she had far more to offer than the woman he had married.

As much as he would have liked to shatter her illusions and tell her that whatever had existed between them was over, he couldn't do that now, not while Viola's wolf hadn't yet awakened and all the potential of the prophesied one hadn't yet risen in her.

Until then, he would have to keep up appearances, not just with Laila but with everyone.

Sebastian sent Laila away with the excuse that he had important matters and work to deal with alongside Matt and would get back to her. After he watched her walk out through his door, he turned to face Matt, who clicked his tongue and said,

"I would never want to be in your shoes, man. In order to protect one you have to pretend to still want another."

"What's the news?" Sebastian asked, ignoring Matt's remark and walking towards his bar and pouring himself a drink.

Matt followed him to the bar. "The news is that everyone is now assuming the Luna is your mate, just as Laila said. Alpha Noah even invited me to his room, which I sadly declined, because I already know he will try to probe me with his powers to draw out the truth."

Alpha Noah was an Alpha whose pack had maintained a hot and cold relationship with the Silver Pack ever since Sebastian's father was alive. Unlike other packs, Noah's pack, the Grim Pack, was said to house werewolves with the rare ability to compel, though it only worked when the victim was in a relaxed state.

More than anything else, Sebastian knew the man would no doubt set his sights on Viola the moment he learned she was his mate, and then use her as leverage against him, forcing Sebastian to finally agree to the long standing demand of handing over hundreds of his male pack members to join the Grim Pack and expand it. Something Sebastian would never agree to when his own pack still had more than enough room to grow.

"How are you going to dispel the rumors?" Matt asked, pouring himself a drink as well. If the rumors didn't stop spreading, it would travel way beyond their reach.

"I don't know." Sebastian said flatly, glaring at the opposite wall like he wanted to burn a hole straight through it. This wouldn't have happened if Muffin hadn't compelled him to carry her on their back, but then Sebastian didn't even regret it, because he had been rewarded with her giggles and her smile, and that alone had made it worth every complication that followed.

"Do you have any helpful suggestions?" Sebastian questioned, taking a long sip of his drink.

"My suggestion would be to perhaps put some distance between yourself and her and make it obvious to everyone that you are doing so. Mates were known to find it hard to be apart. If

possible, you could use Laila to dispel the rumors. It's just a suggestion, don't glare at me like that." Matt said quickly as Sebastian's silver eyes cut to him.

"I know how you are starting to feel about her, but until we are certain she is the one, you cannot allow anything to happen to her. You could take Laila out shopping or something of that nature and let everyone see that you did. The rumors of her being your mate will die out in an instant and get replaced by something else. It's only until the guests leave Silver." Matt said cautiously, unable to think of another way out of it.

"Scratch that idea entirely. I will think of another way. For now I need to meet with the elders about something important. Until the guests leave Silver, send my warriors to discreetly keep an eye on my wife at all times. They need to make sure their eyes are on her without making it known. If anyone suspicious is seen lurking around her, they are to report to me immediately." He said as he rose from the barstool.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 202: Two sides of the hall[1,348 words]

Chapter 202: Two sides of the hall

Sebastian used his authority in no time to make all the elders agree to the law change, even when many of them found it ridiculously absurd and sudden, considering it had been something that had been in place since the beginning of time to make she-wolves aware of the need to control their heat and to not tempt the males or distract them, unless they wanted to offer themselves willingly.

Many were against it, but with the supreme Alpha's commanding authority and his aura pressing down on the room, there was no way any of them could dare say no.

Sebastian sent the signed documents of his agreement and the elders' agreements to Viola that night, along with a text message that he wouldn't be able to make it to her place tonight as something important had come up.

With the rumors circulating through the building, he had decided to keep his distance until things settled back into place. People were well aware of how difficult it was for mates to stay away from each other, especially when they lived in the same building, and if Sebastian was seen staying away from his wife, they would naturally begin to believe everything was nothing but rumors and his mate would be safe from falling victim to any kidnapping or poisoning attempts.

Rather than go to her and follow every instinct inside him that was pushing him toward her, Sebastian arranged an Alphas meeting that night with the visiting guest Alphas and had dinner with them while they discussed important matters, making sure they could all see plainly that he would rather spend his evening with them than go to his Luna.

Viola on the other hand was disappointed that he wasn't going to come, but she had already started to practice being unaffected by him and whatever he did, even when it was hugging another woman and sending her out through back doors like something he needed to hide.

She hadn't married Sebastian to be possessive of him or to keep him tied to her and suffocate him the way she had suffocated Evan until he grew tired of her, and she hadn't come here to let her heart fall into another love she hadn't asked for. She was here for Ivy, to live a better life, one without selfishness and desperation pulling her in directions she couldn't afford to go.

Not having him around was in fact good for her. She told herself that firmly, even when her heart and body didn't agree with her in the slightest. She pushed all of those feelings down anyway and kept them there. The only truly disappointing part was the fact that his presence and his intimacy were the very things that would help her wolf surface, and she couldn't afford to forget that.

Viola had wondered all afternoon what had caused her eyesight to suddenly heal so completely that she could see without her glasses, but now that she thought carefully about what Sebastian had said regarding Doctor Gilbert's analysis, it must have been because of Sebastian's temporary mark or the intimacy between them on their wedding night that must have begun helping her in ways she hadn't yet fully understood.

Who knew, perhaps if she found Ivy, everything would naturally begin to fall into place and they would both finally have their wolves and find where they truly fit into this world.

Rather than beat herself up over the fact that she was growing feelings for the man she had married, feelings she hadn't wanted and hadn't planned for, Viola put all of her time and focus into leading the she-wolf council and preparing to announce the law change to them within the next two days.

On the day she was going to meet the she-wolves, while there were still guests who had come for the wedding present in Silver, she didn't dress too fancy but she made sure everyone would be invited, including the remaining Moonwillow guests and the North Pack members who were still in Silver.

"Many will appreciate the change, I am sure." Zoe assured as they left Viola's penthouse and made their way to the meeting hall. "But I hope you are ready to face those who won't appreciate it."

Viola raised her hand and tucked strands of hair behind her ear as she looked at Zoe. "Any she-wolf who wouldn't appreciate the change is one of the ones who made the belief stronger every time."

Viola was well aware of those kinds of she-wolves. Leni had been one of them, though unfortunately for Leni, she didn't have the privilege of joining the council now. From what Viola had heard, she had been locked in the dungeon along with her mate for pulling that scheme to seduce the supreme Alpha. She and Evan and Eliot would be sitting down there for the next three months, and Viola couldn't find it in herself to feel sorry about that.

"You will be surprised." Zoe said with a serious frown settling over her delicate face. "There are some who genuinely wanted to be taken when in heat. Who believed it was simply the natural order of things and never questioned it."

Not being one to experience an intense heat herself, and her scent sitting only a little above that of an omega after the bullet she had taken for her brother, Zoe still strongly believed every other she-wolf deserved to be protected regardless of what they had been taught to accept.

But then no one had ever truly raised the case before, for many of the she-wolves in positions of power wouldn't want the change any more than the males did. It was a system that had worked in the favor of those with power for far too long.

"I am glad you are coming with me to the council even when you have an important fashion show happening today." Viola remarked, and Zoe waved her hand in easy dismissal.

"Don't worry about it, my manager and assistants will take care of everything. It's my first time stepping into the she-wolf council anyway. I might as well start showing up for something that actually matters, and what better way to begin than campaigning for something good as the Alpha's sister."

When they arrived at the hall, every she-wolf who had attended the wedding in Silver was already seated. Many of them weren't happy to see Viola, while some were genuinely happy about the rumors of the law change and immediately crowded around her, telling her how much they appreciated what she was trying to do for their world.

Viola even got to meet many she-wolves who had been victims of rape during their heat, and she was surprised and heartbroken to find that many of them had been rejected by their own mates for it. While many were present, Sofia was not among them. She noted briefly.

In no time, the hall automatically divided itself into two sides, the she-wolves separating themselves without being told. On one side were those who supported the change, and on the other were those who were against it. Laila and Ember stood at the front of the opposing side, and standing among them were Viola's adoptive mother and sister, who looked at her with open resentment and undisguised bitterness.

"A nobody like you cannot just crawl out of nowhere and suddenly want to change our world's belief." Said Ember from the other side of the hall. No words could describe the anger and hate she held for this bitch who had snatched away her place right under her nose.

"When a she-wolf doesn't have control of her own heat, what happens is up to her. Do not sentence innocent males to death for something as natural as instinct. Our males are not made to control themselves around a female in heat. They were made to claim her and get her with a pup. That is how we are made. We are not humans, we are werewolves!"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 203: A silent challenge[1,097 words]

Chapter 203: A silent challenge

"When a she-wolf doesn't have control of her own heat, what happens is up to her. Do not sentence innocent males to death for something as natural as instinct. Our males are not made to control themselves around a female in heat. They were made to claim her and get her with a pup. That is how we are made. We are not humans, we are werewolves!"

Viola turned to look at the opposing group, unable to conceal the disgust that rose to her face at those words that left Ember's mouth. No doubt many of those arguing against the law change were ones who had never gone through the nightmare of being attacked for something as natural and involuntary as a heat season.

But then she would be surprised that females with an Alpha wolf aura ever got attacked, considering how they carried themselves and how powerful their presence was, enough to force a regular wolf into submission.

"Our males are not made to control their instincts?" Viola asked with a look of calm, amused disbelief as her eyes swept over Ember and Laila and her former pack members who supported this belief, probably because it was Laila standing at the front of it.

Had it been someone like Laila or Ember standing in her shoes wanting to make this change, they wouldn't have dared argue against it. But it was her, the wolfless nobody who had gotten the position through sheer will and luck, and so they felt entitled to tear it apart.

But Viola wouldn't let them intimidate her. Not when she was trying to make a safe place for her sister and others like Sofia. Not when she was going to bring Ivy to live here with her, and knowing that they were twins, her sister most likely also carried her condition of uncontrollable pheromones. For Ivy, Viola would walk down a path of open flames and burning coals without flinching.

"If our males are made to be incapable of controlling their instincts, then tell me how it goes for the female who also cannot control hers? If they cannot control themselves then they should not turn around and blame the female when she gets raped and assaulted against her will. They should accept a female who falls victim to their actions and not abuse her for it. They should raise the pup that was made in the act of their disgusting behavior."

Murmuring broke out across the hall at Viola's words, and many of the she-wolves standing behind her began to nod in firm agreement. Though many of them might not have liked that she was wolfless or felt she was the best candidate to rule them, a large number of them had quietly hoped

for someone to step up and make this change for a very long time, to keep them safe in their own world during their most vulnerable seasons.

"Bullshit." Laila scoffed as she walked over toward the side where Viola was standing.

"Suppressants are made for a reason, in case you were unaware, Luna." She said the word Luna with so much open scorn that some of the she-wolves standing behind her laughed like she had delivered a punchline.

"And I can see that only wolfless like you struggle to have control of their heat, but suppressants exist to help with that. Don't force your beliefs on the rest of us and tear apart what our world has always known." Laila mused, smiling and looking down at Viola despite the heels Viola wore, the height difference between them working in Laila's favor. "You don't even belong in our world without a wolf. You are nothing but a misplaced puzzle piece that someone forced into the wrong picture."

Viola felt Laila's wolf presence pressing in on her, pushing against her with the full weight of an Alpha bloodline trying to intimidate her into submission. Her forehead was damp and her legs felt the pull to bow underneath her, her body responding to the dominance the way any wolfless she-wolf's would. She clenched her fingers tightly at her sides and held her ground.

Viola recalled the scene she had witnessed two days ago of Laila throwing her arms around her husband without hesitation, like she had every right to, and the anger that rose in her chest from the memory made her fight against the pressing wolf presence even harder.

The feeling bubbled hot into her throat and sat there. She hated that this woman not only shared a connection with her husband but held everything her current position demanded, a powerful family name, a powerful wolf, and perhaps even a deeper and more meaningful history with the Alpha than Viola might ever be able to build. A history that had existed long before Viola had ever walked through the doors of Silver Pack.

Perhaps it was the bitterness of that realization, the quiet and painful understanding that she might never amount to everything Sebastian would need to make him never look at another woman, that hurt her more than Laila's wolf presence ever could.

But then she reminded herself, steadily and firmly, the way she had learned to remind herself of things that kept her standing. He hadn't married Laila. Laila was not the Luna. She did not have the right to stand here and make her feel small and undeserving of what she had fought and bled to earn.

Viola ruled over Laila whether Laila wanted to accept it or not, wolf or no wolf.

"You have quite a lot to say for someone who has no standing here, Miss Serrano." Viola said calmly, her voice carrying across the hall without needing to be raised. "Might I remind you that you failed the competition that would have given you the right to speak in this capacity. It seems you forget that easily and require a reminder more often than you should. I rule the she-wolf council now, and I have both the Alpha's and the elders' full support behind me."

Viola pressed a button on the tablet she held, raising a holographic screen for every she-wolf in the hall to see, the Alpha's signed agreement appearing in bold and undeniable clarity on the enormous blue screen above them all.

"The law change is a done deal. And from this day forward, any male who dares touch a woman without her consent and assumes she asked for it will be sentenced to death before everyone!" Her blue eyes locked angrily with Laila in silent challenge.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 204: Ruining plans[1,027 words]

Chapter 204: Ruining plans

"Fucking hell!" Javier cursed as his mother told him what had happened in the hall during the she-wolf council meeting and how the new Luna had changed a law that had stood for generations, and how many other Lunas were now supporting her and even supporting the Alpha for agreeing to it.

"I didn't know she was capable of facing Laila and challenging her, let alone daring to change what has already been accepted for generations." Camilla mused, still unable to believe the girl had that much nerve in her. But then she had won the competition where people died, and she should have known better than to underestimate a woman who didn't even rely on her wolf to get things done. Just what did she think she was doing, changing their law as if she had the right?

How dare she change anything at all? She was supposed to be like a puppet, someone who followed the law and lived quietly as the sacrificial lamb she was, until she either died from the curse or gave birth to a half Alpha heir that wouldn't be accepted in Silver to be crowned. Camilla massaged her temple in distress as it became clearer by the minute that this girl was already doing far more than she had ever anticipated or planned for.

"Oh, Mami, she is asking for trouble, and by the moon I will give her exactly the trouble she is looking for in this pack!" Javier snapped, pacing the length of the room where his mother sat looking, for the first time in a long while, as genuinely worried as he was.

Because they both understood exactly what this meant. Having this many Lunas from other packs rallying behind her and throwing their support behind the change would grow Sebastian's alliances and make him stronger and more untouchable on the Alpha seat, when everything they had spent years working toward depended entirely on the opposite outcome. This woman was going to dismantle their plans before they even had the chance to be set into motion.

And beyond ruining their plans, his problem with her was becoming deeply personal by the day, for she had done something to his wife that he hadn't asked for and would never forgive.

After he had gone and brought his mate back from that wolfless woman's penthouse, something about Sofia had shifted in a way that unsettled him to his core. She no longer covered her face with

her hair when she walked into a room. She had even begun taking her bath in the morning without asking his permission first, as if it were the most natural thing in the world to simply decide something for herself.

How dare she turn his Sofia against him? He had maintained his control over her for so long, shaped her so carefully into someone who needed him for every small decision, that he was no longer used to her doing anything at all without consulting him first, even something as small and insignificant as when she bathed.

If she could make that decision on her own now, what would stop her from one day deciding to walk away from him entirely? What would stop her from turning her family against him and unraveling everything he had built around her? Javier couldn't let that happen. He wouldn't.

"Just as I told you before, you are not to touch a hair on her body without my permission. I haven't yet gotten full confirmation on whether she is his mate or not, and until I do, you leave her alone." Camilla said strictly, looking up at her pacing son whose jaw hardened visibly at her words.

"And how are we going to find that out?" Javier asked.

Camilla looked thoughtful for a moment before she rose from her seat and said, "We are not close enough to her to know it ourselves, but there is a way to find out. We find it out through someone she trusts. Someone like your brother."

She had never paid much attention to Nick, for he had never seemed to share her mindset and had taken far more after his father's genes than hers. In fact he looked much more like the Kades than her son Javier did, and just like his father, he had no appetite for the heavy responsibility of the Alpha seat. A child she couldn't gain anything from was nothing but useless to her, and she had always preferred to put her energy and effort into the one who stood to give her more.

However, right now, she knew that drawing him closer might make him the only one capable of giving her the information she needed.

Javier couldn't help but scoff. "You think that little dickhead would help you betray a girl he follows around like a foolish puppy?" He let out a humorless laugh, already knowing his mother was embarking on a mission that wouldn't succeed in any way because Nick simply wouldn't do it.

His brother should have been born a useless girl. It would have suited him far better given his spinelessness, and Javier would have appreciated a sister much more. At least she would have married into an important pack and brought her husband's support to his reign, rather than a useless brother who spent his time supporting his enemy.

"Good luck convincing my loser of a brother, but all I know is that that woman will have to pay for what she did, whether or not she turns out to be the Alpha's mate. If I don't teach her a lesson, she will start to believe she is something mighty and begin changing our entire world piece by piece before I take the seat."

Camilla fixed her son with a hard warning look. "I am warning you, Javier. Do not do anything to ruin my plans or you will regret it."

Javier wanted to scoff but held it back and said, "I won't. I won't do anything to her yet, not until you finish convincing my coward of a brother." He gave his word in a grumble.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 205: Needing bodyguards[1,530 words]

Chapter 205: Needing bodyguards

In Viola's penthouse, she came back after the meeting in the council with Zoe, and Nick joined them afterwards after seeing the news broadcast across every screen in Silver about the change, and couldn't help but come and congratulate her on her first achievement of changing a century old belief.

It was just too remarkable for him, she fascinated him all the time with the things she did.

He didn't regret ever befriending her and standing by her side, and unlike his family who were angry at the change in the pack, Nick was overjoyed on behalf of his friend and cousin sister.

"You rock, Vee! I should get you something but I can't quite figure out what other gifts I could possibly give you." Nick mused thoughtfully and Viola smiled as she said,

"You have given me enough already. Besides, I have every new tech sample and idea you have made for Silver sitting in my room. And what I did today is not something anyone couldn't do."

"Stop humbling yourself. It's not something anyone couldn't do, but nobody did it until you." Nick said, looking at her from the kitchen counter where he was working on the protein shake he had promised to make for her, having noticed over the past few days that she was losing weight and looking too thin for his peace of mind. As her trainer and friend, he wanted her to be in her best of health.

"Moon river, what is wrong with this blender? I should just make a blender with artificial intelligence rather than deal with this crap. Would you want that as a gift, Vee?" Nick asked, a look of sparking inspiration flashing across his eyes like his brain had just shifted into gear.

He had been thinking about what new things to create for Silver for a while now, but this gave him a direction, and if Vee would genuinely like it then he would make it happen without a second thought.

"I am sure many people would love it. Go ahead and make it, Nick. You are a genius after all." Viola said with a warm smile, basking in the moment with her two closest friends who fussed over her like she was something fragile and precious that needed to be handled with care.

"Mi primita, tell me more. Give me all the juice on Laila's expression when the deal was done." Nick called out to Zoe from the kitchen, and Zoe glared across the room at him for calling her his little cousin again the way he always did just to get under her skin, but she still gladly launched into the gossip he was asking for, because the two of them were like two beans in the same pot who could never keep anything from each other for long.

"Oh, you should have seen Laila's face! I have never seen her lose an argument like that before in my life. I was genuinely surprised that most of the she-wolves stood up and rallied behind Vee!" She exclaimed from where she sat beside Viola on the couch, feeling so proud she didn't quite have the words big enough to hold it.

Though along with the pride, there was that lingering worry that never truly left Zoe, the kind that had taken root in her bones ever since she had lost people she loved and couldn't afford to lose anyone else. She had become something like a paranoid mother to her little remaining family, and even small things that carried the potential for conflict and danger were enough to make her chest tighten.

The light in her gray eyes dimmed slightly as she added, "Though I hope you will be careful from here on, Vee. I can only imagine how many people you have offended today for pushing this change through. Some don't take defeat lightly and will want to retaliate." She turned and faced Viola fully on the couch.

"How about I speak to my brother about giving you personal bodyguards the way he assigned them to me? They are so sharp they can sense danger from miles away before it even gets close."

Viola's eyes dimmed a little at the mention of Sebastian, who she hadn't set eyes on for two days and didn't dare to wonder why.

She was aware that she had offended more people than she had wanted to today, more than she had fully prepared herself for. She had noticed all sorts of eyes following her as she left the council hall, calculating in ways that made the back of her neck prickle. But she didn't think it would ever reach a point where she needed personal bodyguards, and she certainly wouldn't allow Zoe to go to Sebastian on her behalf and ask for it.

She wouldn't like warriors breathing down her neck everywhere she went. And furthermore, she wouldn't let Sebastian do more than he had already done for her. She wouldn't let people see that she was his mate when he himself had chosen not to reveal it, and she understood why, because that would make her an easy target, a weapon someone could use against him.

She wasn't naive. She understood that in the werewolf world, a mate, especially one without a wolf was an Alpha's greatest weakness, and she refused to be the thing that brought more problems to his door than she already had with Javier, even as she fought every day to push back the feelings that kept quietly growing in her chest no matter how firmly she tried to trap them there.

Before Viola could even open her mouth to tell Zoe there was no need to involve her brother, Nick had already spoken up from the kitchen.

"I can volunteer to be your bodyguard. I have had the same training as our pack warriors since infancy, and I can be a far better guard than any of Zoe's." He said, flexing his bicep muscles and wiggling his brows across the counter at his cousin, who responded with a flat roll of her eyes.

"Go sit down, show off. You are not even half as built as one of my guards. You cannot protect Vee from assassins with deadly weapons and guns using those arms."

Nick gasped with exaggerated offense, grabbing the protein shake in the stray cup and stepping out from behind the counter. "Oh no no, primita. I can beat up two or three of your guards without breaking a sweat, and if you don't believe me then let me challenge them to a match right now and let Vee be the judge of it!"

"Vee, don't mind him, he cannot be a guard. He has far too much on his plate already and wouldn't have the time to protect you properly." Zoe argued, turning to look at Viola who was glancing back and forth between the two of them as they bickered the way they always did.

The two of them could never seem to go a full day without arguing about something, and yet Viola had long since learned that underneath every argument was a deep and unshakeable fondness neither of them would ever openly admit to.

"Can you two stop it. I am not looking for a bodyguard so there is no point arguing about it. I am not afraid. Whoever feels threatened by what I did today will already be reassured by the fact that I am considered a dead Luna walking. They all believe I will die like the other two Lunas before me, so no one is going to waste their time attacking a person they already expect the curse to take care of and—"

"Vee!"

"Viola!" Nick and Zoe called out at the exact same time, both of them turning to look at her with matching expressions of distress.

"Don't talk like that." Zoe muttered, her voice suddenly trembling. "You are not going to die. My brother has promised me, so please don't talk like that."

"You don't think we would just stand by and let that happen, do you?" Nick said as he came over and held out the protein shake he had finished making. "If you ever notice the Alpha looking suspicious or doing anything that doesn't sit right with you, all you have to do is call me. You are not going to die. I won't allow it." Nick said with complete seriousness, looking directly into her blue eyes and meaning every single word without any of his usual lightness behind them.

It wasn't something he said just to comfort her. Normally Nick didn't linger in the main pack building, preferring the freedom of moving around Silver on his own schedule, but he had quietly begun staying closer these days because somewhere in the back of his mind lived the fear that a night would come when Viola needed someone near and he would be too far away to reach her in time. Curse or no curse, Viola was not going to die in the hands of the Alpha the way the other Lunas had. Not while he was around.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 206: Hidden feelings[1,346 words]

Chapter 206: Hidden feelings

Viola took the milkshake from Nick with a quiet thanks and looked between them both. She could see how much her teasing words had suddenly worried them and it genuinely warmed her heart, reminding her again just how much she meant to these two, when she hadn't meant anything to anyone in a very, very long time.

Zoe even had tears gathering in her gray eyes and her pink plump lips were quivering like a toddler whose candy had been snatched away by an adult, and Viola found it so adorable it almost made her feel guilty for joking about it in the first place. Meanwhile Nick, the ever playful Nick, looked so serious that his silver eyes had gone hard and unreadable. Were these two really this worried? She was only joking. Besides, Sebastian hadn't marked her so she was safe from any unexpected death tied to the bond.

But of course they didn't know that, and she needed to reassure them before Zoe actually started crying.

"Can you two stop looking at me like that? I am just joking, so relax. Nothing is going to happen to me." She patted Zoe's arm gently and then Nick's, offering them both a small reassuring smile.

Nick let out a long breath of relief and then turned his hand over to cover Viola's where it rested beside him. "Still, whenever there is anything fishy going on, I don't care how small or insignificant it seems, just reach out to me. I will be there in a second, if not faster, to help you."

Had Nick had any real idea of how his cousin disposed of his wives, it would have been one thing, but to make matters worse, the Alpha killed without ever leaving bodies behind, and the elders would pull whatever strings were needed and release the news that they had been properly buried.

He had never actually thought to question whether there were real bodies in the graves carved out for the past Lunas, but now he cared deeply, because his best friend might one day find herself in that same position and he needed to stay alert in a way he had never bothered to be before.

Viola laughed softly. "You are becoming just as paranoid as Zoe, but stay at ease. Sebastian won't hurt me."

As much as her relationship with Sebastian had settled into an awkward and uncertain place now, where she was pulling back to protect her own heart and he was keeping his distance for reasons she hadn't yet fully figured out when he hadn't gotten her with a pup, she still trusted that he wouldn't hurt her.

Not the Sebastian she had come to know. Not the one who had laid on his couch and told her quietly about why he had gotten ink into his skin. Not the one who had kissed her and set her entire body burning for something more than she knew how to name.

Not the one who had slid this shining wedding ring onto her finger and cooked porridge for her during her period and held her with a gentleness that didn't match the cold and terrifying Alpha the world believed him to be. Not him. Had it been the version of him she thought she knew before she actually knew him, she might have believed it easily. But not now.

And so she tried her best to put her friends at ease on that matter. Besides, if he had truly wanted her dead, he would have simply given her his mark without explaining a single thing to her first.

"Oh, you two are on a first name basis, I see." Nick mused with a small laugh. "I am glad you believe in him, even when I don't."

"Hey, my brother is not that evil, you know." Zoe defended him immediately, turning on Nick the way she had done a hundred times before.

"He is only ruthless to his enemies and sometimes to family members who cross him, but he is the most loving person when he wants to be." She was well aware that Nick lived in quiet terror of the Alpha and believed him to be the worst kind of person, the kind who had killed his own twin for the seat of power.

Nick smiled, slow and unbothered. "Whatever you say, dear cousin. Whatever you want to believe about your brother. But I am going to protect our friend if it ever comes to that, even if it's against him."

"You two should drop this conversation, it's making my head spin." Viola said, not entirely truthfully, just wanting them to let the topic of Sebastian go. Because just like Zoe, she was feeling a strong and inconvenient urge to defend him, and wherever that feeling was coming from she had absolutely no interest in exploring it or thinking about the man behind it right now.

Nick turned to look down at Viola on the couch where she sat gripping the protein shake cup with both hands on her lap. He found himself quietly spellbound looking at her face, her natural pink lips and cheeks, her eyes framed with long lashes behind the lenses he believed she wore, which he had always thought suited her far better than the glasses ever had.

Viola pursed her lips at the way he was looking at her and asked, "Is there something on my face?" She touched her face and the corners of her lips self consciously, frowning a little.

He shook his head slowly. "There is nothing on your face. I am just thinking that the Alpha is lucky to have someone like you, and I hope to hell he doesn't mess things up or hurt you, or attempt to use you as a sacrifice the way everyone out there is saying he will. Because if he does, I will spend the rest of my life regretting that I didn't steal you away from him when I had the chance, mi amor." He mused, reaching out to touch her cheek, but Zoe swatted his hand away before his fingers could make contact.

"Nah, no flirting with my sister-in-law, dude. Hands off." She said with a mock strict face, glaring across at Nick, who clutched his hand dramatically to his chest.

"Ouch, did you have to hit me that hard? She has been mi amor long before she ever married your brother and she still is. Isn't that right, Vee?" Nick asked, dropping down onto the couch beside her.

Viola laughed, completely oblivious to the realness of the feelings threading through Nick's words, assuming as always that he was joking the way he always liked to do around her. She didn't see herself as anything a man would genuinely desire.

She wouldn't even have believed that Sebastian would treat her kindly if they didn't share the mate bond pulling him toward her, let alone entertain the idea of being desired by two men at once. There was nothing about her that she believed anyone would truly want or chase after. That kind of thinking had never been something she allowed herself.

But Zoe saw straight through it, knowing her cousin better than most anyone else did. Though even as she noticed it, she wasn't too worried, because just as he had once developed feelings for his brother's wife Sofia years ago and then watched those feelings quietly fade away on their own, Zoe was fairly certain the same thing would happen again.

Nick had one of the most confusing hearts and minds she had ever known. He could be taken with someone entirely one moment and then the feeling would be completely gone the next as if it had never existed at all.

It had happened with Sofia, whom he had developed a quiet crush on when she first came to the Silver Pack before she married his brother. The moment she got married his feelings for her had vanished and they had become total strangers to each other almost overnight.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 207: Giving him an heir[1,617 words]

Chapter 207: Giving him an heir

They were still talking about random things when Nick's phone beeped and he glanced down at the screen, his expression shifting almost imperceptibly.

"What's wrong?" Viola asked, catching the change immediately.

He flashed her a quick smile. "Nothing. My mother wants me to come over for dinner." He got up from the couch. "I guess I won't be having dinner with you two like we planned. By the way, about what you asked of me the other day, our journey to Nightshade. Is it still on?"

Viola nodded. "It is. I will be going next week Thursday. Will you be free then?"

"More than free." He leaned down and before she could say anything, pressed his lips briefly to her cheek, then straightened up and crossed over to the kitchen to do the same to Zoe, who was unpacking their meals on the counter.

"Good night, girls. Don't have too much fun without me."

After Nick left, Viola and Zoe ate dinner together, but at some point Zoe received an important call from her assistant at the designing house that a dress had been mistakingly ruined and the owner was getting married tomorrow and needed her there supervising personally to repair the ruined dress.

Zoe had apologized to Viola, as she had planned to spend the night with her after hearing that Sebastian hadn't come back to spend the night with her following their wedding, which Zoe understood as her brother's way of trying to protect his mate with so many guests still around and watching everything with sharp and curious eyes. But Viola shooed her off warmly to go handle her work and not worry about her for a single second.

She saw Zoe to the door and then turned back to her quiet and suddenly lonely apartment, her eyes taking in the emptiness even with all the furniture filling the living room. Family makes a home, Viola thought. People make a place full and whole, not the furniture. Not the expensive couches or the glass walls or the city lights spilling in from outside. None of it meant anything without someone to share it with.

As a normal married and mated she-wolf she was supposed to be spending this time with her husband. These early stages were the stages where mates were inseparable, where they sought each other out constantly and spent most of their time and days tangled together, learning each other in every way possible.

But then this marriage, Viola reminded herself firmly, wasn't normal. It wasn't even close to what she had always imagined marriage to look and feel like.

She had known to expect as much even from what little she had understood of Sebastian before she truly knew him. He hadn't shared a room with his Lunas before, and none of them except the first had ever lived in his main quarters with him.

She had walked into this with her eyes open and agreed to the arrangement herself when he told her they wouldn't change their living arrangements even after marriage. Still, she couldn't help the quiet loneliness that crept in around the edges, nor the lingering awareness that they hadn't yet done the one thing everyone had wanted from him in taking a Luna to begin with.

Giving him an heir.

Viola sighed and made her way to the couch, folding her legs underneath her as she stared out through the glass wall at the city below.

Normally as a Luna she was supposed to be working through documents and sorting out how to better the pack, especially as a supreme Luna, but since the day she had been crowned she had only gone through two documents and hadn't been bothered with any others, even after reading that she would be taking on a quarter of the Alpha's workload.

This night would have been a perfectly good moment to go through documents as a distraction, since she had nothing else to occupy her hands and sitting bored inside her large penthouse was beginning to press down on her.

When she had been in Moonwillow, even when she was just the girlfriend of an alpha heir, Viola couldn't remember a single night she hadn't gone through papers and worked herself to exhaustion, believing that was what her responsibility would look like when she finally got crowned. She had prepared herself for that weight without anyone asking her to.

But here she was, a Luna, not just any Luna but the supreme Luna, with nothing to do and nothing to work through into the night. Had everything she had taught herself during her time in Moonwillow been for nothing?

She let out a long sigh and leaned back against the couch cushions, her eyes dropping to the space beside her.

A memory surfaced before she was prepared for it. The time she had been in Sebastian's penthouse giving him an oil massage, a massage that had almost led to something her body was still desperately, embarrassingly curious about. Something that had burned and carved a gaping hole of want in her core, and whenever her mind drifted back to it she felt that same intense heat bloom low in her stomach all over again.

Was it because she had never truly had sex before? Was that why she was, no, why her body was so consumed with curiosity about it? Recalling how he had made her straddle him and his cock burned beneath her panties, Viola bit the inside of her cheek and glanced down to find her nipples had turned erect just from the memory alone.

She groaned in embarrassment and then lay down on the couch, staring out at the sprawling city lights and beginning to count them one by one, trying to steer her mind away from not only her husband but from the strong and stubborn urge to go to her bedroom, take her phone and give him a call to hear his voice.

She had made a mental note not to call him first or go look for him. Perhaps she was still stinging from the sight of Laila walking through his front door while she crept out the back.

Perhaps it was because she was determined to strangle the feelings she was growing for him before they grew too large to manage. Whatever the reason, she knew she wouldn't reach out to him until she was certain her heart was no longer the one making her decisions.

From counting the city lights to feeling the slow pull of drowsiness, Viola drifted off to sleep without even realizing it had happened, which was remarkable in itself given how it had always

been nearly impossible for her to sleep without the soothing warmth of Sebastian's scent surrounding her.

She curled up on the couch and in no time she was pulled under and thrust into a dream, or better yet, a nightmare.

'Serena. Help me!' She heard her sister's voice and Viola's heart turned frantic as she looked up to see Ivy being dragged away by shadows that moved almost like bodies of water, fluid and shapeless and impossible to grab hold of. Water? How could water move? How could it take form?

'Serena!' Ivy screamed, and Viola broke into a run after her, lungs burning, legs pumping, reaching and reaching and never closing the distance as the water was moving faster than she could ever reach.

Though Viola knew she was in a nightmare, she couldn't help but feel a shiver down her spine at the bodies of water.

By the time she finally got close enough, she saw Ivy with a gaping hole torn through her chest, looking at her through eyes that were already beginning to die, and she said,

'You killed me.'

Viola looked down at her own hands and found she was holding a knife drenched in blood, her entire hands soaked in it all the way to her wrists. She dropped the knife with a cry and lunged forward, trying desperately to reach her sister and screaming,

'I didn't kill you!'

But no matter how hard she ran or how far she stretched her arms, Viola couldn't reach her. Her heart was beating so violently she could feel it pounding in her throat and behind her eyes.

"Ivy!"

Viola's eyes flew open where she lay on the couch and found the handsome face of her husband staring down at her, and she instinctively smiled up at him even while some distant part of her knew it felt too unreal for him to actually be here, watching over her while she slept.

He reached out and cupped her face tenderly and then began to remove her clothes. She didn't fight him. She allowed it, even lifting herself slightly so he could slip the fabric off her body. His hands touched her where she had been burning for him between her legs, and she leaned helplessly into his touch, her back arching up from the couch cushions.

Her sweet dream slowly transformed into something else entirely.

She felt a sudden wave of revulsion roll through her without warning, and she grabbed his wrist, her blue eyes flashing between gold. She saw terror flash across Sebastian's face in the split second before she flipped him over on the couch and drove the same knife she had been holding while her twin sister bled to death straight into his chest.

Viola snapped back to herself only to find her husband gasping for breath beneath her, the knife buried in his chest, his pained silver eyes looking up at her with something that broke her apart.

"Sebastian..." She cried.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 208: Silly woman[1,278 words]

Chapter 208: Silly woman

"You are killing me, Serena. Just like you killed your sister." He rasped, his voice wet and fading.
"You are killing me..."

Viola frantically shook her head, her hands hovering uselessly over him. "No. I didn't kill anybody. Sebastian don't leave me. Don't die!" She wept as his eyes began to flutter closed.

Viola whimpered in her sleep, thrashing against the couch cushions as tears streamed silently down her face, her lips moving as she begged for Sebastian not to die, begged him to know she hadn't meant to hurt him. She felt a gentle touch against her cheeks, warm and careful, wiping the wetness away, and she opened her eyes slowly to be met with burning, deeply worried silver eyes looking down at her in the dim light.

Without thinking about a single thing she was doing, Viola shot upright and pushed up to kneel on the couch, and she reached forward and tore Sebastian's shirt open to reveal his chest. There was no wound. No blood. No gaping hole.

She traced her trembling fingers across the taut, tattooed muscles anyway, tears still streaming freely down her face as she searched desperately for the wound that didn't exist.

"I thought I hurt you..." She sobbed, looking at his chest with her brows creased deeply together in confusion. "I stabbed your heart..."

Sebastian, who heard her words, looked at her with his brows arched.

He had been feeling restless for the past two days of not seeing her, fighting every urge that pushed him toward her and suffering through sleepless nights.

He had kept himself busy by going to the training grounds and personally overseeing the warriors' training just to keep himself from going to his wife, until tonight when something felt off in a way he couldn't name or ignore, and he couldn't help himself from coming over to at least check on her.

He had found her sleeping on the couch, almost peacefully at first, until her brows knitted together and sweat broke out on her forehead and she began to thrash and whimper, calling his name in a voice so small and distressed it had pulled at something deep in his chest.

He had been completely caught off guard when she jolted awake and tore his shirt open with trembling hands to touch his chest, where his skin burned beneath her palm the moment it landed there, the way it always did when she touched him.

'Damn man, we spent the entire day dreaming about her and she spent hers dreaming about stabbing you. That stings.' Muffin remarked from within, and Sebastian shut him out without a second thought.

He noticed how she was trembling all over and slowly gripped her shoulders to steady her. "It's okay. It was just a nightmare."

"No...it felt so real." She sobbed, unable to shake the image from her mind. She was used to having nightmares of stabbing her sister, but not of doing it to Sebastian.

"Vivid. Not real. It only felt real. Shhh...it was just a dream." He rubbed her back gently, guiding her to sit back down on the couch before gathering her onto his lap and pulling her head against his chest, where her hand was still resting and moving against him, tracing him like she needed to confirm he was solid and whole.

"I...I can't..." She whispered, still trembling from the aftermath of it.

Sebastian cupped her cheeks and tried to make her look at him, but her eyes remained closed. Her lashes were wet and her cheeks were flushed red and damp, her lower lip caught between her teeth as if she were biting down to hold back the next wave of sobs.

Was she this shaken because she had dreamed of stabbing him? Did that mean she cared about him enough to be reduced to this state, trembling and sobbing, for his sake alone? Sebastian thought, a spark catching quietly inside his chest and swelling it with something warm he didn't have a name for yet but didn't want to push away.

He pulled her back against his chest again, caressing her back and rubbing slow circles into it.

He rubbed her back until her sobs quieted and her breathing evened out and steadied. It was only then that he realized she hadn't been fully awake this entire time, and she had drifted back to sleep against his chest without him even noticing it happen.

Sebastian carried her and brought her to her bedroom, setting her down gently on the bed, but just as he began to pull away he felt it. She had grabbed a fistful of his shirt in each hand, holding on tightly, and he smiled softly to himself because he remembered now that it was her habit.

Hovering over her, he leaned down and pressed a lingering kiss to her forehead.

"I have missed you so much it kills me every second to stay away from you, my love." He whispered to her sleeping form. "And yet you are far too stubborn to even try to call me. I wonder if you will ever reach out to me first one day. I am always chasing you, but you never chase me." He clicked his tongue softly as she stirred slightly in her sleep before settling again, completely oblivious to his quiet complaints about her stubbornness.

If it were up to him, with all the warmth and quiet delight that sparked through him simply by being in her presence, he would have moved them both to his main quarters long ago, away from the watchful eyes of pack members and elders alike.

But then he also knew that would stir another wave of curiosity he couldn't afford right now. He hadn't allowed Evangeline to live there, precisely because she hadn't been his mate, so wouldn't they begin to question why he would extend that privilege to his new Luna when he had never done so before? The questions that would follow were not ones he was ready to answer.

And beyond that, his main quarters had a problem he hadn't been able to solve no matter how many times he had tried. Spies. No matter how many times he changed the set of workers stationed there, a spy always found a way to be planted among them, blending in seamlessly until he rooted one out only to find another had already taken their place somewhere he hadn't yet thought to look.

Until Viola's wolf awakened and she was no longer as vulnerable as she was now, separate living arrangements were the safer choice, even if every instinct he had argued loudly against it every single day.

Though that didn't mean he wouldn't spend some nights with her. Everyone was well aware that would be necessary if an heir was ever going to be made, the heir the entire pack pestered him relentlessly about as though it were the only thing that mattered.

Besides, he had already quietly planned a perfect stretch of time for them to spend together, away from all of it, and he couldn't wait to see her reaction when the moment finally came.

"Silly woman." He whispered with a small smile, before he carefully eased himself onto the bed beside her, his head pillowed on his bent arm, watching her peaceful sleeping face in the low light.

Watching her like this, the tension that lived permanently in his chest loosened just slightly, and Sebastian felt the pull of sleep creeping over him before he could think to resist it. He didn't fight it. He let his eyes close for just a little while.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 209: The unexpected companion[1,500 words]

Chapter 209: The unexpected companion

The next morning when Viola woke up it was to the warmth of Sebastian's scent wrapped around her, but there was no Sebastian on the bed or anywhere in her room, and she felt her heart tighten at the absence of him. Had she dreamt of his presence? She could have sworn that someone had held her all through the night...

But then how had she ended up on the bed when she had been sure she'd slept in the living room? She couldn't have brought herself here without the memories, could she?

Viola looked around and tried to find the signs of him, but except for the scent and the crease on the pillow next to hers, he wasn't there, and her shoulders slumped slightly. He came and probably left before she woke up.

The days that followed passed in a blur for Viola. She barely worked on anything beyond the she-wolf council, where she was quietly grateful when she stopped seeing Laila and Ember, along with her adoptive family, showing up there any further. Though she was aware they were still somewhere in the building.

After the new law she had pushed through, she received a lot of hostile looks and open resentment from the male, and to her astonishment even from some of the guards and some of the she-wolves, who removed themselves from her council and joined another one she heard Laila was leading outside the main pack building.

"Is that allowed to happen?" she had asked Zoe when she learned about it.

"Technically, yes. In Silver, power rules many things. She has the strongest wolf among she-wolves, and she has been ruling even before you were crowned. Unless the Alpha dismisses her council, Laila still has the natural power to lead with her suppressing energy. Don't worry, I guess it's for the best. At least all the hostile, nasty she-wolves have gone to join hers," Zoe assured. "It means less trouble."

Viola's reply was a simple, "Hmm." Zoe said she shouldn't worry, but she wasn't worried that Laila was silently competing with her. She was more worried that Sebastian allowed her to be a leader, probably because he still favored her.

Viola's council only had a lot of omegas because even the guest Lunas who had appreciated her change had left her side, and she was left to hear the problems of the omegas, which she actually had no issue with, except for the resentful eyes she got from the pack members.

But for as long as no one openly laid a hand on her or said anything directly to her face, Viola tried to walk with her head high, even when the weight of all those eyes on her back left her weary all the time in a way she hadn't expected.

There were times she also sensed she was being followed, a prickling at the back of her neck that made her stop and turn and find nothing but empty corridor or open space behind her.

Since she never saw anyone in sight she tried to let it pass and not let paranoia take root in her. The life of a Luna was never going to be without its threats, and Viola had always known that, but knowing something and living it were two very different things.

Somewhere quiet in her heart she wished she could just live a peaceful life now, a small and ordinary one without enemies she hadn't chosen and dangers she couldn't always see coming. But that was something close to impossible without her sister beside her, and peace had never truly been something she had been allowed to hold for long.

Perhaps after she found Ivy things would change. And perhaps again when Sebastian eventually found his true mate and their arrangement reached its inevitable end, she would move away from Silver entirely and take Ivy with her to live among the humans where no one would know what they were or what they lacked.

If after finding her sister she still hadn't gotten her wolf, there was no real reason left to keep living among werewolves, or to stay close to a man who was bound to hurt her and break what they had built between them someday, even if he never meant to.

The guests who had come for the wedding soon began making their way back to their packs. Some who still wanted to explore Silver remained behind, but they no longer stayed in the High Tower and had moved themselves into the hotels spread across the city instead.

On the night before the day she would leave for her planned journey to Nightshade, Viola called Sebastian to let him know she wanted to travel. She didn't tell him everything, only that she needed to check on something in the pack. Without asking her a single question about what it was, he gave her his permission to go.

Viola found it strange that he didn't question her more of the reasons of her traveling but didn't let herself think too much about it. After all Lunas were allowed the freedom to go around the world whenever they wanted to.

She sent Nick a text to remind him of their plans and he replied telling her he would be waiting at a certain location in the morning.

Viola couldn't sleep that night. The anticipation of finally going to bring back her twin and being one step closer to the peace she had been chasing for so long kept her wide awake and restless.

Even before sunrise she had packed her bags for the four to five day journey, along with enough money to cover everything they would need, as she had no intention of letting Nick spend a single thing on this trip.

Viola showered, cleaned up and dressed in jeans and a blue t-shirt with a cardigan layered over it against the slight chill in the air, finishing with a pair of sneakers, keeping everything as casual and comfortable as she could manage.

Then she left the High Tower building, which was quiet and nearly empty now that the guests had gone, and made her way to meet Nick at the back building.

When she arrived she spotted a red car parked at the agreed location and assumed it was him. She walked toward it with a small apologetic smile already forming on her lips for making him wait, but the smile froze on her face the moment the car door swung open and someone she had not expected at all stepped out, dressed just as casually as she was, his silver eyes catching the early morning light and glimmering as he smiled at her.

"Are you ready to go, wife?" Sebastian asked, stepping forward and reaching out to take her backpack from her hands, but Viola stepped back with a deep frown pulling at her face.

"Why are you here? Where is Nick?" She asked, taken aback in a way she couldn't hide. What was he doing here?

Sebastian shrugged. "I sent Nick to finish up some work in one of our neighboring packs. He will be leaving with one of the Alphas to build some AI home systems for them with some of his team. He will be gone for a while." He explained to her nonchalantly, his back leaning against the car as he watched her displeased frown with an expression that gave nothing away.

Sebastian had known what she planned to do and why she was going to Nightshade even before she called him the night before, and he had already prepared himself to go with her, wanting to look into her background there himself. But then he had found out she had asked Nick to come with her instead.

Just what was it with her and his cousin? She was married to him and not Nick, and she thought he would simply allow her to go on a several days long journey alone with another man while he was right here and available? He couldn't even bring himself to imagine it, let alone give it his blessing.

In less than a few minutes Sebastian had swiftly agreed to one of the visiting guests' requests to have some of his tech workers go and help develop their pack, and he had assigned Nick to lead the task personally.

"I can't go, I have somewhere to be." Nick had told him, not backing down immediately. "I will send my colleague to go with the Alpha instead. I—"

"It is an order you cannot defy, Nicolas." Sebastian had told him, letting his Alpha energy settle into every word, and Nick had had no choice but to listen.

Sebastian would sooner have had him removed entirely than allow his cousin to spend days traveling alone with his wife. He had then borrowed Nick's phone long enough to send her the message telling her to meet at this location, and waited.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 210: A princess treatment from husband[1,404 words]

Chapter 210: A princess treatment from husband

Now that she was actually standing in front of him however, Sebastian could see plainly that she was not happy about the switch, and his amusement quietly drained from his face, leaving something sourer behind it.

"You don't want me to travel with you?" He asked, watching her expression confirm what he already suspected, and feeling it further dampen the mood he had woken up in. So she preferred his cousin's company than her husband's?

For reasons he wasn't entirely willing to examine yet, he had genuinely believed she might be at least a little pleased that he was coming along with her.

For a long time Zoe had begged him to go on even a one day vacation with her but Sebastian had repeatedly turned her down until she had eventually stopped asking altogether.

Had he come out here to give his sister a few days away like she had always wanted, she would have been overjoyed. But of course not his wife. Not his stubborn hellcat.

He had forgotten that the woman he married was not just anyone who would simply welcome his company without resistance. It wouldn't be her if she didn't either argue her way through it or stubbornly turn him down flat. Only he could match her stubbornness and then some, and he intended to.

"You are the Alpha, you can't just leave the pack for a week and come with me. If Nick is busy then I can go on my own. There is no need for you to come along." Viola said seriously, crossing her arms and holding her ground.

The truth was she had been counting heavily on this trip. On the distance from the pack and from Sebastian specifically, to help clear her head and carefully untangle the conflicting emotions that had been pulling her in too many directions at once, stretching her thin in ways she hadn't anticipated when she had first walked into all of this.

She had planned to find her sister and return with her mind finally back on track. With a clear enough head to think ahead about her future, about what came next if he eventually found the one he had truly been waiting for all along.

She didn't like how she was becoming weakened by her own emotions and thinking about him every night, how her heart was quietly taking the wheel away from her mind and steering her somewhere she hadn't given it permission to go.

She wasn't thinking ahead the way she needed to. Being away from the pack and away from him might be exactly what she needed to find her footing again before she lost it completely.

But now that he was coming with her, how on earth was she supposed to let go of any of the feelings she had been fighting so hard to put down?

"I am the Alpha, which means I can arrange for others to cover for me. The pack won't fall under attack in the few days I am away, Viola. I have been gone for months before, so don't worry yourself about that." He told her evenly, and seeing her lips part to argue with him further, he narrowed his eyes down at her and said,

"Don't stress it, love. I won't let you travel to Nightshade alone. The path leading there is one of the most dangerous routes in the werewolf world. Save yourself the trouble and don't argue with me about this one." Sebastian said as he stepped forward and reached for her backpack.

She refused to release it, glaring up at him with her jaw set, and Sebastian tugged it gently but firmly from her grip. She let out a sharp hiss as if in pain and he immediately stilled, his eyes dropping to her in concern.

"What's wrong, did I hurt you?" He asked, only to be met with another glare aimed directly at him.

"Yes, you hurt me, now will you step away from me." She lied, thrusting the bag into his arms and walking around him to the passenger car door, biting back the urge to argue and refuse to let him follow her.

She reached for the door handle and realized he had locked it, and then she looked up at him to find him smiling at her from across the roof of the car.

"Why are you so mad? It's not like you and I haven't spent time together before. I don't bite, you know." He teased, but she still had that grudging look fixed in her blue eyes and her lips pressed together as if she had absolutely no intention of talking to him.

And she didn't. Not if she could help it. He was annoying and irritating to her right now in a way that sat hot and unresolved in her chest. Did he think she was perfectly fine with him after he had made her walk out through the back door while he received Laila through the front like she was the one who belonged there?

She was being petty and she knew it, but Viola couldn't forget the sting of that moment no matter how hard she tried.

Had it been in the past she would have schemed her way into letting her hurt out on Laila somehow, finding a way to make it known that she was the one married to him and the shewolf should stay away.

But she was no longer that person, and so she had no idea how to deal with the jealousy and the hurt it had left behind, except to want to kill the root of it entirely, which was the feeling she was growing for the man himself. But now she couldn't even do that properly because the man would be stuck with her for days with no escape route available to either of them.

"Unlock the car." Viola said with as much calmness as she could muster, looking at him steadily from across the roof of it.

He didn't unlock it immediately. Instead he walked around toward her and gently swatted her hand away from the door handle before pressing the car remote to unlock it, and then reached out and opened the door for her himself.

When she got in, Sebastian leaned in after her and pulled the seatbelt across her, and she stiffened immediately at the sudden closeness of him, the warmth of him filling the small space between them.

"Wh...what are you doing?" Viola asked, her voice coming out shakier than she intended, caught completely off guard by his sudden closeness, his intoxicating scent flooding her breathing space and making it harder to think straight.

He turned to look at her as he clicked the belt into place and smiled, unbothered by her flustered expression, his voice low and warm as he said,

"Treating my wife the way she should be treated." He said calmly, holding her gaze for a moment longer than necessary before adding, "Get used to receiving the princess treatment, because for this entire journey I will treat you exactly the way my wife deserves to be treated. Everything and anything you want will be yours, baby."

Viola felt heat creep up her face against her will, completely betraying how much his words affected her. Princess treatment? Treat her as his wife deserves? Oh no. Please don't. She thought desperately. The more he did and said things like that, the more her traitorous body and heart responded to him in ways she couldn't control or reason her way out of. She was afraid of it. Genuinely terrified of where it was heading.

She bit the inside of her cheek and held her breath until he finished securing the belt and moved away from her.

She exhaled slowly, releasing the breath she hadn't even realized she had been holding. She watched him through the rearview camera screen as he loaded her backpack into the backseat and then came around to settle into the driver's seat beside her.

"I would have taken our private jet but there is no landing space in Nightshade. And I want us to travel with as little attention as possible." Sebastian told her as he started the car.

Viola didn't register most of what he said after the words our jet. Wasn't it his jet? Since when had it become ours?

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 211: Do not fail me this time[1,350 words]

Chapter 211: Do not fail me this time

Viola didn't register most of what he said after the words our jet. Wasn't it his jet? Since when had it become ours?

"Wouldn't driving through in a car draw attention anyway? I won't be held responsible for anything that happens to the Alpha who should be sitting in his pack right now." Viola grumbled,

acutely aware of how dangerous Nightshade was, and more than anything uncomfortable with the knowledge that the Alpha was making this journey on her account.

The last thing she wanted was to be the reason he got hurt or something terrible happened to him because he had left his pack to follow her on a journey she had planned without him.

Sebastian chuckled softly. "I am not asking you to take responsibility for anything because nothing is going to happen. My scent and aura are masked. No one will know it is the Alpha and his wife inside this car."

When he said that, Viola belatedly realized his aura was nowhere in the air around her. The suffocating atmosphere that always accompanied him wasn't there either, that particular feeling that made being around him feel like standing in the middle of winter with no coat and no shelter. He had masked it completely.

Every supreme Alpha carried a different kind of aura. There were Alphas with heat auras and Alphas with cold ones, and Sebastian's was obviously cold, cold as deep frost, the kind that made people instinctively shiver.

Being prone to the cold herself, she always felt it settle into her bones around him. But now that she paid attention she realized the temperature inside the car was perfectly normal, just ordinary morning air, and she felt herself relax by a small but noticeable degree. No one would sense the supreme Alpha sitting behind the wheel of this car. They would simply drive through unnoticed.

After a moment of silence, Viola turned to look at her husband where he sat fastening his seatbelt.

"Won't you ask me what I am going to Nightshade for?" She asked, a small frown of confusion crossing her face. He hadn't asked her once, not when she called him the night before and not now.

"Does it matter? Whatever you are going there for must be important enough to make you plan this journey. I trust you wouldn't make a trip this long for nothing."

Viola didn't say anything to that and turned her head away to look out the window as he pulled the car out and they drove out of the High Tower grounds, turning sharply into the street where the sun was just beginning to rise in the sky, painting the edges of the clouds in pale gold. Viola drew in a long slow breath of the cool morning air.

He would find out why she was going there when they arrived. Viola thought, hoping with everything in her that she wouldn't lose herself to him before the journey was over. And also hoping that her sister was well and safe.

As their car drove off into the distance, at the highest floor of the High Tower someone stood watching them with keen and sharp eyes, tracking the car until it disappeared around the far bend that led to the main streets. His fingers tightened slowly into fists at his sides, but on his face sat a small smirk.

"This is the perfect opportunity we have been waiting for." He remarked quietly, speaking into a pod attached to his ear, his silver hair catching the morning breeze that ruffled the strands across his forehead and cheek.

"He is leaving the pack. Carry on with the plan exactly as I ordered. Make sure you do not touch the girl. I have given my word on that. You have the weapons I sent. Do not fail me this time."

"Yes, Supreme Alpha!" Answered the person on the phone.

Viola and Sebastian barely shared more than one or two words as the car drove away from the big city of Silver and into the more forested side lanes, where the long tarred road stretched on ahead of them with tall trees lining both sides.

Sebastian was moving at a speed that made the wind rush in through the window she had rolled down on her side, and she leaned into it, letting the scenery pull her attention away from him and from the awkward silence sitting between them in the car.

The sun was high in the sky now and its rays spilled over the long roadside trees, occasionally falling across their car and warming her face where she had it turned toward the window.

She closed her eyes and breathed in the soothing late summer air, purely natural and clean out here, nothing like the city air of Silver Pack.

Sebastian discreetly watched his wife from the corner of his eye and bit back a smile as he heard her let out a soft sigh every time the sunlight fell across her face.

She was sitting half turned away from him with her arm bent against the window ledge and her chin resting on it, her ponytail thick and full behind her head, the morning light catching the dark strands of her hair.

He was well aware she was trying to ignore his presence by refusing to talk to him, and because he genuinely enjoyed the sight of her enjoying the countryside around her, he didn't disrupt the silence by forcing her into conversation that would ruin the peaceful silence.

He had stayed away from her for days in an effort to silence the rumors of her being his mate, and he had been more than miserable during every single one of those days.

Now he wanted nothing more than to take this time with her and simply enjoy it, to let his mind rest for once. No pack matters pressing down on him, no rumors to manage, and no deliberate distance to maintain between them.

Matt would handle everything in his absence. Furthermore, many of the packs had begun to adapt to civilization and no longer made unexpected attacks on Silver the way they had when he first rose to the Alpha seat. So his absence wouldn't be noticed.

Sebastian let his eyes follow the same path Viola was looking along as the car moved, and he noticed she was watching the birds lifting from the trees and breaking into the open sky above them, a small and unguarded smile sitting on her face as she tracked them.

"Isn't it lovely out here?" He remarked conversationally, and she glanced away from the sky and nodded her head.

"It is lovely..." She whispered quietly and went back to looking out the scenery.

After some moment.

"Are you hungry?" He asked, looking at her half turned back.

Viola began to shake her head when her stomach let out a loud and very decisive growl that was heard clearly over the muted sounds of the moving car.

Her cheeks heated up immediately in embarrassment and she wished she could detach her stomach from her body entirely for the way it consistently gave away every lie she tried to tell about not being hungry when she was in fact absolutely starving.

She hadn't had breakfast and it was approaching lunch now, and this journey was going to be long enough that she might as well waste away before they got there. She had hoped to eat breakfast with Nick at his favorite restaurant the way they had originally planned.

She heard Sebastian chuckle softly beside her and turned to find him biting the inside of his lower lip in quiet amusement as he glanced over at her.

"Your stomach says otherwise, darling. Let's stop and grab something to eat. I am hungry too." He admitted, turning the car off the main road and into a small town sitting between Silver Pack territory and a neighboring pack, where a small pack community was forming but hadn't yet grown very far beyond its beginnings.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 212: Pillow talk_Part 1[1,600 words]

Chapter 212: Pillow talk_Part 1

The restaurant they stopped at was small, with no more than five people eating inside and a handwritten menu board hanging above the counter.

The place was built with wood, with forest-themed wallpapers around the wooden walls, giving it a rustic and slightly outdated feel. Many eyes turned to look at them as they entered. In the background, jazz music was playing, sounding like it was coming from a very old radio, one that spoke of how old-fashioned this pack was.

Viola looked around warily, moving to walk closer to Sebastian as the men around the place were giving her looks that were uncomfortable and unsettling. If it were up to her, they wouldn't have stopped in the middle of nowhere, but as if sensing her discomfort, Sebastian's arm came protectively around her waist and pulled her closer to his side in a reassuring manner.

That action was enough to make the men in the space look away and continue what they were doing before their arrival, losing interest now that she was clearly claimed.

"Relax, this is the Forest Pack, they are so far back in technology and are still using things of the past as they do not associate with Silver and the Supreme Alpha. They don't know what the Supreme Alpha even looks like." Sebastian assured the tense Viola, as if sensing her worries and wariness even without her voicing them.

Viola was quietly worried that someone would recognize Sebastian, but she was relieved by his words and even more so when the young waitress who came to welcome them treated him like any other road-weary traveler who had wandered in hungry. They were led to a corner table where the jazz music became muted along with the men's laughter. And this corner was so private it made her feel calm and slightly at ease.

"What are you having?" Sebastian asked, looking at the menu and then at her over the top of it.

"Breakfast platter and coffee, with extra milk and sweetener," she said without even glancing at hers.

He smiled at that and ordered for them both when the waitress came back.

Sebastian watched her fix her breakfast plate and then turn to her coffee, adding a generous amount of cream and then a little too much sweetener that had him pressing his lips together to hold back his words of caution.

As if sensing his eyes on her, she looked up at him with pursed lips and a hint of color rising to her cheeks. "That is how I take my coffee. I like it sweet and creamy or I cannot drink it at all."

"Isn't that much sweetener a little excessive? It's not exactly healthy." He said, watching her add just a little more and stir it slowly without an ounce of guilt. He genuinely could not imagine how anyone could drink whatever she was stirring in that cup. He hadn't known she had this particular habit.

Viola smiled in a slightly embarrassed and self-conscious way, stirring the cup without meeting his eyes.

"I know, but I can't help it. I have been having it this way for a very long time." She grumbled, as if she had heard this particular complaint more than enough times already and had long since stopped being moved by it.

Sebastian pressed his lips together and said nothing further. He couldn't help thinking that she had some of the most unexpected habits and behaviors he had come across. She hurt herself by peeling the skin around her nails until they bled, and now this.

How much sweetener in a single cup of coffee. He found himself genuinely curious about what else he would discover about her the longer they spent time together, and watched her take her first sip with something close to quiet fascination.

She was his wife, and he didn't know these small things about her. Perhaps this journey would not only help him learn about her background, but also about the woman herself.

They ate mostly in silence but it was a comfortable one.

At one point Sebastian reached across the table, picked up her coffee cup out of pure curiosity, and took a sip. He nearly choked on the sweetness of it but was forced to swallow it down properly when he looked up and found her watching him with a frown, and spitting it out no longer felt like a dignified option.

How on earth did she drink this every morning? He wondered as he set the cup carefully back in front of her and reached immediately for his own black coffee to wash the sweetness away.

Viola noticed the way he reached for his own cup almost desperately afterward and smiled to herself. He wasn't the first person to react that way to her coffee, but most people launched straight into a lecture about how unhealthy her sweet tooth was and how she really ought to change the habit.

She was quietly glad he had held that particular speech back. It was a habit she had never been able to shake away and found herself doing it over and over everytime.

Viola didn't comment on him having taken a sip of her coffee, and simply picked it up and drank from it herself as if nothing had happened.

When they were done he paid before she could so much as reach for her bag, and she shot him a look across the table.

"I had money." She said. "I can pay for my own meal. You don't have to do that."

"I know." He replied, already rising from his seat. "But my money is yours. I paid from our money. Think of it that way." He held out his hand to her and when she didn't immediately take it, he reached across and took the hand resting on the table himself, interlocking their fingers and pulling her gently to her feet.

She bit the inside of her cheek and followed him back out to the car, completely unaware of one particular pair of eyes watching them from among the five men. The man brought out his phone, which looked far too advanced for the Forest Pack, where they didn't even use screen devices, and took a picture of their retreating backs.

The man smiled as he sent it to a contact he had saved as, "The Supreme Alpha."

When nightfall caught up with them on the road, where they were barely halfway to their destination, Sebastian made the decision to stop at a hotel in another pack territory they were passing through.

"What are you doing?" Viola asked as he parked the car at the hotel's car station.

"Stopping for the night." He said flatly.

"No, we can't stop. We have to keep going." Viola said with a frown.

She hadn't planned for any stops on this journey and had carefully calculated the distance and the number of days it would take to reach Nightshade based on the night hours driving Nick had told her he was more than capable of handling.

Stopping even for an hour was a delay she had no patience for, not for anything, but mostly because she could hardly contain the urgency that had been building inside her the closer they got, the desperate need to reach the orphanage and finally have her sister standing in front of her again.

It had been years without Ivy. Years since she had betrayed her and had lived in luxury while her twin lived in a miserable pack. She couldn't wait to set things right with her.

"I can't drive through the night, love." Sebastian turned to look at her as he parked the car.

He actually could drive all through the night, but then where was the fun in spending time with her if they would do it in a car without actually being close enough to each other? One could say he was feeling deprived of her closeness and wanted to have her close, especially when her daisy scent had been teasing his nose the whole time.

"Then let me drive while you rest. Hotels in other pack territories are not safe for an Alpha. I was taught that much in Luna school," Viola muttered, looking at the flashing lights of the hotel signboard that reflected across the front of the car.

"If you are worried about my safety, don't be. I wasn't crowned the Supreme Alpha for nothing, I can protect myself out here, not unless you have other reasons for not wanting to rest for the night." Sebastian said, looking at her with barely concealed amusement, his gaze studying her reaction closely.

"What do you mean?" Viola sat straighter in her seat. Safety wasn't her only reason, but it was still a valid one. She genuinely didn't think it was safe for him, not after all the words of assassination attempts she had heard about him. She didn't want to be held responsible for causing him harm, and she genuinely didn't want anything to happen to him.

Perhaps she was just being paranoid and nothing else, but even so, the unease remained in her chest.

Sebastian sighed and stepped out of the car, walking around to her side and opening her door.

"Come on. You look tired and you need to rest for the night as well. We can continue in the morning." He reached in and unclipped her seatbelt and then took her hand and pulled her gently out when she hesitated to step down on her own.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 213: Pillow talk_Part 2[1,641 words]

Chapter 213: Pillow talk_Part 2

Viola couldn't argue with Sebastian about stopping for the night, nor could she argue with him during the payment he made at the front desk. He had paid for a room and she had wanted to pay for her own, but he pulled her away from the counter by the hand he still held in his after helping her out of the car, not giving her the chance to get a word in with the receptionist.

The hotel room was nothing like the High Tower but it was decent enough, with one large bed centered against the wall. It was made to perfection with warm yellow sheets. The room had two huge windows and warm lighting.

Viola set her backpack down and looked around the room, then looked at the single bed, then looked at Sebastian, who was standing near the window with his arms folded against his chest, the warm breeze coming in from the open window ruffling his silver hair.

"There is only one bed," she stated. "I thought there would be twin beds, like it was written on the signboard in the reception area."

"Unfortunately, there are no twin beds in this room," he replied without looking at her.

"Then can you pay for another room?" she questioned.

"This is the last available room in the hotel. We are not the only travelers. Every other room is occupied for the night," he said, finally turning from the window to look at her with that infuriatingly calm expression of his that sometimes unnerved her. "Unless you would prefer to sleep on the floor, a single bed is what we have here."

"I would prefer to sleep in peace, just like I have been sleeping in peace for the past five days without you in Silver," Viola said, gritting her teeth. Because no matter what she told herself, or how many times she had reminded herself not to care, she was still quietly, stubbornly angry that he had stayed away for five full days without so much as coming to see her while she was awake, not even as his wife, but as the friends they were.

Yeah, she was trying to stay away from him to protect herself, but he didn't know that and should have come. But he hadn't, because he was probably enjoying himself with his other mate and now he wants to share a bed with her.

Sebastian's amusement faded slowly as he caught the flash of real anger on her face. Knowing her and her temper as well as he was beginning to, he recognized it was wiser to let the teasing go for tonight.

"You can sleep in peace. I will stay on my side." He said calmly.

"Your side." She repeated flatly. "You mean the side that is directly connected to my side because it is one bed."

"Viola."

"Sebastian."

He stared at her. She stared back.

The silence stretched thin and taut between them, and then Sebastian gave in with a sigh, a small smile moving the corner of his lips upward.

"Are you always this difficult, or do you reserve this specifically for me?" he asked, his tone softer this time around than it had been before. "I feel like you always try to argue with me. We haven't agreed on a lot of things."

Viola blinked, and then despite the anger that lived inside her, the distance she had been carefully trying to maintain, and the walls she had been quietly rebuilding brick by brick, she felt the reluctant pull of a smile threatening the corner of her own mouth.

"I reserve nothing for you because you always end up annoying me regardless," she said, but it came out with considerably less bite than she had intended it to carry.

Sebastian watched her fight the smile, and something in his chest loosened in a way it hadn't in days. He moved away from the window and sat on the edge of the bed, leaning his elbows on his knees and looking across the room at her.

"Will you sit down? You are making me tired just watching you stand there wanting to argue with me. I don't want to argue with you tonight. I want us to sleep and rest peacefully tonight; we still have a long journey ahead of us tomorrow."

Viola didn't want to argue either. In fact, she didn't have the energy, nor did she want her jealousy to push her further into ruining the fragile, friendly mood between them. Hence, she sat down on the opposite edge of the bed with as much dignity as she could pull together and folded her hands in her lap.

The silence came back.

It was still Viola who broke the silence, because the way he was looking at her from across the bed was making her deeply self-conscious, his eyes moving over her like he was studying her and trying to quietly figure her out, and she couldn't sit still under that gaze for long.

"I should take a shower." She said quietly, getting up from the bed, and before he could say a single thing she disappeared into the adjoining bathroom with her backpack in hand and pulled the door shut behind her.

By the time Viola came back out, Sebastian was lying on the bed, flat on his back with his eyes closed, his arms bent and one hand supporting the back of his head. His shirt was unbuttoned, and he looked so relaxed that she stopped to gawk at the tattooed chest exposed before her and the long pant-clad legs that stretched across the bed down to his bare feet, where his shoes had been removed and neatly set at the side.

She had noticed how he was a meticulous person who liked to set his shoes at the right angle and leave everything in order, and even the way he was lying there, relaxed like a cat basking in the sun, she couldn't help but be mesmerized. It always amazed her how he looked like a perfect sculpture, especially with the intricate snake tattoo scales decorating his skin.

Viola felt her throat go dry as the urge to put her hand against his visible abs consumed her, reminding her of the oil massage she had once given him. He looked so gorgeous that it was hard to believe a real man was lying there. But as if sensing her gaze, he opened his closed eyes and turned to look in her direction.

Viola became visibly flustered, and she quickly looked away from him in embarrassment at being caught staring. She hurriedly moved her feet to walk forward, clearing her throat as she did so.

Sebastian's eyes glimmered quietly as he watched his wife cross the room dressed in a long-sleeved shirt and matching pants as her sleepwear, her black hair thick and loose around her face.

He had been aware of her looking at him and had kept his eyes closed, letting her look her fill. He belonged to her anyway, and very soon he hoped she would have the wolf to sense every torture she always put him through, even without her trying. Her scent alone was torture, and he had to fight with immense strength to resist the urge of wanting to claim her every time.

He and his wolf had already agreed a very long time ago that he would allow Viola into his life without giving her a permanent mark, and that was why he had ever allowed her to participate in the competition. But now even he was suffering from the constant battle of restraining himself from claiming her completely.

Viola pursed her lips under the weight of his gaze burning into her. "Why do you keep staring at me like that?" She whispered self-consciously, not used to anyone looking at her in such a sustained way. Was there something on her face? She thought with a small scowl, resisting the urge to touch her cheek.

