

# Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

## Chapter 341: Fallen into a trap[ 1,611 words

# ]

Laila stared down at the bleeding wound with guilt sitting quietly in her chest, biting her nail nervously. She had known he was about to reject the mate bond over the phone, she had heard it coming in his voice, and that would have hurt her far more than this wound she had made on herself.

Well, Sebastian, who wasn't her fated mate, had rejected her, and that had hurt, and a fated mate's rejection would be double that. To be honest, she didn't want a rejection from the doctor and wanted this to work out.

She didn't want to think about what rejection would feel like. She would not only suffer the physical pain of it but would be left completely alone and broken. Maybe not being a bitch and trying to find someone to put down occasionally had made her realize she had no real life and no good relationships.

Okay, she admitted to having bullied a lot of people, but then if she didn't become the bully, she would be bullied. But now she wanted to let that go because a lot of people in Silver were not worth trying to impress or influence. Maybe she wanted someone to love her genuinely, for once in her life, and who else could do that better than someone fated to her?

A fated mate could change everything, could give her back the happiness she had lost, and at the same time, having Gilbert would be its own quiet victory against her family, who didn't like his family. She wanted this to work so badly she could taste the fear of it not working out the way she had planned.

When Gilbert arrived at her door, he called her to give him the entry code, having already told her not to move from where she was. She gave it to him without hesitation. He let himself in and found her on the couch, tears running down her face, her thigh bleeding steadily onto the floor.

"How did this happen?" He asked, dropping to his knees and lifting the hem of her nightdress to assess the extent of the wound properly.

"I... I was, I mean... it just hurt." Laila hadn't thought to prepare an excuse for how it had happened, she had done it to herself purely to get him through her door, and now that he was actually here, crouched before her with his bag open, she had nothing to say.

So she cried instead about the pain, and as she had counted on, as someone in the early pull of a mate bond would naturally do, he was already working on her with a gentleness she genuinely hadn't expected from any man.

Men typically saw her as a seductress. They went rough and impatient. Having this one handle her so carefully, his touch measured and precise against her exposed thigh, made her curl her nails into the couch cushion and bite down on her lower lip.

"It's a small cut but it's bleeding heavily because it was made with a silver blade." Gilbert said, blowing softly onto the wound as he cleaned it and feeling her flinch beneath his hands.

He was doing everything the way he would for any patient, professionally, with clinical detachment, but that was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain, because her exposed, tanned thigh was not presenting itself to his mind as simple human anatomy the way it should have. It was stirring something uncomfortably warm in him, something he had no framework for, because he had never in his life been this acutely aware of a woman's body before, especially a patient.

"I didn't think you would come," Laila said, looking down at his bowed head, the brown hair with its silky waves, cut and faded at the sides, and the pink tips of his ears. He was so handsome. A sharp jawline, a strong, magnificent face with a dent in his chin that added to his charm, and entirely unbothered by any of it, which somehow made it worse.

He didn't answer her and kept working until he was finished, then began packing his tools away methodically.

"Next time, refrain from hurting yourself to get my attention, Miss Serrano. I am a busy man with a great deal to do, and I hope you will go on living your life the way you were before we crossed paths yesterday. If you'll excuse me." He picked up his bag, rose from his knees, and turned to leave, but she caught his hand.

"Why?" Laila asked, her brows drawing together. "I know you feel it, Gilbert. Is it because of the history between our families? Is that why you won't accept the bond and what fate has given us?"

"I don't know what you are referring to, Miss Serrano. But I already have someone I like and want a future with." He half-lied, it wasn't entirely untrue, given that he had already made up his mind to ask Miss Zoe out on a date and make a relationship work between them.

Laila's eyes went wide. But before the hurt could properly settle in, she caught herself, because she had done her research on him this morning and there had been no mention of him seeing anyone. He was lying to get her off his back.

She tugged on his hand until he was standing close enough, then reached up and pressed his palm flat against her breast, holding it there when he tried to pull it back. "You cannot deny the spark between us. Even if there is someone else, a fated mate should always come first."

When he didn't fight her for the return of his hand, standing frozen in place instead, she parted her nightdress and guided his hand inside to her bare skin, and she felt his hand twitch involuntarily against her breast, his eyes going wide as saucers.

"Can you feel my heartbeat?" she asked breathlessly, looking up at him with open longing. "It's beating for you. I need you in my life right now."

Gilbert's mind caught up with his body a beat later, the realization that his hand was inside a woman's clothing, pressed against the warm, full weight of his mate's bare breast, snapping him back into himself, and he yanked his hand away and stepped back from her sharply.

She needed him. But he wasn't a fool; she had needed dozens of other men and had probably seduced them this way. He'd heard words from his sisters and the men she had taken and left, about how the Serranos' daughter acted like a literal bitch and took and dumped men like rubbish, and how they felt sorry for whoever turned out to be her fated mate, for she would give him a heart attack and watch him die from it. That was how nonchalant and uncaring she was about the men she took.

Gilbert didn't want a woman like that, not because he was being judgmental about her choice of lifestyle, but because she would be the biggest distraction, one capable of ruining his perfect, peaceful life, pulling him away from the work he enjoyed and making him worry about which man she might have in her bed next.

"I, Gilbert, reject you as my mate." He said without thinking.

Laila looked at him with hurt plain in her eyes and a bitter smile sitting underneath it. "It doesn't work that way, remember? You cannot reject what you haven't fully accepted yet." She paused, then held his gaze steadily. "But I want you to know, I don't give up easily. And I will make you fall so deeply in love with me that you won't be able to go a single day without me."

Oh no, please don't. I don't want you, damn it! Gilbert thought, regretting that he had gone to the Alpha's office at that particular moment yesterday. She would ruin his life.

She rose from the couch and pressed a kiss to his cheek, but he put his hand on her arm and moved her back gently.

"You are aware that the two of us cannot work in any capacity. I don't have the time or the temperament to navigate mate jealousy with someone who can't keep her distance from others, and I will certainly not go against my family for your sake. Let's not delude ourselves, Miss Serrano. I don't want you in my life."

"And I don't give up." She said simply, the smile not leaving her face. "I want you in my life, not just in my life. I want you in my bed every night. I hope the next time we see each other, we will be discussing whether you will be moving into my place or I into yours." She watched the surprise flicker across his face at her boldness and felt a quiet satisfaction in it.

She walked him to the door and watched him disappear quickly into the elevator at the end of her hallway, doing his very best not to look back at her as the doors slid shut between them.

Laila stood in her doorway for a moment after he was gone, arms folded loosely, a thoughtful look on her face.

She had a long road ahead of her in getting this mate of hers to accept what was already written between them. Gilbert was certainly not the kind of man she would have given attention to in the past, but the Moon Goddess had picked him for her. Only, she didn't know if she would ever win him over, and that made her sad...

# Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

## Chapter 342: Blissful moments before reality[ 1,288 words ]

Viola woke up the next morning smiling like a fool, with the urge to scream it to the world that Sebastian had told her he loved her, that they had danced to three of her favorite songs under the stars and kissed until she could no longer feel her own lips and was completely breathless.

Butterflies stirred in her stomach as she lay there recalling everything that came after, how he had taken her back to his car, and how, true to his word, she had ended up having the most wild, unrestrained, breathless sex with him in the backseat of his Range Rover SV.

They had steamed the windows completely, and afterward had pulled the seat flat and lain there with her draped over him, her head on his chest, both of them bare and still joined in the middle, listening to each other breathe and to the soft music drifting from the car speakers, as though they were deliberately weaving the moment into memory, choosing a song to mark it by so neither of them would ever forget it.

It had been wonderful. It had been crazy and warm and unlike anything she had ever experienced, including the way they had laughed trying to figure out different positions to try in the limited space.

She smiled to herself remembering how they had eventually drifted off, and woken somewhere around four in the early morning darkness, and how they had scrambled for their clothes in a laughing, half-awake rush before returning to the reality of the pack and their responsibilities, where, despite how many had been banished, new members had already begun filling the empty apartments in the building.

