

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 371: Nothing short of killing[1,213 words]

Sebastian had expected the question. But the full answer was something long that would have to wait until after the ceremony, because it couldn't be told properly without going all the way back to his twin brother and everything that had led to that night Natalie died.

He pulled back from the embrace and cupped her face in his hands, looking into her blue eyes as they watched him with quiet curiosity and patience.

"I will tell you everything tonight when we are back in our bed and alone. It's a long story and it will only make sense told from the beginning. Will it make you love me less if you wait until tonight for the full story?" He asked quietly, loving her more in that moment for her complete absence of panic or fear after reading that message and hearing his confession.

Viola shook her head without any hesitation. "Nothing short of you killing me will make me love you less. But I am still finding it hard to digest." She muttered. "Your relationship with Natalie... it always seemed so perfect."

It was perfect, but it wasn't with me. Sebastian kept that thought where it was, knowing it would only add to her confusion before she had heard the full story.

"Can we act normal for now? Like I haven't just confessed to killing Natalie in front of you?" He stroked the side of her face gently, knowing it was a shock and not judging her for the color that had drained from her cheeks. "You look a little pale."

"Hell, it's shocking." She said, because it was. The perfect love story she had constructed in her imagination around him and Natalie was dissolving piece by piece, and she didn't quite know how to feel about that even when she didn't want to feel anything about it.

"I know." He kissed her neck softly. "I'm sorry for dropping it on you like this."

Viola took a slow breath, then reached up and pulled his collar aside and gave him the bite mark he had asked for, while quietly closing the door on her wandering thoughts until tonight, when she would have the full picture of what happened. The ceremony ahead of them no longer felt as appealing as it had an hour ago, but she would get through it without letting her mind go into an overdrive of curious thoughts.

A little while later they left their room together, her arm tucked through his elbow, his bite mark sitting on her neck and hers on his, both of them on full display.

"Are you nervous?" Sebastian asked as they walked in silence.

No matter how much she tried to act normal, he knew his words had put a dent in her mood and that she was still thinking about them. A part of him suddenly wished they didn't have to attend the damned ceremony at all, that they could stay behind and talk everything through until there was nothing left hanging between them.

But now that he was here, his presence was important. The last thing he wanted was for Alpha Daniel to use his absence to rally the guest Alphas behind his back, especially with the Betas from the North pack and several representatives from Moonwillow in attendance. Too many of his enemies were gathered under one roof for him to risk not showing up.

"A little." She admitted, then to fill the silence, she added. "I hope we're not late. I hate being late, all eyes turn to whoever walks in last." She said, as they began to approach the hall where the marriage ceremony would take place before the marking.

"I don't care about people's eyes, let them watch, my wife is beautiful and she's standing beside me." He patted her hand and she smiled a little.

Despite her smile, her heart was thudding steadily in her chest, because she knew she had a great deal to face in that room today, and Natalie's secret was now sitting quietly in the back of her mind, waiting for tonight.

The hall was filled with all the guests and decorated to the very limit of elegance, with a touch of the Grim pack's own traditions woven through it, a raised platform at the front where musicians played instruments, their sound a soft, pleasant backdrop to the chatter filling every corner of the room.

Unlike Sebastian and Viola's wedding, which had been tense and heavy with unspoken things, this one was alive with laughter, the guests spread across the hall in the way of their kind; the important and high-ranking werewolves gravitating naturally toward each other, being admired from a respectful distance by those of lower rank who quietly dreamed of climbing the hierarchy and one day standing among them.

The Grim pack had no ring exchange tradition the way Silver did. They threw a party, everyone together, just for the joy of it, and when the sun went down, the marking happened, and the pair became bound forever under the blessing of the moon goddess with every guest as witness.

Among the cluster of important she-wolves, Hailey stood in a killing black dress with her back cut open all the way to the upper part of her butt cheeks, the fabric from her thighs to her ankles gauzy and completely transparent.

She was surrounded by her friends, who had all heard by now that there were strong chances of her and the Supreme Alpha getting back together, and she was basking in the glow of being treated like the most important person in the room, everyone wanting to know her, talk to her, be near her.

"I love your dress, it looks so good on you. I bet your man won't be able to look away the moment he gets here." Said one of the women in her circle, because by now the consensus among the guests was that the Supreme Luna was nothing but a whore and no one thought of her as deserving of the position she held.

Hailey's plan was to make absolutely sure everyone saw the wolfless for what she was, and to position herself as the natural next candidate for that place at his side. The plan was working beautifully so far, the only thing left was for Sebastian to find out for himself what his wife did behind his back and throw the bitch out of his life.

"You bet. He won't be able to resist, just like no man has been able to look away from me since I got here." She said arrogantly, sipping her wine with an air of importance, enjoying all the attention she was receiving, even from the elder men who were Alphas and had no reason looking at a young shewolf like herself. It gave her the confidence that Sebastian wouldn't be able to turn her down and might even claim her right here today.

She'd spent a couple of millions on this dress just to impress him and she knew without a doubt he would be more than impressed with her by the end of this ceremony.

However, for some reason he was taking so long to arrive and she was getting impatient as hell waiting.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 372: They look good together[1,446 words]

"Oh, Hailey, promise you won't forget us once you move to Silver with him. It would break my heart if we drifted apart just because you're our Supreme Luna." Gushed one of her friends, her eyes already glistening with what were very clearly crocodile tears, which made Hailey roll her eyes.

"How could I forget you all? Start preparing yourselves to be invited to parties in Silver every single weekend. I will have my husband build me a dedicated party house." She declared.

Her friends whooped and Hailey fanned herself lazily, playing the role of their golden girl perfectly, reveling in the fantasy she had already mapped out so completely in her mind that it felt like fact. This plan would not only humiliate the wolfless but launch her up the social ladder in a single day.

Everyone was gravitating toward her, everyone wanted a piece of her attention, until the double doors of the hall swung open and the special guests of the event arrived.

Every conversation in the room fell silent at once as all eyes instinctively turned toward the entrance. Everyone in the hall stared as though they had been caught in a trance.

Most of the guests had heard the Supreme Luna spoken about at length, the wolfless woman, the nobody, the competition winner who had stumbled into a position nobody believed she deserved. They had heard her described in ways that painted a picture of someone meek, shoulders permanently curved inward, a woman who had learned to make herself small because she had nothing to stand tall with in their world.

However, the woman who walked through those doors was not that woman.

She silenced the entire hall without saying a single word. The dress she wore looked like something from another world entirely, and her shoulders were pulled back, her chin held at exactly the right angle, her presence beside the Supreme Alpha not one of someone trying to keep up but of someone who belonged precisely where she stood.

They complemented each other so completely that it was difficult to imagine one without the other as they walked in matching attires.

Her walk was unhurried and elegant, the gentle sway of her hips effortless. The Supreme Alpha had one hand in his trouser pocket and the other bent at the elbow, her hand resting through it. He looked like something an artist had taken great care in creating, with those stone cold eyes.

"Is that the wolfless woman?" Whispers moved through the crowd from those seeing her for the first time.

"Oh my god, she's... she's so beautiful."

"How do they look that good together?"

Zoe, who was standing next to Gilbert with his arm around her waist keeping her close beside him, was mingling with some of the people he was talking to about his line of work. She looked over at her friend walking in next to her brother and beamed with pride and happiness.