Sebastian replied quietly, "Nothing. I just like looking at you. And if I told you the real reason I stare, you wouldn't believe me anyway." He mused, his eyes not leaving her face.

She wouldn't believe she was beautiful. Wouldn't believe there was something genuinely fascinating to look at in the particular way her face was put together, the color of her eyes and the perfect set of her lips. Those lips that he had already tasted more than once and hadn't stopped thinking about since. Her kissable lips.

Viola didn't like where this topic was heading and moved quickly to change it. "If we are going to be around each other for the next few days, let's make things more comfortable between us and argue less." She said, setting her backpack down beside the bed.

Sebastian shrugged. "Fine with me. I don't have a problem with that."

"Then let's start by actually getting to know each other properly." She said, walking around to sit on the other side of the bed with his eyes following her the entire way.

"What is it you don't know about me?" Sebastian asked, a small smile pulling at the corner of his mouth at the fact that she was finally talking to him without looking for a fight in every word.

"Many things. Small things about you."

Sebastian turned his head to look at the side of her face. "What kind of small things? You have to be specific, Viola."

She shrugged one shoulder, still not quite looking at him even while his intense gaze burned steadily against the side of her face. "The kind of things that people who share a last name should probably know about each other."

He was quiet for a moment, and then he said, "Ask then."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 214: Pillow talk_Part 3[1,308 words]

Chapter 214: Pillow talk_Part 3

Viola finally turned to look at him, pulling her knees up to her chest the way she always did when she was settling into a place, making herself small and comfortable all at once. Sebastian, who had been watching her quietly, found her smallness endearing in a way he couldn't quite explain. But he knew better than to underestimate that smallness, for she was really a hellcat who would fight him tooth and nail if pushed, his adorable little wife.

"Like your favorite food," she said, bringing his attention back to their discussion.

Sebastian laughed softly. "My favorite food. Is it strange if I tell you I never really had a favorite meal?" He said. "My mom and Matt's mom used to be like chefs and they liked to experiment with everything edible. I ate everything they made because it was all delicious, so I never settled on a favorite. Sometimes I do miss the way she cooked..." He paused for a moment, something quiet and distant crossing his face. "If I were being honest, my favorite food would be my mother's cooking."

Viola saw the way his eyes softened as he talked about his mother and she felt a silent ache settle in her chest.

She had never truly experienced a mother's cooking herself, not the real kind, and yet she felt a deep and unexpected sympathy for him because he had experienced it and then lost it entirely. She found herself thinking that if she knew how to cook, she would try to recreate it for him just so he could have that soft look on his face when talking about hers, but she pushed the thought away just as quickly as it had come and didn't let herself linger on it.

It was very hard to have her walls back up. It was almost impossible with this calm, soft, caring Sebastian...

"What about you?" Sebastian asked, turning the question back to her. "What is your favorite food?"

He already knew what she liked to eat and had it noted down somewhere, but he felt the conversation ought to go both ways.

Viola shrugged. "I like everything made with beef." She remarked, and then she lay down on the bed, turning onto her side to face him with her head pillowed on her arm. "What is your favorite color?"

She thought she didn't even really need to ask, given that his closet was filled with nothing but black and gray with no color in sight anywhere, but she didn't want to let the silence creep back in between them. Apart from midnight blue and gold, she hadn't seen him wear anything in the way of bright colors at all.

Sebastian looked straight at her. Her blue eyes were catching the warm glow of the bedside lamp, and he didn't answer immediately.

He found himself looking at her eyes the way he sometimes did when he thought she wasn't paying close enough attention to notice.

He had realized days ago that she had stopped wearing her glasses because she could see clearly on her own now. He didn't know entirely what to make of that shift, except to think that Doctor Gilbert's analysis was proving itself right. Being close to her mate was beginning to make changes in her.

Her wolf might be slowly surfacing and healing her, starting with her eyes. It was part of why he wanted to find her twin as soon as possible, to give that process every chance it needed.

But then that wasn't what this moment was about. This moment was about his favorite color.

That particular shade of blue in her eyes that didn't belong to any single thing he could name and pin it to. Not the sky, because the sky changed and was inconsistent and her eyes never were. Not the ocean, because the ocean was restless and cold at its depths and there was nothing cold about the way she looked at the people she trusted and cared about. Not sapphire, because sapphire was

a stone and stones were dead things and there was nothing dead about the color living in her eyes now.

It was simply hers. A blue that existed in her and nowhere else that he had ever found in all the years he had walked this earth. He had never been a man who had a favorite color. Colors had never meant anything to him worth pausing over. He wore black because it suited power and he had never given the rest of it a single thought.

But then she had looked at him for the first time in the forest with moonlight pooling in her eyes and he had realized that a color could be captivating in a way nothing else was, and he had understood without wanting to that this was what it felt like to find something you hadn't known you were missing until it was right in front of you.

A favorite color.

She had made him a man who had a favorite color.

He parted his lips and replied quietly. "Blue. My favorite color is blue." The shade of your eyes. He thought to himself, keeping that last part where it belonged.

"Blue?" Viola asked, genuinely taken aback. She never would have expected that answer from him. She had been fully prepared for him to say black or gray without hesitation. "Now that I think about it, you would look good in a light blue shirt. You should get one for yourself."

Sebastian smiled. "I will wear it if you get it for me." He teased with a deep chuckle.

Viola felt heat rise to her cheeks. She had once bought him blue diamond cufflinks, back before any of this had happened, and she had never gotten the chance to give them to him. They were still sitting in her closet. She cleared her throat. "Hmm. I will think about it when we get back from this journey. I was planning to go shopping anyway."

She had made many plans for things to do with her twin once she found her, and shopping was at the very top of the list because Ivy would need so many things starting from nothing. Perhaps she could pick up a few things for her husband along the way as well. A gift of some kind.

"Can I hold your hand?" Sebastian asked suddenly, and Viola looked over at him in quiet confusion.

"Why?"

Sebastian's silver eyes glimmered with something warm. "Because I like holding it. We agreed not to argue tonight. So let me hold your hand." He stretched his hand out across the space between them on the bed, wiggling his fingers slowly for her to place hers in his. He just wanted to feel that delightful spark that came from holding her, the one that settled something restless inside him every time.

Pursing her lips, Viola placed her hand over his and his warm, slender fingers closed around hers immediately, and she heard him exhale a long and satisfied sigh before his eyes drifted shut. And just like that, right before her eyes, he fell asleep like it was the easiest thing in the world. He was even snoring very slightly, a soft and barely there sound, but the grip around her hand didn't loosen even slightly.

She looked down at their joined hands resting between them, his tanned against her fair skin, and felt that funny, fuzzy feeling bloom in her chest and send a warm tingling spark through her body all the way to her fingertips.

"What a baby you are..." She muttered softly, looking at his peaceful and handsome face in the low light. "You are going to make things so hard for me if you keep treating me this way, Seb..."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 215: The Blue Bridge[1,445 words]

Chapter 215: The Blue Bridge

Viola didn't wake up early the next morning, even when she had tried to sleep light and rise at the first light of dawn. The days of not sleeping well and finally getting to sleep wrapped in the warm scent of Sebastian had pulled her into a deeper sleep than she would have welcomed on her own.

She was still curled up on the bed when Sebastian woke up, took his bath and changed his clothes, finding her still sound asleep, now lying on his side of the bed. During the night he had pulled her close and wrapped her in his arms and even while carefully untangling their limbs this morning she hadn't stirred once.

He knew she must be exhausted and as much as he would have liked to let her sleep on, they were falling behind on the journey. Had it not been for his desire to spend this time with her, he wouldn't have let her make this journey at all and would have simply sent Matt and his most trusted warriors to bring her twin back to Silver.

Sebastian walked over to her after pulling on a black casual t-shirt, clipping on his wristwatch and running his fingers through his hair, and then lowered himself onto the edge of the bed beside her, smiling as he looked at her face.

She was sleeping so peacefully that the hand resting under her cheek was pushing her lips into a slight pout, and there was a small drool at the corner of her mouth. She would never in her life accept that she drooled in her sleep. How adorable. He flicked the tip of her nose lightly with his finger and she stirred, closing her parted lips, but didn't wake up.

Sebastian chuckled softly. "Wake up, sleepyhead." He whispered, caressing her cheek.

She didn't wake up and only swatted at him like he was an annoying fly.

Biting his lower lip in amusement, Sebastian took a strand of her hair and slowly rolled it inside her ear. She jolted awake with a start and began to frantically swat and dust at her ear like she was trying to remove a bug from it, but she stopped abruptly when she became aware of him laughing

beside her. Realization dawned on her face and she pursed her lips, glaring at him with heavy sleepy eyes.

"Ha, ha, very funny, disturbing someone's sleep." She grumbled, rubbing at her eyes and trying not to scratch at her ear where he had tickled her. He was still chuckling, clearly amused by her reaction, but she still wanted to sleep and began to lie back down when he caught her arm.

"We have to leave. You can continue sleeping in the car." Sebastian pulled her gently upright.

"What time is it?" Viola murmured, barely awake even with her eyes open. She hadn't slept this well in a long time and by the moon she wanted nothing more than to put her head back on that pillow.

"Six thirty three." He told her, and he watched as she came fully awake at that, rubbing the sleep from her eyes with the back of her hand.

"Damn, you should have woken me up sooner!" She scrambled off the bed quickly, shoving him aside, and Sebastian shifted to give her room as she rushed into the bathroom. He let out a quiet laugh watching her disappear through the door. There was just something about her that never failed to amuse him. He shook his head and turned back to put on his shoes.

After a small breakfast in the hotel they resumed their journey, and this time Sebastian made a point of not stopping as he had noticed how anxious she was about reaching Nightshade.

They stopped only once at a convenience store to pick up snacks and drinks, filling a large bag between them as they were moving further into open land with fewer and fewer buildings in sight to stop for anything.

Viola fell asleep in her seat with her head resting against the neck pillow Sebastian had handed her, but woke up when she felt the car slowing down. She sat up and looked around in confusion, and then she heard Sebastian let out a string of curses and when her eyes cleared from sleep she saw exactly what had caused it.

"What happened here?" Viola muttered, taking in the enormous fallen tree blocking the road ahead of them. It was so large that the ground around its roots had cracked open, and there was no seeing past it or around it. The road was completely cut off.

"No idea. We are just one pack away from Nightshade. A storm must have come through here at some point. It looks like no one has passed this way in a long time." Sebastian said as he stepped out of the car, telling her to stay inside.

"Where are you going to?" She asked before he could close the door of his side.

He bend a little to look at her as he said, "I need to check if there is a way through. I'll be right back." He closed the door before she could say anything.

Viola watched his figure disappear around the forest side as he went to look for a way through. The environment was so silent that the only sounds were of strange birds and crickets coming from the dense bushes lining both sides of the road, and she found herself tensing and staring at the spot where he had disappeared into the tall trees.

What was taking him so long? She worried, not liking the silence or the fact that he had gone alone into such forest.

She began to unclip her seatbelt, feeling uneasy about sitting stopped in the middle of nowhere. These roads were known to be dangerous enough that people sped through them without slowing down not to mention stopping in the middle of it.

She was pushing her door open when she spotted his figure emerging back from the trees, his face hardened as he rubbed at his temple.

"There is no way around the trees. We either go back or we take the Blue Bridge." He said as he got back into the car, turning to look at her.

The Blue Bridge. Viola felt her body go rigid. Oh no. Not that way. Everyone in the werewolf world had heard of the Blue Bridge and most had passed over it at some point in their lives. It was technically a shortcut to Nightshade, but she had specifically told Sebastian they shouldn't go that way when he first mentioned it as an option. He hadn't asked her why at the time, but now she could feel him sensing her sudden fear and unease because he didn't immediately start the car.

"What's wrong?" Sebastian asked, watching her face carefully. "It is just a bridge with enough space for cars. Why are you afraid of it?"

She had looked genuinely terrified the first time he suggested it, enough that Sebastian had decided to change course and take the longer route without pressing her on it, even though the Blue Bridge would have cut days off their journey. But now with no way around the fallen trees and no way forward except back the way they came, he couldn't let it go without addressing the fear he had seen flash across her face.

"I...I am afraid of water." Viola said quietly, looking embarrassed even as she said it.

"You are afraid of water?" Sebastian repeated, taken aback.

Viola nodded. "Open water. The Blue Bridge goes over water that is connected to the sea. I always have this fear of falling into deep water and drowning. It terrifies me. Even the thought of it makes me shiver and I don't know why." She admitted, wringing her hands nervously on her lap and avoiding his eyes, not wanting to find amusement in them or have him call her fear foolish and silly.

It made absolutely no sense even to her. She was perfectly fine with bathwater, found it soothing even all the time, but open water was something else entirely.

Her nightmares were always about drowning and then somehow coming out of the water to find herself standing over her bleeding sister with a knife in her hand. No matter how many times she had tried to reason herself past it, she could never bring herself to be near open water or cross a

bridge that stretched over the sea. The thought alone sent a crawling cold dread straight into her stomach.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 216: The Second Wish[1,584 words]

Chapter 216: The Second Wish

Viola kept her eyes on her lap, not even looking at Sebastian as she didn't want to see any amusement on his face. But then she felt his hand come down to take her chin and tilt her face up toward him. She was stunned to find that he didn't look amused at all. There wasn't a single trace of it in his silver eyes. There was only concern and worry as he asked her,

"Do you know how to at least swim?"

Viola flushed in embarrassment and shook her head. "I never had the courage to go near any open water long enough to learn..." She whispered. "Can't we find another way to reach Nightshade? I heard the Blue Bridge has been standing for so many years that it's no longer stable. What if it breaks apart and throws us into the water? What if—"

"I will be there to hold you." Sebastian said quietly, cutting off her spiraling words. "Don't worry. If the bridge breaks, which I don't believe it will, I won't let you drown. Do you trust me?"

Viola stared at him with frightened eyes at that question. Did she trust him? She turned the words over without thinking too deeply into them, and found her head nodding before she had made a conscious decision to answer.

Sebastian smiled at her reassuringly. "Good. Let's move. It's too quiet to be sitting still out here." He released her chin, gave her shoulder a gentle squeeze, and then started the car and reversed away from the fallen tree.

Viola could do nothing but dread the bridge ahead of them. It took six hours to reach it, and by then the sun had begun to lose its intensity in the sky. Her stomach felt like it was crawling out of her body from the dread consuming her, her palms damp with sweat and her throat dry as sandpaper.

As if sensing her fear as they approached the enormous long bridge that had no railings on either side, only solid concrete stretching straight across to the other side, Sebastian spoke.

"Are you all right?"

Viola shook her head, her face as pale as a white sheet. "Why is there no blue on the bridge? I mean it's called the Blue Bridge but I don't see any blue color on it anywhere. Why does it look so long? It doesn't even have side railings. Who built this thing? It doesn't look safe at all." She rambled on without conscious thought of what she was saying, all she could hear was the loud hammering of her own heart inside her head.

What if her nightmare of drowning in the dark sea came true and she never got to reach her sister? She would rather take the longest route known to the werewolf world than sit in a car driving over a bridge like that.

"It's as solid as a bridge could possibly be, babe. It has been standing here for more than a century and cars pass over it more than once a day. It won't collapse on us." He reassured her, genuinely surprised at the full extent of her fear of water.

"I think I should get out of the car." She said, not believing a single word of his reassurance, and began reaching for the door handle, but Sebastian quickly caught her hand and held it.

"Don't. Let's talk about something else. Anything other than the bridge." He said.

"Wh-what could we possibly talk about right now?" She asked, her eyes glued helplessly to the bridge stretching out ahead of them.

"Have you ever considered the reason your wolf never surfaced at your awakening?"

Viola looked away from the bridge ahead to look at him. Why was he asking her this now of all moments, when she was about to cross her worst nightmare?

"Yes." Viola replied. She had more than considered it and wondered about it endlessly, why she had turned out without a wolf but with uncontrollable pheromones instead. "I have wondered about it many times but I never found any real answers, since my real parents are not around for me to know what must have gone wrong."

She was already aware that Sebastian must have done a thorough background check on her by now and knew she was adopted and had spent seven years in an orphanage, so she had nothing to hide by acknowledging it. She didn't know her real parents. All she knew, and only vaguely recalled, was that a blue eyed woman had handed them over to someone to be killed, and they had somehow ended up in the orphanage instead.

"I have some theories that I worked through with Doctor Gilbert regarding the reasons behind being wolfless." Sebastian remarked, and those words caught Viola's full attention so completely that her eyes left the road ahead entirely to look at him.

"You do? What are they?" She asked.

"One, he said it can happen when a person's parents were an omega and a human. Second, it could be trauma that held the wolf down. And third, it could be spiritual. Some people use magic to put a wolf to sleep permanently. Since he couldn't determine exactly which applies to your case, he

suggested the method of spending time with your mate." Sebastian turned to look at her briefly as he said, "Do you suspect any of these being behind yours?"

Viola couldn't easily narrow it down to any one of those theories. When people turned out wolfless it was most commonly attributed to one of the reasons he had listed, an omega with a human parent being the most frequent. But Viola had a quiet feeling she was not an omega halfbreed.

She still remembered the strength that came over her occasionally without warning, particularly the time she had broken her toilet seat and called for a repair, and the omega plumber had stared at the damage with wide eyes.

'It can't be fixed, Miss, only replaced. It looks too damaged.' He had informed her, and she still remembered the heat of embarrassment when he asked if she had broken it by sitting down too hard. Really? How could her little ass break a toilet seat?

Omeegas didn't carry the kind of strength needed to break a toilet seat with bare hands, and yet she had done exactly that. So she ruled out the first theory entirely.

"I don't know..." Viola finally said, her brows pulling together. It couldn't have been trauma either, not really, because she hadn't been broken at her ninth birthday the way she was now at twenty three.

She had been a relatively normal child until the betrayal came, perhaps it would be considered abnormal given all the experiences of the orphanage, but still she didn't think that was enough to lock her wolf.

Unless it was the last option. But then who would spiritually lock away her wolf, and how was something like that even possible?

She turned that question over in her mind, completely and utterly forgetting about the water and the bridge beneath them, until she heard Sebastian's voice after a long stretch of silence.

"We made it to the other side."

Viola looked up sharply to find there was no long bridge stretching ahead of them anymore, and when she glanced down at the rear camera screen she could see the bridge already fading into the distance behind them. Her eyes went wide and she turned to her husband, who was wearing a slight grin.

"I didn't even realize when we crossed it..." She murmured, genuinely amazed that he had managed to distract her so completely that her fear hadn't gotten a single foothold the entire time. "Thank you." She added softly.

"You're welcome." Sebastian said, and then after a comfortable stretch of quiet he announced, "We are almost in Nightshade. Thirty minutes drive and we will be in the heart of the pack."

Viola's insides tensed immediately and she took in the familiar signs of the pack she had lived in for seven years, a place that held no happy memories for her, only fear and pain and a bitterness she had never fully been able to shake.

"Do you recall when you granted me three wishes?" Viola began, her eyes taking in the red muddy roads they had turned onto, the car bumping and jolting against the uneven ground and rocks beneath them.

"I do. Have you decided to take me up on your second wish?"

"Yes." Viola mused quietly, her eyes still watching the red muddy roads ahead.

"You didn't ask me what we are going to do in this pack, but I figured you already knew. The day I got drunk and you came to me, I had a feeling I must have blabbered things to you. I vaguely recalled talking about my sister, and as you already know, I was adopted." She said, steadying herself before going on.

"I am here for my sister. I want to use my second wish to make you welcome her into your pack, to promise me you will protect her the way you gave your word to protect me. I want her to have a place she can call home. I want my wish to be that my sister will have everything and anything she wants in her life, and that she will be safe in Silver for as long as she lives there."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 217: Nightshade[1,176 words]

Chapter 217: Nightshade

Viola knew she was asking for a lot but a deal was a deal. She had saved her second wish specifically for Ivy, and now that they were approaching the pack she wanted him to know exactly what she wanted from it. In this second chance at life, Ivy would be everything. She would lay down her own life for her sister if it meant earning her forgiveness, and she would give her every bit of the wealth and power she held as a Luna if she had to.

Sebastian turned to look at Viola and saw the seriousness sitting deep in her blue eyes. "You don't have to use your wish to ask for a home for your sister. She will be welcome in Silver." He assured her.

"It's not her being welcomed that concerns me most, Sebastian. It's her safety. I want her to be happy and safe, to have everything and anything she wants. You gave me those words and I want to reserve them for her." Viola said quietly, looking at him with something close to desperation in her eyes, silently willing him to simply agree. But Sebastian only frowned at her.

Was she asking him to put her twin sister before herself? Sebastian wondered. He wasn't married to her sister, he was married to her, and though he wanted to tell her she would always come first in his pack and in his protection, he held the words back and gave her a nod instead.

Viola's shoulders relaxed visibly. "Thank you."

Now that Ivy's future felt more secure, all that remained was finding her. Viola hoped she hadn't been cast out of the orphanage. Some of the children got turned away after growing up without being adopted, while others were put to work in the pack that had been on the brink of collapse even years ago. Though Viola wished with everything in her that Ivy had been taken in by a family who loved her, she doubted it deeply.

Viola tightened her fingers around her seat. She had left the orphanage by disguising herself as her twin, but the woman in charge of the place had looked her in the eyes once and said with complete certainty,

'Little devils like you don't get adopted, girl. Get ready to spend the rest of your life as a breeder for the packless. I will make sure of it.'

Those words had been the push behind everything she had done. She had been genuinely terrified of that fate, of becoming a breeder, a place no she-wolf wanted to end up, where no mate could ever claim you and packless men used you without consequence or care until you gave birth to countless pups without a home.

If Ivy had stayed behind in her own identity, Viola could only hope she had been kept safe.

The moment they crossed into Nightshade, Viola felt it even before she looked out the window. The sky in this part of the world carried a tinge of red in it, just like everything else, from the muddy roads to the crumbling buildings and the dead trees that barely held any leaves on their branches.

Viola felt her heart sink as she noticed people peering at their car through broken windows. Skinny, shirtless children stood in the doorways of their muddy homes and stared at them with open curiosity. A car like this one clearly hadn't come down this road in a very long time.

"Remind me why Silver doesn't support this pack?" Viola asked quietly, watching as wary mothers came out to drag their children back inside and pull their screen doors shut behind them.

Even the air smelled different here. Dusty and humid in a way that sat heavy in the lungs.

"From the very beginning, some packs didn't take kindly to submitting to a supreme Alpha or adhering to the pack hierarchy and chose to stay apart. Many of the packs without resources either rebelled against Silver or refused to accept any form of help, calling it charity and wanting no part of it. They believed the supreme Alpha position was biased and cut themselves away from the hierarchy entirely. My authority does not extend to this part of the territory. It is all under their own Alpha."

No wonder Nightshade was barely better than being packless. And no wonder they had gotten away with killing innocent children and dropping them into empty wells. Viola shuddered at the memory of it.

Viola grabbed the bag of snacks Sebastian had bought from the convenience store and rolled her window down. She tossed it across the road toward the hungry children watching them from the roadside and turned to watch them scramble toward it, tearing it open between them.

Sebastian slowed the car as he watched her grab the pack of soda cans and hold them out through the window. The children were wary at first, hanging back and watching her hand with wide uncertain eyes, but one of them gathered the courage to step forward and snatched the pack, darting back quickly.

When Sebastian looked over at his wife he found tears sitting in her eyes, but she wiped them away quickly with the back of her hand before they could fall.

"I used to be like them." She said quietly. "We barely got fed in the orphanage. One meal a day, that was all they gave us, and when we were allowed outside we could only hope a passing stranger might be generous enough to give us something. I used to hate that life so much." She paused, her voice going softer. "But my sister...she never complained. Not once. She would go and fight to get a snack and then bring it back to me while she went without. She wouldn't eat and just hand it over to me. She used to have scratch marks from fighting the other kids just to bring back a single piece of chocolate for me..."

She stopped and pressed her lips together for a moment.

"She is brave. I miss her so much. Please hurry. I can't wait to see her. We should have brought more food from the store, I should have thought of that. I bet she will be hungry." Viola said, her voice shaking slightly as she wiped the last of her tears away with the back of her hand.

Sebastian wanted to say something to comfort her but he pressed down on the accelerator instead, knowing that only her sister's presence could give her what she needed right now.

ooo

A/N

Hey guys,

I totally forgot to share last month's redeem code because I've been dealing with some personal matters. So before I forget again this month, here it is:

Code: ABDHYN3SCTCBLGCRA

For those who don't know, this is a code you can redeem in the app by going to Profile-Redeem, and it will give you ten Fast Passes.

Just a heads-up: it's only available for the first ten people who redeem it.

Enjoy!

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 218: Punishment[1,413 words]

Chapter 218: Punishment

Back in Silver. Away from the beauty of the pack and deep underground where only the criminals and offenders were kept and broken down. The cries of men being tortured echoed through the space in waves, bouncing off the stone walls and coming back distorted.

Even the floor of the dungeon was pooled with blood in places, the kind that soaked into the soles of shoes and left stains that wouldn't come clean, and the stench in the air was something that sat on the tongue long after you left.

"Let me out of here! I need to speak to your Alpha!" Evan's hoarse voice cried out to the men standing in the shadows of the dark dungeon where he had been locked away without sunlight or any of the luxuries an Alpha of his standing deserved.

To make matters worse, his Luna had been thrown in here alongside him, and every hour of every day they were lashed and sprinkled with wolfsbane until their skin felt like it was peeling from their bones.

Had he known that woman, Viola bitch, was going to become the supreme Luna, Evan would have strategized his approach entirely differently and known exactly how to handle things. But he had believed, so convincingly and so foolishly, that it was Ember, and he had gone ahead and made the worst mistakes of his life because of it.

"They won't listen to you, Evan. Keep it down before you bring another whipping on us. I can't—" Leni said from the corner where she lay with painful wounds covering her body, but Evan growled at her.

"Shut up! If you had even half the sense that woman has, you wouldn't be here with me and I wouldn't still be rotting in this cell!"

He knew exactly what she had done to end up here because she had been hauled in wearing little to nothing with another man's scent all over her. Beta Matt who had brought her hadn't even spared him the details, making sure he knew precisely what his mate had gone and attempted to do in the Alpha's office.

And Leni still had the nerve to tell him she had done it to help him. His anger had no end to it, and if his fingers hadn't been broken and his legs hadn't been chained at the time she was brought in, Evan didn't want to think about what he might have done. But the worst of it all was that he still loved her, but she kept disappointing him to no end.

He had let go of a smart and genuinely useful woman for her sake, and she couldn't even manage to do things without resorting to using her body. A body that was supposed to be his and his alone to see and touch.

He didn't know how he was going to survive being locked in here with her for all those months, and the fact that his Beta was sitting in the next cell made it painfully clear that he had no one left on the outside to pull any strings and get him out.

His brother would probably laugh his ass off if he heard about his imprisonment. And if it wasn't for that bitch, Viola, who had cheated to make him pass the Alpha test over his elder brother, he would still be in a good relationship with him!

That woman had truly gone too far in ruining everything around her former pack when she was the real villain of her own story. If she hadn't been so wicked and heartless, Evan thought he might have managed her and kept her as his Luna, but she had been ruthless enough to want to cage him to her when she wasn't even his fated mate.

Unlike Leni his mate, she didn't allow him have his fun with other women. She suffocated him by attacking innocent women who found him interesting.

Viola was nothing but a two faced bitch. It was surprising she hadn't come for Leni's head yet for attempting to seduce her husband. He never knew her to be the kind to let things like that slide.

Evan still couldn't understand how the supreme Alpha had been blind enough to choose that woman above all others. But having now tasted the full agony of this dungeon, Evan knew better than to badmouth her or go after her in any way he couldn't back up.

"I need to talk to the supreme Alpha! I will apologize to the Luna personally if that's what he wants, just get me out of here!" Evan yelled, already knowing that in the next few minutes their punisher would be arriving with wolfsbane and whips that tore through skin like it was paper.

"If you don't keep your voice down you will lose your toenails as well." Came the flat warning from one of the guards.

Evan had already lost all of his fingernails and knew that particular agony intimately, so he swallowed his next yell and lowered his voice. "I genuinely need to speak to the supreme Alpha about something important. You—"

His words fell away as he noticed the bulky Gammas stationed along the long hallway of cells suddenly drop to their knees one by one, their heads bowing low to the ground.

"I am here, you can speak to me." Came a voice that made Evan look up sharply from between the cell bars as a shadowed figure moved through the dim corridor toward him.

In the limited lighting of the dungeon Evan couldn't make out the face clearly, but he could feel the aura pressing against him and that he could identify without question. Was that not the supreme Alpha's aura? He had finally come. Evan's heart leapt with relief.

"Supreme Alpha. I am truly sorry about—" Evan began as Leni scrambled up beside him at the cell bars, both of them instinctively bowing under the weight of his aura, but the figure raised a hand to cut off his words.

"Whatever you wish to apologize for can wait. I need to ask you a few questions about the new Luna. If your answers satisfy me, you will be a free man within two days."

Evan nodded quickly and eagerly, even as something at the back of his mind noted that this voice sounded slightly different from what little he remembered of the supreme Alpha's, but who was he to question it when he had only been in the man's presence once and had barely escaped with his life that day.

"I will tell you anything you want to know about her, supreme Alpha!"

By the time Evan finished giving the figure everything he had asked for, he watched in stunned silence as the man turned to the Gammas positioned around him, raised his palm, and a flash of silver light pulsed from it and released into the air, seeping silently into each of their heads one by one.

Evan had no way of knowing that their memories of his visit had just been wiped clean, and his eyes widened at the astonishing display of power. What the hell was that? Did the supreme Alpha have special powers? What the fuck was he doing to his own men?!

Whatever it was, Evan stood watching with wide curious eyes, too stunned to move or speak, not until the light drifted toward the cell and seeped into his head and Leni's as well. His eyes rolled back for a brief moment before returning to normal.

Evan blinked, staring at the empty space in front of the cell bars, momentarily unable to recall why he was standing there at all, until the familiar frustration came rushing back and he resumed his yelling. "I need to speak to the supreme Alpha about something important!"

"Did I not warn you to fucking keep quiet?" The guard growled, then turned to the others and ordered, "Bring the tools. It seems he hasn't learned nearly enough."

Evan went pale. "You never warned me to keep quiet! You have to give a verbal warning three times before any punishment is carried out!" He argued, completely unaware that the meeting he had just had with that mysterious man and the guard's prior warning had both been scrubbed entirely from his memory.

"I gave you the warning four times. It's punishment time."

"Oh for the love of— you cannot do this to me!"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 219: The orphanage[1,183 words]

Chapter 219: The orphanage

Despite having entered the unguarded Nightshade Pack, Sebastian still had to drive around to locate the orphanage, and by the time he found it he had gotten to see the full damage of a pack that had refused to follow the world's laws or contribute to making their world any better.

This was his first time in Nightshade and Sebastian was genuinely taken aback by the extent of the ruin and the hunger visible on the faces of the people they passed. He doubted whether they even had animals left to hunt in the forests surrounding them.

They drove through road after road lined with children and barely grown adults. The roads themselves were so damaged that by the time the car rolled to a stop in front of the run down orphanage, the sides of the car were scratched all over from the rocks and broken ground.

Viola tried not to gasp at the sight of the orphanage. It looked worse than she remembered, far worse, the gate barely hanging on its hinges and swaying slightly in the air. She stepped out of the car as Sebastian opened her door and held out his hand to her. She took it without consciously being aware, her eyes already glued to the two story crumbling building with its broken windows staring back at her like hollow eyes.

She recalled the biting cold of the orphanage winters, and back then the windows had at least been better than this. She wondered what winter was like here now, especially with the snow in this part of the world falling heavier than anywhere else. She was too shaken by what she was looking at to pay attention to where she was stepping, and she allowed Sebastian to lead her forward by the grip of her hand in his.

"Watch your step." He cautioned as she nearly walked straight into a gutter without looking down. He could feel her hand trembling in his and he stopped to look at her.

"Take a deep breath, love. You look like you are about to pass out." He murmured, his brows drawn together in concern at her visibly unsteady state.

Viola swallowed the huge lump forming in her throat. "I can't relax. I am...afraid of what I will find in there." She told him, her fingers gripping his desperately as if searching for something solid to hold onto.

She had prepared herself for this moment, or so she had believed, but standing here in front of it she realized she hadn't prepared nearly enough. Every nerve in her body was on edge and she was shaking like she was walking toward her own reckoning. What would Ivy think of her?

"What if she hates me now for what I did?" Viola whispered, her voice cracking under the weight of the words, her eyes filling at the edges before tears spilled in fat drops down her cheeks.

"Sebastian, I deserve every bit of her hate and her anger, but I don't think I will ever be ready to stomach it. I have hurt her so much. I took something from her that can never be given back. I am scared she won't want to look at me again...I am afraid." She admitted, a choking sob tearing out of her that pulled at something deep inside Sebastian's chest, and he drew her gently into his embrace.

He wrapped his arms around her trembling body and stroked her back as her hands automatically gripped his waist.

"Shhh. Don't worry about anything else right now. Let's see her first. I will do everything in my power to help her understand that you have tried. And if you hadn't taken her place, she might have been the one to go through everything you went through for four years in Moonwillow. Think

of it that way. You saved her from a terrible fate." He said quietly against her hair, wanting for her to stop hurting or blaming herself this much.

Viola shook her head against his chest. "She would never have taken the path I took that led me to end up in the hollow. She was different. Pure and kind and lovely. She cared about everyone around her and she would never have gotten herself into a relationship with someone like Evan. I brought that fate on myself..." She sobbed, her tears soaking into his shirt.

Sebastian tightened his arms around her, pressed a kiss to the top of her head, and then pulled back to cup her face in both his palms. Her face was flushed red and her cheeks soaked, more tears streaming down like a dam that had finally given way. He felt a stab in his chest at the sight of it and slowly used his thumbs to wipe at her cheeks.

He was about to say something when the door of the orphanage swung open behind them, and he looked back to see a young woman step out. She was dressed in a loose, long red shirt that hung off her skinny frame down to her knees, where a yellow skirt, smudged with dirt and stains, fell all the way to the ground. Her blonde hair was tied back with a scarf, braided into two sections that rested over her shoulders. Her sunken brown eyes looked at them both warily as she asked,

"Are you here to adopt?"

Her gaze moved from the man to the crying woman held close to his chest. She had welcomed many couples who had come here looking to adopt and knew the look well enough. The woman was probably crying because she couldn't conceive, and finding this place must have brought her some measure of relief.

Viola wiped her tears and took a slow, deep breath, drawing in Sebastian's warm scent before stepping back from him and walking around to face the girl. She needed to get a grip and not let her emotions control her.

But her eyes narrowed on the girl as recognition began to settle in. She knew this girl. Though the girl had grown considerably, she still had the same brown eyes and dirty blonde hair, and her face still carried the unmistakable resemblance to one of the children they had shared a room with in this orphanage years ago.

"You are Julia, right?" Viola asked.

The young woman looked surprised that a well dressed stranger knew her name and gave a short nod. "I am. Who are you?"

Relief washed over Viola and she felt herself breathe for the first time since they had pulled up. If Julia, who had been Ivy's closest friend, was still here, then there was a real chance her sister was too.

She and Julia had never gotten along well, mostly because of the way Viola had always made Ivy take her punishments for her. Julia had watched it happen and had resented her quietly for it, her

glares saying everything she never put into words. But none of that mattered now. Right now Viola was genuinely glad to see her face.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 220: The twin sister[1,290 words]

Chapter 220: The twin sister

"You might not remember me well, but I used to live here. We shared a room together. I went by Serena back then." Viola said, stepping forward and bringing Sebastian along with her by the hand she still held. He followed her without resistance.

Julia's expression shifted into confusion as her eyes moved between Viola and Sebastian. "I don't remember any Serena. I shared a room with a girl once but I can't remember what became of her. What are you here for? Adoption?"

Viola's smile faltered slightly. Julia didn't remember her. But then she had always chosen not to pay Serena much attention, never truly liking her even back then, so Viola let it go and replied,

"No. We are not here to adopt. Does Mrs. Agustin still work here?" She asked, referring to the orphanage caretaker who had made Viola's life a specific kind of misery, convinced she was cursed and deserving of treatment that matched it.

The brown eyed girl looked taken aback at the name but shook her head. "Mrs. Agustin passed away four years ago. Miss Lara is in charge of the orphanage now."

Miss Lara. The kind assistant to the cruel Mrs. Agustin. Viola thought, and found she felt nothing at all about the woman's passing. Not a single drop of sorrow for someone who had been the mastermind behind dropping bodies of children into empty wells. She hoped the woman's dead body ended up there as well.

"Can we see Miss Lara then?" Viola asked, glancing up briefly to meet Sebastian's eyes. He gave her a small encouraging nod and squeezed her hand once as if to tell her she was doing well.

"You can. Come in." Julia stepped aside to let them through. "You wouldn't normally be allowed access without going through our guards, but they are currently away on a hunting season outside of Nightshade." She remarked as she held the door open for them.

Viola was also aware of how the men in Nightshade were like creepy shadows and was surprised she didn't see any of them outside, but Julia's words explained why.

When they stepped in, Viola looked around the familiar front desk that hadn't gone through any real changes since the last time she had walked out of this door wearing her sister's dress. Her heart felt like it was squeezing itself from the inside with the remorse that came over her.

Julia gestured for them to sit on a long bench while she went to get Miss Lara. Viola couldn't bring herself to sit down. She looked around the place and noticed two older girls and some children peeking down from the upper floor.

In the back of her mind she was searching every face she could see, looking for one that looked like hers, even though she could already tell from Julia's reaction that the girl hadn't looked at her with any recognition, the way she would have if she had seen a face like Viola's walking around these halls recently. Was Ivy still here?

The anxiety began to creep back in, but Sebastian's grip on her hand pulled her back, his thumb moving slowly over her knuckles. Viola had thought bringing him was a really bad idea, but he had made her relax more than once now, to the point that she no longer regretted allowing him to come. She didn't think Nick would have been capable of calming her down the way this man was doing.

And she was grateful. She looked up at him, but he wasn't looking at her.

Sebastian was looking around the orphanage with a quiet expression on his face. He was trying to picture his little hellcat growing up inside these walls, trying to find her in the faces of the small children peering down from the stairs. The place didn't look fit for living and seemed like it could crumble down at any moment. Did she live here during winters and stormy rains?

No wonder she had so much up her sleeve, she had started from such a rough place from the very beginning.

It was then that Julia returned with an older woman who looked to be in her middle age.

"Miss Lara, these are the guests looking for you." Julia said, stepping aside and gesturing toward them.

Miss Lara nodded and turned to the girl. "Go and see to Emma, she is still sick. Take the rest of the children to their rooms for a nap. I will see to the guests."

Julia nodded, but not before letting her eyes drift almost dreamily to the tall handsome man standing beside the woman. She lingered on him just a moment too long, and as if feeling her dreamy gaze, the woman beside him shifted to step in front of him in a way that was quiet but unmistakably possessive. Julia caught herself and looked away, moving to do as she was told.

"Come along, children."

"Julia, are they here to adopt? Who will they take?"

"They look so rich. I wish they would take me!"

The children's voices faded up the staircase before Miss Lara turned her attention to them. "Julia told me you didn't come here to adopt. What brought you here then?"

"I can tell you don't recognize me, Miss Lara, but I was once a child from this orphanage. I stayed here with my twin sister. We were Ivy and Serena then, and you used to look after Ivy so well. Do you remember?" Viola asked carefully, not giving away that she was Serena just yet, in case Ivy had taken her identity and played it through to the end.

Miss Lara looked puzzled. "Did you say Ivy?" She asked, and when Viola nodded the woman said with a small laugh, "But Ivy didn't have a twin sister."

Viola felt her heart throb before she steadied herself and said, "You must have forgotten, but years ago there was a couple, the Lindens, who came here to adopt a girl. They took Ivy."

Miss Lara's face softened with recognition. "How could I forget that. It was the first time people of that standing ever took a child from this place. Ivy was such a sweet little girl." She said, and Viola felt a wave of relief so strong her legs nearly went weak beneath her. But the relief was short lived as the woman continued,

"Unfortunately Ivy never had a twin sister, just like I told you. She was alone here and the Lindens adopted her. Could it be that you are Ivy? I can still see a resemblance in your face and the eyes."

Viola felt her heart drop straight to her stomach as she stared at Miss Lara. "What do you mean she didn't have a twin sister? Ivy and Serena lived here for seven years. The Lindens took one girl and left the other behind." Viola said, and then she turned to Sebastian with barely contained panic in her eyes. "She is mixing things up, Seb. Tell her to check the files and look properly. We were two!"

Sebastian put a steady arm around his luna and looked at the confused woman standing before them. "My wife knows what she is talking about. Check your files. You must have records of every child who has ever lived in this orphanage." He said in a tone that left no room for argument, and the woman nodded without hesitation.

"We do. Every child in this orphanage has a document that contains information from the first day they are brought here to the day they were adopted."

"Then bring everything out and go through them in front of us." Sebastian ordered.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 221: I believe you[1,329 words]

Chapter 221: I believe you

Miss Lara could feel the quiet danger coming off the man and didn't waste a second in telling her girls to bring out the file records from the storage room. It would be bad to offend a man with such bearing in the absence of their own pack patrols.

"Here are the files," Miss Lara announced as the sack of files was brought down from the storage room.

The moment they were set down, Viola pulled her hand from Sebastian's and rushed forward, tearing through the pages to find the years she and her sister had first arrived at the orphanage. She scattered the papers with shaking hands, barely aware of anything around her except the ringing in her ears and the weight of what Miss Lara had just said pressing down on her.

What did she mean by only Ivy had ever been here? Viola had left this place wearing Ivy's identity and left her sister behind as Serena, and she didn't want to think about what the absence of that name in these records meant.

Viola found the years she was searching for and went through the names one by one, and just as the woman had said, she realized with a sinking and sickening feeling that only the name Ivy was recorded. There was no Serena anywhere on the page.

How was this possible? It made no sense. She had lived here for seven years alongside her sister and the records showed nothing of a second girl, only Ivy's adoption and the Lindens' signature at the bottom of the page.

Viola began to shake her head slowly and she felt Sebastian come to stand close behind her, looking over her shoulder at the file in her hands. She turned teary eyes up to him and whispered, "My sister....they are saying I have no sister. It's a lie. I had a twin sister. She was lovely and kind. She was here when I left..."

Miss Lara looked genuinely confused at the woman's insistence that she had a twin sister. "We never had twins in this orphanage. As you can see in the records, there was only ever the name Ivy and no Serena. Could it be that you have things mixed up somehow?"

Viola turned angry, tearful eyes on the woman for daring to paint her as the liar when she knew exactly what she was talking about. "You have done something to my sister, haven't you? We were twins and I am not leaving here today until you bring her out or tell me what happened to her."

"Ma'am, that is a very serious accusation to make without any evidence. We—"

"Call out every single person in this building." Sebastian cut the woman off, his voice dropping to the kind of quiet that was far more dangerous than shouting. "I want every person in this building out here right now." He ordered, watching Viola shake her head over and over again, refusing to accept what the records were telling her.

Miss Lara didn't argue with them. She pulled a string on the wall and a bell rang out through the building, and immediately footsteps were heard on the stairs as children and older girls came rushing out. Julia was among them.

Viola's eyes trailed over the faces, but none of them were her sister's, and she didn't recognize any of them except for Julia's.

She turned on Julia, stepping forward to grip her shoulders. "Julia you were there with us. We shared a bunk and a room. You and Ivy used to be best friends and you disliked Serena, so tell Miss Lara that we were twins and that my sister was here."

Julia stepped back from Viola's grip and said, "I shared a room with a girl called Ivy. I never knew any Serena. Are you Ivy?"

Viola put her hands in her hair and gripped it in frustration as tears of anguish rolled endlessly down her cheeks and she shook her head. "Why are you all doing this to me? What have you done to my sister? Why are you lying to me like this? Please just tell me where she is and I will do anything you want in return. Give me back my sister." She pressed her hand over her mouth and began to sink toward the floor.

Memories of Ivy's smiling face flashed through her mind. Of the words her sister used to whisper to her to make her feel better about their condition. Of the caring little girl who had been forced to act way beyond her age just to protect a twin sister who hadn't deserved half of what she gave her.

"No...I had a twin sister. We used to live here..." Viola muttered brokenly, and then as if something suddenly occurred to her, her anguished eyes snapped to Miss Lara and she whispered, "Have you killed my sister the way you killed those other kids? Have you buried her in a well and removed her records?"

She felt Sebastian's hands come down on her shoulders and she turned to him, getting to her feet and gripping the front of his shirt with both fists.

"Sebastian they have killed my sister! They have killed her and hidden it! They didn't let her grow up, they killed her! You have to believe me, I had a twin sister. I swear on the moon goddess, we were two!" She cried, shaking his shirt front, desperate for him to believe her and not look at her like she had lost her mind.

She didn't even give him the chance to reply before she released him and swung back toward Miss Lara like a person blinded by her emotions, seizing the woman by the throat and screaming,

"Where is my sister? What have you done to her?!"

Viola didn't care if she hurt the woman. All she wanted was to hear that she hadn't been losing her mind, that the sister she had known and loved hadn't been some figure she had made up inside her own head, because she knew she had one. She knew it. These people had taken her.

Miss Lara's eyes went wide and red as the air left her throat, but Viola didn't let go. "I...I am sorry, ma'am, but we never knew any Serena..." She wheezed out.

"LIES!" Viola screamed, shaking the woman. "You are lying!"

Sebastian saw her losing control completely and moved forward, grabbing her and pulling her away from the woman, but Viola fought him like a hellcat, twisting and pushing against his hold to get free. He added more of his strength and hauled her back, wrapping his arms around her from behind and caging her arms against her chest.

"Calm down. Shhh. Let me handle this." He whispered into her ear, and she collapsed into sobs against him.

"N-nobody w-wants to believe that I have a sister..." She wept, her voice broken and small.

Sebastian kept his arms locked around her and then buried his face in the crook of her neck, his voice dropping low as he whispered, "I believe you. You have a sister. Calm down and I will help you find her."

Viola felt the fight drain out of her body at his words. She turned her head to look at his face and found nothing but sincerity looking back at her, and it was like seeing him differently in that moment as he promised, "Whatever they have done to her, they will confess it before they know what came over them. I need you to calm down first. Can you do that for me?"

Viola nodded, her eyes not leaving his, feeling as though they were pulling her back from the edge of herself and compelling her to breathe. "You believe me?" She breathed quietly, tears rolling down her lashes.

Sebastian wiped away the tears with a tender touch as he whispered, "I do."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 222: More complicated[1,630 words]

Chapter 222: More complicated

It took more time than Sebastian ever thought he would spend in Nightshade, but he didn't care, not when his mate was on the verge of an emotional breakdown and becoming hysterical.

Before Sebastian got into the business of intimidating anyone into telling the truth, he made sure to calm his mate first, sitting her down and getting her to take a sip of the water they had brought from the car, before straightening up to face Miss Lara, who looked terrified and close to collapsing herself, with Julia supporting her by the arm. It was almost like they had never been put through anything like this before.

But if Sebastian had to pick a side and decide who he believed was telling the truth, it would be Viola without hesitation. She had no reason to lie about a sister she didn't have, and she had worked herself to the bone to become a Luna for her sake.

Try as he might though, none of the people in that orphanage gave away anything that suggested they were lying. In fact they all looked so firm and certain on the fact that Ivy had never had a twin that it was difficult to find a crack in any of them.

"I swear on the moon goddess and all of her grace that we never had twins in this orphanage." Miss Lara said tearfully, looking up at the intimidating man who seemed to be trying to make her confess to something that simply wasn't possible. "I loved Ivy and tried to protect her all the time

from the mistress who ran this orphanage before me. If she had a twin I would never have hidden it."

"Are you trying to tell me she is lying about having a twin sister?" Sebastian said with narrowed eyes, pulling the woman aside to speak to her separately, not wanting to stir Viola up again.

He could see her sitting quietly from where he stood, peeling at the skin around her nails, and as much as he wanted to stop her from hurting herself, if it helped her calm down, he forced himself to pretend that the way she was pulling at her skin wasn't getting to him.

"I am not saying she is lying, sir. All I am saying is that she may have things mixed up. I didn't want to say this at first, but while Ivy was still in our orphanage, I noticed some patterns about her that set her apart from the other children." Miss Lara muttered, dabbing at her cheeks with her handkerchief.

Sebastian arched a brow at her. "What kind of patterns?"

"Ivy had always been a strange one, ever since she was a baby. We received her on a winter night, dropped at our gate in a basket. I was the one who took her in and cared for her from the beginning. When she was old enough to walk and talk, I noticed she would sit down and smile and carry on full conversations with someone no one else could see. When I would ask her who she was talking to..." Miss Lara's already tired face grew more troubled as she said,

"She would tell me it was her sister. I never made too much of it and tried to keep that habit hidden from Mrs. Agustin because it would have gotten her into serious trouble. Many times she would set aside food and share it with this invisible sister. But I never imagined she would grow up still holding onto that belief. I am telling you the truth when I say there was no real sister here with her."

Having heard everything the woman said, Sebastian no longer knew what to think or believe. Judging from her expression and the emotion on her face, she didn't look like a liar and seemed to genuinely care about what was happening to his wife. But if he believed the woman, he would also have to consider that his wife had been mentally unstable this whole time, and that was something he couldn't bring himself to accept. Not Viola.

"How many children have you taken into this orphanage over the years?" Sebastian asked suddenly.

Miss Lara frowned and went to check a file before returning to him. "Since this orphanage has been in operation, we have taken in more than a hundred children and more than eighty have been adopted."

"And how many death records do you have, and what were the circumstances of those deaths?" He questioned again, his expression blank and unreadable.

"We don't keep track of death records, especially not after our pack came under attack a few years ago and we lost many of the children to the fighting between rogues and our Gammas. We lost the death records then."

He looked at the woman's face as if trying to gauge whether she was lying. He had heard about the fight with the rogues that had further damaged Nightshade, but he couldn't fathom how the other records were still intact while the death records were lost. Something just didn't sit right with him about this situation.

"Take me on a walk around your grounds," Sebastian said, not phrasing it as a request.

Miss Lara didn't hesitate to agree, for even though she wanted to use the night as an excuse not to take this man around their place, as his silver eyes were terrifying, like staring into the bottom of hell itself with silver flames burning within them, she couldn't bring herself to refuse. Besides, she had nothing to hide in the building that she didn't want him to see; it was only that his presence was overwhelming.

Sebastian turned and went back to take Viola's hand. She looked up at him with a lost expression, like a child who was lost in the middle of nowhere and had been approached by a stranger. Her expression stabbed at his heart, but he gave her a reassuring look.

"Let's look around the place. You can show me that well while we are at it, and I will try to track the bodies inside."

Viola's lost eyes came to life instantly at his words. She nodded and followed, moving ahead of even Miss Lara as she pulled her husband forward.

If her sister had been killed and thrown into the well, Sebastian was an Alpha, he would be able to sense if her remains were still there by tracking her scent.

Night had already fallen and the sky was darker than anything she had seen in other parts of the werewolf world. Sebastian turned on his phone flashlight so Viola could see ahead while he used his own sharp vision to his advantage.

Viola led them around to the back of the building, moving faster than Sebastian had ever seen her move. But when they arrived at the back she stopped dead in her tracks. As if not believing what she was seeing, she took the flashlight from his hand and walked forward slowly, shining it around and searching the ground beneath her feet.

"Where is the well?" Viola asked with a deep frown. "And the slaughter board that used to sit beside it? It used to be right here." She shone the light down at her feet. She could swear on anything that there had been a well in this exact spot, but instead of a well all she could see was cemented ground staring back at her.

"We don't have a well on our grounds. We get our water from the river nearby. Nobody pays us enough to have the funds to dig a well out here." Miss Lara said, pulling some of the smaller children who had followed them outside closer to her and wrapping her arms around them as they peeked at Viola from behind her skirt with wary eyes.

Viola let out a short bitter laugh and pressed her hand against her head. "I don't know what game you are all playing with me right now, Miss Lara, but I am not a fool. There was a well right here years ago and you didn't use it for water but to hide the remains of what you did to some of the children in this place. I witnessed it once as a child with my own eyes. I don't care about your other deeds as much as I care about what you must have done to my sister."

Miss Lara looked toward Sebastian as if silently begging him to reason with the woman, clearly unable to understand why she kept accusing them of things they insisted they hadn't done. First a twin sister who didn't exist and now a well hiding the remains of dead children.

Sebastian reached for Viola's hand but she yanked it away from him and turned red swollen eyes on him.

"I am not leaving here without my sister. Leave if you want to but I am staying." She gritted out, stepping away from him. These people were hiding something and trying to paint her as unstable, and she could see in even Sebastian's eyes that he was beginning to doubt her. Hadn't he said he believed her not even an hour ago? So why was he looking at her like that?

Viola knew what she was talking about and she would stand by every word of it until they told her what had happened to her sister. Honestly, if they had simply told her something terrible had happened to Ivy it would have been easier to bear than this, easier than having them look at her like she was slowly losing her grip on reality, and the sister she knew was nothing but her imagination.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 223: The creature[1,732 words]

Chapter 223: The creature

Sebastian reached out and grabbed her wrist firmly but she fought against his hold, trying to pull free. He tightened his grip and put his arm around her waist and hauled her up off the ground.

"Let go of me you bastard! I will not turn my back on my sister again, I will find her before I leave! Let go of me!" Viola cried, pinching and hitting at his arm around her waist but no matter how hard she fought him he didn't release her until he carried her outside to the car and put her down in the seat.

She immediately tried to get out but he locked her in with the seatbelt and grabbed her shoulders, gritting out, "Calm down and hear me out."

"How can I calm down when they are lying to my face?" She cried, a sob of pure anguish rolling out of her, the hand that had been hitting at his chest stopping there as she looked into his eyes in the dim light of the car. "They have gone so far to hide my sister, why would they do that? She hasn't

done anything to anyone. I left her once already, I can't leave her again... please let me go back inside..."

Sebastian let out a slow breath and took her hand into his. "I am not telling you to leave her. You saw how none of them are willing to give out the truth. Nothing we do tonight will make them confess. We need to go back and I will send my men here to investigate everything about that orphanage. If your sister was really there with you—"

"She was!" Viola exclaimed and Sebastian gave a quiet nod, raising his free hand and using his thumb to wipe gently at her wet cheeks.

"Then I will find her for you. Right now it is too dangerous for us to stay here any longer."

The truth was, if it weren't for the fact that she was with him, Sebastian would have used his own methods to make them confess long before now if they were lying. But the last thing he needed was to expose himself as the Supreme Alpha with her beside him, because if trouble broke out, she would be caught in the middle of it.

Nightshade was one of the packs that would grab any chance to kill the Supreme Alpha because they didn't live under his rules and despised everything that had to do with Silver. The Gammas and Deltas were not around now, including the Alpha; the last thing he needed was for them to come back and find him tearing down their orphanage.

The right move was to take her back to safety and return here himself with his men.

Viola didn't nod or acknowledge his words. She turned away from him, biting down hard on her lower lip and trying to hold her emotions down inside her chest where they were burning like lava. The backs of her eyes burned just as badly when she thought about what they might have done to her sister and the fact that Sebastian most likely didn't believe her enough to let her stay and find Ivy herself.

She wanted to cry. She wanted to rage. She kept all of it pressed down.

If she were in his position, he would have no real reason to believe her either when Miss Lara, the one woman she would never have expected to lie to her like this, was standing there looking so painfully convincing.

It hurt her to think she was leaving here again without her sister when she had imagined and envisioned herself finally meeting her today.

And what hurt even deeper, the thing that made her want to fall apart completely, was the realization that it was Serena's identity that had been erased from the records. Her identity. Because they believed Ivy had been adopted and that her sister had kept on living as Serena. She had caused her sister's disappearance the day she had walked out of those doors wearing Ivy's name.

She had caused this.

Sebastian got into the driver's seat and looked over at her with visible worry as she kept her face turned away, biting down so hard on her bottom lip that he could smell the faint trace of blood, and he fought the urge to reach over and coax it free from between her teeth.

He hated seeing her like this. He had hoped she would leave this place with her sister beside her, completely happy for the first time in a long time, and instead she was leaving more broken than she had arrived.

Sebastian started the car and as it pulled away from the orphanage grounds, inside the building Miss Lara crept to the window and watched the car until it disappeared from sight. She turned to find Julia standing behind her, brown eyes clouded with concern.

"Do you think they suspect anything?"

Miss Lara pressed her fingers to her temple. "I don't know. That man unsettles me. There is something about him I cannot put my finger on, something that made me feel like he could see straight through us. If it ever comes out what happened to her sister, we will all die."

"Miss Lara." Julia called quietly, and when the woman looked at her she fidgeted and said, "When she first came in here with the man, she said something about being Serena. I don't know if she had it mixed up, but if she didn't, then I think there will be trouble. Because it would mean she isn't Ivy at all, and that the other one..."

Miss Lara's face drained of color. She reached out and gripped Julia's hand hard and pulled her close. "Keep your mouth shut if you don't want to end up the same way. Get the children back to their rooms and put them to sleep. Now."

Julia nodded quickly and hurried off, herding the children along with her and pulling the door shut behind them. Miss Lara wiped the back of her hand across her damp forehead before looking once more at the empty road where the car had long since gone, and then she turned and walked briskly to her room inside the building.

She went into her bathroom and locked the fragile door behind her. Then she crossed to kneel in front of the old bathtub that had once been white and was now the color of rust, the water inside it still and dark, reflecting her face back at her as she leaned over it and called out.

"If you can hear me, I have done what you asked. I have made them believe she was the only one."

Silence held the bathroom for a long twenty seconds before the water in the tub began to swirl and churn and then slowly rise, taking shape. It formed the outline of a figure, impossible to tell if it were male or female, shifting and reforming each time she tried to look at it directly.

"Good. You are a very smart woman." Came the strange voice of the water as it changed shape again, becoming something snake-like and fluid and began to circle around Miss Lara, who held herself very still even as terror moved through every bone in her body.

She had always heard stories of things from the ancient times, creatures that belonged to a world that once predated the werewolves and everything that came after them, but she had never believed they were real until the day it came for the twins. And unfortunately, by then only one of them was left.

"Why do you want one of the twins dead?" Miss Lara whispered before she could stop herself.

The water coiled around her throat instantly, tightening and cutting off her air. "Didn't we agree there would be no questions? I promised to take care of Mrs. Agustin and in return you would do everything I say. Now you are going back on that by asking questions. Bad little woman. Do you want me to feed you to the sharks? You would make a very nice meal for them, just like that fat Mrs. Agustin who used to sell the meat of my kind to yours. Che. Don't ask questions again."

Miss Lara nodded frantically and the water released her throat. "I am sorry...I won't ask again..."

"Mhmm. Now make sure they never find out what happened to the other twin. Without her, this one will never succeed in breaking the curse. The werewolves need to suffer for what they have done to our kind. You should count yourself lucky that I still have use for you. I will find you again, wolf."

With that the water crashed back into the tub and a flash of light burst from the surface before it went completely dark and still. Miss Lara didn't need to wonder where it had gone. She already knew the creature had returned to the ocean to take its true form.

Her hands were shaking as she reached over and pulled the drain from the tub. She didn't know what curse the sea creature was speaking of, but she had known from the night those twins were first brought to the orphanage that they were not ordinary werewolf children. Something about them had been different in a way she could feel but never explain.

The note left with them had said one was cursed, and none of them had known what to make of it except to assume it referred to the difficult one, the stubborn one who caused trouble. Serena.

As much as Mrs. Agustin had run her dark side business out of this orphanage, sometimes housing the hybrids of werewolves and those sea creatures whose meat was among the most expensive and sought after in their world, Miss Lara had never wanted any part of it. But now that she was in it up to her throat, she had no choice but to carry the secret of what happened to the other twin to her grave, or every child left in this building would pay the price.

"Forgive me, moon goddess, for swearing upon your name." She whispered into the empty bathroom. "But I need to keep the rest of them safe."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 224: Possessive kiss_Part 1[1,577 words]

Chapter 224: Possessive kiss_Part 1

"We didn't get anything." Sebastian spoke to Matt through the mind link as he drove through the night ruined streets of Nightshade, the roads making the ride even more treacherous as the car kept jolting and bumping over rocks and debris.

"Does that mean she didn't come in a pair?" Matt questioned with a deep frown, stopping mid stir over the bacon in his pan. What was that supposed to mean then? If she didn't have a twin and didn't have a wolf, there was no way they could guarantee she was the prophesied one. The one thing that had made Sebastian believe it a hundred percent had just been shaken. Matt thought, switching off his gas burner because he already knew he wouldn't be eating tonight.

"I didn't say she is not the one." Sebastian remarked, turning his head briefly to look at her. She was curled up on the seat with her back turned away from him, looking even smaller than she already was, and it pained him to see her like that. She was heartbroken but she had stopped crying and stopped talking and that somehow felt worse.

"I think the orphanage is hiding something." Sebastian continued. "I need to find out what, but I can't do that with her here. She is in a very vulnerable state right now. Send my private jet to Kasa Land along with the red berge warriors. We will reach Kasa by tomorrow. I will send her back to Silver and handle things here myself."

There was no space for his private jet to land anywhere near Nightshade, and even if there were it would draw attention immediately. Kasa Land was the empty stretch of land beyond the Blue Bridge where a jet could land without anyone noticing, as there was no pack settled anywhere near it.

Sebastian planned to put Viola on the jet back to Silver and then return here with his men. At least that way he wouldn't have her safety to worry about if things broke out into a pack battle. As much as she needed her twin, Sebastian needed that twin to be real just as badly, because it was the only way to confirm everything before it was too late.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Matt questioned, bracing his hip against the kitchen counter. "Nightshade has some of the most unpredictable werewolves around and it is too far out to get backup to you quickly if things go wrong. Why not both come back, you pick as many men as you want and go back properly?" He suggested.

"No." Sebastian said firmly. "That is a waste of time I don't have. I need to confirm more than anything that she is the one, or there is no use in any of this. I have eleven days before the 30th and you know what that day means, so don't try to talk me out of this. Just help me. Her twin is the only way to fully confirm it and if I can't find her...I can't keep Viola."

Matt let out a slow breath. He understood what Sebastian was trying to do, and having put his entire hope on Viola only to have it pulled away from under him was not something that would end well for anyone involved. Without her wolf they couldn't confirm the rest of the prophecy description, but with the twin they would at least have confirmed it one way.

What Matt couldn't quite understand though was why Sebastian was working this hard to prove Viola was the one when in the past he had never pushed this far for any she-wolf the prophecy had pointed toward. In fact he had faced every 30th day with a grim stubbornness lodged in his chest, as if he had already decided he would never find her and would eventually resort to what his father had done before him. Sacrifice.

"Seb." Matt said carefully. "What if there really is no twin?"

Sebastian's eyes hardened and his fingers tightened around the steering wheel. "There has to be. I believe she is the one to break the curse and free Silver. And if she is not the one...then I will find a sea creature if I have to travel to the deepest part of the sea myself and use it as a sacrifice. Now do as I say and get the men ready."

Matt was taken aback by those words. "You can't mean you would actually dive into the sea to find a mermaid? If they do exist the way Doctor Gilbert claimed, and given everything the werewolves have done to them in the past, I believe they would trap you down there and kill you before you even got close. Don't even think about diving into any sea or ocean, man, or you will be eaten alive!"

At the beginning of time, mermaids had lived alongside werewolves in peace, sharing the oceans and seas in a coexistence that had held for longer than either side could fully remember, until the werewolves discovered the powers those creatures carried and what consuming their fish side could do to one of their own.

A mermaid's tail could grant a normal wolf the powers of an Alpha. A mermaid's tears, which hardened into pearls upon hitting the air, were among the most expensive and sought after jewels in the world, the kind rogues would give anything to get their hands on. And then there was the mermaid heart, the most powerful thing of all, a power capable of curing anything. Even a generational curse.

When the werewolves discovered this, the hunting began, and it didn't stop until it was widely believed that every last mermaid had been killed off.

Most held the belief that they were entirely extinct now, wiped out completely.

But research carried out by Doctor Gilbert's father had uncovered something that changed that assumption.

Sebastian's own grandfather had used a mermaid's heart to avoid sacrificing the woman he loved, which meant at least one had existed within living memory of his bloodline.

"If they had gone fully extinct we wouldn't have found even the dead ones when we searched in the past." Sebastian said. "I believe if we look deeper there will still be living ones out there somewhere. They are simply in hiding and I will find one if I have to scour every ocean and sea there is." He shut the link before Matt could say another word.

If he couldn't use his third Luna to lift the curse to the next generation then a mermaid's heart would do the work just the same, and he could keep Viola alive and with him whether she turned out to be the prophesied one or not. But for now he had to push that thought aside and focus on finding out what had really happened to her sister and who was hiding it.

Sebastian knew he was already in deep water by letting himself get this attached and letting their bond strengthen before he had made sure she wouldn't be hurt the way his other Lunas had been. He just hadn't been able to stop it, not even slightly.

And right now her quiet heartbreak was hurting him too, because he didn't just sense it from her, he felt it sitting in his own chest like something heavy that didn't belong to him.

Sebastian turned to look at her again but she didn't stir from her curled up position, even though he knew she wasn't sleeping.

The road grew even more treacherous ahead of them and Sebastian had barely finished cursing the latest jolt when he heard the engine crack and then knock out. The car rolled slowly to a stop in the middle of a small town in Nightshade, every light inside it dying along with the engine.

Sebastian let out a long curse. The road had finally managed to destroy his car entirely. Even with the car going completely dark and still around her, his wife didn't move from her spot.

He was parting his lips to speak when his eyes landed on a small hotel a little way ahead with a nightclub attached to it. He knew that no matter what he said right now she wouldn't respond, and would rather press all her pain and heartbreak down into herself and let it sit there until it crushed her.

An idea came to him. He unclipped his seatbelt, got out of the car and walked around to her side and opened the door.

Her eyes were open and she was staring into the space in front of her without actually seeing any of it. He bent down, unclipped her seatbelt and took her hand gently, slowly pulling her attention back to him.

She looked so completely lost that it broke something in him and pierced at it at the same time. "The car engine has knocked out. There is a hotel a short walk from here. We can spend the night there." He told her and she blinked slowly, looking away from him as she replied,

"You can go ahead and stay there. I want to be alone." She whispered in a small hoarse voice.

Sebastian would be damned before he left her alone in the middle of Nightshade. He bent down and gathered her into his arms, lifting her out of the car.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 225: Possessive kiss_Part 2[1,081 words]

Chapter 225: Possessive kiss_Part 2

Viola fought him like the hellcat she was but her fight was as weak as her spirit had turned after learning that she didn't have a twin.

"Let go of me..." She muttered, hitting at his chest, but Sebastian didn't listen. He used his leg to push the car door shut and then walked away from it with her in his arms.

She didn't fight him again after that. It was like she had lost the will and the strength to do so, and Sebastian wished she would at least argue with him, but she did neither and it broke something quietly inside him. He didn't know what was happening to him. He who had always prided himself on controlling his mate bond couldn't control a single thing when it came to her. Their emotions and moods had intertwined to the point where her pain affected him far more than he would ever have welcomed or allowed any she-wolf to affect him before.

Sebastian carried her to the small hotel and checked them in. However he didn't go straight to the room but instead headed to the nightclub attached to the hotel, where the music was already blasting loud enough to feel before you even stepped through the door.

The club was packed with werewolves, flashing colored lights bouncing off moving bodies on the floor. The people who noticed him coming through gave him strange looks and parted to let him pass toward the bar counter where he was headed.

Viola didn't stir even with the loud music blasting around them, but she came to life at the sight of bottles being lined up on the bar counter when he set her down on one of the stools.

He sat down beside her and before he could place an order with the bartender, his wife had already raised her index finger to signal one for herself. He realized this wasn't her first time in a nightclub from the easy way she did it, like someone who knew exactly what they wanted and how to ask for it.

"Where are you two coming from?" Asked the female bartender as she handed the bottle to Viola and gave Sebastian a cocky look. It was obvious the two of them weren't from Nightshade, thought the bartender. They looked too put together, too clean for a place like this. She'd seen all sort of people, but fresh looking and good smelling wasn't among them here.

"From Hell." Sebastian remarked flatly as he grabbed a bottle for himself and turned to watch his wife begin to gulp hers down like it was the end of the world.

He wanted to caution her to slow down but then he knew she would only open up to him once the drink loosened her enough, and he needed her to pour out the pain she had been pressing down inside herself since they left the orphanage. He didn't want to part ways with her while she was like this because he would worry about her the entire time.

The bartender laughed and leaned against the counter, settling herself in as if she had just found the most interesting customers of her night.

"What a funny guy. There is no hell around here, there is dust and dirt. So are you going to tell me the real answer?" She winked at him, twirling her brunette hair around her finger and chewing gum with her mouth open.

She had a black choker around her neck that Sebastian fleetingly thought he could choke her with if she didn't mind her business, but her very red lips curved into a smile as her eyes moved over him with open interest.

"I like your eyes. I have never seen that shade around here. Does Mr. Handsome have a name? I am Jasmine, by the way, but you can call me Jaz. Everyone knows me around here. I am not only a bartender, I can be a male tender too depending on what service you want. So what do you think, handsome?" She winked at him in a clear invitation.

"Are you paid to question your customers?" Viola cut in after finishing her first bottle, her voice flat and her eyes sliding to the bartender.

The beer had already burned a trail down her throat and as her numbing grief began to dull at the edges, a very sharp irritation rose to replace it at the sight of this woman trying to flirt with her husband directly in front of her. Was she blind not to see he had come in here with a woman?

"Geez, can't a girl get a little curious about who her customers are, especially when one of them is this easy on the eyes?" The girl replied with a tight smile, giving Viola a hostile look. They obviously weren't mates because there was no mark on the man, so what exactly was this bitch getting worked up about?

"Your curiosity is going to earn your damaged hair getting ripped out. He is off limits. Go and attend to your other customers and keep your nosy questions to yourself." Viola warned in a low dangerous voice.

She was already running on dangerously high emotions tonight and she would not hesitate to let every last bit of it out on this woman's hair if she didn't stop looking at her husband like that. As much as Viola thought she wanted to keep a distance from Sebastian and allow him to do whatever he wanted, it was easier said than done.

"And who do you think you are to warn me off him?" The girl challenged, not budging an inch. She was used to flirting her way to whatever she wanted from the men who came through this bar, but this one didn't even need to pay her. Jaz would take the man to bed for free, for she hadn't bedded a fresh looking guy in a very long time.

But this bitch was getting in the way of her flirting to get him in the mood. Who did she think she was? A clean whore he picked up on his way?

Instead of answering, Viola turned to her husband, grabbed him by the collar with both fists, the beer already clouding her head and dissolving every wall she had been trying so hard to hold up, and she jerked him forward and kissed him hard on the lips.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 226: Melt down[1,263 words]

Chapter 226: Melt down

It wasn't a gentle kiss. It wasn't even close to one. It was raw and hungry and desperate, the kind of kiss that had nothing to do with desire and everything to do with claiming. She kissed him like she was trying to burn something into him, like she was trying to remind herself of something she couldn't quite hold onto tonight.