Sebastian had helped her clip her bra, pull her shirt over her head, and smooth her hair, and they had ended up kissing again anyway and laughing at themselves for getting hopelessly, ridiculously aroused all over again. When he drove them back to the high tower, he held her hand the entire way and didn't let go, and they had both sat there for a while just staring at the building in front of them.

"Shouldn't we go in before the sun rises?" Viola had asked in a whisper, even though the last thing she wanted was to leave the warmth of that bubble they had been living in all day. She already had the feeling he wouldn't be coming up to her penthouse with her. The whole day had felt like a dream, and going back inside felt like returning to real life.

"Let me hold your hand a little while longer. I like holding you." He had turned to look at her, bringing her hand to his lips and kissing each finger slowly, lingering longest on her ring finger, his favorite, he had told her, because it carried his mark, even if it wasn't the physical one he should have given her by now.

"Are you coming up with me?" She had asked, and he had groaned, tightening his grip on her hand before saying, "I want to. But I neglected some important work yesterday that Matt can't handle alone, so I have to get back to it now. I will see you later."

The sadness had come quietly and she had scolded herself for it immediately. It was only a few hours apart, not a goodbye, and yet her heart had treated it like one, which was completely ridiculous.

But then that was how the mate pull had always worked, even from the beginning of time before pack life became what it was now, mates had once spent every waking hour beside each other, working together, protecting their pups and their shelter. Civilization had simply changed the shape of things but the body of the werewolves had not adapted like the mind.

What Viola couldn't fully understand was why she felt this pull so deeply when she didn't even carry the bond, but then she thought perhaps it was simply what falling in love did. Love, real love, was strong enough to mirror what a mate bond felt like.

"Promise?" She had asked, and he had nodded. "I will see you later. And before I forget, I want to meet the water creature you told me about. I'll send you a location later where we can meet. There are things we need to understand about what you can do with the water abilities so we can work on finding some control over them, before it happens again and you drain someone. If it does happen again, it won't be long before people start suspecting things, and I don't want them coming after you."

With all the happiness of the day behind her, Viola had completely forgotten about that part of herself, about what had happened just before the beautiful moments had begun. His words brought it back, and she belatedly realized how too much happiness could delude one's mind into thinking they had no problems anymore, because she had a lot of unsolved problems that she began to remember at his words.

"I wanted to ask you, but I didn't get the chance." She had looked across the seat at him. "Did Miss Lara tell you what happened to Ivy?"

Sebastian had shaken his head. "She didn't. But Julia did." He said quietly, interlocking their fingers as though bracing her for what he was about to say, watching her face carefully.

"Your suspicion back in Nightshade was right. Your sister was taken by the body of water." He had watched her gasp and press her hand over her mouth, and he had weighed his next words carefully, debating whether to give her the rest of what he had uncovered from the girl at the orphanage.

"I don't want to ruin this day for you, sunshine, but she told me some pretty fucked up things that I don't think I should keep from you either."

"Tell me, please..." She had said quietly, her eyes already filling as she steadied herself. This was her sister, her twin, someone she had missed and suppressed the thought of missing for the past months. "It's best I know and understand everything. Tell me, Seb... please."

Sebastian had let out a slow breath and said, "Julia told me Ivy was tied up for two days so she couldn't run, they were waiting for the creature to come for her, the way it had been arranged with Miss Lara. She said Ivy was sick and vomiting for those days, but they couldn't risk releasing her from her binds because she had already figured out something was wrong, even if she didn't know the full details. The creature came on the third day. Julia said she was pulled to the river, I believe the same one that tried to take you, and dragged under. She never surfaced again, and the creature never told them what became of her. Her body was never found."

He had paused, watching his wife stare into the distance with suspended, unblinking tears sitting heavy in her blue eyes.

"Julia also said..." He hesitated.

"What did she say?" Viola asked quietly.

"Don't make me continue. Let's leave it here, you're already hurting, love, and I—"

"Tell me what else she said. Please." She turned to look at him directly, and the tears finally fell, trailing silently down her cheeks and dropping one by one onto her pink shirt.

---

A/N

Hey, guys. Before I forget again, like I seem to always do lately, and the code ends up expiring, here is this month's redeem code. You can redeem it as usual, and I am sorry for letting all the others expire before realizing I hadn't given them out.

<ABDHYPSSLALXKV4LA>

## **Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 343: Every second of the way, my love[ 1,488 words ]**

Sebastian felt his throat tighten, not wanting to hurt her any more than he already had, but she had the right to know everything that had happened to her sister.

"She said Ivy had never told anyone she wasn't Serena. After you were taken, she kept acting as you until the very end, and Miss Lara had most likely allowed her to be taken without question because she believed it was you she was giving away. They all believed Serena was bound to be evil, and that getting rid of her was for the best."

He watched her fold over, hugging her stomach and beginning to rock herself as she muttered, "Oh my god. Oh my god. It was my fault... we might be half-breeds but I couldn't breathe underwater, Ivy couldn't have either. She killed my sister..." She broke down into a heartbroken sob that made Sebastian reach across and scoop her out of her seat and into his arms, rocking her as he whispered against her hair.

"It was never your fault. If you want to blame anyone, blame Miss Lara, she was the one who heartlessly gave her away." He kissed the top of her head while her tears soaked into his pink kitten shirt.

She had sobbed without restraint, uncharacteristically, like a small child, her shoulders trembling, her stomach aching with it. She cried and blamed herself, and he consoled her until, at some point, she simply cried herself to sleep in his arms.

Now she had woken up in her own bed, and the very first thing that had come to her was the happiness of everything they had shared yesterday, before the news about her sister settled back over her like a weight, and her foolish smile faded and her eyes filled again.

Did that mean her sister was dead? Killed by that water creature? The same water creature that had tried to come between her and her husband by lying, claiming she was on their side, when it had taken her sister. Her sister, who she had never gotten the chance to ask for forgiveness before she was—

Viola shut her eyes tightly and refused to finish the thought. Even though she had suspected it for a long time, accepting it was something different entirely. She didn't want to accept that the innocent girl who had given her everything was gone.

Viola had never held any particular feeling of her own toward sea creatures until now, only the inherited resentment passed down through the werewolf world. But now she had her own. A private, quiet, burning resentment that she felt no guilt about whatsoever.

This creature had tried to pull her under and drown her, and it had done the same to her sister. She had no reason to feel conflicted about hating a part of whatever unknown bloodline she had inherited, and she was beginning to feel that she needed answers. Why had this creature taken Ivy? And why did it now seem to want her too?

Viola couldn't shake the grief gripping her stomach and her heart, and she sobbed quietly into her pillow in the late morning light, completely unmotivated to leave the bed, until her phone rang.

Sebastian was calling.

Her heart leapt in spite of herself. She picked up quickly, wiping her cheeks and doing her best to make her voice sound steady, but he felt her emotions before she even spoke.

"Have you been crying, sunshine?" His voice was soft and quiet.

She didn't try to hide it. "I couldn't help it. I can't believe she's gone... she protected me until the very last moment, Seb, and it's breaking my heart that I couldn't do anything for her." She pressed the blanket to her lips to muffle the sound of her crying.

"She might still be alive, mi amor. That is exactly why I want you to summon that creature you told me about. We can try to ask it, get some information from it. Since your parents come from both sides, maybe Ivy inherited something that could sustain her in the water. We can try to find out. Do you want that?"

Viola sat up quickly, not having considered that possibility at all, and wiped her face with the back of her hand. "Yes. I can try to call it out. Will you be there with me?"

"Every second of the way, my love. I will send you the location I mentioned, and you can meet me in the next two hours. It's a secluded place in Silver where no one goes. We can try working on your abilities there too." He said, doing everything he could to give her something to hold onto, because he understood her pain, at least in part. He was a twin too.

He could only imagine what it would feel like to lose the other half of yourself, especially after having already been separated from them for so long. He had experienced his own version of it when his brother had promised never to forgive him, and that alone had been enough to nearly undo him.