"Eeeeh! They look stunning!" Zoe squealed.

"Is that the dress you made?" Gilbert asked, looking toward their Luna at his girlfriend's excitement.

Zoe bobbed her head. "It is, but she brought it to life for me. I had to rush making it because my brother wanted it finished at the last minute. I'm still feeling faint from the lack of sleep, but I'm happy it turned out well." She said, leaning her head against his shoulder to rest. Her high heels brought her almost level with him, and he moved his arm from her waist to rest around her shoulders instead.

"You are a talented designer, Zoe. It's beautiful," he praised.

Zoe beamed. "Thanks."

She had noticed some changes in him lately. He was putting in more effort, and she liked it. However, she had Laila to thank for that because the she-wolf had given her some lessons she had picked up from reading articles about how to make your man put in more effort.

Zoe had enjoyed Laila's company so much while they went through the articles together, discussing the subtle things women could do to encourage their men to become more attentive. She had applied some of the advice to Gilbert last night and this morning, and now she couldn't help but wonder if Laila's own efforts had worked out with her mate.

The she-wolf had told her she wouldn't be arriving early because she wanted her appearance to be a complete shock to her mate, and Zoe had found herself wondering who that mate was. She was eager for Laila to finally appear.

Zoe quietly basked in the moment with Gilbert as she watched the two people she loved most walk into the hall like royalty, effortlessly silencing an entire room.

"I'm so proud of her..." Zoe muttered, making no move to go to them, staying with her boyfriend instead and giving Vee the spotlight to shine bright in.

Meanwhile, Hailey, who had been receiving all the attention in the room right up until that bitch dragged herself in here next to her man, was fuming, her fingers curling around her wine glass until it cracked.

"Do you think she looks better than I do?" Hailey asked her friends, who had been gawking at the woman in gold and quickly turned back to her the moment she spoke.

Even though every single one of them privately believed there was no comparison because Hailey didn't stand a chance against the woman before them, the wolfless was dressed with elegance and grace, while Hailey had nearly half her butt cheeks on display in a dress that hardly looked appropriate for a formal ceremony like this, they all shook their heads in unison.

"Not in a million years. She could never stand a chance against you."

"Never!" Another one added.

Hailey got the confirmation she needed and a boost in her ego and confidence. She gulped down the remainder of her wine, handed the empty glass to a passing waiter, and said to her friends,

"Watch me put the bitch in her place. Watch a man grovel over his mate rather than a useless, cheating wife." She adjusted her dress, making sure every inch of exposed skin was looking its best, before she walked away from her circle and finally moved to approach Sebastian.

She had been deliberately holding off this moment because she wanted the impact to be as large as possible. After all, she was his mate, and that bitch was just a wife. This was where she would show everyone that Sebastian belonged to her, and that a wolfless had no place at his side.

Viola, for her part, kept her chin up and her eyes straight ahead despite the murmuring that broke out after the long stretch of silence, every pair of eyes in the room still trailing after them. She was

no longer used to this level of attention, she had learned to live without it, and having it all pointed at her now was somewhat overwhelming, even though she had once moved through gatherings like this without thinking twice. Still, she kept herself composed.

"You're doing well, my love." Sebastian murmured, feeling her nails digging into his forearm, and she turned to him with a smile that was trying too hard to hide what was going on underneath it.

"Am I? I feel like my legs have turned to jelly and I might trip and fall and embarrass myself in front of everyone. I had forgotten what it feels like to be stared at like this."

"Do you want to sit down?" He asked, already beginning to steer her toward where the tables were set, but she stopped him.

"Nobody is sitting yet. Let's mingle and—"

"Sebastian, darling!" Came a female voice, pitched loud enough to carry across a room full of people with sharp hearing, and every head turned toward Hailey as she walked straight toward him, smiling and swinging her hips deliberately with every step.

Viola had completely forgotten and pushed Hailey out of her mind after everything that had happened in the last few hours, and seeing her now, coming straight at them with that smile, made her look up at her husband instinctively for his reaction. His expression had gone completely blank and unreadable.

She had told herself she wasn't going to let jealousy take over this time. She had faith in him. But she still watched, quietly, carefully, for any flicker of reaction on his face as one of his mates approached. Subconsciously her arm tightened around his as Hailey closed the distance between them, close enough now that even Viola could pick up the heavy wave of her lavender scent.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 373: Hailey's humiliation[1,714 words]

"Oh darling, it has been so long, I can't believe you really stayed away from me that long." Hailey said, now standing directly before him, and then leaned forward and kissed his cheek.

When Sebastian didn't pull back from it, Viola felt a spike of panic cut through her, that there was still a bond there, that Hailey's plan to get him into her bed might actually have something to work with.

"Do you want to dance? I saved the first one just for you." Hailey said, reaching out to take his hand, the hand bent at the elbow where his wife's arm was tucked, but before her fingers could close around it, Viola's hand shot out and gripped her wrist, swinging her arm firmly away.

"You should at least have some respect and a little shame. I can see you are not blind, he is with me, Miss Hailey." Viola said, barely keeping the irritation out of her voice, and very aware of Sebastian's continued lack of reaction beside her. What was he feeling? Was there attraction building inside him for the shewolf? Was his mate bond sparking?

Hailey turned to look at Viola slowly, her smile half frozen on her face. "And who are you exactly? Since when did a fly start to talk?" She taunted, reaching again for Sebastian's hand, but this time Viola swatted it away with enough force that Hailey yelped in pain.

"How dare you, bitch!" She reached out to slap Viola, but before her hand could land, Sebastian had caught his wife's wrist and used her own palm to slap Hailey so hard she lost her balance, her ankle twisting beneath her as she fell back and found herself sprawled embarrassingly across the floor in front of everyone, who stared in collective disbelief.

Even Viola stared in disbelief. She hadn't expected Sebastian to use her own palm to deliver the slap, and a sharp, stinging pain radiated through it from the force of the impact, making her realize just how hard it had landed against the she-wolf's face.

She fought the urge to rub her throbbing palm, flexing her fingers to ease the lingering sting.

As though sensing the ache, he began to rub her palm slowly as he looked down at the disrespectful she-wolf who had walked up to strike his wife right in front of him.

Sebastian had said nothing and allowed her to kiss his cheek because he had wanted his wife to take control and put the she-wolf in her place, the same way he would have put any man who dared to advance on Viola firmly in theirs. But one thing he would not stand and watch was some nobody raising her hand at her.

"You've got some nerve, Hailey. What makes you think you can raise your hand at a Supreme Luna?" Sebastian's cold, hard voice cut through the hall and sent shivers down the spines of half the people present.

Hailey, whose face had already begun to swell from the impact of the slap, turned to him in pure disbelief. "You slapped me for that whore you call a Supreme Luna?" She gritted, pushing herself back up to her feet.

Sebastian's eyes narrowed at the shewolf. "I can see the slap has made you not only blind but hard of hearing too. I didn't slap you with my own hand, but continue the disrespect and I will do exactly that, and trust me, you will fucking lose your hearing for real if I do." He said with complete calm. "Get back to whatever you were doing before you attacked my wife." He gave her the choice, all while continuing to soothe Viola's palm.