Her fingers tightened in his collar, pulling him closer even as the stool beneath her shifted, and she felt him go completely still for one single second before something in him gave way and he kissed her back just as hard.

His hand came up and gripped her jaw, tilting her face up, and the low sound that came from him when her tongue ran over his sent a heat straight through her that had nothing to do with the beer. She tasted him and he tasted her back like they had all the time in the world and no audience at all, and for one breathless moment she forgot every single thing that was hurting her.

Then she pulled away sharply, chest heaving, and turned her flushed face to the stunned bartender like nothing had happened.

"This man is my husband. He is off limits to you. Get back to your work and bring me another bottle." She released Sebastian's collar, smoothed it down once with her palm almost as an afterthought, sat back straight on her stool and grabbed the next beer.

Sebastian felt completely ambushed by his hellcat. Had she just taken control of that kiss and ended it herself, leaving him sitting there starved for more? He hadn't expected her to lay claim on him like that, not when she had been so shut down and unresponsive the entire evening, but it seemed the beer was already doing its work.

His mood lightened up immensely and he smiled.

"You heard my wife." Sebastian said to the stunned bartender. "Bring out more beers."

When Jaz recovered from her shock she turned her glare fully on Viola, angry and visibly disappointed that the man she had set her sights on was married.

And not just married but married to someone like her, someone who carried no wolf presence at all, which to Jaz made the whole thing even more insulting. A man like that, with eyes like that and an aura that made your skin prickle, bound to a wolfless woman. The bitterness of it sat sour on her tongue and before she could think better of it she muttered under her breath,

"Wolfless bitch."

Viola heard it. Her fingers tightened around her bottle. On any normal night she wouldn't have let words like that get under her skin, but she was not herself tonight. There was a building frustration and helplessness sitting inside her chest that had been looking for somewhere to go since the moment she walked out of that orphanage, and it had just found a very willing target.

"What did you just call me?" Viola said quietly as she got to her feet, and then without a single moment of hesitation she reached across the counter and grabbed Jaz by her hair, hauled her over it and slammed her fist into her mouth.

"You are the bitch. I told you he is my husband and you still think you can make a move on someone who is mine?" Viola snapped as she landed another hit, but Jaz recovered quickly and swung back.

The punch never landed on Viola like she intended. Sebastian caught her wrist without even looking up from his bottle, stopping it mid-air from reaching his wife.

Jaz screamed as another hit from Viola connected with her face, unable to return it with her wrist locked in the man's grip, giving his wife every advantage she needed.

With the music blasting through the club nobody on the floor paid them any attention and kept on dancing, and it wasn't until Sebastian noticed a few nearby heads starting to turn toward Jaz's screaming that he released her wrist and calmly pulled his wife back by the waist.

"That is enough, baby." He said, amusement clear in his voice as he hauled her up over his shoulder when she announced she hadn't finished and wanted another round.

He lifted her like she weighed nothing, grabbed a bottle of beer from the counter and made his way out of the club.

When they stepped out into the open air away from the stuffy heat and the wall of mixed body smells, she fought her way off his shoulder and landed on her feet, swaying immediately. Sebastian caught her before she could tip over.

"That bitch deserved more than that!" she slurred, unsteady on her feet, as the local beer was known to be stronger than the wines in Silver and she had taken two bottles of it. However, she still wanted more. Her eyes went to the bottle in his hand.

"You gave her plenty of beating," he said, smiling slightly as he noticed her looking at the beer and reaching out to take it from him. He let her have it.

"No, I haven't beaten her enough. My heart still hurts...I feel like a heavy stone is sitting inside it. It's not going down, Sebastian...it's not..." She whispered, her blue eyes turning glassy as she looked up at him. "I should have never left her..."

Sebastian knew she was no longer talking about the bartender.

"I should have let her be adopted and I stayed behind to accept my fate. I caused my sister's disappearance. I am to blame..." She gulped down another swallow of beer, tears streaming freely down her face.

Unable to watch her cry, Sebastian stepped forward and used his fingers to wipe at her cheeks as she brought the bottle down from her mouth and looked up at him with unfocused, red eyes and flushed cheeks. More tears streamed down and Sebastian whispered,

"Don't cry. If she is still alive I will find her for you. Don't blame yourself."

"But I am to blame. It was my fault..." She sobbed, biting down hard on her bottom lip, her free hand pressing and rubbing at the left side of her chest like she was trying to physically reach in and ease the pain sitting there.

"My heart hurts so much. I feel like I am never going to be happy again. Everything just keeps getting worse in my life. I became a Luna because I wanted to protect my sister and now they are telling me she never existed...how am I ever going to live with myself?" She looked up into his eyes with a desperation and raw pain that cut straight through him. "I can't continue living without Ivy. I think I should just die. That would make everything better, I don't_"

Sebastian couldn't bear it anymore. He pulled her into his arms and she dissolved into a heart wrenching sob that sent pins straight into his chest one by one. Her fingers fisted into his shirt and her legs gave way as her sobs grew loud. He supported her by the waist.

Her voice was hoarse and broken and she cried without any restraint, her entire body trembling against him like she was coming apart at the seams.

He couldn't find words to make her stop crying, so he didn't try. He just held her and let her cry, because maybe then, when she had nothing left to pour out, she would finally feel a little better.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 227: Gone_Part 1[1,316 words]

Chapter 227: Gone_Part 1

After Viola and Sebastian left the nightclub, the music stopped and Jaz angrily sent everyone out by announcing the club was closed for the night as she was in charge of the place and could decide when to close it up.

She had never in her life gotten beaten in her own club territory by some wolfless woman while nobody came to her rescue. She was livid, and the fact that the man she had been fighting over had actively helped his wife beat her made it sting twice as bad! The mother-fucker!

"Whoa, what happened to your face, Jaz?" Came the laughing voice of her current temporary boyfriend, who had been drinking himself into the floor in the club and was only just now noticing her swollen face in the slow process of healing.

"I got screwed over by some bitch with a fancy husband, that's what happened. You should have been there to back me up the way her man backed her up!" She snapped, pressing ice against her face and grimacing at the sting of it. But if her boyfriend heard a word she said he gave no sign of it, too busy staring down at a poster in his hand with a smirk pulling at his mouth. It irritated her immediately.

"What is so interesting about that thing you are staring at, Nat?"

"Some poster being handed around town this evening." Nat remarked, turning it around to face her lazily.

Jaz's eyes went wide. She dropped the ice on the counter and walked over to Nat, snatching the poster out of his hand to get a proper look at it. It was a portrait of two people printed clearly on the page. "Well fuck me, would you look at that. That is the bitch and her husband I was just telling you about. Who would have thought there was a reward on the man's head."

Nat's nonchalant expression shifted into something sharper and he yanked the poster back out of her hand. "You mean you actually saw these two tonight? Where are they now?"

All the men of Nightshade had gone hunting during the day and had returned that evening in disappointment, as there were no animals left to hunt around the territory of their pack anymore, and many of the pack men were still livid and in a bad mood.

However, some men had come through Nightshade earlier that evening, handing out posters which stated that the couple pictured were wanted.

Anyone who located them was directed to a specific meeting point where special weapons to kill the man would be provided. The woman was to be left completely unharmed. The reward printed at the bottom was the kind of number that would make whoever succeeded an overnight billionaire.

Jaz looked at Nat with a slow smirk spreading across her bruised face. "Why should I tell you anything? I am not sharing that information unless you promise me my cut of whatever that number says down there."

Nat had absolutely no intention of splitting anything with a woman like her, but he smiled and nodded without missing a beat. "Of course, my honey pie. Now where did you last see them?"

Jaz wasn't a fool to give out that information without her involved in this plan. "They walked out that door not long ago. The woman is probably drunk by now so they wouldn't have gone far. Let me come with you, I can help track her scent. The man has no scent on him, but a strong aura. I think he masked his scent."

Nat scrunched his face in displeasure at the fact that she would tag along but he said, "Sure, but first we need to locate the people who gave the posters to get the weapons before any attacks. Keep your eyes on them while I get my people prepared."

Sebastian held Viola until her cries quieted and then she suddenly pulled away from his embrace and began to walk, moving like an aimless drunken ghost drifting in no particular direction. Her cardigan slipped off her shoulders and dropped to the ground behind her without her noticing.

Sebastian picked it up and followed closely behind her, watching her sway gently and moving instinctively each time it looked like she might tip over, but she always caught herself at the last second.

"Be careful, babe." He whispered gently.

She turned her head over her shoulder and smiled at him, a drowsy lopsided thing, her blue eyes catching the light of the hotel lamp and sparkling underneath it. They had walked away from the nightclub at some point and he hadn't even realized it because he was following her carefully behind.

She was clearly drunk and her eyes were still swollen from crying, but Sebastian was glad she was at least smiling and not telling him she wished she had never been born into this world. Even if it was the beer making her look at him with those soft kitten eyes, he smiled back at her and crossed his arms against his chest.

"Why are you smiling?" Sebastian asked as she continued looking between his face and the street lamp above them for some reason.

He was aware that what they had discovered at the orphanage might make her never be the same again, and that she might carry that guilt until he found out what they had done to her sister. And he would find it out, if only to make her happier than she was now, to bring back the spark to her blue eyes and take away the pain.

"I am smiling at you..." She pointed a finger directly at him as she turned and walked back in his direction.

"Why?" Sebastian asked softly, putting his arm around her waist before she could tip sideways from the swaying. The night air in Nightshade was warm and humid and a breeze moved through it, blowing her hair across her face, and he reached up with his other hand and tucked the strands behind her ear.

"Because you look almost as pretty as that moon." She pointed upward and Sebastian followed her finger, already knowing there was no moon in the sky tonight, and sure enough her finger was aimed squarely at the street lamp above them.

He chuckled softly. "That is a street lamp."

She looked genuinely stunned by this information for a moment and then smiled again. "Even so, you are almost as pretty as the lamp..." She turned her face into his chest and rested her head there, letting it steady her spinning vision. She breathed in his warm woody scent and then slowly lifted her hand up to curl around the back of his neck, tilting her face upward to look at him where he was already looking down at her.

Sebastian felt her fingers pull his collar down gently before they moved to trace the lines of his tattoo along his neck. "You once told me your tattoos were made with a potion to cure heartache and grief." She said quietly. "If I got one, would it make me feel better? I don't want to carry this heaviness in my heart anymore, Sebastian...will you help me take it away?" She looked up at him with desperate eyes that still held all the pain she had been trying to drink down. "Please..."

Sebastian felt his heart twist hard in his chest at that expression coming back to her face. He touched his hand to her cheek and she leaned into it immediately, closing her eyes and letting the tears that had gathered roll silently down. He caressed her skin gently and whispered, "Anything you want, love. Anything." He leaned down and pressed a quiet kiss to her forehead and she let out a soft sigh against his chest.

"Thank you..."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 228: Gone_Part 2[1,511 words]

Chapter 228: Gone_Part 2

Sebastian rolled on the bed, but a frown climbed quickly to his face when he belatedly realized something. He came fully awake and stared at the empty space beside him on the narrow hotel bed. The space was cold with only a faint crease left in the pillow.

His heart gave a sharp twisted thud inside his chest and he shot off the bed and rushed to the bathroom to check even when he couldn't sense her presence anywhere in the room. This was bad. He shouldn't have let himself fall asleep after what she had kept whispering to him the night before when he brought her back to the room to rest.

After they had stayed outside on the ruined street for a while, she had murmured words under her breath and appeared to fall asleep in his arms, or so he had thought, until he brought her back to the room he had checked them into.

His seemingly sleeping wife had woken the moment he began to lay her down on the bed. She had looked up at him with pain filled blue eyes and whispered for him to hold her to sleep. He had intended to step out briefly to find someone who could look at the car engine so they could resume the journey to Kasa Land, as his instincts were nagging at him with an uneasy feeling in this place. But the look in her eyes made him drop the idea entirely and stayed.

Sebastian had quickly taken off his shirt and shoes and gotten into the bed still in his trousers, and immediately she had rolled into his arms and laid her head against his chest, wrapping her arm around his waist.

It was heavenly for a male mate to be needed by his female in that way, and Sebastian had felt something close to cloud nine settle over him, a feeling that was far better than anything else he

could name. He had held her for some time before she began whispering words he had told himself she didn't fully mean.

"Sebastian..." She had whispered. "Tell Zoe and Nick I am sorry, but I am not going back to Silver. I have no reason to be there anymore. I wanted to make a home for Ivy's sake and now I don't even know where she is...I have no reason to go back and live my life like nothing happened when I have destroyed Ivy's life. Tomorrow...you should go on ahead without me..." Her voice had been so small that if he hadn't had sharp hearing he would have missed every word.

Sebastian's arm had tightened around her. "Don't talk like that. You have every right to be in Silver. You are my wife, remember? And you haven't given me my heir yet." He had whispered back and she let out a small hollow laugh that he felt vibrate against his chest.

"What is the use when after you find the one you are truly destined with you will leave me anyway? The pup will suffer for it. I am only your wife by name, Sebastian. Most of your people don't even want me as their Luna because I am a nobody. I have no real identity and I don't even know who I am anymore...I am a messed up person that nobody can truly like."

She paused for a moment and then continued in that same quiet broken voice.

"Don't let me ruin your life. Go...marry Laila, she fits you far better than I ever could. Have your heir with her. I will stay here and look for my sister or die trying..." She had said it with a quiet bitter determination, and even as the words came out she had tightened her arm around him and buried her face deeper into his chest like she was contradicting herself without realizing it.

"I don't want to have a pup with Laila. I want one with you." He said gently, running his fingers into her hair and caressing the back of her neck in slow strokes.

She shook her head against his chest. "No you don't. I can't even figure out what is wrong with my wolf. I am not a good candidate for your wife...I don't want to go back to Silver..."

The thought of her not coming back with him sent something hot and fierce straight through his chest. As much as part of him understood that perhaps keeping her out of his complicated and dangerous life might actually protect her and give her a longer one, Sebastian was no longer willing to let go of her. Not when she made him feel the way only she ever had, and not when he knew she would suffer far worse staying behind in this godforsaken place if she followed through on what she was saying.

"You are talking like that because you are drunk. I am not leaving you here. We are going back together. Now go to sleep." Sebastian had said firmly.

"I am not going back. And I am not drunk. I am giving you the freedom to find a better Luna than me."

She had said all kinds of things last night that Sebastian hadn't truly believed she would act on, but waking up to an empty bed and an empty room, his insides twisted sharply at the realization that she had actually meant it and slipped away while he was sleeping.

Without bothering to put his shirt back on, Sebastian shoved his feet into his shoes and ran out of the hotel room, immediately trying to pick up whatever trace of her scent was still lingering in the air. The faint daisy scent was so thin it was clear she had been gone for a while. But how had she left without taking a single thing with her, not even her phone?

When he stepped outside and still couldn't find her, Sebastian cursed the fact that she had no wolf for him to connect to.

"Where could she have gone?" Sebastian asked his wolf who had snapped awake at the waves of panic beginning to roll through him.

Sebastian rarely ever panicked. He was a man of complete control over his emotions and circumstances, and he genuinely could not remember the last time something had made him feel the way he was feeling right now as he stood on the red mud road outside the hotel.

'Why did you fall asleep, man? Now look, our mate has escaped us in this godforsaken place!' Muffin complained loudly.

'It wasn't my intention to fall asleep. Her scent always calm me down to sleep. Now stop playing the blame game and help me track her down!'

He took off down the red mud road, following the faint trail of her scent that still clung to the morning air. Tracking her in his wolf form would have been considerably faster, but he couldn't risk shifting out here or his scent mask would drop and every werewolf in Nightshade would know immediately that the supreme Alpha was walking their territory.

When he reached the forest edge of Nightshade he felt a small wave of relief because her scent was noticeably stronger here and he quickened his pace. The forest was deeply silent, the only sounds being the morning birds calling to each other somewhere high in the trees above him.

The deeper he pushed through the trees the stronger the daisy scent became, but the deeper he got the more aware he became of another sound beneath the birdsong. Water. Moving water, like a river somewhere ahead.

When Sebastian finally found her he had just begun to exhale in relief, but the relief died the moment his footsteps came to a dead stop at the scene in front of him.

She was there. But she was standing at the very edge of a small cliff, and beneath that cliff was a vast river that everyone in the territory knew was connected to the waters running under the Blue Bridge and from there straight out to the sea. Why was she standing so close to the edge? He recalled clearly how terrified she was of open water, so why was she standing right there at the very lip of it?

What if she fell?!

"Viola..." He called her name carefully and softly, but when she turned to look at him it was with a wide terrified expression and a desperate whispered cry of, "Help me!" before she went pitching over the edge with a scream that cut through the silent forest, followed by a loud splash, and then a deafening silence that was broken only by the undisturbed singing of the birds above.

"Viola!" Sebastian called her name and ran to the edge, looking down into the water below where the surface had already gone still again, showing no sign that anyone had fallen into it at all. Without thinking about a single thing except getting to her, he dove in after her.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 229: The water[1,530 words]

Chapter 229: The water

A few hours ago.

Viola had woken up not feeling any better than she did the night before, the sadness and regret were still lodged in her chest along with a very bad hangover headache that felt like her skull was about to split clean in two. She found herself tucked inside Sebastian's embrace as she attempted to move, but stopped herself so she wouldn't wake him with a sudden movement.

She stared at his handsome sleeping face, where every sharp feature had softened in sleep, giving him a boyish and almost innocent look that she had never seen on him while he was awake. She recalled how he had stayed with her all through yesterday, every moment of it, and a lump rose quietly to her throat.

She stared at him for a while longer than she intended to before she slowly and carefully began to move away from his hold, easing herself out of his arms one inch at a time. She sat at the edge of the bed for a moment, her feet on the cold floor, letting the quiet of the room settle around her, and then she let out a long sigh and got up.

She needed time alone to think about her life from here on, because going back to Silver no longer felt like an option she could stomach. She didn't want to live a life of luxury among werewolves who didn't want her there anyway, inside a marriage that was bound to end terribly for her.

She needed to think and search for ways to find out what happened to her sister while she had been enjoying life. So she got up, looked at Sebastian one last time where he slept, and quietly made her way out of the hotel.

This part of Nightshade was unfamiliar to her but she walked around to the back of the small hotel and into the forest side, the morning dew still damp beneath her feet. The sky was barely bright, sitting somewhere between night and proper morning.

As she walked with no particular destination in mind, Viola found some peace in the sound of the birdsong and the cool scent of earth around her.

She even bent down at one point and plucked a honeysuckle from the side bushes and brought it up to her nose. This used to be her sister's favorite flower.

The thought of her sister sent a sharp pain straight into her chest and she felt the familiar burn rising at the back of her eyes. She wiped it away quickly before the tears could fall and looked up at the muted morning sky, swallowing with difficulty.

"Where are you, Ivy? What have they done to you?" She whispered to no one in particular, but never in a million years did she expect a reply from anyone until she had it and her soul almost jump out of her body when it came.

"Come forward if you want to know, little girl." Said a voice that didn't seem to come from any particular direction and yet was unmistakably there, and Viola jerked backwards in shock. Had someone just spoken to her?!

"Who are you?" She demanded, stepping back from where she had been standing and looking around with wide disbelieving eyes.

The voice laughed softly. "Curious, are we? Don't worry. Follow my lead and I will show you who I am and where your sister is."

Viola pinched herself to check if she was dreaming but the sting was real and sharp on her skin that she grimaced in pain. She was very much awake and very much hearing a voice coming from nowhere. How did that make any sense? Even as the thought ran through her head and something deep inside her screamed danger, her legs began moving in the direction the voice seemed to be pulling from.

"How do you know my sister? What have you done to her?" Viola demanded.

"No questions. Just walk, little girl."

Viola stopped walking. No matter how consumed she was by her pain and regret, something about this voice sat deeply wrong with her, and the fact that she was hearing it at all made the hairs on the back of her neck rise. She looked around carefully, scanning the trees for any sign of someone hiding among them trying to trick her, but apart from the swaying branches she was completely alone.

She belatedly realized that even the lovely bird songs had stopped. Everything had become unsettlingly silent, like the silence before a storm. The only noise was her heartbeat pounding in her ears and her growing unease, as she sensed she was prey to this unseen being. Alarm bells were already ringing loudly in her mind.

Before she could decide to follow her instinct and run, she saw something moving toward her from ahead. Her eyes went wide, and her heart lurched.

Water. Moving water, completely separate from any river or stream, forming itself into something long and fluid and entirely impossible as it moved across the ground toward her. The sight of it was so unbelievable that she stood frozen in pure shock, and by the time her mind caught up and told her legs to run it was already too late. The water wrapped itself around her body and locked her arms against her sides, holding her completely trapped.

"Ha, ha, ha. I have you now, girl. Come to me." Said the voice, and before Viola could even process the idea of fighting against something made entirely of water, she felt her feet leave the ground and she was pulled forward through the air.

In no time at all she found herself at the edge of a cliff with a vast river running far below. Viola's eyes locked onto her worst nightmare and her insides dropped completely.

"No, no, no, not open water! Let go of me!" She struggled and twisted against the water's hold but nothing she did loosened it by even a fraction.

How could water hold a person imprisoned like this? What was this thing?

"Come on now, jump in!" The voice said cheerfully, but Viola shook her head hard. She would have to be completely out of her mind to go into that river when she didn't even know how to swim.

As she fought and struggled she heard her name being called and she turned to find her husband standing at the tree line, and the wave of relief that hit her was so intense she almost cried. But the pull of the water was already too strong and she couldn't get more than two words out before it took her.

"Help me!"

And then she was falling.

The water hit her like a solid wall slamming into her face and body all at once. Terror unlike anything she had ever felt gripped her chest and squeezed. She couldn't move her limbs properly as she was dragged downward with a speed and force that left no room to fight back.

She looked down and saw nothing but deep darkness pulling at her from below and her lungs began to burn immediately as she struggled desperately for breath.

The air was leaving her faster than she could hold onto it, and the dread of what was waiting for her in that darkness below was almost worse than the drowning itself. The feeling she had lived through so many times in her nightmares was happening to her in real time, pulling her down exactly as it always had in her sleep.

She was drowning faster than should have been possible, like something was actively pulling her under rather than just the current, and her body began to shut down in response. She opened her mouth in a desperate attempt to breathe and water flooded into her lungs instead.

She was going to die. That was the last clear thought she had before something grabbed her hand with a fierce and unyielding grip and yanked her upward with a force that matched everything pulling her down.

When she thought she couldn't hold on a single second longer, her head broke through the surface and she choked and coughed violently, clutching onto her rescuer with every bit of strength she had left in her body.

She didn't know exactly when she was pulled fully out of the water, but when her burning eyes cleared enough to focus she found her husband's drenched and rage filled face directly in front of her as she gasped and coughed and tried desperately to clear her lungs.

"What the hell were you thinking?!" Sebastian rebuked, his voice raw and shaking underneath the anger, certain she had thrown herself into that river without knowing how to swim. He hadn't seen anything drag her there. "You scared the fucking hell out of me!"

Even as he raged and cursed he was on his knees behind her, one large hand patting firmly at her back as she coughed and tried to speak at the same time.

"So-something...pulled me in...I didn't fall by myself..." She managed to get out between ragged, broken breaths.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 230: Stick together_Part 1[1,331 words]

Chapter 230: Stick together_Part 1

"What do you mean?" Sebastian asked, his eyes narrowing down at her as she tried to catch her breath and speak at the same time. He patted her back and willed her to relax for a moment before she spoke again, but the terror she must have experienced seemed intense enough that she didn't wait to catch her breath and raised her hand trying to describe what she was saying even as the words came tumbling out.

"Water, it took a form like a snake, I don't know how that ha-happened, but it wrapped around me and dragged me into the river. It even spoke to me...I...I couldn't break free from it no matter how hard I tried." Viola rasped, her throat still feeling raw from the experience and her body shaking, but she didn't care about any of that as much as she cared about making him understand what had just happened, because she had never experienced anything like it in her life.

"Breathe, relax," Sebastian coaxed as he watched how she was struggling and her words registered in him. Water wrapped around her? Sebastian wondered, moving the wet hair away from her flushed face as she looked up at him, her eyes darting around frantically like she was expecting something to come out.

"We-we should move away from the waterside before it comes back..." She said, attempting to stand but falling back down from the heaviness of her clothes.

Sebastian quickly pulled her back down before she could slip on the muddy riverbank, and put his arm around her waist to keep her from attempting to move away frantically. "Nothing will come and take you, calm down. Are you sure of what you saw?" He asked calmly.

Sebastian hadn't seen anything around her when he spotted her standing at the edge of the cliff. From where he had been standing it had looked like she had jumped in herself, but then if nothing had actually pulled her and she had truly wanted to end her life, she wouldn't have turned to look at him with that terrified face and cried out for help.

Viola nodded her head, his arm around her making her calm down a little, feeling that with him holding her, she wouldn't be pulled into the water again.

"I am sure of what I saw and felt. It...it spoke to me about knowing where my sister is and tried to lure me to come forward before it grabbed me. I swear on the moon goddess. You have to believe me, there is something in that water."

She said, glancing briefly over his shoulder at the still surface of the river behind him before looking back at his face, hoping with everything she had that he would believe her even though what she was saying didn't make any rational sense.

Would she have believed herself if someone else was telling her this from another point of view? Viola honestly doubted it, because it was just too absurd. However when Sebastian spoke again, his wet hand coming up to rest against her cheek, he said,

"I believe you."

He had no real reason not to. Apart from werewolves there were many supernatural things in this world that nobody could fully account for or explain. And if that water had specifically wanted her pulled in, it meant there was something about Viola he hadn't discovered yet. It seemed that everything he was beginning to learn about her barely scratched the surface of what her background truly was.

Viola was stunned that he believed her yet again and she looked at his face, his lashes wet and dark around his silver eyes, and something shifted quietly in her chest again. That feeling she thought she could fight for him came back tenfold, warming her inside.

He had said he believed her even when the people at the orphanage had tried to paint her as mentally unstable, and now again he believed her when what she had just experienced was something so far beyond the ordinary that most people would have looked at her like she had lost her mind.

"Did the water have a face?" He asked, looking at her steadily, brushing wet hair away from her face as the warm breeze of Nightshade blew in their direction.

Viola broke out of her trance of staring at him and shook her head.

"Not one I could see. It had a voice though. And...I think it might not be the first time I have experienced something strange when it comes to water." She muttered, looking down at her still trembling hands and hugging her arms across her chest when even the warm breeze felt chilly against her damp skin, causing goosebumps to rise along her arms.

"When have you experienced something like this before?" He asked, his eyes narrowing with serious focus on her because she hadn't mentioned it to him.

"It was before our marriage, when I went out to eat with Nick. I was standing outside in the rain when I felt something touch my shoulder. It felt so real, but when I turned there was nothing there. I ran, and while I was running I thought I heard a loud splash behind me but I didn't have the courage to look back..." She said quietly, and then glancing warily at the water behind him she whispered, "Could it be that water is starting to evolve and take forms the way wolves did in the past when they first took human form?"

Sebastian would have found that theory almost amusing had the situation not been this serious and had she not looked so genuinely shaken by every word she was saying.

Seeing how badly she was trembling from the cold and the shock, he got up, gathered her into his arms and straightened to his full height. "Let's get you warm first."

He began to walk away from the shore, no longer trusting the river behind them. He was turning everything she had told him over in his mind when her voice came again.

"You haven't answered my question. Is water also taking form now?" She asked again, disturbed and wanting answers to what had just happened to her, her head automatically leaning against his chest as she soaked in the warmth of his body.

"I genuinely don't know, babe. I have never heard of water taking a physical shape and form like that, and I can't give you a clear reason for why it did." He paused for a moment, as if searching his own memory.

"There used to be words passed down that the water in the werewolf world have a life of its own, because more than hundreds of creatures live beneath the surface. There was a time when it was said they swallowed people who wandered too far into them and not even their bodies were ever found, but that was believed to be the mermaids' doing when they still existed. Now, I honestly can't say with certainty whether it is their doing or not."

Mermaids had long been believed to be extinct, and even though he and Gilbert still held the belief that some lived deep in the seas and oceans, it hadn't been a mermaid itself that had attacked and pulled her in but the water moving as if directed by something. Unless a mermaid was behind it, working from a distance, because those creatures were known for having far more tricks at their disposal than most gave them credit for.

Sebastian's eyes glinted and darkened at the thought. If a mermaid was truly behind this, then this very water might be the key to what he had been searching for. And though he didn't yet understand why a mermaid would send its power after his wife, he already knew that if he could get his hands on one, he would use its heart as the sacrifice he needed.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 231: Stick together_Part 2[1,304 words]

Chapter 231: Stick together_Part 2

Viola went quiet for a moment before she whispered, "When I was in the orphanage, we were taught that mermaids and sirens were wicked creatures and that was why werewolves hunted them in the past and use them for meals. I also heard how they lured humans to their dens and either ate them or kept any man they found handsome for themselves.

"But that was in the past, now nobody believes those creatures exist anymore..." She whispered, still finding it all deeply hard to believe. Why would the water pull her? Were sea witches really real and was one of them responsible? She thought.

"I think it's time we talk about you practicing swimming, we can't have you fall into such situations again. How about I make time to teach you how to swim when we go back? There is a pool at the main quarter, we can use it for your practice." Sebastian suggested, glancing down at her face where it was tucked against his chest, her drenched hair teasing his bare torso.

Viola pursed her lips. She didn't think that even by knowing how to swim she would have escaped that water current that had pulled her down, and the thought of being in any body of water was still terrifying to her at this moment.

Furthermore, she didn't plan to leave Nightshade without finding out what happened to her sister, and so she was parting her lips to tell him just that when a thought suddenly crept into her mind and her eyes went wide with sudden terror as she looked up at Sebastian.

"Wh-what if something like this happened to my sister and she was taken, and the orphanage didn't know how to explain her disappearance so they lied about her never existing? Sebastian, I think we need to go back to the orphanage."

Sebastian's expression remained calm as he spoke. "I will go back to the orphanage and look into things myself. You will be going back to Silver on my jet once we reach Kasa land in the next hour." He told her, but immediately she began to shake her head.

"No. I don't want to go, not without knowing what happened to my sister. I can't—"

"Do you want to be pulled into the water again?" Sebastian deadpanned, looking down at her with a firm and displeased frown. He didn't want to scare her about the water pulling her if she stayed in Nightshade, but if she kept being stubborn about not wanting to go back home, he had no choice but to make her drop that idea one way or the other.

He noticed the way her expression turned pale at the thought of the water pulling her again, her fingers digging into his shoulder, and he felt suddenly bad for using those words.

Sebastian let out a sigh. "I don't think Nightshade is safe for you. The land barely has any good water conditions and food, its people are starving every day and the Alpha is not willing to submit to the werewolf world system. If you stay here, you will suffer with the rest."

"I don't care, as long as I find my sister..." She muttered, staring straight at the treeline.

Sebastian decided to use another approach, the honest approach of why he didn't want to leave her behind, even though he wasn't a man who liked to confess to his feelings and weaknesses. He was raised to show dominance and to command, but he already knew from experience that this mate of his wasn't the woman to cater to any command.

"I don't want to leave you here. I have a feeling if I do, it will mean our relationship is broken. And having you here while I stay to challenge Nightshade and investigate them will only make me worry, and I don't do worry well, wife. But if you go back, I promise you I will investigate everything thoroughly and find your sister for you."

"But—" Viola's words cut off as Sebastian suddenly signaled for her to be quiet, his footsteps coming to a dead stop. His eyes began scanning their surroundings with sharp alert focus and she noticed immediately that his eyes had darkened.

"What's wrong?" She asked quietly, looking around but not seeing anything.

"We are not alone in this forest. There are others lurking, and a lot of them." He said, his voice carrying a calm that was almost more unsettling than alarm would have been, but she could tell from the look in his darkened eyes that whatever he was sensing out there in the trees was nothing good.

Sebastian slowly set her down to her feet and carefully pushed her behind him with one hand. "Stand behind me."

The moment he pushed her behind him, Viola also sensed what he must have sensed as the leaves began to rattle and the bushes moved and shifted as more people than she could count in a situation like this walked out from between the trees, all of them in ragged clothing with weapons in hand.

At their lead was a man with dirty blonde hair and a tanned face with a cigarette burning between his teeth, and beside him was a woman, a woman Viola faintly recognized from the night before at the nightclub. Though the memory wasn't entirely clear, Viola recalled fighting a woman and recognized the face.

What the hell were they doing here? She wondered with a frown, looking at Jaz, who was walking forward with a smirk stretched across her face. She was wearing a short and a crop top with two guns held in her hands like she had been waiting all night for this exact moment.

"Hello fancy pants." Jaz greeted Sebastian, who looked back at her with a completely blank face. "We meet again, isn't that a lovely coincidence, after you and your wolfless wife put me off last night. But don't worry, I didn't come here to seduce you this time, which is really too bad though." She commented with a laugh and then blew a kiss toward Nat when he looked at her in disgust.

Sebastian barely looked fazed by their appearance even with the sheer number of them, and even with the ones he could sense still lurking beyond the tree lines.

"Don't tell me you brought all these men just to get back at us for putting you in your place at the bar?" Viola questioned from behind Sebastian, wanting to step out but he pushed her back with one hand firm on her waist.

"Oh, the wolfless bitch still has a mouth on her, would you look at that, Nat darling?" Jaz remarked, turning to her temporary boyfriend who growled at her and replied,

"Drop the games. We are not here to chat with them. We are here to finish the man. Whatever issues you have with the woman, deal with it somewhere else." He whisper yelled at her, and then turned his attention to the silver haired stranger who somehow managed to look intimidating even without any aura or wolf presence coming off him at the moment.

"I don't like wasting time on my business, man. Let's get this over with. Your girl can walk away," he said to Sebastian, then looked toward where Viola was peeking from behind his back and added, "We don't want you, it's him we're here for. So if you know what's best for you, scram and get out of Nightshade before I change my mind."

Nat spoke with a calm that was almost more unsettling than aggression would have been. He stood there with a large, strange-looking gun propped against his shoulder as if it weighed nothing, while daggers coated in wolfsbane lined his belt.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 232: A hole to the heart_Part 1[1,095 words]

Chapter 232: A hole to the heart_Part 1

Sebastian immediately understood something at Nat's words. This confrontation had nothing to do with his hellcat pulling Jaz's hair and putting her fist in her face last night. These people were here to assassinate him specifically. He was no stranger to things like this, to traveling and finding himself suddenly under attack, but he had been careful to keep his scent mask in place and had not revealed to a single person here who he actually was.

Furthermore, Nightshade had no functioning power devices or means of communicating with the outside world, no way of knowing what the supreme Alpha looked like without his aura. Which

meant whoever was behind this had traveled all the way here with them and specifically hire these people and gave them what they needed to recognize him. Someone on the outside had sent them.

Sebastian might not have agreed with much of anything the man said, but he agreed with one thing. His wife should not be involved in this.

Turning his face slightly to the side while keeping his eyes locked on the men in front of him, he said quietly, "Go and wait for me at the car. There is a gun in there and it is loaded with silver bullets. Use it to protect yourself if anyone comes near you. I will meet you in a few minutes, hmm?"

Viola's brows pulled together hard at those words and she couldn't help the glare she leveled at him. Was he joking with her or what?

How could he expect her to just walk away and leave him here because some pig-faced man with a gun didn't feel like killing her? If Jaz's boyfriend thought she would be happy to be sent away while they assassinated her man, then he was mistaken, she wasn't going to leave him to this many people!

"I am staying. I am not leaving you." She said firmly, because he would never have come to this land at all if it weren't for her sake, and now he was being targeted because of her and she was not going to be the kind of person who ran while he stood alone facing it.

Sebastian was about to say something when he felt the shift in movement and yanked her sharply to the side just as a gunshot cracked through the air and buried itself into the tree directly behind where Viola's head had been a second before.

"If you want to stay and die with him, bitch, then I will deal with you too!" Jaz gritted out, her patience gone completely. She couldn't understand staying to die for any man, and since this wolfless woman was clearly a fool, Jaz was more than willing to show her exactly what being a fool cost.

"What if you'd fucking shot her?" Nat rebuked as he turned to Jaz, who had pulled the trigger.

Jaz turned to look at him and smiled. "Don't worry, I am just trying to scare her away. She's wasting our time here."

Nat fired a sharp warning look back at her not to mess things up for him.

"Get on with your business. I will drag her away from here first." She said, raising her gun and aiming it directly at Sebastian, whose face had shifted into a mask of pure fury, as if he hadn't moved Viola in time, that bullet would have hit her straight in the skull!

Sebastian made his decision. He had no choice left. He forced the scent mask away and released his aura, letting it expand and fill the space around them.

His supreme Alpha aura couldn't produce its full effects on wolves who had lived outside the world order system for years, wolves who had never submitted to the hierarchy and therefore had never been truly conditioned to respond to it.

But every single one of them felt it hit them regardless. The chill of it rolled over their skin and made them shiver where they stood, their bodies reacting instinctively even as their minds tried to push it off. But with the price on the man's head being what it was, none of them were willing to let intimidation be the thing that stopped them, and they began forming into position, raising their guns to eye level and training them on him.

Sebastian didn't turn around this time as he spoke to Viola behind him, his voice dropping low.

"Don't argue with me. Go. Now."

Viola was parting her lips to repeat that she couldn't leave him, but then she also realized that staying would do nothing but distract him, and if she ran quickly enough she could get to the gun he spoke of and come right back.

Viola began walking backwards before she turned and broke into a run in the direction she believed would take her back to where Sebastian had parked the car the night before.

However, the moment she was a little distance away, multiple gunshots rang out behind her and she flinched hard and stopped, her heart seized with a worry so deep it made her want to turn back immediately and check if he was all right.

Following the series of gunshots she heard men grunt and then a wolf's howl that she recognized, for reasons she couldn't fully explain, as Sebastian's. The sound of it settled something slightly in her chest.

She turned back and kept running toward the direction she believed would take her to the roads, holding onto the fact that his howling meant he was alive and fighting. But the moment she turned a corner, something hard struck her across the head, and Viola saw a burst of colors explode behind her eyes as she collapsed to the ground.

She grimaced in pain, looking up at the woman standing over her who was smirking down at her with obvious satisfaction. "Surprise, bitch. You didn't think I would just let you walk away after you pulled my hair and punched my face, did you?"

"I didn't think anyone could be this petty about getting beaten for trying to seduce another woman's husband directly in front of her." Viola gritted out, glaring up at Jaz with hot anger burning behind her eyes.

"You still have that mouth on you. How about I blow it off?" She said, raising the gun and pointing it directly at Viola's face. "Let's see how much talking you do with a bullet stuck in your throat. What do you think?" She smirked.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 233: A hole to the heart_Part 2[

1,078 words]

Chapter 233: A hole to the heart_Part 2

If Viola felt any ounce of real fear she masked it completely and smiled softly up at the shewolf, moving her wet hair away from her face with one hand as she looked up at Jaz and shook her head slowly. "I don't think you actually want to settle this with a gun. Whoever sent you here didn't include me in the kill order, so how about you put the gun down and we settle this the way we did last night. Jaz, right?"

Viola wasn't stupid. If they had wanted her dead, Nat wouldn't have told her to walk away. He would have shot her where she stood. And knowing there was someone behind this assassination pulling the strings, she was well aware that Jaz wouldn't pull that trigger no matter how badly she wanted to.

Jaz gritted her teeth and kept the gun raised and Viola tilted her head and taunted, "Am I to assume you are scared of fighting me without a weapon between us?"

"Oh, fuck you!" Jaz snapped and threw the gun to the ground, telling herself she couldn't kill the woman if they wanted their money, but nobody had said anything about not beating the living fuck out of her. She hadn't been ready last night when the bitch came at her from across the bar counter. She was ready now.

Viola got to her feet, feeling slightly dizzy but holding her ground. All she needed was to get her hands on Jaz's guns and weapons and she would get herself back to Sebastian and assist him the way a Luna should stand by her man, not run off like a coward with her tail between her legs.

She watched as Jaz pulled her hair back, cracked her knuckles and began to close the distance between them with a wide smirk.

"You want to fist fight me knowing I have my full wolf powers and you have none? Fine. I will give you exactly what you are asking for." She came at Viola with full force, swinging for her face, but Viola ducked under it and drove her fist hard into her abdomen.

Jaz cursed in pain but recovered fast and grabbed Viola's drenched hair, swinging her back and slamming her fist into her chest twice before hurling her to the ground with the added force of her wolf strength behind it.

Viola hit the ground hard enough to knock every bit of breath out of her body and cramp her chest. She groaned but knew she couldn't stay down, not even for a second. She saw Jaz's foot swinging

down toward her face and rolled to the side just as another series of gunshots reverberated through the trees around her, pulling her thoughts sharply back to her husband.

"You hear that? Your husband is being taken care of as we speak. We have over a hundred men surrounding this forest with weapons that can kill him instantly."

Viola felt her insides clench hard when she strained to listen and couldn't hear Sebastian's howl anymore, only the repeated cracking of gunfire. She tightened her fists in the dirt beneath her, and then she pushed herself up, grabbed a handful of sand and hurled it directly into Jaz's face before making a lunge for the gun she had thrown to the ground.

She almost reached it. Jaz, rubbing furiously at her eyes and cursing through her teeth, pulled a dagger from her belt and threw it in one fluid motion. It went straight into Viola's back and she went down hard, landing right beside the gun with a cry that tore out of her throat before she could stop it.

"I am going to rip your throat out and I would like to see who tries to stop me today!" Jaz snarled furiously, storming toward the fallen Viola who was bleeding and groaning against the ground, her fingers clawing forward.

But just as Jaz reached close enough to grab her, her eyes went wide with terror as Viola turned over to face her with stone cold blue eyes and the gun already in her hand, snatched from the ground in the same movement, and before Jaz could process what was happening Viola pulled the trigger and the bullet went straight through her heart.

"Fuck me...!" Jaz managed before she dropped, dead before she fully hit the ground, a gaping hole blown through her chest with smoke rising from it. The bullets loaded in the gun were not ordinary and the kill was almost instant, surprising even Viola herself as she hadn't known there was such guns and bullets to kill werewolves this fast.

Viola lay there breathing hard, watching the life drain out of Jaz's wide open eyes. If there was any remorse in her own blue eyes for what she had just done, it had died a long time ago, the day she took her first life back in Moonwillow as the pack princess.

This was not her first kill and so she didn't linger on it. She recovered and reached back trying to grip the dagger buried in her back, groaning as her fingers couldn't reach the handle no matter how she twisted.

When another series of gunshots cracked through the trees followed by the sound of men yelling and groaning, Viola made the decision quickly. She couldn't waste time trying to pull out a dagger lodged where her hands couldn't reach.

She grabbed both of Jaz's heavy guns off the ground, dragged herself over to the body to strip any remaining weapons from her, and then pulled herself to her feet and began making her way back in the direction of the gunfire.

Viola ran and walked, ignoring the burning pain in her back and the blood trailing steadily behind her with every step, her thoughts entirely fixed on the fact that everything had gone completely silent. No more gunshots. No more groaning. Not even the sound of wind moving through the leaves, which was somehow worse than the noise had been.

Viola quickened her pace, making sure to stay out of the open where she could be fired on without warning, moving through the dense bushes instead with the gun held up. But when she began to reach the scene, what she found there was so completely unexpected that her gun slowly lowered on its own and her eyes went wide.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 234: Bloodbath[1,205 words]

Chapter 234: Bloodbath

Blood. Everything looked like a bloodbath. Bodies were scattered across the ground in every direction, missing limbs, heads ripped clean off and lying separated from their owners, some bodies hanging over the low branches of trees like broken things discarded carelessly.

A wave of nausea rose so fast and strong to Viola's throat that her stomach turned completely over at the sight of it.

Her bare feet stepped into warm blood on the ground and she grimaced at the slick feeling beneath her soles. It was far more gruesome than anything she had imagined finding here.

Had Sebastian done all of this alone? She wondered, realizing she had been gone for no more than twenty minutes and every single one of the men was dead on the ground around her. Hadn't Jaz said they were more than a hundred?

She'd heard supreme Alphas were the strongest werewolves in the world but she never thought it was to this extent, especially with the men carrying such unusual weapons that had proven capable of killing a werewolf with a single bullet. Surely those series of bullets she'd heard had been targeted at him? Her stomach turned in worry at the thought.

Her eyes moved frantically across the bodies trying to find him, and when she didn't see him anywhere her heart climbed straight to her throat.

Viola moved carefully around the bodies and then heard a whimpering sound coming from her left. She swung around to find Nat on the ground with both legs ripped off, dragging himself slowly away from the scene and whimpering with every movement.

"H-help me..." He whispered in pure agony, turning his face toward her and reaching one trembling hand up in her direction as if expecting her to extend a helping hand to him.

Looking down at him, she felt no pity whatsoever but anger. How dare he attacked her man?

Viola's eyes showed almost nothing as she raised her gun and pulled the trigger against his head, ending it instantly without so much as blinking.

He had brought every bit of this on himself and had come here with a hundred men to take her man's life. She felt no conflict about it as she turned away and called out for Sebastian, but only her own voice echoed back through the silent trees and her anxiety climbed sharply alongside the burning pain in her back.

She didn't understand where he could have gone when he had clearly already dealt with every man here, but the longer she couldn't find him the worse the feeling in her chest became.

"Sebastian!" She called again, and this time her voice came out slightly shaky in a way she couldn't fully control.

It didn't help that everything remained unnaturally silent and every bird had taken flight from the surrounding trees, leaving nothing behind but empty branches.

Viola noticed a trail of blood on the ground that looked like something had been dragged, and she followed it without hesitation. When she reached the point where the trail stopped, she almost tripped over the large and powerful wolf lying on the ground, covered in blood.

Even in this state his size was not something anyone could overlook or mistake for anything else.

Viola felt her heart sink completely and she dropped to her knees beside him. "Sebastian!" She called, horrified at the sight of the bullet wounds and the blood matted dark and thick against his fur.

At the sound of his name he opened his eyes weakly and rolled them slowly in her direction. He made a faint sound low in his throat and then his eyes began to drift closed again.

"No, no, don't close your eyes!" Viola dropped the guns and reached for his head, stroking his fur with trembling hands as she took in the full extent of his injuries. The wounds were not healing. Some of them were actively smoking, and she could already smell the sharp and sickening scent of burning flesh rising from them.

She parted his fur carefully and saw that the bullets were burning deeper into his flesh rather than being pushed out the way a normal wolf's body would expel them, and she let out a horrified sound that she couldn't hold back. "Oh moon goddess. What kind of bullets are these? Sebastian, can you hear me?" She asked, looking at his face desperately as she had no idea what to do now.

He was barely breathing, his sides rising and falling in slow and shallow movements that scared the hell out of her more than anything else she had seen today. She put her hands on his head and his eyes opened again slowly and weakly. He made a sound that was somewhere between a whimper and a groan and it cut straight through her throat like a blade.

"Can you shift back? I...I can't carry you like this." She whispered, not even realizing she had been crying until her tears dropped onto his fur and she felt the wetness on her own cheeks. Her hands were shaking badly. She was shaking all over. Lord! How could she help him now?

"Sebastian..." She called again when he made another sound that came out thick with pain.

"Go..." She heard his voice crack out. Viola stilled for a moment, stunned that she could understand him in his wolf form, but she pushed past the shock immediately as the situation was just too serious for her to dwell on the fact that she could suddenly understand him.

"Where?" She asked, looking around the trees helplessly. "Wh-where can I go to get help?"

"Go...to Kasa...Matt and my men will take you back to Silver...I can't move. The fucking bullets are killing my nerves..." He struggled to form the words, each one costing him visibly, his eyes already sliding closed again.

His entire body felt paralyzed and heavy, like every system was shutting down one by one, and the pull toward unconsciousness was becoming impossible to fight. But before he would allow it to take him he needed to know she would be safely away from here. He couldn't let the damn bullets take his life without making sure of her safety.

Sebastian had known with how many times he had been targeted for assassination that one day his enemies would succeed, just like they had with his parents. He had narrowly escaped death at every step of his life but he knew he was getting closer to it every day as the world progressed and new weapons were being made.

However, never in a million years did he think today would be the day he would look upon this world for the last time. His eyes were fixed on her face, but even his vision was going, he could barely make out her features. And he suddenly wished he could touch her face, even just one last time.

"...don't stay in Silver forever...take care of my sister and leave for the human world...you will be safer there. Take as much money as you want with you..." Came his weak instructions to her as his eyes were beginning to shut against his will again. Those damned bullets...

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 235: At the brink_Part 1[1,435 words]

Chapter 235: At the brink_Part 1

Viola wiped her tears away with the back of her hand and glared down at him as she gritted out, "If I leave this place, I am leaving with you. I have lived as a coward all my life and turned away from

Ivy because of it. I will not turn away from my husband now. Do you hear me?" She said it with a resolve that left no room for argument, watching his faintly opened eyes for any response.

"Hmm...husband...I like the sound of that, honey." He said weakly, and the ghost of something like amusement in his voice even now made her chest ache in a way she couldn't put into words. She wouldn't let him die, and nor would she listen to any of his last instructions.

Viola smiled faintly despite everything. "If you like the sound of that and want to hear it more, don't close your eyes again. Now help me by trying to shift." She said, rubbing his fur gently and steadily, trying to calm her anxiety enough to think clearly about what she needed to do next before it was too late.

He let out a groan that sounded like it came from somewhere deep and painful, and Viola felt her heart twist as she watched him gather whatever strength he had left and try to push himself into his human form.

It took many tries. Each one was harder than the last and each failed attempt made the fear in her chest press down a little heavier. But he finally succeeded, and the moment the shift completed the wounds that had been bad in his wolf form became something unbearable in his human one.

His cry of pain came immediately, raw and unguarded, his entire body shaking as the burning bullets worked deeper toward his organs.

"Sebastian!" She called but the only reply she got was another broken groan.

Terror had its hands around her chest but before it could pull her under, Viola got to her feet.

She didn't think about the fact that he was naked, didn't think about her own pain or the blood still trailing down her back, she just leaned down and pressed her lips close to his ear and whispered, "I will be right back. Don't you dare die on me. Please don't. I cannot lose you too." She pressed a kiss to his ear and then she straightened up and ran.

She ran with everything she had, completely numb to her own pain, her own wounds, her own exhaustion.

The only thought her mind would hold was him. If anything happened to Sebastian she would never forgive herself for bringing him here, for being the reason he was lying on the ground burning from the inside out. She had already lost enough of the people she loved. She could not lose him too.

Viola burst out of the forest and tracked down his red car parked a distance away from the tree line.

When she reached it she realized the keys weren't in the door and she let out a desperate sound, turned and ran straight for the hotel to find them.

It cost her precious time she didn't have.

By the time she got back to the car, unlocked it and tried to start the engine, her hands were shaking so badly she could barely grip the key properly and the back of her shirt was soaked through with blood.

The engine refused to turn over and she slammed her palm against the steering wheel, trying again and again, whispering under her breath for it to start until finally it groaned to life and she pulled out without waiting another second.

She drove back toward the forest like the world was ending behind her, not slowing down at the tree line, pushing the car directly between the trees with a single minded determination that left no room for hesitation. Thankfully the trees in that direction were spaced far enough apart that the car fit through, and she brought it to a stop directly in front of him.

When she got to him, Sebastian had gone completely still. He wasn't moving at all and she felt her heart drop straight out of her body as she threw herself down beside him, shaking her head over and over until she leaned close and felt the faint warmth of breath still coming from him.

Still there. Barely, but still there.

"Don't you dare go quiet on me, bastard." She gritted through her teeth, and then she positioned herself and began using every bit of strength in her body to lift him and drag him toward the car.

Her back screamed at her. Her arms burned. She didn't stop. Nothing was going to happen to Sebastian. Nothing. Viola kept chanting it inside her head like a prayer, like if she said it enough times it would become the only possible outcome, and she pulled him forward inch by inch and refused to think about anything else until she got him into the car.

At the orphanage they had left behind, Miss Lara sat in her room staring down at a photograph of the orphanage children taken sixteen years ago. Many of the kids didn't look happy in it, especially a little girl known as Serena, but her twin had a bright expression and a wide smile on her face despite the thin clothes on her tiny body in the middle of winter.

Miss Lara stared at Ivy, her favorite of all the children she had ever cared for, turning Julia's words over and over in her mind. The fact that the woman who had come yesterday had introduced herself as Serena at the doorstep when Julia welcomed them in was a detail that had been sitting like a stone in her chest ever since.

Miss Lara had watched the gruesome deaths of many of the children who turned out to be hybrids, and she had learned over the years to live with the guilt of it, pressing it down and covering it over. But she didn't think she could learn to live with this one, not if it turned out she had erased the wrong twin from existence.

The thought twisted something deep and nauseating inside her. If she told herself it had been Serena she had done that to, she felt something close to ease, but the thought that it might have been Ivy, the girl she had cared for personally since infancy, made her genuinely sick to her stomach.

When the twins were brought to the orphanage, it had been easy to like Ivy because she made things easier, meanwhile the other one was hard to like and care about, because she didn't care about anything or anyone else. She had been selfish even as a little infant, and Miss Lara had failed at every attempt to pull her close.

She didn't make it any easier for anyone to like her in the orphanage and lived every second of her life proving she was indeed the cursed one, just like the letter that came with the twins had pointed out.

Ivy had been an easygoing little girl and Miss Lara had made sure she got adopted, but now there was a strong possibility that it wasn't Ivy but Serena...

Miss Lara was still staring down at the photograph when she heard frantic footsteps climbing the wooden stairs. She quickly shoved the picture under her pillow just as the door of her room slammed open and Julia rushed in.

"They are coming back, Miss Lara!"

Miss Lara got to her feet and scowled. "Who is coming back?"

"Ivy and that man. I saw the car from my window driving down the road and heading back in this direction at full speed." Julia reported breathlessly, but she barely needed to finish saying it because they both heard the slamming of the closed gate and the sound of a car driving furiously into the orphanage grounds.

Miss Lara rushed to the window and looked out to see the red car skidding to a stop below, and then she turned to the panicked Julia and said firmly,

"Whatever they threaten us with, you must not say a word of the truth to them or you will find yourself served to the sea. Stick to what I have told you and—" Miss Lara's words died in her throat as her eyes fell on the car and she watched a woman covered entirely in blood climb out of the driver's side.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 236: At the brink_Part 2[1,273 words]

"MISS LARA!" Viola's scream cut across the orphanage grounds as she threw open the back passenger door, where Sebastian had gone completely quiet and still, despite her attempt to keep him awake by talking the whole time she drove like a mad woman.

She had covered his body with a blanket during the drive but now she moved to pull him out and found her arms shaking too badly to manage it alone.

Miss Lara came running down shortly after, along with several of the older girls from the orphanage who had caught the thick scent of blood in the air before they even reached the door.

"What is going on? What happened to you?" Miss Lara asked, moving forward and immediately seeing the dagger buried in Viola's back and the blood covering every inch of her, but the young woman barely registered her own condition as she grabbed Miss Lara's arm and pulled her urgently to the back passenger door where her husband lay in the back seat, his wounds still smoking and his body barely moving.

Miss Lara's breath left her at the sight of the man who had intimidated her so thoroughly just yesterday now lying as still as something already gone.

"Help him! Please help me get him inside, you need to save his life." Viola cried, moving to pull Sebastian into a sitting position with shaking arms. His body had gone as cold as ice and his breathing was so faint she had to watch his chest for several seconds just to confirm it was still there.

She knew coming back to the orphanage was not the most rational decision she had ever made, but it was the only place she knew in all of Nightshade, and Miss Lara had been a healer once, attending to the injuries of children and pack members alike for years. Her mind had brought her here before she had even consciously made the choice.

Miss Lara recovered herself quickly and ordered the older girls to help Viola get the man out of the car.

It took considerable effort and the combined strength of four girls working together to get Sebastian out of the back seat and into the orphanage. They brought him into Julia's room on the ground floor, as taking him up the stairs was not possible, and laid him carefully on the floor with the blanket beneath him.

Miss Lara called for her medicine boxes and clean rags to be brought down from her room, and while she crouched over him examining the smoking wounds with a deep and troubled frown, she said to Viola without looking up,

"Dear, he is in a very bad state and so are you. I need to examine what kind of bullets these are before I attempt to remove them, and while I do that you need to let Julia attend to your back. She is learning werewolf medicine and she is capable of taking care of that. It is not safe to leave that dagger in any longer."

Viola shook her head immediately. "I am not going anywhere. Why are the wounds still smoking? Why is it even smoking?" She asked, her eyes fixed on his bare back where the blanket only covered his lower half and left every wound exposed and visibly burning at the edges.

"I honestly don't know. I have never come across anything like this before." Miss Lara remarked with a deep frown, leaning closer and studying the wounds with narrowed eyes. "Whatever is in these bullets is digging deeper rather than staying put, and it is actively preventing him from healing. His body cannot do what it is supposed to do."

"Will...will he be all right?" Viola asked quietly, biting the inside of her cheek as she stared at his motionless body, keeping her terror and fears at bay.

"I don't know." Miss Lara said honestly, not willing to give the girl false hope when she genuinely had none to offer yet.

Julia and another girl came in shortly after carrying a large box filled with equipment and medicinal herbs, setting it down carefully beside Miss Lara.

It took more than gentle words to get Viola out of that room. In the end it was only Miss Lara telling her firmly that she could not properly treat Sebastian with eyes watching her and needed the room cleared entirely, including Viola, that finally made her move.

Viola was reluctant to leave without seeing any progress in her husband but she pushed herself up. "I will stay outside." She whispered.

"Let Julia attend to you while you stay out there." Miss Lara instructed without taking her eyes off what she was doing.

Viola was walking out through the doorway when the dizziness hit her without warning, sudden and uncontrollable, and she collapsed to the floor before she could reach out and grab anything to stop herself.

The next time she opened her eyes her surroundings were dark and her back was on fire. She was covered in cold sweat and the sheet of the bed she was lying on was damp like she had been drenched in water, but it was only her own sweat soaking through it.

Viola was confused at first about where she was until her eyes adjusted to the lamp light in the room and she made out the bunk beds around her.

Memories of before she lost consciousness rushed back like a wave and she shot up from the lower bunk, almost ripping her back open in the process as pain screamed up her spine.

Viola barely let the pain slow her down. She climbed down from the lower bunk carefully and stood to her feet, leaning her forehead briefly against the upper bunk to steady herself.

The child lying up there opened his eyes and looked at her warily and Viola said quietly, "Sorry I woke you. Go back to sleep."

"I can't sleep, miss. That man has been making sounds in pain every time I try." The boy said, referring to Sebastian, and Viola's head swung toward him immediately.

"Is he awake?" She asked.

The little boy shrugged. "Don't know. We are not allowed to go and see. Emma says he is going to die. She heard Julia talking to Miss Lara about it. Emma has sharp hearing and catches things from far away, you know."

Viola didn't wait to hear another word. She straightened up with a groan and turned to the door. She felt the warm wetness spreading across her back and knew the wound had opened again but

she paid it no attention as she moved toward the room she had last left Sebastian in, handed over to Miss Lara's healing.

When Viola got downstairs, the four older girls were all sitting on the bench outside the room with rags soaked through with blood piled up in buckets beside them. They all looked worn and exhausted. When they noticed her coming, Julia got to her feet and stepped in front of the door before she could reach it.

"You should be resting and letting that wound heal." She said. "I have put so much effort in grounding herbs to kill the wolfsbane in it and you shouldn't move in the next five hours."

Viola was too consumed with worry about Sebastian to give that a single thought. She jerked her arm away from Julia's reach and replied, "Get out of my way. I need to see him."

"You can't go in. Miss Lara said no one is allowed inside." Julia gritted out, pulling Viola back by the arm without ceremony.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 237: The dying man[1,088 words]

Viola grimaced hard at the pain it sent through her back but still managed to work her arm free and reach for the doorknob. Just because she had brought Sebastian here didn't mean she trusted the people in this orphanage with his life. They had done something to her sister and the idea of staying away from her husband while he lay in there at their mercy didn't sit right with her at all.

She hadn't planned to fall unconscious and leave him to them in the first place. Her exhaustion and blood loss must have taken a greater toll than she had realized to knock her out the way it had.

Viola reached for the door handle again but just then the door opened from the inside and Miss Lara stepped out looking completely worn through, her hands stained dark with blood and her face carrying the expression of someone who had been fighting a losing battle for hours.

Viola pulled her arm fully away from Julia and turned to the older she-wolf. "How is he?"

Miss Lara lowered herself heavily onto the bench and let out a slow breath before she said, "I am sorry. I truly tried my best but those bullets are unlike anything I have ever encountered before. I managed to remove one from his left thigh and then I quickly realized what they do after removal. They dissolve the surrounding bone and tissue, killing every muscle and nerve in the area. If I attempt to remove the remaining nine bullets from his body the same thing will happen on a far larger scale and he will not survive it. He cannot survive it now unless we find out exactly what those things are made of and find a way to counteract it first. I am so sorry."

Viola felt her insides turn over as the world tilted around her. She staggered and caught herself against the wall, staring at the kerosene lamp hanging there with her blue eyes glistening and her arms wrapping around her own middle like she was trying to physically hold herself together.

"Are you telling me he is going to die?" She asked, and her voice came out quieter than she intended it to.

Miss Lara could see how devastated she looked and couldn't bring herself to soften it with a lie. "Eventually...yes. Without knowing what those bullets are made of, there is nothing more I can do for him tonight."

A sound came from Viola's throat, something between a sob and a whimper, but she swallowed it back hard and bit down on her bottom lip until she felt the sting of it. She couldn't stop the tears though. They came anyway, sliding silently down her cheeks as she stood there staring at nothing.

Why did it seem like everyone she ever allowed herself to care about ended up being taken from her? The only person she had ever truly cared about was lost to her, gone to who knows where, and now the man her heart had been warming up to, no, the man her heart was already falling madly for, was also slipping away from between her fingers like a grain of sand she couldn't hold onto.

Silently, Viola walked past them and pushed the door open. Julia reached out to stop her but Miss Lara raised her hand and Julia fell back.

"She has every right to be in there with him at his last moment. The man is barely holding on at this point." Miss Lara said quietly, shaking her head with a tired sigh. She still couldn't fully reconcile the powerful and intimidating man who had stood in her orphanage just yesterday with the broken body lying on her floor now.

She couldn't help but wonder what had happened to them.

Julia subtly gritted her teeth as she stared at the door Viola had walked through. She couldn't help thinking that had she been the one married to a man like that, wealthy enough to take her far away from the suffering of Nightshade, she would never have let anything happen to him.

What a waste of a good man. Julia thought to herself with a bitterness she couldn't quite shake.

Inside the room, Viola moved carefully toward the body lying on the floor. The room was dim, lit only by two kerosene lamps set on the small table being used as a nightstand, casting a low and flickering orange glow across the walls.

The man lying on the floor was so completely still that a stranger walking in might have taken him for already gone, if not for the faint and strange sound working its way out from deep within his throat.

Viola's arms tightened around herself as she stepped closer. Moving as quietly as she could, as though she was afraid of disturbing whatever fragile thread was still keeping him here, she

lowered herself soundlessly to the floor beside him and took one of the lamps from the table to bring closer to his face.

He was lying on his stomach with his head turned in her direction. His face was pale in a way that didn't look like him at all, and his lips had turned a faint bluish color, parted slightly with that cracked and broken sound pushing out through them with every shallow breath.

Even his silver hair had lost its usual luster and lay flat and dull against his skin like something already fading. She felt a needle sharp pain in her chest at the sight of it.

"Sebastian..." She called gently, her voice quivering at the edges. She got no reply. "Seb?" She tried again, reaching out and carefully touching his hair.

His eyes cracked open the slightest sliver and then shut again, and he made a louder sound deep in his throat that tore at something inside her chest.

"Can you hear me?" She asked, but there was no reply. Not even a flicker of movement. His body was weakening with every second.

Viola reached out slowly and lowered the blanket to look at the bullet wounds, but what she saw turned her stomach completely over.

The wounds had darkened and deepened since she last saw them, each one looking less like a wound now and more like a hole being eaten into his skin from the inside out. She squeezed her eyes shut and the blanket slipped from her trembling grip as a sob made its way up her throat.

"No... please no..."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 238: Trying to save him[1,214 words]

Back in Silver Pack.

In the Kade family quarters where Camilla lived with her family, she turned to look at her son who had just walked in carrying a gift and arched a brow at him.

"What is the occasion? It is not my birthday and you only ever gift me on my birthday." She said, eyeing him with open suspicion as Javier stood there beaming from ear to ear like a child who had gotten away with something.

"It is a gift because I had a wonderful dream this evening, Mami." Javier remarked, dropping himself down onto the couch beside her. "I dreamed that I finally took the Alpha seat and got crowned."

Camilla looked at her eldest son with the particular kind of tired patience she had developed over the years specifically for moments like this one. Javier had always been a master of delusion, forever building grand castles in his head that crumbled the moment reality breathed on them, and she couldn't believe he was indulging in this particular nonsense again when they hadn't managed to remove Sebastian from his seat after all this time.

"A dream without action is nothing but a dream, boy. How many times must I say that to you?" Camilla said, pressing her fingers to her temple. "You will never so much as smell that Alpha seat for as long as your cousin is alive and walking, and as of right now we have never once succeeded in taking his life."

Javier let out a laugh, full and hearty and completely unbothered, waving his mother off with a casual hand. "Well, Mami, we have succeeded now. He is dead. My cousin who everyone believed was untouchable will very soon be resting in a grave where he belongs."

Camila's eyes narrowed sharply at her son and Javier was quick to catch himself, holding up his hands as he said, "I mean he died in my dream, of course. You cannot imagine how happy I was. But my dreams always come to pass, Mami. Let us wait and hear the news of his death." He said it lightly, almost whistling to himself as he got up from the couch, and then he turned back to add,

"By the way, you don't have to bother yourself with my loser of a brother anymore. We don't need his help and he can stick his help straight up his ass along with that wolfless bitch." He spat, and then continued,

"I have decided who I want as my wife and future Luna. I find Ember very interesting, and she is hot as hell. I think I will make her mine once I get crowned." He flashed a smirk and turned to leave, throwing his last words over his shoulder. "I am going back to sleep to continue my sweet dreams."

Camila watched her son walk away in a good mood and she parted and closed her mouth, at a loss for words. What was this fool up to now? Javier was only ever in this dreamy mood when he had done something he wasn't supposed to do without her knowing, and made up some nonsense about a dream so that when it happened, he would tell her his dreams had come true.

"What has he done this time?"

A short while later in a dim room elsewhere, a silver haired man sat comfortably on a couch with his left ankle crossed over his right knee, listening to a phone call with an expression that gave nothing away.

"He won't survive, supreme Alpha. The man we sent has been killed along with every one of his men, but we found a trail of the target's blood on the ground, and one of those bullets to the body is enough to finish any wolf. Wherever he is right now, as long as the bullet found him, it is only a matter of time before he dies."

The silver haired man was not pleased. "You were given one job and you cannot even confirm whether he is dead or not." He gritted out, his voice dropping low with fury.

"I am sorry, supreme Alpha. I will send men to search through Nightshade immediately to confirm. We believe the girl has taken him somewhere. There are tire tracks on the ground that suggest she moved him in a car." The person on the phone spoke quickly, as he knew how dangerous the person he was dealing with was. To put a man under his loyalty, he would use one's family as a scapegoat, if you went against him, your entire family paid the price.

He wasn't ready to offend such a powerful person, who could break his bones with a single look alone.

"You have until morning to return with confirmation. I need full proof of his death. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, supreme Alpha. It will be done."

The call ended and the man's eyes settled on the night lights of the city spread out beyond the window. This was taking far longer than he had anticipated. He was tired of concealing himself and suppressing his powers and biding his time in the shadows of someone else's seat.

"You had better be dead." He said quietly to the silence of the room. "You have lived long enough. It is time for someone else to take what was always supposed to be theirs."

"What do you think you are doing?" Miss Lara asked Viola, who had sent one of the girls for a bucket of water and a clean rag.

Miss Lara had heard her sobbing quietly in the room and had told the girls to leave her to grieve and bid her husband farewell, believing this must be the will of the moon goddess. But then the girl had suddenly gone silent and come out requesting a bucket of water and a rag.

Miss Lara had waved for one of the girls to fetch it without thinking much of it, never imagining the girl intended to use it to try to counteract the bullet damage from the inside of the wounds, whatever she believed that would accomplish when those bullets were actively dissolving his tissues and killing him from within.

"You said you couldn't help him, Miss Lara. I can't stand to watch him suffer toward his death without trying something. I am experimenting to find out if there is a way to neutralize the bullet's effect." She said, her voice coming out hoarse and very quiet, giving away how emotionally drained she was. Her eyes were swollen and so was her face, which looked puffy from all the crying.

Viola couldn't bear it anymore. She couldn't sit still and watch him die in front of her. He couldn't even speak to her now, couldn't look at her. At this point she would welcome his teasing with open

arms, would take every bit of his flirting and kiss him back without hesitation if only he would stay alive and not die. She was willing to do anything but grieve his death.

She didn't like this condition he was in and she refused to accept it or lose him without at least trying to find out what these smoking bullets were made of.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 239: Moving water[1,278 words]

"I tested the bullet you removed from his thigh, Miss Lara. It is as hot as coal to the touch." Viola said as she squeezed more cool water into the bullet wound and Sebastian's body jolted and shook beneath her hands. "When I dropped the bullet into the water it sizzled and then turned cool after making the water hot around it. Maybe if we keep putting water into the wound it will cool down the bullet's effect enough for you to remove them safely."

Miss Lara hadn't thought to experiment with the removed bullet, nor had she thought of trying that approach, but then the man was dying already. What was the worst that could happen at this point?

Miss Lara knelt down beside her, took another rag and also began to squeeze water carefully into the bullet holes.

The wounds sizzled and Sebastian's body shook violently and he let out a deep and guttural groan of agony.

Viola immediately set her rag down and moved to hold him, resting her cheek gently against his head and whispering, "Shhh. I am sorry. I am trying to cool you down from the pain." She rubbed his hair and caressed his damp forehead with her fingers until the violent shaking gradually reduced and his body quieted. She pressed her lips to his hair and closed her eyes for a moment as if gathering herself back together before she sat up straight and picked up the rag again.

Miss Lara watched her quietly, and found she couldn't reconcile this caring and determined young woman with the little devil child called Serena who wouldn't have given a single thought if someone had died right in front of her all those years ago.

She had been suspecting since yesterday that perhaps this was Serena, going by how she had behaved and from Julia's words, but seeing how she was caring for this man, Miss Lara thought, she couldn't be Serena in any way.

Serena had shown every sign of becoming something cold and entirely without feeling from childhood, and this woman kneeling on the floor pressing her lips to a dying man's hair was something else entirely.

Miss Lara tried to put her mind at peace with the belief that this wasn't Serena but Ivy.

"I think the water is helping. He is not making those sounds as much anymore." Viola remarked, looking at his face carefully. "We should keep doing it. Perhaps if we cool the bullet down enough you can attempt to remove it again without it dissolving everything around it."