"Are you still in bed?" Sebastian asked, his voice gentle.

"I just got up. I should get ready, and I think Zoe is still here, I can hear her moving around." Viola said, feeling remotely better than she had expected to now that there was even a small chance Ivy might not be gone.

"Have you eaten?" She asked, noticing the time read 11:46 am and realizing he had been awake and working since long before she opened her eyes.

"Not yet. I was waiting for my wife to wake up so we could eat together, but since I won't be free for the next two hours, I think we should both eat now separately. I will too."

"Hmm." Viola hummed. "You had better actually eat something. I'll see you in two hours then."

"I love you." Sebastian whispered, and she heard the soft certainty in it.

Her breath caught on her end of the line, and she felt herself smile before she could stop it. "I love you too." She replied, the words still so new on her tongue, still so foreign coming from him, and yet she liked them so much that she was grinning long after the call ended, feeling measurably lighter than she had when she first opened her eyes.

Viola took a slow, steadying breath and held onto the small but real possibility that Ivy was somewhere, alive. She began making her bed out of habit and picked up the big plushie Sebastian had gifted her to set it between her pillows when a knock came at the door, and she called Zoe in.

Zoe entered wearing a dazed expression and a look of pure, bewildered confusion. "Vee. I think I just woke up from a dream. Look, my Doc replied to me. He is asking me on a date. Tonight. Tonight is Saturday, Vee. Tell me I am not dreaming."

Viola took the phone from her and read the message.

\*"Are you free Saturday night? Let's go out together, tell me what you would like to do and we can do that."\*

Viola read it twice, a small frown pulling at her brow. She couldn't help the thought that crept in, if Gilbert truly was Laila's fated mate the way Laila had been so certain of, he wouldn't be asking Zoe out on a date.

Something about it didn't sit right. But then she looked up at Zoe, whose eyes were already shimmering with tears of joy, who was already pressing her hands to her cheeks and fussing aloud about what she was going to wear, and Viola pressed her lips together and said nothing.

"I cannot believe this is actually happening, Vee. My dreams are coming true. I have liked this man since my teenage years and now he wants to take me out." Zoe said, wiping her tears of joy as the smile broke fully across her face. She pulled Viola into a tight hug. "It's going to be the best day of my life."

Zoe had made her dream of becoming the top fashion designer come true, and the other thing she truly wanted was for her feelings for the doctor to be returned, and it seemed that too would happen sooner than she had expected. It already looked like she wasn't destined to have a fated mate, and she might as well let her heart embrace real love.

"I am so excited."

Then, as though a switch had been flipped, she pulled back and narrowed her eyes at her friend with immediate suspicion.

"Speaking of going out, where did you disappear to all of yesterday? I woke up and the whole place was empty, and my brother's scent was all over everything." She wiggled her brows. "Where exactly did you two go?"

## **Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 344: Ability practice\_Part 1[ 1,604 words ]**

Viola flushed and turned away from Zoe's prodding eyes as she answered, "We went to an amusement park." She had no reason to hide it, and if she was being honest, she had been quietly bursting to tell someone.

Zoe's gray eyes went wide and round, giving her the look of a startled doll, and then landed on the purple plushie sitting between the pillows on the bed. She reached over and snatched it up. "My brother took you to an amusement park and won you this?"

Viola nodded, and Zoe's lips pulled into a curious smile. "No wonder you smell so much like him lately. When I first woke up this morning, I thought hermano was in your room. Even now, you have his scent."

Zoe didn't think much about the scent of her brother on his wife because, just like everyone else in Silver, she believed her brother had marked his wife during their ceremony. But Viola, who was certain he hadn't marked her and that she wasn't supposed to carry his scent, fought the urge to sniff herself and frown.

She carried his scent? Maybe it was because of how much they'd been close to each other lately, and she didn't think too deeply about it or try to consider the other reasons a mate could carry her husband's scent without a mark.

"Tell me everything. I don't see him being that romantic on his own, so hearing it out loud will help me believe it," Zoe said excitedly.

Since she still had two hours before she needed to leave to meet her husband, Viola sat down with Zoe and told her everything, from how her brother had gripped her arm in a death grip on the Ferris wheel and turned three shades of green, to how he had reflexively punched one of the haunted house actors clean unconscious.

Zoe sat there with increasingly stunned eyes and an expression of pure disbelief, hugging the purple plushie tightly to her chest the entire time.

When Viola finished, Zoe was smiling like a fool and dabbing at the corner of one eye. "You have just inspired me. I am taking Gilbert to the amusement park and making him win me a plushie too."

Zoe left after a while, happy for Viola and quietly emotional that her brother was finally coming back to himself, that things between them were genuinely going well. She had been in a few relationships that hadn't lasted more than a month, and she wanted this one with her doctor to be different. She left Viola's penthouse with outfit advice tucked in her head and a spring in her step.

After she was gone, Viola stood there for a moment with a little worry. Zoe was walking toward a heartbreak she didn't see coming, and there was nothing Viola could do to stop it without causing it herself.

It would hurt either way, whether it happened now or later. Not unless Gilbert chose to reject Laila's bond and take Zoe as a chosen mate, but for that to happen, he would have to mark Zoe first, and none of that was close to certain yet.

Maybe she needed to stop hovering over her friends like a mother hen. It wasn't the first time in history that someone had chosen a promised mate over a fated one. Some people simply did.

Viola was moving out of her bedroom when she remembered and reached for her phone. She had seen Nick's reply notification yesterday, but so much had happened that she hadn't had a single moment to open it. When she pulled up his message now, though, her brows drew together.

[It's okay. We can reschedule our plans. One of my friends is having a mating ceremony coming on next week, and I believe the event will help me forget about the family I have lost. Will you please come with me?]

Viola bit the inside of her cheek. She wanted to be there for him as a friend, but for some reason she felt Nick was depending on her far too much for companionship. Right now, she had so much on her own plate, and going out randomly with someone who didn't know her secret wasn't something she should be doing.

She hated that she would have to reject his offer yet again, for if he was really growing feelings for her, not seeing him so often would help those feelings fade, and she didn't want to become someone he sought emotional comfort from when she had her own problems to deal with.

She replied and apologize that she would be busy on that day.

A few minutes before the two hours were up, Sebastian shared the location. She left her penthouse and followed the arrow on her phone through the building, into parts of it she had never been before.

She took the elevator, then stairs leading downward in the direction of the training grounds, turned down another corner into a long hallway, and pushed through another door. The deeper she walked, the more she noticed the absence of security cameras, and unease began to prick at her, until she reached a set of double doors, pushed them open, and stepped through.

She gasped.

It was a vast open space, and at the center of it sat a wide, sprawling pool with lights built into the floor beneath it and along its edges, giving the water a soft, luminous glow. She was still staring at it when she heard her husband's voice.

"Hi, love." He said, rising from one of the chairs where he had been sitting with his tablet, which he set down at the sight of her.

"Hello." Viola turned to him and felt relief wash through her immediately. He pulled her into his arms and held her tightly, pressing his lips to her hair before stepping back to stroke her cheek and said,

"You did good finding the pool ground." He praised as this place was complicated even with the map location of the building.

Viola pursed her lips. "I nearly turned back at one point because I wasn't sure I was going the right way. What is this place?" She looked back at the pool again.

"It was built for secret parties thrown by the teenagers who used to sneak down here. More accurately, my cousin liked to throw parties as a boy and commandeered this pool for them. It hasn't been in use for a long time, I think most people have forgotten it even exists. But I had the old water drained and replaced with a clean one before you got here."

He took her hand and began to lead her closer to the edge, but she dragged her feet and stepped back, not wanting to be anywhere near a body of water that size. Though it was just a pool, it looked overwhelming too big.

"How deep is it?" She asked, unable to keep the dread out of her voice.

Sebastian glanced back at her over his shoulder. "The shallow end is no more than ten feet. The hollow in the middle is thirty feet deep."

