

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 391: Apprehend Nick[1,715 words]

The moment Sebastian stepped out of the room, he connected to Matt.

'Is he in custody yet?'

'I didn't go with them, but the men are out looking for him, he isn't in his room.' Matt replied.

'Where are you? You should have gone with them to catch the bastard.'

Sebastian said, the frustration he had successfully kept hidden from his wife bleeding through to his friend without an effort to hide it, for it was boiling too hot in his chest.

'Chill, Seb. I'm with Zoe right now, but I'm leaving. I'll meet you in a moment.'

Matt looked down at the she-wolf curled up asleep on her bed, her cheek pillowed against her hand and her face turned toward him, making her look more like the little girl he remembered than the twenty-two-year-old woman she had become.

The memory of what had happened a little while earlier, before she had fallen asleep, brought a small smile to his face.

He had come to tell her the Luna was fine, and Zoe had wanted to go and see her immediately, but he had stopped her, knowing Sebastian likely wouldn't have let anyone in. She had asked him to stay a while, and he had offered to call Gilbert, and she had said,

"No, let him be. I don't want him worrying about me when he is dealing with the mate bond conflict."

"Are you really all right with him being fated to Laila?" Matt had asked, pulling the chair close to the bed and sitting down as she lay there looking at him.

"As long as he doesn't want the bond, I am okay with it. At least I know I am not forcing myself on him and that he chose me. I know he doesn't love me yet, I am not that naïve, but I believe he will someday." She had said it with an ease that surprised him, now that Vee was safe and the worst of the fear had lifted from her chest.

"What if you find your own fated mate someday?" Matt had asked, still not entirely settled about her being with Gilbert. What if Gilbert never fully got over Laila? What if he never truly loved Zoe? He had seen too many unhappy unions built on that kind of foundation, and he wouldn't want that life for her. He would rather she have a man who was head over heels for her from the beginning, someone who would bring the world down to her feet without needing to be convinced.

Zoe had chuckled softly. "A fated mate? Matt, I am almost twenty two and my wolf is still barely active, I can hardly smell anything beyond a human's range. I have already passed the window for awakening without sensing him. What are the chances I ever find him now? What if I never do, and I let my chance at love slip away because I was waiting for something that might never come?"

Matt had arched a brow, crossing his arms. "You talk as though you are approaching forty. You are still so young to be making a life decision as permanent as mating. You can afford to wait a little longer instead of rushing into it. You are still a baby to me, Zoe."

Zoe grabbed a pillow and smacked him with it.

"Stop treating me like a baby, Matt. We're werewolves. Most of us sense our mates and settle down by eighteen or nineteen. I'm twenty-two, and I've never been in a real relationship. Now that I finally am, you want me to let him go."

She glared at him, hurt shining in her gray eyes, and he raised both hands in surrender.

"Easy, brat. You're misunderstanding me. I'm just telling you to slow down and not rush things."

"You sound like a father, and you're only twenty-eight yourself."

Matt pointed a finger at her.

"Point of correction, I turned twenty-nine this year, which absolutely qualifies me to give a twenty-two-year-old little girl some advice. Take it or leave—"

He yelped as another pillow smacked him over the head.

"Ouch!"

"Don't even start," he warned when she reached for a third pillow, clearly ready to throw it if he said another word about Gilbert, the mating mark, or taking things slowly.

Zoe understood why everyone was worried. They didn't want to see her get hurt, and she appreciated that more than she could ever put into words. But she wasn't being reckless. She had thought everything through over and over again, and she still wanted him.

She was willing to take that chance for love.

She looked at Matt and saw him watching her warily because of the pillow. She didn't put it down. Instead, she hit him with it anyway, even though he hadn't said another word.

Matt immediately got up from the chair. Just as she reached for another pillow, he climbed onto the bed, one knee sinking into the mattress, and reached out to wrestle it from her hands.

But Zoe hugged it tightly to her chest.

"Drop the pillow or I will carry you and throw you and it off the balcony." He threatened. He could have used his full strength and taken it from her easily, but he didn't want to hurt her, so he didn't.

"I dare you!" She laughed, and Matt scooped her clean off the bed like she weighed nothing and began walking toward the balcony with her in his arms.

"Drop the pillow, Zoe." He said again.

"I won't. I'd like to see you throw me off the balcony. My brother will have your head."

But when he stepped out onto the balcony, the night view below stopped them both.

The marking ceremony was underway in the garden beneath them. The room Zoe had been given overlooked the entire garden, giving them a clear view of Tess and Kenny, who were completely unaware of everything that had happened to the Supreme Luna just hours earlier. Matt had deliberately kept the incident quiet instead of announcing it publicly, allowing the ceremony to continue without being overshadowed by the chaos.

Zoe dropped the pillow without even realizing she had, her attention fixed entirely on what was happening below. To get more comfortable, she looped her arm around Matt's neck.

Matt turned to look at her face at the action, the breeze moving the silver strands of hair across her cheeks, her face bare of any makeup and still somehow effortlessly beautiful, and found her so absorbed in watching the couple below that he turned to look as well.

"I heard it's painful to be marked..." Zoe murmured, watching the expression on Tess's face.

"It is, for the she-wolf. But I've also heard it's the most beautiful pain there is, because it connects them to their destined one."

"I can't wait to connect to mine."

Matt glanced at her. "Are you getting desperate, Zoe?" he asked.

She frowned and turned to him. The movement brought her face so close to his that, for a brief moment, she forgot to breathe. She found herself staring into his hazel eyes until she caught herself and quietly replied,

"No... not desperate. Afraid."

The words slipped out before she even realized she'd said them, the cool night breeze stirring her hair.

Matt frowned.

"Afraid of what?" he asked gently.

What did she have to be afraid of when she had someone like Sebastian as her brother, along with him and the rest of his family, all of whom cared deeply about her?

Zoe adjusted her arm around his neck before looking away from his mesmerizing eyes and back toward the garden.

"I want to have what they have. And if I don't let my heart lead me to it..." she whispered, "...I'm afraid the day will never come when my wolf leads me to him."

She looked back at him, narrowing her eyes.

"And don't tell my brother I said that."

Matt smiled. "Don't worry. I won't."

"That's why you used to be my favorite, Matt." A sleepy smile tugged at her lips. "You always keep your word."

She yawned as she finished speaking before resting her head against his shoulder, finally losing the battle against exhaustion.

Right before his eyes, her lashes fluttered once... then drifted shut.

Matt remained quietly on the balcony, letting her sleep against him while the marking ceremony below came to its peaceful end.

Only after the last of the guests began to leave did he carry her back inside, lay her gently on the bed, and pull the blanket over her.

He had just gotten her settled when Sebastian reached out through the link and ordered him to send men after Nick. Matt was curious about the reason but didn't ask, he sent the instruction to their Gammas immediately, then made sure Zoe was comfortable and properly covered before he left.

Now, certain she was asleep and safe, he resumed his conversation with the Supreme Alpha and went to meet him out in the hallway just as the Gammas came to report.

"We have checked everywhere for him, Supreme Alpha. His friend Simon said he had to leave urgently, there was something he needed to handle back in Silver." One of the Gammas reported.

Sebastian felt a bad feeling settle instantly in his gut at that. Nick going back ahead of all of them have him a bad feeling.

"Tell the warriors to apprehend him the moment he sets foot in Silver." He ordered, and then turned to Matt. "We are leaving first thing in the morning. Make sure Gilbert knows."

"What's going on? Why are you going after your cousin?" Matt asked, and Sebastian told him coldly, "Because I believe he is our man. The fucker responsible for deleting all the footage of his crimes, the reason we never found any evidence on him."

"Which also means he was the one who shot Zoe all those years ago..." Matt said quietly, and the anger came onto him immediately and completely. After everything Zoe had done for her cousin

over the years, the loyalty she had given him without question, it turned out he had been the one responsible for her weakened wolf and her fragile state ever since.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 392: Clean escape[1,287 words]

By the time the sun rose and the night faded away, Nick was already far away from the Grim pack. The moment he had achieved one of his biggest goals, one piece of his plan to have the woman he loved, the woman he knew would learn to love him someday once she realized the man she was married to was neither loveable nor a saint, when he abandon her.