Viola dabbed at his forehead with the damp rag and moved it carefully across his dry and cracked lips. She wiped the blood stains from his skin without letting a single emotion cross her face, methodical and focused and refusing to fall apart while there was still something left to try.

A few minutes later the water sitting in the bullet wounds had turned hot again and Sebastian was back to making those low sounds of discomfort that pulled at her every time she heard them. Miss Lara got up to fetch something to drain the water so they could replace it with cool water again, leaving Viola alone with him.

The moment she was alone she couldn't hold back her tears. It was beginning to look like there was no way she could help him, no matter what she tried, and that realization was pressing down on her chest like something physical.

Though Viola had tried more than once to deceive herself about what she felt for Sebastian, she knew, sitting here on the floor beside him, exactly why everything he did and said and was had always affected her the way it did. She had fallen for him.

Somewhere between all the walls she had tried to keep standing and all the distance she had tried to maintain, she had fallen for him completely, and she hadn't been brave enough to admit it even to herself until now when she was watching him slowly slip away from her.

Something inside her heart was dying along with him. She could feel it slipping away.

If she lost Sebastian at this point in her life, Viola doubted she could ever recover from it. She had not only lost her twin and her hope of ever being a normal werewolf, but she would also lose her best friend, her husband, whom she hadn't given any chance at all inside her heart, because she had been afraid of a deep relationship with him.

Now he was dying before her, and there was absolutely nothing she could do for him. Nothing at all.

And it was killing her to sit there and watch him.

She wouldn't even mind the arrogant Sebastian right now. In fact the pretentious bastard would be infinitely better than the silent and fading one lying in front of her.

Viola stared at the bullet wound that had begun smoking again and reached her hand out to check if the water was heating and causing the smoke, but just as her fingers got close enough something happened that stopped her completely.

The bullet, along with the water surrounding it, rose from within his skin. The dark bullet sat encased inside a small ball of water and hovered for a suspended second before she instinctively withdrew her hand, and then it dropped and clinked against the floor beside her.

Viola stared at it, too stunned to move for a long moment. Then she reached down and picked it up and found it completely cool to the touch. Not warm. Not hot. Cool.

What had just happened?

As if compelled to test it, she moved her hand to the next bullet wound and reached close, and just like the first one the water inside the hole enclosed the bullet and drew it smoothly out of his skin.

Viola's eyes went wide and she stayed very still for a breath, looking at her own hand like she was seeing it for the first time. She had no clear understanding of how she was doing it or how she was directing the water at all, but she moved to the next bullet anyway and then the next, working steadily and carefully.

It was then that Miss Lara came back into the room.

"What are you doing?" The woman asked as she set the water pail down and moved to kneel beside her, only to find herself watching a bullet rise from the wound encased in a small bubble of water and drop cleanly to the floor.

Miss Lara's eyes went wide. She leaned in quickly to examine the wound the bullet had just left and found that unlike the one she had removed earlier, the surrounding tissue and muscle showed no damage at all.

She watched in silence as the girl continued, so focused that she didn't pay her any attention. She kept removing the remaining bullets, one after another.

It dawned on Miss Lara then, slowly and with a dread that crept up from the bottom of her stomach, what she was witnessing, what it meant. And the panic that followed was immediate as she realized that the water creature she had made a pact with could sense the use of any water power on land, and right now, this girl would pull that dreadful being's attention back here.

"Oh dear, stop that right now," Miss Lara said in a low, urgent voice, looking around the room and reaching out to push the buckets of water away from them both, so the creature wouldn't use them as a passage to come through.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 240: Protective and possessive wife[1,249 words]

Viola didn't stop until the last bullet was out and then she sat back and said with a voice that was growing noticeably weaker, "Look him over and tell me if he will be all right now." Her back was bleeding profoundly and she was losing more blood than she should have been.

Miss Lara examined the wounds carefully and was genuinely stunned to find that not one of the removals had caused any further tissue damage. Now they only needed to wait for his body to register the bullets were gone and begin healing itself the way it was meant to.

When Viola heard that, a small and exhausted smile came to her lips and she looked down at her own hands for a quiet moment. "I didn't know I could do that. I have heard there are special kinds of werewolves with abilities..."

Miss Lara looked troubled in a way that went deeper than concern. "Keep that entirely to yourself, girl. You must not let any werewolf know you carry that ability or you will find yourself in a situation you will never be able to get out of." She warned in barely more than a whisper as she turned to begin applying healing herbs to the open wounds now that the bullets had been removed.

A frown settled slowly between Viola's brows as she looked at Miss Lara. "Is that what happened to my sister? Did she do something extraordinary and that was why you got rid of her and lied about her ever existing?"

Miss Lara's expression didn't shift even slightly as she replied, "How many more times must I repeat myself? You do not have a sister here. It was only ever you, and nothing you say or do will produce a sister who never existed in this place. I am advising you to keep that power hidden from every werewolf you ever meet, that is all."

"Why?" Viola demanded, but then Sebastian let out a long slow breath that sounded like something releasing, like a body finally beginning to unknot itself from the inside, and she turned quickly to look at him.

The color of his skin had already begun to shift, the deathly pallor pulling back slightly, and she felt a weight she hadn't realized she had been carrying since she found him in the forest lift just enough from her chest that she could breathe properly again. She reached out and touched her hand gently to his hair and then looked back at Miss Lara, waiting for her answer.

"Why?" Viola repeated impatiently.

"Why what?" Miss Lara pretended ignorance of her question. "I have told you what is concerning, because I have lived longer than you have. A power like that will get you into trouble once greedy werewolves, seeking more power, find out about it. It has nothing to do with your imaginary sister. I am only looking out for a girl I once raised."

Though what Miss Lara said wasn't far from the truth. If the girl wasn't careful enough and allowed herself to use that water ability and got caught by a werewolf, a smart one who had lived long enough to know the history of the water creatures, they would recognize what she was. And she would either be used as a meal or have her heart ripped out before she even knew what was coming her way.

Even though Miss Lara found it strangely confusing that she was using water powers while there was also a werewolf pheromone aura on the twins, she didn't think she should let it out to anyone in this world.

Viola stared at the woman in resentment, even as she clenched her fingers as if to hide her powers, and said,

"You can say and make up whatever story you want to, but I know you have done something to my sister and I will never forgive it until you tell me the truth or bring her back to me. I won't stop until I find out what you did, and once I do...I will make you regret every lie you have told me since I walked through that door..."

Viola couldn't finish the threat as the pain in her back returned with a force that felt like someone had driven a fist into the wound, and she groaned and pressed her hand to the floor to steady herself.

"Save that energy, girl. You are badly hurt and losing blood. Go and rest and I will look after him for you." Miss Lara said with a tired sigh, noticing the blood pooling profoundly around where the girl was sitting, but the girl fixed her with a glare that had no give in it whatsoever and said firmly,

"I am staying. I am not leaving him with a liar like you. Who knows, I might wake up to hear I don't have a husband, and whatever happened here was my imagination. Isn't that what you are now good at, Miss Lara?"

It was in that moment that it truly dawned on Miss Lara, hitting her slowly and then all at once like something she should have seen coming from the very beginning.

Her hand trembled slightly as the full realization settled on her. No matter how many years had passed, she knew that stubbornness. She had seen it up close for seven years and there was no mistaking it. This young woman was none other than Serena, and in doing what she had done she had made the gravest mistake of her life by erasing the wrong twin entirely.

Miss Lara swallowed hard against the dread rising in her throat and turned to find those blue eyes already watching her, tracking her every small movement with the quiet and sharp distrust of someone who had no intention of leaving her husband alone in this room with a woman she didn't fully believe.

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Viola didn't leave Sebastian's side even as his body shut down into a deep healing process, slipping into unconsciousness while his wounds worked slowly to repair themselves. After they had transferred him onto the bed to make him more comfortable, she settled herself beside him and stayed there.

Miss Lara had cleaned her back and applied herbal medicine to the wound, but no matter what the woman said to her Viola wouldn't agree to go to the children's room to sleep and let Julia take over his care.

Viola wasn't stupid. She had seen the way Julia looked at Sebastian, the kind of look that had nothing to do with nursing and everything to do with opportunity.

The moment word reached Julia that there was a real chance of him waking up, the girl had disappeared, come back freshly showered and changed into her best dress, and presented herself at

the door ready to take over the night watch so Viola could rest. Viola had looked at her and told her flatly that she was perfectly capable of caring for her own husband.

Julia's intentions were not hard to read. She was hoping to be the face he woke up to, hoping a man of Sebastian's obvious wealth and standing might be her way out of Nightshade entirely.

Viola already had more on her plate than she could manage without adding delusional women to the list, especially ones she deeply didn't trust now that she was certain the people in this orphanage were lying to her about her twin.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 241: The Chase[1,525 words]

After what she had done with the water and after Miss Lara's warning about keeping it hidden, Viola was deeply unsettled. Whatever had happened to Ivy had something to do with it, she could feel it. And it also had something to do with that water creature that had dragged her into the river. Could something like that have taken Ivy the same way?

The thoughts swirled through her mind in endless circles through the night as she sat at the bedside keeping a close watch on Sebastian, checking the progress of his healing every few minutes. It was moving so slowly she could barely tell it was happening at all.

His face looked calmer at least, more like a person sleeping than a person dying, but she knew he would remain in that suspended state until his body had finished what it was doing and healed completely.

Viola turned toward the small window in the room and noticed the gray light beginning to press in around the edges of the curtain, the first quiet announcement of dawn. She stifled a yawn with the back of her hand. Her back was burning with pain, and she felt deeply exhausted to the bone, but sleeping in a place she didn't trust was out of the question.

She turned back to adjust Sebastian's blanket against the morning chill when she heard the door open behind her and Miss Lara came in, the woman who hadn't returned to the room since their exchange of words the night before.

"If you are here to insist I get some rest, you are going to be wasting your breath, Miss Lara." Viola said tiredly without turning around, but Miss Lara crossed the room quickly and when Viola heard the urgency in her footsteps she turned to look at her.

"How did you and your husband end up in this state in the first place?" Miss Lara asked, and the barely contained panic in her voice made Viola sit up straighter.

She considered the question carefully. Jaz and Nat had been hired with a money reward to kill Sebastian, and Viola had seen the poster inside Jaz's pocket when she stripped her of her weapons,

the one with hers and Sebastian's face on it and a number printed below it large enough to turn anyone's head.

If she told Miss Lara about it and the woman decided that reward was worth more than the risk of sheltering them, she would have handed their location over on a plate. Every person in Nightshade was starving and desperate, and desperate people made dangerous choices.

It was why Viola had not told anyone about the assassination and the attack, but now that she was being asked, she looked at Miss Lara and parted her lips to lie.

"We were attacked by packless werewolves," Viola replied, keeping her voice even.

Miss Lara clicked her tongue and reached into her trouser pocket, pulling out a folded poster and holding it out toward Viola. "Why didn't you say anything about this when you first came here yesterday? You didn't tell me there are people after your life with this much reward!"

Viola's face went pale. "Where did you find that?" She reached out and snatched the poster from Miss Lara's grip.

"It doesn't matter where I found it. What matters is that I went out to the trees to collect some herbs this morning and this was stuck to the bushes along the path. And it is not just that. Pack members are combing through every corner of Nightshade searching for a red car and the couple on that poster. They will reach here in no more than thirty minutes."

Viola felt her heart drop to her stomach and her back gave a sharp stinging pain that she bit back hard as her eyes moved to the window. The red car was still sitting outside in plain sight, visible to anyone who came down the road.

"They will know we are here the moment they see the car." Viola said, pushing her fingers into her hair as she moved to peek around the curtain. The sky was brightening quickly. There was no time.

"What are you going to do? I cannot have them find you here. I will be implicated along with all the children in this building." Miss Lara remarked.

For the past few years she had been keeping the orphanage matters low key because the Alpha had wanted to tear it down to avoid strangers from coming into their pack to adopt. It had taken so much pleading to keep the orphanage standing, and if a wanted person was found here, it would do nothing but bring unwanted attention along with greedy, money-hungry men tearing down her building and ruining the children's futures and lives.

Viola looked at Miss Lara over her shoulder for a moment and then without saying a word she walked back to Sebastian on the bed. She stood over him for a quiet second, looking at his face, and then she pulled the blanket up more snugly to his neck, leaned down and pressed her lips gently to the side of his mouth, and whispered,

"I will be right back, Seb."

She straightened up with a small grimace and turned to Miss Lara. "I will drive the car away from here and draw them away from the orphanage. I don't want Julia anywhere near my husband while I am gone, and I want to find him exactly where he is when I come back."

Miss Lara's eyes went wide. "You cannot possibly do that in the condition you are in, girl. Your wound—"

"Does anyone here know how to drive?" Viola asked simply. Miss Lara said nothing. "Then it has to be me." She said firmly, and then seeing the genuine worry etched into the older woman's face her voice dropped and softened. "Promise me nothing will happen to him while I am gone. Please."

Miss Lara gave her a nod, even as her concern for the girl sitting heavy in her chest told her this was not a good idea.

"Thank you. I will be right back." Viola turned and took one last look at Sebastian before she walked out the door.

She moved quickly through the orphanage and out to the car. Getting in, she started the engine with difficulty, cursing under her breath as it kept catching and refusing to turn over until finally it rumbled to life. The moment it did, an idea struck her and she grabbed Sebastian's phone from the dashboard intending to call Matt, but stopped when she looked at the screen and found not a single bar of signal.

Of course. Nightshade had no network connection to the outside world.

She dropped the phone back on the dashboard and pulled out of the orphanage, driving away from it as quickly as the road allowed. She was still moving when Sebastian's words from before came back to her. His men were waiting at Kasa Land to take her back to Silver while he returned to Nightshade.

There was no way to reach them by phone with no signal, but she had the car. If she drove fast enough she could reach Kasa before afternoon and bring his men back here for him before whoever was searching for him found him first. The bullets were out and his body was healing, but that didn't protect him from the people still combing through Nightshade looking for his head.

Staying here was no longer safe for him. Viola took a steadying breath and changed direction, pointing the car toward the road that led out of Nightshade toward Kasa Land. She pressed her foot down.

As the red car sped over the rough and muddy roads of Nightshade, the men scattered across the pack following tire tracks were quick to spot it moving fast down the road ahead of them and one of them raised the alarm immediately.

"That's the car! That's the one!"

Beyond Nat and Jaz's group who had gone after Sebastian for the reward money, several other groups had been formed and deployed after Nat's failure. The people behind the poster had sent fresh orders to find the car and locate the man, and since no vehicle like that existed anywhere in Nightshade they didn't need any further description to know it was the one they were looking for.

The car was moving at a speed that made it look like it was flying over the rocky terrain, and the men on foot knew immediately they had no chance of catching it that way. Their leader made the call for them to shift forms without hesitation.

"Chase her down. It's the girl driving, she is taking him out of Nightshade. Do not let that car leave the pack boundary!"

"Yes, sir!"

In no time they shed their clothes and shifted, hitting the ground on four legs and cutting through the trees at full wolf speed, taking the forest as a shortcut to get ahead of her and cut the car off before it reached the border.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 242: Down the waters[1,557 words]

Viola kept her eyes fixed on the road as she pushed the car to its limit, and despite the burning in her back and the sticky wetness of blood she could feel soaking through her dress, she didn't slow down.

She was determined to reach Kasa Land and hold onto the hope that Sebastian's men had already arrived there. There was a fear sitting at the back of her mind that she might get there and find nothing but empty land, but she held onto the smallest possibility that his jet had landed and pushed it forward like a lifeline.

Before she bled herself to exhaustion or worse, Viola pressed harder on the accelerator, but it was then she sensed the shift in the air and caught movement from the corner of her eye coming from the tree line along the side of the road.

She turned her head and saw the dark silhouette of a black wolf keeping pace with the car in the trees, and before she could process what she was seeing a loud and heavy thud came from the roof of the car, caving the metal inward and sending the steering wheel jerking hard in her hands. She corrected it fast, her knuckles going white.

There was a werewolf on top of the car. And another one running alongside it at full speed. She barely had time to register both before the howling started and she understood it wasn't just two but many of them closing in from every direction.

Viola let out an involuntary scream when the wolf on the roof sank its claws into the metal and began tearing at it like it intended to peel the top of the car open and reach down to her. She wrenched the steering wheel hard to try to throw it off but its claws held it in place against the force of the movement.

Her heart nearly fell out of her chest when another wolf launched itself onto her front bumper as if to make her stop. Without a single moment of hesitation she floored the accelerator and felt the bump and the horrible sound beneath the wheels as she drove over it, and then she hit the brakes hard and sudden, the force of it throwing the wolf tearing at the roof forward and off the car.

She ran over that one too and heard the sound it made when she did.

With her heart hammering so hard she could feel it in her teeth and every limb in her body shaking, Viola slammed her foot back down and drove. When she cleared the Nightshade roads and the path ahead became clean and tarred she checked the rear camera and saw the wolves were still giving chase, spread out behind her in a dark and moving mass.

Good. She needed them to keep chasing her.

If they figured out that Sebastian wasn't in the car with her they would stop, turn around, and go back to find him in the orphanage where he lay unconscious and completely unable to defend himself.

The best thing she could do was keep them following her all the way to Kasa Land and pray with everything she had that his warriors were waiting there, because if they weren't she had no plan beyond that and no way to fight off a pack of werewolves alone.

Blood kept dripping from her back onto the seat beneath her and with every passing minute she could feel her body losing its grip on itself. Her vision was beginning to split and double, the road ahead of her fracturing into two versions of itself that swam and merged and separated again. She blinked hard and gripped the wheel tighter, willing herself to stay focused.

The Blue Bridge came into view ahead of her and immediately Viola felt her insides drop.

She had forgotten about the bridge entirely in the desperate urgency of her decision to drive for Kasa Land. And now here it was, stretching out ahead of her with no railings on either side and the vast dark water far below it, and her head was spinning and her vision was doubling and the wolves were still behind her.

Viola slowed the car slightly as she approached and her pulse began hammering in every part of her body at once, in her ears, in her throat, behind her eyes. Her palms went clammy against the steering wheel and her mouth went completely dry.

"You can do this, Viola." She whispered to herself, staring ahead at the bridge with her jaw set and her whole body trembling. "You have to do this. His life depends on it." She told herself even as the whimpering sound that escaped her throat made a liar of her composure.

Oh, goddess, she was terrified!

The closer the car got to the bridge the worse the anxiety became, rising fast and uncontrollable from somewhere deep in her chest.

The memory of being dragged beneath the water came back to her with full force, the darkness below, the burning lungs, the helplessness of being pulled somewhere she couldn't fight.

What if the water below reached up for her again? What if she went over the side before she could get Sebastian help and find her sister?

Viola hit the brakes before the car reached the bridge and sat there with her hands pressed to the steering wheel and her eyes fixed on the long stretch of concrete ahead of her and the dark glinting water visible on either side of it.

She hit the steering wheel with the heel of her hand and bit down hard on her bottom lip. "I can't..." She whispered. "I can't go over it."

She wanted to. She needed to. But her body was refusing to cooperate with what her mind was telling it and the fear was bigger than her determination right now.

She ran the options through her spinning head. If she turned back and took the longer road it would be seven hours before she reached anywhere useful, seven hours of blood loss on an already emptying tank, and she would either bleed out behind the wheel or run out of fuel long before she got there. The bridge was thirty minutes to Kasa Land. Thirty minutes between Sebastian living or dying in the hands of his assassins.

She was still sitting there staring at the bridge with her vision tilting when the howling reached her and she snapped her eyes to the rear camera.

The wolves had caught up! They were coming at full speed and they were close, much closer than they should have been, and the panic that detonated in her chest at the sight of them made the decision for her.

There was no longer a choice to make. It was either she faced her worst nightmare and saved Sebastian, or she sat here and let the wolves find out he wasn't in the car and go back to finish him in the orphanage while he lay there unable to lift a hand to stop them.

Viola's fingers tightened around the steering wheel until her knuckles ached. She pulled in a long and shaking breath, held it, and then pressed her foot down and drove the car onto the bridge just as the wolves behind her hit the road at their full speed.

"Don't let her get over that bridge!" The leader of the group ordered as they saw the red car accelerating onto it. "She gets over that bridge and we lose them into packless territory and nobody will help us touch her there!"

"Knock her off it if you have to! We need the man dead before he leaves Nightshade!"

"We have orders to keep the girl alive, Gab." Another wolf argued. "Won't knocking her off the bridge kill her along with him?"

"She won't die from a fall like that! Werewolves don't go down that easily, she will swim her way out! Knock her off the bridge!" Gab snarled, having had more than enough of the chase this woman had taken them on through half of Nightshade.

Viola was whimpering under her breath and singing fragments of something tuneless to herself at the same time, anything to keep her eyes on the road and her mind from looking down at the water on either side of her.

She drove fast but carefully, threading the line between speed and control, and when she began to see the other side of the bridge drawing closer and the solid ground of Kasa Land beyond it she felt the first flicker of relief beginning to rise in her chest.

Until she saw them too late.

Two wolves came running along the side of the bridge from behind, faster than the others, and she only had a split second to understand what they intended before they hit the side of the car together with the full combined force of their supernatural strength.

The car jerked to the side with a force that knocked the breath from her.

Viola's heart left her body at the exact same moment the car lost its balance and began to go over the side, and the dark water far below rushed up to meet her.

"No!" she let out a scream.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 243: Backup[1,597 words]

In Kasa Land, a black private jet sat landed on the open stretch of land with tall and powerful Silver Pack warriors positioned around it, all of them dressed in black as they waited for their Alpha's arrival.

Among them was Matt, who was pacing the ground with his hands in his pockets and his jaw tight. He wasn't supposed to have come here with the warriors at all, but he had lost all contact with Sebastian since the day before and hadn't been able to sit still in Silver knowing his friend was out there in Nightshade with no word coming through the link.

He had told himself he was coming to make sure Sebastian returned to Silver before pushing deeper into whatever plans he had about finding his wife's twin, but the truth was the silence had unsettled him more than he wanted to admit. Why would he lock his link? That was so usual.

It was now well over four hours since he and the warriors had landed here and there was no sign of the Alpha, no car on the road, and no response through the mind link no matter how many times Matt reached for it.

They had agreed to meet here by dawn, and it was becoming very clear that dawn had come and gone and afternoon was settling in around them, with the sun blazingly hot and scorchingly annoying as it made him keep adjusting his buttons.

This was exactly why Matt hadn't wanted Sebastian coming out here alone with only his wife beside him. On more than one occasion during his travels there had always been some mischief played by his enemies that had never succeeded, largely because most weapons simply couldn't kill a man carrying supreme Alpha blood in his veins, and that fact gave Sebastian a confidence in his own survival that Matt had always thought bordered on recklessness sometimes.

But a delay this long without so much as a word through the link was something different. Sebastian would never go this quiet without a reason, and the reasons Matt's mind kept producing were not ones he wanted to sit with.

"Bring the car out." Matt ordered, and in no time the rear compartment of the jet opened at the press of a button and a sleek black car was driven out by one of the warriors onto the open ground.

"Four of you with me. The rest stay here and keep the link open. Contact me the moment the Alpha shows up or you hear anything." Matt said, already moving toward the car.

It was better to drive into Nightshade himself and see what was causing this delay than to stand here and worry himself into an early grave. Matt briefly thought to himself that he had no idea why so many people spent their lives fighting for an Alpha seat when he himself could barely manage the head Beta position without aging ten years from stress. It was perhaps time he drafted a retirement letter and find himself a restaurant to work as a top chef, that would be better than constantly worrying himself to old age!

He was stepping into the car when something on the road ahead made him stop. He straightened and took his sunglasses off, narrowing his eyes at the distant movement.

A red car was coming down the road at a speed that suggested whoever was driving it had a very good reason to be going that fast. And behind it, closing the distance with the focused and coordinated movement of a hunting pack, were wolves.

"Well I'll be fucking damned." Matt muttered under his breath, the relief at seeing the car arriving already tangled up with the cold anger of seeing what was chasing it. "The audacity of these wolves." He raised his voice and turned to the warriors. "Take position and deal with them. Now."

Four warriors shifted immediately into massive wolves and ran ahead at full speed to intercept the approaching car and cut off the wolves behind it.

In no time, a fight broke out between the Silver Pack warriors and the malnourished-looking Nightshade wolves, who had come bearing no weapons to kill the Alpha, confident that he was already weakened. It didn't take the Silver Pack warriors long to chase the wolves back the way they had come, some of them crying out in pain as they get caught.

Inside the red car, Viola felt the relief of seeing the black jet and the figures waiting around it wash over her, but alongside it came the terrifying realization that she could no longer feel her limbs properly.

She had used all of her energy to keep the car from falling off the bridge and to drive the tilted car back onto the bridge before jerking it and hitting one of the wolves into the water. Thankfully, she had almost reached the other side, and she made it before another attempt could be made to knock her into the water, but now her energy was seeping away.

The dizziness had climbed past the point of fighting it. The road ahead of her kept splitting and the figures standing around the jet blurred and doubled and she wasn't entirely certain she could stop the car the way she needed to.

Everything in her wanted to give in. To close her eyes and let the darkness take over and be done with the pain and the fear and the exhaustion pressing down on every part of her.

But Sebastian was still in that room in the orphanage and these men didn't know it, and so she gripped the last thread of consciousness she had and used it to drag her foot to the brake and bring the car shuddering to a stop just short of the jet before it could crash into it.

Matt was already approaching the car, his sharp eyes reading that something was wrong even before the door opened. The vehicle itself told a story, Sebastian's once sleek and expensive red car now looking closer to scrap metal than something that belonged to the supreme Alpha, dented and scraped and missing parts it had left behind somewhere on the roads of Nightshade.

Then the door opened and Viola half fell out of it, her dress soaked through with blood front and back, her face the color of someone who had given most of their blood away, her entire body shaking with the effort of staying upright. Matt crossed the remaining distance at a run and caught her before her head could meet the ground, lowering her carefully.

"Sebastian." Viola forced the word out the moment she felt hands catching her, one arm lifting weakly to point back in the direction she had come from before the strength went out of it.

"Where is he? What happened to you?" Matt demanded, his eyes moving quickly over her injuries and the realization hitting him at the same moment that she was alone. Sebastian was not in the car.

She was fading but she held on long enough to tell him what he needed to know. "The orphanage in Nightshade...they are going to try to kill him. He can't defend himself right now. Please go. Please hurry." She pressed her palm weakly against his chest as if she could physically push him in the right direction.

Matt had a dozen questions he needed answered but he could read the situation clearly enough to know this was not the moment for any of them. Sebastian was in danger. But he also couldn't leave her on the ground in this condition or Sebastian would tear him apart when he found out.

"What about you? You need a doctor immediately. You can't—"

"I will be fine. Sebastian needs you more than I do right now. Go." She whispered, pulling herself back from his support and straightening just enough to make the choice easier for him, removing herself from the equation so he wouldn't hesitate to go to the Alpha first.

Matt looked at her for one moment and made his decision.

"Four of you stay and protect the Luna. Nobody touches her and nobody comes near her. The rest are with me, we are going into Nightshade." He said, and then he turned back to Viola and the look in his hazel eyes had shifted into something that hadn't fully been there before, a deep and unguarded respect that he didn't try to hide.

She hadn't thought of herself once. Bleeding and barely conscious, she had driven through wolves in her condition, and the first word out of her mouth had been his name. Matt had known many she-wolves in his life but very few who would have done what she just did for his friend. Respect, he felt it deep for her.

"Hold on, Luna." He said quietly, and then he turned and moved, barking orders as the warriors split into formation, some taking the car and others hitting the ground on four legs in their wolves form, and within moments they were moving down the road toward Nightshade at speed.

Viola watched them go until they were nothing but shapes in the distance and then dust, and when they disappeared entirely she let go.

Her legs gave out and she went down, the ground coming up to meet her. She let the darkness take her completely and was grateful for it. Knowing that Matt would keep Sebastian safe, she completely gave in to the darkness pulling her consciousness away.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 244: Awakened[1,546 words]

More than once Sebastian had tried to come awake but failed completely, his body no longer feeling like something that belonged to him.

When he did manage to open his eyes it was only because of the soft coaxing voice of his wife beside him, her hand moving through his hair, and when he looked at her he felt a pain in his chest that had nothing to do with the bullets, because he could see clearly from the state of her that he was going to die and she knew it too.

He would die without ever knowing what a full life with a mate he genuinely liked felt like. Every mate he had known before and every relationship he had carried had always been held together by sexual attraction and the need to let out steam during his heat cycle, nothing more than that.

But not with this one.

With her it was something else entirely. He found peace sleeping beside her. He found something close to calm just from holding her hand, which was not something he had ever looked for or thought he needed from anyone.

She was different in so many ways that Sebastian knew, even without the mate bond pulling him toward her, he would still have found himself drawn to her regardless. Every time he forced his

eyes open and found her sitting next to him looking devastated, he felt ashamed at his own inability to even move and tell her not to cry for him, to tell her he wasn't worth those tears.

His days had always been numbered. He had known that from the moment he took the Alpha seat and made the enemies that came with it. He had known somewhere deep in his chest that a day would eventually come when someone succeeded and he would be gone, the same way his parents had gone, and he had made a kind of peace with that knowledge over the years.

Death no longer fazed him.

His only real regret, lying there unable to move, was that he hadn't known what it would feel like to be with her. Truly be with her in intimate ways a male and female of their relationship should be together. He had imagined it, had built scenarios in his head the way he had never done with anyone before, but imagination was a poor substitute for the real thing and now he would never know the difference.

He would miss her. Damn, he would miss her stubbornness and the small arguments they fell into so easily and the way she looked at him when she thought he wasn't paying attention.

He didn't have a clean name for what he felt for her, couldn't pin it down to something simple, but Sebastian knew it had crossed into the kind of territory he had always been careful to stay out of with fated mates, the territory where losing someone stopped being something you recovered from.

He had been certain this was the end. Certain he would die in that small dim room and leave behind a mate he hadn't had nearly enough time with and a bratty sister he loved more than he usually let on. He had been completely certain of it.

Which was why opening his eyes to the familiar ceiling of his bedroom in his main quarters felt like something his mind had manufactured to comfort him on the way out.

He blinked. The fancy ceiling remained. He looked around slowly and took in the dark themed room, the furniture he knew, and then his eyes found Matt sitting on the couch with a tablet in his hands, working through something with a focused expression. How did he end up here? Sebastian wondered.

When Matt sensed him awake he looked up quickly.

"Un-fucking-believable, man. I genuinely thought you were going to sleep forever. Welcome back to the living sleeping beauty!" Matt said, setting his tablet down and getting to his feet, and Sebastian immediately rewarded him with a dark scowl that Matt chose to ignore entirely because he was glad the Alpha had finally woken up after days.

"What happened?" Sebastian asked, finding his voice coming out hoarse and dry in a way that told him it had not been used in a very long time. When he tried to move, his left leg felt completely immobile and when he attempted to force it the pain that shot up his thigh was immediate and vicious enough to make him groan.

"Don't try to move that leg." Matt warned quickly, crossing toward him. "It is still going through treatment and healing. Leave it alone."

It was the leg where the bullet Miss Lara had removed had dissolved the surrounding tissue and muscle, and unlike every other wound on his body that had healed cleanly during his unconscious recovery, that one was taking considerably longer to repair the damage done from within. Matt explained this to Sebastian whose expression was darkening by the second as he tested the leg again and felt the pain knife all the way up into his groin.

"Fucking hell." Sebastian cursed, slamming his fist down onto the mattress and lying back against the pillow. "Get me water."

Matt moved to the bedside table and poured from the jug there as he said, "That leg should honestly be the least of your concerns right now, Seb. You are lucky to be breathing. Those bullets were made with a combination of every element and poison known to be lethal to a werewolf, stacked together into one. Gilbert couldn't even identify some of the components in them. We have never seen anything like it." He clicked his tongue and handed Sebastian the glass.

Sebastian sat up carefully, the movement sending a fresh wave of pain from his thigh that made him grimace, and leaned his back against the headboard. He drained the glass and held it out again and Matt refilled it before he asked, "How did I survive it?"

"Now that," Matt said with a small and somewhat baffled chuckle, "is the interesting question." He settled himself on the edge of the couch. "Nobody is giving me a straight answer. When I went back to get you from the orphanage in Nightshade I asked the woman there, Lara or something, I can never remember her full name, and she told me they used water to extract the bullets from your body. She didn't go into detail about how and I didn't have the time to push her on it because you needed to be moved immediately."

Sebastian's eyes narrowed as pieces of memory began drifting back to him in fragments. The attack.

Sebastian clearly recalled killing every single one of those assholes who had come to assassinate him, but by the time the last one fell they had already shot him with countless bullets that made even shifting impossible. He also recalled his mate coming back for him after he had told her to leave...

"Where is she?" He asked, the question coming before anything else. "Did you leave her in Nightshade?"

"Of course we left her there. I couldn't very well bring back a woman who belongs to Nightshade into our pack. I only brought you back and collected a few of the removed bullets for Gilbert to examine and—"

"Why would you leave my Luna in that godforsaken land?!" Sebastian gritted out, his voice dropping to something dangerous as he pushed himself forward and began to swing his legs off the bed.

Matt, who had entirely misunderstood and thought Sebastian was referring to Miss Lara, caught up quickly and reached forward to push him back down before his leg could take any weight. "We

didn't leave the Luna in Nightshade. She is in the next room right now receiving treatment. I brought her back with us."

The relief that moved through Sebastian at those words lasted exactly as long as it took for the second half of that sentence to reach him, and then his silver eyes, still slightly sunken from days of unconsciousness, fixed on Matt with a dark and heavy intensity that filled the room.

"What happened to her?" He asked quickly.

Matt scratched the back of his neck with the particular expression he only ever wore when he was about to say something Sebastian wasn't going to take well, and then he began to explain. Everything the Luna had done. The condition she had been in when she reached Kasa Land. All of it, from beginning to end, over the four days since they had returned to Silver.

"...she lost a significant amount of blood and the wound in her back was one step away from a serious infection by the time we got her back here, but Gilbert moved quickly and caught it in time. She is still unconscious and receiving blood. I made the decision to keep her here in the main quarters rather than the healing house because we cannot have anyone in the pack knowing what happened to the two of you in Nightshade. You—what are you doing?" Matt asked, his voice sharpening as Sebastian pulled the sheet away from his legs and moved to get off the bed.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 245: His Luna_Part 1[1,251 words]

"I am going to see her." Sebastian gritted through the pain as his leg made moving anywhere near as fast as he wanted to completely impossible, and he had to limp his way around Matt, who immediately reached out to support him. Sebastian shot him a dark glare that stopped his hands mid reach.

"I am not an invalid. I can walk. Don't touch me." Sebastian warned, his voice carrying the particular edge it got when his pride was being stepped on. He was furious. Furious at the pain slowing him down and furious at himself for being in a position where his Luna had taken a wolfsbane dagger in her back and nearly bled to death trying to save his life.

Matt stepped back and held both hands up, reading the situation clearly enough to know that touching the Alpha right now would only make things worse.

His ego was hurting just as badly as his leg and there was nothing Matt could do about either of those things. Instead he fell into step beside him and carefully guided him toward the room where Viola had been put, saying nothing and making sure nothing about his posture suggested he thought Sebastian needed the help.

The last thing Matt needed on top of everything else was a moody Sebastian, but that was exactly what he was going to get. Whoever was behind this assassination attempt had not come to play games or make a statement.

They had come to end the Alpha completely and permanently, and they had done it with a level of precision and preparation that Matt found deeply unsettling the more he thought about it.

What bothered him most was the concealment. Sebastian had always been near impossible to follow without him knowing.

His senses were sharp enough to pick up on anything before most people had even made their second move, and yet whoever had orchestrated this had managed to track him all the way to Nightshade and plant people ahead of him without Sebastian catching so much as a hint of it. That was not ordinary planning.

That was someone who knew Sebastian well enough to know exactly how he moved and how to stay ahead of it, and that particular thought narrowed the list of suspects in a way that made Matt's stomach turn.

His Alpha ego was going to take a hit from this and Matt already knew what a hit to Sebastian's ego looked like from the inside. He would go cold and difficult, and he would push himself before his body was ready because the idea of being outmaneuvered by anyone was something Sebastian Kade did not know how to sit with peacefully.

And beyond the ego and the moodiness was the grimmer reality underneath it. Whoever was behind this would strike again.

They had invested too much into this attempt to simply walk away from it, and next time they would have learned from what went wrong. If they didn't find this person and remove them before that next attempt came, Matt wasn't certain even a supreme Alpha's blood would be enough to walk away from it a second time. Matt thought grimly as he followed Sebastian down the corridor.

When they reached the room, Doctor Gilbert was in the process of removing the tubes that had been keeping the Luna stable, and upon seeing the Alpha at the door he straightened and bowed his head in greeting.

"Alpha, you should not be out of bed right now. Your body still needs time to finish repairing the internal damage from within, particularly that leg." Gilbert said, but if Sebastian heard a single word of it he gave no indication, his eyes already having found the woman lying on the bed and not moving from her.

She was positioned on her side with a back support keeping her from rolling onto the injured wound, looking pale and very small beneath the covers. An IV drip ran from a stand to the back of her hand and her eyes were closed and still.

Sebastian walked to her and lowered himself carefully onto the edge of the bed, his jaw tightening as the movement pulled at his thigh.

His eyes moved slowly over her face and his chest twisted at what he saw there. Dark circles had formed beneath her sunken eyes and her lips were dry and cracked and colorless. She had lost weight that she hadn't had to spare in the days she had been lying here, and the stillness of her was deeply unsettling to look at.

But she was breathing on her own now, her chest rising and falling without the tubes Matt had described, which Gilbert must have only just removed.

Sebastian reached out and took the hand resting on top of the covers. The moment his fingers closed around hers the familiar spark of their bond moved through him, and the delight of it was immediately followed by the cold and angry knowledge that she was lying here like this because of him. His fingers tightened around her slender hand.

"How is she?" He asked quietly, not looking away from her face.

"She is improving each day. She regained consciousness briefly this morning before going under again. I have removed the tubes because she no longer needs them to maintain her vitals. The recovery is taking longer than it would for a werewolf because without her wolf to accelerate the healing process we have had to rely entirely on medicine, which works at a considerably slower rate." Gilbert explained.

"If she is improving then why is she still unconscious?" Sebastian asked, his voice carrying the quiet edge that meant he wanted a real answer and not a reassuring one.

"Because her body is healing at a human rate rather than a werewolf one, as I said. She simply needs more time. Based on what I examined this morning I would expect her to wake within the next several hours, possibly sooner." Gilbert replied, swallowing slightly as he felt the Alpha's aura beginning to push into the air of the room even though the man hadn't so much as glanced at him since he walked in.

"Do you have a lip balm?" Sebastian asked, and the question was unexpected enough that Gilbert blinked and exchanged a brief look with Matt before answering.

"I don't have one on me. What do you need it for?"

"Matt." Sebastian said simply, and Matt left the room without needing to be told anything further.

When he returned and held it out, Sebastian took it and then turned to Gilbert. "I want a full written report of every ingredient identified in those bullets. Do you have it?"

"I completed the report yesterday. Many of the components are things we have never encountered before in combination. I will have a copy sent to you before this evening." Gilbert said, watching as Sebastian opened the balm, dipped his index finger into it carefully and then leaned forward and rubbed it slowly across Viola's cracked lips, working it in gently until the dryness began to soften under his touch.

Gilbert found he had to look away. He had heard what people were saying about this woman, that she was nothing more than a sacrificial pawn placed beside the Alpha until the curse claimed her. Looking at the man sitting on the edge of that bed right now, Gilbert thought those people had gotten things very wrong indeed.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 246: His Luna_Part 2[1,261 words

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"I also need nourishing supplements prepared for my Luna for when she wakes up. Make sure they are ready." Sebastian said to the doctor, recapping the balm and finally turning to look at Gilbert directly.

"Of course, Alpha." Gilbert said.

"You know the drill, I don't want any words of what happened here to leave this room. No one must hear of this," Sebastian told Gilbert, who was quick to nod as his complete loyalty was with Sebastian after the Alpha had supported him in becoming a werewolf doctor when his own family had wanted him to join the warriors and do something different.

If it weren't for the supreme Alpha, Gilbert wouldn't have been anywhere close to his dream. He wasn't a man who was interested in fighting and eating enemies' flesh to protect Alphas, he was more of a man who liked to experiment and work on injuries and discover things about their kind. Hence, his loyalty had always been with Sebastian and would always be.

"You know me well, supreme Alpha. No word of this will leave this room." Gilbert said before he turned his eyes to the Luna and said, "From my tests on her, I have figured out she is a strong one for someone without a wolf. I don't believe a completely wolfless person can survive that long with the amount of blood she lost. I have some supplements that I am working on to try on strengthening the wolf, if you want, I will add them to her medications." He suggested, having a feeling she must be the wolfless one the Alpha had once enquired about.

Sebastian arched a brow at the doctor who always looked for an opportunity to use someone as an experiment. "Use it on someone else first and if it is safe enough, you can give it to her. For now, don't bring it close to her."

Gilbert's shoulders dropped in slight disappointment because they did not have any wolfless person in Silver except for her, but then he gave a nod and bowed his head. "Very well then, I will get the reports ready as soon as possible and get back here. If there are any changes in her, you can always mind link me."

The Alpha had the power to mind link as many of his pack members as he wished to, but the supreme Alpha always kept that limited to a few people as there was always a risk of linking to the wrong person. But among the limited people Sebastian used mind link on were Gilbert and Matt.

Gilbert quietly excused himself from the room.

When he was gone, Matt settled himself against the wall and asked, "Do you have any idea who was behind this one?"

Sebastian's eyes went cold and dark at those question.

"Not a name. But whoever it is has been planning this for a long time. Those bullets didn't come from someone acting on impulse. That kind of preparation takes time and resources and knowledge about what kills a supreme Alpha, knowledge that very few people have." He said, his eyes drifting back to Viola's face. His enemies were many and some of them were hiding in plain sight within his own pack and his own bloodline, careful and patient and impossible to flush out through ordinary means.

But this time they had gone too far. Whatever game they were playing had reached out and touched someone he was determined to protect, and that changed the rules entirely.

He had always kept his enemies close in a way that allowed him to track their movements, but it seemed this person wasn't among the enemies he was already aware of, and if the person was, then they had played the game differently this time around, just like when Zoe had taken the bullet for him years ago.

That incident had happened unexpectedly after his Luna's funeral and up until this moment, Sebastian had failed to flush out that culprit despite all the investigations done.

"We will have to make them show themselves." Sebastian said.

"How?" Matt asked, genuinely curious, because the men they had captured from the group that had chased Viola down the road had given them nothing useful under questioning.

Every one of them had claimed they were approached by strangers carrying posters and had no knowledge of who was behind the order. The strangers themselves had left no traces in Nightshade that Matt's men could find.

"We give them what they wanted." Sebastian said simply, still looking at Viola. "Announce my death within the next three days. The first person who moves to claim the Alpha seat will show us exactly who we are looking for. Whoever wants that seat badly enough to have gone to these lengths won't be able to help themselves when they hear I am gone."

This plan might work because before bringing Sebastian to his main quarter, all of the omega workers had been given weeks of leave in order to avoid having any moles around. Only the trusted patrol guards were present. No one knew of him being here.

Matt was quiet for a moment and then gave a slow nod. "That is actually a very good idea." He paused and then asked, "And what about her?"

"Nobody will think about her if the Alpha is announced dead. She stays here until I find whoever is behind this. I also still need to find out what happened to her twin." He said, his voice dropping slightly on those last words. He had given her his word on that and he intended to keep it. Just as

she had kept him alive with everything she had left in her. Sebastian felt something swell quietly in his chest at the thought of it.

He didn't like seeing her like this. Even knowing she was out of danger and on the other side of the worst of it, the worry hadn't left him and he didn't think it would until she opened her eyes and said something to him, even argue with him. He liked her that way more than this way.

After Matt had told him everything she had done, Sebastian still couldn't fully absorb it. No one had ever done what she did for him. He had been through more life threatening situations than he could count and had always found his way out of them by himself or with his warriors at his back.

But hearing that she had driven through a wolf attack and over a bridge she was terrified of with a dagger wound in her back, thinking about him and not herself the entire time, was something he didn't have a word for. It sat in his chest like something that would never go away, because it meant more than anything to him.

He had always known she was brave, braver than even the she-wolves with Alpha wolves that he had known before, because he was certain none of them would have done what she had done for him, staying by his side through all of that. He could no longer recall why he had ever thought of her as weak and unfitting for the position of his Luna. He tenderly touched her cool cheek with the back of his hand, rubbing it gently as he said to Matt,

"I want to make her more happier than she is when she wakes up. Gather some of the warriors and send them back to Nightshade. I need to find her twin."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 247: Awake / emotional[1,575 words]

Viola didn't wake up from her unconsciousness on the schedule Gilbert had predicted. She remained sleeping even after the tubes were removed, not stirring or turning, lying so still that it worried Sebastian enough that he took it upon himself to personally watch over her through the hours rather than leave her to the care of anyone else.

Meanwhile, Viola was in a dreamland that felt so real that if it had been up to her she would have chosen to stay there rather than wake up to a reality that felt so uncertain and filled with overwhelming pain and danger.

The dream became something like a shelter for her, a place where her mind had retreated to cope with everything it couldn't hold while she was conscious. In it she felt emotionally safe and steady in a way she hadn't felt in a very long time. No fear. No pain. No weight on her shoulders.

She was living with her twin sister and smiling without the burden of guilt sitting permanently in her chest. Viola saw herself, or more accurately experienced herself, combing through the dark hair of her twin that was identical to her own, just the way Ivy used to comb hers when they were small.

"You must hate me now, Ivy..." Viola said quietly, her throat thick with pain and held back emotion as she looked into a pair of blue eyes that were mirror images of her own.

The Ivy in her dream smiled at her with the same quiet kindness Viola had always known her for, the kind that never had conditions attached to it. "I do not hate you, Serena. Nothing could ever make me hate you in this world."

"Then why do you look...sad?" She asked softly, hugging her arms around herself the way she always did when she was bracing for something she didn't want to hear, afraid of finding the hatred she had always expected to see and even more afraid of learning that her sister's sadness was something she had caused.

Ivy reached out and cupped her face in both hands. "I am in a place you cannot reach, and I never want you to try. You will die if you come here, Serena. I am sad because I can see how desperately you want to find me, and it is not worth it. I am sad because all I want is to see you happy and smiling and living the life you always deserved. Don't kill yourself while there is still breath in you." Ivy whispered, stroking away the tears rolling down her cheek with the pad of her thumb. "Live, Serena. Experience life the way you always wanted to. Stop trying to reach for me."

Viola shook her head and reached out to grip her sister's shoulders, feeling the dream beginning to shift and pull away from her, sensing she was about to be thrust back into the pain of reality she had been hiding from. "Don't say that. We are stronger together. I will find you. I will make it up to you, every bit of it."

"You don't have to make anything up to me. I do not hate you and I never will. Go and live your life, Serena. There is someone who is becoming important to you and he needs you. He needs you in his life more than you understand right now. Go back to him. Live well, sister..."

"Nobody needs me, don't leave. Take me with you wherever you are, Ivy. I don't know myself anymore. I don't know what I want or who I am without you. I only know that if I find you I will find myself along with you. Please don't go. I don't want to feel the pain again. I don't want to go back there. Don't leave me!" Viola screamed as the image of her twin began to dissolve like watercolor bleeding through wet paper, turning transparent at the edges and working its way inward.

"You are safer where you are. Goodbye, Serena. I want you to remember that I will always love you. Always."

Viola reached for her sister's hand but the moment their fingers touched, Ivy's image broke apart entirely into water, collapsing into a cascade of droplets that splashed against her face and jolted her awake from the long sleep with a sharp and disoriented gasp.

"Don't leave me!" Viola screamed herself awake, her chest heaving, eyes flying open and scanning the dim room around her before her mind slowly caught up with where she was.

She looked down and found that her sleeve was soaked through with water as if what she had just experienced had been physically real, and when she pressed her hand to her face she felt the dampness there too. How was this remotely possible? Did someone pour water on her to wake her up?

Before she could begin to make sense of anything, movement from the side of the room made her jolt upright and pain shot through her back and spine immediately, a sharp and vicious reminder of her condition.

"You're awake." Came Sebastian's voice, and then the light came on in the room and she had to squint against the sudden brightness before her eyes adjusted.

When they did, she found him standing there looking back at her, and the sight of him triggered something in her chest that moved through her in a wave she wasn't prepared for. Confusion crossed her face first and then disbelief and then relief so overwhelming that tears spilled down her flushed cheeks before she could do anything to stop them.

He was alive. He hadn't died...

"Seb..." She whispered, and the way she said it, quiet and broken and with a catch in her voice that she couldn't hide, made Sebastian's heart thud hard against his ribs.

She left the bed before he could move his injured leg to go to her. She crossed the distance between them and came to him and before he could say anything she put her arms around his waist and held him tightly, pressing her face against his chest.

"Oh g-god... I'm s-so glad y-you're all right... I th-thought I had l-lost you... I th-thought I was g-going to w-wake up alone... You were in s-such a t-terrible condition the l-last time I saw you... I was s-so af-afraid... I th-thought I—"

The words came out rushing and trembling over each other like she couldn't get them out fast enough, and Sebastian recovered from the surprise of her holding him to wrap his arms carefully around her trembling body, one hand threading gently into the hair at the back of her head and the other resting lightly on her back, careful of her injury.

"Shhh. It is all right. I am fine. Thanks to you." He whispered, feeling her tears soaking through his nightshirt and her fingers fisting into the fabric at his sides.

"I was so scared..." She sobbed against his chest, like a terrified child holding on to a lifeline.

"I know." He whispered back, pressing his lips to the top of her head and rubbing slow circles into her scalp with his fingers to try to soothe her. "But everything is all right now."

Viola couldn't find words big enough to hold what she was feeling. It was hitting her all at once, too much and too strong, rocking through her in waves she had no defense against.

She had fallen unconscious without seeing him wake up and in that darkness her mind had built itself a shelter to hide in because reality had become too heavy to carry. She had thought she had lost Sebastian the same way she was losing her twin, because of her. Everyone around her kept getting hurt and it was a feeling she carried like something physical inside her, the certainty that she was not someone anyone should be close to, that being near her only ever cost people something.

The urge not to have woken up at all had been so strong she wasn't sure she would have if that water hadn't hit her face and pulled her back by force, as if something had decided she didn't get to disappear into that dream and stay there to shut her reality.

Viola closed her eyes and tightened her arms around the only solid thing in the room. "I am so scared." She admitted, meaning it fully and not just about Sebastian or Ivy or any single thing but all of it at once. "I don't want to lose anyone else."

"You won't." Sebastian said confidently, stroking her hair slowly and steadily. He couldn't help but feel warmth and happiness in his chest that she was this glad to know that he was alive and also carried fears of losing him just like he carried fears of losing her. Though he didn't like that she was this vulnerable to her fears, Sebastian's heart was overwhelmed at the feeling of their progress and the relief of her being awake after days of unconsciousness.

He rubbed her back and it was only then that he noticed her clothes were completely soaked through, the dampness already seeping into his nightshirt. He pulled back slightly and looked down at her, taking in her wet face, wet hair, wet sleeves, in a room where nothing else appeared to be damp at all.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 248: Being there for each other[1,338 words]

"How did you get water on you?" He questioned quietly, moving the wet strands of hair away from her face and tucking them behind her ears as she looked down at herself and the confusion on her face shifted into something closer to unease.

"Ivy..." She whispered, staring at her drenched sleeves. "I saw her in my dream...she turned into water and splashed onto me when she disappeared. It was a dream but I have water on me. That is impossible." Viola murmured, almost as if she was talking to herself rather than to him, her brows pulling together as she turned her hands over and looked at them like they belonged to someone else.

Sebastian was just as confused but he kept that off his face when he noticed the fear beginning to creep back into her expression and the color leaving her cheeks. He put his hand on her shoulder

and brought her attention back to him gently. "Don't worry about that right now. Would you like to change your clothes first?" He asked, and she gave him a wary nod.

Sebastian guided her back to the bed and then walked to his closet and pulled out his robe for her to wear in the meantime. When he held it out to her she took it with the absentminded look of someone whose thoughts were still somewhere else entirely.

He was considering stepping out to give her privacy to change when she surprised him by pulling the healing gown off without warning. He turned away quickly, but not quite quickly enough to avoid catching sight of the sharp curve of her hips and the soft roundness of her backside, and the wound on her back that immediately redirected every other thought because the sight of it sent a quiet and controlled rage straight to his gut.

Damn, it looked bad. Sebastian thought, his fists clenching at his sides. The wound was angrier than he had imagined it from Matt's description and yet she hadn't said a single word about it since she woke up.

Not one complaint. He had never known a woman as small in frame and as enormous in spirit as she was, and she never failed to astonish him every single time he thought he had figured out the shape of her.

Had it been his sister with a wound like that on her back, Sebastian knew without question he would not have heard the end of it. Zoe could make a production out of a paper cut and hold everyone around her emotionally hostage for days over something that would heal by morning.

But his mate was something else entirely. Something he was only beginning to fully understand. One in a million, wolf or no wolf.

She pulled the robe on and covered herself, pushing her arms through the sleeves and pulling the belt loosely around her waist, tying it at the front before she lowered herself slowly onto the bed and sat there staring down at her hands in her lap.

Sebastian cleared his throat. "Would you like something to eat?" He asked, and as he had half expected she shook her head.

He didn't push her on it. He had already arranged with Gilbert to have nourishing injections added to her IV drip to keep her hydrated and sustained while she was still finding her way back to herself, so he wasn't worried about that.

"Something to drink then?" He offered, and she turned to look at him.

"Yes, please. Thank you." She said quietly, and when Sebastian turned to walk away to fetch something for her she noticed the slight drag to his step and her eyes narrowed.

"What is wrong with your leg?"

He glanced back over his shoulder. "It is taking its time healing. The bone in my thigh took some damage from one of the bullets. It is getting better." He said simply and kept walking before she could ask anything further. He didn't want her worrying about him anymore than she had already done. She needed proper rest and time to also heal.

He came back with a cup of tea, which he recalled to add a lot of cream like she liked it and placed it in her hands. She held it without drinking, staring down into it with the look of someone trying to remember how ordinary things worked.

Sebastian watched her quietly. He had expected her to wake up irritable and full of complaints about the pain and the discomfort, and finding her like this instead, silent and lost inside herself, was harder to sit with than the alternative would have been. He would have preferred she found reasons to argue and fight with him at this point.

"How are you feeling?" He asked.

She gave him a small smile that didn't fully reach her eyes. "Better. Just a little discomfort in my back but I will be fine."

"Do you want to talk about your dream?" He asked gently, keeping his voice soft so she understood there was no pressure behind the question. He just wanted to see her come back to herself. He would take her at whatever pace she needed.

She was quiet for a long moment, her fingers tightening slightly around the warm cup as if deciding, and then she gave a slow nod. "It felt so real it didn't feel like a dream at all. It was like I truly saw her and held her. She was there, smiling the way she always did..."

"Does seeing her make you happy?" He asked.

Viola nodded, wiping quickly at her cheeks with the back of her hand. "It does. But she told me to live my life and stop trying to find her. How am I supposed to do that when I don't know what happened to her? I became your wife because I wanted to give her a better life. What am I supposed to do with my life now?" She whispered, the words coming out like she was asking herself rather than him, her hand moving across her face again to catch the tears before they fell too far.

To be quiet honest with herself, after everything she had been put through over the past four years, Viola would have chosen a quiet life if given the option. A small and ordinary one where nothing could reach her and nothing was expected of her.

But a quiet life would have meant no way to find her sister and no way to protect herself from the people who would have come for her anyway, so the choice had never truly been hers to make.

She had wanted to give this second chance at life entirely to Ivy. Everything she had done, every painful and humiliating and dangerous thing she had walked through, had been framed in her mind as an act of repentance, a way of paying back what she owed.

Now that she had no idea what had become of her sister, it felt like the ground had been pulled out from under the only reason she had been standing on it. She felt like she had no life. Nothing to want to live for and nothing to make good of. Lost in a way that had no clear direction to it, like a

single pin dropped in the middle of a vast and directionless ocean with no shore visible in any direction.

The Ivy in her dream had wanted her to be happy. Had told her to live. But Viola had spent so many years surviving rather than living that she had genuinely begun to forget what pure and uncomplicated living even felt like. The difference between the two had blurred somewhere along the way and now, without the purpose that had been carrying her forward, she felt the absence of it in every quiet moment like a hollow she didn't know how to fill.

"I don't know what to do anymore." She added, very quietly.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 249: Being Pampered_Part 1[1,047 words]

Sebastian pushed himself up from where he was sitting and lowered himself down in front of her on one knee despite the sharp pain that shot up from his thigh at the movement. He took the teacup from her hands and set it aside and then held both of her hands in his, waiting until she looked at him before he spoke.

"Just as I told you before, I will help you find out what happened to her. But while I am doing that I want you to live. Let life move the way it needs to move. You said you don't know what to do, but are you forgetting that you are a Luna? My wife." He reached up and cupped her cheek with one hand while keeping the other wrapped around hers.

"I don't want to be a Luna anymore. I don't know what I want." She whispered.

"Most people don't know what they want, love. We live and we figure it out along the way. That is all any of us are doing. Don't punish yourself for not having the answer right now. We can figure it out together." He stroked a tear from her cheek with his thumb.

"I am not good for anyone. I ruin things that get close to me. Don't let me stay near you. Let me go away to the human world the way you suggested once before..."

Sebastian's brows drew together. That had been said in a moment long past and he had no intention of honoring it now, not when the thought of her leaving made a string in his chest pull tight in a way it had never before. "I need you here. I don't want you to go anywhere. I want you to stay with me."

Viola bit down on her lower lip hard enough to taste blood. He needed her? For what exactly? She was a temporary Luna and a temporary mate and she knew how that story ended, had always known, and staying would only mean hurting more when the ending finally arrived. She should go. She knew she should go.

But he had said it with such quiet sincerity that she didn't know how to turn away from it. When had anyone ever truly wanted her to stay? She searched back through her memory and couldn't find an answer, and the absence of one was enough to make her close her eyes and breathe through it slowly.

She would stay. Until she found out what happened to her sister. Until he stopped needing her. And then she would go quietly and not make it harder than it had to be for either of them.

"Will you stay with me?" Sebastian asked, looking into her shimmering eyes that held his favorite color even when they were full of tears.

She nodded. One small movement of her head. And she watched the tension leave his face a look that looked almost like relief softened his expression, as if her answer had been the only one he was willing to accept and he hadn't been entirely certain it was coming.

He wiped away her tears with his hand and tucked her hair behind her ears as he stared at her face with a tender expression. 'I will take good care of you, mi amor, so you will never consider leaving me.' Sebastian thought to himself, staring at her weary eyes.

Viola suddenly became very aware of her own state from the way he was staring at her like that. Along with it came the awareness of how long she had been lying in that bed without properly cleaning herself and washing the hair his fingers were currently running through, and the thought of a bath and warm water and starting fresh pulled at her more strongly than exhaustion did.

She looked at him and asked quietly, "I need to bathe. Will you hold me to sleep afterwards?"

Sebastian didn't hesitate for even a second. "Of course. Do you need help bathing?" He asked, and she felt the color rise to her cheeks before she could stop it.

"I can manage on my own." She said, standing up from the bed quickly, and the movement sent a sharp pain shooting through her back that made her hiss between her teeth. Sebastian was on his feet immediately.

"Move carefully, baby. That wound still looks bad. I really think I should help you in the bath before you hurt yourself further or get water in the wound." He said with his brows pulled together, meaning every word. He was at the point where the concern he felt for her was overriding everything else and the last thing he needed was a domestic accident making things worse than they already were.

Viola's cheeks flushed warm at the suggestion. She couldn't begin to imagine herself undressed with him assisting her when she had perfectly functioning hands and legs, and the image that came to her mind uninvited of him running soapy hands over her naked skin made her momentarily forget every emotion she had been sitting in for the past minutes and sent heat rushing all the way to the top of her head.

She dispersed that image quickly by clearing her throat and saying, "I can bathe myself. I will be careful not to let water touch it. I just need to wash my hair and wipe the grime off my skin, that is

all." And before he could insist or deny her the bath entirely, Viola moved away from him and walked briskly into the bathroom, pulling the door behind her.

Sebastian stood looking at the closing door, his eyes dropping to where his robe had swallowed her whole and made her look even smaller than she already was, and his mouth settled into a flat and worried line. His mind immediately began running through scenarios of her slipping on the wet floor or catching the wound on something and falling, and the thought made him move before he had consciously decided to.

He was at the bathroom door in a few steps. "Wear the brown shoes at the shoe rack on the side." He called through the door. "They grip the floor and make it less slippery."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 250: Being pampered_Part 2[1,153 words]

On the other side, Viola stared at the door with her brows pulled together, unable to help thinking that he was being thoroughly paranoid about a woman who was perfectly capable of standing upright in a bathroom without supervision. But to put his mind at ease and also because it was not the worst idea, she reached for the shoes and called back, "Thank you."

Sebastian was still not satisfied. He began to pace the space outside the bathroom door, stopping every so often when the sound on the other side went completely quiet to press close and listen for any sign that something was wrong, then resuming the pacing when he heard the sound of water again. She wasn't using the shower, which was good. It meant she was keeping the water away from her back.

He caught himself with his ear nearly pressed against the door and his hand reaching for the doorknob, and stopped short, cursing quietly under his breath. What was wrong with him? She had assured him she was perfectly capable of bathing herself, so what was he doing trying to peek and confirm that she was really fine?

He was behaving like a paranoid new mate, hovering over his female at every given moment because of that little fear that always sits on mates, just like new mothers fearing that something would go wrong with their baby. Sebastian had heard about this behavior in mates, but by everything holy, this was the first time he was truly experiencing that mate paranoia, even though he was a man destined to have mates come and go throughout his life.

He moved his hand away from the doorknob and ran it into the silver strands of his hair, bewildered by this new experience and the strange, unfamiliar urges. He stepped away from the door before he found himself peeking inside, because that was not something he intended to make a habit of.

He straightened up and decided that standing here was doing neither of them any good and he should use the time to find her something comfortable to sleep in when she came out.

He walked into his closet, where he had arranged earlier that morning for Matt to bring in female clothing in her sizes, underwear, sleepwear, comfortable clothes for recovery, and other female essentials she would need while staying here. He wasn't yet certain how long she would be here, but Sebastian was determined to keep her until the 30th, until the worst of those days in his life had passed.

The last time, he had left her in the main pack building because they weren't married then, and he hadn't cared for her the way he did now. But this time around, he would keep her where he knew there was high security and strong walls while he would be away. He hated this time of his life, but it was a battle he had to fight until the curse was over and done with. However, for the first time in his thirty years of life, he wasn't looking forward to this one, because there would be changes...

Sebastian pushed the thought from his mind and focused instead on his task of finding his female something to wear.

He had arranged her things himself on one side of the closet after they had moved her into his room in the main quarters, since there were no omega workers currently in the house. He opened the drawers he had folded her panties and selected a boyshort and a loose fitting nightshirt that would sit away from the skin and not graze or press against the injury, and carried them out to the bed.

He was setting them down when the bathroom door finally opened and she came out wrapped in the robe with her hair bundled in a towel on top of her head.

Sebastian felt his heart soften at the sight of her. Her face was still pale but cleaner now, and she was gripping the belt of the robe with both hands like she didn't quite know what to do with them, her eyes moving between him and the nightwear laid out on the bed.

She looked almost comically small in his gray robe, swamped by it from shoulder to floor, and he wouldn't have minded her staying in it if the fabric wasn't thick enough to press uncomfortably against the wound and suffocate it through the night.

He moved first. He crossed to her, took her hand gently and said, "Let me dry your hair." He led her toward the bed before she could argue.

"I can dry my own hair." Viola muttered, not used to being on the receiving end of this kind of attention and not knowing how to sit quietly inside it without pointing out that she was capable of doing things for herself.

"I know you can." He said simply. "I just want to do it. And lifting your arms above your head will pull at the wound. Come and sit here." He guided her to the low stool at the foot of the bed and settled her onto it.

Despite his own leg still aching with every movement, he walked back into the closet and returned with a wireless blow dryer and a hairbrush, and she was watching him when he came back out. He smiled at her when he caught her eyes on him.

"I really can do it myself. You don't have to dry my hair for me." She said again, because sitting in silence while someone fussed over her was something she genuinely did not know how to do without narrating it. She even reached out and tried to take the dryer from his hand but he pulled it back out of her reach and clicked his tongue at her.

"Didn't I tell you that day, amor?" Sebastian remarked as he positioned himself at her side. "You will be given the treatment deserving of my wife and mate, so let me do my duties to you. Don't stop me from taking care of you the way you deserve," he said, turning the blow dryer on to drown out any argument she might have made with the noise.

He was well aware that she might not be used to things like this, just as he wasn't, but she had saved his life and done something no other person had ever done for him. And if it took spoiling her rotten until she became completely used to it, used to being cared for, even dependent, then so be it. In fact, Sebastian thought with a secret smile, he wanted her to fall for him too, without the pull of a mate bond, which she didn't have yet. She didn't know it, but he had already mentally marked her as his alone, even without the permanent mark on her.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 251: Being pampered_Part 3[1,195 words]

Viola felt her heart warm along with the warm air of the blow dryer moving through her hair, and despite not being used to this kind of treatment from anyone, she sat still and allowed herself to simply enjoy it rather than insisting on doing it herself, the way she had been doing everything for herself for years without exception.

She didn't know what she would have done at this point in her life without Sebastian beside her. He had supported her at the orphanage in Nightshade and talked her down from the edge of herself.

He had pulled her out of that river. And now he was here holding her up when she was at the lowest point she had reached in a very long time, at a point where she had genuinely forgotten what living truly felt like rather than just surviving it.

Knowing herself as well as she did, and knowing how easily she could slide into a dark depression that had always been waiting at the edges of her when things got bad enough, Viola understood that if he hadn't been here she would have fallen into that state of mind again. The one that always brought the self harm and the self hatred with it like unwanted company. She had been closer to it than she wanted to admit after she woke up, but his presence had sooth it away.

She was closing her eyes to the warm air moving against her skin when the dryer clicked off and she heard him ask, "Do you brush your hair in sections or all at once?"

Viola opened her eyes and let out a soft laugh at the genuine innocence of the question. "I thought you were supposed to be an expert at this?" She said.

Sebastian heard her laugh and felt something loosen pleasantly in his chest at the sound of it. If only she knew that he had never brushed a woman's hair in his adult life, not even his sister's, because Zoe had declared loudly when they were children that he pulled too hard and had refused to let him near her hair ever again, running to Matt's mother every time she needed it done instead.

He had attempted Zoe's hair exactly three times in his life and all three times had ended with her in tears. He had no intention of repeating that outcome with Viola, which was exactly why he was asking rather than simply diving in with false confidence.

Beyond that, he had never seen hair quite like Viola's. Now that it was dry it had expanded to nearly three times the volume it had been when damp, the full dark mass of it sitting heavy and impossibly black in a way that was almost intimidating to look at. He ran his hand slowly through it before he could stop himself, feeling the weight of the strands against his fingers.

"Not much of an expert when it comes to women's hair." Sebastian admitted, still studying the hair and quietly trying to determine where a sensible person would begin.

Viola felt a quiet pull in her chest at that admission. It meant this wasn't something he did for other women. If it were, he would have known how to hold a brush without looking like he was approaching something that might startle. She couldn't fully explain where the warm satisfaction of that realization came from, but it was there regardless, sitting in her chest.

"Let me do it myself then," she said with a small smile, reaching for the brush, but he gently swatted her hand away and said, "Show me how to do it properly so I don't hurt your scalp. That is why I asked, not because I wanted you to take the brush from me. Ay, qué cabezota eres."

"What was that you said?" Viola questioned, turning to playfully glare at him from the corner of her eyes as she understood the meaning of those words.

"Mi cabezota understands me, so I don't need to translate. You're stubborn, and I like you that way." He reached out and gently pinched her plump cheek, and color rushed to her face before she swatted his hand away and turned to face forward, biting down on a pleased smile, quiet satisfaction settling within her.

Viola showed him carefully, walking him through it step by step, and he followed her instructions with the kind of focused and unhurried attention he usually reserved for things that mattered to him.

He brushed through her hair with the careful hands of a pirate handling his most prized treasure, and somewhere in the middle of it, his fingers began working in slow circles against her scalp

between strokes. Viola let her eyes drift closed without meaning to, the sensation pulling her under as the warmth of it spread from the top of her head down through her shoulders, loosening the tension that had been wound tight in her for days.

When he finished she felt the absence of his hands immediately and was quietly, privately disappointed that it was over. He stepped back and gave her room to stand and then gestured toward the nightwear laid out on the bed before excusing himself from the room, telling her he would be back shortly.

Viola had a feeling he was giving her privacy to dress and the thoughtfulness of it moved through her in a quiet wave.

When she looked at the clothes he had set out and found that he had thought to include underwear alongside the nightshirt, the heat that rushed to her cheeks came quickly, and she pressed her hands to her face for a moment. Why was she becoming someone who blushed so easily these days? she thought with pursed lips. Was it because he was so considerate and caring, thoughtful enough to pick out a pair of panties for her along with a nightshirt?

She hadn't known little things like this could have such a huge effect on her, enough to make her like him more than she had just minutes ago. She picked up the shirt and underwear, biting back a smile.

By the time she had finished changing into the loose nightshirt that fell to her knees and sat blessedly away from the wound on her back, Sebastian had returned, carrying a bowl of porridge on a tray and setting down alongside it several bottles of supplements and a glass of water, which he told her she needed to take before bed.

Viola didn't argue or complain. She surprised Sebastian again by walking over to him and carefully sitting down on the couch, taking the tray from him with a soft, "Thank you."

Sebastian watched her finish the porridge and reach for the bottle of medication, which he was quick to take from her, uncapping each one as she swallowed a pill with water. She took every single pill without hesitation, and Sebastian couldn't help but praise her, gently patting her head.

"That was impressive. Many people can't stand swallowing pills, amor," he said as he took the tray from her hands and set it aside.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 252: Being pampered_Part 4[1,192 words]

Hearing his words, Viola bit the inside of her cheek. She used to hate medication so much, but the Hollow Quarter changed that. Four years of forcing dry pheromone suppressant pills down her throat every morning had killed that fear. Pills were nothing to her now.

"Let me fix our bed," he told her, turning to look at her after putting her pills aside. Since she hadn't eaten anything heavy that needed time to digest, sleeping wouldn't be a problem now, and she gave him a nod, fighting not to blush at the term our bed.

She watched as Sebastian moved around the room, disappearing into the closet and coming back with clean bedsheets, stripping the current ones from the bed himself and replacing them, arranging the pillows with a care.

Viola glanced at the frameless digital clock on the wall and saw that it was nine in the evening. She had regained consciousness an hour ago, and if it weren't for the pain in her back, she wouldn't have believed the assassination attempt on Sebastian's life that had happened days ago was real. The fact that she had almost lost him then was still taking its time to settle within her.

