Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 411: We finally meet[1,154 words]

Viola walked out of the elevator with a thoughtful look on her face while she let everything Wave had explained settled inside her. So that explained why she'd been so sad after singing at the ceremony? She had unknowingly sung in white, as Wave called it, and taken back blue into her heart. How strange, she didn't even have a tail, and yet she carried all these bizarre mermaid powers she'd rather not have.

Viola made a mental note to try not to sing again, since taking in blue had done nothing but nearly ruin her relationship with her husband, which was still hanging on a bridge for as long as Nick was free.

Despite Wave urging her to hurry, Viola remained aware of her condition and stayed determined to be careful with it as anything could go wrong. She walked at a normal pace, following the water trail Wave left behind on the floor, mindful of her bodyguards, who naturally fell into step behind her the moment they spotted her step out of the elevator of her floors.

She first walked down the hall where people milled about, then into a quieter section, still following the water trail.

When Viola reached a part of the building she had never expected to enter, she stopped at the sight of a heavily guarded area, several of Sebastian's most prized warriors standing in black around it, as though to keep anyone from getting in.

Viola saw Wave waving to her from behind the men, having already snuck his way through without their notice, and even though she suspected the men wouldn't let her pass, she lifted her chin and started walking forward anyway. As expected, they stopped her, their bulky hands stretching out in front of her.

"You can't go in. No one is allowed inside. Go back," one of them said, showing no regard for who she was. In fact, he didn't even recognize her as the Supreme Luna. These were men brought in from the territory borders specifically to guard the Supreme Alpha's treasures, so they naturally assumed she was some relative of Kade's who had arrived with bodyguards. But their orders had been strict: no one, not even Kade's relatives, was to be allowed inside.

"Step aside. I have business inside, and I intend to see it through. You don't need to know why I'm here. You only need to move out of my way." Viola ordered firmly.

Her words made the other men stiffen, clearly caught off guard by the small woman ordering them around. Nobody ordered them around except the Alpha, and they were under no oath to respect anyone who wasn't the Supreme Luna. As far as they were concerned, they could do as they pleased to anyone who didn't follow their orders.

"Get away from here if you know what's good for you, or—"

"Watch how you speak to the Supreme Luna, warrior." One of Viola's bodyguards warned, and the men's eyes widened, looking down at her in disbelief. So this was the Supreme Luna everyone was talking about?

"Step aside." Viola ordered again, this time putting even more firmness into her voice, enough to send a shiver down the men's spines as they found themselves wondering how such a small woman, without any visible aura, could truly be their Luna, until the command itself made it undeniable.

They all bowed their heads. "Apologies, Luna, but we can't let you in. It's the Alpha's order, no one is allowed through this door. Not even you."

Viola's eyes trailed to the door behind them, and something inside was indeed calling out to her. But there was no way she could force her way through with these men blocking it, and she realized that no matter how many commands she gave, they wouldn't budge, not when Sebastian himself had given the order. Was he really keeping a mermaid in there? If so, what did he plan to do with it?

She looked to Wave, who was making quick gestures with his watery hands, and she frowned, not understanding what he meant.

Wave face-palmed, sending water splashing across the floor when she still didn't understand. "Sing in pink, Mermaidia! They will listen!" He exclaimed, drawing the attention of every guard nearby, who heard his strange, garbled sounds rather than actual words.

"Oops!" Wave exclaimed, dissolving into a puddle of water to hide himself the moment all eyes turned toward him.

The men looked around, confused about where the sound had come from, before their eyes landed on the water pooling on the floor. Naturally, they assumed it had come from the creature confined inside the nearby tube, as she had been trying unsuccessful tricks on them all day and making strange sounds like whales.

Viola, meanwhile, had no idea how to sing in pink, or in any other color, since what had happened at the ceremony had been nothing but coincidence. Still, when her bodyguards began to usher her away, she began to sing, hesitant at first.