He hadn't bothered with his car or any other ride. He had shifted into his wolf form and made a clean escape through the night. He had tried not to make himself a suspect, but it seemed his efforts had come to nothing, they were searching for him now. He knew because his allies in Silver had already told him.

"When are you going to take the seat from him?" Elder Halvrek asked through the link, his anxiety bleeding through clearly. The men turning Silver upside down looking for Nick were making his aging heart more restless by the day, because if Nick got caught it would be about time they figured him out as well. Nick was taking longer than planned to make himself the Supreme Alpha. Every day that passed was another day that ruthless Sebastian would come after all those who had sided with Nick behind his back in silver.

Nick was standing on the mountain that separated the Grim pack territory from the next, a mountain that looked out over the dense forest of their world, the wind beating fiercely against his fur. He replied through the link without moving.

"Soon. Not yet." He hadn't gotten everything he wanted yet, not enough to make his move for the seat. Nick wasn't looking for power only the way Javier had been. He wanted love. From Vee, from Zoe, from anyone willing to give it. He wasn't going to rush now that he could feel things shifting in his direction.

Nick wasn't a fool. He knew Sebastian had given her a temporary mark designed to create the illusion that she was fully claimed, but he carried enough Supreme Alpha blood in his own veins to see through that lie.

She was unmarked. And Sebastian would never truly mark her, not while the fear of killing her hung over him like a curse, which was exactly what had given Nick the confidence to do what he did, and to leave her where Sebastian would find her. Not only to destroy him, but to crack that relationship open from the inside.

Nick's wolf threw his head back and howled into the night, the sound rolling out across the dark and echoing into the silence below. Another wolf answered from somewhere deep in the distance.

'Very soon you will be mine, Vee. Because I will be the only one who can truly protect you in this world. My fucking cousin won't want you now, he won't be able to overlook the fact that another wolf laid his hands on you and had his way with you.'

"What about the mermaid in his custody?" Elder Halvrek asked. "Won't you move to take her?"

Nick replied without concern, "I don't need that one. I already have my own mermaid. She will give me what I want."

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The next day, Viola was pulled out of bed before she was fully awake, omegas moving to help her pack their belongings as Sebastian had made arrangements for them to leave first thing this morning.

As much as she wanted to stay for Tess's sake and be around for the after-marking-ceremony gathering, she no longer had the energy for any of that, nor the emotional strength to put up a happy front for everyone when she had so much running through her mind.

In just the space of yesterday and today, a lot of things had happened that would forever change the way she thought and who she was. She had been a moment away from being humiliated by Hailey, and then she'd sung a song that had drained up her entire joy and left her emotionally wrecked, which led to her going outside and...

She didn't want to think about what had happened after she went outside, and if she could turn back the hands of the clock, she would have stayed within the hall. Viola felt physically violated, and that feeling came with a feeling of shame and anger she couldn't fathom, for what had happened to her last night.

Sebastian had assured her that nothing would change in their relationship, but she couldn't help the uncertainty, which she hated having. Last night was supposed to be good for her because she had made a lot of connections that important people were extending invitations to her to visit their pack, but just one wrong moment had ruined it for her.

How could she have fallen unconscious last night and allowed what happened happen?

Recalling the description of how she had been left in the maze made her sick with resentment and anger. But rather than carry that heavy feeling, she let her mind wander instead to Sebastian's confession afterward.

Now that she knew Alex was alive and in hiding, it made her understand so much about Sebastian's past with his late wives; however, it was saddening that the two of them were not on good terms, given what Sebastian had done, in his own way, to protect his brother, but that had instead made things worse.

Would Alex ever accept her as a sister-in-law after what his twin brother had done? Probably not, unless he was told the complete truth, but with his current heart sickness, it would be a great risk

to tell him the truth. Hence, a cure must be found first, and Viola couldn't help but wonder where Sebastian planned to find that cure, for she hadn't heard of one yet, unless Alex let himself fall in love and fix his broken heart.

Viola stepped out of the shower and into the bedroom, where the omegas were already waiting for her.

"Has the Supreme Alpha taken his shower yet?" she asked one of the girls.

"Supreme Luna, the Supreme Alpha went ahead of you last night with his beta. He ordered your traveling arrangements with Miss Zoe and Doctor Gilbert, and the car is waiting," reported one of the omegas who were carrying their suitcases out of the closet and dragging them toward the door.

"Oh..." Viola muttered, disappointment laced in her voice even though she didn't try to show it. She had expected to see him this morning, expected to feel the happiness of being held and kissed good morning, not only for the feeling itself, but to be reassured again after last night.

She checked her phone and didn't see any calls or texts from him, and felt even more sad that he had left the message through an omega rather than texting her or leaving a note.

She was in a deeply low-spirited mood, and now that Sebastian had left ahead of her, everything felt flat and dull, and her emotions were starting to sprawl in a direction she didn't want them to go. But she kept her mind locked tightly to herself, refusing to let herself spiral, and decided to hold onto hope that what had happened wouldn't build a wall between them.

When she finished dressing for the journey in denim jeans and a t-shirt, Viola was led to the limo. If anyone saw her walking the way she did outwardly, without looking deeply into her, they would think nothing had happened to her last night and that she was perfectly fine, but deep inside, Viola was fighting a silent battle of will.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 393: Achievement[1,190 words]

The morning was slightly chilly today in the Grim Pack, and Viola shivered faintly as she stepped outside.

The moment she walked toward where the limousine was parked, she noticed Zoe standing with Tess and her husband, and they all turned to look at her. Viola put on a perfectly normal smile. She greeted them and shook hands with the Alpha heir, who was beaming at her in a friendly manner, just like his wife.

"Good morning, Luna Viola," Kenny greeted, and Viola returned the greeting before he added, "I didn't get the chance to thank you properly last night. I am grateful for your efforts. You made our

day truly special, and I can't describe how happy I was to sing with you. I hope to do that with you again sometime."

He said this as he took the envelope Tess had been hugging and handed it to her before continuing, "I have prepared a contract agreement. If I ever become Alpha, I have signed it to stand by the Supreme Alpha no matter what. Whether in war or during pack conflicts, Grim Pack will always have your back."

Viola accepted the envelope with a surprised expression. She hadn't expected to be given such a contract on behalf of their pack. Even though she had somehow hoped to bring about a lasting peace between their packs, she was stunned that it was her efforts that had earned it for them. She was almost tempted to open the envelope and take a look at its contents but restrained herself, deciding to wait until she handed it over to Sebastian.

"Thank you so much, Alpha Heir—"

"You can call me Ken. There is no need for formalities between us. We are like friends now, if you don't mind, Supreme Luna," Ken said, looking slightly uncertain until she smiled and nodded.

"Sure, Ken. You can call me Viola or Vee, just like Tess does. I am glad I made your day, and you made mine too by singing with me."

Though this trip had done something horrible and unchangeable to her, something good had come out of it that made her feel a little less worthless to their pack. She had achieved something meaningful for Silver, at the very least.

Viola was glad that none of them knew what had happened to her the previous night, as they hadn't been told. Everyone believed she had retired to bed early because she wasn't feeling well.

"I was so disappointed you didn't make it to the marking, but I understood you weren't feeling well after the Silver Pack Beta spoke to Ken. I really wish you could stay longer in our pack. Ken and I both would have loved to spend more time with you," Tess said, genuine sadness filling her eyes as she held Viola's hands.

"I wish I could have too. But we have responsibilities waiting for us back home," Viola replied.

"But you are always welcome to visit us in Silver. I am certain the Supreme Alpha would be happy to have you there, just as I will be," Viola said with a warm smile, noticing as Ken slipped an arm around his wife's waist and gently pulled her closer, silently consoling her over her new friend's departure. The sight made Viola suddenly wish her own husband were there to hold her like that right now.

"We will absolutely take you up on that, Vee. I still haven't seen Silver yet. Thank you again, and I wish you a very pleasant trip back home."

Saying that, Tess stepped forward and hugged Viola warmly before stepping back once more, allowing her to climb into the waiting limousine.