But of course Hailey was not about to take the humiliation and slink back to her friends, not after everything she had bragged to them, and certainly not without getting her revenge and putting the whore in her place.

She saw everyone watching, some of them whispering among themselves about how thoroughly she had been humiliated after telling everyone she would soon be marrying the Supreme Alpha.

Hailey gritted her teeth, anger rising inside her as she slowly lifted her gaze to Sebastian.

"I can see she has some kind of spell on you, Supreme Alpha. But don't worry, I will break you out of it and show you exactly who the whore is." Saying that, Hailey turned to one of the nearby waiters and ordered, "Go and get Ethan and Cole, the omegas responsible for carrying the guests' luggage."

Someone hurried off to do exactly that.

The music in the hall died away as though the musicians had sensed the brewing drama. They stepped down from the stage, not wanting to miss a single moment of what was about to unfold.

The guests began pressing forward as well, drawn in by the spectacle before them. The rumors about the Supreme Luna cheating on her husband were still fresh in everyone's minds, and many were eager to see her publicly shamed for it.

"Don't piss me the fuck off, Hailey. Drop whatever drama you are cooking and get out of my sight." Sebastian warned her for the second time, but she only smiled.

"I am not cooking up drama. I am unveiling your so-called wife. Give me a moment and I will show you exactly what she does behind your back while she is here."

Viola knew precisely what Hailey was about to do. Kim had already told her, but Viola hadn't expected Hailey to expose it publicly and thought she would confront Sebastian in private.

Despite realizing Hailey intended to ruin her image in front of everyone, Viola didn't move a muscle. She wasn't nervous because she knew she was innocent of whatever scheme was about to unfold, and her husband's trust in her was about to be tested right there in front of everyone.

A few moments later, two good-looking male omegas arrived in the hall, men who didn't look like omegas at all from their appearance, more like playboys with piercings in their ears. Despite their rank, they had apparently found their way under the skirts of several she-wolf guests over the past two days, and their appeal in the room was obvious the moment they stepped in.

"Tell our Supreme Alpha how his wife sneaked you into their room in his absence and had you fuck her." Hailey said, arms crossed, smug expression firmly in place.

Viola had never seen either of these two men before in her life. She looked at them steadily, waiting to hear the kind of lies they were about to tell, and when they finally opened their mouths to speak, she realized she had never heard anyone tell such a convincing, detailed lie in all her years.

Everyone listened intently, gasping at every word that came out of their mouths.

"How did you end up in her room?" Hailey asked. "Don't leave anything out. Tell everyone exactly what happened."

"...she gave us the eye when we were carrying their luggage and we understood the signal. We went back to her and she was waiting for us naked on the bed with her legs spread, saying 'Fuck me please. My husband ain't good at it.' And we did just that because we can't say no to the Supreme, she's got us wrapped around her fingers."

The moment the words landed, the guests erupted into murmuring, disgust and shock rippling through the hall, people whispering about how she could insult the Supreme Alpha in such a way.

"At what time did she sneak you into the room?" Came Sebastian's question, directed at the two men, his expression giving absolutely nothing away.

Hailey could barely contain her satisfaction at the fact that he was engaging with it, asking questions, treating it as something to be investigated. Though she had paid the omegas to lie, she still believed in her gut that the wolfless had genuinely been with another man that day in that room, she just couldn't find out who among their workers.

One of them answered, "We never checked the time. We just went. It was night, that's all I know. And she was ready and waiting for us."

"And I can stand as a witness to that." Hailey added. "I went to welcome her to our home and ended up stumbling into the scene myself. She was moaning so disgustingly loud I wanted to throw up."

Viola was barely fazed by any of it, not by the words, not by the insults murmuring through the crowd. She only turned her head and looked up at her husband, who still wore that completely blank expression. What was he thinking? Did he believe these people?

And then he surprised her.

He reached out and removed her hand from around his elbow without so much as glancing at her.

For a moment Viola felt her heart seize with panic. They hadn't spent much of the afternoon together since arriving, they had been apart for stretches, and though she knew with absolute certainty that the night Hailey was referencing, she had been with Sebastian, he didn't know Hailey had come to the door that evening. He hadn't been there for any of it.

She almost opened her mouth to explain, but then he walked past her without looking at her, moving forward through the crowd.

Hailey's smug satisfaction was practically glowing off her as she watched him approach, and she was already preparing to step forward and wrap her arms around him in triumph, but he brushed straight past her too, and kept walking until he reached the two omegas standing slightly behind her.

"What a waste it will be of two strong men like you." He said quietly. "I hope you learn not to lie like this, if you get a chance at a next life."

Saying that, Sebastian's hands moved. Before anyone could speak or step back, he placed both hands on the heads of the two men and with the full force of his strength, smashed them together.

A single bursting sound cracked through the hall as their skulls met like two pumpkins being smashed, blood spraying across the floor and across the guests who hadn't moved back in time.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 374: Luna Viola[1,035 words]

Blood immediately began pooling across the ground, spreading over the once-clean floor as the two bodies remained where they had fallen, their heads smashed beyond recognition. The Supreme Alpha stood over them with tiny droplets of blood splattered across his face and the front of his suit jacket.

He looked like the Grim Reaper collecting souls, the dark, murderous, utterly unapologetic expression on his face suffocating the entire atmosphere.

Nobody moved for a full minute, too stunned, too caught off guard by what had just happened right before their eyes.

It wasn't unusual for Alphas to kill omegas who had committed grave offenses, but they were usually given a trial first because, no matter how weak they were, they were still pack members. Yet the way the Supreme Alpha had killed them was so cold, so merciless, that it sent shivers down everyone's spine.

Hailey's face had gone as pale as a ghost, most of the blood having landed on her million-dollar dress and across her skin. She and everyone around her were still frozen in place, still hadn't fully recovered, when Sebastian turned to face the crowd and addressed them in a voice so cold and so controlled it felt like winter had descended on the hall without warning and turned everything to ice.

"This should serve as a clear warning to anyone who thinks they can lie about my Luna. If anyone, and I mean anyone, regardless of rank or where they come from, disrespects her, they will suffer consequences far worse than what just happened here." He said, and then his eyes moved to Hailey. "Which brings me back to you."

Hailey saw the look in his eyes and began backing away in genuine fear, but before Sebastian could move toward her, her father and brother had stepped forward along with a handful of important Alphas who had been mingling and talking earlier about what a promising match Hailey and the Supreme Alpha would make, only for them to see this scene.

Alpha Daniel had been speaking about it proudly all evening, certain Hailey would succeed and that Sebastian wouldn't keep a cheating Luna by his side. Instead he had watched his daughter get slapped and thrown to the floor, and now she was in very serious trouble as the Supreme Alpha stood there looking like he was on the edge of smashing her head as well, the veins in his neck broadening and rising visibly against his skin in rage.

"Daddy!" Hailey scrambled to put herself behind him the moment he stepped forward. "He's going to hurt me because I tried to shed light on what his Luna has been doing behind his back."

Her words only made Sebastian's anger rise further. Fur began pushing up along his skin as his wolf fought to break free of his control and bite off her idiotic head.

'Let me out! I want to teach her a good lesson!' Muffin groaned, fighting for freedom he hadn't had in a long time.