Had he died then... she shuddered, not wanting to imagine the worst, and chided herself for letting that nightmare creep its way back into her mind at this time. She had fallen in love with the man against her will, and she didn't think there would ever be a way to stop that feeling unless the day came when he would stop needing her and she would have to walk away herself.

Watching him fluff the pillow and seeing how unlike the scary Supreme Alpha she had met months ago he looked now made her eyes twinkle. He was wearing a casual black T-shirt and loose sweatpants, the shirt emphasizing his strong tattooed biceps and forearms, veins subtly bulging beneath his skin. He was so impossibly handsome, and she stared at him until he turned around, and she quickly looked away, pretending she was looking at the closet door.

"Why are you looking away like a sneaky thief?" he said, chuckling at her reaction when he caught her staring. "I am your husband. You are free to look."

"I am not looking at you. I am looking at how you are fixing the bed and doing a splendid job at it. You must have been a cleaner or a working omega in your past life, because you made the bed so well for an Alpha," Viola remarked, not wanting to admit the fact that she had been admiring him, finding it hard to believe that she had fallen for him against all her willpower.

Sebastian let out a laugh at her words. "I wasn't always an Alpha. When my mom was alive, she didn't allow omegas to fix our beds, we did it ourselves. Fixing the bed isn't such a big deal, darling."

Viola pursed her lips, noting how he mentioned his mom again and she couldn't help but comment, "She must have been a wonderful she-wolf then, even if she made you do your own bed."

"She was." He remarked fondly, his eyes settling on her with a warmth that sat differently on his face than his usual expressions. "And if she were still here, I think she would have liked you very much."

Viola felt flattered and doubtful at once, as not many people liked her that much, and even though she thought his late mother might not have liked her, she couldn't help but feel warm at the notion. It would have been nice to have a mother-in-law...

"You mention her often." She said quietly, looking at him. "I can tell how much you loved them both, her and the late Alpha. But I have never seen any pictures of them anywhere, not here and not in the High Tower." She muttered, the curiosity pulling the words out before she had fully decided to say them.

She had genuinely wondered about it, what the late Alpha and his wife had looked like, why there was no remembrance of them displayed anywhere in Silver. "Do you have any aversion to photographs?"

Now that Viola thought about it, there were no pictures of any of the dead, not of his dead Lunas, his twin brother or his parents. She watched as her question made his silver eyes turn dim like the light switching off a candle and she couldn't help but think that maybe she had stepped into forbidden territory with that question.

She almost thought he wasn't going to answer her and was about to switch it up and bring back the good mood, when he suddenly let out a sigh and said, "I don't like looking back at people who are gone. It is not something that sits comfortably with me. I grieve and then I close it away and I focus on what is ahead. Life is easier when you move forward and don't keep pulling yourself back to what you can no longer change."

Viola's brows arched at those words. So he avoided keeping photograph because he didn't want to hold on for too long, even when he cared about them. Did that go the same for his late Lunas? A thought suddenly crossed her mind. So if something were to happen to her someday, he would grieve a little and then move on with his life like she had never existed, just like he had moved on as though those two past Lunas had never been...

"But if you are curious about what the late Alpha and his wife looked like, their album is somewhere in this quarter, you can always look through it." Sebastian added, noticing the slight dim to her mood as if he had said something to disappoint her, even though he had no idea what he had said wrong. She gave him a small smile and a nod.

"Sure." She muttered, looking down at her hands, completely unaware that unlike his parents, whose pictures he avoided looking at because flashes of how they had died had never left his memories over the years, Sebastian had entirely different reasons why he didn't keep either of his past Lunas' pictures anywhere within sight, even though it was said he had been head over heels for the first one, which was anything but the truth, but he couldn't let the truth out, because he had made a promise to someone.

Sebastian straightened up. "Come here." He beckoned for her to come closer after he finished with the bed.

Viola's inside quivered. She had asked him to hold her to sleep earlier and she had meant it when she asked, but now that the moment had actually arrived she felt the flutter of nerves in her stomach as she walked toward him.

"I need to look at your back before you lie down." Sebastian said, catching her small hand in his as she reached him and guiding her to sit on the edge of the bed. "Can you pull your shirt up for me?"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 253: I like the way your skin taste[

1,385 words]

Viola bit down on her lower lip and nodded. Since the wound sat at the upper part of her back, she couldn't simply raise the fabric without exposing the front of herself, so she slipped her arms carefully out of the sleeves, gathered the shirt away from her back and held it pressed against her chest with both hands, covering herself at the front.

From behind her, Sebastian's eyes darkened. The rounded sides of her breasts peeked out softly from under her arms, full and smooth. Heat rushed to his groin, his cock twitching to life in his pants. He wanted to touch those mounds but he controlled himself as he didn't want to frighten her with his desires when she had just woken up.

Nonetheless, the moment the wound appeared, the desire was suppressed almost as quickly as it had risen, his full attention shifting to the wound on her back, and the sight of it sent a slow and controlled fury moving through him all over again.

The wound was healing as it should, but not fast enough for his liking. If she had her wolf it would have been gone by now, closed and fading, and she wouldn't be sitting with the discomfort of it.

He reached out and traced his fingers carefully along the outer edge of it and felt her jolt beneath his touch.

"Is it painful?" He asked softly.

She shook her head without turning around. "No." She murmured.

She was lying. He could tell it. He had known she-wolves who would have used a wound like this to their full advantage, who would have made him feel responsible and guilty and wrapped that guilt around him like a rope to get exactly what they wanted from him. This one sat here with a dagger wound in her back and told him it didn't hurt.

Who was she kidding?

"Lie on your front." He said quietly. "I will heal it for you."

Viola turned her head over her shoulder to look at him, color rising immediately to her face. "What? You don't mean to lick it, do you?"

"There is no other way that works as fast." He said, his hands coming to rest lightly on her shoulders. "Let me treat it properly and it will be gone in seconds."

Viola didn't move immediately. The idea of his mouth on her skin in any context was doing things to her composure that she didn't have the energy to manage properly right now, wound or no wound. But the ache in her back had been a constant and exhausting companion since she woke up and the thought of it being gone made the decision for her.

She turned and lay carefully down on her front, settling her cheek against the pillow and letting her hands rest on either side of her head. She felt him shift on the bed behind her, felt the warmth of him as he leaned in close, and then his breath fell against her skin, warm and teasing, and the goosebumps rose across her back and arms before he had even touched her.

Then his tongue made contact with the wound and she went completely still.

'Oh.' Was the only coherent thought her mind produced.

Her fingers curled into the sheets as the sensation moved through her, the careful motion of his tongue against the wound sending a wave of warmth spreading outward from the point of contact, the healing effect immediate and deeply relieving.

The ache that had been sitting in her back began to lift and dissolve and she closed her eyes and exhaled slowly, letting her body soften into the mattress. Even though he shouldn't have been licking her in his human form, and usually mates only licked each other in their other forms, she couldn't help but embrace the soothing effect of it more than feel embarrassed by it.

Sebastian kept licking, making sure every part of the wound was covered, and he didn't let himself get distracted. But her taste, the softness of her skin, the little shivers running through her... it was getting harder to stay focused.

His cock grew harder, pressing uncomfortably against his clothes.

When the wound finally closed completely, he didn't pull back. Instead, he hovered there, staring at her smooth back, now slightly glistening with his saliva as it worked to heal her.

He wasn't entirely sure when the decision happened or if it happened at all, if it was a decision or simply the absence of one. His lips pressed to the skin just beside where the wound had been, and then to the smooth plane of her shoulder blade, and he felt her go very still beneath him in a way that was entirely different from the stillness of before.

"I like the way your skin tastes, always. You are always cool," he whispered against her back, causing goosebumps to rise on her skin.

'Stop. Don't go too far, or you'll end up with blue balls, man. We're all still recovering; sex should be the last thing on your mind right now,' Muffin, who was still healing himself, spoke from within him, but Sebastian ignored him.

He pressed another kiss to the curve between her shoulder and her neck instead.

Viola's teeth sank into her lower lip. She knew the wound was healed. She had felt it close under his mouth and tongue. She knew that. And yet she said nothing when she realized he was kissing her skin and whispering words on her back.

She lay there with her cheek against the pillow and her fingers twisted into the sheets and she said absolutely nothing because the feeling of his lips moving across her skin was the most exquisitely distracting thing she had experienced in recent memory and every rational thought she had was staging a quiet and very unconvincing protest somewhere at the back of her mind.

'Tell him to stop.' She thought.

His lips moved to her other shoulder blade and she felt the warmth of them through her entire body.

She didn't tell him to stop.

Sebastian trailed his mouth slowly down the line of her spine, feeling the way her breath changed beneath him, and the knowledge that he was doing that to her was not helping him think clearly. His hand moved without full permission and settled on the curve of her ass where the boyshort sat, his palm curving around it, and he felt her sharp intake of breath.

'This is not the right time, man.' Muffin protested, even as Sebastian's lips pressed to the soft skin at the small of her back.

'She just woke up. She is healing and so are we. She has been through more in the past week than most people survive in a lifetime.' Muffin reminded him firmly. 'We have tomorrow.'

His lips stilled at the memory of her looking pale and nearly lifeless just a few hours ago. If he was going to do anything, he didn't want to be stopped halfway through, and it would be better to wait until she had fully regained her strength.

He stayed there for a moment, not moving, his palm still resting on her ass and his forehead dropping lightly to her lower back as he pulled in a slow and steadying breath and got hold of himself. He felt her waiting beneath him, the tension in her body a mirror of his own, and it cost him considerably more than he expected to pull his hand away and lift his head.

Sebastian straightened up and lay down beside her on his back, staring at the ceiling with his jaw set and his hands flat on his stomach, working at getting his breathing back to normal.

Viola turned her head against the pillow and looked at him from where she lay, her cheek flushed and her eyes carrying an expression she hadn't fully gotten under control yet.

She watched the line of his jaw and the stillness of him and understood exactly what had just happened and exactly what he had just chosen not to do.

'He stopped.' She thought to herself, and didn't fully know whether what moved through her at that realization was relief or disappointment as she had anticipated more.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 254: The Alpha's Death[1,005 words]

Sebastian turned his head and looked at her, and for a moment neither of them said anything.

"How is your back?" He asked, his voice coming out rougher than he intended.

"Gone." She said quietly. "It's completely gone. Thank you."

He nodded and looked back at the ceiling. "Good." He said. "Come here then." He opened his arm to her.

Viola moved carefully across the bed after pulling her shirt back on and settled against his side, and his arm came around her without hesitation, pulling her in close. She rested her head against his chest and listened to his heartbeat, which was not nearly as steady as he was pretending it was.

She closed her eyes, but sleep was the last thing her body was interested in. She had been unconscious for days and her mind was too awake now, too aware of too many things at once, to slide easily into rest.

Neither of them said a word about what had almost happened. The silence between them held it without either of them needing to name it, and Viola let it sit there for a while before she broke it.

"Did they catch the people responsible for the assassination?" She asked quietly.

Sebastian let out a slow breath. "Not yet." He said. "We are still working on drawing the person out."

Viola felt the restlessness that had been sitting underneath her skin since she woke up sharpen at those words. The thought that whoever had done this was still out there, still unaccounted for, still planning, made it difficult to lie still. "How do you plan to do that?"

"By faking my death." Sebastian said it with the easy nonchalance of someone announcing a minor schedule change, like it was the most ordinary solution in the world. "The announcement will go out to everyone in Silver tomorrow. The Alpha is dead."

Viola tilted her head slightly to look up at him. "Do you really think that will work? What if the person doesn't come out?"

Sebastian shrugged the shoulder she wasn't resting on. "Whoever is behind this is eager. Eager people don't sit still when they hear what they have been waiting for. They move. And when they move to claim the seat, they will show themselves. Even if I don't manage to catch the main culprit

immediately, I will know which of my enemies wants me gone badly enough to have gone to these lengths for the seat. That alone narrows things considerably."

Viola was quiet for a moment, turning his plan over in her mind and examining it from different angles, when his voice broke through her thoughts.

"How did I survive?" He asked quietly, looking down at her, his breath warm against her forehead.

Viola thought about Miss Lara's warning. The seriousness in the woman's voice when she had pushed the buckets of water away and told her to keep that ability hidden from every werewolf she ever met, not to trust any of them with it.

She didn't fully understand why she was holding the warning so close, and she didn't fully understand why even now, lying against someone she trusted more than most people she had ever known, something in her kept the whole truth just out of reach.

"We used water to cool the bullets down and draw them out." Viola said, keeping her voice even. "Miss Lara figured it out."

It wasn't a complete lie. But it wasn't the whole truth either, and the part she left out sat quietly in her chest as she closed her eyes again and listened to the unsteady rhythm of his heart beneath her cheek, willing herself to go to sleep and not dwell on why she didn't tell him the complete truth.

Sebastian watched her closed eyes, her lashes casting soft shadows over her cheeks, and he couldn't help but narrow his eyes. He could have sworn he'd caught fragments of a conversation between her and Miss Lara about her doing something to remove the bullet, but his mind hadn't been clear at the time, so maybe he had misheard them...

The moment the sun rose over Silver the next day, Matt made the announcement through the pack conference system, pushing it to every screen in the city. Every pack member who saw it stopped what they were doing and stared. The holographic screens displayed a clear image of the Alpha lying in a pool of blood with bullet wounds across his body, and that detail alone made the news land with a weight that left no room for doubt.

The werewolves of Silver's reacted with gasped around the city. Many couldn't help thinking that it had always been a possibility, that a supreme Alpha known to travel without a full warrior escort was always taking a risk, but none of them had expected it to happen before he left an heir behind like the Alphas who had come before him.

What were they supposed to do now? The Alpha seat couldn't simply be handed to whoever was available. It required Alpha blood, a specific lineage, and there was no heir waiting to be groomed for it. The thought of the seat sitting empty made people's chests tighten with a particular kind of fear that went beyond ordinary grief.

A pack without an Alpha didn't stay standing for long. Everyone in Silver knew that. The Alpha was the thread holding everything else together, the safety, the order, the alliances, all of it. Without him it could unravel faster than anyone wanted to think about.

What if their pack become an ordinary pack like the others?

"...We ask that everyone remain calm while the elders work to address the situation and identify a path forward. Thank you." Matt finished the announcement with those words before the screen went dark, but calm was the last thing anyone in Silver was feeling as the crowds outside the High Tower began to swell with people demanding answers and action from the elders.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 255: Heat season[1,332 words]

Matt stood at the glass wall and looked down at the gathering below, watching the size of it grow as he opened the mind link to fill Sebastian in.

"They bought it completely. The whole pack is in a panic and I expect our man will not be able to sit still much longer with the seat sitting empty in front of him. We will have him out in the open soon enough." Matt said, and he meant it.

They had been waiting a long time to put a face to whoever had been operating from the shadows, striking carefully and disappearing without a trace each time. Zoe had paid the price once. The Luna had nearly paid it this time. They were done waiting for the person to show himself.

When it had happened with Zoe back then, every kind of investigation had taken place in Silver, yet the culprit remained unknown to the point that not a single camera captured the person behind the shooting. It had made Sebastian suspect that the people working behind the security system might have been involved in it, and he had replaced every one of them and banished them from his pack.

Something similar had happened now. No matter how much pain the men they had captured in Nightshade were put through, nothing useful was coming out of them, just like nothing had come out of the investigation years ago.

"Keep me updated on everything the elders decide. I will keep the link open around the clock." Sebastian said from the other end as he walked the perimeter of the quarter the way Gilbert had advised to keep the muscles in his leg from stiffening.

"Will do." Matt said, and then before the link could close he added, "You only have a few days left before the 30th. Are you still going through with it this time?"

Sebastian's eyes darkened. "You know how it works. It is out of my hands until we find the sea creature or confirm the prophesied one. Have the men reached the Nightshade river yet?"

"They should be there by now searching the waters. I have also flagged the girl Julia to our men on the ground. If she cooperates she might give us something useful about what really happened to the other twin." Matt informed.

Sebastian hummed in quiet satisfaction. Matt always came through, always had things moving before Sebastian had finished thinking about them, and right now that was exactly what he needed.

"Heads up, by the way," Matt mused. "I sent Gilbert with your suppressants, though I don't think you'll need them with your mate there. But just in case you want them and can't perform well in bed because of your injuries, or your mate gives you a no-go, you can suppress your heat and—"

"Don't insult me so, Matteo," Sebastian cut him off, knowing his friend was having the laugh of his life. Sebastian had never used heat suppressants during any of his heat cycles, for there had always been a she-wolf available to him until now. But he wasn't about to give Matt the satisfaction of knowing he might indeed need the suppressants because he and his mate were not yet sexually familiar with each other.

"I don't need suppressants," he deadpanned. "Keep them for your single ass when your heat season circles around. Virgins like you need them more than me."

Matt clicked his tongue. "Ouch, that burns," he said in mock pain while laughing, because being insulted as a virgin didn't affect him, not when he was saving himself for the one. Whoever she was out there in the world, probably being a chef like he had always imagined her to be, creating new dishes that would make them compete and click when they finally met.

"Whatever. I already sent the bottle of suppressants. It'll help you sleep well if you take a double dose," Matt added.

Sebastian's lips thinned at Matt's words, and without addressing them, he said instead,

"Don't forget to send Zoe back to the main quarters. I don't want her hearing this news and believing it. She hasn't fully recovered from losing Alex yet, and I won't have her grieving me on top of it," Sebastian said, the thought of his sister sitting somewhere in the pack believing he was dead settling uncomfortably in his chest.

"Already on it." Matt replied.

"Good. I have to go." Sebastian said, his eyes moving toward the room where Viola was upstairs. "My Luna is awake."

While the Silver pack members were panicking about the Alpha's death, some were delighted at the news.

"I told you so, didn't I, Mami?" Javier exclaimed, his face lit up with a happiness that was almost uncomfortable to look at. "My dreams always come true and they didn't disappoint me this time either. I got exactly what I wanted."

Camilla stared at her son with open suspicion as he grinned from ear to ear. If there was one thing she knew about Javier it was that he had a habit of making his so called prophetic dreams come true by doing something behind her back and then presenting the outcome as fate.

"What have you done this time?" Camilla asked calmly. "Are you the one responsible for his death?" She narrowed her eyes at him and Javier's smile slowly fell as he turned to glare at her.

"What are you talking about, Mami? Would I hide something like that from you if I were responsible? I would be gloating to your face." He said, and then turned it around quickly. "Actually I think you are the one responsible. You set something up without telling me to make my dream come true, didn't you?"

Camilla pressed her fingers to her forehead. "Don't take me for a fool and don't try to turn things around. You have become sneaky lately, moving around at night. I saw you leaving the quarters days ago. Where did you go? What are you hiding from me, boy?"

Javier kept his expression carefully neutral. He couldn't let her find out what he had been doing, not yet, not until his plans had fully succeeded. His mother had a way of taking over and steering things the way she wanted them to go the moment she caught wind of anything, always pushing him to the side and taking the lead when she should be standing behind him and letting him carve his own path.

"I am not hiding anything from you." He said evenly. "All I want you to understand is that I will use this opportunity to claim what I deserve. That seat belongs to me more than it belongs to anyone else out there and I intend to take it. It shouldn't matter who killed my cousin, what matters is that the path is now clear. All we need is for the people to get desperate enough to see that I am a more than capable Alpha." He said with a smirk that made his mother uneasy because she knew that particular smile and what it usually preceded.

"Don't rush toward the seat. Let me speak to the elders first and—"

"I have left this plan in your hands long enough, Mami." Javier cut her off. "Let me take it from here. Talking my brother into betraying his wolfless friend didn't get us anywhere because he turned you down flat. I am doing things my own way now." Saying that, he turned and walked out whistling to himself, leaving his mother standing there with her mouth open, unable to fully believe he had just spoken to her that way.

Hadn't she given this ingrate more than enough? If only the other boy hadn't also turned out to be such a disappointment, she wouldn't have had all her hopes resting on one who was now talking back at her like that.

What was the boy up to? What had he done?

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 256: Kissable lips[1,526 words]

Silver Pack main quarter.

Viola sat on the living room couch browsing through the new phone she had been given that morning at breakfast by Sebastian, since she had lost her old one back in Nightshade. With her legs tucked underneath her and a pillow pressed against her chest, she watched a cooking video with quiet concentration.

She had woken up feeling healthier than she had in a long time. Sebastian had healed her back the night before and the medication had done its work, and for the first time in what felt like forever she could move around without grimacing at every step.

It had been so long since her body had felt this functional that she genuinely felt like she could do something with herself rather than just exist carefully inside it.

Unlike the last time she had come to his main quarter, there were no omega workers around this time to constantly have their eyes on her.

Sebastian had cooked breakfast himself, and not a small one either. He had made an entire feast that she couldn't come close to finishing, though he had kept refilling her plate regardless, saying she needed the nourishment and the protein, and she had stuffed herself to keep the look of displeasure off his face.

After breakfast he had stayed and talked with her for a while about the search he had sent to Nightshade for her sister and about the death announcement going out across Silver.

Hearing that he genuinely intended to keep the promise he had made her about finding out what happened to Ivy settled something in her chest. Even though the Ivy in her dream didn't want her to look for her didn't mean Viola would give up on her. Knowing that someone was actively helping her made it easier to breathe.

Now though she had nothing to do in this large and quiet quarter while Sebastian was in his study with Doctor Gilbert, and so she had found herself drawn to cooking videos.

She wasn't fully certain yet but the idea of cooking their dinner had been growing in her mind since she finished eating. Just like he had made breakfast for her.

It wouldn't hurt to finally learn. She had never bothered before, having grown up with the arrogant assumption that she would never be without omegas to do her bidding.

That version of herself felt like someone she had read about rather than someone she had been. Now, more than anything, she wanted to do something for Sebastian. Something real and specific that he hadn't asked for.

She had thought about going shopping and getting him the light colored shirts she had mentally noted to buy when she would go out with her sister, but that plan had changed along with everything else when she couldn't find Ivy. And even if it hadn't, Sebastian had told her clearly that they couldn't step outside the security of the quarter for at least three days until the culprit was found and dealt with.

So it had to be something inside the house.

Viola bit the edge of her nail as she watched the video intently, and when she saw the list of ingredients she got up from the couch, slid her feet into Sebastian's house shoes and padded into the kitchen and pantry to check what they had.

When it comes to cooking, she was too ignorant at it to save her life so she had to check the ingredients lists carefully.

She gathered her hair up into a ponytail and plugged in her earbuds, listening to the cooking instructions while scanning the shelves and pulling out what she needed for a proper high end dinner.

She wasn't going to make something simple. If she was going to do this she was going to do it well, something that could at least hold its own against his cooking, which she had fallen in love with even before she fell for the man himself. Strange as it sounded even to her, Viola wanted to be someone in his life that wouldn't be so easily set aside or replaced.

She was reaching up to the top shelf for an ingredient when she felt a presence behind her and spun around so fast she lost her footing on the built-in step and would have gone straight down if a strong arm hadn't caught her around the waist and lifted her clean off the floor like she weighed nothing at all.

Her heart lurched and then Sebastian's warm scent hit her before she even saw his face, and when she did his silver eyes were right there, twinkling at her as he steadied her against his body.

His hand was pressed firmly over her ass, fingers splayed with a possessiveness that sent a rush of heat straight to her core before she had even processed what was happening. The solid press of his chest against her breasts made her nipples tighten instantly.

"Wh-when did you get here?" Viola stammered, trying to shift back but he kept her right where she was, her feet not touching the floor so she had no choice but to keep both hands braced against his shoulders. She could feel the heat coming off him, the hard ridges of muscle shifting under her palms.

She saw the smile pull at his lips. "What are you doing in the pantry? I have been looking for you."

He had come looking for her after finishing with Gilbert, and when she wasn't in the living room where he had last seen her he had followed her scent into the kitchen to find her straining up toward the top shelf of the pantry.

He couldn't help being curious about what she was doing in here, especially when her scent had been running warmer and sweeter to him all day, pulling at things in him that he was going to have to deal with sooner rather than later given that his heat season was approaching and pulling harder on his control each hour he didn't take the suppressant.

Viola pursed her lips, looking down at him from the height his hold had lifted her to. "Planning to cook." She said, not hiding it, and she watched his brow arch at that.

"Cooking?" He repeated. "For what reason?"

Viola rolled her eyes. "For whatever reason people generally cook for?" She said, and he let out a short laugh, the low sound vibrating through his chest and into hers.

"You know that's not what I mean. You should be resting or at least sitting somewhere in the house, not reaching for things on high shelves."

Viola wriggled until he set her down on her feet, though his hand stayed at her waist and kept her from going anywhere. "You made breakfast for me so I am making dinner for you. And I feel perfectly fine, more than fine enough to cook. Why were you looking for me anyway?" She added, steering the conversation before he could talk her out of the plan entirely.

Sebastian wouldn't have, as it turned out. The idea of her cooking for him sent a warmth through him that his body, already running hotter than usual with the approaching heat, received with far more enthusiasm than he intended to show. And looking down at her upturned face, her lips parted just slightly, soft and close, the urge to close the small distance between them and kiss her senseless hit him hard enough that he had to physically hold it back before he could answer her.

"I was looking for you to take you to the pool. It is time you learned to swim, like we talked about." He said, raising his free hand to her ear and teasing the lobe slowly between his thumb and index finger, rubbing the sensitive skin in strokes that made her shiver before his words actually landed.

Swimming. Viola swallowed. She wasn't ready for anything involving open water, not after everything, and beyond her own fear, Miss Lara had given her a last minute warning before she left Nightshade to stay away from any body of water for the time being, without fully explaining why. The warning had stuck.

But right now, with his fingers moving against her ear and his other hand warm at her waist, swimming was the absolute last thing on her mind.

Viola cleared her throat. "I can't today, as you can see I have cooking to do before sunset. We can reschedule the swimming lesson." She said, patting his chest with the intention of creating some distance between them.

Sebastian didn't move. He pulled her closer instead, bringing their bodies flush against each other, and dipped his head lower. "Stay still, silly. Always running away from me." He said quietly, his eyes swimming like a pool of melted silver.

They darkened as they locked onto her moist, inviting mouth that seemed to be calling onto his. The air between them thickened and charged itself in the way it always did when they got this close, like the space between them had its own heat source.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 257: The kiss in the garden_Part 1[1,663 words]

Viola's breath caught, her lips parting instinctively as his face hovered inches from hers. She could feel the warmth of his breath brushing against her mouth, the heavy beat of his heart thumping steadily against her chest, his grip on her waist pulling her in until there was nothing left between them but the anticipation of what came next. He was going to kiss her. And she wanted him to. Badly.

"Now, slowly drizzle in the hot oil while stirring carefully!"

The loud and enthusiastic instruction blasted directly into her ear from the earbud she had forgotten about and shattered the moment like glass hitting tile. Viola jerked back startled, her cheeks flooding with heat as reality crashed back in, and she fumbled to pull the earbud out.

"You should...you should go do your things." She said breathlessly, still not quite meeting his eyes. "I'll get on with the cooking."

Sebastian's jaw flexed. His eyes were still dark and hadn't fully cleared, the hunger in them unreleased and sitting right there on the surface. He had been managing himself since their marriage and managing it well, but today was different.

Today his body was not cooperating with the level of control he usually kept over it, and without a suppressant running through his system everything was hitting harder and closer than it normally would.

He didn't want to take the suppressant. He wasn't entirely sure why he was being stubborn about it, only that he was, and that the line between not wanting to force anything on her and wanting very much to have her was becoming a thinner one by the hour.

Never in his life had he held back with a shewolf this much. He had always gotten what he wanted, always, without having to put in any real effort because that was simply how it had always worked for him.

But then never in his life had he had a woman like her, one whose pull on him went beyond the physical in a way he still wasn't completely used to, and whose pull on his wolf was something else entirely.

Muffin was fully in support of her and would not allow him to simply seduce her into his bed the way he would have handled any other situation, standing firmly between Sebastian's desires and his actions like a wall.

And maybe it wasn't entirely Muffin holding him back either. Maybe part of it was something he didn't like to acknowledge even to himself.

Fear.

A quiet and unfamiliar fear that if he took her to bed and made love to her, a term he had never used for sex before in his life and yet found himself using now, that he might get her with a pup before she found her wolf and before everything between them had settled into something permanent. And if that happened before she was ready, before they were ready, things would go downhill in ways he couldn't fully predict or control.

They could use protection but that option came with its own complications when it came to werewolves.

They were primitive creatures at their core, and mates specifically were built differently from humans in ways that made their bodies actively resist interference of that kind when it came to each other. It simply didn't work the way it did for others.

The she-wolves he had bedded in the past had always known how to handle themselves to avoid having a pup. They were not new to intimacy and Sebastian had never needed to think twice about any of it with them.

But this one was different in every way that mattered, and he would never take her the way he had taken any of those women before her. She deserved better than that from him and he knew it, even when every instinct he had was arguing loudly against his restraint.

After a long moment he gave a slow nod. "Call if you need help." He said, his voice coming out rougher than he intended. His eyes dropped to her lips one final time before he turned and walked out of the kitchen stiffly, doing his best to conceal the erection pressing against his trousers as he went.

The dining table was set simply but elegantly, two places across from each other with the good candles Viola had found somewhere in the quarter and a bottle of red wine she had brought out from the wine compartment to complete her vision of a proper high end dinner.

She dimmed all the lights in the dining hall so only the candles would brighten the space, and the effect of it made her pause and look around and then smile softly to herself because it had somehow turned into something that looked very much like a candlelight dinner date, which hadn't been what she intended at first. But she found she didn't mind the direction it had taken. A date with Sebastian was not the worst thing she could imagine.

She'd never had a candlelight dinner date with anyone before and having one with her husband doesn't sound all that bad.

She stood back and looked at the table and then at the food and felt the nervous flutter in her stomach settle into something closer to pride. It looked good. It smelled good. Whether it tasted good was the part she was about to find out.

Sebastian came down from his study and stopped at the doorway of the dining room. He took in the table and the candlelit space and then his eyes found her standing beside it in his oversized shirt, and something in his expression shifted in a way he made no effort to hide.

He had come to notice, and quietly like, that she had a habit of wearing his things. His shirts, his house shoes, she moved around his space in his clothes with a comfort that should have felt presumptuous and instead felt like something he hadn't known he wanted until it was already happening.

Nobody had ever been bold enough to wear his things before. He had always considered himself someone who didn't share personal things, not his space and not his belongings, and yet here she was in his shirt looking like she belonged in it and he found he had absolutely no complaint about it whatsoever. He loved her in it.

"You did all of this." He said, still taking it in. It wasn't a question. "Everything smells divine." He inhaled slowly, the aroma of everything she had cooked settling rich and warm in the air around them.

"Don't say anything until you taste it," Viola said quickly, pulling out her chair and sitting down before he could make her even more nervous than she already was.

Why was he inhaling the air like that? Oh, why was she suddenly so worried about his reaction when she should have been worried about whether the food even tasted good or was edible? This was her first attempt at cooking, and she hadn't dared to taste anything while making it, choosing instead to cook and serve everything first.

She bit the inside of her cheek nervously. With how good he was at cooking, she doubted he would find hers eatable, but she would be deeply disappointed if all her effort went to waste. She chided herself to stop overthinking and just let him try it first.

He sat across from her and began loading his plate, helping himself generously to what she had made. She had prepared different dishes. Creamy garlic butter pasta, roasted herb chicken, and buttery mashed potatoes. It had taken the better part of the afternoon to get everything finished and she had been afraid the whole time that the effort would amount to nothing.

For dessert she had prepared a strawberry shortcake layered with whipped cream and fresh strawberries.

She watched him take the first bite with her breath held somewhere in the middle of her chest, and then she watched his expression change.

He said nothing. He simply reached forward and served himself more.

"Well?" She asked, her brows drawing together as her eyes moved between his face and the food.

"I am eating." He chuckled, and she decided to accept that as the highest compliment available.

He ate with an appreciation that was almost embarrassing to witness, the kind of focused and genuine enjoyment that couldn't be faked or performed for politeness, and Viola finally allowed herself to take a proper bite of each dish she had made.

Her eyes rounded slightly. They weren't bad. One of the pasta dishes was a little salty but the rest of it was genuinely good in a way that surprised even her.

Seeing that Sebastian hadn't so much as glanced up to complain about anything, she found herself eating as well.

When he finally set his fork down his plate was clean in a way she had never seen it before. Her heart gave a small flutter and her stomach felt suddenly like it was full of wings all taking flight at once. A funny sensation.

"You have been holding out on me." Sebastian said, looking at her across the table as he finished the last of what was in his mouth.

Viola laughed before she could stop herself. "I genuinely did not know I could cook until today."

"Then we have wasted a great deal of time, my darling. You should open a restaurant." He said, reaching for the wine bottle.

"Don't flatter me, the pasta is salty. Nobody would pay to eat salty pasta." Viola chuckled, watching him fill her glass first before his own. He picked up his glass and looked at her with an expression of genuine disbelief.

"Salty? Where exactly? I didn't taste any salt. You are being a harsh critic of yourself." He mused, pulling the dessert plate toward him and taking a bite, humming in great approval.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 258: The kiss in the garden_Part 2[1,887 words]

Viola couldn't believe he hadn't tasted the salt but she didn't push the topic and instead picked up her own wine glass and sipped.

The wine was good. Viola's glass emptied faster than she intended and Sebastian refilled it without comment as the night seemed to call for it.

Her eyes drifted to the floor to ceiling glass window in the dining hall and settled on the almost full moon hanging in the night sky, and she asked, "In many other packs they will be preparing for the moon festival by now."

Sebastian hummed and turned to look out at the moon, his expression barely shifting as he replied, "We don't celebrate the moon festival in Silver."

Viola turned to look at him. "Because the past Alpha died on that day?" She asked. She had always wondered about it growing up, why Silver never celebrated the moon the way other packs did and why they never participated in the tradition of traveling to neighboring packs for the event, until he had told her how his parents died. It had made sense to her after that.

But Sebastian looked at her and said, "There are more reasons why we don't celebrate it, but yes, that is one of them. It became something I had no interest in after they died. That said, I don't stop anyone in Silver from celebrating it as they like, as long as it doesn't involve inviting outside pack members in."

Viola's brows knitted in curiosity as she asked, "You have other reasons for not celebrating the moon festival other than the death of the past Alpha?"

Sebastian smiled but it didn't reach his steel silver eyes as he told her, "I knew you'd ask me that, love. But some things are better off being unknown. Don't let me burden you with the other reasons, they are deeply personal." He paused and then asked, "Do you want to celebrate it?"

Viola immediately noted he was changing the topic and whatever the other reasons were, he wasn't about to tell her. She felt a pang of disappointment that he still had things he wasn't sharing with her, but then realized she also wasn't completely honest with him...

She refilled her wine glass as she shook her head. "No. I don't want any reason to be the center of attention at a celebration right now. I am fine as I am." She gulped down a mouthful and let the sweetness of it settle on her tongue. It tasted better than any wine she had tried before, sweeter and warmer going down.

"Be careful with that." Sebastian said, watching her over the rim of his own glass. "That wine is stronger than it tastes."

"I have a very high tolerance for wine. I will be perfectly fine." She flashed him a smile.

She was not perfectly fine.

She became aware of it gradually, the warmth settling low in her body.

And the way she was looking at Sebastian across the candlelight was not helping. Tonight, she was finding him almost unbearably attractive and somewhat irresistible. Did he always smell like coffee?

His shirt was open at the collar and she could see the snake tattoo at his neck and she had the completely unreasonable urge to lean across the table and trace it with her finger and then press her lips to it just to see what his skin felt like there.

She pulled her attention back to the conversation.

He was saying something, she wasn't entirely certain what, because she had gotten distracted by his mouth and the way it moved when he talked and the memory of what it felt like against hers, which was a deeply unhelpful thing to be sitting with at the dinner table.

"Are you listening to me?" Sebastian asked, and she realized his voice had stopped a moment ago.

"Yes." She said.

"What did I just say?"

She had no idea whatsoever. "What did you say?" She questioned, with a clueless expression.

Sebastian looked at her face and then at her wine glass and then back at her face.

"How many glasses have you had?" He asked.

"Two." She said. And then, because apparently wine made her honest in ways she hadn't consented to, "Or three. I wasn't counting, they were small glasses."

The glasses were not small. Sebastian thought, pressing his lips together.

He set his own glass down and laced his fingers together on the table and stared at her. She looked damnably cute with those flushed cheeks and glassy blue eyes staring back at him.

He was not in any position to be making good decisions tonight either, a fact he had been carefully managing throughout dinner.

His heat was slowly stirring beneath his skin, and if she had a wolf, she would have been able to smell it and feel it in the air around him. It would have made him more irresistible to her in ways she wouldn't have been able to ignore either. Simply looking at her from across the table was enough to turn him on and make him hard.

"Come on." He said, pushing back from the table and standing. "You need some air."

"I don't need air." Viola said with pursed lips. "I want to talk to you."

"We can talk outside." He said, coming around the table and pulling her chair back for her.

The quarter had a private garden running along the inner walls, lit at night with low lights set into the stone path, and Sebastian walked beside her with his hands in his pockets as she moved alongside him in shoes that were four sizes too large and somehow still looked comfortable on her.

His men were lurking in the dark, keeping away from their path.

The night air was doing what he had hoped, clearing his head by degrees, but not so much.

They walked in silence for a while and it was a comfortable silence, the kind that didn't need filling.

Then Viola said, "I want to ask you something."

"What?"

"Do you think about me?" She questioned.

Sebastian looked at her sideways, taken aback by the question. "In what sense."

"In the sense of." She stopped walking and turned to face him and appeared to be organizing her thoughts with great effort. "In the sense of when I am not in a room with you. Do you think about me when I am not there?"

He looked at her for a long moment, knowing the wine was loosening her up again. "Yes." He said simply.

She seemed to find this extremely significant and looked away from him and then back again. "I think about you too." She said with a grave seriousness. "More than I want to. A lot more. Sometimes in my sleep. Sometimes I feel you touching me and doing things to me..." She smiled in a silly way.

Intrigued, Sebastian asked her, "What kind of things do I do to you in your sleep?" The corner of his lips pulled up at the side.

"You know it..." She whispered shyly and Sebastian chuckled at the reaction that was so unlike her.

"How am I to know it, amor? I am not a mind reader. Tell me." He leaned closer to her as if wanting her to whisper the secret into his ear.

She opened her mouth and closed it again before shaking her head. "I am not saying it." She then frowned slightly, sniffing him. "Why do you smell like coffee and rain? You smell different tonight," she grumbled to herself.

"I smell different to you tonight?" Sebastian's eyes glistened, and she bobbed her head. If she thought he smelled different tonight, didn't that mean she could sense his cycle? Only a mate with a wolf could pick up on that. Was this a sign that her wolf was awakening slowly?

"What else do you notice about me tonight?" he asked quietly.

She moved closer and began sniffing him properly, standing on her tiptoes and touching his chest and neck in the process, causing Sebastian to stiffen.

"Your skin is hot. You're sweating and..." She paused, her voice dropping softer. "I feel like licking you. You smell like something I want to...eat," she whispered. "No wonder your wolf's name is Muffin. I like muffins."

"What?" Sebastian stepped back, glaring down at her. "How do you know that name? Who told you?"

"You did," Viola said with a smile. "In Nightshade. When you were falling unconscious, you told me your wolf's name while I was driving and trying to keep you talking to me." She giggled, and he arched a brow in displeasure, not recalling telling her that at all, not unless Muffin had been responsible for it.

But that wasn't as important as the fact that she was aware of him in a way a wolfless mate wouldn't be.

"Muffin!" she laughed. "Just picture that. I never thought you would have such an adorable name for your wolf, and I'm going to call you that from now on. Muffin, Muffin—"

He plastered his mouth over hers to shut her up as he didn't want that name associated with him.

Her arms came around his neck immediately and he lifted her clean off the ground, her breasts flattening against his chest, and the moment his mouth covered hers he forgot entirely that shutting her up had been the point of it.

He took her mouth wholly and there was nothing restrained about it. She had both arms folded behind his neck, her toes dangling off the earth, and they stood in the silver moonlight and kissed and kissed, all tongue and heat and the soft press of her lips that tasted of wine and something beneath it that was entirely hers.

Her mouth was hot and sweet. She made a small sound deep in her throat, warm breath against his cheek, and his body responded to it with a completeness that reminded him sharply and urgently that he had not taken his suppressant.

He set her down on her feet quickly and pulled her arms from around his neck, pinning them firmly at her sides when she tried to wrap them around him again. His powerful body crowded hers as he looked down at her with a raw, burning hunger he made no attempt to hide.

"Kiss me again," she whined.

His silver eyes darkened, almost savage now.

Then he leaned in, letting his lips brush against her ear, his voice low and rough with need as he whispered,

"If I kiss you again, baby... I won't be able to stop. I'll strip you bare right here and taste every inch of you. These breasts..." His breath grew heavier as he ran his knuckles against her nipples and she gasped.

"I'll suck and lick your nipples until they're swollen and you're trembling. I'll spread your legs wide open and bury my face between them, licking that sweet, wetness until you're riding my tongue and screaming my name. I want to feel you come apart for me, Viola. Over and over. I'm so hard it hurts... and if I start, I'll take you completely. Deep. Hard. Until this tight little body of yours knows exactly who it belongs to. Do you want that?"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 259: Giving in[1,101 words]

Viola, picturing every word he said he wanted to do to her with such clear intensity, jerked away from him, her face burning hot and her insides warming up. She'd never felt such feelings before and hearing his hot breath whisper those words against her ear, it frightened her with the overwhelming emotions.

Sebastian could tell he had managed to startle her with the intensity of his need and his face hardened and closed up slightly as it seemed she didn't share any of that intensity with him. It was obviously one sided, and she wasn't feeling the bond like he was, or she wouldn't look like he had whispered words of threat into her ear rather than his passion.

"Go on inside if you don't want any of that happening because I can't promise to control myself if you remain in my presence."

She stood there looking up at him with her lips still parted and her eyes not entirely focused, and he kept his jaw set and didn't look at her mouth again, lest he lost control and kissed her again, made love to her mouth and explored every corner and inch like he desired to.

She looked at him for another moment and then she turned and walked back toward the house door with as much speed as the oversized shoes would allow, and Sebastian's shoulders dropped.

Perhaps this was his punishment for breaking hearts in the past without caring for anyone but his own desires. He was the man who always had women at his beck and call, until now that the only woman he burned for more than anyone didn't seem to share his feelings completely.

With how she had helped him in Nightshade, Sebastian thought, he would have sworn that she loved him enough to risk her life like that.

Sebastian stood in the garden alone and breathed in the night air for a long moment and then went directly to find his suppressant before he did something he would spend a great deal of time regretting. She didn't want him in that way it seemed, because she didn't have the wolf to pull her sexually towards him yet.

Inside the room Viola was in, she lay in bed feeling miserable and hot all over her body.

A light knock on the door made her gasp, her eyes immediately snapping towards it.

"I'll be sleeping in the next room tonight." He said through the door. "If you need anything, call for me." His voice still carried the thick rasp of desire in it, quiet yet gravel deep and she felt her insides melt like a soft puddle.

Yet a strange fear and uncertainty led her voice to come out, mousely soft as she squeaked a quiet, "Okay."

She felt him linger there for a second longer, as if there were words yet to be said between them but he never uttered them, instead, she heard his footsteps as he walked away down the corridor and went into the next room.

Lying in the darkness next to the room Sebastian was in, she found herself picturing his naked body. She knew it so well in images of him that had carved itself into her memories.

She knew many details of his body even where she'd never touched, the shape, hue and texture of it, from the valleys of his shoulder blades where strong muscles bulged and created hollows you wanted to touch, to his strong arms etched with veins.

His legs and feet, how she'd seen them, washed them in Nightshade. She knew his hands, large, square, able to tease her just as easily as they could be gentle.

His silver eyes seemed to seek her out in the darkness, she could still feel the heat of his gaze tracing her whole body from memory.

Those eyes crinkled at the corners in the instant before his gorgeous lips lifted with a lazy smile. She knew the spot where the skin grew smooth, down low where his broad tattooed chest narrowed and dove in a thinner line, narrowing and narrowing along his hard belly to his groin.

She rolled onto her stomach because her breasts ached. She clamped her arms against the swelling sides of her breasts and squeezed her thighs together, locking her ankles, holding them tightly, trying to forget the image of the naked Sebastian and his whispered words in the garden.

But forgetfulness refused her. She opened her mouth, waiting for the heat of his imaginary kiss. But she touched only the pillow, not warm, soft lips.

She rolled to her side clutching a handful of her shirt between her legs, feeling what was happening there, this awful aching need to be filled, needing him to soothe it.

Was this how it was? How it was supposed to be? This desire rushing through her body...It was fullness and emptiness, acceptance and denial, hot and cold, shiver and sweat, yes and no. It was the coming apart and not caring in the slightest, because your body spoke louder than anything.

Even though Viola was afraid, afraid to step into a deeper relationship with Sebastian because of the future she couldn't control, she knew she couldn't keep torturing herself in such a way and holding back on something her mind and body burned for. Though she wasn't certain whether he returned her feelings or not, none of it was making relatively much sense to her at this moment, not when a delicious throbbing was happening between her thighs and she was feeling as miserable as she'd ever felt in her life.

Senses Viola had never realized she possessed were now expanded to their fullest. Her body throbbed and beat and begged. How right... how utterly right... it would be to simply go to him and say, "Make love to me. Show me what my body has never experienced before."

The question no longer was could she do that and live with it afterward knowing there was no going back. The question now was could she not do that, and watch her husband find that pleasure she so much refused him, because she was afraid, in the arms of another woman who would be more than willing to give it to him?

Many she-wolves would kill for this chance she had now, and though she wasn't like many women and had her own fears, Viola couldn't let this night pass like that when he had voiced out how much he wanted her.

Before she knew it, she was stepping out of bed and leaving the room.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 260: Blissful night_Part 1[1,563 words]

Lights were turned off. Soft, creamy light filled the tall room and poured in through the wide, open long windows spilling over him as he lay sprawled on his stomach, naked on the bed.

Viola had listened to his restless movements for what seemed like hours, working up the courage to creep into the room.

But now he was asleep, she could tell by his measured breath and the one foot that dangled off the end of the bed carelessly.

She came trembling to the bedroom doorway, afraid to enter, afraid not to. What if he turned her away? She didn't know what she would do if he turned her away.

She clenched her hands into small fists as she eased closer. Her chest felt as if it were in a vice. How should she wake him? What should she say? Should she touch him?

Suddenly she felt awkward and out of place and knew for sure he'd tell her to get her inexperienced ass back to the room and she would die of humiliation.

Yet she whispered his name anyway. Or did she whimper it?

"Se... Sebastian?"

It might have just been the curtain brushing against the windowsill, the sound was that faint.

"Sebastian?" she called again, looking at his body covered in moonlight, every sharp ridge highlighted by the silver light making her fist tighten and release again.

He straightened his head around on the pillow drowsily. Although she couldn't make out his eyes, she saw the moon's reflection on the bolder lines of his face. He lowered his chin, looked over his arm and saw her, his eyes shadowed in disbelief as he pulled the sheet up to cover himself.

"Amor? What is it?" he asked sleepily, disoriented, braced up on his elbows now.

"Se... Sebastian?" She quavered, suddenly not knowing what else to say. This was awful. This was so awful. It was worse than any of the insults she'd suffered at the hands of people in the past years that had made her become so insecure and awkward, yet she stood as she was, her two hands fisted tight.

He sat up, taking more of the sheet across his lap, dropping a single leg over the edge of the bed for balance.

"What's wrong? Did you have a nightmare?" He asked gently and she shook her head. "Then why are you here?"

"I...I want to..." She couldn't finish the sentence.

The night was silent around them, and for a moment time felt frozen, until his low voice broke the quiet.

"What is it, Amor?"

She gulped, unable to speak.

He could recall the startled hue in her blue eyes when he'd whispered those words to her in the garden. He didn't want her looking that frightened again, not when her scent rocked into him now that she was near, awakening the blazing heat he had been trying to suppress.

When he had gone to take his suppressants earlier, he had realized that Matt had not given them to Gilbert to bring because of the remarks he'd made to him earlier. Matt must have thought he had it covered with his wife here with him, and probably because he'd called him a virgin.

Yeah, maybe he shouldn't have mocked his beta like that earlier. He was paying for it now, keeping his desires agonizingly stuffed deep in his stomach.

"Go back to the room, Amor. You don't know what you're doing. I shouldn't have let you have that champagne." He drew a palm over his face, frustrated. It was the only explanation for why she would be here, she was still drunk and had no idea she had walked right into a beast's den, a beast who wanted nothing more than to devour her inch by inch until she was begging for more.

"I'm not drunk, Seb. I... I'm not. And I do not want to go back to that room. I want be here with you, doing...doing all the things you said to me."

She finally admitted and it brought a stunned silence for merely a moment before he got off the bed, twisting the sheet around him, holding it low against one hip.

"Goddamnit, that's not fair. You can't keep teasing me like this and not mean it. You shouldn't have come here while you were still drunk." He yanked at the sheet angrily but it was tucked under the mattress and held him in place in front of her. He didn't believe she meant a word of what she said or even knew what she was asking for, if she did she would be keeping her distance from him, not coming anywhere near.

Viola swallowed her pride and spoke in a strained whisper. "You're sending me away then?"

Oh, hell, he thought. Hell, Viola, don't do this to me when I'm trying to be noble for the first time in my life!

"Amor, if I go ahead and do this while you are still under the influence of the wine, you might not like it in the morning." If he was going to take her, Sebastian wanted to do it with raging passion and her full sober participation, he didn't want to see regret in her eyes the morning after.

"I am not drunk. I...I want to experience everything you whispered to me in the garden. Please..." Her plaintive plea made him ache with want.

She had no idea what she did to him, standing there hugging herself, swathed in moonlight and trembles.

"I think it's best if we do this tomorrow without any influence." He said after a long pause. His cock throbbed with anticipation at her willingness, and it was taking a lot more than willpower not to grab her right there and give her...no, show her with sweet detail everything he'd described in the garden.

Viola felt her heart tighten. "You don't want me then..." She whispered so quietly.

The moonlight shimmered on their bodies and she squinted, trying to make out his face as he had turned off all the lights in the room.

He could smell daisies clear across the room. Her shoulders were so small, and with her arms crossed tight over her chest, she looked vulnerable and scared. But her hair hung loose, glowing in the moonlight like a halo around her shadowed face.

"Amor..." His voice sounded tortured. "I want you more than I have ever wanted anyone, but I'm not sure if this is the right time." But his conviction somehow faded into something more pleading and he took a hesitant step towards her. She took one shaky step, then another until he could see her chest rising and falling with each breath.

"I want this..." She whispered.

Her words were soft, breathy, and raised the hair along his arms. They were so close that Sebastian's shadow fell over her face as she looked up at him. Tension pulled at both of them, leaving their bodies hovering closely.

The whisper of curtains in the night breeze was now the only sound in the room. Sebastian's nostrils flared while he clutched the sheet tighter.

She knew absolutely nothing about what he could do to her, he was sure. She stood there pleading with him for something she couldn't even understand, his tiny little hellcat, who had fought for his life and defied death to save him.

He wanted to give her everything and anything so badly that it physically hurt. And he'd waited so long for this moment that now that she was here in front of him he was afraid. He'd fucked, screwed before, but he had never made love. And he suddenly felt like a clumsy schoolboy.

She was only about four feet away from him now . All he had to do was take one step more.

Standing there, his teeth clenched as he fought back the pull of his heat, Sebastian breathed in the scent of daisies rolling off her. It wrecked him. The instinctive need to claim his mate roared into his chest but he forced himself to hold still, lost in her, bound to her, even as control frayed at the edges.

"Amor," he uttered, the endearment strained, deep in his throat, "you're so damn small."

And the sheet, like a puddle of rippling milk, moved with him as he leaned to whisper in her ear, "I don't want to break you."

His low growl ruffled the hair behind her ear and made her heart catch in her throat. A strong, corded hand reached through the moonlight to close itself around her upper arm.

Her lips parted and she lifted her face until her nose brushed his firm shoulder, breathing him in. His skin smelled of night warmth and coffee and held a faint trace of dampness, not wholly unpleasant.

She raised a hesitant hand and brushed her fingertips against his chest. He was hard, burning hot and she had no idea what she was doing. He went still, his breath hot against her ear and she waited, wondering what he wanted her to do. She didn't know much about sex intimacy, but she knew that the way they had kissed in the garden had turned her body to sweet, shaking jelly.

So she raised her lips and asked near his, "Would you kiss me first, like you did in the garden?"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 261: Blissful Night_Part 2[1,268 words]

His grip on her arm grew tighter. "Oh, fuck it," he groaned, and let the sheet spill from him as he scooped her up in his powerful arms and held her against the heart that hammered wildly in his

chest. He buried his face in her hair, knowing he should not do this in her inebriated state, but unable to deny himself or her any longer.

She brushed her temple against his lips, aching for the feel of them on hers. Then, slow and shy, she tilted her face up, chasing the memory of that heady, overwhelming kiss.

"Are you sure you want this?" he reiterated one last time, asking again felt useless at this point, because he wouldn't be able to bring himself to let her go now.

"Kiss me," she whispered. "Please... I liked it so much."

Control snapped. Her quiet, pleading need hit him like a blow, making his heart slam against his ribs. He lowered his parted lips to her warm and waiting ones.

As she kissed him back, her arms wound around him, fingers tangling in the thick silver hair at the back of his head, learning every inch of him.

His tongue moved hot and urgent against hers, slipping into her mouth to claim and explore with unrestrained hunger.

She responded timidly at first, but imitating his actions, her pleasure grew and her tongue became bolder within his mouth.

He suddenly let go of her. Her knees buckled and her legs slid down his strong thighs until her feet hit the floor. Before she could catch her balance, his powerful arms wrapped tight around her ribs and lifted her up, pulling her soft body flush against his burning, rock hard frame.

His mouth slanted demandingly across hers and his tongue delved deeper, plying, playing, melting her insides like sugar candy until she felt something drizzle, sweet and warm, far down from the depths of her between her legs.

For Viola it felt like the wonder of the first kiss magnified a hundred times as her body pressed willingly against his.

He made a faint growling sound in his throat, then threaded his long fingers back through the hair at her temples, cradling her head in his palms while he scattered little kisses everywhere.

He seemed to be eating her up by nibbles, making her feel delicious as he took a piece of her chin, then her lip, her nose, her eyebrow, ear, neck, settling back upon her mouth again, biting her tongue lightly as if finding it the tastiest.

Control, he told himself when the beast within him urged him to slam right into her, feel her entrance close around him and take her over and over again until her body learned him, became his completely. He anchored himself tasting her skin sensually. He would take it slow, for her.

Viola forgot everything but the slow, sweet yearning inside her body. She let herself be swept away, in awe of this man, the one whose effect on her she had feared for so long. But now she wanted him with a desire so strong it drowned out any thoughts.

She didn't stop to think that his kiss came from practice. All she knew was that it was just the beginning of everything she was desperate to discover from him, about him. He pressed his face into her neck, his breath warm on her skin like a summer breeze.

"Amor, I have to know, so I don't hurt you," he said in a hoarse, stranger's voice, "did you and Evan ever have sex?"

Her hands fell still against his neck at his question and the dark aura coming off him when he asked that sent a shiver down her spine.

"No... no!" she answered in a startled whisper, straining away suddenly from his intense aura. "I...I have never..."

She started to turn away, embarrassed, but he held her jaw in his warm hands, cradling her face like a cup he was about to drink from, forcing her to look at him.

"It doesn't matter," he said low, brushing his thumbs lightly upon the crests of her cheeks. "I don't want to hurt you is all. I had to ask."

"I... I have never done it before," she said tremulously, her eyes wide on his, lips fallen open in dismay.

She didn't want her complete inexperience to repulse him.

She swallowed hard, he felt it beneath the heels of his hands, and thought, Hell, she's so small, I'll kill her. Yet he brushed her cheek with his lips and hushed, "Shhh... it's all right," and lifted her face to meet his kiss again, making them both forget all but the turbulent senses aroused now beyond recall.

It didn't matter to him whether she was a virgin or not, but the thought that he would be the first man to have her this way sent his blood roaring and his mate bond sending sparks into his body.

With his tongue in her mouth, he picked her up again and carried her to the edge of the bed, where he sat with her on his lap.

Silently he vowed to go slow with her, to make it good, to make it right, and memorable if he could. He took her shy arms and guided them around his neck. She couldn't stop noticing that he was completely naked pressed against her and that his skin radiated a warm heat right through her shirt.

His lips slid to the warm cave of her collarbone, and he murmured, "You smell like daisies... so good."

She moved her head slowly, sensually, brushing her jaw against his temple. He ran his tongue along her neck, tasting her supple skin making her tremble with a fresh, intense desire.

"Can I take your shirt off, Amor?" he asked, trailing brief kisses to a soft spot on the underside of her chin.

"Now?" she asked breathily.

"Only if you want."

"I want," she confessed simply, sending his senses thrumming.

So he found the hem of her oversized shirt, pulled it out from under her then tugged it up and slipped it over her head and off her arms before tossing it aside.

He kissed her once more, then said into her mouth, "I'm shaking as if it's my first time, Viola. Do you know that no one else ever made me feel this way?"

This rush of anticipation and need, it was almost tearing him apart. His previous heat had never made him burn like he did for Viola, it felt like she was taking over his mind, his body and everything he was.

"Not even Laila?" she whispered, and then immediately felt like slapping herself for blurting that out.

"No baby, just you." He murmured, taking the tip of her earlobe in his mouth and smiling.

"I have really wanted to do this for a long time..." He cupped her breast and she gasped, it felt warm, peaked and full under his touch. "...wanted to touch you like this, kiss you..." He swirled his tongue over her taut nipple over the light fabric of her bra feeling her shudder, "I've wanted you to feel this heat with me, to make you burn for me too, half as much as I've been burning for you but couldn't... not until I knew you wanted it too."

"I wanted to...but I was afraid."

His hand slid to her ribs, rubbing sideways, abrading her skin softly through the thin fabric of her lounge bra.

"You have nothing to be afraid of Baby, I'm yours...and you are mine."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 262: Blissful Night_Part 3[1,520 words]

Viola held her breath, her skin buzzing with anticipation. She wanted to feel the moist warmth of his tongue on her breast again, but his lips pulled away.

His hand pressed a demanding pressure at the back of her neck and she obeyed its unspoken command, turning her mouth back to his.

But this time his kiss was as light as a moth's wing, more like a breath than an actual touch of lips. But it made shivers ride outward from every pore of her body. His caresses were loving, gentle, as he took a nipple, hard and expectant, between his thumb and the edge of his palm, squeezing it gently until she sighed against his lips.

His hands moved over her shoulders and her lounge bra fell onto his lap. First, she felt the warm fingers of night air ripple over her skin, then his warm, hard fingers followed.

When his hand at last cupped her bare breast, she laid her forehead against his chin, lost in the magic of his touch. He brushed the taut nipple with the backs of his fingers while her wrists went limp, hanging across his shoulders.

Lost in the feeling, she instinctively pulled back just enough to make room for him to explore further.

Finding her other breast as aroused as the first, her nipples firm and inviting, he made a satisfied sound in his throat. "They're so hard," he said thickly.

She murmured something wordless, lost in the pleasure, wishing this could last forever. It felt like she was floating above herself, looking down at a strange, lucky woman being pleased by her man.

She had never imagined people talking when they did things like this, but his calm, gentle voice loosened the grip of her inhibitions and she found the word to honestly reply, "Sometimes all I have to do is think of you and they get that way."

He chuckled softly against her neck, but it was all he could do to keep himself from tumbling her backward and delving into her, deep and hard right now. He felt like he would burst from his skin!

He wanted to taste her, smell her, hear her whimper, feel her flesh surround his. But he restrained himself, knowing it was best to make it last long and good for both of them.

He plied her with more kisses, running a hand up her back, then low along her spine. His fingers slid to her waist and pulled her bare hip up hard against the erect evidence of his desire.

He placed one hand on her stomach and the other at the base of her spine, then eased her back with him, holding her steady between his hands. His large palm swallowed up her breast as he drew her down with him onto the soft rumpled sheets.

She fell on his hard chest, but he rolled her onto her back, dipping his head down to kiss her shoulder, her collarbone, then the warm swell of skin below it.

She felt his soft lips and pictured it so clearly, his hot, wet tongue sliding closer and closer to her nipple. When it finally reached her, stroking the stiff little peak, she gasped, arched her back, and blindly grabbed for his hair.

He tugged and sucked gently, sending waves of pleasure rippling outward and downward from her nipple, teaching her skin to crave the warm, damp heat of his mouth.

He left one nipple wet and glistening. She shivered as he moved to the other, her palm gently guiding his jaw. The moment his hungry mouth claimed her breast, all her long-dormant senses flared awake, flooding downward in a hot, liquid rush down her thighs.

Her nipples throbbed with a sweet ache, begging for more, but he stretched out beside her, propping his head on one bent arm, and began teasing her breast with a single playful fingertip.

Goose bumps erupted all over her body.

"I want to touch you all over," he said.

But then he pulled his touch away completely, leaving her aching with greedy longing. They gazed deeply into each other's eyes for a long, charged moment, neither speaking, neither moving. Her lips parted as her breath quickened. She subtly arched toward him, wanting for him to make true of his words of touching her, but he didn't.

His hand rested lazily at his hip before he slowly lifted it. He watched with satisfaction as her eyelids fluttered and widened the moment his fingertip made contact with her stomach. With deliberate, possessive strokes, he traced lazy spirals and vine-like patterns around her navel, up along her ribs, circling her nipples, then continued upward until he reached her throat.

Then, still using just that single fingertip, he dragged it downward with slow pressure. He traced the fine trail of hairs along her lower belly, following the natural line as it narrowed into a bold arrow pointing straight to her slick, throbbing entrance that begged desperately for him.

He pressed her stomach, letting his fingertips trail towards her cunt, lingering there while she lay with the breath caught in her pleased throat. But as his fingers moved lower she recoiled, instinctively protecting herself against the intrusion.

Realizing what she had done, Viola felt awkward and ridiculous for covering herself like that. A sudden, inexplicable fear gripped her. Surely he would be disgusted now, think her childish and immature, and realize he had been wasting his time with her.

But instead, he whispered near her ear, "It's all right, Amor, it's all right." He looped an arm loosely around her waist and kissed her again, exploring her back, shoulders, and the firm rises at the base of her spine.

He lifted his head, looking down into her face. "Have you changed your mind?" he whispered, husky and strained.

Her wide, uncertain blue eyes looked up at him, but she could not speak but she softly shook her head. Sensing her last-minute fear, he soothed her with whispered words, running the backs of his knuckles down her shoulder and around the outer perimeter of a breast.

"Your skin, Viola, I never felt such skin. It's like warm custard pudding... smooth... and soft... and sweet."

And as if to prove it, he leaned to take a taste, just inside her elbow where the soft pulse throbbed. He took the velvety skin gently between his teeth, tugging at it tenderly, then buried his face in the hollow of her abdomen. Her spine went taut, so he eased up to whisper into her mouth, "Don't be afraid."

Then his big, warm hand slid downward with slow, insistent possession, his rough palm dragging over her soft skin. She squeezed her eyes shut, sucked in a sharp breath, and held it, her pulse thundering in her ears as she imagined those thick, strong fingers sliding over her clit. She whimpered.

"Fuck, Viola," he growled against her ear, his voice low and hungry, "you're so wet for me already."

His fingertips teased along her slick folds, parting her swollen lips before one thick finger pushed inside her in one smooth, deep stroke. The stretch was delicious, the heat of his skin searing against her sensitive walls as he curled his finger and groaned.

She was sweetly swollen and wholly aroused, all sleek, wet satin. He braced up on an elbow, the better to see her. He could smell her arousal strong in the air but along with it was her deep nervousness, and so he wanted to go as slow and careful as possible so he wouldn't scare her. His beautiful little hellcat, who had given herself to him.

He moved his finger in and slowly out, watching her face all the while, the eyelids that trembled, the lips that fell open, the cheeks that grew pink by the second. She arched and gasped at what was happening within her as he rubbed her clit with his thumb, stroking.

He worked her with confident, wicked knowledge, fully aware of how ripe and desperate she was for him. He teased her and stroked deep inside her slick heat until she bit down hard on her lower lip, a broken whimper escaping her throat. Lost in pleasure, she flung one arm over her head, hiding her eyes behind her elbow as her hips bucked helplessly against his hand.

"That's it, baby," he growled, voice rough with lust. "Let me feel how bad you need this."

His finger moved faster, pumping deeper, and he added a second thick finger, stretching her wider as her wet core clenched greedily around him. Her breathing turned fast, hot, and frantic.

He smiled, watching her go all sensuous and stretching, even moaning gently, music to his ears.

Then his fingers slipped away.

She opened her startled blue eyes to his smiling face above her.

"Sebastian..." she choked, dying of need and wanting him to never stop what he had been doing to her.

"Shhh... we have all night." He circled her with a strong arm and turned them onto their sides, pulling her up tightly against his hot length.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 263: Blissful Night_Part 4[1,426 words]

Sebastian's knee slid possessively between her thighs, pushing them wider as he pressed it firmly up against her middle, right where his hand had been. The hard muscle of his thigh rubbed against her swollen heat with slow pressure. At the same time, the sole of his foot stroked slowly up the back of her calf and behind her knee, teasing the sensitive skin there.

Even in the dim light, he could see the raw longing burning in her eyes.

He kissed her just enough to keep the fever high, then pressed her shoulder blades back against the sheets again.

With agonizing slowness, his large hand glided over her belly, up her ribs, and cupped her breast, his thumb brushing her stiff nipple. He continued upward, tracing her armpit and then the full length of her outstretched arm until his fingers closed firmly around her wrist and palm.

He guided her hand downward between their bodies, pressing it toward his throbbing erection.

He felt her tense instantly, her breath catching as she realized exactly where he was taking her.

"Sebastian..." she uttered before she could stop herself, her voice sounding nervous. Her fingers strained against his grip, leaving him doubtful of how to proceed with her. At last he laid her hand upon his ribs, leaving the choice up to her.

But to tip the scales in his favor he used ardent words and the timeless language of the body to tempt her.

"Touch me, Amor," he encouraged, "touch me like I just touched you."

His voice was a rough, ragged whisper against her skin as he trailed scorching kisses across her face, leaving paths of fire in their wake. His knees moved her thighs wider apart while his hips rolled slowly against her, his hard manhood grinding between her legs.

Her hand stayed pressed to his ribs, trembling, warm and slightly damp.

"That's how it's done, baby, we touch each other first. Did you like it when I touched you?"

He heard her swallow convulsively. "It was good, wasn't it? Men like it just as much as women. They go crazy for their woman's touch."

A fearful timidity swelled her throat but the hand would not move. Do it! Do it! she told herself, her heart leaping and lunging within her chest. But nothing had prepared her for this. Why was she suddenly this way?

Because she had thought to lie passively and let him do what he would with her and enjoy it. The thought of fondling him made her palm burn to know him, but she was afraid that once she reached out and touched him, the little fear of that part of him she had always glimpsed would spark to life and make her want to run. It wasn't entirely her fault, his size had scared her the last time she had seen it underneath the towel!

"Just a touch, then you'll know." He reached down again, his fingers sliding between her thighs to tease her. He stroked her, hinting at the scorching pleasure that had made her shameless and desperate before.

She couldn't hold back. With a needy whimper, she thrust her hips up against his hand, eagerly welcoming him.

But his teasing fingers left again, and she understood frustration as she never had before. She swallowed and made her hand move.

He fell dead still, waiting. But when at last her fingertips came into contact with his manhood she yanked her hand back with a startled little gasp. He was so incredibly hot, scorching, like fevered velvet-wrapped steel!

He lost all sense of caution then and moved swiftly, capturing her wrist between their bellies. "It won't bite you, amor. It's hot for you. Touch it," he begged in a whisper. "Please..."

Curiosity lodged in her throat. The back of her hand now rested against that soft-hard heat, but a stupid timidity crushed her will to do what he asked. She pinched her eyes shut as she allowed him to carefully guide her fingers to close around his hot flesh and showed her how to move her hand against it.

A raw, ragged sound tore from his throat into the quiet night. Her eyes flew open to see him braced on one elbow, head thrown back, mouth open in a silent snarl as if he were in exquisite pain. He let out a deep, broken groan.

Guilt flashed through her and she jerked her hand away from his flesh.

"Seb, what is it! Did I hurt you?"

Sebastian swooped over her in one quick, enveloping motion, seizing her hand and pressing it firmly back to his flesh where it had been before she pulled away. She had drawn back in fear that she'd hurt him, but in truth he was drowning in pleasure. The spark of her touch had sent a wild surge bursting through his body like fireworks.

"Hell... no, no, you didn't hurt me," he rasped. "You can do anything you want to me. It's okay..."

His lips crashed down on hers, devouring her in a hungry kiss as his tongue thrust deep, matching the urgent rhythm of his hips as he moved against her hand. At the same time, his hand slid possessively over her stomach and between her thighs, searching frantically for her warm entrance, desperate to return the intense pleasure she was giving him with her stroking hand.

Viola's senses were torn between the thick, sinuous organ throbbing hot and hard in her grasp and Sebastian's warm fingers sliding up her inner thigh. His feather-light, knowing strokes quickening her with practiced skill. His fingertips never faltered.

The sensation was far too intense, too overwhelming and unreal, that Viola felt as though she were floating outside her own body. She was dimly aware of Sebastian quickly pulling her hand off his manhood, but she could no more open her eyes than she could stop the volcanic climax he was drawing from her with such effortless skill.

He braced himself above her on one powerful forearm, the hard, sculpted lines of his body caging her in heat and raw dominance.

Moonlight filtered through the loft windows, glinting off the faint sheen of sweat on his tattooed skin and the dangerous edge of his elongated canines as he lowered his mouth to her flushed face.

He forced down the urge to mark her, knowing the consequences, instead distracted himself by letting his lips brush her closed eyelids in slow, reverent kisses while his other hand roamed possessively down her quivering curves, fingers stroking and teasing every sensitive inch of her flesh.

"Come for me, baby," he growled against her throat, voice low and velvet-rough, laced with that primal alpha rumble that vibrated straight to her core. "Let it take you. Fly... fly with me."

"Sebastian..." His name tore from her throat in a broken cry as powerful spasms of heat erupted from deep in her lower abdomen. The pleasure pulsed outward in hot, rhythmic waves, surging down through her belly and into her clenching core. Her hips bucked high off the bed, straining and yearning toward him.

When the final, shattering wave seized her, she was completely unprepared for its force. She had never imagined it could feel like this... the raw power, the blinding rapture. Sebastian... oh God, Sebastian, it's so good...

In the midst of her ecstasy, a hazy thought pierced her mind: Seb... why had I held back from this for so long? I could have been feeling this every single night of my life with him after our marriage...

His fingers stroked deep again, curling just right against that perfect spot inside her, and her nails raked down his thick, corded forearm, leaving red lines across his skin.

Even as she shuddered and gasped, he covered her completely. The heavy, burning weight of his massive frame pressed her deeper into the sheets, all hard muscle and raw power.