Though she genuinely liked Tess and Ken, Viola felt a rush of relief when she stepped into the car, finally on her way out of this pack that had now given her a nightmare, and she longed for something familiar to make her forget everything that had happened last night.

She waved at her friend and the Alpha heir, where behind them the gloomy-looking Alpha Daniel stood glaring as the limousine drove away from his pack.

Viola kept her eyes averted from the window when they passed by the hedge maze, her fingers clenching so tightly against her jeans that they turned white. She refused to look at it and refused to let herself imagine how the assault had come to happen, when she had no memory of it except for a glimpse of Nick's face.

Not having the memories was supposed to give her some kind of comfort, but it made it all the more terrifying, as her mind kept trying to fill in the gaps of how it had happened.

She wished more than anything that Sebastian was the one driving with her now and not Zoe, whose eyes she could feel burning over her with worry and curiosity. She hadn't told Zoe what her cousin had done to her last night, for Viola still couldn't come to terms with the fact that the man she trusted, and was willing to give anything but her heart to, had done this to her.

She felt that hurting, constricting lump in her throat again, but this time it wasn't only grief over their friendship, it was fear of what her own judgment was worth. She had trusted Nick completely, had let her guard down around him the way she rarely let it down around people, and if she could be that wrong about him, she didn't know who else in her life she might be wrong about too. She swallowed it down and subconsciously fixed her face to distract from her thought, refusing to let Zoe see the crack starting to form.

"Are you all right, Vee?" Zoe asked after a long moment of watching Viola sit quietly against the car door, staring out of the window with her back turned toward her.

"I am fine," she said, turning with a smile to look at Zoe.

Zoe didn't think so.

"About last night, Vee... what happened?"

Viola didn't even miss a beat as she replied, "Nothing. I was tired, so I went to sleep earlier. Look, your boyfriend is already waiting for us by the helicopter."

Viola said it cheerfully, trying to disguise her true feelings and steer the conversation away from anything that would lead back to the events of the previous night. She didn't want to talk about it right now, and certainly not with Zoe, who didn't know the full story of what Nick had done.

Zoe immediately understood that Viola didn't want to talk about the previous night or what had happened to her, so she didn't push the subject any further.

Matt hadn't told her what happened, no matter how much she had asked, he had said she would find out in the morning from her friend, but her friend was acting strangely cheerful today, which looked questionable.

Still, Zoe let it go with the thought that maybe nothing big had happened, since there were no bruises or injuries on her, not knowing that the bruises were deep and internal.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 394: The Secret Reveal_Part 1[1,707 words]

The helicopter touched down on the private landing pad atop the skyscraper of High Tower with a low, steady hum before the blades gradually slowed to a stop.

Before the door had even fully opened, Viola's eyes searched instinctively for Sebastian.

He wasn't there among the people waiting for their arrival, but Matt was.

The disappointment settled quietly in her chest, heavier than she wanted to admit.

Matt stepped forward to help her down first before turning to help Zoe down, the she-wolf still rubbing sleep from her eyes after dozing through most of the flight against Gilbert's shoulder. Warriors quickly approached to unload their luggage while the midmorning breeze swept across the landing pad.

"Has he been caught?" Viola asked once she was out of earshot of Zoe and Gilbert, with Matt beside her.

Matt knew immediately who she was referring to and shook his head. "Unfortunately, he hasn't been caught, but men are everywhere looking for him. You look tired, Supreme Luna." He pointed out, noting that her blue eyes looked slightly dull, with dark circles beneath them.

"I'm fine. What about Sebastian?" She asked as they walked to the side of the helicopter.

"He has been busy since last night. Get some rest and don't worry about anything." Matt said to her. Though he didn't know the full details of what had happened last night, he was aware that Nick had kidnapped her for a time and left her in the state the Supreme Alpha had found her in, which in turn was the sole cause of Sebastian's murderous rage and his determination to find his cousin since last night.

"I'll send word if anything changes, but I believe the Supreme Alpha will come to see you himself once he knows you've landed."

Viola forced a small smile. "Thank you," she said. Then, as though remembering something, she took out the envelope Ken had given her and handed it to Matt.

"A signed contract from the Alpha Heir of Grim Pack, pledging to stand with Silver. Can you hand it over to the Supreme Alpha for me?"

Matt looked at the envelope, surprise flashing across his face. He couldn't believe she had managed to get the Alpha Heir to stand by Sebastian when even the Supreme Alpha himself hadn't known how to convince the young man to take Silver's side. He looked at her in a much brighter light as he said,

"You should give that to him yourself, Supreme Luna."

Viola smiled weakly. "I think it's best if you do that. The Supreme Alpha will be busy from here on and might not have the time to see me anytime soon. You're his Beta. Please relay the message to him."

Matt accepted the envelope. "Thank you for making this possible. Silver needed fewer enemies right now, and now we know that Grim Pack won't hold on to their bitterness forever or attack us because of the past."

He bowed his head to her respectfully.

"If you need anything else, you know you can always reach out to me too, Supreme Luna," he told her. Then he pointed toward the helicopter. "I am flying back with it to meet up with our search team. Take care."

She watched the helicopter lift into the morning sky moments later, carrying Matt away once again, before turning and walking toward the elevator with Gilbert and Zoe.

"Is she sick?" Gilbert asked Zoe in a whisper, noticing how the Supreme Luna looked unhappy and that her face appeared slightly swollen.

"I don't know. She hasn't talked much to me since this morning. I am worried about her. Do you think she is sick?" she asked him.

Gilbert tried to study Viola from a distance, but before he could get a better look at her, she had already stepped into the elevator without waiting for them, and the doors slid shut behind her.

"What the..." Zoe muttered, pursing her lips. "She didn't even wait for me..."

Her shoulders slumped sadly at Vee's behavior. Had Zoe done something to make her distance herself and act that way toward her since this morning? Was it because she hadn't let Gilbert go yesterday and had ended up taking someone else's fated mate? Zoe wondered, not wanting to lose the friendship she had built with her sister-in-law, a friendship that suddenly felt as though it was drifting further away today.

"It looks like she's going through a lot, but I don't know the reason for it. Did I do something wrong?"

"Don't overthink her behavior. I believe she's simply exhausted. Allow her to rest before you approach her again," Gilbert said, placing an arm around Zoe's shoulders and gently steering her toward the elevator that had opened next to the one the Luna had used.

But Zoe's eyes had already begun to turn glossy with unshed tears. She quickly blinked them away, wiped at the corners of her eyes, and nodded.

"I will give her space..."

...

When Viola stepped out of the elevator, everything inside the building looked exactly the same. The active screens on the walls flashed continuously, showcasing the new things being made within their pack.

Omeegas were moving around the halls in groups, talking to each other as though nothing had happened. Some hurried across the halls carrying baskets of laundry from the rooms. Somewhere farther away, someone laughed.

Life had continued.

Only hers felt as though it had been left behind in the hedge maze.

She walked through the hallway, greeting everyone who bowed to her, somehow managing to smile back despite feeling completely hollow inside.

The familiar corridors that led to her penthouse offered little comfort.

Every few steps, she found herself expecting Sebastian to appear around a corner like he usually did sometimes, asking if she had eaten or stealing her hand just because he wanted to hold it.

But every corridor remained empty.

When she finally reached her penthouse, she quietly closed the door behind herself and leaned against it.

Silence.

It wrapped around the room in a way she had never noticed in these recent days.

She slowly walked toward the bedroom before sitting down on the edge of the bed, staring at nothing in particular.

Her fingers absentmindedly traced the wedding ring still resting on her hand.

His ring, she thought. Soon...

Hopefully...

His mark too, and she would have no more worries, and everything would be completely as it should be. Viola would have time to focus on her own life and background, and if possible, find her family, the part of her that was werewolf, and put her mermaid part aside, as though it had never existed, because she didn't want it.

That thought comforted her enough that she lay back for what she intended to be only a few minutes of rest.

Instead... sleep claimed her almost instantly.

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She wasn't sure how much time had passed before a melody drifted into her dreams. A very soft and beautiful voice that sounded like it didn't come from a mortal creature, but from the heavens, as though a goddess were singing.