Viola, still in shock from the deaths of the two omegas, noticed the fur beginning to spread across his body and hurried to his side immediately. She knew that if he transformed right there, it would be seen as a direct challenge, one that could easily escalate into a war, something she desperately didn't want, especially because it was Tess's happy day and she refused to let it be ruined for the couple.

She placed her hand gently against his back and began rubbing slow, steady circles over it, trying to calm him down. Then she turned to face both Hailey and her father, deciding it was finally time to speak.

"Shed light, or try to destroy my reputation, Miss Hailey? Everything you said in this hall today is a lie. I never slept with any omega, and I have no reason to prove that to you, but—"

"Are you calling my daughter a liar, Luna Victoria?" Alpha Daniel cut in, his eyes hardening as he glared at the wolfless woman standing before him, getting her name wrong again as she was unimportant to him.

"Don't you fucking glare at her or I will rip your eyes out, Daniel." Sebastian's voice came out dark and quiet and utterly cold, and it shocked the room all over again, because Alpha Daniel was not only the Alpha of the second largest pack in the world but was old enough to have been a peer of Sebastian's own father.

Nobody had expected him to go that far for his wolfless wife, and the people in that hall who had been quietly harboring intentions against the Supreme Luna suddenly understood with complete clarity that going after her meant going through this man, this wall, who they had all mistakenly believed didn't care about her.

Alpha Daniel met Sebastian's eyes and said, "I will pretend I did not hear those words, Supreme Alpha. But I will not stand here and watch my daughter be shamed and humiliated by—"

"With respect, Alpha Daniel, I am the Supreme Luna, and I am well within my right to say exactly what I believe." Viola's voice cut in clearly, and she held his gaze without flinching when he turned to her. "Since when does the higher rank answer to the lower? What position does your daughter hold that gives her the right to accuse me publicly of something I did not do? I can speak, and I will, even to you."

Alpha Daniel's expression was one of pure shock, his eyes widening as though he had never expected those words to come from her mouth.

In truth, by rank and position, she stood far above both him and his daughter. Even he was expected to show her respect when everything was viewed according to werewolf law. However, because she was wolfless, Alpha Daniel had always considered her rank to mean very little, believing it existed only in name.

Now, in front of everyone, he was being reminded of exactly where he stood beneath her, and it felt like a public humiliation.

"Luna Victoria—" he began, but she cut him off sharply.

"It's Viola," she said, her voice hard and unwavering. "Luna Viola."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 375: Real damage[1,135 words]

Viola had been quiet for too long about too many things in their world. Laila had been right, some people only understood when they were put firmly in their place. She had been knocked down time and again even while standing in the highest position in their entire world, and the hollow had humbled her so deeply she had almost forgotten who she once was and what she was capable of.

But Sebastian had told her again and again that he had her back, and today he had proven it in front of everyone, and that proof had given her back something she had spent years losing.

She had the room's full attention and she used it.

"Your daughter came to our room the night we arrived here. She disrespected me right there at the door and I let it go. As for me sleeping with omegas, you can ask her how she arrived at such a thing, because I remember that night very clearly. I was far too occupied with my husband to have had any visitors." She said, looking directly at the she-wolf still hiding behind her father and brother.

"That wasn't the Supreme Alpha in that room. She's lying—"

Sebastian's arm came around Viola and pulled her against his side as he looked straight at Hailey. "What exactly made you think it wasn't me? I was with my wife every night, that night included, and I heard you disrespecting her through the door of that room quite clearly."

Viola looked up at him in genuine surprise. She had believed until this moment that he hadn't heard any of what had passed between her and Hailey that night outside the door.

But in fact Sebastian had heard every word of it, and had smiled to himself in quiet amusement and even participated in making sure the she-wolf heard exactly where she stood while he was here. However, it turned out Hailey's head was filled with mush and she lacked the brain to see that he was completely and madly in love with his wife.

He had assumed she had gotten the picture, had assumed that was the very reason she had kept herself out of his presence for the rest of the visit. But who could have anticipated she would come up with a scheme this crazy to humiliate Viola publicly?

"How could that have been you she was with? You—" Hailey began to argue, but her father turned hard eyes on her and shut her up cold.

He could not believe she had been stupid enough to come up with an accusation she hadn't even witnessed with her own eyes. Alpha Daniel had believed her completely and had thought she was positioning herself closer to Sebastian by shedding light on his wife's supposed affairs, only to realize now that she hadn't seen a single thing she claimed to have seen.

And to think she was still talking, still pushing when things had turned this way, with the Supreme Alpha standing there looking the way he was looking.

Alpha Daniel would have had far more to say in this situation had his daughter not been so clearly in the wrong, but if he kept defending her now, everyone in this hall would see him as complicit and stand firmly on the Supreme Alpha's side.

He cleared his throat and said, "Hailey, apologize to the Supreme Luna for the misunderstanding you have caused and let us put this to rest."

Hailey looked ready to crack her own head open before she would give that bitch a single word of apology. She was already parting her lips to tell her father exactly that, that she would not apologize because she was not the one in the wrong here, when Sebastian spoke.

"My Luna does not need her apology."

Hailey exhaled and began to let a smile form on her face, but Sebastian wasn't done talking.

"Because an apology is far too little for the damage she has caused. If she is allowed to walk away from this with only an apology, your daughter will believe it is perfectly acceptable to shame any she-wolf she takes issue with, especially my Luna. Every action should carry a consequence equal to the damage it has done."

Alpha Daniel tried to laugh it off and play it cool. "There hasn't been any real damage done beyond anything that requires more than an apology, Supreme Alpha. Hailey was only acting on what she believed was helping you. Everything was just a big misunderstanding."

Sebastian's eyes narrowed on the man. He reached out, took his wife's hand, and opened her palm to the room, showing the visible pinkness there from the force of the slap Hailey had received through it.

"Here is one damage. Your daughter did this to her. And let's not even get into the ruining of her mood and mine, that alone is worth more than a simple punishment."

Viola looked at Sebastian, unable to believe he was adding pettiness to the argument and yet not parting her lips to tell him to let it go. She wasn't kind enough for that, not this time. She knew that letting it slide would only make Hailey believe she was an easy target and do it again.

"I didn't do that to her, you used her own hand to slap me in the face!" Hailey cried out from behind her father, her face still throbbing from the pain of the slap.

"Your daughter walked herself straight into range of being slapped, and she will be punished for it. That is my final verdict, unless you want me to withdraw every benefit you receive from my pack and declare war against you." Sebastian said seriously.

Alpha Daniel could not say another word at the mention of war. Had he been the one to push for war against Sebastian first, he might have gathered enough supporters behind him, but not now, not like this, not when the murmuring around them was making it clear that most of the guests believed Hailey was in the wrong and should accept her punishment. People were already whispering about how she could have pulled a scheme like this on her own brother's big day.

"All right. I will have her locked in her room as punishment." Alpha Daniel said, and Hailey went pale behind him and grabbed at his arm. "Daddy!"

"Shut up!" Alpha Daniel snapped at her.

"Neither of us will be deciding her punishment, Daniel." Sebastian said, and then turned to his wife with a voice so warm and tender it was a completely different sound from the one he had been using on everyone else in the room. "My Luna will have the full say. What would you like to happen to her?"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 376: Supportive husband[1,391 words]

Viola was surprised that he had given her the right to decide the punishment, and for a brief moment she was caught completely off guard as every single pair of eyes in the room turned toward her, waiting to hear the judgment she would pass.