"Viola." His voice echoed rough with lust as his damp, fever-hot chest slid against her bare breasts. The slick sheen of their mingled sweat sealed them together while his erection nudged between her thighs, the swollen head parting her folds, searching for her entrance.

His hips flexed, teasing her with just the tip, letting her feel every heavy inch of him and what she had done to him.

The thick head probed her, then found her tight opening and paused.

He braced himself on his forearms, flanking her narrow shoulders, keeping most of his weight off her.

"Baby, it's going to hurt, but just once, I promise."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 264: The aftermath[1,525 words]

Hot, rigid flesh pressed into her. Her virgin body resisted the thick intrusion, clenching tightly against him. She instinctively struggled, pushing hard against his chest.

"Seb...!" She moaned in pain.

"Relax, love. Relax and it'll feel better. Don't fight me," he soothed, pressing his lips to the top of her head.

But the burning discomfort made her nails dig into his skin. He swiftly captured her wrists and pinned them to the mattress above her head, holding her gently but firmly as he paused to calm her.

"I want to make it good for you," he murmured, voice strained with desire and restraint.

Then he pressed his hips forward and plunged deeper in one smooth stroke. Viola gasped sharply as pain lanced through her. A cry tore from her throat, but he smothered it with a deep, loving kiss. When he finally pulled back, he whispered her name again, soft and full of tender apology.

The ecstasy of moments ago dissolved into a sharp, uncomfortable ache that made her body tense beneath him. Her shoulders lifted from the mattress on instinct, but Sebastian held her carefully against him as he continued moving slowly within her.

He had known from the beginning that she was far too small for his size, yet stopping now would only make her tighten against him again. So instead, he focused on easing the discomfort, moving with restrained patience and giving her time to adjust. His fingers clenched around her fingers and interlocking it.

He felt the delicate barrier give way as he thrust forward, sinking deeper into her impossibly tight heat. A sharp cry escaped Viola's lips at the sudden sting, her whole body tensing hard beneath him at the discomfort.

She instinctively tried to pull away, hips jerking back from the overwhelming stretch, but his massive frame pinned her down, one powerful arm locked around her waist, holding her right where he needed her.

"Easy, baby..." Sebastian murmured low against her ear. His breathing was ragged, muscles trembling as he fought every instinct to slam into her. Instead, he rocked slowly, feeding her just a little more of him with each careful glide, letting her adjust to the stretch.

Viola turned her face into the pillow, her teeth sunk into her lip, her walls fluttering and clenching around his invasion. Sebastian pressed his forehead to her temple, lips brushing her skin in soothing kisses even as his hips continued their slow rhythm.

"I've got you," he rasped. "Breathe through it... That's it. You're taking it well."

Sebastian stayed buried to the hilt inside her, his body pulsing with the effort of holding still. He could feel her tight walls fluttering around him, adjusting to the stretch. His lips trailed slow, open-mouthed kisses along her jaw and down the side of her neck, where he gently scraped his fangs against her racing pulse.

"Relax for me, Viola," he murmured against her skin. "The pain's already fading... let your body take me. You were made for this. Made for me."

Gradually, her breathing evened out. The burning ache dulled into a deep, throbbing fullness that began to spark with something hotter. When she finally rocked her hips experimentally, a soft, needy whimper slipped from her throat.

That was all the permission Sebastian needed.

He started moving, slow, deep rolls of his hips that dragged every thick inch along her sensitive walls. Each thrust pushed a little harder, a little deeper, until the wet sounds of their bodies filled the room. Viola's hands slid up his back, nails digging into his shoulders as pleasure overtook the last traces of discomfort.

"Ah... Sebastian..." she gasped.

He devoured her moans, picking up rhythm. His powerful body caged her in, muscles flexing with every thrust. Sweat slicked their skin as he drove into her harder, the heavy slap of his hips against hers growing louder. He reached between them, his thumb finding her swollen clit and rubbing tight circles.

Viola's back arched sharply, a broken moan tearing from her throat. Her legs wrapped around his waist, heels digging into his lower back as she pulled him even deeper.

Sebastian's control began to fray. His thrusts turned feral, faster.

The combination of his deep strokes, the pressure on her core, and the raw growl in his voice sent her spiraling.

Her orgasm hit like a wave, hard and sudden. Viola cried out, her body seizing as her walls clamped down around him in powerful pulses. Her nails raked down his back hard enough to draw blood, but the sting only made Sebastian snarl with pleasure.

"Good girl," he praised through gritted teeth.

As her climax rippled through her, Sebastian slammed deep one final time as he came with a savage cry deep in his throat.

Thick, hot jets of his release flooded her, pulse after pulse, filling her until she felt impossibly full. He ground his hips in tight circles against her most sensitive spot and dragging out her pleasure until she was shaking and sobbing beneath him.

Sebastian collapsed over her, careful not to crush her completely, his massive frame trembling with aftershocks of the moment. He buried his face in her neck, his lips brushing her skin as he panted her name like a sacred vow.

"My wife," he rasped, his voice wrecked. "My mate. Mine..."

He kept them locked tight, ensuring every drop stayed deep inside her as they rode the lingering waves together, hearts hammering against each other in the quiet afterglow. He couldn't believe just how wonderful it had turned out to be and how deeply she made him feel.

Yet the hunger didn't die down even after his release, it only intensified a hundred fold now that he'd tasted her. He had imagined a night like this so many times, but none of it came close to the reality. None.

Need surged through him again hot and fresh and he rolled off her, keeping himself distant from her, if he stayed close his heat would consume him again, he had already lost control with her the first time, if he took her again immediately after he could hurt her against his better judgement.

He remained unmoving for a long while until she started to get off the bed.

"Where are you going?" He asked feeling a sudden loss in his chest. He wasn't sure if it was still the heat constantly making him crave his mate's closeness excessively or his own longing but his heart immediately began to ache when she pulled away seemingly leaving.

"To the other room." She whispered.

She began to sit up, but he swiftly reached out a long arm and pinned her flat on the bed.

"What's wrong?" He questioned, his brows pulling together.

"Nothing. I'm going to sleep." She muttered quietly.

Viola could already feel tears gathering in her throat and she wouldn't cry in his presence. Deep inside she was beyond wrecked, there was no going back, she was in love with him, deeply in love with him and the fear lodged itself in her heart as a tight knot. What if after this he no longer wanted her as much as he did.

Her heart was tearing apart on the inside just at the thought of it. She couldn't stay here and see disinterest in his eyes after his passion subside, she wanted to leave to the safety of the other room before her heart would break.

"Not until you tell me what's wrong. Sleep here with me." Sebastian urged.

Viola's eyelids stung. She shouldn't have come to him, she should have kept to herself in that room and allowed everything to remain imagination, and loved him silently without this intimacy. She had loved every second of it, and now it hurt to think he might not want her anymore.

"It's nothing, I just want to go to sleep in the other room," she told him, keeping her voice steady.

"But I want you to stay here. We don't have reasons to sleep in separate rooms now," he tightened his fingers around her arm and tried to pull her back onto the bed but Viola didn't move.

"What's wrong, baby, did I do something wrong?" he asked in confusion at her sudden mood change. He had never taken a virgin in his whole life, and his inability to fully control his turbulent desires might have led to him actually hurting her, and until he soothed this, he didn't think he should let her go and sleep in a separate room.

"You didn't do anything. I just...I don't want to see you dislike me. After this you might not want me anymore."

For most males, desire snuffed out the moment they had a taste of a female, she didn't want to stay long enough to witness it tonight.

Sebastian instantly softened the moment he heard her thoughts. She was internalizing things again, wrapping herself up in a protective shell. Yet he could see that her expectations of rejection came from that deep wound from her past and he searched for ways to soothe her. "Why would you think I could ever dislike you?"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 265: Feelings (Bonus -) [1,786 words]

Author's Note: This is a bonus Chapter dedicated to Mbmclawhten for gifting the book its first Magic Castle. Thank you, and happy reading!

Viola bit the inside of her cheek, avoiding his intense silver eyes. "I still want to go to the other room to sleep."

She knew he was just being nice. Men like Sebastian, powerful, experienced Alphas, didn't keep women like her around after they'd gotten what they wanted. Their marriage had been built on terms and conditions, her heart might have swayed at some point but he still had other mates, and everything that had happened between them might not have been half as emotional for him as it was for her.

She had felt him holding back, moving away so quickly afterward, like he was already done with her. The warmth and connection she had felt moments ago now felt fragile, like it could vanish at any second. Better to leave first than wait for him to pull away.

She moved to sit up, but Sebastian's large hands caught her shoulders and gently pulled her back down against his chest.

"Don't go," he murmured, his voice deep and steady. "When something is bothering you, it's best to talk about it rather than run away and let misunderstandings build between us. Your eyes are shining, love. Lie down here with me. Talk to me. Give me a chance to put it right."

She bit her lip and looked away in embarrassment. "I don't like it."

Sebastian arched a brow, still holding her close. "I thought we did rather well, considering it was our first time together. So what don't you like?"

"No, not that..." she began to explain but then stopped herself. "I don't think we should talk about this," she whispered, her voice uncertain. "Other people don't talk about these things after sex. We're done already and nothing can change it, can it?"

She jerked, trying to pull away, but his strong arm wrapped around her, firm yet gentle, allowing no escape.

"We are not other people, amor," Sebastian said, narrowing his eyes with quiet understanding. He could feel her walls going up, that familiar instinct of hers to bottle everything inside and flee.

"Then what are we, Sebastian? Friends?"

His expression softened completely at that question. He rolled them carefully onto their sides so they faced each other and pulled her flush against his warm, powerful body, one arm locked around her waist.

"Don't say that," he whispered. "This should never leave two people as nothing, not even as just friends. It should leave them as more. You are more than a friend to me, Viola. I've never been with anyone the way I've been with you. You make me happier than anyone I've ever met, combined. You're special to me... more than special."

He leaned in and kissed the corner of her lips tenderly, then her forehead. "If I could, I'd tie you to my side every single day just to keep you close. I'm not done with you, baby. Not even close."

Viola's heart fluttered at his words, warmth blooming inside her chest even as doubt still whispered in the back of her mind. She had felt so wanted while he was moving inside her, but now the fear crept back in, that this had just been one night for him, that once the heat faded he would lose interest in someone as inexperienced and broken as her.

"But... after this..." she murmured, her voice barely audible, "you might not want me anymore."

Sebastian's eyes darkened. He cupped her face in both hands, tilting it up so she had no choice but to meet his gaze in the moonlight.

"Viola," he said softly but firmly, "look at me. I want you. Not just tonight. Not just for sex. I want you, the woman who trusted me enough to let me be her first, the one who trembles in my arms and still looks at me with trust. I felt how perfectly you fit around me. I heard every sound you made. You think I could walk away from that? From you?"

He brushed his thumb across her trembling lip. "I held back tonight because I didn't want to hurt you. But that doesn't mean I'm satisfied and done. It means I'm only getting started with my mate. I want to learn every inch of you. I want to watch you come apart for me again and again until you never doubt how badly I need you."

A tear slipped down her cheek. Sebastian wiped it away gently and pulled her tighter against him, tucking her head beneath his chin. His chest rumbled with a low, soothing growl.

"I know you're scared. I can feel you trying to run before I can reject you. But I'm not going anywhere. You're mine now, Viola. And I'm yours. Stay right here with me tonight. Let me hold you until that fear disappears."

She hesitated, then reached for the sheet that had fallen to the floor. She wiped her eyes with it and pulled it over them both before lying back down. Sebastian rolled onto his side facing her, studying her profile in the moonlight.

He brushed his lips against her temple. "We all have insecurities," he said softly. "Nobody is perfect. We just learn by experience. You can always talk to me when something is weighing on you. It makes things feel less heavy than you think."

His hand lay warm and still between her breasts, his elbow resting lightly along her ribcage as he held her close.

Viola bit her lower lip. His words cracked something open inside her. Looking at his moonlit face, she parted her lips, but the emotions she had tried so hard to keep bottled up came rushing out.

"Sebastian...I am afraid of giving myself and having my heart crushed again. I am afraid that nobody will like me for who I am. I know I can be selfish sometimes and hard to love and I..."

Ashamed, she turned her face into his biceps, trying to hide.

"Shhh, love," he hushed, his voice deep and soothing. A big hand cradled her cheek, his thumb gently brushing away the tear that escaped. "I don't care, I want you just the way you are, and if you give me the chance I will prove it to you every moment. Will you give me the chance to be your man and treat you right?"

"What about your prophesied mate and—"

"I don't give a fuck. It's you I want." He said firmly, already knowing he would make any sacrifice to keep her, even if she turned out not to be the one.

The more he reassured her, the harder the tears fell. Viola wasn't crying from insecurity anymore, she was crying because he made her feel safe enough to be vulnerable for the first time in years. She clutched his neck suddenly, pulling him closer so he couldn't see her face.

Sebastian understood. He held her tenderly, cooing soft endearments against her hair as he smoothed it back from her nape and temples. "Shh, don't cry, baby. I'll make things right for you, I will fix every crack that fucker left broken in you." He kissed the top of her head.

She had not expected this much from Sebastian when she came to him tonight. She hadn't expected him to give her all these lovely words or make her feel so certain about her feelings. Her heart had gone through heartbreak and betrayal, to the point that trusting another person with it felt terrifying, but he made it sound and feel so easy. She didn't want to run from him anymore. She didn't want to be a coward in this relationship.

She pressed her lips against his neck, feeling and tasting the salt of his sweat, and even that sent a wild thrill through her body that made her tighten her arms around him.

After Viola quieted in his arms, she asked, "Can we do what we just did again?" She traced idle lines against his chest. "I want to learn more and know everything..."

His hand paused on her back. He kissed her forehead, lingering there. "Not tonight, amor. You're still raw, and I want you to rest. I need you soft and relaxed for next time, not pushing through any discomfort. I won't rush this with you."

She nodded against his chest, swallowing her disappointment even as a small voice whispered that maybe he simply didn't want her again so soon. She pushed the fear back down and closed the door on it, refusing to give it any chance to plant more doubts in her mind when he had sweetly reassured her in ways nobody in her life ever had before.

Staring at the ceiling, she quietly recategorized everything she thought she knew about him.

He was no longer the untouchable, heartless Alpha she had once painted in her mind. He was tender. Considerate. And somehow, that made her heart ache with a dangerous kind of longing.

But how could she face him in the morning? How could she wake up here and look into his eyes after tonight? Wouldn't it be awkward after she had cried about her insecurities?

She lay falsely still, waiting for sleep to take him so she could slip away into the other room.

But a large, heavy hand sought and found her hair, smoothed it, then drew her to her side and pulled her up against his chest. He rested his chin upon the top of her head and her eyelashes fluttered shut as she sighed and stayed, unwilling to deny herself the comfort of being cradled that way in his warm arms.

After some minutes his hand moved lazily against her hair. His chest was so warm beneath her cheek that it soothed her. And like a bird in its nesting place, she felt secure. His hand grew weighted on her skull, then fell still. His other hand, which lay flung across her hip, twitched once spasmodically. His breathing became heavy and buffeted the top of her hair.

A fatigue unlike any she had known before came to lower her lids and sap her limbs. She knew she was falling asleep in the arms of her husband.

She knew she must awaken tomorrow to the awkwardness. But it all ceased to matter. Only his warmth matters.

And they slept in each other's arms, while somewhere else in Silver, an awakening storm was waiting for Sebastian to face on the 30th, two days from now, one he was trying to avoid, but avoiding it carried consequences even greater than facing it.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 266: Another chance[1,430 words]

The night the almost full moon stood against the backdrop of Silver pack, the city lights were purposely dimmed to honor the moon as it had been done every month. No matter how bright and advanced Silver was, the moon was respected enough for the night lights to be turned down so their pack could be blessed with the milky light of the goddess. However, many didn't feel the blessing this time around as they were consumed by fear, some by excitement, and others by grief.

Laila had heard the news of the Alpha's death and still could not bring herself to believe it, it sat like a thorn lodged in her throat, she walked into their quarter's garden like a ghost to meet her uncle who had summoned her amidst her hurt and grief about Sebastian's death. How could he be dead? He had been strong and untouchable for so long.

She looked up and found the elder standing with his back to the garden entrance, his head tilted as he gazed up at the almost full moon in the sky. Sensing Laila's presence, he spoke without looking away from it.

"What took you so long to answer my call, girl?" Came the elder's displeased words. He despised waiting on anyone or having his time wasted, especially now when he was preoccupied following the report of the supreme Alpha's death, which he still wasn't certain was true or a sham.

"I was trying to come to terms with the Alpha's loss, uncle. What about his body, has it been found?" She asked in a quiet, low-spirited voice. Though Sebastian wasn't her fated mate as their bond had been one-sided, Laila had genuinely wanted to settle for him, he was better than any man she had ever known in all her life.

It was the first time in her life she had wanted to be someone's marked mate, and now he had been killed just like that. How could she accept this? Though there wasn't much information about what had happened, she was certain her uncle had some, and that was why she had hurried here to hear what he had to say.

"His remains were not brought back. The head Beta said they couldn't bring him back because he was too damaged by the gunshots, they melted his flesh. He said he was melting like a puddle along with his bones, and that bringing him back was no longer an option." Elder Halvrek said it with a tone like he was discussing the weather.

He had seen this coming. The bullet that man had used was designed to melt a werewolf from the inside out, Alpha or not, and the report the head Beta had given completely matched the expected outcome once the Alpha was hit, he would melt into a puddle of flesh and bones in a matter of time.

The elder shuddered at the cruelty of the man he had decided to serve, knowing he never wanted to find himself on the wrong side of him. He was twisted and sadistic in a way that made his enemies suffer long before death came for them. He cared nothing for blood relatives or even siblings.

Laila's hand flew up to cover her mouth, horrified by the description of what had happened to her Seb, and she felt her eyes burn with tears. "Is it true that he was with that wolfless woman?" She questioned, angry that assassins had attacked Sebastian while that wolfless woman stood right there and couldn't do a single thing to protect him.

"Didn't the news say they were together? Don't bother me with unnecessary questions about the dead, that is not the reason I called you here to meet me in private." The elder finally looked away from the moon and turned to face her. His expression was strict as always, a permanent line carved around his mouth from years of wearing a grim look.

"But uncle, Sebastian was killed unjustifiably and—" Laila swallowed her words as his hard eyes narrowed at her and she quickly bowed her head.

"For once in your life, can you think without letting your bitchy jealousy get the better of you?" Elder Halvrek remarked coldly. "I call you here and the first thing out of your mouth is about the wolfless, a woman who, in my opinion, you couldn't even defeat. What a useless niece the moon goddess decided to saddle me with. You have failed me time and again."

Elder Halvrek had lost a great deal because of this useless niece of his, and if he didn't find a way to recover everything she had cost him, just as her mother had cost him before her, he would have cut them both from his family entirely. This girl had failed to win the position of Luna once, but he would give her another chance, and if she failed him again, Elder Halvrek thought grimly, he would put that special bullet in her and her useless mother both and watch them melt to puddles.

"I am sorry, uncle..." Laila muttered, her fingers fisting at her sides.

"You had better be." He said, and then he walked up to her. "Now that the supreme Alpha is dead, Laila, it is time for you to prove your worth to your family. It is time we stop serving the Alpha family and start being served."

Laila's brows drew together in confusion as she lifted her head to look at the elder. "What do you mean?"

Elder Halvrek gritted his teeth and slapped her hard across the face, causing her to gasp and stumble back, she hadn't seen it coming.

"Uncle..." Laila said in shock, her hand flying to her stinging cheek.

"I have always wanted to do that. You are becoming more of a fool than I remember raising. Always asking questions without seeing the full picture. Get yourself ready, there is someone I have in mind for the next supreme Alpha candidate and this time you will marry him and take the crown you let slip through your fingers." He instructed strictly, watching her teary eyes and narrowing his own in warning until she quickly wiped them dry.

"Is it Javier?" She asked, fighting to keep the disgust from showing on her face. She would rather remain a bitter, unmarried she-wolf for the rest of her life than marry that short-tempered loser who she had heard was already campaigning to be crowned.

"Who it is does not concern you right now. Just get yourself ready to take that seat. You will be a Luna and give Silver its first heir for this generation. And do not disappoint me this time, because there will be no mercy with the next Alpha, he will not hesitate to have you killed if you make a mess of things."

Laila wanted to ask about the investigation into what had happened to Sebastian, but she swallowed those words and gave a stiff nod. "I won't disappoint you, sir."

Elder Halvrek gave her a long, assessing look before brushing past her and making his way out of the garden. Laila, left alone, sank to the ground, burying her cries of rage into her fists. Did this worthless old man think she wanted to be married off like property?

She had chosen Sebastian for a reason, had made her peace with settling for him, and now he was matching her up with some unknown candidate all over again? And whose fault was all of this if not that wolfless bitch?

"Laila?" Came her mother's voice from behind her. "What did he say to you?"

"It's none of your business, Mom. You never stopped him from controlling your own life even after you were married, and now he is taking control of mine and destroying it because he thinks he has the right." Laila muttered in quiet rage. "Nobody cares about what I want or what I feel. Only Sebastian ever considered me, and now that wolfless woman let him die..." Her fingers clenched against the grass as her tears dropped and soaked silently into the ground.

To her all the gifts Sebastian had ever given her and all the times he gave her things when she asked for, counted as him being affectionate than anyone else. Though he had been distant to her lately, he had once cared enough to get her things and think about her feelings.

"If I ever see her again, she is going to pay for this." Laila promised quietly into the dark.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 267: Morning rounds[1,086 words

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The almost full moon pulled the earth around, climbed the clouds, and slid down the other side, to the west. The dawn peepings of birds stirred upon the pinkening, silver air.

A sleeping man rolled over and settled his face against a fair, warm arm. A sleeping woman pulled her pillow into the deep curve of her shoulder, bent a bare knee toward her nose.

The man snored lightly and shifted onto his stomach, and a lock of silver hair caught in his nose, fluttering as he breathed, tickling him distractingly.

The edge of a long, tanned hand scratched at his nose, tried to brush the nuisance away. But his breath fluttered it again, still caught, still tickling. He snuffled, then roused, felt something warm covering his fingers, and opened his eyes groggily to see what it was.

His wife.

He grinned at the sight of a single rose-tipped breast half covering the back of his hand. Her other breast was buried beneath her, she too was half on her belly, one knee drawn up high, presenting a beautifully turned hip, but hiding her feminine secrets.

He smiled crookedly. She likes to hog the bed, he thought, looking at all the space she had taken and how she had somehow pushed him in their sleep far to the edge. How adorable is that. Her little habits were what he loved most about her.

The smile dissolved from his face as he remembered how she had cried last night. He carefully extracted his hand, rolled onto his side, and braced his jaw on a palm.

His eyes leisurely traveled the length of her, several times. Tiny toes, delicate ankles, shapely calves. He remembered glimpsing them before, but never as freely as this. Her hip was round, and her waist femininely lean.

Tens of memories flitted through his mind of the time he had been barely conscious in Nightshade. Viola, you saved my life. Viola, I made you cry. Viola, I must leave soon.

He looked at the window where pink-gray light crept over the side of the drawn, thick curtains and suddenly felt an emptiness unlike any he had ever felt when leaving a woman's bed.

Last night's pleasures, for him, had been different from anything he'd ever experienced before, yet his body sprang to life now at the sight of her, an insatiable hunger roared into him. He leaned to drop a light kiss on her ribs, then on that pale hip. He placed a much more lingering one in the curve of her waist.

A small hand came down and swatted unconsciously at him. Then she flopped over, facing away from him, with her top leg pulled up high as before.

His heart went crazy and moisture erupted on his brow. She was small, exquisite and, innocent, she had no idea of how maddening his desire for her ran.

He released a pent-up breath and slid down low on the bed, ran his tongue along the soft parts of her, closed his eyes and breathed against her skin, knowing he was probably taking unfair advantage right now while she slept, but he couldn't stop himself, he was so deeply aroused that his body felt it would burst.

Her skin tasted sweet, and smooth like daisies and maybe a little of himself and it drove him wild. He followed the contour of her leg, his hair brushing against her thigh, recalling how he had almost exploded when he slid into her warm, sleek sex.

It felt almost inevitable after the weeks of growing intimacy between them, like something that had been building quietly all along.

He kissed her everywhere but found himself avoiding the one spot he wanted to taste the, waiting for her to wake up so that he could kiss it, too. He traced the ridges of her body, the firmness of her hip, her thighs, ass, calves.

She stirred awake when he lightly bit her and with a start she looked back over her shoulder at the man behind her, biting her, making her dream of a rat licking and nibbling at her.

Vague, predawn light caught in his silver, aroused eyes as he braced up and searched her face for permission to continue what he had been doing to her while she slept.

His face still carried the sexiness of sleep and his lips were holding a faint gorgeous smile. Her eyes were drawn to it, sensing that those lips had just explored her skin in every part she felt warm and moist. Her startled eyes lifted to meet the dark swirling pools of silver, and she couldn't believe the kind of need bordering on agony she found in his scorching gaze. She would have never imagined a man could feel this kind of raging passion if she hadn't felt it just from his gaze. It made her heart leap and her pulse thundered in anticipation.

"S-Seb?" she stammered softly. Slowly she eased her leg down, realizing how seductive her pose had been and that he had undoubtedly been awake for some time biting and _was it licking?_ her body. What was he, Zoe's dog?

"Y... you woke me up." She murmured, looking at him and trying to hide the light blush coloring her face.

"I meant to, love," he whispered, holding her captive with his gaze.

She rolled backward slightly, bracing up on her elbow, his eyes dropped to the peak of her breast, which curved into view, then return to her face.

She felt his warm palm travel from the small of her back, around her ass, along the back of her calf, gently tucking her knee back up as it had been before. And all the while his eyes never left hers.

"I want to know your body like a man should know his woman's body, amor." He breathed.

She suddenly became sharply aware of all the places where her body was wet, where his tongue had trailed as she slept, where her skin now cooled as it dried.

She shivered involuntarily, then slowly hid her breast behind her upper arm, not quite knowing how to hide the rest of her, or if she wanted to even hide it from him.

Mesmerized by the raw hunger burning in his gaze, Viola watched in fascination as Sebastian dipped his head to her hip. His eyes slid closed in pleasure as he pressed hot, open-mouthed kisses along the pale curve of her skin. A deep, rumbling groan of passion vibrated from his throat.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 268: Morning rounds_Part 2[1,125 words]

Mesmerized by the raw hunger burning in his gaze, Viola watched in fascination as Sebastian dipped his head to her hip. His eyes slid closed in pleasure as he pressed hot, open-mouthed kisses along the pale curve of her skin. A deep, rumbling groan of passion vibrated from his throat.

He braced himself on one hand, twisting at the waist, and with a warm, caressing palm, gently rolled her onto her stomach. Her cheek sank into the pillow as her heart hammered wildly against the mattress. His lips brushed slowly up and down her back, trailing soft, lingering kisses while he murmured her name reverently against her skin.

"Viola... Viola... Viola..."

Over and over he chanted her name, roaming her body with his warm lips and even softer tongue, kissing, licking, and tasting every inch of her until her entire body ached with yearning, reaching desperately for more.

Then he turned her gently onto her back once more, arranging her limbs exactly where he wanted them. His mouth never left her flesh, leaving trails of wetness and whispered love words as his kisses traveled across her breasts, her stomach, and lower.

His gravelly voice was thick with desire as he reassured her between kisses when she tried to press her legs together.

"The second time will be better, my love... I promise. Be still for me... Let me in..."

When she reached instinctively to cover herself, he gently nudged her hand aside with his nose. Then his teeth closed gently over the side of her thumb and he carried it to the hollow of her hip.

"Sebastian..." she rasped, and he looked up at her with shining silver eyes.

"Hmm?" he hummed softly, pressing lingering kisses against her thighs. "I promised to show you more last night. Let me honor that promise. It's going to be different this time around," he murmured soothingly.

She relaxed beneath him, curiosity slowly overtaking her nervousness about the pain before pleasure as she wondered what other things he wanted to teach and show her.

Perhaps she had deprived herself of this for years, because now she felt strangely unsatisfied and longing for more, as if desires that had slept dormant inside her for years were finally beginning to awaken.

She watched him moved down her body, settling between her parted thighs. His strong hands gripped the backs of her knees, pushing her legs wider and folding them back toward her chest, completely exposing her.

When he leaned down between her thighs, he paused, pressing a soft kiss to the sensitive skin just below her pelvis.

"Let me soothe the aches from last night. You are already wet, and I want to taste every inch of you," he murmured against her flesh, dampened by her arousal and throbbing softly with need.

Then his mouth claimed her.

His hot, velvet tongue swept slowly through her folds, tasting her with deep, worshipful strokes. He licked her languidly, savoring her, before focusing on her clit with gentle suction and teasing flicks that made her hips jerk and made her gasp in stunned pleasure that wept over her.

Two thick fingers eased inside her, moving in a slow, curling rhythm that matched the strokes of his tongue. Every movement felt overwhelmingly delicious that her eyes rolled behind her lids.

Viola's fingers threaded through his hair, torn between pulling him closer and pushing him away from the overwhelming intensity. Tears pricked her eyes, not from pain, but from the raw vulnerability of being so completely opened to him like that with his mouth doing things to her.

He groaned against her, the vibration humming through her. "That's it, my love... Let me have all of you," he whispered. "I've waited so long to make you feel this."

He devoured her relentlessly, licking, sucking, and thrusting his tongue deep inside her, until she lost all will to hold back her moans. Her hips began writhing and grinding against his face as waves of intense pleasure crashed through her. Sebastian groaned in approval.

He sailed her higher and higher, sucking harder on her while his fingers curled inside her, stroking that perfect spot with every thrust. Heat coiled tighter and tighter in her belly until it finally exploded like a skyrocket. A gigantic burst of sensation erupted from her core, sending white-hot sparks sizzling outward to the tips of her fingers and toes. Her back arched violently off the bed as she came hard against his mouth, crying out his name.

When the powerful spasms finally eased, Viola opened her eyes to find Sebastian gazing up at her from between her thighs with undisguised, burning need and passion.

She moaned softly, pulling her scattered senses together, she realized he needed his own release just as desperately as she had moments ago. She reached for him with open arms.

"Come," she whispered, looking at him.

Sebastian lunged up, encompassing her with powerful arms that lifted her off the bed, turned her around as he laid back down, and set her on top of his stomach, then brought her down slowly until she was impaled on his enlarged flesh and her breasts were crushed against his chest. She moaned and he groaned.

Words became unnecessary because her body and his hands told her what to do as he gently began to move her hips in his grip. Innocence, timidity, naivety all fled as she started to move, watching his pleased face as his eyes slid closed and his head arched back against the jumbled pillows.

As his lips fell open and his breath scraped roughly, she saw the kind of complete passion he had brought to her in his face. Her heart soared. Her insides grew hot and more needy and she followed her body's instinct and began to grind and roll her hips to take in more of him.

This, this, this, is how it should be, she realized. The one giving to the other, the one taking from the other, with as much joy derived from the giving as from the taking.

She purposely faltered and his eyelids flickered open momentarily, then closed again and his head turned sharply against the pillow as she regained the rhythm of grinding.

Unbelievably, when he reached his climax he cried out, was it her name or some mindless profanity or both? It didn't matter to Viola, it made her smile, made her feel skilled and bursting with the joy of knowing how much power she held over him like this.

She collapsed onto his broad chest, her forehead nestling beneath his jaw. One of his hands fell onto her back possessively, rubbing it in a light, caressing tender circles before resting firmly on her hip and giving it a squeeze.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 269: New connection[1,058 words]

They both lay there, breathing hard and trying to catch their breath as the morning brightened outside. Then, surprisingly, beneath her ear, a slow, quiet, wonderful chuckle began. It rumbled there like sweet thunder until, puzzled, she raised her head to study his face.

But his eyes remained closed while his chest rose and fell beneath her own with silent laughter.

"I could get used to this for the rest of my life, Amor."

And suddenly she understood why he laughed, it was a laugh of clear satisfaction.

A smile blossomed on her lips, and a slow glow began deep down in her belly, reaching the place where they were still joined. He slung his arms around her, hugged her tightly, and smiled against her hair as he rolled them both from side to side several times.

"Ahh, you're going to be all I crave for the rest of my life," came his words, softened in a lover's praise. "Do you want to do it again?"

Nothing he might have said could have pleased Viola more at that moment. She smiled against his chest and began to take the lead of doing it again.

They did it again and again until the morning sky grew bright and the sun rose high.

"You are mine, Amor, no one can take you from me. No one. We will live the rest of our lives together." He whispered in her ear despite being spent from their many rounds, and Viola's body hummed to life again for some reason that made her wonder if it was normal that the more she experienced, the more she craved.

Still joined together, he rolled them both so she lay on her side facing him. Her head rested on his arm while he hooked one strong leg between her thighs. She squeezed her legs around his, trapping it snugly as their bodies stayed intimately locked. Their shared heat mingled with the awakening mate bond, a low, humming spark blooming inside her, while his surged into a fierce, roaring flame that heightened every ounce of his possessiveness and tender protectiveness.

They lay there in silence for a long moment while the sun kept rising outside and the chaos in Silver about his fake death was growing higher and higher. If it were up to Sebastian, he would have paused time in this moment and made love to her over and over again, but he knew that was impossible, he would have to leave her this evening.

His arms tightened around her, and as if sensing his unease, Viola raised her chin and looked up at him with a frown between her brows. "What is it?" She asked.

Sebastian dipped his chin and asked, "What?" as he reached out and used his fingers to caress the side of her lip, and she turned her face to press a kiss on his palm as she said, "I feel like something is disturbing you. What is it?"

Sebastian was once again taken aback at her words, which showed the heightened senses of mates. Last night she had said he smelled different because of his heat and now she sensed that something was bothering him. Was that not a good sign? She had other senses that indicated a she-wolf.

"I am just thinking, that's all."

"A penny for your thoughts." Viola said, placing her hand against his hard tattooed chest. "What are you thinking?"

Sebastian grinned. "About you." He teased, trailing his hand from her back to let it settle on her ass, where he gripped it and she gasped and slapped his chest.

"Don't change the topic, Seb. Tell me or I will bite your nipple," she threatened, bringing her lips closer to his nipple. Sebastian chuckled from the ticklish sensation of her warm breath and purposely stayed quiet so she would bite him, and when she indeed bit him, he groaned at the mingling of pain and pleasure and gripped her chin, leaning down to swiftly cover her mouth in a kiss he meant to be quick but that quickly grew hot.

Sebastian ended up going another round with her and this time she was finally spent enough to look drowsy and sleepy, but before she closed her eyes she asked him, "Tell me what is bothering you."

"I will miss you, that is what is bothering me." He confessed thickly, watching as her eyes turned to his.

"Where are you going?" She asked.

"Somewhere I can't tell you, but I want you to know that I will be back." He said, when she looked at him with a frown, the drowsiness wiping off her face.

"Are you going back to the main pack building? I can come with you."

"No. And I don't want you going to the main pack building until the culprit who assassinated me is found. Zoe will come here today, the two of you are to stay here until I return."

Viola felt her heart twist as she didn't want to be separated from him, not when she had just discovered they could actually live the married life like normal. She wanted to keep him here with her, but she was aware he had so many other responsibilities and secrets he wasn't sharing with her yet, and there was nothing she could do about it, just like there was nothing she could do about loving him.

"How long will you be gone?" She asked instead.

Sebastian's expression didn't change as he replied, "It depends. I travel certain months and how long I stay depends on things I cannot predict, so I can't give a certain date, but I won't be long. If there is something you need, Matt will be there and you can always ask him."

Viola could only hum in reply as she felt a lump rise in her throat because she didn't want him to leave. What if assassins came after him again? She wanted to voice that out but then realized he knew what he was doing, and insisting he stay might come across as being far too clingy, so she held her tongue and enjoyed the little time she still had with him before he would go, while he talked to her about the progress of his plans to catch the culprit who had planned that assassination in Nightshade.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 270: The hidden rat[1,441 words]

Sebastian looked down at his wife's sleeping face with a softened expression, feeling the urge to just close his eyes and fall asleep beside her, but this time of the month was not a time he could afford to sleep. Tomorrow was the day he had dreaded for so long that the thought of it sent spikes through his chest. He wanted to stay here, enjoy every moment of this newfound bond between them.

Sebastian had always told himself he didn't know a name for the kind of relationship he wanted to have with this little woman, who was so small compared to him it had scared him last night, but now he knew. He wanted her. No, he loved her. A very dangerous, risky game he had played that might cost him so much in the future.

He had fallen into something he had tried unsuccessfully to avoid and now that he was in it, he couldn't let it break. She was now his as much as he was hers.

He slowly traced his fingers around every feature on her face and touched her hair that had gone wild against his arms and the chest she was laying on. He leaned down and pressed a lingering kiss to the top of her head, breathing in that intoxicating daisy scent that clung to him like a second skin, and then gently, like a snail crawling, he disentangled himself from her body and laid her properly on the pillow.

She stirred, moved and twitched her fingers that were resting on both sides of her head before she relaxed, exhaled deeply and slept on. Sebastian smiled at that reaction he found dangerously endearing and adorable.

He covered her with the sheets and moved out of the bed, reaching for his robe in the room's closet. Putting it on, he reached out to Matt through the mind link and almost immediately his friend's words flowed into his head as if he had been waiting for him to become available.

"You know what, Seb? One of these days," Matt complained, "you are going to make me lose my social life and become old at twenty-nine. I have been trying to reach you to fill you in on what's been going on here."

"Quit the drama. You are a werewolf, and aging for you is hardly the same as it is for humans. What's the update?" Sebastian asked, not giving Matt the chance to continue with the complaints that were clearly meant to make him feel guilty.

Unfortunately for Matt, those tactics had stopped working on Sebastian a long time ago. He was already used to them, and besides, Sebastian was fairly certain that if Matt were not occupied with beta duties, he would not know what to do with himself anyway. The werewolf barely had a social life outside of work as it was.

"I have been trying to reach you for hours now. You can't believe who stepped out demanding the right to the seat." Matt reported. "Javier has laid a claim to the seat. He called for a meeting last night and gave them all the reasons to hand him your position."

"What reasons?" Sebastian's brows drew together, his eyes never leaving his sleeping Luna despite his displeasure at the news he was listening to. That stupid cousin of his. He should have banished the idiot a long time ago to live with the packless.

"He displayed some surprising energy that came close to people with Alpha blood, it was weak compared to the supreme Alpha but strong compared to a small pack Alpha. You should watch the Silver news across the packs. People are agreeing for him to be crowned rather than leave the seat empty since you don't have an heir."

Sebastian's scowl darkened even more like a brooding storm about to rain hell onto earth. His silver eyes turned the darkest shade in rage at this outcome, but despite that intense anger burning in his chest, his eyes softened the moment they landed on the woman turning on the bed in a way that dragged the sheet down her chest, exposing pale milky nipples with hickeys all over them from his handiwork, and he found his lips pulling into a smile as he went forward and adjusted the sheet over her chest.

"Javier is going to dig his own grave sooner than the moon goddess predicted for his fate." Sebastian said unemotionally.

"Is he our man then? Do you think he's responsible for the assassination?" Matt inquired curiously, as all he needed was the Alpha's command to send the warriors to catch Javier and put him somewhere worse than where Evan and his Luna were being held. The dungeons in Silver were graded according to one's crimes, and the biggest criminal got the worst treatment.

Sebastian didn't even hesitate as he replied to Matt's question with a, "No. I don't think it's Javier. He is too stupid to have any connections to get those weapons made or to manipulate the systems of Silver and wipe clean all the CCTV footage from when Zoe was shot. Javier doesn't possess the common sense humans have, let alone werewolves."

"What if he has other hidden connections we don't know about? I mean he could still have gotten those weapons made without anyone knowing. And don't forget Mrs. Kade. Camila has crazy connections." Matt said, as he couldn't think of anyone who wanted that seat as desperately as Javier had since childhood. The man was a greedy, short-tempered moron who could do anything to get what he wanted.

"I also got reports that Javier has been moving around the High Tower at night lately. The camera footage caught him sneaking in more than once during the days you were in Nightshade. If that is not a giveaway then I don't know what is."

"Javier and Camila don't have the connections to make those bullets." Sebastian said. "I know this because I have people keeping eyes on them, and as for the sneaking, I have already received a report from one of my men. The fool is sneaking out to meet Ember at night."

Matt was taken aback by that. "No shit? You mean Ember, the North pack princess?"

"Do you know another Ember apart from her." Sebastian deadpanned flatly. "The person who reported to me yesterday said it seems he is very taken with her. He is promising to make her his Luna."

Sebastian wasn't a fool to keep green snakes in the grass without marking them so he could identify them before he got bitten. Camila and her son had been a threat to him since day one, they had made it known what they wanted and Sebastian had acted like he didn't know.

He kept his enemies close so he could watch them. Every one of them had people keeping a close eye on their movements, which was why Camila's attempts at assassination had always failed, Sebastian always saw them coming.

Javier, his cousin, got too emotional to keep things cool. He would blow his own attempt even before making it, that was how foolish he was. Sebastian had ruled them both out of this attempt because he knew them well enough.

"Un-fucking-believable. I can't believe Ember is seeing a mated man. What about Sofia? What is he going to do with her?" Matt voiced out, unable to see how Javier planned to make Ember a Luna while his wife was still alive.

"You could always go and ask him yourself if you are that curious, Matt," Sebastian deadpanned once again as his friend predictably drifted off-topic the moment something juicy came up.

"Oh, come on. Javier is the last person I want to talk to or ask anything. Motherfucker would challenge me to a fight again," Matt remarked with a small laugh. "But still, I can't believe Ember fell for him. Thank God she didn't end up becoming our Luna."

He clicked his tongue before waving the matter aside.

"But anyway, man, who do you suspect?" Matt asked, steering the conversation back to their main topic.

"A lot of people. Some of the elders have been acting suspicious, they move around at night but the footage always gets cut off and never shows where they go. Elder Halvrek and Elder Thorne in particular."

"Do you suspect them?"

"I suspect they know who our man is, but we can't accuse them without evidence, which brings us back to the rat." Sebastian replied, his fingers absent-mindedly moving through her silky hair, stroking it gently, and loving the feel of it on his fingers.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 271: Take care of my Luna[1,327 words]

"So what are we going to do about Javier taking the throne?" Matt asked after a short moment of silence, because if he wasn't the rat then there was no reason for his ass to come anywhere near that position.

"Nothing." Sebastian announced.

"Excuse you. What do you mean nothing? I will be dead before I serve that fucker. You're joking, aren't you?"

"No. I mean it. We will do nothing. Let him have the seat. In fact I want you to support his rise to it." Sebastian instructed nonchalantly.

"What is your plan?" Matt asked, certain that Sebastian wouldn't hand Silver over to someone like his cousin without a plan. Sebastian had worked hard for the pack with his sweat and blood, had fought pack battles, built the world from the ground up, giving it up now wasn't something Matt believed he would ever do, not unless there was a plan behind it.

"Whoever made that assassination attempt on me wants the seat. And if Javier takes it, what are the chances that they wouldn't come after him too? Sometimes we need to use one thief to catch another. Their focus will no longer be on me but on Javier. I will give it one month, and if the culprit doesn't make a move, I take back the seat."

Sebastian had quietly thought through everything, and besides, this outcome wouldn't be all that bad given that he would be away. At least in his absence he wouldn't have to worry that someone would come after his hellcat or target her because of him, all assassination attempts would be redirected to whoever sat in that seat, and right now that would be Javier.

At the same time, he would have men planted so this hidden rat in his pack would finally come out, for this person was the most dangerous adversary he had ever encountered in all of his twenty years of being Alpha.

"I hope to hell this plan won't backfire on us, man." Matt said.

"I hope that too." Sebastian sighed, glancing at the time and realizing it was already well past afternoon, the hour of his departure approaching far faster than he wished.

He had planned to cook a meal for his wife before she woke up since they had both skipped breakfast, but that might no longer be possible. He had wasted far too much time simply lying there watching her sleep in his arms.

Perhaps he could at least make something quick for her to warm up later when she woke.

Knowing her habits, she would rather stay hungry and unintentionally starve herself than remember to eat on time, Sebastian thought with a faint frown, already considering ways to break her of that habit.

If only he did not have to leave today.

The thought left a sour taste rising in his mouth, and he had to force it down before continuing the conversation with Matt.

"What is the report on Nightshade?"

"We are making great progress. The men have found real traces of mermaids and are following the lead. And about the orphanage, the Nightshade Alpha is planning to destroy it and put the children to work on pack duty, as he believes the orphanage is bringing unwanted attention to their pack after what happened."

Sebastian was thoughtful for a moment before he ordered. "Tell the men to speak to Miss Lara. Tell her that if she is willing to give out the information about what happened to Ivy, she and the children will be welcomed into Silver as full members. They will be given everything." Sebastian said, his jaw set with quiet determination, still resolved to bring this woman all the happiness she deserved, and having that twin here would give her that.

They were still discussing plans on how to get the truth out of Miss Lara about Ivy when Sebastian heard Matt curse sharply and he asked what it was.

"Laila. She's here knocking on my door. I have been ignoring her since yesterday, but she keeps insisting on talking to me about you. It seems I can't ignore her any longer."

"Then deal with her," Sebastian said flatly, not having the energy to hear anything about Laila anymore.

And before Matt could start complaining again, he added, "Take care of my Luna while I'm away. And get Zoe here before tonight."

With that, he closed the link.

Matt, who was at his apartment, dragged his fingers through his hair as the door knocked again, louder this time, rattling with impatience. He cursed Sebastian in his head for putting him in this situation. That is why you don't keep multiple women, man, it always backfires!

He contemplated ignoring her but he knew better than most how persistent Laila could be when she wanted something, which left him with no choice but to answer. He did not have to come up with an excuse for Sebastian's absence this time around, Matt reminded himself. As far as everyone else was concerned, Sebastian was dead.

He went to the door and unlocked it, expecting to find a glaring, furious Laila, but what met him instead was a slap that snapped his head sideways, and a tearful Laila who looked like she had walked through hell itself to get to his door.

Her eyes were red and swollen, her hair disheveled, her chest heaving like she had been crying for hours.

Matt barely recovered from the first slap before a second one landed hard on the same cheek. It was when the third came swinging that he caught it, his fingers wrapping tightly around her wrist.

"You had better have a very good reason for that, Miss Serrano." Matt gritted out, tasting blood on his tongue, for she wasn't just an Alpha female wolf by title, she had the strength to match it and had put every bit of it into those slaps.

Laila jerked her wrist free from his grip and glared at him through tear-soaked lashes.

"How could you have let him go alone and get assassinated? Why my Sebastian and not you?" She cried out, her voice cracking under the weight of her rage, wishing she could rip this useless Beta's head clean off for letting her Seb travel alone to his death along with that bitch.

She didn't know where to pour her anger on but on the incompetent head beta.

"Whoa, that is a pretty strong thing to say about someone else's life, Miss Serrano." Matt remarked, his eyes narrowing slowly. So she wished him dead? What exactly had he done to her?

"I can't believe you allowed them to bury him without bringing his remains back...oh god, I should have gone with him instead of that weakling Luna. Why did he have to leave Silver?" Laila cried out, stumbling on her heels so violently that Matt had to reach out and catch her before she fell, but she shoved his arms away like his touch burned her.

"That bitch doesn't deserve to even be anywhere near him to begin with. She couldn't even protect him from his enemies, she—"

"Watch how you speak about the Luna." Matt said before he could stop himself, because he had seen with his own eyes exactly what Viola had done for the Alpha, had watched a woman with no wolf do what trained warriors hadn't, and he doubted very much that Laila, with everything she

had shown during the Luna competition, would have done anything other than run and leave Sebastian to face it alone.

"Luna?" Laila scoffed, the word dripping with contempt as it left her lips. "Sorry to break it to you, she's no longer that. And wherever you have left her, I hope she stays there, because if I see her I will send her to her grave to join Seb. And I will find whoever harmed my Seb and give them exactly what they fucking deserve!"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 272: Husband's kiss[1,435 words]

While Sebastian was still in the main quarter and Matt was handling an emotional Laila so she wouldn't direct her anger at their Luna in the future, in another part of Silver in the Kade's other quarter where the hot sun was blazing against the glass window, Javier dismissed the omega worker who had lead Ember to his study room.

"I told you not to come here to see me until I have handled Sofia," he said even while his hands were reaching out to grip her closer to him and she was cooing in his ear like a satisfied lover, turning him on.

"I couldn't help it, my Alpha. You know, after I heard the elders were deciding to crown you, my heart longed to find you and congratulate you on this milestone. I never thought things would turn out this way for us. I came to Silver never knowing I would find a man for me. You." She kissed his cheek and Javier grinned, liking that she was already addressing him as her Alpha.

"Why haven't you sent Sofia away to her pack like you said you would?" Ember asked, trying to mask her irritation at the fact that he was delaying sending that she-wolf back to her family. She wouldn't want to lose her second chance at becoming the supreme Luna the way she had lost to Viola.

"I don't know what is wrong with her, she is refusing to go back home." Javier gritted out. He had thought Sofia would have wanted to return to her family pack the moment he gave her his permission and told her he no longer wanted her as a mate, but the she-wolf had taken a particular fondness for the word no and he still blamed that wolfless bitch for her defiance.

"You can leave her to me, my Alpha. I can deal with her and make her accept your rejection. I will have her gone before the day we are crowned." She wound her arms around his neck, rubbing herself against him.

"And don't forget the promises you made me." She whispered into his ear, reminding him of what he promised her. "You promised to release Evan and Leni and give them back all the resources the late Alpha took from them. They are my friends and I don't like them being locked away. I want them to attend our ceremony."

Ember had been shamed in public because of Viola, insulted and humiliated to the point she'd had to hide herself away, but she no longer wanted that. She wanted to come out of hiding and fix things. She would become the North princess again and earn back her respect if she gave Moonwillow everything they wanted.

She was still dizzy with happiness and she beamed when Javier said, "I plan to release them today. My cousin knew nothing about pack matters, blacklisting Moonwillow and your pack the way he did. As long as you give me a healthy heir, I will give you more than you ever wished for." Javier said proudly, completely unaware that everything he was being handed was a trap set to walk him straight into the shark's mouth.

Viola didn't wake from her blissful sleep until the sun was high in the sky, though despite that the room was pleasantly dim, the thick curtains drawn together to keep the sunlight out so it wouldn't disturb her rest.

The first thing she noticed when she opened her eyes was the emptiness beside her. She felt her heart cave like a piece of it had gone missing, and her expression turned grim at the realization that he had already left.

Viola stared at the ceiling.

She had known he was leaving. He had told her himself, and she faintly recalled waking to find him dressing in the early morning light, and when she had smiled at him he had come forward and kissed her and whispered for her to sleep more.

Viola had wanted to fight the sleep but hadn't been able to. "You're leaving already?" She had whispered softly and he had nodded and kissed her again, catching her lip between his teeth and nibbling gently, sucking and exploring inside of her mouth.

"Sleep some more, love. You look tired. I have made some food you can heat up when you wake. Take care of yourself." He had kissed her one last time and then patted her hair until she drifted off again, something she had wanted so badly to fight so she could at least see him off or walk him to the door, despite the worry sitting heavy in her heart that he was traveling again so soon after narrowly escaping an assassination.

Viola lay there recalling everything that had happened between them last night and then again this morning, and a heat unlike anything she had known before climbed up to her cheeks, warming them all the way to the roots of her hair. She found herself missing him even though he hadn't been gone more than a few hours. She couldn't recall ever feeling this way toward Evan in the past, this warmth, this fluttering deep in her stomach, this tingling in her toes that made her curl them beneath the sheets.

She couldn't believe how much time she had wasted feeling miserable rather than enjoying the presence of her mate and giving him a chance to show what she was missing. She had guarded her

heart so fiercely that she had turned away every possibility of loving him, her fears building walls she had convinced herself were necessary.

And now she was lying in a bed that smelled like him, with the memory of his hands on her skin and his mouth kissing and licking every inch of her, the thought of it alone pulling a low heat between her thighs. All that careful distance felt like the most wasteful thing she had ever done in her life.

"Stupid." She whispered to the ceiling, slapping her head.

The more she thought about Sebastian, the more her heart felt warm and her skin tingled like little sparks were flying underneath it. The feeling was so foreign to her that she raised her arm and admired the goosebumps rising along the backs of them.

Viola didn't know what Sebastian felt deep down, beyond his mate bond. She still wasn't certain whether everything he did and said to her last night was because of their mate bond, but she was certain of her own feelings.

Maybe he felt everything. Maybe he felt nothing beyond mate bond attachment. Maybe she would never know for certain and would spend the rest of however long she had here reaching for an answer and doubting whether another mate would come along and sweep him away from her. Something she had feared might happen eventually because of this prophesied mate situation.

But she had decided it no longer mattered.

She would love him completely, without demands and without expectations. She would give him everything she had for however long she was allowed to have him, and when the time came, when he found the prophesied mate he could mark without killing, when she found her sister, and when the reason for her being here finally dissolved and there was nothing left tying her to this place, she would leave.

Quietly. Without burdening him.

Because he had already given her far more than the people she had once considered family ever had, even the one person she had spent years desperately trying to please.

Evan had used her without giving her anything in return except distrust and pain, but Sebastian had never used her or burdened her with pack duties, even when he technically should have. Instead, he had shown her care, affection, patience, and kindness.

And somewhere along the way, without her realizing when it had happened, her heart had become completely his.

Viola sat up slowly on the bed, the sheet pooling at her waist, and pushed her tangled hair back from her face.

Her body ached in a way it never had before, a deep, settled soreness between her legs that had nothing painful about it, and she sat with it for a moment.

Then she swung her legs off the bed and made her way to the bathroom on feet that were still slightly unsteady, something she refused to be embarrassed about, because the experience with her husband had been wonderful despite the little awkward moments the night before.

She smiled to herself recalling everything that happened between them.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 273: The creature In the shower[1,412 words]

Inside the bathroom that smelled so much of Sebastian and made her body hum to life and her pulse throb, Viola saw her reflection and almost gasped at the hickies covering her body, especially on her neck and breasts, it went all the way down, her thighs carrying bite marks that turned her face red like an overripped tomatoes.

"Sebastian!" she muttered in shocked disbelief at the sheer extent of the hickies scattered across her skin. "How did he expect me to hide all of this?" she grumbled to herself.

Unlike werewolves, she did not possess fast healing, and Zoe would be arriving today.

Viola pursed her lips at the thought, though despite herself, she still found her fingers drifting to the marks on her neck, lightly tracing them with a smile she could not quite suppress.

"Sometimes you act like a dog, Seb," she sighed.

Then she turned on the shower and stepped beneath the water without waiting for it to warm, needing the cold shock of it to pull her fully back into herself and stop the lingering sparks and delicious warmth his touch had left behind in her body.

The water came down in heavy, steady streams and she stood under it with her eyes closed, her forehead tipped forward, letting it run through her hair and down her back and carry whatever was left of last night off her skin. Not because she wanted to be rid of it. More because she needed to begin the day and standing here remembering wasn't going to make his absence any shorter.

She reached for the soap.

And then the water moved.

Not the way water moved when pressure changed or something shifted. It moved with its own intention, the stream nearest to her shoulder pulling away from its downward path and curling slowly, like something waking up and stretching to life.

Viola went completely still, her face going pale.

Her heart slammed hard against her ribs as the water began gathering in front of her, pulling itself from the streams running around her. It twisted and thinned, shifting shape until a small, fluid, and entirely impossible creature stood before her.

Its form flickered uncertainly between a serpent and something unrecognizable, its body made entirely of moving water. The bathroom light caught against its rippling form and scattered pale silver reflections across the tiles.

She stumbled backward and hit the shower wall behind her, believing the water that had attacked and pulled her under in Nightshade was back to do it again.

"No." She breathed, her chest seizing immediately with the memory of Nightshade. Her hands pressed flat against the tiles behind her and she was already looking for an exit, her pulse roaring in her ears.

But the shape didn't move toward her.

It stayed exactly where it was, hovering in the falling water, and if something made entirely of water could be said to have stillness in it, this thing had it. It wasn't coiling or moving with the shower water anymore. It tilted what she could only describe as its head and regarded her the way a patient creature regarded something it had startled by accident and was now waiting for to calm down.

Viola stared at it.

It stared back.

Or whatever passed for staring when you had no eyes, only water shifting in the shape of them. What the hell was this?!

She pressed herself against the wall for a long moment, breathing hard, waiting for it to lunge or to change shapes or for the voice she had once heard in Nightshade to follow. But nothing happened.

The shape simply existed in front of her without any alarming movement to attack.

"You're not the same one, are you?" She questioned, and her voice came out quieter.

The shape moved in a way that looked almost like a dip of its head in acknowledgment, and then it did something else that made Viola's breath catch completely.

It began moving toward her shoulder.

She flinched, every muscle in her body screaming at her to push it away, but it didn't touch her like a grip or a pull. It touched her the way water touched skin, pressing lightly against the curve of her shoulder where a bruise had bloomed dark and tender from Sebastian's mouth, and where it touched she felt warmth instead of cold, a deep traveling warmth that moved through the hickey.

She looked down.

The bruise was fading. Right there beneath the touch of this impossible water creature, the mark was lightening, the tenderness easing, the skin smoothing back to its unbroken pale as if Sebastian's mouth had never been there at all.

"Oh." Viola said softly.

She watched it move to the next one. Then the next. Traveling across her skin with that same careful gentleness, touching each mark Sebastian had left on her and dissolving it back into nothing.

She didn't understand what this was and had never heard of it. Though she was aware that many werewolves had abilities and powers, it didn't include giving water shapes...

How did she have water abilities? Viola raised her hand to try it and watched as she could move the water with her hands, pulling it into a large bubble, and when she brought her hand down it splashed against the water creature, and it squeaked and glared at her, at least she thought it glared from the way it looked at her.

"Sorry..." She muttered. "You don't perhaps talk?"

It shook its head.

Viola sighed. "I am getting confused about myself. What am I? I am a werewolf, I can feel it, but what are you?" She asked it.

Whatever she was, whatever ran in her blood beneath the surface of this wolfless, supposedly powerless body she had been told her whole life was a deficiency, she was beginning to suspect it was something else entirely. Could it have something to do with why she had never received her wolf?

Did she even have a wolf? But then if she didn't, what was that voice that had once spoken to her and told her to find her twin? She felt her head spinning from all these questions.

She watched the water shape finish its work and draw back, returning to the streams of falling water until it was simply a part of them again, its form dissolving back into ordinary shower water that ran down the tiles and disappeared into the drain.

Viola stood in the middle of the shower for a long moment, wondering what on earth had just happened.

Then she looked down at her unmarked skin, every trace of last night erased, and felt a strange feeling move through her, a grief she hadn't expected for the loss of those marks, which was ridiculous and she knew it was ridiculous, and yet she felt mad that it had wiped Sebastian's marks from her.

"You could have talked to me about what you are rather than do what you were not asked to do, water." Viola rambled, and as if hearing her, the water pouring over her head smacked her hard on the face so that she yelped and stumbled back.

Viola gasped at it. "I hope next time you don't try to heal things without asking me first, not everything is meant to heal." She sighed, pressing her fingers lightly to her collarbone where the most visible mark had been.

"I need to figure out what I am. I can't be anything other than a werewolf, I can't be." She said quietly to the water, to whatever had just happened.

Outcasts were not welcome in the werewolf world, this world belonged only to were-people, and anything else would be killed or cast out. Vampires and any kinds of creatures had been cast away a very long time ago. It had been that way since the beginning of time and she wanted nothing to do with water creatures, the oldest enemies of werewolves.

"You had better never show yourself to me again." She said to the water, not wanting to be implicated in anything that had to do with it.

The water ran on in silence, offering no answers. But she had a feeling in her chest that it wasn't gone. That it would come back. That it had always been there, waiting for her to be ready, ready for what exactly, she didn't yet know.

She turned off the shower.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 274: Defending husband[1,410 words]

Viola was dressed and sitting at the big window of the dining room with a cup of creamy tea she had made herself, her damp hair loose over one shoulder as she wanted it to air dry, when she heard the front door opening. She immediately got up, sensing it was Zoe, for some reason she couldn't explain, her senses seemed sharper today.

"Vee!" Came Zoe's voice echoing through the halls, and Viola felt the first real smile of the afternoon move across her face before she could stop it.

She set down her tea and went toward the front door.

Zoe stood in the hallway with her hair piled messily on top of her head, the first time Viola had ever seen Zoe with a hair out of place, given that she always carried herself like a supermodel commanding her height. Her face looked like she had been crying a great deal, and it sent a needle of pain straight to Viola's heart knowing it was because she hadn't been told in time about her brother's fake death.

"Zoe..." Viola murmured with a sympathetic smile on her face as she opened her arms for her friend who looked like she needed the hug.

Zoe adjusted the large bag hanging off one of her shoulder as she pursed her lips and said, "Do you know how devastated I was when I heard the news?" She murmured as she walked forward into Viola's open arms. She had to bend down slightly since she was taller than her brother's wife, and the moment she was pulled into the hug she felt her eyes tear up as she began to complain about Sebastian.

"I told you that brother of mine doesn't give a damn about me. He announced such a thing without giving me any warning. I wish I were older than he is so I could pull his ears and make him understand that things like that are not acceptable!"

Viola rubbed her back and sighed. "Everything happened so quickly, Zoe. Don't blame him, he didn't have time to sort things out and it all just happened at once."

Zoe's brows pulled together as she moved back from the hug and looked down at Viola, biting the side of her lower lip. "Hmm, you are defending him now I see. I heard a wife always stands by her husband but your husband is insensitive." She grumbled, finally noticing that Viola smelled so much like Sebastian now, she didn't even need to sniff the air to know the two had been together intimately like mates should be.

Zoe's heart leaped with joy. Did that mean she should start expecting little pups calling her Auntie Zoe soon?

The realization eased some of the hurt caused by her brother's insensitivity, but she did not let it show. She wanted to see just how far Viola would go in defending him.

"Seb is not insensitive," Viola said, walking right into Zoe's trap. "He is the most considerate man I have ever known. He treats everyone he cares about with genuine affection, and I hope you won't blame him this time because he truly almost died from that assassination. I almost lost him and that feeling is still sitting inside me."

Whenever she thought about how he had looked with those bullets in his body, she shuddered, because he would have died if she hadn't used the ability she hadn't even known she possessed. And even now she couldn't fully rest, knowing he could be targeted again wherever he had gone to.

Zoe pursed her lips, noticing the worry lines settling on her friend's face. She let out a slow breath. "How bad was it?" she asked quietly.

As happy as she was that their relationship had progressed to this level, she still could not overlook the fact that he had almost died, and her friend had been there to witness it happen.

"As bad as it could get. I know you warned me that he gets assassinated often but I never knew it was this serious. I believe a special weapon was used on him." Viola said quietly as they moved into the house together.

Zoe had grown up watching her brother get targeted so many times that his constant assassinations had turned her into a permanently paranoid person, and she knew her friend was

about to become familiar with that same feeling, the unpleasant, relentless habit of watching your back and never fully exhaling.

Since she was a little girl she had understood the danger of his world and what being Alpha cost him. When she had heard the news yesterday, Zoe thought grimly, she had believed she had lost the only close family she had left, and for a moment her entire world had gone dark, until Matt had come to tell her the truth last night.

"I suppose the weapons advance with every assassination attempt." Zoe said. "People are heartless and greedy. My brother hasn't hurt anyone by protecting the pack as the Alpha."

"That's exactly why I didn't think it was a good idea for him to leave so soon. I really wish he could have stayed here until all of this was over and the person responsible was caught." Viola voiced her frustration quietly.

"He left already?" Zoe asked as she swept past her into the living room area, already moving toward the kitchen as naturally as if she had been there a hundred times before.

"You know about him leaving?" Viola asked, following behind her.

Zoe was quiet for a moment, setting the bag she had brought, packed with takeaway, down on the counter. Then she turned and looked at Viola directly. "Yes, because he leaves every time at this time of the month. It has been a routine I have grown used to since I was growing up."

Viola couldn't help her curiosity at those words. "Where does he go?" She asked.

Zoe's expression shifted and a look of quiet sadness settled over her face. She looked down at her fingers as she whispered, "I don't know exactly where he goes, but I know that Alex died on the 30th and Sebastian never spends the 30th in the pack. He goes away for a while and when he comes back, he looks like he has fought the devil himself."

Many times Zoe had tried to ask him where he went but his replies had always been so flat and disinterested that she would eventually have to drop the topic. There had even been a time she tried to follow him at a safe distance, but he had caught on and stopped, instructing his warriors to take her straight back to her fashion house and never drive her after him again.

Zoe had eventually given up, stopped asking, stopped secretly following, because he always caught her no matter how careful she was. Just as he never spoke about the real reason he had killed his twin, he never spoke about where he went on the 30th.

She had hoped he would eventually open up to Vee someday, but seeing the look of confusion on her friend's face, Zoe had a feeling their relationship had not yet reached that level of trust.

"Does he go away to grieve for his brother's death?" Viola asked quietly.

Zoe shook her head. "I don't know. He tells me nothing and he never mentions Alex after his death. Sometimes he acts like a man with memory issues because he never speaks about the dead, like he has erased them from his mind completely. That is something I have never liked about him..." Zoe muttered.

Viola recalled his words about not keeping pictures of dead people because he didn't want to hold on to any feelings connected to them. But if he truly didn't hold on to them, he wouldn't be leaving every 30th to grieve for Alex, which meant wherever he was going, it wasn't to grieve.

"When does he come back after he leaves?" Viola asked.

"He'll come back." Zoe said simply. "He always does, but there is no certain day or date, you will just find him back one day without any warning. It is the most irritating thing about him." She gave Viola a small, tired smile. "Welcome to the world of Sebastian Kade, Vee. You and I can try to figure him out together, because my brother is complicated as hell."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 275: The Intruders[1,337 words]

Viola stood in the kitchen with Zoe, going through everything they had talked about regarding Sebastian. She tried to find a reason for his absence on the 30th, settling on the idea that he went to grieve, but his own words came back to her, that he didn't hold on to people who were gone, and she found herself more confused about him than before.

Where did he go? This was her first time being with him during this particular absence, unlike his sister who had witnessed many of his strange disappearances over the years. Viola let out a quiet sigh, unable to piece it together, and reached out to help Zoe put away the snacks and food she had brought for them, having heard there were no omega workers to cook in the main quarter, and when it came to cooking, Zoe was as bad as her brother was gifted.

Though Viola could cook for them, especially now that she was more confident after Sebastian had eaten her cooking without complaint, she did not like wasting perfectly good food when there were so many people starving somewhere out there.

It would be best to store the takeout in the refrigerator and heat it up later.

"Nick is devastated too. He was with me when I was crying over Sebastian's death and your whereabouts," Zoe said with a tired sigh, catching Viola's wandering attention. "I wanted to tell him the truth after Matt told me everything was fine and it was all a cover, but the Beta said it was confidential and shouldn't be shared with anyone, even the closest family members. So I only let him know that you weren't hurt."

Zoe trusted Nick and knew that whatever was going on, he wasn't among those driven by greed for the Alpha position like his older brother. But as much as she would have liked to tell him that nothing had truly happened to Sebastian, she had kept that from him and only confirmed that Viola was safe. Just like her, he had been relieved.

Viola smiled hearing that. "I am glad you assured him about me. I wouldn't want him thinking I was dead too. And—" Viola's words trailed off when the front door suddenly unlocked again and

she exchanged a quick look with Zoe, who frowned and shrugged. They were the only ones currently in the house aside from the men guarding the perimeter outside, and those men never came in.

Even if they want to come in, they couldn't have unlocked the passcode of the door.

"Are you expecting someone else?" Zoe asked and Viola shook her head, wiping her fingers on the kitchen towel before reaching instinctively into the drawer cabinet for the butcher's knife and pushing Zoe firmly behind her.

After the assassination attempt she had lived through with Sebastian, her instincts had sharpened considerably and she now associated anything unusual with danger. The last thing Viola wanted was to be caught unprepared and have another person she cared about get hurt. Though her heart was slamming like a drum against her ribs, she held Zoe's hand with one hand and gripped the knife with the other as they moved cautiously toward the entrance.

"Do you think we are going to be assassinated, Vee?" Zoe asked fearfully from behind her as they crept forward. The house was soundproofed and any commotion outside wouldn't have reached them if someone had managed to get in.

"I don't know, just stay behind me." Viola whispered, raising the knife. She had almost hurled it at whoever had come in without invitation, and she would have thrown it if she hadn't belatedly heard two voices she recognized and seen two familiar figures walking out from the corridor connected to the front door.

"Holy shit!" Matt exclaimed, stopping short in his tracks and pulling Gilbert to a halt beside him as his eyes landed on the two women, one with a raised knife and the other hiding behind her. "What are you doing with a knife, Luna?" Matt questioned, his gaze moving from the gleaming blade to her alert face, which was already beginning to soften with relief as she lowered the hand holding the knife and brought it down to her side.

"I thought you two were assassins..." Viola muttered, though even as the words left her mouth, she realized how foolish they sounded. With the level of security surrounding the quarters, how could assassins possibly have gotten inside?

Matt exchanged a look with the doctor, who arched a brow, equally taken aback at being greeted at the door with a blade and mistaken for assassins.

Only then did he belatedly remember that neither of the two women possessed full wolf senses sharp enough to detect that it was them approaching.

Zoe, whose entire body was shaking terribly was so relieved that she slumped straight down to the floor, patting her chest to calm her heart, before peering up and saying, "What are you doing back here? I thought you dropped me off and left already? Do you have any idea how much you two scared us?!"

"Our apologies, it was never our intention to frighten you. I came back for something urgent and found Doctor Gilbert also on his way here to bring the Luna some supplements he had prepared to add to her medication list from yesterday." Matt said, looking toward Viola with an apologetic smile, quietly admiring her instinct to want to fight rather than flee at the thought of intruders.

Viola gave him a nod, equal parts embarrassed and relieved that they weren't about to be attacked in their own house. She was embarrassed because if she'd had a wolf, she would have immediately sensed the two men and recognized their presence, instead she had made a fool of herself wielding a kitchen knife in her own hallway.

"It's okay." She said, then invited them in as she reached down to give Zoe a hand and pull her up from the floor.

"We haven't been officially introduced, Luna." Doctor Gilbert said as they followed her to the kitchen, where she put the knife back in the drawer and turned to face them, her blue eyes now composed, the brief murderous look he had glimpsed in them completely gone.

"Now that I think about it, we indeed haven't been formally introduced." She muttered.

"I am Doctor Gilbert, the pack's chief physician. My work also extends to forensic medicine and biological research." He held out his hand and she took it with a warm, friendly smile. Whenever Gilbert had come around after she regained consciousness, the Alpha had not allowed him to see the Luna, as if he feared the doctor would somehow steal her attention away with a single glance.

He would take him straight to the study room and dismiss any idea of Gilbert doing a quick check-up on her.

Unknown to Gilbert, the Alpha had no intention of allowing the doctor too much time around his wife. He did not want her becoming smitten by the man's good looks and easy charm the way his sister had.

Possessive and overly protective by nature, Sebastian was unwilling to take that risk. Otherwise, he feared he might one day end up strangling the doctor to death.