However, it sounded almost familiar when it came again.

At first she thought the song was only replaying inside her sleeping mind after she had performed it last night at the ceremony, but then a feeling of sorrow came with it that didn't belong to her.

It tightened around her chest until breathing became difficult, and she slowly opened her eyes.

Darkness. Everything in the room had gone dark in the time since she had closed her eyes to rest.

The room was dim, lit only by the city lights spilling through the glass walls of her room.

She blinked several times, still disoriented from sleep. She hadn't meant to sleep through the entire afternoon, but it looked like that was exactly what she had done.

She was wondering what it was that had woken her from such peaceful sleep when the melody came again. It was fainter this time, almost too distant to be heard.

Viola slowly pushed herself upright despite the pounding ache in her head that made her grimace. What was that? Was someone replaying the song she had sung last night? Who could it be? Not many people from Silver had attended the ceremony except for her and Sebastian, and then Zoe, Matt, Gilbert, and some warriors.

When it drifted toward her again, it immediately made the tiny hairs along her arms stand upright. This didn't sound like her own voice. It sounded sweeter, more surreal, and echoey.

Her breathing slowed, and she listened closely to try to tell where it was coming from. Was it outside? Inside? She couldn't tell at all, for it didn't sound like a physical sound, as she stepped out of her room and was met with darkness, since she hadn't turned on the lights of the house.

The sound stopped when she stepped out of the bedroom. She went back in, and it came again. Was it playing inside her head? Viola thought with a dreadful feeling in her stomach. On top of everything else that was happening, now she was hearing a melody that wasn't even real!

Just as she leaned forward to listen again—

Her phone suddenly vibrated against her thigh where it was tucked inside her pocket.

Viola jumped, startled, her heart racing as though she had run a race. She calmed herself and hurriedly reached for the phone, pulling it out with slightly shaky fingers.

Sebastian.

Relief washed through her almost immediately, and she picked it up without a moment of hesitation.

"Seb..." She whispered.

"Sunshine."

Hearing his voice dissolved some of the tightness that had settled inside her, and she found her heart skipping a beat at his endearment, forgetting the melody she was trying to track.

"I wanted to call you earlier, but there was no service where I was, the connection was poor. Was your flight smooth?" Sebastian asked.

"It was okay. Where are you right now?" She asked, hearing voices in the background of the phone, as though people were talking and murmuring around him.

"I'm at Nick's office." Came Sebastian's words, which made her frown, her heart knotting at the name.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 395: The Secret Reveal_Part 2[1,270 words]

Viola's fingers tightened around the phone, and she asked curiously, "What are you doing there?"

"I'm trying to look for him and find out where he might be hiding. We have almost turned Silver upside down, but he's not in the pack, nor anywhere near the vicinity. We are trying to track him down and fish out all of his accomplices."

Sebastian stepped aside from the men he had brought into Nick's office to get the job done, hacking into everything Nick had ever made, along with his computers, to find out how he had committed each crime and who had helped him. Silver was an advanced pack where almost everything a

person did was recorded on their personal system, and Sebastian had access to every system in the pack, except, as he was only now realizing, his cousin Nickolas's, the guru behind the tech.

"Have you found anything yet?" She asked, hearing the sound of a drawer sliding open through the phone, followed by the sound of several papers being moved around.

"We've found some of his personal things, but every one of them has been locked tightly with a passcode my men are trying to hack open," Sebastian continued. "We're going through everything he left behind. His files... financial records... hidden footage..."

His voice trailed off.

"And a tablet we found hidden inside a locked compartment," he added, as the tablet he had been waiting to have hacked open was handed to him by the hacker, who looked wary, having spent more than five hours working to gain access.

"Do we have access to everything on it now?" Sebastian asked the young man, who nodded quickly.

"Yes, Supreme Alpha, I believe we do. I have hacked open every password on the system." The hacker said, his voice carrying through the phone to Viola, who was listening.

There was a brief silence on Viola's side before she heard the rapid tapping of keys somewhere near him.

"It finally opened."

"What did you find?" Viola asked, sitting a little straighter on the bed.

She heard nothing for several seconds, only the faint sound of Sebastian scrolling through the screen, before he let out a curse.

"Un-fucking-believable..."

Her heart skipped. "Seb, what is it?" Viola asked, panic creeping into her voice at his curse, but he didn't answer her right away. There was a long silence, and when he spoke again, his voice had become noticeably lower.

"I thought Javier was the sick one, sunshine," he let out a humorless laugh as he added, "I was wrong. My cousin Nick makes Javier look fucking normal."

Viola's fingers slowly tightened around the phone again, knowing she was about to learn the truth of who Nicolas Kade really was. "What did you find on the tablet?"

"A diary." He said, then corrected himself. "No... More like a diary app."

There was another pause that followed, while Viola felt tense, wondering what must have been in the diary app to make Sebastian sound so shocked, when he normally didn't let such emotions show.

"He documented everything, from his thoughts to everything he'd ever done, right up until the day he left for the Grim Pack." His chair scraped softly across the floor, as though he had stood up without realizing it.

"He has his obsessions and his every fantasy and plan documented..." He paused, as though he were reading, and Viola didn't interrupt him, giving him time to read.

She could hear his breathing becoming heavier the longer he read.

"Sebastian..."

"I found Sofia on it." He said.

Viola frowned, standing up from the bed. "What do you mean?"

"One of his entries is about her."

"What did he write about Sofia?" She asked, unable to understand why he had an entry about Sofia, before belatedly recalling that Zoe had once teased him about having feelings for his brother's wife in the past. Did he write down his feelings for her there? She wondered as she waited for Sebastian to read on.

When Sebastian finally spoke again, his voice sounded tight. "He loved her and believed Javier didn't deserve her, so he made plans to destroy and ruin their relationship. 'She is supposed to be mine and not my brother's.' Sebastian quoted as he swiped across the screen.

"When you said he wanted to destroy their relationship, what did he do?" Viola asked, feeling a tense knot forming in her stomach.

"He sent men after her on the day of their honeymoon. My fucking cousin was behind Sofia's rape and was among the rapists, just to destroy their relationship!"

Viola covered her mouth with her palm. "What...?"

"He believed if Javier rejected her after everything that happened..." Sebastian stopped, clearly finding it hard to believe himself. "...she would eventually run to him instead."

Viola couldn't breathe for a moment. She only stared blankly at the wall opposite her.

The Nick Sebastian was describing couldn't possibly be the same Nick she had laughed with... trained with... trusted. She recalled how Sofia had become a she-wolf laughed at and called mad for what had happened to her, and she felt a shiver run down her spine. He had destroyed her life so completely...

More than once, she had noticed the terror in Sofia's eyes whenever Nick came near her, but she had never thought of it as anything other than the she-wolf being afraid of all the Kade males, like she had said.

She remembered Sofia quietly telling her once...

"All male Kades are evil. Stay away from them."

She hadn't just meant Javier.

She had meant Nick too.

"I can't believe this," Viola whispered. "It's... it's so hard to believe he actually did something like that."

She swallowed hard before asking,

"If he loved her... why didn't he simply take her away when Javier mistreated her?"

Sebastian gave another tired sigh. "He answered that too, here."

"What?"

"He wrote that she was no longer appealing to him. 'I tasted her and realized there is nothing special about the little whore. She's just like all the others, forgettable.' The psycho went as far as to add a laughing emoji, Viola!" He gritted out.

Viola closed her eyes. "Oh my..."

"He also wrote that he had discarded her..." He trailed off for a moment and then added, "...for someone else."

A knot formed inside her stomach.

"Who?"

"You."

The single word made her blood run cold. She was now his new obsession, just like Sofia, Nick wanted to ruin her life and destroy her relationship with Sebastian.

Sebastian continued reading mechanically, so he wouldn't give in to his boiling rage and break the tablet that held such dirty obsession over his wife.

"He believed you would eventually end up exactly the way Sofia did, if he had you, only he believed he would never grow tired of you the way he grew tired of Sofia. My fucking cousin has planned everything, and I never saw it coming until he hurt you..."