Viola's eyes turned towards Hailey, who despite everything was still glaring at her, still not a trace of remorse, still not sorry for the mess she had made of this day. If she was someone with common sense, she wouldn't pick this day of all days to attack Viola with accusations, considering it was her brother's mating ceremony.

She had promised herself never to become a cruel person without reason, but Hailey deserved a taste of what life was like without her father's power and position. She needed a reality check, and maybe that would strengthen her and knock some sense into her.

Without missing a single beat, Viola said,

"She will live in the dungeon for one month and be brought out every morning to clean up after the guests, strictly supervised by two of Silver's Gammas. Failure to do as ordered will earn her twenty lashes of a wolfsbane whip a day."

Hailey's face drained of all color. She began shaking her head, grabbing at her father's arm desperately, but Alpha Daniel no longer had any say in the matter. It was either stand with his daughter and lose every shred of face he had left in front of the guests he had been hoping to rally, or step aside and salvage what remained of his dignity.

As hard as it was, he chose the latter. Hailey had humiliated him too badly today, in exactly the place he had needed things to go well.

He stepped aside.

Silver Gammas, double the size of the Grim pack's own, moved into the hall and seized Hailey, who immediately began to resist and scream, reaching out to her family members one by one as they each turned away as though they didn't know her, as she had brought this upon herself and messed with the wrong person.

She even reached for Kim, and her little sister sidestepped her and for the first time looked her directly in the eye with a cold, satisfied expression.

"Enjoy your days as the cleaner, sis." Kim gave her a small wave, feeling deeply satisfied, because just that very morning Hailey had snapped the necklace Liza had given her right off her neck and thrown it aside, saying it looked too cheap to be worn anywhere near her.

Out of sheer shame at his daughter's actions, Alpha Daniel was forced to apologize to both the wolfless and the Supreme Alpha, who was young enough to be his own son, and then he made his way to his seat without mingling with anyone, promising himself this wasn't over for that wolfless had just humiliated him.

"Are you all right?" Sebastian asked his wife, who was leaning against him as though her legs were no longer completely sure of themselves.

Viola nodded, even though she felt shaky on the inside for some reasons. For a moment, that one moment when he had removed her hand from his elbow and walked past her, she had been genuinely terrified about what he was going to do. And then he had killed those omegas, whose bodies were now being dragged out of the hall while the blood stains were being mopped from the floor.

"I'm just a little shaky but I'll be fine." She said, looking up at him with a smile, and noticing the dried blood spots on his face and front coat.

"Are you sure? If you don't feel well we can go back to the room and—"

"No. We need to mingle and I don't want to be a coward who hides. Tess is my friend and I owe her an apology for the drama at her special day. It's not fair if her day ends like this."

She took his handkerchief from his pocket and began carefully cleaning the blood from his face. When she found it had dried, she dipped the corner of the fabric into a glass of water that a nearby omega quickly brought and wiped it away properly, while everyone around them watched and quietly thanked the moon goddess that they had not disrespected the Supreme Luna, because it was now unmistakably clear what the outcome of that would have looked like.

Because the cold, unapproachable Supreme Alpha was standing there letting his wife clean his face with a look of pure, unguarded tenderness in his eyes, and he had bent down to make it easier for her without her having to strain upward to reach him.

"Thank you." Viola whispered when she was done.

He looked at her with a playful glare. "Why are you thanking me? Didn't I promise to always have your back and clean up after any mess?"

He stroked her cheek and she pressed her face gently into his palm. "It's been a long time since anyone stood up for me like that." She said again, earnestly and from the deepest part of her heart, because not even during her time as the princess of Moonwillow had anyone ever put themselves between her and the world the way he just had, made her feel that she could stand wherever she wanted because he was the wall at her back, supporting her.

Sebastian was parting his lips to speak when Kenny and Tess approached them both, looking sheepish and genuinely embarrassed, and Kenny said,

"My sincerest apologies for what Hailey did. I am deeply sorry on her behalf, Supreme Luna."

Viola moved to the side and looked at the Alpha heir of the Grim pack, who she had fully expected to be annoyed with her over the drama that had unfolded, but he was apologizing instead.

"I should be the one apologizing, Alpha heir. I was the reason today turned out the way it did and I am deeply sorry for it." She gave her words sincerely, and he looked genuinely surprised that the Supreme Luna was apologizing to him when she had just put his own father firmly in his place.

"And you too, Tess. I truly didn't wish for any of this to happen on your day." Viola added, and Tess waved her hand dismissively.

"It's all right, none of this was your fault. You were the one being accused on my ceremony day, not the other way around. And by the way, you look absolutely stunning." She complimented warmly, and Viola smiled with visible relief that she hadn't lost her new friend to the chaos of the afternoon.

They were still standing together talking when Zoe came striding through the crowd of guests to reach them too.

"What a drama that was, Vee. I had no idea she was planning to do something like that in public when Kim told us," Zoe said with an exasperated sigh.

"Hailey can be unpredictable. I learned that too during the few weeks I've been here. I'm just glad everything was resolved so clearly," Tess said, unable to hide the little spark of happiness in her heart over what had happened to her future sister-in-law, who had never liked her and always found a way to insult her in public instead of making her feel welcome in the family.

"She must have made your life hell," Zoe said, already able to relate because her brother had had many mates in the past who hadn't liked the attention he gave her. They hated how he fussed over her, reminded her to take her medication, and always found little reasons to attack or belittle her because of it. "I can relate. Hailey stayed in Silver in the past and..."

Even though his sister was the topic of conversation between his mate and her new friends, Ken didn't say a word in her defense. He simply listened to them, just as the Supreme Alpha was quietly listening to the girls talk, laughing and gushing over one another's outfits.

Zoe finally turned and held out a gift bag to Tess.

"I got this for you at the last minute. I hope you like it. I had to send my brother's Gamma back home to get it for me last night."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 377: Laila meeting Gilbert[1,296 words]

Tess opened the bag and found a beautiful, neatly folded dress inside with the tag of Zoe's fashion house attached, and her eyes went wide with delight.

"Thank you so much! Can I hug you?" Tess asked and Zoe opened her arms. "Why not? Come over here."

They hugged each other, laughing, and the group formed naturally around them, with Zoe pulling Gilbert forward and introducing him to Tess as her boyfriend.

While all of this was happening, Sebastian, standing beside the Alpha heir and watching the women fall into easy, comfortable conversation as though they had known each other for years, was lifting a glass of wine to his lips when he stopped.

His expression shifted immediately, turning dark and stormy, his eyes narrowing on his sister, who had not breathed a single word to him about dating Gilbert until just now, in public, in front of everyone.

Since they had arrived here, he had spoken to Gilbert and worked closely with him on planning the mermaid sacrifice, yet not once had the doctor mentioned being in a relationship with his sister.

Sebastian was about to speak when he felt his wife's arm slip through his and she leaned in close.

"I forgot to mention it to you with everything that was happening, but please don't bring it up here with her right now. We can talk about it once we are back in the room. Everyone's eyes are on us at this moment."

Viola reasoned quietly, sensing both his anger and his confusion, because he had been told Laila was Gilbert's fated mate, and now here was Gilbert standing with his arm around his sister.