He saw the horror cross her face. Thirty feet was too deep for a pool in any place she had grown up in, but in Silver, people didn't do things the way humans did and had never seen the point of going halfway.

"Don't worry," he said. "I won't let you drown. I will be right beside you every second." Then he reached into his pocket and produced three bars of chocolate, holding them up. "And if you do well, you will be rewarded with your favorites." He teased.

"How did you know these were my favorites?" She looked at the chocolate with barely disguised hunger and then back up at his eyes. They had always been her favorites, and she had run out of them in her penthouse days ago and had no idea where to get more, as it was Zoe who bought those for her.

"I found the wrappers in your kitchen and figured it out from there, and trust me, there is a lot more where those came from." He pinched her nose gently, trying to ease the visible tension wound through her and settle her nerves before they got to what they had actually come here to do.

His plan was to teach her how to swim first, and then see what she could do with those abilities, and more importantly, how they could bring them under control.

Though most people in Silver wouldn't recognize the signs of mermaid abilities even if they were standing right in front of them, the elders who had lived the longest were a different matter entirely.

Those who had been present during the silent war between mermaids and werewolves knew exactly what to look for, and they had already begun to murmur among themselves that there was an imposter somewhere in their midst.

If Viola was found out before Sebastian could get ahead of it, there would be very little he could do to protect her. Short of something as extreme as killing every single person who knew the truth, he had no solution, and he refused to let his mind go there unless it became the only option left.

He would do absolutely anything to protect her. But if there was a way to avoid things reaching that point, he would find it, and teaching her to master her abilities and keep them concealed was, right now, the best option available to either of them.

# Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

## Chapter 345: Ability Practice\_Part 2[ 1,459 words ]

"Can I have one of the chocolate bars to calm my nerves?" Viola asked, staring at the vast pool, the largest and deepest and most terrifying pool she had ever stood in front of in her life. Her throat had gone completely dry.

Sebastian handed her one bar and then produced the swimsuit he had brought for her. "Wear this so your clothes and underwear don't get soaked."

She took the bathing suit, a pink short and its matching top. Tucking the chocolate between her lips, she slowly began to remove her clothes and asked, "Is it safe to use the ability here? What if someone comes in?"

Sebastian was also pulling off his clothes to swim in his shorts. "No one comes to this part of the building. The pool has been forgotten for years." He stepped forward. "Let me get that for you." He reached around and unclipped her bra from behind so she could change into the one that came with the suit.

His eyes moved briefly to her bare nipples, which she made no attempt to hide, and Sebastian realized she had grown comfortable enough with him that she didn't think twice about taking off her clothes. He felt warmth stir in his blood and settle in his loins, but he reined it in firmly. It wasn't the right moment for pleasure.

He tied the strings of the bikini top behind her back and heard her say, "I am not very confident the creature will listen to me even if I try to summon it. I don't actually know how to call it out." Her anxiety sat plainly on her face as she stepped out of her panties, and he helped her pull on the pink shorts after fastening the strings of the bikini top.

"When did you last see it?" he asked, standing now in just his boxer shorts and doing his best to keep his attention where it belonged and not on how sexy she looked in the pink bikini, with her hair tied in a ponytail, staring up at him and making him pleased that he was the only one seeing her like this.

"The last time was right before I was thrown into the electric pool. I haven't seen it since then, but I think it tends to appear whenever I am near water or about to touch it." She put her clothes aside and positioned herself as far from the pool's edge as she reasonably could, the dread of what was coming gnawing steadily at her stomach.

"Then we will find out whether it shows itself when I am present." Saying that, Sebastian dove cleanly into the pool, the water slapping outward on impact, and she instinctively stepped back as

he cut through it. His head broke the surface a moment later, silver hair plastered flat over his face, and he swept it back from his eyes with one hand before beckoning to her.

"Come forward, sunshine." He swam to the edge and waited, and Viola began taking tiny, reluctant steps toward him. It was time she faced this. With Sebastian here, she told herself, he wouldn't let her drown.

When she reached the edge and looked down at him in the water, her heart was hammering so hard it felt like it might come through her ribs, and the sight of the water rippling below her made her dizzy, until Sebastian's voice cut through it.

"Look at me, love. Not the water. I will hold onto you no matter what. Give me your hands." He reached up toward her and she hesitated for just a moment before reaching back.

He closed his fingers around hers and gently coaxed her downward. Slowly and patiently he guided her until her legs were submerged, giving her time to adjust to that much before he reached to the side and dragged something forward, and Viola noticed it was a pair of bright orange inflatable armbands.

"These will keep you afloat." Sebastian said softly, slipping one over her upper arm and then the other, tightening each one carefully to make sure they sat snugly. His fingers lingered as he checked them, then he looked up into her eyes. "You are not going to drown with these on, and even without them, I wouldn't let anything happen to you. I will be right here the entire time."

Viola looked down at the floaties hugging her arms and then back at him, some of the fear in her eyes loosening beneath the steadiness in his voice.

"Now come down to me." He didn't pull her, he let her take that step herself.

Viola took a slow breath and scooted forward off the edge. She lowered herself into the water with a sharp gasp and immediately latched onto him as her feet found nothing solid beneath them.

"I think I am going to drown. Put me back up." She said, gripping his neck in a death grip that made Sebastian fairly certain she would drown him first if her panic didn't ease.

"Relax," he murmured, brushing damp strands of hair from her face. "You have the armbands on and I am right here. You are not going to drown."

It took considerable coaxing before her breathing steadied enough for her fingers to loosen from his neck. Reluctantly, she allowed herself to lean back slightly, and discovered that the floaties did exactly what he said they would.

"See?" Sebastian said quietly. "The water is holding you."

"No," Viola corrected immediately. "The floaties are."

"They are helping. The rest is you." He told her, watching the fear still swimming behind her eyes.

She looked at him with open disbelief, feeling her body moving on its own without her permission.

"I don't believe that."

"You don't have to believe it yet. Your body will." He said, and slowly shifted until only one arm remained loosely at her waist, careful not to let her notice too quickly.

"Now move your legs."

"I don't know how." Viola exclaimed in alarm.

"Neither did anyone before they learned. Try it."

Feeling slightly ridiculous, she gave a tiny, uncertain kick beneath the water.

"The other one." He said.

She obeyed, sending a small splash in his direction.

"Again."

She kicked a little harder.

"There you go." He encouraged.

"I look foolish." She murmured, embarrassment creeping in alongside the fear, particularly given that she reportedly had mermaid blood and couldn't manage a basic kick in a pool.

"You do." He agreed.

She glared at him before deliberately splashing water directly into his face.

It hit him squarely and he didn't even blink.

"So that's your revenge?"

"You deserved it." She grumbled, still glaring.

"For encouraging you?"

"For agreeing that I look foolish."

"You said it yourself."

A reluctant laugh broke out of her and she swatted at his chest. "Because I feel foolish."

"There it is," he murmured with quiet satisfaction. "You can laugh in the water."

"I am still scared shitless." She admitted.

"I know." He said quietly.

"But... I don't think I am quite as scared as before."

"Good." He loosened the arm at her waist a little more until his hand barely grazed her back.

Viola didn't notice right away. She kept kicking her legs the way he had shown her, her focus fixed entirely on staying afloat.

It was only when she glanced down that she noticed and went completely still.

"...Sebastian." She cried out.

"Yes?"

"You let go."

"I am still touching you."

"No... you are barely touching me."

"Exactly."

Her eyes widened slowly as the realization settled over her, she was not sinking.

"I'm floating!" She exclaimed.

"You are."

"I am actually floating."

"You have been for almost a minute." He lifted his hand away entirely to show her.

She looked back at him, the astonishment on her face giving way slowly and beautifully to delight.

"I didn't drown."

"I was fairly certain you wouldn't."