Viola stared through the window into the city beyond the glass, feeling Sebastian's anger roll out of him in waves, cold enough that she could feel the shiver of it come through with his aura. He remained silent but didn't cut the call, and Viola suddenly felt the need to say something before he would end it.

"He didn't penetrate me, Seb."

The words escaped before she even realized she was saying them. She didn't know why she felt so certain.

But somewhere deep inside herself, she couldn't shake the feeling that Nick had staged everything to make it appear worse than it had actually been.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 396: Plans to mark[1,508 words]

The silence on Sebastian's end lasted only a second.

Then he closed whatever he had been reading and dropped it on a desk, the sound of it slamming coming through the phone so clearly it almost made her flinch. Was he angry at her or at Nick?

"That doesn't change anything for me, my love," he said. "What matters is that we know exactly who he is now. We know what kind of monster we've been dealing with."

He took a slow breath. "And now we know he planned all of this long before yesterday, and it's time we put him down."

Viola heard his words, but she didn't feel reassured enough that it truly didn't matter. For a moment she wanted to insist that Nick hadn't done what they thought he'd done, but then she dropped it completely, for now.

However, as though sensing her doubts and misgivings, Sebastian said again, "It doesn't matter to me, I want you to always keep that in mind, but I will kill Nick with my own hands and put him to rest."

Sebastian promised, and he meant every word of it. His late father's promise to keep the family strong no longer held any weight where Nick was concerned. Nick had forfeited the right to that protection long ago. And until he had wiped Nick out of the picture entirely and put his mark on Viola's neck, he knew she would continue to carry that quiet doubt, the fear that what had happened had changed something in him.

It hadn't. And being apart from her right now was its own kind of slow torture, and all he wanted was to be in that bed beside her, holding her and kissing her and telling her in every way he knew how exactly how much she meant to him.

He could feel her doubt as though it belonged to him, because in a way, it did. But he was certain it wouldn't last much longer. In a few days she would carry his mark, and once that bond was fully sealed, she would feel everything he felt without needing his words to confirm it.

And if everything came together the way he was working toward, Gilbert would have finished the antidote to awaken her wolf from its suppressant, her full potential would surface, and with it, her true identity.

Because every shade of wolf fur carried the signature of a bloodline, and once hers came through properly, they would finally know where she came from and which Alpha bloodline had birthed her, because Sebastian had no doubt in his mind that she carried an Alpha bloodline.

If she had a wolf and knew her family, she would stop feeling as though she only had a home because of him, and would completely feel at home in herself.

That was what he wanted most for her, to grow into her full strength and become completely fearless. To discover her people and her origins, to find out what had happened to her parents, and whether the one who carried werewolf blood was still alive somewhere.

He wanted her to choose to depend on him because she wanted to, not because she was afraid of what she would be without him. The anxiety and the constant fear of losing her home, he didn't want that to be the foundation she stood on in this world. Even though Sebastian wanted her to depend on him wholly, he needed her to grow into her own strength too.

Sebastian had had so many plans for their future before Nick came and ruined the momentum of those plans, and now he had to be away from her to find Nick, who had somehow developed powers capable of concealing every trace of his crimes and wiping every piece of evidence clean before it could be found.

Sebastian would not stop. Not until Nick was gone from their lives permanently, along with every single one of the people working for him, all of whom he had now found out about.

Because in that sick diary were things, fantasies written out in detail about his wife, that made Sebastian's blood boil every time his eyes passed over them, and the anger that came with it was the kind that didn't cool easily.

"I need to go, amor. I have some pests to remove from our pack. Nick hasn't been working alone and has some underdogs in the pack."

Viola almost voiced out that she would come with him and help, but then swallowed down the words.

"Okay," she said, "Be careful."

"Hmm," he hummed and then added, "Before I forget, I have assigned warriors to be your bodyguards just like Zoe has hers, you have your set of bodyguards. From here on they will escort

you wherever you go. Your safety is the priority now." He told her, for some reason expecting her to tell him she didn't need bodyguard like she had once turned the idea down.

He was surprised when she simply said, "Okay."

She then asked, "What about my swimming practice? Are we going to resume now that we're back?"

She desperately wanted a normal routine. Something to return that was normal. The things she had just learned about Nick was still sitting uncomfortably in her chest.

"Yes, but not yet. We will resume once I have marked you. I believe sharing my strength with you through the mark will help, and your fear of water might ease after that."

Viola felt more reassured the more the marking came up in conversation. "Are you coming home tonight?"

"We are still out following leads, sunshine. Go to bed without me. I love you, I need to go. I'll see you in the morning."

The call ended before she could answer.

For a moment, Viola didn't move.

The phone remained pressed against her ear even though the line had already gone silent.

"...Love you too," she whispered instinctively.

Only then did she realize he was no longer there to hear it.

She slowly lowered the phone and looked at the dark screen. Her thumb hovered over his name for a brief second, almost pressing the call button again before she stopped herself.

"No," she murmured, locking the screen instead. "He's busy."

She placed the phone on the bed beside her, but before she could even stand, her eyes drifted back to it.

A quiet comparison crept into the back of her mind before she could stop it.

Before they had gone to the Grim Pack, Sebastian would never have ended a call without waiting to hear her tell him she loved him too. Sometimes he even teased her into saying it more than once before he finally hung up.

She smiled faintly at the memory.

Then the smile slowly disappeared.

He was searching for Nick. She reminded herself of that over and over again. The situation was different now and he still made time to call her, but because of what had happened, her mind was searching for reassurance in everything he did or say or didn't say.

He wasn't pulling away. He couldn't be. He was simply doing what he had to do. She drew in a slow breath and pushed herself to her feet.

"I am overthinking again," she quietly scolded herself with a mental shake.

Nick.

The name alone made something harden inside her chest. Her gaze wandered toward the kitchen almost absentmindedly, and as she stepped inside, the row of protein powders sitting neatly on the counter immediately caught her attention.

For several seconds she simply stared at them.

The first day he had handed one to her flashed through her mind.

"You'll need this after training."

She had thanked him. Trusted him.

Even smiled at him but in the end, he had betrayed her.

A shiver crawled over her skin.

Without another thought, she picked up the first container, walked to the bin, and dropped it inside.

The dull thud echoed louder than it should have.

She reached for the second one.

Then the third.

Until every single thing he had ever given her was lying at the bottom of the bin.

Only then did the tightness in her chest ease slightly.

She rested both hands on the edge of the counter and closed her eyes for a brief moment.

"How did you become this person...?" she whispered into the empty kitchen.

The question, of course, received no answer.

He had ruined Sofia's life...

And now he had come after hers.

The last she had heard, Sofia had been forced back to her family, where rumors said she had become even worse than before after losing Javier. Just because of Nick's twisted desires, he had so easily destroyed another person's life.

How had he even managed to do all of this and get away with it? Was there something else about him that hadn't been uncovered yet? Last night, she could have sworn he had used something on her to lure her into that endless blankness...

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 397: Getting rid of the enemies[1,261 words]

Sebastian turned everything of Nick's upside down with his men until he had gotten the names of every single spy his cousin had planted in his pack. When he read the list, his silver eyes turned dark with ironic mockery, and he let out a bland chuckle that sent shivers down the spines of everyone present, making them instinctively bow down to him in submission as his aura flared out like icy waves.

His warriors and betas, who had been working alongside him until past midnight and were already dying of exhaustion, watched as he crumpled the tablet holding the list in his hand the way one would crumple a sheet of paper. His silver eyes looked darker, appearing almost black from a distance. He was furious, and it looked like there was no hope of any of them retiring for the night or returning to their partners in bed.

He flung the broken tablet across the wall before ordering one of the betas, who served as an assistant to Matt, "Gather all the elders in the hall." His voice was menacingly low as he walked past the men, who looked concerned, since it was past midnight and the elders might have their heads for being summoned at this hour.

Everyone knew the elders liked to consider themselves mighty, mighty enough to believe they were untouchable by anyone but the Alpha. Many suddenly wished Matt were there, since the elders respected him more than they did the others, but he had led the team searching outside Silver.

....