"It's nice to finally meet you, Doctor Gilbert. I have heard a lot about you." Viola remarked, and Zoe nudged her sharply from behind, warning her not to reveal that she had heard it all from her.

The doctor looked far younger than Viola had imagined, and far more handsome, with a dimpled smile that would send any woman's heart spinning. That face belonged on the cover of a magazine, just as Zoe had always told her, but though Viola could appreciate his looks and respect his intelligence, her heart now longed only for one particular person, and everyone else's handsomeness fell a distant second to that.

Her heart had recognized and stored only Sebastian in its shell...

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 276: A Situation that changes things[1,509 words]

Viola released Doctor Gilbert's hand just as Zoe waved cheerfully from behind her. "Hello, Gilbert."

"Hi, Miss Zoe. It has been a while, you must be keeping busy at the fashion house." Gilbert said, a trace of awkwardness in his voice as he recalled that the last time she had contacted him, she had asked him to model for her new limited edition men's collection. Gilbert was accomplished in many things, but standing in front of a camera and taking a pose was not among them.

He had politely declined with the excuse of being too busy, and though he was fairly certain she had been stung by it, she-wolves like Zoe were not accustomed to being turned down, given that most people lined up eagerly for the chance to be noticed by her and be picked as her model, Gilbert was a doctor with a full roster of patients and had never had any interest in using his looks for anything beyond charming reluctant patients into accepting their medications and injections without complaint.

"Yes, very busy. I found myself another male model who was more than willing, so no hard feelings about last time." Zoe said, resisting the urge to facepalm herself for having been foolish enough to ask Gilbert when Nick had been right there willing from the very beginning.

Though as desperate as she was for his attention, Zoe knew all these feelings were something that would disappear the moment she found her fated mate, who was taking his sweet time finding her, because had he been here already, she wouldn't be so smitten with her doctor.

She was still embarrassed about approaching Gilbert to model for her and knew talking about it was awkward, but thankfully the Beta finally stepped into the conversation and steered things away from any further awkwardness.

"Luna, I came back to inform you that you two need to leave the main quarter for now." Matt announced, addressing Viola directly.

"Wait, what?" Zoe exclaimed.

"Why?" Viola asked, taken aback. Sebastian had told them to stay put and not go anywhere until he was back. What was Matt saying now?

Even Gilbert turned to the Beta with an arched brow, knowing the Alpha was away and that these two were safest here in a quarter heavily protected by warriors and security systems designed to cut any intruder apart before they got close.

"We have a situation that changes things." Matt said. "The elders have decided to hand the Alpha seat to Javier, and as we all know, the new Alpha has rights to this quarter and everything in it. I don't know all the details yet, but I've heard he intends to take Ember as his new Luna and she is requesting to stay in this quarter ahead of the crowning."

Viola's brows pulled together at that information. Javier was taking the bait for the seat? And he intended to make Ember his Luna?

Shouldn't Ember have returned to her own pack by now?

None of this sounded good, and it left a sour taste in Viola's throat. She still had a history with Ember that she had not forgotten.

But steadying herself, she looked at Matt and asked, "Does Alpha Sebastian know that you are moving us away from here?"

Matt nodded. "Yes, I wouldn't take this step without reaching out to him first. He says to move you two back into the city. You can stay with Zoe for the time being until he's back. The security at her apartment is as strong as it is here. Furthermore, the city is much more protected with the pack members around."

Knowing Sebastian was aware of the move, Viola gave a quiet nod and let her shoulders relax. She didn't mind being moved as long as there was no drama involving Ember, she had no desire to cross paths with that she-wolf or watch her get high and mighty over a position she was about to temporarily occupy.

The only thing that truly bothered her was the thought of Ember and her new lover using the bed where she and Sebastian had shared their first time. That memory was private, something that belonged only to them, and the thought of it being tainted by someone else felt like a quiet violation she had no power to prevent.

But there was no choice. She excused herself to go and get her things ready.

Viola walked into the master bedroom, pulled out a suitcase and carried it into the closet. She packed the clothes Sebastian had gotten for her and her underwear, then paused with her lip between her teeth and reached into his section of the closet, pulling out two of his shirts and one of his house shoes and stuffing them into the suitcase. If she had to leave, she could at least take something of his to hold onto.

Sleeping was always hard without him next to her, perhaps if she took his shirt it would help her sleep more.

She was closing the zip when she stopped, got up, and walked out of the room. She moved down the polished, quiet hallways of the large quarter into the gallery where Sebastian had once told her his family album was kept. She searched through it for a moment, found what she was looking for, and tucked it under her arm.

She still couldn't shake her curiosity about Alex's death and his relationship with Sebastian, the fact that Sebastian left on the date he had killed his twin, the silence he kept around it. She wanted to see their past through the pages of the album, to understand something he had never chosen to tell her.

Done packing, Viola left the room with a quiet promise to herself that she would return. She didn't carry much attachment to the place, she hadn't been here long enough for that, but what attachment she did have was bound up entirely in last night, this morning, and her husband.

Downstairs, Matt spotted her coming down with the suitcase and moved quickly to take it from her, leaning in to murmur, "The Alpha says to tell you to endure any shortcomings until everything is cleared. He said he will make it up to you when he comes back."

Viola felt her heart warm at the fact that he had sent his Beta with a private message just for her. She wasn't worried about any shortcomings, she had endured far worse and a she-wolf temporarily sitting in her seat was hardly the hardest thing she had ever faced.

"Do you know when he will be back, or where he went to?" She tried her luck with Matt, who let out a slow sigh.

"Unfortunately I don't have the answer to either of those. He may be back in a week or more. Let me take that, Luna." He took the suitcase and the bag she was holding along with it.

Gilbert, who had come only to drop off supplements, found himself feeling the pull to stay and accompany them. It was his day off, and seeing the Luna and the Alpha's sister safely to their destination felt like the right thing to do. He picked up Zoe's bags that were still sitting in the kitchen and, being a gentleman, placed a guiding hand at the small of her back as he fell into step beside her.

They all drove into the city toward Zoe's apartment connected to her fashion house. As they entered the city of Silver, Viola watched every holographic screen they passed carrying the same news, Sebastian's death and Javier's coronation, and she couldn't help turning to Matt, who was driving.

"Is he responsible for the assassination?"

"No. But the culprit will strike again, and when they do, Javier will be the target rather than Sebastian. That is what we are counting on."

"What if the culprit has something personal against Sebastian that goes beyond the Alpha seat? They could still try to come after him regardless of who is sitting on the throne, couldn't they?" Viola asked, her brow furrowed deeply. She couldn't shake the thought that an enemy driven by something more personal than ambition wouldn't simply stop because the seat changed hands.

Who knows, the person might want to investigate more into Sebastian's fake death than focus on Javier.

"You are smart, Vee. They could still want my brother's life." Zoe remarked, biting her lower lip with worry. "And why are they even crowning Javier when he doesn't have a strong enough Alpha presence to hold that seat?"

"We haven't looked deeply enough into that angle yet, Luna. But we are hoping it is someone whose motivation began with the seat, as most of his known enemies started there. As for Javier, Zoe, he is walking himself into something he may not be equipped to handle." Matt said, though he filed the Luna's words away carefully and made a quiet decision to increase the security around Sebastian and around the Luna herself.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 277: The Water Attack_Part 1[1,134 words]

Viola had never been to Zoe's fashion house despite having been in Silver for months now, as it was tucked away on the other side of the city where the pack's industrial buildings and companies were located.

She'd seen pictures of it in fashion magazines and on screens but seeing it in person was even much better. It was a sleek glass ten story building with a large glass sign at the top that said, [Zoe Fashion House] in bold letters.

They exited the cars they had driven in and entered the building, where bodyguards stood at every corner, and no one was allowed access without first identifying themselves.

The building was not only a fashion house; it also contained a boutique that sold all of Zoe's design collections, from bags to shoes and dresses.

Viola looked around as they were led into the glass elevator, which gave them a clear view of the different floors as it ascended. The lower levels held her showroom, boutique, and offices, while the middle floors housed design studios, private fitting rooms, and photography spaces that looked far more elegant than anything Viola had ever seen in her life. There was nothing remotely like this in Moonwillow, not even close.

At the very top was the luxury penthouse, with two more apartments beneath it, where Zoe led them after they stepped out of the elevator. She unlocked the penthouse using the eye scanner installed for security purposes and gestured for the three of them to enter.

"Welcome to my little coven!" she said, opening her arms invitingly as she welcomed them inside with a smile.

This was her private space, and apart from Nick, she had not brought many people here. Even her brother had only stepped foot inside once, back during the period when she had practically cut off all connection with him because of his reckless, ruthless behavior.

Now that she was having guests over, she found herself oddly anxious to please them and make them feel comfortable, especially Gilbert, whom she knew looked down on her profession and did not regard it with the same seriousness as his medical career.

Viola, who had already seen so much of the elegant building on their way up, would never have associated such a place with the word little. It was far beyond little and even more luxurious than the penthouse in High Tower.

No wonder Zoe was the biggest fashion designer in the entire werewolf world. She had made a name for herself since she was a teenager, and Viola could not help but admire the amount of hard work and passion poured into everything around her.

At the same time, it made her reflect on her own life and how many years she had spent trying to please others instead of building something for herself and learning independence the way Zoe had.

Zoe's passion for her work showed in every part of the building, and Viola found herself genuinely in awe of it. Apart from music, she had never really discovered something she loved that deeply, and even her love for music had slowly begun fading into the background of her life over the years.

Meanwhile, Zoe had built an entire life for herself away from her brother's shadow and had grown into someone capable of standing firmly on her own.

And now she was proudly showing it all to them, exactly as she deserved to.

Viola could not help feeling genuine admiration and pride for her friend.

Doctor Gilbert, who had never set foot anywhere near the fashion house, was completely taken aback by what he saw. "You have a lovely place, Miss Zoe." He said sincerely and Zoe flushed before she caught herself and composed her expression.

"Thank you."

"I'm impressed, Zoe. I didn't realize this much work went on inside Zo Fashion House," Matt remarked with genuine admiration, realizing that the little girl they had all practically helped raise after she lost her mother in infancy was no longer a little girl at all and now owned something this remarkable.

Though the inside of the penthouse was a little too girlish for his taste, he still found it oddly adorable.

He hadn't been in here before, and perhaps he hadn't seen her fully as an adult because he had witnessed all the stages of her growing up and every tantrum she had thrown to get what she wanted in their lives.

"Well, thank you. Make yourselves at home. Vee, you can take the room next to mine. Put her things there." She told the bodyguard carrying the Luna's bags.

"No wonder you always go back and forth from the High Tower, you have an even lovelier place here." Viola muttered, taking in the living room décor that spoke so much of her friend, from the designs to the pink sofa and rug. Even the glass walls had a tint of pink to them as they overlooked the city, where a screen was showcasing Javier's face alongside Sebastian's black and white picture.

"I used to like it here much better because it served as an escape from the High Tower and the main quarter that held too many memories I wanted to forget about Alex," Zoe said, hugging Viola from the side and exhaling softly. "But after you came to Silver, I started preferring to spend time with you instead. It's good to have a friend who is now family."

Viola smiled warmly and slipped her arm around Zoe's small waist, feeling her heart warm at the thought that they were indeed now family, and even best friends, something she had not experienced genuinely apart from her sister.

They both stood before the glass wall, staring out at the city screens as the sun set behind the horizon, welcoming the evening. The sky, which had been bright a while ago, was now heavy with dark clouds gathering at its edges, as though a rainstorm was slowly building, faint flashes of lightning flickering within it.

Viola stared at Sebastian's black and white picture with the words rest in peace printed below it and felt a shudder move through her. It felt too real, too convincing, and watching it made something uncomfortable settle in her chest.

"Okay, I know what you are thinking, Vee. Let's cover the glasses, I don't like seeing my brother with a rest in peace on him." Zoe voiced it out and Viola let out a quiet laugh because they had been having the exact same thought at the exact same time.

Just as the rain began to fall lightly from the sky and dim the surroundings of the city lights outside, Zoe turned and had the house system draw the curtains across the glass walls while thunder rumbled in the background.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 278: The Water Attack_Part 2[1,446 words]

By the time Viola's things were set in her room the rain had grown stronger and was falling in earnest, drumming steadily against the building and glass. The air turned cool and Viola wrapped her arms around herself as she made her way to the dining area where Zoe had decided they would all eat together since the rain would keep the two men from leaving for a while.

They decided to heat the takeouts for dinner. Matt had taken over the table setting and was attempting to teach Doctor Gilbert, who looked like he had not set a dinner table in a single day of

his life, how to do it properly, and Zoe was leaning against the counter laughing at Gilbert's extreme concentration as she heat up the food.

"This is mostly useful when you know how to do your own thing, Doc. Seeing as you only care about your work, you might never find your mate, so let me teach you how to live a less lonely single life. You set the plate this way for a professional dinner and—"

"I don't need to learn how to set a professional dinner table, Beta. I won't be having one if I end up alone like you said. Teach me one for mateless men," Gilbert said, watching what the Beta was doing at the table.

"You really are planning to stay mateless all your life, Doc?" Matt asked, raising a curious brow.

Gilbert shrugged. As the pack's head physician, he had spent most of his years in the human world learning medicine, and now worked tirelessly to improve werewolf healthcare. He did not think he would ever have time to attend gatherings to find his mate, unless she somehow came from Silver.

Mateless males usually traveled and attended many moon festivals and other lunar gatherings, but he simply did not have the time. Furthermore, it was not something commonly practiced in Silver anymore after the death of the previous Alpha and Luna.

"What a life, Doc. I mean, you and I, not having the time to search. I wish the female would come looking for a change." Matt turned his attention. "Luna, are the plates in good condition for eating now?"

Viola, who stood by the sink rinsing the plants Zoe had not used in a while, leaving them slightly dusty, was already smiling as she listened to their conversation.

"Almost done," she called back to Matt.

She had never been in a group like this before, friends joking and talking so casually, and she was enjoying the atmosphere more than she probably should. That was when she noticed the water from the tap begin to separate itself from the flow, taking on a strange shape. Her heart gave a sudden thud as her eyes narrowed at the water-like creature, forming again.

Before she could fully panic at its appearance and tell it to go away, it subtly gestured upward toward the glass panel.

Her gaze slowly followed to the glass above the sink that overlooked the outside, where rain was pouring heavily and making the view hazy.

Her heart gave a trembling, terrifying slam when she noticed the rainwater beginning to crawl across the glass, forming a slow-moving circle. It spun gently at first, then began to pick up speed.

But it wasn't the current of the rain. She knew that.

Like someone caught in a spell, she stared as the circle widened, unable to move away. In the middle of it a dark hole began to form, the glass behind it slowly melting as if the heat of whatever was on the other side was dissolving it from the outside in.

Viola's eyes flashed gold, reflecting the circling water and glass.

She stared at the hole as it grew bigger and in its center, past the dissolving glass, she could see the view of the open ocean stretching endlessly in the dark.

"Serena!" A voice called her name from within the hole and her heart dropped straight to her stomach. "Move away!" The voice said in urgent, but Viola's body had stopped listening to her. It was like her limbs had gone immobile. She was caught in it completely, her feet rooted to the floor, the plate still in her hands, her eyes fixed on the ocean growing wider inside the glass.

The hole kept growing. The glass began to swell outward, bowing under the pressure of whatever was pushing against it from the other side, and just when it looked like it would burst entirely, the water creature from the running sink beside her gathered itself and moved. It pulled free from the stream and coiled like a rope and wrapped itself around her waist, yanking her backward hard.

The plate in her hands crashed to the floor and shattered, and a split second later the glass window exploded outward with a sound like a crack of thunder splitting the sky, lightning flashing at the exact same moment as if the two things had called each other into being.

The conversation in the dining hall stopped dead at the explosion.

Matt was at the front and reached her first, rushing toward the sink where the Luna was on the floor surrounded by scattered glass pieces. Wind was howling through the broken window now, blowing rain water in sheets across the kitchen floor.

"Luna!"

Viola was slowly coming back to herself, the spell-like stillness leaving her body in pieces as Matt grabbed her shoulders and helped her up from the glass and the water spraying in from outside. There were small cuts on her arms but nothing serious and he moved her carefully away from the debris. The last thing he needed was for something to happen to the Luna on his watch!

Zoe's hands found her from the other side and pulled her further back while Gilbert and Matt moved forward to assess the damage to the window.

"What happened?" Gilbert asked, turning to look at her with a physician's trained eye, quickly scanning her for injuries. But noticing there was nothing serious, he did not panic and instead let out a quiet breath of relief.

His gaze shifted to the shattered window, his brows knitting together. What could have caused the solid glass, the kind that had been used throughout Silver for years, to suddenly explode like that?

Could it have been a gunshot from another building? Gilbert wondered, quickly scanning the floor for a bullet, but there was none.

So he turned back to the Luna, waiting for her to explain what had just happened, since none of them had been close enough to witness it clearly.

Viola, who was as shaken as she was confused, could only shake her head. "I...I don't know. I was rinsing the plates when the glass started cracking and then it exploded..." She murmured, looking between their faces and hoping they believed her because she wasn't certain she believed herself.

Whose voice had that been? What had just happened? And the water from the tap, the same water she had told not to come back again, had just saved her by pulling her out of the way of what would have been a fatal accident. She shuddered.

Gilbert looked at the broken window and said, "It must have been the thunder. It's thundering like crazy tonight. You ladies should stay away from the glass panels until the rain stops. Take the Luna to get changed." He looked at Matt. "Let's see what we can do about this opening before the water ruins the whole kitchen floor."

"We can't replace the glass tonight but we can cover it until the rain stops and get someone out here first thing tomorrow."

Viola heard them shifting into practical problem-solving as Zoe guided her away from the kitchen. She did not tell them what she had actually seen. She was conflicted to, because they might single her out as an outcast, even though she knew she was a werewolf. And she was not yet certain what she would even say if she tried to explain it.

They would not understand like Sebastian who had witnessed it happened in Nightshade would...

Whatever had to do with water was chasing her, had been chasing her since Nightshade, and now something on the other side of it was calling her by a name that wasn't the one she had grown up with. And the water that kept saving her, she needed to understand what it was before it decided to introduce itself somewhere she couldn't explain it away as thunder.

She would tell Sebastian when he came back.

She had to.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 279: The history[1,625 words]

Inside her bedroom, Viola sat with Gilbert as he attended to the cuts on her arms and neck after she changed her wet clothes. The rain continued to fall heavily outside with such force it seemed like it would break the glass walls. Her eyes drifted occasionally around the room warily and, unable to help herself, she asked the doctor,

"Is it true that in the past werewolves killed any sea creatures and anything associated with them?"

Doctor Gilbert bandaged the cut on her arm and turned his eyes to look at her before he hummed, "Yes. The sea creatures, mermaids and all the others, caused chaos in our world once." He said. "Though I don't blame them much for the chaos they caused, as it was we werewolves who used them for selfish gain and extraordinary strength. We wanted abilities we weren't created with and so we attack the sea creatures."

"What kind of abilities?" Viola asked, making sure her tone carried only curiosity and nothing that might indicate she was beginning to suspect something about her own background.

At this point, she would rather believe her parents had somehow used a sea creature to gain abilities that were now being passed down to her than believe she herself might be part sea creature, beings that were natural enemies of werewolves.

Gilbert put the first aid kit back in the box as he replied, "Well, a lot. We werewolves were gifted with the natural ability to heal, not age like humans and to shift form, but unlike the vampires who once existed alongside us, we can't compel, we can't manipulate memories or control other powers, but with the parts of mermaids, that became possible. Their hearts in particular could change any werewolf's life entirely, could give one a supreme Alpha's strength and something more than anything they could imagine.

"Their tears that turned to pearls are the most expensive treasure in existence, their fins can be used to create weapons capable of killing a werewolf and a vampire instantly. There are many advantages to mermaids, sirens and sea witches that werewolves would kill to get their hands on. That caused the huge rift, to the point where sea creatures could no longer be sighted without a werewolf attacking and wanting something from them." Gilbert said and continued with a sigh.

"Though saying it that way makes the werewolves sound like the villains, I also want you to understand that long before werewolves began hunting and using sea creatures, our kind was being hunted by them first.

"They would turn werewolves into glass-like stone and use them as decorations and accessories in their world. Sea creatures are fond of collecting unusual things, so a werewolf trapped in its wolf form and preserved like stone was considered something rare and valuable to them.

"That was why they kept coming to the surface during the Moon Festival to silently attack us back then. Until we also figured out their values."

Gilbert had always wanted to teach this history to more werewolves but not many were curious enough to sit and listen, and so he told the Luna what he knew gladly and without suspecting there was a deeper reason behind her asking.

"Mermaids and many sea creatures are invaluable to us werewolves now, we don't kill them for killing's sake or turn them to stone, we use them to build ourselves and gain more of what we don't have."

Viola digested his words carefully. It was history she had known a little about before but had never taken seriously, but now that things connected to water were beginning to latch onto her, fear sat

quietly in her chest. She didn't want to be anything but a werewolf. She had lived her entire life among them and she wouldn't want to be singled out now.

Though she doubted she was a sea creature entirely, given that she couldn't even swim and had nearly died in the water, she didn't know what she was and that uncertainty was its own kind of terror.

"I hope I didn't waste your time with my curiosity, Doctor Gilbert?" Viola said offhandedly and the doctor was quick to wave his hand dismissively.

"Not at all. I like it when werewolves get curious about history and why sea creatures hold such value to us. By the way, try to keep the bandages away from water and get a good night's sleep, Luna. It looks like it will rain all through the night. Good night." He got up from the edge of the bed and carried the first aid box with him as he left.

Viola was almost tempted to follow him and spend the night in Zoe's room so she wouldn't have to be alone near the glass walls, but she didn't move. Maybe it was time she stopped running from it and tried to face it instead.

She hadn't found her sister. She didn't know what she was. And she didn't want to become the next target for any werewolf who found out, because it was beginning to make a horrible kind of sense why those children in the orphanage had been killed when they showed a reaction to fish.

Viola shuddered at the thought and ran her fingers through her hair.

Wary of the rain, which, while not unusual during summer, was far heavier than it should have been for this time of year and showed no signs of stopping, she pushed herself off the bed and began unpacking her things.

Perhaps keeping herself busy would serve as a distraction, something to stop her mind from dwelling too much on the unsettling fact that nearly every corner of the penthouse was made of glass.

She searched for one of Sebastian's shirts she had taken and pulled off the nightdress Zoe had helped her into earlier.

She slipped Sebastian's shirt over her head and exhaled slowly when the warm scent of coffee and woodsmoke wrapped around her, sending little sparks into her chest and belly. It was almost like he was here, and she hugged her arms around herself through the fabric and took deep, slow inhales of him.

She reached out to put her things away in the closet when something thudded to the floor and she looked down to find the album she had taken from the gallery.

"Oh, I almost forgot about you." She muttered to herself, bending down to pick it up.

Viola went back to the bed as a loud crack of thunder rumbled through the ground and rattled the glass walls behind the curtains drawn around them.

She glanced toward the glass wall and sighed in dismay.

She settled against the headboard and pulled the sheet over her legs, making herself as comfortable as she could manage. She was still unsettled from earlier and every sound of thunder that followed felt like a reminder of what the glass had already done once tonight.

Viola placed the album on her lap and opened it, hoping to discover more about the relationship between Sebastian and his twin and curious to see the couple who had given birth to her mate.

The first picture that greeted her was of Sebastian and a she-wolf she recognized as Natalie, he had his arm around her waist and they were both grinning at the camera. They looked so genuinely happy together that it stung somewhere she hadn't expected.

She quickly turned to the next page. Another picture of Natalie and Sebastian, and Viola pursed her lips. Was this even something she should be looking through? She hadn't come this far emotionally to spend the night watching how happy he had once looked with someone else.

Viola was about to close the album altogether and stop looking through it before jealousy got the better of her, but she paused when her eyes landed on something that caught her attention.

She stared at the Sebastian in the picture, the one smiling tenderly down at Natalie. Something felt off about him but she couldn't put her finger on what it was.

Trying to figure out what was missing, she pursed her lips and continued turning the pages. After moving through a few happy moments of Sebastian and his late wife, she finally found one of him and his twin when they were little, alongside their parents.

Her eyes narrowed. "Holy moon, they look so identical." She traced her fingers over the picture, studying the two boys and trying to single Sebastian out.

She found him quickly enough, his young face held no smile, only a scowl that was entirely recognizable. But when her eyes moved to Alex, that same strange feeling returned, that sense that something was off she still couldn't name. She turned the pages back to Sebastian and Natalie and then back to the boys again, her eyes settling on Alex.

She flipped back to the picture of the older Sebastian with his late Luna, and suddenly it clicked what had been bothering her.

The snake tattoo on his neck was missing.

And so was the hairstyle. It was different from what he wore now.

Viola frowned as she recalled Sebastian telling her he had gotten the snake tattoo at sixteen after losing Alex.

So why was there no tattoo on his neck in this picture?

She quickly went back through the other photographs and realized he had been wearing high-collared shirts in most of them, concealing his neck entirely.

Something about this did not feel right to her, but she could not quite figure out what it was.

"You're still awake?"

Viola jolted at Zoe's sudden voice from the doorway. She looked up with a guilty expression. "Yes, I'm going through the album."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 280: The other side[1,189 words]

"Can I sleep here with you then? By the moon, the thunder is so loud tonight." Zoe asked, hugging her pillow against her chest.

Viola closed the album, setting aside whatever that unsettling feeling was, and felt genuinely glad for the company. "Sure. Hop on."

Zoe grinned and padded into the room in her pink nightdress. She hopped onto the bed and burrowed under the blanket, fluffing her pillow with great satisfaction.

"Ooh, you smell like my brother."

"Because I'm wearing his shirt." Viola murmured, smiling. "By the way, where is your dog? I haven't seen it since we got here." She asked curiously, settling into the soft mattress, but she caught the sheepish look that crossed Zoe's face immediately.

"I don't have a dog." She muttered. "It was actually Seb who licked you and probably left a hickey on you that day. I had to play along because he warned me." She said, reaching over and taking the album from Viola's lap.

Viola found herself smiling. That sneaky devil. Even back then when he had acted like he wanted nothing to do with her, he had crept into her room and licked her in her sleep like some sneaky wolf, and she had believed all this time that it had been a dog. She suddenly felt the weight of missing him and found herself drifting back to the previous night without meaning to, to his body warm and close against hers, moving with hers, moving inside her, and she flushed quietly and pulled her thoughts back to Zoe flipping through the pictures.

"Sometimes I used to think that the brother who was married to Natalie was a completely different person..." Zoe muttered, her eyes moving slowly across the open pages of the album.

"Why do you think that?"

Zoe pursed her lips. "He loved her so much and yet after her death he moved on from it so quickly, like she had never existed at all. Is love really that easily forgotten? He doesn't even talk about her."

Viola lifted her eyes toward the ceiling. She had felt that exact thing herself, how he never spoke about the woman he had supposedly once given everything to.

The photos in the album said enough about the love they had shared, and it stung her heart to see it.

"He told me a potion was used on him to make him forget her..." she muttered quietly.

Zoe scoffed. "I don't buy that. I have always had this feeling that he is hiding something, both about Natalie and about Alex's death. That's why I always hoped that one day you would be the one to get the answers out of him and share them with me." She closed the album and set it aside on the nightstand. "A day where he finally tells you exactly what happened. Don't let my words make you doubt that he loves genuinely, he does. In his own way perhaps. He is just secretive, and I hate that about him."

"Hmm." Viola hummed, unable to shake the strange feeling that had crept over her looking at Alex's picture, and she found herself turning it over quietly in her mind alongside another thought entirely. "I wonder where he is right now..."

Outside, the rain continued to fall heavily, drumming down on the paved roads below. Everyone had retreated into their apartments and homes to keep away from the unusually heavy summer rain. The holographic screens around Silver flashed and blinked under the torrent of water, and below the ground a water creature moved like a snake, circling the Zo Fashion House to protect the master who had sent it away.

Its eyes, made entirely of water, looked up at the building with something that carried the weight of sadness and loneliness, because it had been formed to be hers, and if she didn't accept it, it would dissolve into water forever, never taking form again.

In another part of Silver, deep in the rural areas where tall trees grew close together and the rain was only a drizzle, a black car came to a stop in the dark. Its headlights cut off.

The man inside didn't get out immediately. He sat staring at the large iron gate before him, wrapped in electric wire that glinted faintly in the dark. The silver eyes that had carried the look of tender love in them when he left his wife now carried nothing at all.

Sebastian reached out and opened the car door, his polished black shoe stepping down onto the muddy ground, and without bothering about the drizzle falling on his shoulders he stepped out and walked toward the iron gate. It flashed red, scanned his face, and cracked open with a heavy grinding sound.

He hadn't looked forward to today. But it wasn't something he could escape either. He shoved his hands into his pockets and walked down the muddy path through the gate as it closed heavily behind him.

The moment Sebastian was inside the perimeter, one of the warriors lurking in the tree line came and drove his car away from the premises, leaving no trace that he had ever been there.

Meanwhile, inside the building that was behind the gate. To many it was just a small building that didn't need the heavy protection around it, but to Sebastian it was more than that, because the main building he protected was underground and the small one was cover for the one below.

He walked into the small disguised building and just like the gate, there was a special scanning, a full body scan, before the ground opened and a tube rose from below, opening for him.

Sebastian stepped into the tube and when it closed it took him downward through tunnels and passages until it reached the final destination. The moment the tube opened he was welcomed into the coolness of the atmosphere he had been used to and had lived in for years in the past. Cool steam hovered around him.

His body could not withstand heat, so cool steam vents were installed in every corner, releasing chilled mist into the air.

Sebastian kept his eyes and ears alert as he moved through the polished hallways with cool steam drifting around him, a pleasant castle built into the ground. Just as he was entering an open door he felt the shift in the air but acted like he didn't, until a fast swift movement swished past him and he was slammed into the wall, the wall caving in as a hand wrapped around his neck pinning him to the brick.

Sebastian didn't fight the strength pinning him there. A slow smirk formed on his lips instead as the steam cleared from the face in front of him, a face that was identical to his in every sense, down to the set of the jaw and the silver of the eyes.

"Hello, brother." He said. "And you are still too slow." With that he twisted the hand at his throat, turned his weight and tackled the other man cleanly to the floor, pinning him down.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 281: The change[1,288 words]

"That is cheating. I put you down first, motherfucker!" The twin on the floor gritted out, glaring up at the other with darkened silver eyes.

"There is no such thing as cheating in war, bro. You use any trick available to win. What do you think?" He grinned down at his twin, who didn't look amused, and patted the hand around his neck to signal a release.

Sebastian let him go and stepped back, offering Alex a hand to pull him to his feet. If Alex saw the hand extended in front of him he ignored it entirely, getting up without taking it.

Sebastian didn't let it show that it stung. He brought his hand back to his side and tucked it into his pocket as he took in the mirror image of himself standing shirtless before him. They were identical in every way except for the tattoos, where Sebastian had the snake scales across his chest, Alex had a face inked into his skin instead. The face of the woman he loved.

"I thought you wouldn't make it here on time," Alex remarked, his cold eyes not softening even slightly at the sight of his twin. "You're always known for taking your precious time whenever it's my turn to step out."

"I wouldn't have missed it for the world, bro. Believe it or not, you're still my family, and I can't watch you die slowly by deliberately delaying my arrival," Sebastian said, holding his brother's grudging gaze, the same eyes that had once looked at him like he was the only person in the world worth trusting.

Alex let out a laugh with no warmth in it. "Since when has my selfish brother started putting anyone above himself? Admit it or not, Seb, you are keeping me alive because you know that if I die from any cause that didn't come from your own hand, you will die along with me. What a life the Kade twins live, fate binding us in the cruelest way possible. We come into the world together and we leave it together."

Sebastian's fingers curled into a fist inside his trouser pocket. He said nothing. He just looked at his brother, knowing that whatever he offered in response, Alex wouldn't believe it anymore.

It was the truth that the twins born with Alpha strength were bound together in a way that if one died the other would follow not long after. The only way to break that bond was if one twin killed the other with his own hands.

"You will never forgive me for it, will you?" Sebastian asked quietly, and rather than an answer, Alex's fist connected with his face and his hand grabbed his collar.

"Never." He gritted. "Not until you experience what I went through after what you did to her. You promised me, you fucking promised me, and in the end you still killed her. You killed her for me!"

Alex hit him again and Sebastian did nothing to stop it. It was a cycle he had learned to move through, because if taking the hits helped his brother's rage dissolve enough for them to reach something that resembled the closeness they had once had, he would stand there and take every one of them.

As he took the blows, Sebastian recalled how all of this had started, back when they were still young and still cared about each other without the weight of everything that came after.

Years ago...

A young Sebastian had just left the meeting with the elders, his expression dark and cold as he walked down the halls with one of the elders hurrying behind him, struggling to keep up with his pace.

"I told you to stop following me. There is no way that will happen." Young Sebastian gritted, his fists clenched at his sides.

"But you know two people with the same strength cannot rule the pack. One of you will have to take over and the other has...has to die."

Sebastian's footsteps stopped in the hallway and he turned his eyes on the elder, who quickly bowed his head because the aura rolling off the young boy was so intense it was suffocating. "My father didn't kill his twin brother." He gritted through clenched teeth. "His brother stepped down and gave him the chance to take the Alpha position. Why can't that happen for us?"

Though Sebastian asked the question, he already knew the answer. Because his father and his twin hadn't shared the same strength or aura. They had been identical in face but the late Alpha had been far more powerful.

"We have never had a pack ruled by two Alphas, one has to go. And I believe it should be Alex. He is too soft for the Alpha seat. You are the one suited to rule us. You have to think about this pack and its people. We need someone emotionally strong and that is you."

The young Sebastian stared at the elder, who was none other than Elder Halvrek, his lips pressed together and his fist clenched tight at his side. He said nothing. He turned and walked away from the elder who wanted him to kill his brother, his best friend, his family.

He was so conflicted he didn't know what to do. If he chose to step aside and let Alex take the seat, enemies would attack his brother emotionally and tear him apart. Alex was strong in ways people didn't see but he wore his heart openly and that would be used against him. That was when the idea came to him and he went to find his twin.

"Alex!" Sebastian called as he stepped into his twin's room to find him sitting on the floor with photographs of their parents scattered around him, tears running silently down his face.

"Seb..." Alex muttered, wiping his face quickly with the back of his hand. "How many times do I have to tell you to knock before you walk into someone's room?" He chided, his voice unsteady.

Sebastian's lips pressed into a line. "I don't see the need to knock at your door." His eyes dropped to his mother's smiling face in one of the photographs and his jaw tightened. He looked away quickly. "I have something to tell you."

"I know." The young Alex said, gathering the photographs and placing them carefully back in their box. "They want you to kill me so you can become Alpha."

"But I won't do that." Sebastian said flatly. "Mama and Papa would never forgive me if I did."

Alex looked up at his twin with a small smile that carried too much in it. "I don't mind, you know. You can kill me. At least that way I would go to them. They died a gory death I can never forget, Seb...I want to be where they are. I don't want to be Alpha."

"I will not fucking kill you." Sebastian said, and his voice left no room for argument. "You might not want the position but the blood running in your veins says otherwise. I will handle it. You and I will both be Alphas of Silver and no one will know about it."

It was then that Sebastian conceived the plan to make everyone believed he had killed his brother. Being twins with the same aura, presence and strength, nobody ever caught on to the fact that during the years that followed they had switched between each other to rule the pack.

They switched positions every six months and met up on the last day of every month to fight the curse of their fate. That was how it had all started, until everything changed.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 282: Torture[1,672 words]

Back to the present, Alex finally stopped hitting his brother and stepped back, grabbing his own chest and coughing up blood. "Fuck..." He spat it onto the floor and went down to one knee, steadying himself until the wave passed.

Sebastian exhaled slowly. "You are torturing yourself, Alex. You have to let the emotions go or they will kill your heart."

"Along with yours." Alex said, wiping his mouth and getting back to his feet as though nothing had happened. He made his way to the bar in the underground mansion and poured himself a drink.

After what Sebastian had done, something his twin had never forgiven him for, it had caused irreversible damage to Alex's heart. The grief and bitterness he refused to let go of were slowly eating away at both his soul and his heart, causing it to gradually shut down.

And when it successfully shut down and killed him, it would naturally pull the other twin along with him because of the connection between them. Sebastian could end that connection by killing Alex with his own hand, but he wouldn't. No matter what had happened, this person was still a part of him.

Sebastian followed and took the stool beside Alex, pouring his own glass. He was raising it to his lips when his brother spoke.

"So how is the search for the prophesied mate? The one you married... did she turn out to be the one?"

One of them was supposed to find the prophesied mate and break the curse that kept killing the wrong mates while slowly torturing them along with it, or make a sacrifice instead. But the search had been pointless for years. The curse ran deeper than most people believed, and time was ticking away for them to find the one capable of breaking it.

"I don't know." Sebastian said, deliberately keeping his voice flat.

Alex looked at him. "You don't know. Have you marked her?"

Sebastian's fingers tightened around the glass. "Not yet."

"Why?"

"Because I don't feel like marking her." Sebastian said and Alex chuckled humorlessly.

"I suppose I will mark her for you after we switch places this time around. Just like you marked my wife for me when you promised you wouldn't." He swallowed his drink along with the bitterness and anger in his throat.

"How many times do I have to tell you that I didn't mark Natalie intentionally?" Sebastian looked at him and watched his jaw tighten.

"And how many times have I told you it doesn't matter?" Alex said. "You killed her. You used her as your first sacrifice to break your curse by marking her."

"And you killed Evangeline. I never held that against you, Alex." Sebastian gritted out.

"You never held it against me because you didn't give a damn about her! That is different." Alex's voice dropped lower and colder. "I cared about my wife. I married her because I loved her and you took her from me." He slammed his glass down on the counter hard enough to shatter it. "If we are keeping score, I believe it is time I made my second sacrifice too, brother."

Rage rose hot and fast in Sebastian's chest at those words, but he didn't address what they implied. Keeping score would mean Alex might do to his own wife what Sebastian had done to his years ago, something born from a mistake and a momentary loss of control he hadn't been able to stop.

Viola had come to mean too much to him now, and he wouldn't risk dragging her into the conflict between them. If he wasn't careful, his brother would use her simply to make him experience the pain of losing the mate he love and cared about.

Rather than addressing his remarks about Viola, he said instead, "I have a clear lead in my search for the sea creature. It won't take long before I find it. Its power can break our curse and cure your heart completely. We wouldn't need to sacrifice any more Lunas to be free of it."

Alex looked at him slowly and then smiled. "You are trying to protect her." He threw his head back and laughed, the sound carrying through the underground halls. "You have finally found the mate you love enough to protect. Now isn't this interesting, Seb?"

Sebastian's expression didn't move. "Keep her out of this, Alexander. My wife is innocent."

"So was mine." Alex got up from the stool. "It's almost twelve. Let's get on with it before we talk any more about this new wife of yours. I don't want to go through the curse inside the house because that would leave you with the cleaning up, and you are terrible at that."

Sebastian felt his throat tighten, because Alex would be stepping out this time around to live as him, which meant Sebastian would be left here once the days of the full moon passed, for the next six months. He couldn't let that happen and needed to talk to Alex, to buy himself more time to look for the sea creature and to protect his wife.

The last thing he needed was to put his woman in any more danger, but he still got up and followed Alex deeper into the tunnel that led to a hall resembling a dungeon, where the sounds of whimpering were already reaching them.

They stepped into the dark hall where moonlight streamed in from a ceiling built in a way that connected to the small house above, allowing the milky light to filter down in pale shafts.

The whimpering grew louder alongside the clinking of chains. When the twins stepped fully into the hall there were lines of ten men chained to the ground.

"Please help us. Don't hurt us. We didn't do anything wrong!" Cried one of the chained men, who were human and looking up at the tall identical figures standing before them with barely contained terror.

"Hmm." Sebastian hummed. "You didn't do anything wrong. You should have known by now that it's unsafe to trespass into this part of the world to steal and kill. I heard you even killed five pups, hunting them like a common animal."

The humans, who hadn't even known that the territory they had trespassed into belonged to another world entirely, one of creatures who changed form, looked up at the man speaking and replied, "We just wanted to sell their skin and fur. The wolves here have lovely furs. We had...we had no idea monsters lived in this world. If you let us go we won't come back here ever again, we won't say a word to anyone!"

Sebastian was used to this, the pleading, the crying, the desperate faces of the people they used to fight off their curse. But these were not innocent people despite how they presented themselves in chains. These were criminals who had trespassed and killed innocent werewolves, and being the supreme Alpha, he kept this kind of human specifically for the full moon when he needed them for the curse.

Normally, they were executed before the pack members because releasing them back into the human world was no longer an option. They would spread word about werewolves and turn his people into something humans would want to capture and experiment on. But using them here was no different from execution anyway.

"Unfortunately I don't give second chances to killers, especially ones who killed one of my people and skinned little pups." Sebastian said as he began to pull off his shirt. His eyes dropped to the empty plates sitting in front of the chained men and he stared at them for a moment before he turned to look at his twin brother.

"I can't believe you fed them, Alex. They are criminals."

"Shut the fuck up." Alex gritted out, not wanting to talk to Sebastian and not wanting to admit that he had felt sorry for them and brought food down the previous night, and that the loneliness down here had gotten so heavy he had come here just to ask them about the human world.

"Alex, help us!" One of the men cried out to him.

"I'm sorry," Alex said quietly. "My brother and I need you, or I would have given you all a second chance." He paused. "I will keep my word and send money to your families on your behalf."

"Really? We're sending money to criminals now?" Sebastian muttered, rolling his eyes at his twin's naivety and the way he would give criminals second chances but not him. That was exactly why the elders didn't think he was built to be the Supreme Alpha.

"It's none of your business. I'm not sending your money, it's mine."

Alex hated this part of their curse more than anything and couldn't wait to be rid of it, but he had no choice but to participate in order to keep himself from turning on innocent pack members instead.

The men watched in horror as the twins began to sink to their knees the moment the clock struck twelve. And what happened next was not something they would have been able to explain even if they had lived to tell it.

Author's Note:

I want to give a special thanks to mbmclawhten for the Spacecraft gift and for being the top supporter of this book. As much as I would love to do a mini mass release in honor of the gift, I've been extremely busy lately because I'm preparing to move. The stress of packing and getting everything ready has been keeping me occupied.

However, once I've settled into my new place, I will make it up to you all and do a mini mass release in honor of mbmclawhten's generous support.

Thank you as well to everyone who continues to support this book. Every gift, comment, review, vote, and read helps the story reach more readers, and I truly appreciate each and every one of you. ❤️📖

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 283: Became Your Wife[1,139 words]

The next morning the sky over Silver looked like a pile of gray smoke left behind by the rain that had fallen overnight and only stopped just before dawn. Viola woke at the first gray light filtering through the gap in the curtains that had automatically pulled apart slightly, falling across her face.

She stared at the sky through the narrow opening before turning over, and a smile caught her off guard when she found Zoe had migrated entirely in her sleep and had all her limbs sprawled across her like she was trying to claim not just the whole bed but the person in it too. Her silver hair was fanned across her face, making her look like a sleeping witch, and it pulled a quiet laugh out of Viola despite herself.

She reached over and parted the hair away from Zoe's face before pinching her plump cheek. "Hey, wake up. It's morning."

Zoe grumbled and slapped her hand away without opening her eyes. "I am not married, who is sleeping next to me and disturbing my precious morning?"

Viola pressed her lips together to keep from laughing. "You got married to me yesterday, have you forgotten? I became your wife, my darling. Now get up so I can get up too." She teased, biting her lower lip.

"Ha, ha, ha, so funny, Vee." Zoe cracked one eye open. "Maybe I should just take you from my brother and keep you for myself. It would be so much more fun. Come here, wife." She played along and yanked Viola into a hug. "Divorce Sebastian and be mine forever!" She laughed as Viola immediately went for her sides and tickled her, and Zoe shrieked and twisted away laughing, rolling herself right off the edge of the bed and hitting the floor with a loud thud.

A beat of silence.

"Ouch." Zoe's voice came from the floor. "What kind of wife pushes her partner off the bed. Meany." She grumbled, and rather than getting up she dragged the blanket down with her, wrapped herself in it on the floor, and went right back to sleep.

Viola peeked down and saw that her best friend was fast asleep on the floor. She shook her head in amused disbelief as she recalled that Sebastian had the habit of falling asleep quickly if he got comfortable enough too.

"Like brother, like sister," she muttered, her eyes briefly falling on the album on the nightstand that had kept her thinking for most of the night, because she couldn't quite point out why she felt there was something wrong with Sebastian's old pictures with Natalie.

She removed the thought from her mind before it made her overthink.

Before anything else, Viola pressed her nose into the collar of Sebastian's shirt and breathed in the warm scent still clinging to the fabric, then exhaled slowly, missing him more than she wanted to admit and feeling that hollow aching space in her chest that mates always described but that she had never understood until now, where she was feeling it without even having the wolf.

The weather was so dull it killed the spirit, but Viola got up anyway alongside a bleary eyed Zoe who complained loudly that she hadn't slept nearly enough. By the time they made it to the living room, Matt and Gilbert had already brought in workers to replace the shattered window panel.

"Good morning, Luna," Gilbert greeted as Viola stepped out of the room.

"Good morning." She replied with a smile, taking in the workers carefully bringing down the rest of the glass panels to replace them completely. She shuddered at the memory of the night before and pushed it firmly out of her mind.

When Matt came out of the guest room talking on his phone, Viola moved toward him and waited. He ended the call and greeted her.

"Has there been any word from Sebastian? Did you speak to him this morning?" She asked and Matt shook his head.

"Unfortunately I won't be able to reach him for now. Today is a no contact day, but don't worry, he will be back soon." He assured her, watching her nod with a smile that didn't come anywhere near her blue eyes.

"Is there anything you need? I can have it brought to you." Matt offered.

What Viola wanted was to tell Sebastian about everything strange that had been happening and have him help her make sense of it, and to find out whether what he felt for her was strong enough to hold if he discovered she might have ties to sea creatures. But she couldn't tell his beta any of that, so she shook her head.

"There's nothing. Thank you though." She murmured.

"No need for thanks, Luna. I will always be here to help. It's a pleasure." Matt bowed formally and it pulled a genuine smile from her before she waved him off as he mentioned needing to get back to the business of serving the so called new Alpha, who he called an asshole that had been disturbing him with calls since early morning.

After Matt and Gilbert left once the window was fixed, Viola decided to join Zoe down in the fashion house after she freshened up and ate breakfast. There were a great many demands coming in for the new Alpha's upcoming ceremony and she didn't want to sit doing nothing, so she offered to help with organizing the fabrics and pulling out what the designers needed.

She didn't bother dressing up, she pulled on a pair of shorts underneath Sebastian's shirt and moved around helping where she could while listening to the workers gossip about everything unfolding in the pack.

"...I heard he is going to marry Ember and send Sofia back to her home pack. If I were her I would be relieved to go, but guess what she did?"

"What?" Asked the other girl arranging fabric beside her.

"She offered to serve Ember as long as Javier doesn't send her away. She would serve Ember just to stay close to him. How insulting."

"Did he agree?"

"Of course he agreed. She didn't give him any other choice, she said if he didn't agree she wouldn't step aside to let him marry another woman."

Viola listened with a straight face and let out a quiet sigh. Sebastian had been right. Sofia was beyond what she or anyone else could reach, and Sofia had no idea how cruel Ember could be to those who served her.

She was wondering how long Javier's hold over Silver would last and hoping he wouldn't dismantle everything her husband had built before it was over, when a commotion broke out near the entrance. She looked up and felt an involuntary headache rise at the sight of the unexpected people.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 284: The bullies[1,376 words]

What are they doing here? Viola thought, watching as Ember and Leni walked into the design space with a few she-wolves trailing behind them, Sofia included, moving into an area where shoppers had no business being.

"Call her out for me." Ember said to the workers who tried to tell her she shouldn't be on this side of the building.

"You can't meet Miss Zoe without an appointment and—" one of the workers was explaining when Leni stepped forward and slapped her hard across the face that she fell away from their front.

"The audacity of an omega to stop the future Luna. Call out Miss Zoe right now." Leni ordered, trying to act on Ember's behalf. One would think that everything she had gone through and experienced in the dungeon would have humbled the she-wolf, but she was back to being the arrogant person she had always been, wanting to be on the favorable side of whoever held power.

Viola didn't have to wonder who had released her before her sentence was over. Ember and Javier were already messing up Sebastian's rules and orders even before they were officially crowned.

Viola watched without moving from where she stood, as none of the she-wolves had noticed her yet.

As if hearing the commotion, Zoe walked out of the adjoining sewing hall.

"What is going on here?" Zoe asked, looking at the two she-wolves in her working space. "You are not supposed to be in here."

"Says who?" Leni scoffed with a glare. "Don't you know who she is?"

Ember raised her hand for Leni to let her speak and stepped forward with a smiling face to meet Zoe.

"Good morning, Miss Zoe. I saw the signs outside that said workers only, but I don't believe that applies to me, does it?" Ember said, her lips curling into a smile, because as far as she was concerned the future Luna had the right to go wherever she pleased.

"Why would you think it doesn't apply to you, Miss Ember? It applies to everyone, unless you are here looking for employment as a designer." Zoe said, rolling her eyes at the entitlement radiating off the she-wolf.

Ember's smile faltered. "I know you are bitter because it's unfortunate that you and I didn't get to be sisters-in-law, Zoe. But don't let that affect us, we are still somehow relatives now."

Zoe stared at her with the flattest expression she could manage. Just how delusional was this woman? She hadn't even wanted Laila as a sister-in-law, why on earth would she want another entitled she-wolf she had never personally met before?

"What do you want?" Zoe asked, because she didn't have all day to stand here and let them waste her time.

"I wanted to honor you with my presence." Ember said smoothly. "I came personally to have you design my wedding dress. I have always wanted to wear one of your limited edition pieces. Something like the one you made for the other Luna..." Ember's voice trailed off as her eyes landed on Viola standing behind Zoe. Her brows arched and her gaze moved slowly over the former Luna's casual outfit before a smirk settled on her face.

"Well, well. What is she doing here?" Ember asked. "Did you take her on to work for you now that her husband is dead? How generous of you, looking after a widow." She said, placing her hand on Zoe's shoulder, but Zoe stepped back and brushed it away.

"I want you two to leave my space. There are no available ceremony dresses and I am not currently making." Zoe said calmly, not wanting to tolerate any disrespect towards her friend and her supposed dead brother.

Ember's smile slowly fell away completely. "What do you mean you are not making? I have three days to my ceremony, that should be enough for you to design one for me."

Zoe sighed. "I don't want to spell it out to you, but it seems you want it spelled out. I don't want to design your dress, find another designer, Miss Ember, my hands are full."

That made Ember's expression turn sour. What was this weak she-wolf talking about? Ember thought. She was trying to be nice to her and pull her closer, since she planned to make every member of the Kade family like and support her as much as possible, but instead, Zoe seemed determined to oppose her and get under her skin, even though she no longer held the power she once had when her brother was alive.

"You really are what I heard you are, the spoiled sister, but are you forgetting that your brother is no more and I have the power to shut you down alongside your business?"

Viola, who had wanted to stay out of these people's business and let Zoe handle and send them away if possible, couldn't stand and let them bully her girl. She put the fabric down and stepped forward to the scene. "Zoe has given her words, you should respect her decision, she's not making dresses."

Ember and Leni's faces turned to Viola at the same time.

Leni, who had spent many days in a dungeon getting whipped and tortured, was the first to react to Viola's interference. Every bit of the anger and bitterness of being locked away for what she considered such a small thing; trying to save her pack and her mate by seducing the Alpha the way this woman had, came rushing to the surface at once.

Leni's lips pressed together in displeasure. Because of this woman and the supreme Alpha, Evan no longer trusted her the way he once had. He looked at her now with a disgust she was working every day to undo, sticking close to the new Luna and doing whatever it took to gain benefits for Moonwillow pack.

Leni stepped forward with a furrowed brow. "Oh, I didn't even notice you were here, your presence is that insignificant now, Viola. What a shame, you get the power to rule the biggest pack in the world and then come plummeting back down to where you belong." Leni mocked, deeply satisfied to find herself above this nobody again. "And if you know what is best for you, don't interfere in matters above your station and get back to your work right now."

Viola's expression remained blank as her eyes stayed on Leni. "I should be saying the same to you. I advise you both to leave this place, or—" before she could finish, Leni raised her hand intending to slap her, but Zoe caught it before Viola even had the chance to react and stop the offending hand.

"You don't have that right in here. I want both of you out of my building right now before I call my guards!" Zoe, who was rarely angered, gritted out, her fingers tightening around Leni's wrist.

Leni's brows rose, and she let out a slow chuckle at Zoe's audacity to threaten them with guards when Ember practically controlled things now with Javier backing her. The guards had tried to stop them from coming in earlier, but Ember had simply called Javier, and within moments, orders had been given to let them in.

It seemed the past Alpha's bratty little sister needed a harsh lesson and a little strengthening up before she would agree to design their dresses.

Leni glanced back at Ember, who made no move to stop her and instead gave a small nod that silently told her to go ahead and do whatever was necessary to make the she-wolf design their dresses.

"Just don't break her hands so she can still use them to work for me," Ember said slowly to Leni, her voice low enough for only her to hear.

"What a pity, Zoe." Leni smiled coldly. "You're the Alpha's sister, and yet your wolf is so weak I can barely feel it, and you think you can hold my hand? Let me teach you a little lesson then."

She jerked her hand free from Zoe's grip and used her wolf strength to shove her backward hard enough to send Zoe stumbling across the room with enough force to leave injuries if she landed badly.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 285: Use of ability_Part 1[1,331 words]

Before Zoe could hit the ground with force, and before Viola, who had reflexively reached out as though to catch and stop her fall, could get to her, someone else stopped it first, catching Zoe against them and holding her steady.

Everything happened so fast that even Zoe could hardly believe she hadn't slammed into the floor or the fabric shelves.

Viola's worried eyes immediately went to her friend, who had been caught in none other than Laila's arms, and she let out a breath of relief that was instantly cut short because it now seemed they were surrounded on all sides. These two had already been here, and now Laila had shown up as well.

It was the definition of a complete disaster, with arrogant, bullying she-wolves crowding the place, and Viola could already feel her headache worsening.

"Are you all right?" Laila asked.

Zoe immediately jerked away from her and moved to stand protectively in front of Viola, as though the bullies were multiplying by the minute and she needed to shield her friend, who didn't have a wolf, barely thinking about herself in the process. That made Laila's emerald eyes narrow.

"What are you doing here?" Zoe asked.

Laila was wearing less makeup than usual and dressed casually, something completely unlike her, considering how much she normally loved flaunting her elegance and class in front of everyone in the pack, especially those she considered beneath her.

"I came to see how you were holding up after everything, you did lose a brother." Laila said, her eyes already moving around the room and taking in the scene, settling briefly on the two she-wolves before landing on the wolfless woman she resented more than ever for what she believed was her role in Sebastian's death and the impossible position it had put her in with her uncle.

"What is going on here?"

As much as she hated Viola and would have loved nothing more than to deal with her directly, these two she-wolves had been making her life considerably worse lately, spreading rumors about her around Silver and mocking her at every opportunity for losing her chance of becoming Luna and losing to a wolfless once. They had moved to the top of her dislike list.

Laila had genuinely come to check on Sebastian's bratty little sister because it was the least she could do for him after his death, and she hadn't expected to walk into these backstabbing bitches.

As much as she didn't particularly like Sebastian's sister, she had cared about her brother, and she wasn't about to let these two cause Zoe any trouble. Honestly, that role belonged to her, not outsiders, who believed they could rule Silver.

"Were they bullying you, Zoe?" Laila asked, narrowing her eyes at the two she-wolves who were already smirking at her arrival and giving her dirty looks.

"Zoe knows we aren't bullies. We just want a dress made and were talking about the perfect style, that's all," Ember said with a roll of her eyes, privately thinking it was almost amusing that this she-wolf, who had become the joke of Silver after losing her backing, had chosen today of all days to show up here.

Ember had never liked Laila. The two of them had never been close and had always seen each other as competition even in the past when they were teens living in the werewolf media world.

"And Zoe has already told you she isn't making any dresses. Is that so hard to accept and live with?" Viola said, stepping out from behind Zoe because she had seen enough of their entitlement and bullying. While she might have tolerated it when directed at herself, she wasn't about to stand there and watch it aimed at her family. "She wants you gone."

Hearing Viola's words, Laila surprised everyone by saying, "Then the two of you should leave."

She turned to face Ember with the calm authority of someone who had grown up being obeyed and had no intention of allowing otherwise.

"Go find another designer in Silver. Zoe is still grieving."

"Look who's talking." Leni chimed in, tilting her head at Laila with a slow smile. "I used to admire you once, Miss Serrano, but I'm sorry, you've lost your power now. You can't tell the future Luna what to do. Stay out of this if you don't want to get your own medicine. This is our world now and start preparing to serve my friend when she is crowned."

Laila had lived her entire life being worshipped and deferred to, and she stood very still for a moment as those words landed, staring at Leni, the same Leni who had sidled up to her during Sebastian's wedding trying to get on her good side, now speaking back to her because she had found someone new to attach herself to.

Who does this bitch think she's talking to like that? Laila thought, her jaw tightening as she cursed under her breath.

Without even thinking, she stepped forward, grabbed Leni by the hair, and twisted it tightly into her fist.

"Watch that dirty mouth of yours before I shut it for you. You don't belong in Silver and have no say here."

Leni had a strong wolf for a female but she wasn't a very strong Alpha wolf, and Laila was more powerful than she was. Leni cried out in pain and looked desperately toward her friend. "Ember!"

As if waiting for that moment, Ember didn't hesitate to move. She stepped forward and released her Alpha wolf strength, grabbing Laila's wrist and wrenching it behind her back.

"Show your strength on someone your own size." She gritted. "Do you remember how you used to talk about me during our school days, Laila? Now I am going to be your Luna and you will respect me and bow the fuck down to me."

Laila felt the pain shoot up her arm and a wave of humiliation washed over her that she hadn't felt in years. Normally she was stronger than Ember, but too much had been breaking her from the inside lately and it was showing. She groaned and twisted around, jerking her wrist free and summoning her strength, but Ember was faster, she seized her wrist again and wrenched it back before shoving her hard into the glass fabric shelves with a strength that broke the shelf into pieces.

"Damnit, they are going to ruin my fabric room." Zoe pressed her fingers to her temple, not wanting them to fight in her place, and if they absolutely had to take it outside, she would gladly sit back and watch the two arrogant she-wolves fight with popcorn in hand.

"Then let's send them outside to fight," Viola muttered.

Before Zoe could ask how exactly they were supposed to manage that, Viola stepped forward because it stung her heart to watch the fabrics she had spent the entire morning carefully stacking for the designers end up scattered across the floor and see the beautiful fabric room being torn apart.

Though Viola had no idea how she was going to stop a fight between the she-wolves, she stopped a safe distance away, knowing it wasn't smart to get too close to either of them, and said,

"That is enough, Ember. If you want to fight, take it outside and stop destroying people's hard work in here."

Ember immediately released Laila's wrist and turned toward Viola with narrowed eyes, deeply offended at being addressed by her name as though they were equals when, in truth, she stood far above the wolfless woman in the hierarchy. She hadn't tolerated it from Laila, and she certainly wasn't about to tolerate it from Viola either.

Without another word, she released Laila and walked toward the wolfless woman. She raised her hand, intending to slap her and damage that stupid mouth of hers, but Viola did something completely unexpected that caught Ember and almost everyone off guard.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 286: Use of ability_Part 2[1,266 words]

Viola had seen the slap coming and knew the she-wolf was going to hit her for the way she had addressed her by name. She had already prepared herself to stop it before it landed, and she caught the she-wolf's wrist so effortlessly that it stunned Ember.

"You don't think I'll let you hit me again after what happened the last time," Viola said, tightening her grip around Ember's wrist. "I want you and Leni out of this building right now, or you might not like what I do next."

She threw out the threat even though she herself knew there was very little she could actually do if the two she-wolves decided to gang up on her. Still, she was the Luna as the crown hadn't been taken from her, and technically she still had the authority to send them out of anywhere in Silver if she chose to.

Ember parted her lips to respond and pulled at her wrist, expecting the effortless resistance of someone wolfless, but something was wrong.

She couldn't pull free and a cold sensation had begun spreading from her wrist up into her stomach, moving fast, and before she could make sense of it the cold turned to a sharp, consuming pain through her entire body. Viola had no idea that her water ability was quietly pulling the liquid from Ember's body and turning her blood against her.

Ember's knees buckled beneath her.

Viola released her wrist the moment she saw the she-wolf gasping on the floor, stepping back without understanding what she had just done. Ember looked up at her with unfocused, stunned eyes as Leni rushed to her side.

"Are you all right?" Leni asked, grabbing her friend's arm. "What's wrong?"

"I don't know. Let's leave, I suddenly don't feel well..." Ember muttered, letting Leni pull her up. But before they went, Leni looked back at Zoe and said, "You had better design her dress or we will be back for it." She had no way of knowing that this was the last time either of them would ever set foot in this building, because one of them was already bound never to see the light of another day.

Viola watched the two she-wolves and their entourage leave, Sofia trailing silently behind them, buried beneath the shopping bags she carried for the future Luna, and Viola kept her eyes fixed on the entrance long after they were gone.

Zoe came to stand beside her and lowered her voice. "What did you do to her, Vee?"

Viola had felt something move through her body the moment she held Ember's wrist, something she couldn't name or trace back to anything she understood about herself, and so she said the only honest thing she could.

"I don't know...I just held her wrist, that's all."

"Well, I think holding her wrist really shut her up. I'm glad they're gone." Zoe let out a sigh of relief before she heard Laila moan behind them and they both turned to find blood pooling at the she-wolf's side, a piece of glass from the broken shelves lodged into her stomach where she had fallen.

Viola stared at the she-wolf who had once competed with her for her husband and at the blood spreading around her. How did she get stabbed? she thought. Seeing as she was losing blood so quickly, like a broken pipe pouring water everywhere, maybe the bully had always had it in abundance, and karma was finally making her lose it with such intensity. She even contemplated letting her bleed out. Maybe if enough blood left her body, it would take some of her rotten personality with it.

"Oh, Moon, she's losing so much blood on my floor. Don't you think we should help? I don't want her passing out here," Zoe said with a worried frown on her face.

As much as Viola wanted nothing to do with Laila, she didn't think it was ideal to stand there and let her bleed out on Zoe's floor. It wasn't common for werewolves to die from blood loss, but it wasn't impossible either.

"Get a first aid kit, Zoe." Viola said, already moving forward and going down on her knees beside Laila. "Can you move to the side so I can remove the glass?"

Laila's eyes narrowed down at her with open disgust. "Don't you fucking touch me or I will rip your head off. I don't need your help." She gritted, wanting nothing less than this woman's hands anywhere near her.

Viola let out a quiet sigh. "As much as I would like to stand back and watch you bleed to your senses, Miss Serrano, you are in my sister-in-law's fashion house and your death would tarnish her reputation."

"How dumb are you, I can't die from a glass stab to my side." Laila glared, thinking that on top of being wolfless the bitch clearly knew nothing about their kind, until she watched Viola gesture pointedly at her chest. Laila looked down and felt the blood drain from her face. A second piece of glass, larger than the first, was embedded directly into her chest dangerously close to her heart, and if left untreated it would do exactly what the wolfless bitch had implied.

"Fuck. G-get a doctor, there's glass in my heart." She choked, coughing up blood as the pain bloomed sharp and immediate through her chest, as if seeing it only make her aware of the pain.

"I can pull it out and you will heal on your own without needing a doctor, just stay still." Viola said calmly.

Laila was already panicking and cursing Ember and Leni with everything she had. "I will fucking kill those two!" She gritted, her eyes cutting back to Viola with deep wariness, not entirely convinced this bitch wouldn't drive the glass deeper rather than pull it out, it wasn't as though they were friends, and Laila had made no secret of how she felt about her. She made a mental note to deal with her properly once the glass was out. Maybe she could stab the bitch in the heart with it once she was out of danger.

She never got the chance to act on it. The pain won before the glass was even removed and she slipped unconscious.

When Zoe arrived with the first aid kit, Viola worked carefully to remove the glass and slow the bleeding enough for Laila's healing ability to take hold, and she couldn't help the thought that drifted through her mind as she worked; that she was kneeling on the floor tending to one of the women who had made her feel the most insecure about her place in Sebastian's life, back when she hadn't yet understood that her place was already secured.

"I hope you will get off his back when he returns." Viola thought quietly to herself. "I would hate to help you today and then have you chasing my husband tomorrow."

Meanwhile in another part of Silver, Ember had been forced to cut her shopping day short entirely. Her body was turning against her in ways she couldn't explain, a dizziness so consuming that standing on her own had become a task, her skin looking parched and cracked no matter how much water she swallowed. She felt dehydrated from the inside out, like something had reached into her body and wrung it dry.

"Are you sure you will be fine?" Leni asked, watching with growing unease as Ember gulped down bottle after bottle of water desperately as though nothing could touch the thirst.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 287: Bad Condition[1,044 words]

"Yes..." Ember whispered, setting down the bottle and frowning as she looked down at her wrist that was beginning to look swollen where the wolfless had gripped her. She had thought even back in Moonwillow, when Viola had bumped into her during the moon festival and she fell onto the drink table, that something was strange about her strength, and now she had confirmed it again with the way she had grabbed her wrist and that energy that radiated from her.

Ember hadn't wanted to believe there was anything beyond the uselessness of a wolfless girl in Viola, and she had ignored it because she believed Viola would eventually be killed in the North Pack. But now she couldn't ignore it anymore, because this bitch had done something to her that was making her feel completely out of herself.

"If that's everything I will go ahead and see to the preparations for your ceremony and check on the progress. Are you sure you don't need to see a doctor? You are starting to look very pale." Leni voiced her concern but Ember waved her off to go ahead and get on with the work.

As much as she liked Leni as a friend, she could get annoying sometimes with her eagerness to please, and Ember was suffering too much to care right now. "Go ahead, I will be fine."

Leni reluctantly left and Ember decided to take a nap, hoping she would feel much better by evening because she intended to personally deal with Viola and have Javier punish her until she confessed what she had done.

The sun slowly descended toward the horizon, casting a golden-yellow hue across the sky. As darkness gradually crept over the city, the lights began to shine brightly, while flocks of birds flew together across the darkening sky.

Ember woke up in that evening expecting to feel better but her condition had turned worse. Her skin looked like sandpaper, so dry she thought you could scrape vegetables on it, and her lips had cracked open. When Ember looked at her reflection in the mirror she almost screamed at what looked back at her; her skin appearing to peel away from her face in thin, papery layers.

She brought her hands up to touch her cheeks and began to shake her head. "No, no, no, I can't look like this before my wedding day." She cried, her voice coming out so hoarse it barely carried.

She touched her throat and winced at the dryness there, every swallow feeling like she was forcing sandpaper down. When Ember raised her eyes to the mirror again her soul almost left her body when she caught sight of Sofia standing behind her, her hair hanging around her face, nearly giving her a heart attack on top of everything else.

"How many times have I told you to stop appearing like that like a ghost? Do something about that crazy hair." Ember chided as she made her way back to her bed, holding her throbbing head. "Get me some really cold water and a towel."

Sofia stared at her for a moment before she bobbed her head and went to do as she was told. When she got into the kitchen she grabbed a bottle of water from the refrigerator and stood staring at it for a long moment before she uncapped it.

Ember's eyes were beginning to hurt along with her head and she couldn't help but moan in pain. What was taking this imbecile so long to bring her water and a towel? Ember thought, and just then Sofia hurried in with both.

"What took you so long? I almost thought you found yourself a bed in the kitchen." She snatched the water from her hand and tried to uncap it, but her condition had left her so weak she didn't even notice that the cap wasn't sealed as she brought it to her mouth and gulped it down, feeling the chill hit her dry throat.

Ember didn't lower the bottle until it was empty. But instead of quenching her thirst, it only made the dryness in her throat feel worse, as though it was intensifying.

Then she looked at Sofia, who was staring at her nervously, and said, "I don't think this will pass. Call Javier for me, I think I need—"

Her words suddenly trailed off as a sharp pain twisted violently through her stomach, forcing her to double over on the bed.

"Shit. Hurry up...get me Javier, my stomach..." She groaned, grabbing her belly, and then she began to cough up blood as her vision turned blurry. Through the blur she watched Sofia standing completely still, not moving an inch to go and call Javier or the doctor, just staring down at her as she suffered.

"Sofia...what did you..." Ember's voice began to fade as she coughed violently, and soon enough her body gave way and she went silent and still, her eyes wide open and staring up at Sofia.

Sofia didn't move from her position until she was certain Ember had gone still. Then she checked her pulse and heartbeat, stepped back, and ran from the room to find Javier.

"What the fuck is wrong with her, Sofia?" Javier chided as she had pulled him from an important meeting by saying something was wrong with Ember.

"I don't know. She's not looking good."

Javier massaged his temple. He was already drowning in pressure from the elders and didn't have time for this, but Ember mattered to him and his plans to be Alpha and so he followed Sofia to the penthouse to see what she was talking about.

When Javier entered Ember's penthouse he called her name as he made his way to the bedroom, but only silence met him. When he reached the bed and found her lying face up, his brows drew together.

"Ember?" He called gently, walking toward her, and then stopped short when he came close enough to see the blood trailing from her nose and mouth and the state of her skin.

"Fuck, Ember!" He rushed forward and urgently felt for her pulse, and everything in him went still when he found nothing. No heartbeat. No breath. His heart dropped into his stomach.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 288: Longing[1,121 words]

"Wh-what the fuck happened to her? Ember!" He pulled her into his arms but her body had already gone stiff. "Sofia, what happened?!" He demanded of his wife, who stepped quickly forward shaking her head.

"I don't know, mi vida. I just came here and she told me to get you..." Sofia cried, her hand clasped over her mouth as she watched her husband grieve over the woman he had wanted to crown in her place.

"Call the doctor now!" he ordered his wife, but then belatedly remembered she was a useless fool and used the mind link to summon his men instead.

The doctor was brought in a few minutes later, along with Ember's parents, who looked anxious and horrified at their daughter's unmoving state as the doctor examined her.

"What did she eat today, and where did she go?" Javier demanded of Sofia while waiting for the doctor's verdict, knowing he couldn't afford to lose Ember at a time when everything had finally been going right for him. Her family were going to be a big help to him with their pack's natural resources and without Ember, he could kiss goodbye to everything he planned to do for Silver to overrule everything his cousin had done and be a better Alpha than he had been.

"She went shopping and got into a fight with... with Laila and the Luna. The Luna grabbed her wrist, and Miss Ember said she didn't feel well after that..." Sofia spoke through tears, wringing her hands nervously and avoiding eye contact as usual.

Javier dragged a frustrated hand through his hair as his eyes fell on the marks around Ember's wrist, evidence of exactly what Sofia had described. The doctor was examining the area with so much attention that it irritated him, especially since the man hadn't said a single word since arriving.

"Will she be fine?" Javier asked irritably, even though he had checked himself and found no breath in her, he still hoped for a miracle.