Sebastian smiled warmly, relief moving through him that she had relaxed enough to move on to the next stage. Trying to coax her abilities out while she was in a panic would only make things worse. Right now he was putting himself in the water alongside whatever might surface from it and what her ability could do to him, but he didn't mind. Not for her.

Unable to contain herself, Viola threw her arms around his neck and very nearly tipped them both under.

Sebastian caught them both with one arm, laughing softly against her wet hair.

"Easy, my darling. Celebrate after we have both survived the lesson. We still have a little way to go." He steadied her, then looked into her face. "Now, since you are floating, try to summon your water friend."

## **Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 346: The presence in the water[ 1,251 words ]**

Sebastian taught her a few swimming tricks and lessons, how to relax enough to float on her back, and how to swim back up if she went under, so she would have enough confidence in the water to attempt summoning her little friend.

His wife turned out to be a fast learner, and he didn't have to repeat himself much. Without the panic clouding everything, she picked things up quickly, and when she seemed confident enough, he eased back a little to give her space to make her first attempt.

"You can do it, sunshine." He encouraged, watching her draw a slow breath. "And if it doesn't come out, show me the other water ability you told me about. Take your time."

Viola gave a nod and brought her hand forward above the surface, trying to pull the current upward the way she had done that time in the shower. Nothing happened at first. She bit down on her lower lip and tried again. She still hadn't fully understood how she had done it the first time, and she was beginning to lower her hand when she noticed the surface of the water beginning to tremble and slowly rise.

It came up as though it was trying to form itself into a water ball, but her excitement at seeing it made her turn to her husband, and the moment her concentration broke, it collapsed back into the pool and splashed over her.

"Did you see that?" she asked, turning to Sebastian, who was watching her with narrowed, focused eyes.

"You are doing well, my love, but you lost your concentration. Try again, and do it as though you are alone here," he encouraged, and she gave a small nod before turning back to face the water.

He had also never seen a mermaid's ability in all of his life before, and seeing it for the first time, with the person controlling it being his wife, naturally made his wolf tense instinctively, as though preparing to protect himself from it, and Sebastian immediately reassured his wolf.

'Calm down. She is not attacking you, she is only practicing.'

Muffin scoffed. 'Yeah, right. You can't feel the mermaid's aura the way I am feeling it whenever she raises the water. I don't like mermaids. Their Goddess cursed us and made us suffer every full

moon. You shouldn't allow her to hone the very powers that will get her into trouble if she is ever found out. Let her be our mate without mermaid connection.'

Sebastian let out a sigh, his eyes remaining on his wife, who looked to be mentally preparing herself to try again. 'No matter what, she is part of us now, and I will support her. She needs to hone her ability and learn to control and hide it. If she can't protect herself by being a werewolf... she can protect herself with her mermaid ability someday if anyone tries to attack her for being who she is, and you know such a day might be inevitable.'

Muffin still didn't like his human's way of thinking. 'I would rather we let her suppress the mermaid blood in her. And let me remind you that her being a mermaid means she is not our prophesied mate after all, for our prophecy speaks of a full she-wolf with a mark on her wolf. I still want her, but you are making a mistake right now. She is—'

Sebastian locked Muffin away, no longer interested on hearing the rest of his opinion. His wolf's dislike for the creatures who were the reason they had been cursed and forced to suffer almost every month ran so deep that he wouldn't forgive them, even when their mate carried their blood. Rather than listen to Muffin list all the reasons he shouldn't allow Viola to hone her mermaid ability, he would rather not hear another word.

He wouldn't allow his mate to unintentionally give herself away someday simply because she didn't know what else she could do. Since he had given his word and sworn to love her through anything, Sebastian intended to keep that promise.

As for the prophecy, he no longer cared, for she had already scratched herself from the possibility of being his cure, and he didn't need her to be. With that thought settled, he turned his full attention back to his wife, who kept trying and failing to raise the water again, and she was beginning to look frustrated.

"You can do it, honey," he encouraged.

"Thank you for the encouragement, but I think I lost the ability. It's not coming forth anymore," she muttered, looking down at her hands.

"Try thinking about the water rising, and let's see what happens then," he told her.

She took a deep breath and raised her hand again, thinking about the water as he said. A surge of energy rose from somewhere inside her as the water's surface lifted, and this time she held it up. She formed not just one water ball but many. The surface began to ripple and rise in dozens of shifting, gleaming spheres, reflecting her face back at her from every direction, and her eyes went wide as she spoke without breaking focus.

"Seb... can you see this?" She said excitedly, and heard nothing in return. Her brows drew together and she glanced to the side, only to find the space he had been occupying moments ago completely empty.

She looked around quickly. His clothes were still folded neatly on the chair beside hers. She hadn't heard him leave the pool. Hadn't heard any movement at all. He couldn't have left without making any movement in the pool, and that too in a blink of an eye!

Her heart thudded hard. "Sebastian?"

## Silence. **Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -** **Chapter 347: The mermaid companion[** **1,547 words ]**

"We do, and I have it right here." Viola said, raising her hand and pulling the creature up from the surface.

It writhed against her hold, struggling to free itself, shifting shapes like something caught between forms, visible only as a moving disturbance against the water. "It's my water friend, like you called it." She said, watching it change, trying to escape her.

"You described it as friendly but it just tried to drown my ass at the bottom of the pool." Sebastian said, looking at the thing with open displeasure.

Sebastian studied the creature and it's changing against her grip in the water. He'd seen the drawing of it in Gilbert grandfather's research book. It was said each individual mermaid had a companion made of water, given as a birth gift by the sea goddess, and looking at the creature, Sebastian realized it might be his wife's water companion, even when she wasn't a full mermaid and had no tail.

"I don't know why it did that to you," Viola said, studying it, and then noticed it was glaring at her husband with what could only be described as intense hatred.

Sebastian met its glare with his own and said, "It's called a Tidekin. A living companion formed from the sea itself and gifted by the Sea Goddess. It sometimes shares its master's emotions, protects them from danger, and obeys no one else. It's trying to drown me because it believes I mean you harm. It's protecting you. Let it go, and we'll see."

"Are you certain?" Viola digested his information before she asked uncertainly, and when he nodded she slowly released her hold on the Tidekin.

The moment she did, it dissolved back into the water, and immediately surged toward Sebastian again as if to attack him. But this time Sebastian was ready. He raised his hand and the creature was suddenly encased in a dense, ash-colored smoke that rose above the water's surface, boxing it in and holding it suspended there.

"You little shit. You will stay in there until you calm down and realize I am your master's husband." He remarked flatly, meeting the watery eyes now aimed at him as the creature pushed against the walls of Sebastian's ability.

"How did you do that?" Viola asked in surprise, staring at the smoke sitting above the water in the shape of a box, like ink poured into the air and held there. She had never seen anything like it and reached out to touch it before he caught her hand.

"Don't touch it, it will trap your hand inside." He warned, then explained, "I was born with it. Every werewolf who carries the strongest Alpha blood carries an ability of some kind within them."

Viola stared at him in surprise. "I have never heard of such a thing. You don't use it often, do you?"

Many rumors went around about the supreme Alpha but she'd never heard of an ability, or seen Sebastian use it before.

He shrugged. "I don't use it at all. I kept it hidden to stay on equal footing with my twin, and sometimes I forget I even have it." He said, looking down at his palm where faint traces of the smoke still curled and rose.

If he had shown his powers in the past, there would have been no way he could have switched places with his twin, who didn't have any powers, and people would have noticed their differences when Alex found himself in a situation where he was supposed to use his powers but couldn't. To be safe, Sebastian let everyone believe that this generation of Alpha wasn't born with any abilities.

Viola wanted to ask more about that, about why he had felt the need to hide himself to be equal with his dead twin, but the creature was struggling against its cage with increasing urgency, making strange, strained sounds that drew her attention back.

"Can you communicate with it?" Sebastian asked, watching them both.

"I think I can." She said. "It kind of understands me but it doesn't speak."

"Then tell it to calm down and I will let it go." He said, still watching the creature with the expression of a man who had not forgiven it yet. The thing had caught him off guard while he was distracted watching his wife earlier.