On the floor where the elders resided, the betas and warriors went one by one, calling out the elders within the building and phoning those who had gone home to stay with their families. Among those in the High Tower building was Elder Halvrek, who was already in bed trying to make himself sleep and not worry about what the hell Nick was up to and why he wasn't answering his mind-link.

Elder Halvrek had worked for Nick for years, ever since the boy had displayed extraordinary strength to him and asked him to be his ally, promising that Halvrek would remain an elder

forever, and that once he took the seat, he would be made head elder rather than Elder Natasha, who wasn't only a female warrior once before, but also a Serrano enemy, since their families had fought for generations over the head elder seat.

Natasha had been given the seat by the late Alpha for her so called bravery and loyalty, and Elder Halvrek had been cast aside as an ordinary elder because he lacked enough influence.

The late Alpha had betrayed him by giving that seat away to "the skimpy bitch," and Elder Halvrek had been angry ever since, which was why his loyalty had been so easily bought by Nick, for Sebastian was just like his father, who had cast his opportunity aside. Had Sebastian given his niece a chance, had he picked Laila, Elder Halvrek would have given anything to make sure Sebastian never lost a hair on his body.

Elder Halvrek thought about this as he got out of bed and reached for his phone to call his useless niece, wanting to hear what she had been up to so far, and whether she had caught herself another big fish at the ceremony in Grim Pack she'd attended. However, just as he began dialing her number, his door buzzed, and a loud knock vibrated through his room.

Elder Halvrek put the phone down in annoyance. Who the hell was disturbing him at this time of night? He thought as he walked to the door, opened it, and was met with one of the Supreme Alpha's assistant betas.

"You must be truly ready to die, disturbing my sleep with your rude knocking. I could have your head for it, beta Lion." The elder gritted out irritably, until the beta bowed his head and announced, "My apologies. The Supreme Alpha summons all the elders to the front hall."

Elder Halvrek's eyes narrowed. "For what reason at this time of the night?"

Beta Lion bowed. "We weren't told the reason, sir. You are requested to proceed to the meeting room in the front hall."

Before the elder could ask for more information about what had prompted this strange meeting in the middle of a bloody night, the Beta had already walked away after

delivering the message.

Why were they being summoned? He had heard that Nick was wanted, could it be that the son of a bitch had implicated him in his evil plans, when Elder Halvrek had done nothing but pass along the occasional inside message?

Elder Halvrek's first instinct was to find an escape, but the moment he stepped out of his floor's elevator into the lobby area, he noticed bulky pack warriors stationed in front of every single door leading outdoors, some of them escorting the other elders to the meeting hall while keeping a respectful distance.

Many of the elders looked annoyed at being disturbed, but they obeyed the command and walked.

"What does the Supreme Alpha want that couldn't have waited until morning?" came the complaints of several elders who didn't know what was happening, though Elder Halvrek and his partners in crime could already sense it and exchanged anxious looks but remained composed.

When they entered the hall, the Supreme Alpha was already seated at the head of the table, a pen rolling casually between his fingers. However, his expression was murderous enough to make them all bow to him in respect before making their way to their seats.

"Nobody sits. I want you all standing." Came his calm voice as he regarded them carefully.

The Head Elder, Natasha, looked at the Supreme Alpha in confusion, as he had never spoken to them in such a tone unless they had done something unreasonable.

"What has warranted this meeting, Supreme Alpha? Are we under attack or in danger?"

"Some of you are about to be," he deadpanned before sweeping his gaze across all of them.

"As you all know, I have been the target of assassination attempts time and time again by an unknown enemy, one who succeeded in shooting my sister years ago. The culprit's identity has finally been revealed, and along with it, the names of some of you who have been working for him."

Murmuring broke out among the elders, who exchanged glances. The innocent ones wondered who among them had been working with an enemy, while the guilty ones pretended to be clueless as they began to sweat under the Alpha's gaze.

"Are you certain of this, Supreme Alpha?" Elder Natasha asked, knowing that elders were meant to be loyal to their Alpha and support him in his reign, and not thinking anyone foolish enough to work for the enemy. "It might be a grave misunderstanding."

"Yes, I agree with Natasha." Elder Halvrek chimed in, supporting a woman he had never once backed and had always opposed, and everyone turned to him in surprise. He barked at them, "What?! Natasha is finally making sense, and you're all looking at me as if—"

"Yes, she is finally making sense, when she hasn't made sense to you in more than fifty years, Elder Halvrek. Is it because you're guilty of something?" Sebastian asked, tilting his head to the side. This old fart had been Nick's informant in everything, and because of them, he had nearly lost not only his sister but his wife and his own life to the last assassination attempt.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 398: Don't feed me your bullshit[1,293 words]

Sebastian was still boiling with rage over what Nick had done to his wife, so much so that he wouldn't forgive any of them and would make an example of them.

"Supreme Alpha, I would never—"

"I won't beat around the bush. I will call out names, and the moment you hear your name, you step away from the rest, silently. If I hear a word of mercy or forgiveness from the criminals, your punishment will extend to your entire generation and family members." Sebastian said as he got to his feet, and without waiting for any of them to digest his words, he began calling out names.

He called out two names before finally calling out the masterminds.

"...Halvrek and Samuel."

"I am innocent! Halvrek made me do it. He was the one who told me that if I did as he said, we would remain elders for as long as he suspected you wanted to replace us with the younger ones!" one of the elders cried as he fell to his knees in front of everyone. "Your father put me in this position, and I would never willingly betray you. Halvrek deceived me into thinking he was doing you a favor since you hated the responsibilities of being the Supreme Alpha. He wanted to help you by putting your cousin on the seat. I only went along with it for that reason. Forgive me!"

Sebastian looked at the man with stone-cold eyes.

"I see. So if the motherfucker told you to burn your own ass or cut off your own dick in order to help me out of my responsibilities, I bet you wouldn't have hesitated, would you?"

He let out a humorless chuckle when the elder flushed in embarrassment.

"Don't feed me your bullshit, Samuel. You're an accomplice in this crime, and you will pay for it. Banish his entire family from Silver, from the first generation to the last," Sebastian ordered his warriors, having already made it clear to them that he didn't want to hear a single plea for forgiveness once the names were called.

The remaining elders, who had been on the verge of falling to their knees and confessing that Halvrek had manipulated them into all of this, immediately sealed their mouths. Sweat soaked through their nightwear as terror over their fate gripped them.

"As for the traitors, they will be tortured until they give us useful information. If nothing comes of it that helps us find Nicolas... they will be executed tomorrow, in front of everyone, to set an example for every traitor. No traitor will be forgiven in my pack! Take them out of my sight."

Sebastian watched as the four elders were dragged out, and he felt hollow inside, because these were people his father had trusted with his life, people he had trusted with his children, and yet in the end they hadn't hesitated to betray him. His heart knotted as he couldn't help but wonder if they had been responsible for his parents' deaths too, for it seemed they had grown used to betraying him even before Nick entered the picture.

Sebastian's anger knew no end, and he knew he would make an example of this set of traitors, so no one would ever cross his family, or him, again.

As Sebastian watched the elders being dragged away, he dismissed the rest and began making his way out when he saw Matt walking in and slowed his pace. "What's the progress?" He asked his beta, who fell into step beside him as they made their way toward the dungeon.

"No progress. Still no sign of him, Seb. I don't know if he's just good at hiding, or if we're not good enough at finding him."

"Let him hide as much as he wants. I will bring him out if it's the last thing I do."

"How are you going to do that?" Matt asked curiously, since they had nearly finished searching all the other packs, except for those they weren't permitted entrance to.

"The elders who worked for him might have information that will help us. I will get it out of them, even if I have to tear them limb from limb. It's been a long time since I last practiced torture myself, it seems I'll be getting some practice in again." Sebastian said through his teeth.

Matt swallowed hard hearing that. Sebastian's methods of torture were worse than anything the dungeon punishers could dish out, and he couldn't help but pity the elders, who might die before their execution even came.

However, Matt could also see that his friend was starting to grow obsessed with finding his cousin, and might be forgetting something else, so he put it into words. "Won't you retire for the night? I believe someone is waiting for you."