This wasn't the right moment for him to confront them. Every pair of eyes in the hall was fixed on their group because they moved within the circle of the most influential werewolves, and even the smallest incident could quickly turn into a big scandal, especially with the werewolf media people and paparazzi around the hall.

Sebastian would never accept this relationship, knowing full well that Zoe was walking straight toward heartbreak. As long as Gilbert remained bonded to another woman, there was no way he could give Zoe the life and love she deserved. Sebastian knew better than anyone how powerful the pull of the mate bond could be.

Sebastian swallowed his anger and every word he wanted to say and began brewing on it internally, waiting for the moment he could confront the doctor properly.

It seemed there was a great deal left to clear up once this ceremony was over, including the pending conversation about Natalie that he still needed to have with Viola before she heard the full story from someone else and it became another misunderstanding.

He suddenly found he had very little interest in remaining at this ceremony or in making any kind of meaningful connection with the Grim pack today.

Right at that moment, as though they hadn't already been through enough shocking drama and revelations for one day, Laila Serrano made her entrance in an elegant red dress that emphasized every curve of her hourglass figure. Her high heels clicked confidently against the floor with every step, immediately drawing every eye in the hall toward her.

Whispers broke out immediately and eyes followed her across the room, and Laila, who had never once in her life felt self-conscious about being stared at, immediately began to feel it and quietly regretted arriving so late and walking into a hall already full of people.

She looked around quickly and her eyes found Viola, Zoe and Tess, and the visible relief on her face was immediate as she made her way toward them.

She hugged Tess first and then Viola. "Please tell me I didn't miss the interesting part? I saw Hailey being dragged out by Silver's Gammas on my way in, someone needs to tell me everything I missed right now..." Her words trailed off the moment she sensed it.

Her mate.

She turned toward him instinctively, and found him standing there with his arm around Zoe's waist.

Laila's emerald eyes trembled. And as though he had been caught doing something he had no business doing, which was exactly what the mate bond was making him feel, Gilbert removed his arm from around Zoe and put a small, telling distance between them, his eyes doing everything they could to avoid meeting Laila's directly. She put two and two together in the span of a single breath and immediately understood.

"You missed so much, you missed Vee putting Hailey exactly where she belongs." Zoe said, buzzing with excitement, too caught up in the energy of the group to notice that her partner had quietly taken his arm away from around her.

"Are you all right, Laila?" Tess asked, noticing that the she-wolf had gone completely still and was staring fixedly at Zoe's boyfriend, and even Zoe finally caught it, the sudden awareness of the space that had quietly formed between her and Gilbert settling over her face as confusion.

"I'm fine, Tess." Laila said, not taking her eyes off her mate, who was looking at everything and everyone but her, the guilt written plainly across his face, the kind that came from a mate bond even when there was no commitment, even when nothing had been agreed to. It still sat in the chest like cheating, and it showed.

"Oh, I forgot to properly introduce you two." Zoe said, pushing through the awkward atmosphere with her usual energy. "This is Doctor Gilbert, you already know him, of course, he's my boyfriend. And Gilbert, this is Laila. She's a she-wolf I've recently come to realize I can actually be friends with. She's softer than she lets on and more caring than she looks." Zoe introduced cheerfully, even as something in the back of her mind told her the atmosphere wasn't quite right.

Had it been any other she-wolf, Laila thought as she heard Zoe introducing her in a way no one ever had before, she would have torn every strand of hair from her head by now for ruining her plans and showing up here as her mate's date and girlfriend.

After spending time with the Supreme Alpha's sister the previous day, along with the others, Laila had genuinely come to like her and the others like friends. She had even made plans to have Zoe design a killer dress for her to seduce her mate once they returned to Silver, but it turned out Gilbert was her boyfriend.

"We've actually already met," Laila said, and Gilbert finally turned to look at her directly, hoping with every part of him that she wouldn't announce in front of everyone that they shared a mate bond.

He had been planning to tell Zoe about Laila himself. He didn't want her finding out from the she-wolf and having her heart broken that way, especially when there was nothing between him and Laila worth causing drama over with his girlfriend.

"You have?" Zoe asked, genuinely surprised, because Laila's world and Gilbert's were as far apart as two worlds could be, and the known rivalry between their families that went back to the earliest days of Silver pack made any prior connection between them feel almost impossible.

"Yes." Laila said, and turned to Zoe. "He didn't tell you about me?"

Zoe looked more confused by the second.

Viola glanced at her husband, whose expression was growing darker and darker with every passing second, his eyes fixed on his sister.

"No. Is there something he should have told me about you? What's going on here?" Zoe asked, looking around at the faces surrounding her, sensing that there was something everyone knew that she didn't, and the unease was beginning to show.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 378: The supreme Luna surprise[1,501 words]

When no one seemed willing to tell her what was going on, her brother finally did.

"Your boyfriend and Laila are fated mates." Sebastian delivered the news so calmly and evenly that no one would have guessed from his tone alone how much he wanted to break Gilbert's head, even knowing he couldn't afford to, not while the doctor was the only one with any real chance of helping Viola recover her wolf and conduct the mermaid sacrifice that will break his curse.

"What?" Zoe muttered, the disbelief hitting her quietly, not loudly. She turned to Gilbert, who already looked guilty enough to answer every question she hadn't asked yet, and he reached out to her immediately, but she stepped back.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because there is nothing between us beyond that." He said, and the earnestness in his voice was real and unmistakable. "Yes, she is my fated mate. But I have never accepted that bond and I never will. You are the one I want and the one I intend to build my life with. Please believe me, Zoe."

He meant it so completely that she stopped stepping back. She stood there and looked into his eyes that looked torn.

Zoe understood how fated mate bonds worked. She understood that he must have been fighting it all this while, that every absent-minded moment, every time he had spaced out on their date, every invisible wall she had been knocking against had a name now. And even as her eyes stung with the realization that he was the man Laila had been talking to her about, the one Laila had said she wanted and intended to fight for and seduce if she had to, Zoe didn't know what to do with any of it.

But then she thought about it properly. Gilbert and Laila's families were known rivals, a conflict that ran deep and old. And from everything she could see, Gilbert didn't want Laila. He had been

putting real effort into her since this morning, more than he had before, and she could not picture a single day without him now that she had let herself imagine one with him.

She had loved this man for half her life. She wanted to be with him and from every sign in front of her he wanted to be with her too, and he had never once committed himself to Laila in any way for Zoe to feel betrayed.

If she walked away now, she would spend the rest of her life regretting it. Because she knew, with the quiet certainty of someone who had examined it from every angle, that she would never love anyone the way she loved him. And she had long since accepted that her wolf would never return to full strength nor heal completely, that a fated mate of her own was not something the moon goddess had written for her. She had to live the life in front of her.

Viola, watching all of it unfold, saw Zoe's eyes move from Laila to Gilbert, who was holding out his hand to her, his expression open and pleading and completely unguarded.

Zoe looked at Laila and said quietly, "I'm sorry, but I love him."

Then she took his hand.

He pulled her into his arms, and they held each other. For a long moment, neither of them said anything at all. They simply held on to each other tightly.