Viola focused on it for a while, talking to it as though she were speaking to a disobedient pet and telling it to calm down if it wanted a treat. The Tidekin stopped struggling and stayed still, and after a few moments, she turned back to Sebastian.

"I think it's calm now. Let it go."

He released it. And true to her word, it kept its distance from him this time, though it was very clearly still glaring.

Viola studied it now, unable to believe that it was truly her companion. Just like werewolves had wolf spirits as companions, it seemed mermaids also had the Tidekin, and this little mischievous one was hers.

"Do I get to name you?" She asked it, and it finally turned away from Sebastian to look at her with what could only be described as eagerness.

The Tidekin nodded its watery head and then began moving around her in the water, splashing it up at her playfully and making her giggle.

"That is amazing. You are one cute thing, aren't you?" She grinned, then looked over at her husband. "What should I name it, Seb?"

"Call it Malvado." Sebastian said flatly, and Viola gave him a look, understanding exactly what that meant given how far her Spanish had come so far, where she understood little words like that.

"Absolutely not. I am not calling it evil." She said, giggling when the creature splashed her again as though agreeing with her. "What about Wave? I think I will call it Wave." The moment she said it, the creature rose up taller in the water, stretching itself upward so that she had to tilt her head back to look at it, clearly delighted with the name she chose for it.

Then she watched it extend something like a hand outward, a blue light pulsing from somewhere within it, and out of pure curiosity Viola reached out and placed her palm against it.

The moment she did, a current shot through her entire body and the light traveled into her chest, blazing bright for one suspended second before it vanished, and she was jolted backward into Sebastian, who caught her in his arms.

"What the fuck did you just do to her?" Sebastian demanded, holding her trembling body against him as she tried to get her bearings.

Then she heard it.

"We are bound now, Mermaidia!"

"It's speaking to me, Sebastian." She exclaimed, looking between the creature and her husband, who clearly hadn't heard a word, and Viola realized with a start that she was the only one who could understand it now.

"What did it just say to you?" He asked, his eyes moving over her with open concern as she looked pale and slightly shaky. He examined her entire body and let out a sigh when there were no signs that she had been hurt physically.

"It said we are bound now, whatever that means." She moved to swim toward the creature but Sebastian pulled her back and trapped it inside his ability again.

"You little piece of shit." He gritted out, his jaw tight. "I should destroy you for binding yourself to her without her knowing what it meant."

"I will destroy you too, monster." The creature shot back, glaring at him with undisguised hostility, the way all its kind regarded werewolves, and though Sebastian couldn't understand the words, Viola could, and she looked between the two of them with growing unease at the tension crackling in the air.

She realized what Sebastian had said and became even more curious.

"Is it bad that Wave bound itself to me?" she asked Sebastian carefully, placing a hand on his shoulder in an attempt to calm the aura bleeding off him, causing the temperature around them to drop like the middle of winter.

"A Tidekin binding itself to a mermaid means it will be at their side forever and share feelings with them, the way a mate shares feelings with their other half. There are cases where mermaids ended up choosing their Tidekin as a life partner because the bond grew into the deepest companionship of all." He said through his teeth, his silver eyes dark and dangerous behind his wet lashes, and Viola swallowed quietly before looking back at the creature she had just named.

Wave was far too small and far too adorable for her to picture it as any kind of romantic companion, and so she said, "I don't think it will ever come to that. It's just water, who marries water?" She laughed, trying to ease the heat in the air.

Sebastian didn't laugh. "It doesn't stay water forever. In the sea world, a Tidekin can petition the sea goddess when its master chooses them, and if the wish is granted, it takes a merman form, said to be the most beautiful of all their kind. And then they live together forever."

## **Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 348: The sea witch[ 1,183 words ]**

Viola's eyes went wide. She looked at Wave with an expression of stunned disbelief, realizing it had bound itself to her without telling her any of this, but Wave simply looked back at her with enormous, guileless eyes and said,

"That monster is jealous of our companionship and our world's ways. I will protect you from werewolf monsters like him."

Viola pressed her fingers to her forehead. "First of all, he is not a monster. He is my husband, and you will treat him with respect if you want to remain near me. His name is Sebastian." She said firmly, and then asked, "Is it because you bound yourself to me that I can now understand you?"

Wave nodded.

"And will you assure my husband that you will not cross your boundaries and will not petition for a form to be my mate?" She asked, still finding the entire concept faintly absurd.

Wave looked at Sebastian with profound displeasure, then looked back at her and said, "That is not up to me, Mermaidia. I can only take a form if you wish it and choose me. Your wishes are my command."

"Then that is settled." She turned back to Sebastian. "You have nothing to worry about, it cannot take a form without my permission. Now can you both please stop glaring at each other so we can talk about why we summoned Wave here in the first place?"

Despite her words, Sebastian did not like this. He didn't like that the creature was now connected to her. Not at all. The creature was bound to his wife, sharing feeling with her, and he had not yet marked her, and he deeply regretted suggesting they summon the thing. But Viola needed answers about her sister, and so he swallowed his possessive jealousy down and nodded.

"Ask it about your sister." He said, watching Wave with narrowed eyes. "Ask it if Ivy is in the sea."

Wave understood what Sebastian had said and turned to Viola. "I don't know. I have never been with the other Mermaidia, my place is with you, and I go only where you go and protect you from harm. What I do know is that the sea witch has been trying to reach you, and I have been turning her away each time by blocking her portals." It paused, then bounced eagerly within Sebastian's cage. "Is Wave not amazing, Mermaidia?!"

Viola's eyes turned sad at the confirmation that Wave knew nothing about her sister's fate and wouldn't know what had happened to her after she was taken to the sea, but she smiled at it anyway.

"Yes, you are. Very amazing."

Then she asked more quietly, "Who is the Sea Witch?"

Wave stilled. When it spoke again, the playfulness was entirely gone from his gurgly voice that sounded like someone talking with a mouthful of water.

"She is wicked. She controls many Tidekin, and she wants you too. She is very dangerous, Mermaidia. Do not go into the sea. If you do, she will take you, and you will not come back. Scary. Very scary." It singsonged the words, curling into itself.

"Why does the Sea Witch want me?" Viola asked with a frown, feeling Wave's fear in her chest, which made goosebumps rise on her skin.

"Don't know. I don't like the Sea Witch. She turns Tidekin into stone and keeps them in her very scary cave."

Viola exchanged a look with her husband, and she saw his eyes drop to her arms, where the goosebumps were obvious.

"You're shivering, love," Sebastian mused as he swam closer and pulled her into his arms, holding her against him without her asking to be held. He saw that Wave was also trembling and realized the little shit was transmitting its fear to her, and he fought the urge to strangle it in its cage.

After speaking to Wave for a while, Viola came to understand that the entity that had dragged her under in Nightshade was none other than the sea witch, and without a doubt the same one who had spoken to Sebastian and tried to manipulate him. Wave told her,

"The Sea Witch is very good at manipulating. She can make even the smartest person believe her words. She has the greatest power and controls the sea. I am afraid of the Sea Witch."

---

"I believe she manipulated you into thinking I was one of the sea creatures and had come to destroy your world," Viola said, after they had left the pool room and spoken with Wave at length. She could see Wave trailing behind them in a thin path of water, flattening itself against the floor and blending in whenever Sebastian turned around.

Sebastian had been quietly taking everything in, and he couldn't believe a sea witch had used her abilities to manipulate him that day, but now he understood why he had believed it so completely, believed it enough to almost destroy everything between them, right up until the moment he had seen his wife's tears.

"I wonder why the sea witch is fixated on you specifically." Sebastian said thoughtfully as they walked, his hand around hers and tightening without him fully realizing it, because somewhere in the back of his mind, Miss Lara's words were surfacing again. She had called the water creature the twins' aunt. Could it be the sea witch then?

"I don't know." Viola murmured. "But the deeper I look into all of this, the more I realize how much danger simply existing puts me in. It seems I am not truly safe in either world..."