"I've told her I'm not coming tonight. She won't be waiting." Sebastian said, walking down the halls leading to the dungeon behind the elders. If he didn't finish what he had started, he wouldn't be at peace, and he didn't think he should be around his wife, or anyone he loved, in this state of anger, where it felt like his blood had been replaced by hot, burning coal. He would hate himself even more if he let any of his rage fall on someone he loved, so the safest thing to do was to burn it out where it belonged, before ever facing her or anyone else.

Furthermore, the more he saw the signs of what Nick had done to her, the angrier he became, not at her, but at his own failure to already have his cousin in custody. Sebastian's rage was so consuming that he knew cooling it would take more than beating the elders; it would take Nick himself.

"But still, after what she went through last night..." Matt trailed off when Sebastian shot him an angry look. He pressed his lips together and changed the subject immediately. "Anyway, if you choose to return to your office, you'll find a yellow envelope on your desk. It's—"

"I'm not going there tonight either. I will see to their punishment and torture myself. Tell Gilbert we have six days before the next full moon, and I need that antidote ready by then. I don't care what he has to do, I want it ready. And tell him to start preparing for the sacrifice." Saying that, he increased his pace, walked past Matt, and disappeared around the corner that led to the dark dungeon entrance.

Matt fell back and stopped walking. "He's letting his anger cloud his mind, and everything else with it," Matt thought, unable to forget the Luna's dull look that morning, and knowing that only Sebastian would have been able to help her heal from whatever had happened in that maze with Nick, but the Alpha seemed too consumed by his own temper at the moment.

He had felt sorry for her when she'd forced a smile at him and handed him the envelope, something she should have been giving to her husband instead. Matt didn't know what was going on, but he believed that whatever it was, a real marking would solve it, and he needed to go urge that doctor along, give him a little threat to hurry things up, before everything here fell apart.

He liked the Luna, for his friend's sake, she was exactly the kind of woman Matt believed Sebastian needed, and more than anything, he wanted her to remain their Luna, secured with a mark. Matt didn't know what the antidote was for, but he knew it was something important to keeping her safe for the marking.

He opened his link and connected to the doctor.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 399: Clashing mate[1,244 words]

Doctor Gilbert was already sweating through his lab coat as he peered through the microscope at the latest blood sample mounted on the slide. Around him, test tubes, centrifuge tubes, and chemical compounds were scattered across his workstation, all part of his desperate attempt to formulate an antidote to the powerful wolf suppressant.

To top it all off, Matt had told him the Alpha would have his head and his legs if he didn't finish it within three days.

He hadn't left his office since they had returned from the Grim Pack, and quite frankly, he was beginning to regret ever accepting that invitation to the ceremony. He could have used that time to make far more progress on the antidote instead.

The Luna was everything and anything he had never encountered before in his life. Her blood chemistry and DNA were unlike anything he had ever seen, and so was the substance used to suppress her wolf.

By now, he was certain she had one, or else that chemical would never have been present in her body in the first place. Wolf suppressant existed for only one purpose, to suppress a wolf.

There was absolutely no reason for someone to administer such a massive and unusual dose to a woman who was supposedly wolfless, unless there was far more to her condition than what he was currently seeing through his tests.

He wished he had more reason to run further tests on her, but the Supreme Alpha had limited him to what he already had, forbidding him from finding any excuse for additional testing. Yet the more Gilbert discovered, the more he knew he would need to get her here in person to finish this faster.

Under the microscope was a slide containing a sample of Viola's blood saturated with the heavy suppressant. Beside it lay another prepared slide containing a tiny sample of the compound he had formulated using Sebastian's blood and several other ingredients collected from the werewolf healing system. His previous test using Sebastian's blood had yielded no reaction, and now he was trying a different approach, one he wasn't entirely certain would work.

Gilbert was more than exhausted, but he knew he had to find out what was stopping the blood from clearing the suppressant. He was so immersed in it that when the door opened, without looking away from his work, he ordered,

"Keep it right there and back away." He said this to the she-wolf working in the lab, believing she had returned with the samples he'd asked for. But the she-wolf foolishly dropped the tray in front of him, and Gilbert, who rarely cursed, cursed as water sloshed out of the tray and into his slide sample.

He jerked back to scold her in irritation for ruining his hard work, but his voice died in his throat when he realized it wasn't the she-wolf he'd sent at all, but Laila, standing there in her nightdress with her arms crossed over her chest, having just dropped a tray of food and a glass of water in front of him and spoiled his work.

"What are you doing here?" He asked, his voice irritated, his eyes narrowed in displeasure. She had just ruined days of his hard work, and had Gilbert been a violent werewolf, which he wasn't, he was sure he would have shoved her right out of his lab for what she'd done, mate or no mate.

Laila heard his irritation and rolled her eyes in annoyance. "If you've forgotten, Mr. Rodrigo, you and I are connected by a bond, and I can feel every bit of the distress you're going through, so much that I can't sleep in peace. You are disturbing me with it, so I brought you something to eat so I could get some rest." She said, her own anger barely contained.

She still felt cheated and betrayed, and on top of that, she was doing her very best to stay away and let him forget her, to let him live his life with Zoe, something Laila knew she would never have done had it been any other she-wolf instead of Zoe.

But for the first time in her life, she was being noble, even while she suffered. Her sleep was all that mattered to her right now, and she hated that he was ruining that too with his distress and hunger.

Having an Alpha wolf who spoke to her only occasionally didn't make it any better, since her wolf had pushed her out of bed to go feed her mate.

Gilbert, who was not only sleep-deprived but working under a threat hanging over his head, couldn't have been more triggered.

"You could have put the damn tray anywhere else, but you chose to dump it right onto my worktable, Miss Serrano. Do you have any idea what you've just done?" He ran his fingers through his hair in frustration, for it almost felt as though she had ruined his life. That was the last blood tube of the Luna he had left.

The more she brought herself to him and triggered the mate bond, the more she complicated his life and filled his mind with conflict, when he should have been focused on his work.

"Well, it was the only table I knew you'd notice the food on," Laila said, looking at the table and seeing nothing worth being so frustrated over, except for the fact that he disliked her so much that her mere presence triggered his frustration.

The feeling made her shrink inwardly, and that hurt returned to her chest, like a live wire gripping her insides. The mate bond tightened, as though it wanted to snap and break under his rejection.

Gilbert could feel himself losing his grip on his frustration at her cluelessness and lack of apology, though he realized he didn't even need one, since it wouldn't fix anything for him. This was why he had never wanted to put any effort into finding his mate in the past; she-wolves always had, and always would, make him miserable.

He composed his anger and said, "Please leave." He gestured toward the door.

Laila felt his hurt as though it were her own and looked at the table where the water had spilled. She hadn't meant to ruin his work, and had only been frustrated that he'd pulled her out of her bed. "I am—"

"Please go away," he gritted out, pointing firmly at the door. Gilbert immediately noticed how her lashes trembled, but she didn't let him see her hurt. She composed herself quickly, then turned to leave.

"Wait," Gilbert stopped her, and for a moment Laila's heart soared as she looked at him almost eagerly, but he merely pointed toward the tray of food containing the steaming instant noodles she had prepared for him by pouring hot water over them.

"Take that away with you."

Laila's fingers clenched at her sides, and without arguing, she shot him a heated glare before walking forward to collect the tray. As she did, her eyes fell on the slide beneath the microscope, and she blurted out,

"Your sample is smoking..."

Gilbert cursed and quickly moved her aside before rushing to the microscope. Sure enough, a thin trail of smoke was rising from the sample. He cursed again in frustration and peered through the microscope. A second later, his eyes widened, and he breathed out in disbelief,

"I'll be damned!"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna -

Chapter 400: You call that lashing out? [

1,869 words]

"I didn't touch it," Laila said quickly before he could accuse her of being the reason the sample was smoking, but Gilbert surprised her by letting out an excited laugh.

"It's working!"

He watched in astonishment as the Luna's blood, mixed with the Alpha's blood and a few other ingredients, began breaking down the suppressant after a single drop of water had fallen onto the sample.