Tears filled Laila's emerald eyes as she watched them, and for the first time in her life, she did something she had never done before. She backed away without causing a scene, without staking her claim on her mate, without letting everyone know that this was where she rightfully belonged.

Her heart twisted painfully inside her chest, sending needle-like stabs of pain through her that she had never experienced in all her life. She couldn't breathe, and a large lump the size of a golf ball lodged itself in her throat. If she stayed another moment watching her mate turn away from her, she would shatter into dust.

She handed Tess the gift she had brought before quietly saying, "Excuse me. I need some air."

Before anyone could say anything she had turned and was walking away, hurrying out of the hall in her high heels with whispers trailing behind her back.

Gilbert's eyes went over Zoe's shoulder to follow Laila's broken, retreating figure and his arms tightened around Zoe instinctively.

"I'm sorry for not telling you sooner. I wanted the bond with her to fade on its own, and it will, once I mark you someday. After that, you will be the only one I think about."

"I am not blessing this relationship." Sebastian muttered under his breath, and Viola, standing right next to him, heard every word clearly.

She looked up at him. She didn't entirely know what to think of it herself or whose side to stand on, the relationship felt wrong somehow, in a way she couldn't fully put into words. But she also knew that with the depth of love Zoe carried for Gilbert, there was no way Sebastian could break it apart without breaking Zoe along with it.

Viola's mind drifted back to her own situation, Sebastian's past resurfacing, casting a quiet cloud over their future, and the conversation about Natalie still waiting for tonight. The thought alone dampened her mood again.

She quickly realized that no matter how hard she had tried not to be the reason Tess's day was ruined, it was already ruined by many factors. The drama with Hailey had been all anyone talked about at first, and then the conversation had shifted to the she-wolf who had fallen from grace and been publicly rejected by her fated mate right there in the middle of the hall.

Even though what was said between Laila, Gilbert, and Zoe had been spoken in relatively measured voices, werewolf hearing had caught enough of it, and the words were already spreading from person to person, accompanied by laughter at Laila's expense.

Even Zoe and Gilbert had a stiff, fragile air around them now.

Sebastian was making no effort with Kenny anymore, his expression cold and dark, his eyes repeatedly tracking back to his sister and her boyfriend across the room.

Viola could feel his anger radiating off him like heat, the danger of it threatening to break loose, and the atmosphere in the hall had long since stopped being lively enough for her to approach anyone and build the connections she had planned for.

Even the musicians on the stage seemed to have picked up on it, their music matching the deflated mood of the room rather than lifting it. Viola was no longer confident about her plans to surprise Tess and Kenny, and Sebastian, the way she had intended.

But the preparations had already been made. And when she looked over at Tess, who was standing across the room wearing a smile that didn't touch her eyes, forcing warmth for every guest who approached her on what was supposed to be the happiest day of her life, Viola made up her mind.

She leaned toward Sebastian. "Excuse me."

He finally turned to look at her, a small frown crossing his face. "Where are you going?"

"I need to use the restroom." She told him, and watched him give a reluctant nod.

"Don't be long."

"I won't." She stepped away from his side, and Sebastian watched her go, his eyes following her back until she disappeared around a corner, feeling her ruined mood. He was still looking when Matt appeared at his side.

"What a damper for the couple, man. The party was supposed to be about them and your family took the whole spotlight with drama." Matt remarked with a chuckle that didn't quite reach his heart, and Sebastian said flatly,

"Shut up."

"I wasn't going to come near your group earlier, it looked tense from thirty feet away. So what do you think about Zoe and the doc?" He asked, and Sebastian finally turned to look at him properly.

"You knew about it?"

"Only found out yesterday. It shocked me too. I walked out and caught them kissing. I had a talk with the doc and made it clear what would happen to him if he hurts her. I'll tear his limbs apart myself if anything goes wrong in that relationship," Matt said the way he said everything important, plainly, and meaning every single word.

No matter how much time had passed, Zoe was still that little girl he had helped keep happy in order to fill the empty space left behind by the deaths of her parents, and no man was going to hurt her on his watch, not even now that she was an adult.

Sebastian was about to reply when his eyes caught movement in the crowd, someone cutting toward them with an easy, familiar smile on his face.

"What is he doing here?"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 379: The Mermaid[1,044 words]

"What is he doing here?"

Matt turned to follow his gaze and found Nick walking in their direction. "He's friends with Kenny's distant cousin, the one who works in Silver's tech company."

Sebastian didn't like Nick being anywhere near where his wife was, for reasons he could already sense clearly enough. His cousin was carrying feelings for her that Sebastian would never allow. On top of that, Nick was someone Sebastian had been quietly growing suspicious of for some time, though he couldn't bring himself to fully commit to that suspicion. He had kept men watching Nick almost his entire life, the same way they had watched Javier and his mother, and Nick had always come back clean of his brother's particular brand of greed.

"Supreme Alpha." Nick greeted as he reached them, smiling easily, and Sebastian acknowledged him with a stiff nod.

"Hey, Zoe!" Nick walked towards his cousin and pulled her into a hug, which she returned before immediately grumbling at him. "Where have you been hiding? I've almost forgotten you exist, you've become completely scarce."

Zoe was only joking, but she had no idea her cousin took it to heart the way he did. Nick's smile went just slightly stiff at the corners. He hated being forgettable more than he hated almost anything else, more than the fact that he had never once measured up to Javier in his mother's eyes. He buried it under his easy expression and said,

"I didn't know I was that easy to forget." Then his eyes moved around the group. "Where's Vee?"

He had only glanced away from this side of the hall, where he had been mingling with friends and keeping up with their drama, for a brief moment. When he looked back, she was gone.

More than anything else right now, he wanted an opportunity to get her alone, away from the husband who was constantly at her side to carry on with his plans for her. He wouldn't be able to rest until he got the kiss he had witnessed her giving his cousin. Nick's blood boiled at the memory, and every part of him roared with the desperate need to know what her lips felt like.

"Vee went to the restroom—" Zoe's words cut off as the lights in the hall suddenly died.

Every light went out except for the ones on the stage, which came on in a single warm beam and pulled every eye in the room toward it. The chattering dissolved into quiet murmuring.

"What's going on?"

"Who knows. The ceremony has been boring anyway, there's been no real entertainment."

"They should just do the marking and get it over with. Hailey already ruined everything for her brother."

"What's about to happen again?"

While everyone was still wondering, a figure stepped into the spotlight on the stage, the light catching her and the grand piano that had been placed there, and a microphone positioned in front of it. People recognized her immediately as the Supreme Luna and exchanged glances, wondering when she had slipped up there and what she was about to do.

Sebastian stared at his wife as she made her way to the stool in front of the piano and sat down. Was she going to play? He had never once heard her play anything before, had never even known whether she could, despite the fact that her penthouse, like most homes in Silver, housed a piano.

"This is a gift from me to the couple." Her voice came through the microphone, clear and warm. "And to someone very special, amidst a million."

Her fingers found the first keys, and slowly the notes began to build and breathe outward into the entire hall. It was a sweet, deeply romantic symphony that reached into the chest of every person in the room and held on, the chattering stopped completely, every single person drawn toward the stage without fully realizing they were moving. Even Laila, who had been crying quietly out on the balcony, turned her head at the sound.