The doctor slowly straightened and let out a heavy sigh.

"I am sorry. I cannot save her. She died before you even called me."

"What do you mean she's dead? She was fucking fine this morning!" Javier exploded, and Ember's mother collapsed against her husband from the shock of the news of her daughter's death.

The doctor, who knew Javier's short temper and how dangerous he became in that kind of mood, quickly said, "It's an unnatural cause of death. Her body is completely drained of water, and I detected traces of silver in her blood, which means she consumed something containing silver. That is why she coughed up blood before her death."

After Ember was declared dead, neither Javier nor her parents, for whom she had been their only daughter, could accept it. She had been perfectly fine that morning, and then suddenly she was dead.

Javier immediately ordered an investigation.

Leni confirmed Sofia's account that Laila and Viola had been the last people Ember confronted before she began feeling unwell, and the doctor concluded that supernatural means had been used to completely drain the water from her body. On top of that, traces of silver had been found in her stomach, which meant whatever had happened to her had been done deliberately.

"You mean to tell me someone has used some powers to kill her and put her in that dry state?" Javier gritted out.

"That's what it looks like." Replied the doctor.

"I will find who is responsible for this and sentence them to death for using witchcraft to kill my Luna to be!"

Viola was sitting in Zoe's living room where Laila was still unconscious on the couch even after the wound in her side had healed, but the one in her chest was taking its time. She wasn't sitting there to look after the she-wolf, she had already done her best and once Laila woke up she could find her own way home. She was sitting there because she was staring silently at the full moon through the glass wall of the living room.

Today was supposed to be the Moon Festival in the other packs, and the moon looked lovely, especially after all the building lights in Silver had been dimmed in its honor.

There were many sayings that praying to the Moon Goddess during the full moon could grant you what you desired in life, and so Viola, despite being nowhere near where the festival was taking place, offered her own quiet prayer from the house.

Many used this time to pray for their fated mates to find them or for the healing of their sick inner wolves, just as she suspected Zoe was doing in her room.

"Wherever Sebastian is right now moon goddess, I hope you protect him both emotionally and physically." She muttered, because it was still unknown to her where he was and she hadn't heard from him yet. She hadn't known she could miss him this much, hadn't thought she was capable of missing his presence to the point she searched for him in everything around her and her heart constantly skipping a beat at any thoughts of him.

Her mind kept wandering to him in everything she did. If she didn't think of his eyes or the way he teased her and smiled, she thought of his warm kisses and his touch, his mouth on her skin, his body warm against hers, inside her, and just from those thoughts alone Viola felt her body react, sparking to arousal and longing so deep it surprised her, because not once had she ever experienced anything like it with Evan or anyone else.

She let out a sigh and prayed to the moon goddess, as his mate, to guide him back home to her safe and sound, without any attempted assassination on his way, and that he shouldn't come back to her with a bullet anywhere in his body.

While she prayed for Sebastian she also prayed for her sister to be found soon and for her protection. Viola didn't forget to pray that she would stop experiencing strange things with water

and could go back to being a normal werewolf with nothing in between, and nothing to worry about but her wolflessness.

What had happened with Ember in the fabric room was still fresh in her mind, and she couldn't shake the strange sensation of power that had moved through her when she grabbed that wrist. It had been as though she could feel every trace of water and blood inside the she-wolf's body just from holding her wrist, and that wasn't something normal, yet she had no idea how she had done it.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 289: A smile that turned around[1,552 words]

Viola was looking down at her palm when she heard a curse from the she-wolf who had finally regained consciousness. "Fuck."

Viola turned to look at Laila, who was trying to sit up, but her chest was aching badly with the effort. Pursing her lips, she said, "If I were you, I wouldn't try to move. That wound is pretty deep. Sleep and let it heal before morning."

Laila became aware of the wolfless woman sitting across from her, and her expression immediately turned sour as everything that had happened came rushing back to her. She pushed her hair away from her face irritably.

"Where am I?" she demanded, sitting up anyway and grabbing at her chest as pain flashed across her face.

"Zoe's penthouse. Please keep your voice down, Zoe is resting. If you want to go home, you are free to leave, but if you take my advice and stay so you can heal, then do it quietly," Viola said with a sigh. "Because I am trying to pray."

Laila looked toward the full moon and then back at Viola before she scoffed.

"What are you praying for? A miracle to happen so you can become a normal werewolf with a wolf?" she taunted, and when Viola ignored her, Laila rested her back against the couch and continued speaking. "It's hopeless. You can never be anything but wolfless, and as much as I would love to wring your useless neck and send you to your grave beside Sebastian, I think it's best I pray to the Moon Goddess to make your life a lot more miserable in Silver."

Viola, who heard every word the she-wolf was saying, couldn't help but let out a silent sigh. Some people simply didn't deserve a reply, and right now she believed the she-wolf was merely bored and looking for someone to bully. But when Viola peeked at her from the corner of her eye, she

noticed that Laila was indeed staring at the moon with a bitter look on her face, genuinely praying for her misery.

"Do you know something, Miss Serrano? Bullying someone you believe is beneath you just to make yourself feel better about what you lack, or fear you might lack, is one of the worst flaws a person could have," Viola said quietly without taking her eyes away from the moon.

"One day everything might backfire on you, and you'll realize you have no one who genuinely cares about you, and trust me, it's one of the worst feelings a person can ever experience. Hate me as much as you want, but try seeing the world through another lens and looking at people without constantly feeling like you are better than them..."

Viola had once been there herself, and falling from that place hadn't been pleasant. And though the she-wolf was trying to get to her with those harsh words about praying for her suffering, Viola found herself feeling sorry for her instead, because believing you are better than everyone else can blind you to many things around you.

Laila turned to Viola with offended eyes. "How dare you talk to me like that?" she rebuked sharply.

But Viola had already continued her prayers with her eyes closed, shutting the she-wolf out completely, which only made Laila even angrier. She began reaching out as though she intended to shove Viola off the couch when a loud knock suddenly rattled against the door.

The loud knock drew their attention to the door. It was immediately followed by a commotion that made Viola stand up with a frown, and even before she could go and check who was knocking that violently, Zoe had come out of her room and gone to unlock the door, only to be immediately shoved aside as men poured in alongside Javier and Matt, who appeared to be trying desperately to stop him.

"...you can't arrest her on such flimsy evidence. Listen to me at least!" Matt was saying but Javier shoved him aside and gritted his teeth.

"If you don't want to end up in prison alongside her, I advise you stay out of my way right now." He warned, glaring dangerously at the beta before turning his eyes to the room. "Seize her!" He ordered, looking at Viola.

The men who had come in with them hurried toward Viola, who looked stunned and completely taken aback. What was going on? she wondered as she watched the warriors advancing toward her.

"May I ask what my crime is?" Viola spoke up as the two warriors under Javier's command grabbed her arms roughly.

She hadn't committed any crime that she knew of, and she certainly didn't recall any rule stating that the former Luna could simply be arrested because a new one was about to be crowned, which meant something entirely different was happening in the middle of the night.

"Isn't it obvious?" Laila said with a scoff and a smirk from the couch where she sat looking entirely too relaxed. "My prayers have been answered, and you are finally about to become miserable. You are being arrested for being a loser who doesn't belong here. Take her away and—"

"Take her too." Javier ordered, turning to look at Laila with undisguised disgust. "How convenient that the two of them are in the same place, seeing as they haven't bothered to go anywhere after committing the crime."

Laila's eyes went wide with confused disbelief and she stepped back away from the men coming to grab her on the couch. "What did I do to be arrested with her?! I haven't committed any crimes!"

"Can someone explain to me what is going on here and why my sister-in-law is under arrest?" Zoe asked, looking from her cousin to Matt and the men surrounding Viola.

This was completely confusing to her, and Viola hadn't done anything that deserved an arrest. Perhaps Laila might have, Zoe thought, but certainly not her friend.

Javier turned to Zoe with narrowed eyes. "You should stay out of this, little cousin, if you don't want to join them in the dungeon. These two have been found responsible for Ember's death four hours ago and they will be tortured until they reveal the powers they used on the late Luna to be. Take them away!" He ordered, angry veins standing out against his forehead.

Viola's blood ran cold hearing that Ember was dead, but she kept her expression neutral even as panic consumed her from the inside and made cold sweat break out on her forehead. Had that ability she used unintentionally been powerful enough to kill a she-wolf?

What had she done?

If anyone found out she had used water abilities there was no going back; she would be sentenced to death because it was a power belonging to outcast creatures! Sea creatures...

She hadn't intended to kill Ember and the shock of the news was hard enough that Viola didn't fight the men pulling her out, not that she could have fought them with their firm hold on her anyway.

"Beta Matt, what is he talking about? Vee didn't do anything to Ember!" Zoe said urgently as she watched her friend being dragged away and tried to stop them, but Matt pulled her back.

"We don't have the power to stop her arrest. Only your brother can stop anything from here on, because all the elders are agitated over the unknown powers used on Ember. They said it's something similar to powers from the past associated with something they could never forgive. Javier's investigation supposedly proved that they used some sort of power to kill Ember because they both wanted to become Luna."

Zoe's eyes widened in horror. "But that's not true!"

"I know," Matt replied with a sigh. "But we can't do anything to prove otherwise when the eyewitnesses are all saying that Luna Viola and Laila were the last people Ember came into contact with."

Laila, who was also being dragged out, struggled furiously against the warriors when she heard some of what the beta had said about the crime she was being arrested for.

"I didn't fucking do anything! Ember stabbed me with glass, can't you see I'm still healing from the injury? How could I have done anything to kill her?!" she yelled furiously, turning toward Javier. "My uncle won't like that you are arresting me for something I didn't do!"

"Don't worry, your uncle is one of those who approved your arrest along with the wolfless. Do yourself a fucking favor and move," Javier warned coldly.

He had thought Laila had enough sense not to stoop so low, but it seemed she was just like every other woman who acted the moment she felt her position being threatened. Only, unlike the others, he had no intention of forgiving either of them.

"My uncle would never allow my arrest!" Laila yelled out, convinced Javier was lying because her uncle had his own plans for her, and with how desperate he was to place one of his own beside the Alpha, he would never allow her to go through this before getting what he wanted.

"Let go of me!" she ordered furiously.

Nobody listened of course, and when she refused to go willingly she was knocked unconscious and dragged out powerless.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 290: Protector[1,235 words]

Just then Nick, who had heard about the case and had been on his way there, arrived to find Viola being dragged away from Zoe's penthouse. He immediately stepped forward and grabbed her arm protectively, planting himself in front of Javier.

"What the hell, bro? What do you think you are doing? How could she have killed Ember?" He demanded and Zoe hurried to his side and nodded quickly.

"Nick is right, Viola didn't do anything to Ember. I was there and saw everything that happened. Ember came here to bully me."

"Oh look who has decided to show up, my long lost brother, a fucking loser who doesn't know when to keep his useless self out of important matters." Javier taunted, moving closer to his brother who was still holding Viola's arm. "This has nothing to do with you, little brother, so step away from the criminal."

"It has everything to do with me because she is my best friend. You know me, if you touch my people, you touch me. I have stayed out of your way all this time, but I won't let you take her to the first-level dungeon," Nick said, tightening his grip on Viola before turning to her.

He had overheard whispered conversations from his colleagues that Viola was going to be taken to the first-level dungeon, and he had run here with everything he had to try to stop it, because not even people with wolves survived that level of torture, and many criminals were pronounced dead even before their public sentencing.

Nick could never allow her to be taken anywhere near that place. He tightened his hold on her again and turned slightly to reassure her over his shoulder.

"I won't let them take you away. Stay close, Vee."

Viola, who hadn't seen Nick in a long time, looked at him and at the protective grip he had on her arm. She knew exactly what happened to people accused of crimes like hers, and she was also aware of what the first-level dungeon held for criminals.

It was every werewolf's nightmare, and she was no exception, because she hadn't even been sent to Moonwillow's first-level dungeon when she was suffering there, not to mention Silver's first level. The thought of it and the fear of the horrors inside combined made her instinctively move closer to the person trying to protect her from it, but she was immediately yanked back by the warriors.

"Don't you fucking pull her!" Nick reached out to hit the warrior who had jerked Viola away from him, but his brother quickly grabbed him and pulled him back as well.

"Aww, little brother has a thing for taken women, doesn't he?" Javier taunted with a smirk, watching Nick's grip on Viola while also referencing his old feelings for Sofia. "Unfortunately, she will face her death this time and join that fucking cousin of mine. If I could forgive her, I would have gladly handed her over to you. Now step away!"

All traces of humor drained from Javier's face as he gave the warning.

For a very long time he had been looking for a way to make this wolfless pay for humiliating him, and it seemed she had walked right into his hands again. This time he had all the power he needed to not only deal with her but take her life, and before he did, she was going to tell him exactly what witchy power she had used on Ember.

But first he needed to deal with his loser of a brother.

"Step aside." Javier warned Nick again but he held his ground without moving an inch.

"Tell your men to let her go." Nick said.

Javier ran his fingers through his silver hair slowly, and then without warning he turned and slammed his fist into Nick's face, sending him stumbling back away from Viola. "When I speak, you fucking listen to me, little brother."

Viola's worried eyes went to her friend on the floor, who was already pushing himself back up and still hadn't let go of her hand, and not wanting him to take another hit because of her she yanked her hand free and told him quietly, "Nick, it's all right. I will be fine. Don't interfere."

If he kept interfering when not even the Beta had stepped in, he would only get himself beaten for nothing when there was no changing the fact that she was going to be arrested. It was better if nobody else got hurt because of her.

"No, you won't be. He's going to kill you!" Nick yelled, tears glistening in his eyes as he looked at her blue eyes that tried to stay calm despite everything he could see she was feeling underneath. Everybody was afraid of first level dungeon.

"He won't," Viola said, allowing them to take her.

As she was pulled away, she forced a reassuring smile toward Zoe, who was crying and looking between Matt and Nick as though silently begging one of them to do something. But Viola knew there was nothing either of them could do. Only her husband could stop whatever was coming for her now.

And she had a feeling he wouldn't allow her to be sentenced if he returned in time.

As the warriors dragged her away, Viola's eyes lifted toward the moon's reflection, and she prayed silently for Sebastian to come back in time, because as much as she had suffered before, she still wasn't looking forward to more pain.

As the men dragged her away, Javier turned to his brother who was standing with his fists clenched and his chest heaving. "Next time be a real man, do something worthy with your life, and maybe you would have been important enough to stop me." He patted his back and then turned to Matt. "Come with me, Beta. We need to prepare the execution grounds because it seems these two may be involved with witches or something far worse."

Before Matt followed, he turned to Zoe who was gripping his sleeve and blinking hard against tears. He put his hand over hers. "I will try to delay any hasty sentencing until he comes back. I will do my best to lessen any punishment in the meantime. Dry your eyes. Don't cry." He used his fingers to wipe her cheeks gently and patted her head before he turned and followed the men taking Viola and the unconscious Laila away.

Zoe hurried to Nick who was still on the floor, glaring heatedly at his elder brother's back. "He is going to kill her..." Nick said, his fingers balling up at his sides. "He hates her that much. And I am going to fucking kill him." He jerked his hand away from Zoe's reach and left, wiping the blood from his nose, and Zoe was left alone in the hallway hugging herself as she watched him disappear around the corner.

"Nick!" she called after him.

He didn't turn once.

Zoe stood alone in the empty hallway, her worries for everyone she cared about mounting alongside her helplessness, and she began picking at her hair as she whispered into the mind link her brother always kept shut at this time of the month,

"Hermano, you have disappointed me time and again, please don't disappoint me this time around and hurry back. Vee needs you. I need you..."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 291: Sea creatures[1,569 words]

Deep into the forest, Elder Halvrek was seen walking away from the city and into the trees. The leaves crushed under his shoes as he moved with only the moonlight guiding his way. When he reached a certain part in the trees he stopped, as a figure revealed by the moon stepped out from behind a tree.

"Supreme Alpha," Elder Halvrek greeted with a slight bow, not wanting to come across as offensive to this person whose aura was flaring through the atmosphere.

After the assassination attempt on Sebastian, they had begun meeting in places where no one would suspect them, as they couldn't risk this person's identity being revealed to anyone before he took the position he had been silently fighting to claim for himself for years.

But Sebastian had always been in the way, taking control of matters and leading the family, leaving him in the background and overshadowed at every turn. Not only had he left him in the background, he had taken away someone of his he would never forgive or let go.

"You called for me?" Elder Halvrek said.

"Hmm." The person hummed. "Things are taking longer than planned to happen. I should be sitting in that position by now but it seems to be getting even more complicated. What is with the new death and chaos In Silver?" He asked calmly, looking at the elder's bowed head.

"Ember, as you may have heard, died hours ago. The cause of her death was strange and unnatural enough to raise questions from the other elders." Elder Halvrek said to the person powerful enough to humble him, he who didn't bow to anyone easily.

"What is unusual about it?" the person asked.

"She dried up like a leaf in autumn, with flaking skin. I saw her body, and if it weren't for the silver found in her stomach, I would have bet my life that she had been killed by a sea creature. But sea creatures are just as sensitive to silver as we are. It has left the elders baffled as to what was used to kill her."

The person's brows knitted together as he retrieved a cigarette from his pocket and lit it. He took a slow drag and blew the smoke out into the dark air.

"You are an expert at betting, just like you bet your wealth away during the competition. I don't trust your judgment when it comes to bets."

Elder Halvrek's jaw tightened at the subtle insult, but the person continued.

"A sea creature has no business being here in our world. They are not stupid enough to live among us and attack someone using powers that would immediately give them away. From what I have heard, they cannot survive out of water for long periods and eventually die from land suffocation."

Elder Halvrek clenched his fingers but then reasoned, "There could still be a chance that the wolfless sought a sea creature's help to do something..."

"What about your niece?" he cut the elder off. "She is an accomplice in the killing of the future Luna. Are you telling me she is in contact with one of these creatures? And speaking of your niece, you don't still believe I will make her my Luna after all of this if I take the seat, do you?"

He chuckled softly, bringing the cigarette to his lips again and letting the smoke drift into the wind, his eyes carrying a grim look.

Elder Halvrek felt his insides twist. This was exactly what he had wanted to avoid. He had gotten this person to agree to marry his niece through a sheer stroke of luck, but it seemed that possibility was no longer on the table.

"I don't think Laila is responsible," he said carefully. "I think we should look more closely into the wolfless and find out more about her background. You are looking for a sea creature. Who knows, we might discover some connection between them or find something useful."

The person stayed silent for a moment, as though digesting some piece of information, before he looked at the elder with bitter eyes and a half smile.

"I want him dead."

He made the announcement without elaborating on who he meant, knowing the elder already understood exactly who he was referring to.

"We have wasted too much time. He has lived long enough. And I want his death to be even more painful, so I will do the work myself. He doesn't suspect me, which means I will finish it."

He said it with the quiet certainty of someone who had already made up his mind long before this meeting had even taken place.

Elder Halvrek couldn't help the shiver that ran down his spine at that declaration. If this person decided to kill with his own hands there was no way it wouldn't be carried through, and this time he would be getting that seat no matter what stood in his way.

"What about the wolfless?" Elder Halvrek asked.

"What about her?" The figure questioned with a dull look as he stared at the elder like he was losing his mind. "She has committed a crime she will have to pay for. Let those in power handle it."

"And Laila?" Elder Halvrek pushed, not wanting to lose this chance because it was his last one and he couldn't afford to blow it. But from the look that fell over the person's eyes at the mention of his niece, Elder Halvrek already had his answer before it came.

"She is no longer my business. I don't need a she-wolf who lets jealousy rule her enough to kill." He said. "I have someone else in mind to be my Luna." Saying that, he turned his eyes toward the moon in the sky and blew out a long puff of thick smoke, coming to the quiet conclusion that when you wanted something done right, you had to do it yourself. It was time he took decisive action and brought everything back to the way he wanted it.

Sebastian stepped under the shower and stood beneath the spray, allowing the water to fall over him and wash his body clean. Dark red ribbons bled into the stream running over his skin, gathering at his feet before slipping between the tiles and vanishing down the drain. He remained there for a long moment, letting the cold steady his thoughts before he reached for the soap.

He did everything automatically, the way he had done it for so many years of his life in this underground place. However, unlike the many times before, Sebastian was actually looking forward to stepping out of here, because he knew there was someone waiting for him on the other side. He hadn't had the capacity to miss her during the past two days, but now that his curse was over for the month his heart longed for her in a way that surprised even him.

It almost felt like he hadn't seen or touched her in years when in truth it had only been three days. How ironic that he, Sebastian Kade, a man who had never truly known what a genuine mate bond felt like until now, was standing here looking forward to going back into the arms of his mate, when he had spent his whole life avoiding commitment so he would never fall into the same state his twin had fallen into after losing the woman he loved.

Many had believed Sebastian had loved only one woman, Natalie, and that no other mate could ever replace her. But what they didn't know was that Natalie had never been his. It was Alex who had found her, given her the world, and loved her to the end of the moon and back.

It was Alex who had loved deeply and lost bitterly. It was Alex who had been surprisingly kind to every mate that came into his life, giving them everything they ever wanted. And not wanting to give away their differences to other people, Sebastian had often followed his lead and given every she-wolf he felt a connection with the same treatment and generosity.

It was Alex who had made the less violent choices for Silver and built relationships with many of their pack members, when Sebastian would have ruthlessly killed anyone who crossed him. They had balanced each other so completely that Sebastian had often found himself following his twin's lead in the way things were done, all to maintain their secrets and keep anyone from noticing the differences between them.

But on that fateful night that caused the rift between them, the one he didn't think time could ever fully heal, Sebastian had taken away the love of his brother's life.

He had never known what truly loving a mate beyond sexual desires felt like, even though he had come across many over the years. He had never felt this kind of deep connection until now, and he

was beginning to understand, terrifyingly, the possessive protectiveness that consumed a man when his heart and soul genuinely chose someone.

He didn't want to think about what had led to him marking Natalie and killing her in the process, because it made him hate what had led to it in the first place. It had been an accident that never should have happened if he hadn't...

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 292: Mate calling[1,023 words]

Sebastian closed his eyes and forced the memory from his mind before turning off the shower spray. He stared at his reflection in the mirror, his dull silver eyes looking back at him, dark circles etched beneath them from exhaustion.

Sebastian was reaching for his robe when he felt a sudden stab in his chest. A restless feeling tightening around his heart and turning his stomach inside out. The feeling was not only foreign but strange enough to make him frown and grip his chest.

His lips pressed into a straight line. He was still recovering from the full moon's effect and for at least a few more days, he and his twin were not supposed to have recovered enough to use their mind link or any other heightened senses. This was the curse of whoever carried the full Alpha blood, a battle they had fought their entire life.

Sebastian suddenly felt restless in a way he couldn't pin to anything except the certainty that something wasn't right. He tried to reach out to Matt through their link to check on his wife but then remembered that Muffin hadn't recovered enough yet for the mind link, and until it was completely restored he would be dependent on his human form and senses alone.

His concern today was supposed to be simple, it was Alex's turn to step out of here, and Sebastian needed to find a way to convince him to let him go again instead, without revealing that the reason was a woman he loved and wanted to return to. He let the uneasy feeling settle as best it could before he straightened up.

When Sebastian stepped out of the bathroom, Alex was already waiting on the other side, getting dressed and buttoning up his shirt. "Now fill me in on what I need to know when I step out as you. What has been happening in Silver? And what is it I need to know about this new Luna of yours? It's about time I met her, don't you think, dear twinny?" A smirk crossed his face and Sebastian's jaw tightened immediately, knowing exactly what Alex meant.

"Stay the fuck away from my wife. Don't even lay a finger on her." He gritted out before he could stop himself, and he cursed inwardly as he realized he was no longer very good at keeping his feelings for Viola out of things.

"Now isn't this getting even more interesting? You've found a woman you actually care about, but unfortunately she won't be breaking our curse, the last I remember, you told me she is wolfless. Just like Natalie wasn't the one and she died after the mark, we won't know if one of us doesn't mark this one too." Alex said, tilting his head as he studied his brother's grim expression.

"I am warning you. I have given you my promise that I will break our curse and cure your corrupted heart, Alex, and I will keep that promise, but I won't let you hurt her. I mean it." Sebastian said calmly, fully aware that with every full moon Alex's heart was declining further as it took everything they had to fight it, weakened further still by what had happened with Natalie. But that didn't mean he would sacrifice his wife to find a quick cure.

Sebastian had tried everything to find the prophesied mate before the day came when he would have to switch with Alex again, but instead of finding her he had found a woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with, and if remotely possible to have pups with, to build his own family, which was why he was working so hard to find the sea creature and use its heart to break the generational curse now rather than focus on the prophecy. But Alex still harbored too much bitterness toward him to hesitate when it came to his hellcat.

"Who said anything about hurting your wife, Seb? You are paranoid because you know it is exactly what you did to me, even after promising you wouldn't. I miss my little sister and I can't wait to step out of this hellhole and see her." Alex said, and was about to continue when he noticed Sebastian gripping his chest with a dark scowl cutting across his face.

"What's wrong with you?" Alex arched a brow.

"Nothing." Sebastian lied, even when he knew it was far from nothing. Viola. He groaned her name through his mind as the feeling pressed harder against his chest. She needed him. Something was wrong back there.

Inside the first level underground dungeon of Silver, one couldn't tell the time of day because of how completely sealed off everything was. Rather than natural light, LED lights burned against the whiteness of the place from wall to floor, and the sound of moaning and people in pain echoed through the halls. When there was no screaming, there was only the quiet, rhythmic sound of blood dripping from severed limbs onto the tiled floor.

The cells were not barred doors but electric iron doors that required a special security system for entry. Behind one of these silver colored iron doors sat two women tied to electric chairs with harsh lights burning down over their heads.

Viola tried to move but the aches and the impossibly tight binds around her wrists, tied behind the chair, and her legs bound against it made any movement remotely impossible.

"What do you mean, Mom?" came Laila's voice from where she had been untied and brought to speak with her mother at the door.

Viola watched them exhaustedly. They hadn't been fed or given any water, and so far they had only been whipped once. She knew this wasn't the full extent of the punishment carried out on this level, and that the worst was still yet to come, but she still held on to the hope that something would happen to stop the worst from reaching them.

Even now, despite everything, she found herself hoping that someone or something would intervene before it was too late.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 293: The rumors[1,207 words]

"Your uncle can't help you out of here. I have tried speaking to him, but he says you have to face the consequences of your actions. Oh my, I don't know what to do anymore. I have tried my best, darling," Agnes, Laila's mother, said from behind the door, her hand holding her daughter's through the small opening as she sobbed in dismay.

Her daughter would never have killed anyone the way everyone was claiming she had. People were saying that she and the wolfless had contacted a witch, but Agnes couldn't bring herself to believe it. If Laila wanted someone gone, she would do it herself rather than rely on a witch to do the job for her.

"You look like hell, sweetie. They haven't fed you, have they?" Agnes asked gently as she took in how much her daughter had changed. Laila looked exhausted, with dark circles beneath her eyes and a pale, drawn face.

"Those shitty people haven't fed me. They whipped me like I'm some nobody. I haven't even taken a bath for two days now, and I smell like rotten fish. Mom, I can't stay here for another day," Laila said in a shaky voice as she thought about how much she hated every moment of being trapped in this place, especially with the woman she despised and wanted to skin alive.

"I will see what I can do. You have to endure it for now, my dear," Agnes said, patting her daughter's hand reassuringly while shooting the wolfless behind Laila a dirty look, firmly believing her daughter would never have been dragged into this mess if it weren't for that nobody.

Viola watched their linked hands and felt an involuntary stab of longing, a fierce, consuming ache for a mother she had never known. Even though Laila's mother couldn't get her out of this place, at least she was here. She was here to hold her daughter's hand, comfort her, and direct her dislike toward another woman she viewed as her daughter's rival.

Her own mother had given her and her sibling away to be killed as infants for reasons Viola still didn't know, and it was something she would never forgive.

Mothers loved their children. No matter what happened, a mother was supposed to stand by her own. And no matter how much she disliked Laila, Viola envied her in that moment.

"Are you sure Uncle can't do anything? I don't want to stay here another day," Laila sobbed, gripping her mother's hand desperately, even though there had been times she had blamed her mother for every unfortunate thing that had ever happened in her life.

For the first time in Laila's life, she had gone to check on how someone was doing, only to end up in this mess. If she hadn't cared enough about Sebastian to check on his bratty sister, she wouldn't have been here.

Instead of being locked inside a dungeon, starved, whipped, and treated like a criminal, she would have been at home where she belonged.

Now this was exactly why she never chose to act nice or kind, because kindness always seemed to bring you to places like this. The one time she had tried to do something decent for someone else, she had ended up chained in a dungeon for it!

"Ember's family won't let it go. They want justice for their daughter and are demanding that you and the wolfess confess and be executed. I heard them associating her death with sea creatures, those disgusting things that were believed to have gone extinct," Laila's mother said with a tired sigh, having barely rested for a moment as she exhausted every option available to bring her daughter out of this place.

"That's ridiculous. I have never even laid eyes on a sea creature with such powers. Those disgusting things don't even exist anymore."

"I believe there are some rumors that those things exist and are in hiding. But I don't understand why they believe you two were in contact with one to kill Ember."

Viola, who was listening from behind them, couldn't help but look away. Disgusting sea creatures.

Werewolves could never forgive any creature of the sea. The hatred ran too deep and had existed for generations. Being connected to them, descended from them, or possessing any powers associated with them was practically a death sentence, and Viola found herself genuinely terrified of being discovered before she had found the courage to tell Sebastian, that was if she even got to see him.

The thought that they were already speaking about sea creatures in connection with Ember's death made a cold knot form in her stomach. If anyone ever found out what she was, she doubted they would even wait for a trial before deciding her fate. There would be a huge bidding on her head and people wanting some part of a sea creature to use to gain power.

The punishment they had received hadn't even reached the level she had expected, as Matt had pulled strings from outside to make it less severe than what first level dungeon prisoners normally received, but it didn't make it any less draining or painful; they hadn't been given water or food since they arrived.

Viola watched the mother and daughter sobbing together and found it hard to believe that a bully like Laila had it in her to cry like that, until the guards came and announced their time was up.

"I will try speaking to your uncle again." Promised her mother.

Laila was forcefully dragged back to her chair and tied down again. "Let me out of here!" She screamed at the guard. "These lights are roasting me, can't you turn them down?! If I get out of here, every single one of you is going to fucking pay!" She shouted, but tears were rolling down her cheeks that she clearly didn't want there. It seemed her uncle no longer had any use for her and this was his way of getting rid of her, just like he had always promised he would once she disappointed him.

But this time she hadn't really meant to disappoint him and had fallen into circumstances. She had been accused wrongly and would be punished for it.

"I hope you are happy now." Came Laila's quiet words to Viola. "My life got ruined the moment you walked into Silver. You ruined everything. You did something to Ember and yet you are dragging me down with you..." She said, hating the wolfless more than ever, because as far as she was concerned this woman was the reason for everything that had happened to her, from losing Sebastian to being locked up in this cell.

Viola looked down at the floor, where the white tiles had turned dull from being constantly stained with blood, and no amount of washing could ever make them truly clean again. Guilt gritted her chest.

As much as she didn't like this she-wolf, it had never been her intention to ruin anyone's life or drag anyone down with her. Laila might have been cruel, arrogant, and impossible to get along with, but she didn't deserve to be punished for something she hadn't done.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 294: Special treatment[1,405 words]

But then what else could Viola do when she was locked away right alongside her? She didn't want to be here either, and just as much as Laila wanted to get out, she wanted her freedom as well. She knew that if anything happened to her in this place, the people who cared about her would be hurt, and the last thing she wanted was to cause pain to anyone close to her heart.

And as much as Viola wanted to confess and allow Laila to be released, she felt deep in her heart that confessing would only make everything worse. She wouldn't even be able to properly explain what had happened because none of it had been intentional. All she had wanted to do was protect Zoe and prevent her workspace from being destroyed.

If anything were to happen to her because of a confession, she had a feeling Sebastian would suffer for a very long time, especially because of their mate bond. He had already lost two Lunas before. One of them had been a woman he had loved so deeply that Viola had always envied the place she

might still hold in his heart. Losing another mate, especially after everything he had already endured, might break him in ways he would never fully recover from.

The thought alone made her chest ache.

So, for her husband's sake as much as her own, she would keep the secret and swallow down the guilt of having dragged another person into this nightmare with her.

And furthermore, how could she confess to something she hadn't entirely done?

Yes, she had grabbed Ember's wrist. She couldn't deny that. She had felt that strange surge of power move through her the moment their skin touched. But she hadn't put the silver found in Ember's stomach and bloodstream there.

For reasons she couldn't fully explain, Viola was certain of that much. Deep down, she knew her ability didn't create silver, nor did it carry silver substances that were harmful to werewolves and even sea creatures when consumed. Whatever had killed Ember, there was still a piece of the truth missing, and confessing now would only bury that truth even deeper while condemning both her and Laila for something neither of them fully understood.

"It was never my intention to drag you here and believe it or not, I do not wish for you to be here." Viola said quietly. "I hope we can stop the blame and find a way to prove that neither of us is responsible for Ember's death. We didn't kill her."

Laila let out a dry laugh. "You wish. You are the last person I would ever work with. I am innocent here and you are the culprit. After all, it was you who held her wrist and it was after you held it that she went down. Whatever you must have done, it's best you tell them right now and spare yourself further pain."

Laila advised, wincing at the heat from the harsh lights above her head that were burning into her skin.

Viola let out a sigh and pressed her lips together. It seemed hopeless to talk to Laila about working together when the she-wolf despised her so much.

She had endured Laila's entitled words on top of her own discomfort, listening to the she-wolf boast about how her uncle would come and set her free and how Viola would die a humiliating death in front of the entire pack.

But after the visit from her mother and their brief exchange, the she-wolf went silent and withdrew completely into herself.

Through the silence, her mind began to wander. It drifted from wondering about her background and how she and her sister had come to be, to what had happened to Ember, and then, inevitably, it turned back to her husband, who was away and probably unaware of what was happening here.

Sebastian.

She thought of him, hoping the thought of him would distract her from the pain spreading through her body. It had been three days since he had been away and she wondered if he even knew she was being held captive. Through their bond she believed he would feel her distress, but she didn't want to be a burden when he was in hiding and faking his own death to draw out his enemy.

He was away handling personal matters that were important to him and she didn't want to cut them short. Constantly pulling him away from things he needed to do would eventually lead to an exhausting relationship, and all she wanted was to be a source of comfort in his life, not another problem for him to carry.

Still, despite her determination not to trouble him, she found herself staring at the door every now and then, imagining what it would feel like if it suddenly opened and Sebastian walked through it. The thought was foolish, yet she held onto it anyway.

Viola was drifting off on the chair, trying to sink into sleep to numb the aches, when she heard voices outside and opened her eyes a crack as the door slid open.

The harsh overhead lights made it impossible to see who had walked in, but she watched carefully as the figure came around and loosened her binds before roughly pulling her up from the chair without ceremony.

"Where are you taking her?" Laila, who was quietly trying to recover from her wolfsbane injuries but failing miserably because of the harsh lights, demanded.

"Mind your business. She's being taken to another room." The guard grumbled and Laila rattled her chair.

"Why is she being taken to a room? What about me? I haven't done anything and should be the one getting special treatment. Take me with you! I also need a room." Laila shouted irritably, believing that because Viola had once been Luna she was about to receive special treatment while she would be left here to suffer more.

Not to mention Laila had noticed that while being whipped, Viola's lashes were lighter and less harsh than hers. It was as though the guards were holding back on her while striking Laila with full force.

"You can't leave me out!" Laila added. "I will go wherever you take her and receive the same treatment she gets. After all, I am far more important than she is."

The guard parted his lips to tell her to shut up, but before he could speak, a voice called from outside the cell.

"If she insists on joining the wolfless, bring her along."

The command was delivered calmly, leaving no room for argument or disobedience.

"Yes, Alpha Javier." The guard answered as a second one entered to release Laila's binds as well.

Hearing Javier's voice outside, Viola felt any hope Laila was clinging to that she would receive special treatment deflate immediately in her own chest. Javier had had a problem with her long

before any of this, going back to the day she had interfered with his treatment of Sofia, and he would be the last person on earth to extend special treatment to her.

Matt and Nick had each come to see her more than twice, both of them promising she would be released soon, but she knew there was nothing either of them could do with Javier in charge.

As they were pulled along behind Javier, Laila said to Viola, "Don't think I will rot in there while you get different treatment. You put me through this and I will make sure you don't get out before me."

Viola let out a quiet sigh. "Not everything is a competition, Miss Serrano. Not everything is always about you. And I hope you won't regret tagging along rather than staying behind."

Before Laila could respond, Javier spoke without turning around.

"I've heard you aren't speaking, dear Luna, or should I say Viola? You were the last person to hold Ember's wrist and not confessing what you did will only cost you your life. I have decided to take the punishment into my own hands to make you speak the truth, and it seems Miss Serrano doesn't want to be left out of it either. So welcome to your end, because neither of you will be leaving this room alive until I get the answers I want."

When they were dragged into the room, Viola's eyes widened in horror.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 295: Worried husband[1,542 words]

The feeling didn't fade the way it should have.

Sebastian sat on the edge of the bed and stared at the floor, his hand still pressed flat against his chest where the tightening had settled into a permanent and insistent ache that no amount of breathing was easing. He had told himself it was the aftermath of the full moon. He had told himself Muffin was still recovering and his senses were unreliable.

He had stopped believing either of those things an hour ago.

He needed to leave, but there was no way he could get past his brother, who had been keeping an eye on him like a hawk and wouldn't allow him to leave in his place.

After Natalie's death, Alex had stepped away and remained underground for more than two years to grieve and recover while allowing Sebastian to continue being the one who went out into the world.

It was only after he married Evangeline that Alex had come out again, and then he had marked and killed her as his first act of revenge for what Sebastian had done to him. However, that revenge had little to no effect on Sebastian because he hadn't cared for Evangeline nearly as much as Alex had hoped. Her death hadn't struck him the way his parents' deaths had, the only loss that had truly shattered him.

Since then, Sebastian had been treading carefully around his twin because if Alex ever sensed an opportunity to get back at him for what had happened to Natalie, he would seize it without wasting a second.

Furthermore, now that it was Alex's turn to go out, he wouldn't allow Sebastian to take it back simply because his mate, whom Alex would have gladly killed to hurt him, needed him.

Their relationship was no longer as close or as strong as it had been when they were children, and Sebastian was painfully aware of that. Frankly, now that he knew what it felt like to be deeply connected to a woman, he believed he wouldn't have forgiven anyone who had killed her either.

As Sebastian tried to breathe through the pain and think of a way out, his mind wandered back to the day he had broken his brother's heart.

The look of betrayal in Alex's silver eyes.

The way a grown man had broken down into tears right in front of him, sobbing and clutching at his heart as though it had physically been ripped from his chest.

That night, Alex had looked worried when Sebastian walked down into the underground mansion. He had immediately grabbed his shoulders.

"Hey, bro. I've been feeling restless for the past few days, and I couldn't reach you. Is my Natalie all right? I don't know why, but I have this terrible feeling in my chest that won't go away."

Sebastian had been tongue-tied, unable to part his lips and tell his brother what he had done, and that silence had only made Alex more worried. He had been looking forward to his turn to leave and return to his wife.

After Alex married Natalie, Sebastian hadn't switched places with his twin because he wasn't the one who was married. Instead, he had given Alex more time with his wife and continued staying underground in his place. It remained that way until a battle with a rival pack arose and Sebastian needed to take over, as Alex was someone who avoided killing, violence, and warfare whenever possible.

That was why Sebastian had stepped out to take control of the situation.

And somehow, everything had gone wrong.

By the time he returned to his brother, nothing was the same anymore, and he was carrying news that would destroy Alex's world forever.

"Talk to me, bro. What is it? You know what, if you're going to stand there looking like a ghost, suit yourself. I'm getting out of here to check on my wife."

Alex had released him and turned to leave, but Sebastian grabbed his arm, stopping him.

"I am sorry..." Sebastian had said quietly. "Natalie is gone."

At the time, Sebastian had no idea what his twin was feeling. The pain. The agony. He had delivered the news almost as if he expected Alex to accept it and move on because, just like him, he was connected to multiple mates and could eventually find another.

But he hadn't expected to watch a man cry like a child.

He hadn't expected to watch a man drop to his knees and scream his heart and soul out over the death of his wife.

And then Sebastian had revealed something that had made everything even more devastating for his brother.

"You took her away from me..." Alex had sobbed, so much pain woven into every word. "Sebastian, you promised. You assured me..."

Now, years later, Sebastian couldn't help but wonder why in the world his brother would see the need to help him get back to his own wife when she needed him, when he had ended the life of his.

As Sebastian was thinking about the past, Alex appeared in the doorway, already dressed and already preparing to step out into the world to be Sebastian Kade for the next six months.

He leaned against the frame with his arms crossed and said nothing for a moment.

"You look like hell," Alex said finally. "Are you going to tell me what's going on in that head of yours?"

"I'm fine," Sebastian said.

Alex gave a scoff.

"You've said that three times since this morning, and you look worse each time you say it."

He studied him carefully.

"It's her, isn't it?"

It wasn't a question but a knowing statement that made Sebastian's jaw tighten. He didn't answer, which was answer enough.

"Don't worry. I'll take care of her for you once I go out and also work on finding this person you said is trying to kill you and force you to fake your death. If only you had followed what I taught you, Seb, and if only you knew how to handle things properly instead of offending every fucker you

feel the need to offend, including your own family members, no one would be after your head like this. You reap what you sow, and sooner or later you have to pay the price for everything."

Sebastian glared darkly at his brother but kept his mouth shut.

Perhaps the guilt from years ago was still the reason he allowed his twin to get away with talking to him like this and constantly taunting him. Or perhaps it was because a part of him knew Alex wasn't entirely wrong.

"Your wife will be in safe hands."

Alex mused with a smile that felt more like a taunt than reassurance.

Because Sebastian had once said almost the exact same thing to him when he had been worried about Natalie.

Back then, he had spoken those words with complete confidence, never imagining how cruel they would sound years later when thrown back at him.

He had told him, "Don't worry. She'll be in good hands, and I won't touch a hair on her head. I promise."

Sebastian ran his fingers through his hair as he rose from the bed.

"I know I messed up badly. I know I screwed you over, Alex, but you have to let me clear this case and find the person trying to kill me for the seat. I have to be the one to go out again."

Alex's eyes narrowed.

"What makes you think I can't clear up the case too? I can do a better job than you can, so sit your ass down and enjoy your time here. This is my turn."

He jabbed a finger against Sebastian's chest and then pushed him back down onto the bed.

"If you know what's best for you and your wife, bro, don't piss me off and make me do something to her. I promised I wouldn't touch her, and I won't."

Sebastian's fingers tightened around the bedsheet. He took a deep breath, held it for a moment, and then slowly exhaled before giving a nod.

"Okay, I trust you. But before you leave, how about we have a meal together? We haven't done that in a very long time, and we haven't properly caught up with each other in years. What do you say?"

Sebastian already knew Alex wouldn't give him the chance to step out this time, so he had to do what he must, even though it was going to have consequences that would echo far into the future.

He watched as his brother looked at him suspiciously before eventually shrugging.

"You'll do the cooking. Get on with it while I continue familiarizing myself with the life you've been living through those videos, because it seems you've done a lot without me."

Alex smirked, a dangerous glint flashing in his eyes as he turned away, fully aware of what his brother was trying to do and equally determined not to let him succeed so easily.

He would win this battle.

And once he did, he would finally set his own plans into motion.

It was time Sebastian paid for what he had done to him.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 296: Execution[1,061 words]

Viola's eyes widened as she was dragged along with Laila into the room Javier had opened, and she wasn't the only one stunned in terror by the sight. Laila also looked taken aback and terrified at the same time as she took in the room before them.

"Wh-what is the meaning of this, Javier?" Laila asked, staring at the pool in the middle of the dark room where the only light was coming from the water that sparkled with electric wires running through it. It looked like a torture device straight from hell. Was this man insane? What exactly did he plan to do by bringing them here? And where was the special treatment she had anticipated a Luna would receive?

"Take me back to the cell! I don't want to be a part of this craziness!" Laila began to turn away, but she was immediately grabbed, pulled back, and held still by two gammas.

Viola swallowed hard at the sight of the water, something she had been desperately trying to avoid. However, this time it wasn't just any water but water charged with electricity.

Just great!

Javier had finally found a way to put his psychopathic nature to use and torture them until the truth was forced out of them.

Javier opened his arms wide as if in welcoming his special guests to his den.

"Welcome to the number one punishment center of the first-level dungeon. Tie them up," he ordered the men, smiling to himself before addressing the two women. "I don't want to do this, but you two are leaving me with no choice except to go down this path."

He spoke with a sigh and a shake of his head, as though he were the victim in all of this.

Though as much as Javier was doing this because of Ember's death, he now had another reason for wanting the truth from them. Every test Ember's body had undergone had pointed toward the involvement of a sea creature, something they had long believed to be extinct. More than anything, Javier wanted one of those creatures.

Who didn't want more power?

All the elders had been in an uproar over the news and the clear signs that there might still be more of those creatures hiding among them. It seemed one of these two women, though his best bet remained the wolfless bitch, had some connection to them.

His mother had told him not to act rashly and not to take the punishment into his own hands, but Javier wasn't about to let any woman tell him what to do when he was closer than ever to obtaining everything he had wanted. Ember was dead, and there was nothing he could do to change that, but her death had opened another possibility, one involving something far greater than he had ever imagined.

"All I need is for you to tell me how you drained Ember. What sort of power was that? How did you contact the sea creature?" he asked, stroking his chin thoughtfully.

Viola pressed her lips together as ropes were wrapped around her body, binding her hands and legs while Javier stared directly at her.

"We didn't contact any sea creature," she told him.

He smiled harmlessly.

"Prepare to pull up the rope. She's not ready to speak." He ordered without looking away from her blue eyes. "And just so you know, we have cameras all around this room, and everyone in Silver is currently watching what is about to happen here. You will be electrocuted until you confess, and if you don't..." He glanced toward the pool. "Well, that will become your sentence."

He grabbed a chair and sat down to make himself comfortable as the ropes continued to be secured, while the people of Silver watched anxiously from their screens. Though some watched with a certain amount of excitement, as it wasn't every day that they heard of a case involving the sea creatures who had once been the reason their Alpha's bloodline was cursed and the reason the werewolves had nearly lost their world.

Stories about those creatures had been passed down through generations, carrying fear, hatred, and warnings, and now it seemed one of those stories might be unfolding right before their eyes.

When it came to sea creatures, many werewolves became blinded to everything else. Logic, sympathy, and reason often took a back seat to old fears and old grudges. Many of them had spent their entire lives hearing stories about the creatures of the sea but had never actually seen one or eaten one, and secretly wanted to know what they looked and taste like.

And right now, many wanted to hear how the wolfless woman and the former princess of Silver had supposedly contacted one to gain the power to drain Ember, because in their minds that was the only explanation. Sea creatures could not simply walk onto land and harm someone without exposing themselves, which meant there had to be an intermediary involved.

At least, that was what many of the viewers had convinced themselves of as they waited for the truth to be dragged out of the two prisoners before them.

"Javier, you know this is crazy!" Laila yelled in panic. "You and I have known each other since we were little. Do you remember when I gave you my candy while we were playing in the pack as pups after you got bullied by some older pups from another pack?"

Laila tried to talk him out of it by reminding him of their so-called friendship, one that hadn't lasted very long because Javier had been a little devil she wanted nothing to do with and liked to pull on little girl's hair to make them cry and fear him.

The man only laughed before replying,

"Are you reminding me of that so I can repay the favor of getting a candy from you?"

He tilted his head to the side before turning toward one of his men.

"Get Miss Serrano a candy so I can repay the favor. It seems she didn't give me that candy for free and was expecting something in return all these years later. What a greedy she-wolf you have turned out to be. I am ashamed of who you have become. I recall you used to be a nice little girl."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 297: Execution_Part 2[1,044 words]

Laila balled her fists, hating and regretting every moment she hadn't punched Javier's stupid face while they were growing up in Silver.

Yeah, she had once been a nice little pup.

And that kindness had gotten her nothing except bullies and being a target to every girl in the pack.

So she had decided to become the bully instead.

"You are going to regret this."

"Go on, then. Make me regret it." Javier smirked. "Everyone in Silver is curious about how you contacted a sea creature, and they're all watching this to hear the truth. Nobody is supporting either of you. So if you know what's best for yourselves, tell me the truth or shut up and get electrocuted in peace."

He took the candy from his man, unwrapped it, and handed it to a guard.

"Put it in her mouth so it can shut up that hole on her face."

The guard obeyed and forced the candy into Laila's mouth.

Javier smiled. "Now we're even."

Laila had been rendered speechless after hearing that everyone was supporting her execution. She, whom everyone had claimed to like and look up to. She, whom they had always said they would die for.

Yet now, not a single one of them was speaking up for her.

And as much as she hated to think about the wolfless woman's words, they came back to her at that moment.

'One day everything might backfire on you, and you'll realize you have no one who genuinely cares about you, and trust me, it's one of the worst feelings a person can ever experience.'

For the first time since arriving in this nightmare, Laila found herself wondering if Viola had been right.

Tears stung her eyes, and she spat the candy out into the pool of water that crackled with electricity across its surface.

She turned to look at Viola, who appeared calm and was staring at the water as if deep in thoughts and barely aware of what was happening around her, and said to her,

"I guess it's time I accept that you are stronger than I am despite not having a wolf. I have never seen anyone look this calm in the face of torture."

She mused, and Viola finally looked away from the water and toward the she-wolf standing next to her before offering a small smile.

"I am terrified, Miss Serrano. You can say I am simply good at hiding my fears because I know showing them won't change anything," Viola replied honestly to the she-wolf, who was silently tearing up, and her eyes zeroed on the tears. Was she that afraid?

"Well, if I am dying here, I want you to know that I still hate you, and I want to wring your neck so badly," Laila said with a glare.

Viola nodded, finding the entire conversation absurd considering they were standing before a pool of electrified water that would likely execute them while thousands of Silver pack members watched from their screens.

"Don't worry. You won't die here. You haven't done anything."

Laila looked at her in confusion as Viola turned her gaze toward Javier and spoke loudly enough for everyone present, and everyone watching, to hear.

"Miss Serrano is innocent. Let her go. I was the last person to hold Ember's wrist before she collapsed. In fact, Ember injured Miss Serrano, and there is footage in Zoe's fashion house that can prove it."

Viola hadn't wanted to confess this, but it seemed she had no choice if she wanted to avoid dragging another person down with her. It was beginning to look as though there was no way anyone could save her from this mess. The people who cared about her were powerless to help now, and the one person who might have been able to stop all of this was away and unaware of what was happening.

As much as she missed Sebastian in that moment, she knew wishing for him to appear wouldn't change her situation.

And the reason she was saying this here, in front of the cameras, was because if the entirety of Silver was truly watching, they would not allow Javier to execute Laila after a public confession had been made declaring her innocence.

Javier cursed under his breath.

"This fucking wolfless. Always interfering in things like some goody-two-shoes," he muttered under his breath.

But then again, he had no real interest in Laila.

His interest had always been focused on Viola.

Thus, he didn't even bother telling his men to investigate the claim before ordering them to release Laila.

Laila, who was suddenly being untied, couldn't believe that her rival had just pulled her away from the edge of being electrocuted. She stared at Viola as though she were seeing her for the first time while the guards shoved her aside and away from the pool.

For a moment, she didn't know what to think and could only stare. But then Viola gave her a small nod, as if silently telling her to leave while she still could, before turning her attention back to Javier, who was grinning from ear to ear.

"We've gotten somewhere with the confession. Now this leaves the two of us again, Viola." Javier smiled. "It's good that you confessed, but that's not the full confession I wanted. I need to know how you did that and how you managed to get silver into her system at the same time."

Viola's eyes narrowed.

Just because she had admitted to holding Ember's wrist didn't mean she would confess to the silver substance found inside her.

"What I confessed to was holding her wrist, not putting silver into her system."

Javier's brow lifted, and he let out a long sigh.

"You are making this difficult."

He leaned back in his chair and drummed his fingers against the armrest.

"I was hoping you would make this easier on yourself."

Viola said nothing. She wasn't about to confess to something she hadn't done.

Javier stared at her for a few moments before his expression hardened.

"Throw her in."

The words echoed through the room, and for the first time since entering it, Viola felt her inside tightened with dread that made cold sweat break off her forehead.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 298: A Voice From the Deep[1,024 words]

Viola felt herself rising off the ground as the rope around her pulled her up and, almost as if to intimidate her, the rope moved slowly to begin lowering her onto the water that was sparking like lightning currents.

"Javier, I don't think she killed Ember. She only just held her wrist," Laila, who was standing at the side, spoke as she watched the rope lowering her toward the water. Though she might not like the wolfless, she had just saved her of being electrocuted.

"What are you still doing in here?" Javier questioned Laila. "Should I assume you still want to join her? Get out."

He waved for his men to drag her out and away from his sight.

Viola heard Javier ask her, "Do you have a confession to make now?"

She didn't even look at him, and her eyes remained on the water below that was coming closer to her toes, and she instinctively curled them in.

Viola's brows pulled together as she noticed the surface of the water beginning to rise slowly in a way that not everyone would notice if they weren't looking too closely, and she belatedly recognized what was happening.

Oh no.

That water creature was forming, and she could see its eyes staring at her, and what looked to be a smile drawing across its watery features made her insides drop.

Right below the surface of the water, she noticed something swirling and forming circles like a portal.

Viola recognized it from when Zoe's glass wall had given way.

What was it doing here?

She was denying doing anything and denying having anything to do with sea creatures, and this thing was going to give her away!

Viola shook her head as if to tell it to go away, but everyone mistook the movement for fear, as they hadn't noticed yet what she was seeing, and Javier smiled as he flicked his finger for the men to release her into the water.

Before she was prepared for it, she was dropped into the water.

A whimper left her mouth, and she closed her eyes, expecting the shock of the electricity, but instead of that, all Viola felt was normal water.

And she was drowning in it.

Her eyes flew open to the darkness of the water, and fear consumed her, her heart drumming loudly in her ears as she belatedly realized she hadn't been dropped into the pool but into an endless dark body of water, as though she had gone through a portal hidden beneath the pool, and that was somehow more terrifying than being electrocuted in the pool.

As she began to drown with the rope still around her, Viola felt her lungs burn from lack of air, and her chest began to feel heavy.

She tried to wiggle her arms and legs, but the ropes kept her restrained.

"Serena!"

Viola's insides knotted as her name echoed from somewhere around her with a rippling echo to it, and she looked around the darkness, panic-stricken, water bubbling around her as her heart drummed faster and faster.

She noticed the movement too late, but when she did, Viola saw something blue coming toward her, swimming toward her through the darkness.

"Serena! You shouldn't be here. Go back. It's unsafe. She will kill you... She wants you."

Came the voice of the blue creature that was hazy in the darkness, and when it began to swim closer to her, water bubbling around them while her lungs burned and her body tingled, she felt the rope tighten around her limbs and she was suddenly jerked upward and away from that blue figure, giving her heart an anxiety she couldn't put a name to.

Before her breath would give out or before she could see what that thing speaking to her was, she was pulled back toward the surface where she finally felt the electric shock that rattled her whole body briefly before she was completely pulled out of the pool.

Viola was coughing and trying to catch her breath, while at the same time her body was still shaking from the electrocution of the water current. But she slowly became aware that she was being held by someone who was loosening the rope from her body, and his familiar warm scent hit her like a wave after the shock, sending her insides tingling with a spark of delight and relief even before seeing him clearly.

"Cough it out, love. That's it."

She heard his familiar voice whisper close to her ear, and when she looked up through her hazy, red, teary eyes, Viola's heart skipped a beat before it resumed throbbing faster against her ribs, as if trying to make up for that brief moment of a missed beat.

She stared at the face of her husband like she was seeing him in a dream and couldn't believe he was indeed back and trying to make her cough out the water. For a moment she simply stared, afraid that if she blinked he would disappear and she would wake up to find herself still trapped in that water, and this was a dream.

"Seb..." she muttered hoarsely as she began to cough again, and he patted her back, looking at her without displaying any emotion on his face, which made her suddenly fear that he was angry at her for causing a mess, especially with that dark scowl settled on his face.

She was relieved to see him and wanting nothing more than to throw herself into his arms properly, and just to make sure she wasn't dreaming this after falling into that water, she tried to touch his face.

But he moved his face away and grabbed her wrist, bringing it down to her side as he continued to pat her back gently and tenderly while pulling her to lean against his chest.

Viola barely had the energy to apologize to him for the trouble she had caused, as she was weakened by the electric shock and the experience in the water. She let her head rest weakly against his chest as his arms tightened around her.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 299: The Alpha's Wrath[1,735 words]

Everyone in the audience was too stunned at the appearance of someone they had believed to be dead, who had suddenly run into the scene and pulled the wolfless out of the pool.

How come the Alpha was here? Wasn't he supposed to be dead? Everyone watching thought.

Javier was too astonished that he remained sitting on the chair with his eyes widened in disbelief, until he felt the Alpha's suffocating aura flare in the room, bringing every Gamma and warrior to their knees automatically.

"Who is responsible for this?" came the terrifyingly low voice of the Supreme Alpha, making them all shake in their positions.

"Ho-how come you are here?" Javier stammered, too shocked and confused to allow his body to obey and go into automatic submission. "Aren't you supposed to be dead?!"

"Too bad I don't die that easily, dear cousin, and I assume you are responsible for punishing my Luna this way when you are not even the Alpha," he stated in a dry tone as he took off his coat and draped it around his shivering wife, who was clinging to the front of his shirt, her face pale and her teeth chattering.

Javier jerked out of his chair. "You can't just come out of nowhere when everyone believed you are dead and interfere in this sentence! You have lost your seat! This is my place now, and that woman will be punished until she confesses the truth of what she has done to Ember!" he rebuked, not caring that his aura wasn't as heavy as the Supreme Alpha's, and that what made one the Supreme Alpha was the power to make any wolf submit.

Everyone watching from their screens was taken aback at this turn of events, when they had believed until now that the Supreme Alpha had been dead and they had to make due of an Alpha with average energy.

Even Matt, who was watching and rushing to reach the scene after noticing Sebastian, was shocked, only his own shock came from seeing his friend return this soon when he normally didn't come back until after a week or more. This was the first time Sebastian was returning after only three days.

However, Matt's shock at seeing Sebastian wasn't as strong as his relief, because had he not come, the Luna would have been left in that electric water until who knew how long it would take for her body to finally shut down from the constant electrocution and stress on her system.

He shoved pack members out of his way so he could reach the scene, and on his way he found Nick, Gilbert, and Zoe hurrying in the same direction he was going. They joined him, all wanting to reach there and witness the scene and to make sure the Luna was fine.

"How is he alive?" Nick commented in surprise, stunned like everyone else, as he had believed until now that his cousin was dead.

"Does it matter? Vee is free from your psycho brother, that's what matters now," Zoe remarked as she ran through the dungeon halls, relieved that her brother had come right on time to stop Javier's nonsense before things had gone completely out of control.

"You are right, it doesn't matter. I just hope Vee is all right." Nick replied as they finally arrived at the room where the punishment pool was located, shoving their way inside behind Matt.

The moment they entered, their eyes immediately searched for their friend, anxious to see her condition after everything she had been put through.

Inside, Sebastian gently released his Luna, wrapping his coat around her as he allowed his sister, who had run toward him, to support her shivering body. He placed a hand on Zoe's head, and she looked at him with teary eyes and whispered, "Thank you for making it on time."

He gave her a nod, then turned to face Javier with a dark scowl, the idiot who didn't know when not to lay his hand on a Luna again.

The Supreme Alpha's energy flared so intensely that even people outside the building felt a chill run down their spines. Javier's knees were knocking together, but he fought it, refusing to submit, burning with anger and rage at the sight of his cousin being alive.

How was this even possible when he had believed until now that Sebastian was dead and gone from his life?!

Not only that, he had been given proof of his death and had received prior notice that the assassination would be successful and that Sebastian wouldn't be coming back alive!

Javier hadn't been responsible for the assassination, which he wished to high heavens he had been, but he had randomly received a picture on his phone of the assassination attempt, and it had brightened his mood like crazy. Unfortunately, it seemed that his fucker of a cousin hadn't been killed by whoever the enemy trying to end him was.

This was Javier's reign, and Sebastian wasn't supposed to come back and ruin it for him! All his life he had wanted to rule Silver and be an Alpha, but this piece of shit had always stood in his way, always overshadowing him no matter how hard he tried.

"You better go back to the grave you crawled out from, cousin, because this is going to be my world now." Javier said through gritted teeth, and his mother, who was watching from outside, facepalmed at her son's stupidity.

"Javier, bow down you fool!" She mused.

Did he think he could face a Supreme Alpha?

Instead of keeping his mouth shut and going down like everyone else, he was actually speaking back. Camilla thought, watching the screen and feeling anxious for her son.

"It seems I have given you too much liberty in this pack, cousin. Instead of investigating what caused my so-called assassination, you are attempting to find ways to kill my Luna. And now you are refusing to submit to your Alpha. That in itself is a crime, and it will not go unpunished."

"I would like to see you dare to punish me for doing what is right." Javier challenged, baring his teeth as fur began to rise along his arms as though he was preparing to shift.

"Throw him into the pool." The Supreme Alpha ordered his warriors because it seemed Javier needed something to calm that hot head of his.

The warriors were quick to obey and rushed to grab him.

Javier fought back, throwing the warriors off him, and Sebastian, who watched him fight, couldn't help but notice how much his cousin had improved in his combat skills and how the warriors were struggling to hold him down.

Still, not having the strong Alpha bloodline, Javier was weaker than a Supreme Alpha.

Letting out a sigh, Sebastian moved toward his cousin and, without so much as an effort, grabbed his collar, delivered a hard punch to his nose that instantly broke it and caught him off guard, and then shoved him into the electric pool, where Javier was immediately being electrocuted and thrashing above the surface.

"Turn off the cameras and let him enjoy being electrocuted in peace until he either finds his way out of the water or dies in it. No one go near him." The Supreme Alpha ordered coldly.

Then he turned away from his cousin and returned to his wife.

Bending down, he gathered her carefully into his arms, and immediately he began to walk away. Zoe, Nick, Matt, and Gilbert followed behind him, and all the warriors moved aside and gave them a clear path to pass.

The remaining warriors were ordered to leave Javier alone as his body tried to fight the electric shock, while his mother and Sofia, who had been watching from elsewhere, hurried from the places they had been observing from, desperate to reach Javier and turn off the electricity in the room.

No matter how disrespectful her son could be, Camilla thought, he was still her boy. She had raised him, watched him grow, and despite all his faults, she couldn't stand by and watch him suffer.

Sofia was thinking much the same thing.

No matter how much Javier had hurt her, no matter how many times he had raised his hand against her or made her feel unwanted, he was still her husband and mate, the man she loved with all her heart. She would never willingly let anything happen to him.

The Alpha was heartless to throw her mate into that dangerous water and simply leave him there.

She had to reach him and get him out.

Maybe then Javier would finally see how much she cared. Maybe then he would remember everything she had done for him and love her the way he once had. Maybe he would finally stop thinking about that witch, Ember, and focus on the mate who had stayed by his side through everything.

Those thoughts raced through Sofia's mind as she ran through the halls as fast as she could, determined to reach him before he suffered more damage.

Javier, on the other hand, wasn't about to give up without a fight.

He wasn't claiming to be Alpha for no reason.

Through the electric current that rattled his entire body and made every muscle seize painfully, he forced himself to move and swim. With tremendous difficulty, he pulled himself out of the pool, heaving and struggling to regain control of his body as he collapsed onto the floor beside the water.

He stared at the ceiling as his expression slowly darkened and his fingers curled tightly at his sides.

Humiliation.

It seemed that was all he got.

And it was time he made that fucker pay for good.

Javier thought as he began to push himself up from the ground, but his bones weren't cooperating and his muscles were still spasming from the electrocution.

He was cursing explosively when he suddenly paused after sensing a presence behind him.

Turning his head toward the entrance, Javier's brows pulled together at the sight of the person standing there.

He scoffed. "What the fuck are you doing back here again?" he asked angrily.

The person tilted his head to the side, studying Javier for a long moment before speaking.

"You don't think an electric pool is enough of a punishment for what you did, do you?"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 300: Killing The Rival[1,606 words]

Javier's anger remounted, and he tried to stand straight, but his legs were failing him. Even so, he still managed to say, "I will fucking kill you along with that wolfless!"

The person laughed. "I would gladly like to see you do it, because you won't be leaving this room alive today."

Javier's gold eyes darkened even more. "You fucking asshole, I will—"

Javier's words got stuck in his throat as the person raised his hand and a silver light, like smoke, came out and wrapped around Javier's neck, cutting off his windpipe. It lifted him off the ground, and his eyes turned wide in horror at the display of the unexpected ability.

An ability.

Not many werewolves possessed abilities. Only members of the Grim Pack carried abilities stolen from the sea creatures in the past and passed down through their bloodline from generation to generation.

So how had someone in Silver gained an ability? And this fucker of all people?

The realization sent a wave of disbelief through Javier. Even as he struggled for air.

"You—" Javier began to speak, but the smoke tightened around his neck and he watched a smirk form on his killer's face.

"Not only are you my rival for the seat, Javier, but you don't deserve to live as a Kade. Too bad we never really got to know each other better and more deeply as family. Goodbye."

Saying that, he clenched his fist and the silver smoke tightened until there was a crack from Javier's neck. His struggling body immediately went limp and slack, and when he was released from the smoke, he plummeted back into the pool of water with a loud splash.

"What a waste." The person clicked his tongue and turned, walking away with his shoes clicking against the floor.

Viola looked around at the people fussing over her and felt overwhelmingly cared for as she watched them, hugging the blanket more around herself.

She had been brought back into her penthouse and changed out of her wet clothes, and now she was sitting on the bed surrounded by everyone except the one person she wanted around.

Doctor Gilbert was applying ointment to her bruises, and Zoe was trying to dry her hair while Nick had gone to make her something to eat, and through all of this, she didn't see Sebastian or Matt.

After bringing her back into the room and putting her on the bed, Sebastian had looked at her face and then told her he would be right back before leaving along with Matt.

Viola felt a pinprick in her heart because that wasn't how she had expected to receive his return, with a cold detachment to it and an expressionless face.

Three days ago, before he left, they had both been lovers in bed, embracing each other and not wanting to let go, and she had expected that warmth to still be there when he returned.

But now that he was back, she wasn't feeling any warmth from him. It was like he had built a wall around himself.

Where did he go to?

She wondered as she looked around at the heads gathered around her.

Her muscles wouldn't stop trembling. Every few seconds, a violent shudder ran through her body and she found herself longing for his warmth.

As if noticing her shudder, Zoe muttered,

"I hope Javier gets shocked until he is drained of blood! You have a burn at the back of your neck. Doc Gilbert, take a look at this."

She said it while showing him the burn, and he leaned in to take a closer look.

Viola was barely aware of it, or of any of them.

She felt bone-weary and stressed about her husband not being there, but she reassured herself that suddenly revealing himself after faking his death must have required him to face the elders and the people of Silver to clarify things and set them straight before he could come to her.

He was a Supreme Alpha. His pack would always come first.

It wasn't as though she had suffered life-threatening injuries, and she was conscious. He must have been assured enough of her condition to leave her for a little while, and besides, he hadn't left her completely alone.

Viola clung to that reasoning and slowly began to relax her back against the headboard.

But the devil on her shoulder scoffed at every bit of logic she had made up.

If he was too busy, he should have at least looked at her properly, talked to her, asked if she was all right, before walking out. He had left while she was still trembling violently, and without a single word at that, still wearing that very dark expression that made her feel as though she had disturbed him and forced him back before he was ready to come back. It was something she desperately wanted to avoid, because she never wanted to become a burden to her mate.

Was he angry at her for disrupting his grieving, or whatever it was he had left the pack to deal with on the 30th?

Had she distressed him so much that he now found her tiring?

Or had he noticed something when he pulled her out of the water, the portal, perhaps, and was now disgusted by what he had seen?

Fear rose quietly into her chest at the thought of Sebastian growing cold and detached toward her, not after everything they had carefully built together. The portal, the water creature, all of it, she was terrified it would come between them and unravel what little ground they had gained.

But she masked every one of those spiraling thoughts and emotions, keeping them locked tightly behind her eyes, and forced her attention back to the people around her.

Soon, Nick returned carrying a tray with a bowl of porridge he had made himself, along with a warm glass of water. He brought it over and set it carefully on the nightstand.

"A special meal made for a special friend!" he announced cheerfully, lifting the bowl and holding it out to Viola with a grin.

She forced a smile and accepted it from him, but her hands were still shaking terribly, too unsteady to hold the bowl properly.

"Let me do that," Nick said as he took the bowl back and perched on the edge of the bed.

"It was a good thing Cousin Sebastian came on time to stop my brother. I can't imagine what worse things would have happened otherwise. Your fingers look so pale, I think they should be warmed up first."

Nick said with a sigh as he hated that he hadn't been able to help or do anything for his Vee.

He had lost a chance to be her hero.

However, he was still glad that she was fine now despite the fact that her condition looked fragile and her face looked so pale.

If he had known she would go through all of this, Nick thought as he took her hand in his to help warm it, he would have never allowed her to participate in the Luna competition and would have convinced her instead to leave Silver.

"Luna," Doctor Gilbert called, drawing her attention as he recapped the ointment. "When you were thrown into the pool, for a moment I would have sworn that you disappeared from sight."

Viola's breath caught in her throat, her heart skipping anxiously as she stared at him, until he continued.

"I believe it happened because you are underweight. You haven't been eating well, even before all this, and have been neglecting your health. Being imprisoned seems to have only worsened it. Not taking the medication I gave you isn't going to help, and being in poor health won't help you with your wolf either, even if you have one and it's in hiding."

He set the ointment aside and fixed her with a firm look. "Which is why I will personally send someone to see to your diet and make sure you are eating properly. I will also be speaking to the Alpha about it."

For a moment she had genuinely feared that Gilbert, and everyone else who had been watching, had actually witnessed her disappear beneath the water. But it seemed he was only making a pointed remark about her weight, using the moment to drive home his concern.

The relief she felt was short-lived, quickly replaced by the hollow ache of wondering whether Sebastian would even act on whatever the doctor told him. Had it finally come to the time where he was tired of her? Oh moon goddess, she wanted to be a werewolf, nothing more and nothing less. She didn't want this to come between them, and she didn't want to find herself on the other side of her people, branded as the enemy.

She had lived her whole life wanting to fit in, wanting to belong somewhere in this world, and now that she had found someone who made her feel wanted, needed, and like she finally had a place to call her own, she was about to lose him because of an origin she knew absolutely nothing about.

If Sebastian knew what was happening to her, what she had done to Ember and what she could do to others, would he finally cast her away? The fear gripped her heart like a vise and refused to let go.

Still, she gave Doctor Gilbert a small nod.

"I will look after myself better," she said quietly, "once the accusations surrounding Ember's death are off my head."