He hadn't thought to add water, and it had never occurred to him that it was the last ingredient he needed for the antidote. Gilbert's arctic-blue eyes shimmered with happiness, and when he turned to find Laila studying him, he belatedly realized he wouldn't have gotten there without her mistake. He hugged her out of pure excitement and gratitude.

"Thank you, you completed the final test for me!" He laughed again, and Laila stood frozen in his embrace, completely unaware of what had made him so happy. Still, she found herself sharing in his happiness through their bond, and she hugged him back hesitantly.

The hug, born of excitement, turned intimate the moment the bond sparked between them at the contact of their bodies. Laila, who had felt hurt since returning from the Grim Pack and had been eating in a depressed daze ever since, suddenly found peace in his arms and tightened her hold around him.

Gilbert, who had worked tirelessly since morning without a moment's rest or food, inhaled her scent and felt like he was in heaven, exactly where he was meant to be. His body relaxed, all the tension melting away as he buried his nose in her warm neck, and felt his body stir to life in places he had long trained himself to ignore by burying himself in work.

The mate bond sparked through his veins like live wires, humming through his blood and settling low in his abdomen. He felt Laila rub her face against his chest as she whispered,

"I'm sorry for ruining your work. That wasn't my intention, I just wanted to make sure you'd rest and stop being so distressed." She said in a small voice.

"You didn't ruin my work, and I'm sorry for lashing out at you." Gilbert apologized without letting go, wanting to enjoy this for a while longer before he would inevitably send her out of his life again.

Laila chuckled softly against his chest, burying herself deeper into him.

"You call that lashing out?" she asked. "I've experienced far worse than that, Mr. Rodrigo. I've been shoved around and hit in the name of 'lashing out.'"

"You have?" he asked, surprise evident in his voice.

Laila nodded.

Growing up, she had been bullied by girls her age for being meek in the past. Living under her tyrannical uncle, she had endured real lashing out and knew exactly what it felt like. She had been beaten countless times and dragged around by her hair. She eventually learned to fight back the hard way, after a group of girls nearly drowned her by forcing her head underwater simply because, on her first day of school, she had asked if she could join their group of friends.

At fifteen, Laila made the hardest decision of her life as she stared at her reflection in the mirror. She vowed that she would never again allow anyone to beat her or try to drown her, not even her uncle. That was when she decided to leave her family behind and live anywhere but Silver.

She reinvented herself, shedding the timid girl everyone had once preyed on. She became everything every man and woman wanted but could never have unless she chose them on her own terms. Yet she had never imagined that when her own mate finally came into her life, he wouldn't want her for any of the qualities she believed made her irresistible.

Her arms tightened around him even more, and Gilbert pulled back from the hug with some difficulty to look at her face, where her emerald eyes gazed at him with a longing that mirrored exactly what he felt inside.

"I never would have thought Miss Serrano would end up on the receiving end of someone else's lashing out." Gilbert remarked, his hand moving before he could stop it, brushing her hair behind her ear and tucking it carefully into place.

Laila smiled faintly. "You'd be surprised." She looked up at him, noticing as his eyes dropped to her lips, then back to her eyes.

"I should leave, I think." Laila said, but made no move to step back, their gazes locked together, emerald and aquamarine blue, both heavy with exhaustion, and longing.

This man was supposed to be her mate for life, someone the Moon Goddess had given to her, but she couldn't have him, and yet she couldn't resist him either.

He looked so stressed that she wanted to take some of that burden from him and carry it herself. Maybe it was the mate bond making her feel this way, because it was so unlike her.

The thought had barely crossed her mind before she realized she was leaning toward him. When he made no move to pull away, she gently pressed her lips to his. Softly, she drew his lower lip between hers before her lips glided to his upper one in an equally tender kiss.

He didn't return the kiss.

"We shouldn't, Laila..." He whispered, but she kissed him again, murmuring against his lips, "You don't want me because of your family, don't hurt Zoe just to try to forget me. I want you, and you want me. We belong together, Gilbert." Saying that, her kiss grew bolder as she grabbed his collar.

Laila's fingers tightened on his collar, pulling him closer as her lips met his again. This time, the kiss was deeper and more eager, yet still slow and unhurried, as she moved from one of his lips to the other with gentle care.

She kissed him as though trying to pour every unsaid thing into it, the hurt, the want, the stupid hope that refused to die. She tilted her head, deepening the kiss as her tongue traced the seam of his lips, coaxing them apart with teasing little licks. When he finally parted them on a shaky exhale, she slipped inside.

The soft, wet sound their mouths made sent heat rushing through her. She tasted the exhaustion on him, the faint bitterness of too much coffee, and beneath it all, the pull of the mate bond that made her chest ache.

Her free hand slid down his chest, feeling the rapid thud of his heart, then over his abdomen through his shirt, before dipping lower, brushing boldly over the growing bulge straining against his pants. She caressed him there, feeling him twitch under her touch.

Gilbert stiffened, a shaky breath escaping him. He had no idea what to do with his hands at first, they hovered uncertainly before finally settling on her waist.

That small surrender was all she needed.

She pressed her body flush against his, and Gilbert's resistance, which he'd had no power to fight against with the bond pulling at him, snapped. He kissed her back.

Gilbert had more than once questioned his own sexuality, since no woman had ever made him lose himself enough to want to have sex, and he had believed that maybe all the teasing back in school had killed his interest in women entirely. But since meeting Laila, it was a different story altogether.

He suddenly lifted her, surprising them both with his strength. Laila wrapped her legs around him instantly, her nightdress bunching up as she clung to him.

He carried her to one of the tables in his lab and set her on the edge, knocking things aside without caring. His fingers fumbled with the front of her nightdress for half a second before something snapped in him, his wolf pushing forward hard. The fabric tore under his hands with a sharp rip, exposing her breasts to the cool air of the lab.

Laila gasped, but she didn't pull away. Gilbert stared for a moment, breathing hard, his face flushed with a mix of hunger and nerves. Then he leaned in and pressed his mouth to her neck, sucking on the sensitive skin there.

His tongue moved in slow, needy circles, and Laila tilted her head to give him more, a soft moan slipping out. She could feel how hard he was against her, the heat of him pressing between her legs, and it made her dizzy with want.

The bond flared brighter, flooding her with his emotions, raw want, fear, guilt, and a deep, aching loneliness that mirrored her own. Gilbert's hand cupped her breast almost reverently, his thumb brushing over her nipple, and she arched into him, whispering his name.

But then his teeth grazed her neck again, harder this time, the urge to mark her rising sharp and dangerous in his chest. His wolf howled for it, to claim her right here, to make her his so no one else could ever touch her, so he wouldn't have to keep fighting the bond.

Gilbert jerked back as though he'd been burned, his eyes wide. He was harder than he'd ever been in his life, his body trembling with need, every inch of him screaming at him to keep going.

Her bare breasts, flushed and heaving, the way her lips were swollen from his kisses, it was almost too much. He wanted to bury himself inside her so badly it hurt to stop himself.

Instead, he yanked his lab coat off in one rough motion and draped it over her shoulders, pulling it closed to cover her as he buttoned it up at the front. His hands were shaking as he helped her down from the table. He took her hand without a word, holding it tighter than he meant to, and walked her to the door.

"Thank you for the noodles. Good night, Miss Serrano..." he said quietly, his chest constricting at the thought of sending her away.

But Gilbert had already dug his own grave by committing to another woman, accepting Laila was no longer an option, not unless he was ready to hand his head to the Alpha and the Beta on a platter. He was caught in the middle of his own mess.

He gently pushed her out and looked at her confused face one last time before closing the door behind her.

The second it clicked shut, Gilbert leaned his forehead against the wood, his eyes squeezed closed. His heart was still racing, his body on fire, the taste of her skin still on his tongue. He hated himself for letting it go that far. Hated how much he still wanted her. Hated that even now, part of him wished he'd just given in.

But he couldn't, because he had already made his mess.

He stayed there, breathing hard against the door, alone with feelings he didn't know how to fix, before finally going back to his worktable and contacting the Beta to let him know the antidote was done, all that remained was for the Luna to come by tomorrow for it.