"We can build a safe world for you right here beside me, sunshine. You belong where I am, and I will do everything in my power to keep you there." Sebastian said, and he meant every word of it.

Viola felt warmth move through her chest at his words and she hooked her arm through his, leaning her head against his shoulder and breathing in his scent. "Thank you for always having my back." She whispered. Then, after a small pause, "Can I have my second chocolate bar now?"

Sebastian reached into his trouser pocket and produced it for her without a word.

"What are we going to do about Wave?" She asked as they stepped into the elevator.

Sebastian's brows pulled together. The more this little water creature kept coming up, and the fact that it was quietly following them right now, leaving a damp trail along the elevator wall, the more displeased he felt about it.

"I think we should contain it somewhere before it exposes itself to someone who shouldn't see it. We don't—" He didn't finish the sentence, because a splash of water dumped squarely over his head from the wall where Wave had been crawling.

"Don't listen to the monster, Mermaidia!" Wave said, scuttling back toward Viola and leaving a trail of wet patches across the elevator floor. "May the Sea Goddess strike his mouth!"

"What is it saying?" Sebastian asked, wringing water from his silver hair with one hand.

## Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 349: Invitation[ 1,644 words ]

In the interest of keeping the fragile peace between them, Viola said, "Nothing important. We don't need to worry about it, it doesn't stay. It comes and goes and will return to the sea when I don't need it to keep an eye for the sea witch portal, it told me so." She said, hoping that was convincing enough.

When they reached her penthouse, Sebastian paused at the door.

"Aren't you coming in?" she asked.

"I'd love to, but I need to get back to work," he told her.

"Oh... You'll come tonight, won't you?" she asked again.

"I will. And before it slips my mind, we have been invited to the Grim pack for their Alpha heir's mating ceremony. I would normally turn down invitations like this without a second thought, but Silver has a great deal of mending to do after Ember's death and the attempts of certain packs to isolate us. Alpha Daniel has invited almost all of the larger packs and I think having you appear publicly as Silver's Luna will show the other packs that Silver stands united, and it will give us an opportunity to rebuild alliances instead of remaining isolated.

"What do you think, do you want to attend?"

Viola was no longer someone who sought out public appearances, but then since their wedding she hadn't attended a single event as Luna, not once. And as much as large gatherings drained her, she couldn't argue with his reasoning. Isolation was not something the most powerful pack in the world could afford.

"When is it, and which packs will be there? I want to prepare myself properly."

"You have enough time to prepare yourself for it. It's ten days from now. I will send you the guest list once I get back to my office." He said, and then pulled her forward and kissed her, firm and passionately, his tongue finding the chocolate taste still lingering on hers and clearly deciding to lick it off into his mouth. He kissed her until every trace of it was gone, and Viola smiled into his mouth, thinking that no matter how many times he kissed her, she was fairly certain she would never grow tired of it.

---

Viola had thought the invitation to the Grim pack was going to be something small and manageable, but she quickly realized they were expected to arrive at the pack two days before the event itself, alongside a long list of important guests.

She had gone through the guest list that evening after Sebastian sent it to her, along with a silly animated meme that was apparently going viral in Silver. It had made her laugh so hard she had nearly peed herself in surprise and had to make a hasty trip to the bathroom.

[You are crazy. Why would you send me something like that?] she texted him from her spot on the piano bench in front of the glass wall, where she had been sitting practicing while Wave watched as her audience from a small rectangular glass tank filled with water beside the piano when the message arrived.

She hadn't wanted to think about Ivy or the sea witch being after her as the thought on itself was scary. Sea witches were scary creatures, who even werewolves couldn't dare cross.

His reply came quickly. [To cheer you up. I had a feeling you might be overwhelmed by the guest list. It is going to be a large event, and the Grim pack will be using it to show the world that if Silver doesn't hold its position, they are ready to step into the supreme seat, they have abilities too and are the second largest pack after ours.]

[I don't want to overwhelm you, but we have to show up and deal with people we would rather not.]

Viola couldn't help smiling at the fact that he had already thought about how she would feel seeing a guest list that long, with Silver at the very top, which meant they would be receiving more attention than anyone else in attendance. It would be her first public event as Luna, and she would be expected to leave a first impression strong enough that people wouldn't think to walk all over her, while also not disgracing the pack members who hadn't fully accepted her yet.

There was a great deal to prepare for, and she was glad he had told her with enough time to do it. But focusing on this ceremony would mean pausing her ability practice for a few days before they left Silver, and as though he had read her thoughts exactly, his next text arrived before she could reply to the first.

[We will practice some more before we leave, if you are up for it, so you still have plenty of time to prepare for the travel.]

She replied, [I am up for it. The last thing I need is to accidentally drain someone at that ceremony.] She sent that one and immediately typed another. [Is it true that the Grim pack Alpha family members have the ability to compel?]

\*[Not all of them. It only works when the target is relaxed, so stay alert if any member of their family tries to put you unusually at ease or acts overly warm toward you. They are not naturally pleasant people, so any excessive niceness should be a warning sign. That said, being careful does

not mean letting any of them walk over you because they think you don't have a wolf. You are allowed to act like the Supreme Luna and put anyone who tries to bully you firmly in their place. I will clean up whatever mess you make afterward.]

Viola's face flushed warmly as she read it, a smile spreading across her face before she could stop it. Most would be quietly warning their wolfless Luna to keep her head down and not cause a scene or embarrass the pack, she had seen how it worked in this world, how someone like her was expected to shrink and be suppressed for what she was.

But not her Supreme Alpha. He wanted her to stand tall and not worry, because he would be there to handle whatever followed. His reassurance quietly dismantled more of her anxiety than she expected, and she told him so.

[I was here getting nervous, but chatting with you just now made me realize I have nothing to worry about. Thanks.] She sent it with a kissing emoji.

[Anytime, sunshine. And save that kiss for when I get home. I expect to receive it at the doorstep.]

Viola chuckled, curling her legs underneath her on the bench.

[Sure, I promise you more than a kiss tonight.]

Then she added: [Wave says hi.]

Sebastian, who was sitting across from Matt while the Beta worked through a report on their warriors' training, felt himself smile, before his expression shifted into a frown as he read the follow-up text.

Matt had noticed the change immediately and had been watching him for the past thirty minutes, waiting for any sign that the Alpha was actually listening to anything being reported to him. Matt had been talking nonstop, making reports, and the only replies he got were hums and nods, but he doubted the Alpha was even listening.

The fast, back-and-forth replies on that phone told him everything he needed to know about where Sebastian's attention was. There was no need to wonder who he was texting because he had never texted anyone before until recently, when he was always on his phone with her.

Matt set his tablet down on the desk and rested his chin in his palm with the particular exhaustion of a man who had been carrying double the workload for days and whose mother had recently informed him over a video call that he was starting to resemble a walking ghost with permanent dark circles. He cleared his throat loudly enough to demand the Supreme Alpha's attention.

"Are you even listening to me?" Matt said flatly.

"Hmm." Sebastian hummed, not looking up. "You were telling me the new recruits are performing well and that the older children from the orphanage have been assigned positions in Silver and given individual rooms. Julia has been sent to work in the factory like I ordered."

"You missed the part," Matt said, his exhaustion sharpening into dry frustration, "where I said the elders are applying increasingly pointed pressure about your heir, and if something doesn't happen

soon I am going to be the one set on fire for it. You also missed the part where I said we caught spies at our borders, sent by the Grim pack, by the look of it." He leaned back in his chair, rubbing his face.

The better Sebastian's personal life became, the more Matt's own social life quietly ceased to exist. He hadn't seen his family in person for weeks. He missed his mother's cooking with a longing that was beginning to feel dramatic even to him, but he was here, because Sebastian needed him, and because being Beta to the Supreme Alpha was what his father had done before him, and it was what he would keep doing, too.