Sebastian stood transfixed. The melody she played washed over him, dissolving every trace of the anger that had been simmering inside him and replacing it with something he knew so well, love and warmth.

The music flowed through the hall, filling every corner of it, and when she parted her lips and began to sing along with it, it took the breath from more than a few people in the crowd. Her voice was unlike anything. It moved like a healing balm across every wound in the room, its sweetness pulling tears to eyes and bittersweet smiles to lips that hadn't smiled genuinely in hours.

As Sebastian listened, he couldn't help the thought that crept in, was this what people meant when they said mermaids and sirens could charm any soul with their melody? Because this song was doing something to his heart that he couldn't put a name to, especially when she looked out across the hall in his direction and sang,

[...A love like no other. I can't say I love you enough, for my words could never be enough. Hold my hands, hold my heart, kiss my lips and take me home...]

Viola sang with everything she had, her whole heart poured into it, not thinking about anything beyond the music and the people she was singing for, completely unaware that when a mermaid sings, particularly one of royal blood, her voice carries something beyond melody. It could heal the most broken heart in a room. It could bring hope to someone who had forgotten what hope felt like. And it traveled.

The song moved through an invisible channel that only mermaids shared between themselves, carrying itself all the way back to Silver, where a certain mermaid was currently in the captivity of Sebastian's men, being transferred into a containment tube.

The mermaid swam to the glass and pressed both hands flat against it, her blue eyes wide and searching, making a sorrowful sound as though trying to reach the singer, as though she could hear it and was calling back across the distance.

"She's trying to charm you with those eyes. Lock the tube before the fucking creature pulls off another trick on us."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 380: The Mermaid_Part 2[1,329 words]

The men who had gone through the trouble of shipping the creature to Silver had suffered all kinds of injuries along the way and had nearly gone through a complete shipwreck, because the creature had been using her tail to slam against the tank she was trapped in, making sounds and shaking the ship from the inside.

They had lost three men to her sharp fins and pointed scales, which looked like the most beautiful jewels in the world but were as sharp as blades the moment she decided to use them to fight, and she had used them more than once.

Now, having finally brought her to their destination, she was acting restless again after being silent for hours, hitting the tube with her tail as though she intended to break through it.

The tube, however, had been built from unbreakable materials specifically for stubborn sea creatures like her. That didn't stop the mouths of every werewolf who laid eyes on her from watering, because the fish half of a mermaid was the most prized and delicious delicacy known to their kind.

"The Supreme Alpha only wants her heart, we can bargain for the fish part. I've never tasted it before but I've heard it's something else." Remarked one of the three men standing watch over the long tank that ran from ceiling to floor, filled with clear water in which the creature swam up and down looking for a way out, her bluish tail catching the light with every movement.

She made a sound like a wail and slammed her tail against the glass.

"That tail sure is strong. Can't wait to have a taste of it. She must be calling to her fucking partner with those cries. The bastard killed Willy."

"She's glaring at us," muttered another one. "Glare all you want. If you don't stop making those annoying sounds, we'll find your partner and kill it too to avenge our friend. You should consider yourself lucky you're still alive, but you won't be for long once our Supreme Alpha gets back."

The mermaid suddenly stopped struggling. She suspended herself in the middle of the tank and raised both hands slowly. The men, confident that she couldn't escape or do anything from within that sealed tank, watched with curious eyes, waiting to see what trick she was trying to pull this time.

But as they watched, the ground beneath their feet began to shake. A crack split through the floor and water began gushing up through it, flooding the ground faster than any of them had expected, and their eyes went wide.

"Fucking fish! I told you she's royalty and has more power than the others! She's going to flood all of Silver if you don't give her more of the sedative dosage!" One of them shouted as they scrambled to keep their footing and hold back the panic rising in their chests.

The water coming up through the floor didn't just flood, it moved. It shaped itself into something like a snake, coiling and striking, wrapping around the throats of two of the men and slicing their heads clean off in a single motion as though a blade had passed through them.

The third man saw it happen and lunged for the control panel on the wall, and if he had been even a step further away from that button, the water would have reached him too. His palm hit the switch, and a blue liquid released into the tank immediately, and the mermaid went limp, sinking slowly to the bottom of it as the gushing water retreated back underground.

The man stood there with water up to his knees, breathing hard, staring at the heads of his companions on the floor as the flood receded around his feet. His heart was slamming so hard in his chest he could barely think straight.

He didn't waste another second. He covered the water tank with a tarpaulin and backed away from it. Then he reached for his phone and called the Beta, to report that the mermaid they had captured was far more powerful than anticipated and was almost certainly one of the royals, whose strength was known to be in a class entirely its own.

Back in the Grim pack, the hall that had been carrying the weight of gloom and tension was now filled with movement and smiles, people dancing around the floor with a warmth that hadn't been there an hour before.

The Supreme Luna had won the hearts of the room without even trying, her song had reached into every chest and loosened something there. And the moment she finished and began stepping down from the stage, the Alpha heir, who could never walk away from music, had come forward with his guitar and asked if they could sing together.

Their voices combined into something that the people in that hall would be talking about long after the ceremony was over. A masterpiece born in a moment of unexpected joy. And as they sang and the emotional current of the song moved through her, Viola's eyes filled with tears and she poured her soul into every note, thinking about how far she had come, and the people who had found her along the way. Zoe, Sebastian, Nick, Tess, and even Laila, despite everything between them at the beginning. And now the Alpha heir singing beside her, grinning like he had just been handed the whole world on his mating day.

Wasn't this something. Wasn't this something worth feeling.

After betraying her sister as a little girl. After being adopted and turning hard and mean in the effort to be liked, and letting that cruelty carve a path that had almost broken her entirely. She thought of Ivy, and a lump rose in her throat and tears blurred her vision without her being able to stop them.

There was a bittersweet ache in her chest that she couldn't put down. Life was never meant to be all sunshine and warmth, she knew that, but she wished, quietly and deeply, that she could find every missing piece of herself. Know what had happened to her sister. Be wholly, completely, unguardedly happy without something always waiting in the shadows of it.

She ended the song carrying every happy and sad and bitter moment of her life at once, and somehow turned all of it into music.

When she finally stepped down from the stage, people came at her from every direction.

"I have never heard anyone sing like that in my life!"

"Supreme Luna, do you know anyone who sings as well as you just did? I would love to book them for my birthday. And if you don't mind, I can send you a special invitation to attend. Goddess, I would give anything to have you sing for me."

"Supreme Luna, can you do us the honor of sitting with my table?"

Viola had hoped this attention would help her make connections and find her place in the circles a Supreme Luna was supposed to move in, but she was too overwhelmed by her own emotions to do anything more than force a smile and reply to people one by one, and even hugged people.

Thankfully Sebastian came and pulled her away from the crowd, whose attention drifted naturally back toward the Alpha heir and his Luna-to-be, where it belonged, as today was their day.

Werewolf paparazzi moved through the hall, snapping pictures and shoving cameras toward the Supreme Luna, desperate to capture the perfect shot so they could plaster her across tomorrow's headlines. Earlier, none of them had paid much attention to her, too busy interviewing the people they considered important. Now they crowded around her, calling for her to look at their lenses and smile for the cameras, until a single look from the Supreme Alpha sent them stumbling backward, hurriedly redirecting their lenses elsewhere with shivers running down their spines.