Sebastian finally set his phone down after Viola told him she needed to get back to what she had been doing. He looked at Matt properly for the first time since he had walked in, and what he saw made him pause.

"Hell, man. You look terrible." He said, the concern on his face entirely genuine.

"Whose fault is that?" Matt returned, rolling his eyes. "I genuinely cannot believe you have not looked at me once since I sat down." He exhaled. "What are you planning to do about the Grim pack and their quiet campaign to take our position?"

## **Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 350: Our little girl[ 1,492 words ]**

"Show him who the superior is at his own event, make it clear while his son is being presented as the next Alpha. I will handle him personally. He is not a significant problem. And as for my heir, that is something personal, and when it happens, no one will know until the child is born. Learn to ignore anyone who doesn't have the spine to bring it to my face directly." Sebastian said with complete indifference, and Matt let out a slow sigh.

"You do realize there will be talk of it at this ceremony you are attending, and the Luna will be subjected to all of it. She will also be meeting many of your past flames, and if luck is not on her side, she will meet Hailey. Hailey would never miss a family gathering like this one, given that she is the sister of the man having the ceremony. If you want my honest opinion, for the sake of avoiding unnecessary drama, you should consider going alone and—"

"Drama can happen for all I care, Matteo. I will not hide my Luna or keep her in the shadows any longer. It is time she makes a proper public appearance and stands on her own ground as the Supreme Luna. As for Hailey and the others I once shared a mate bond with, it is about time I tested whether my hellcat is enough to make me resist all of them. I have already resisted Laila, and I haven't seen the others yet."

When Alex had chosen Natalie, his body had naturally built a resistance to many of the she-wolves he had found himself sharing a bond with in the past, and even with those he still had a faint bond with, the love he had for his wife had made him unable to let anything come between them.

Because of that strong bond between Alex and Natalie, Sebastian had, at one point, believed she might be the prophesied one and that Alex would be the one to break their curse, until everything went downhill.

And now that Viola had such a strong bond with him too, it didn't automatically make him think she was the one, which she could no longer be, as she carried half the blood of the creatures who had caused their curse. But that didn't mean he would entertain any other she-wolves in his life. He was content with her and would make it work until the end.

Matt could only shrug. He had made the suggestion purely to avoid unnecessary complications at the ceremony and to make things smoother for Viola, who would inevitably be subjected to the scorn and sharp eyes of every high and mighty she-wolf Sebastian had once taken as a fling. But if Sebastian was ready to face all of that head-on and was confident enough to want the world to see his Luna standing beside him, Matt didn't see the point in arguing further.

"You should come with us as well," Sebastian added. "I imagine you could use a few days away from here, and who knows, you might meet your mate at the ceremony."

Matt let out a long sigh. "Any she-wolf unfortunate enough to be my mate would regret it the moment she saw my schedule. But you are right, there is no harm in going." He paused, then said, "Gilbert mentioned he has a date for the ceremony. I couldn't help wondering who."

"It is most likely Laila. They are a pair, my wife told me." Sebastian said, already reaching for his work, wanting to get through it so he could be back home on time and receive his kiss at the door like promised.

"No kidding? You are serious?" Matt asked, genuinely taken aback, and Sebastian gave a small shrug.

"How did your wife find out?" Matt pressed, still not quite believing that the doctor had managed something like that before him, especially with no one but Laila Serrano, of all people. How on earth did such a match happened?

"Laila told her herself, I believe. Some kind of conversation happened between the two of them."

"I'll be damned." Matt sat back. "And you are actually all right with it?"

Sebastian leveled him with a flat look. "Why wouldn't I be? She was never mine to begin with. I am happy for them both. My only concern is my sister, she has feelings for the doctor and she is going to be hurt when she finds out."

"She is still carrying that crush? I genuinely thought it was a teenage thing that would fade on its own." Matt said with a quiet chuckle, shaking his head. "Guess it grew into something more. Our little girl." He said it with the easy warmth of someone who had known her since before she could properly walk, and then relaxed back in his chair. "She will get over him. It is only a matter of time." He paused. "Is it strange that I still picture her as little spoiled Zoe, the one we used to carry on our backs around the pack just to stop her from crying?"

"Hmm. She's still a baby to me." Sebastian only hummed, already focused on his work, and Matt drifted quietly into the memory of it.

He could remember all of it so clearly, the chaos of trying to help raise a small child without either parents present, how she had refused to be held by anyone else and screamed until one of them picked her up, and how, after Sebastian became Alpha at such a young age, Zoe had practically lived at their house. She had made it a habit to appear at Matt bedroom door at night, clutching her little doll, her wide gray eyes blinking up at him as she told him she had bad dreams and needed to sleep where he was.

'You can't sleep in my room, Zoe. Go to my mom,' he had told her the first night she came by.

She had looked on the verge of tears as she pouted and said,

'I don't wanna go dere. I wanna be wif Matty. I be as quiet as a mouse. Pwomise.'

Thirteen years old Matt could not turn her away with her teary eyes pleading at him, he had given in and since then she had made it a habit to disturb his night.

She had been so endlessly troublesome. And he had been so endlessly patient with her, more than he had ever been with anyone, protective of her in a way that had gone beyond what was reasonable, to the point where he genuinely could not stand to watch her cry.

All of that had ended when he traveled to Mexico with his mother for a month after Sebastian's coronation. While Sebastian had become Alpha at such an early age, Matt hadn't become his Beta until he was eighteen years old and had only been his best friend before then.

By the time he came back to Silver, Zoe had grown into someone more independent, pulling back from both of them and spending more time with Sebastian's twin. Matt had felt the loss of it more than he had ever admitted to anyone and had eventually taught himself to stop missing those days, the ice cream outings days, the bike rides with her little arm wrapped around his waist as she held onto his shirt, and the way she used to follow him around like he hung the moon.

She no longer lived with them. She came on weekends to visit his mother, not him, and the distance between them had settled into something comfortable and permanent. He had taken to calling her brat in his head as a way of making it matter less.

They were not what they used to be to each other. But he still saw her, when he looked at her, as little troublesome Zoe, a little sister he never had, perhaps.

"Is she coming to the ceremony as well? Zoe?" He asked, and Sebastian nodded without looking up. "Naturally. I wouldn't want my wife to feel alone when I am pulled away for stretches of time. Zoe is coming."

Matt nodded slowly, making a quiet decision of his own. If Zoe ended up heartbroken at the sight of Gilbert with someone else, he would find a way to cheer her up, the way he used to when they were small and everything could be fixed with ice cream and a piggyback ride, only now he knew they were both adults.

Neither of them knew, sitting there in that office, that Gilbert's date to the ceremony was not Laila at all.

It was Zoe.

And when they all arrived at the Grim pack and found themselves in the same space at the same time, things were going to unravel in ways none of them had seen coming.

She dropped her hands and every water ball crashed back down at once, some of the water falling directly over her head, but she barely felt it through the panic and confusion rising in her chest.

She worked her arms and legs through the water the way he had shown her and moved toward the edge. Then, just as she was about to climb the steps to leave the pool, she looked down and saw movement beneath the surface. Her stomach dropped as she made out the shape of her husband beneath the water.

He looked like he was struggling.

For a moment Viola forgot every fear she had about water entirely and dove, but the armbands pulled her straight back up. She cursed, ripped them off both arms without hesitation, and dove again. She found herself cutting downward at a speed that would have startled her under any other circumstances, heading straight for Sebastian.

When she reached him, she could see something wrapped around his neck, and she narrowed her eyes as she made out the shape of it. The water form. Its eyes unmistakable even down here and she frowned at it in displeasure, but it only tightened around his neck.

Viola didn't hesitate. She raised her hand and sent a rope of water coiling around the creature, wrenching it away from Sebastian's neck. Then she grabbed his hand and they pushed upward together.

They broke the surface with a gasp, Sebastian coughing and cursing at the same time, and she held onto him.

"I think we have company in the water." He said, catching his breath and casting a sharp, alert look down at the pool below before wrapping a protective arm around her.