Everyone stopped in their tracks as the song flowed from her like honey. As Viola kept singing, she noticed a strange, glassy expression settling over the men's faces, one by one, until they looked like enchanted puppies. Emboldened, she tried her luck again,

"Let me in."

Without question, they stepped aside and allowed her through the door, closing it behind her while she was still singing in a color she couldn't even name. Once the door shut behind her, she stopped singing and let out a sigh of relief, only for her eyes to widen as she took in the room around her.

It wasn't like an ordinary room at all, it looked more like a lab, lined floor to ceiling with clear tubes that resembled cages. They filled every corner, but one in particular stood apart, covered by a tarp.

At that moment, Viola heard a sound coming from behind the covered tube, and she walked toward it slowly. There was a red button on the side of the covered tank, and without fully understanding what she was doing, she reached out and pressed it experimentally. The tarp snapped and folded upward, and she stepped back at the sharp sound it made in the otherwise silent room.

The moment it finished folding away, what she saw inside the tank stole the breath from her lungs, and she took another step back as her eyes landed on the creature within, pressed close to the glass.

It was indeed a mermaid, and Viola's gaze moved slowly from her shimmering blue tail, to her midriff, so strikingly human, save for a scattering of small scales, and then up to the long hair spilling over her chest, before finally reaching her face. Viola's heart stopped for a moment as her eyes met a pair of blue ones staring back at her.

"Serena..." The mermaid murmured. "We finally meet."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 412: Distrust[1,470 words]

Viola was struck with a strange familiarity toward the creature inside the tank, though she concealed it. Hearing her given name spoken by the creature made her take another step backward.

Serena had been her given name at the orphanage, before her adoption, and not many people in Silver knew it. Staring into the mermaid's blue eyes, she felt a sense of familiarity she couldn't quite shake from her heart.

"H-how do you know my name?" Viola asked, staring unblinkingly at the magnificent creature she had never truly seen with her own eyes before, though she had heard countless lore and stories about them.

If beauty were a person, it would be this mermaid; if jewels were a living being, they would be those sparkling blue tail and eyes. Her hair was black, resembling Viola's own, but she shook that off as coincidence, just as she did the eyes.

The mermaid swam around the tank as though searching for an escape before settling back against the glass, looking at her.

"You look so much like my cousin, so I know you're Serena. What took you so long to come for me?" She asked, her palms flattening against the glass, her sorrowful eyes glistening. "They're going to kill me in a few days..."

Viola's fingers tightened around the fabric of her dress as turmoil ran down her spine, her insides twisting. "What cousin?" She asked. "Who do I look like?"

The mermaid parted her lips and replied, "Ivy. My cousin. You have the same face, and she talks about you all the time. I know you're Serena. Get me out of here before they kill me, my family is waiting for me, and Ivy will be in danger without me." She said frantically.

At first, emotions so fierce rose in Viola's chest at the mention of her sister, alive somewhere, that the first thing she wanted to do was ask more, how she had ended up living with the mermaids when she couldn't breath and didn't have a tail. But then something held her back, kept her rooted where she stood. Mermaids were known to be manipulators and liars; they lured people into dancing to their tune.

Just as that sea witch had once deceived Sebastian, this one could be deceiving her too. And she felt her heart clench with disappointment at the thought that the creature might simply be trying to use her to get away.

"You don't believe me, do you?" The mermaid said in a small voice, her head dropping. "Ivy told me you're headstrong, and—"

"Don't you dare say my sister's name." Viola warned, stepping back again, even as she found herself feeling a pang of sympathy for the creature as pearls began drifting through the water, settling at the bottom of the tank. She was crying.

"Come closer, and I'll make you believe I'm not lying. Save me, please, they'll kill me, and if I die, Ivy will too, my mate will kill her. Don't turn away from her now, not when she

needs you. She was there for you. She stood by you." The mermaid said desperately, banging her palm against the glass.

But Viola kept stepping back, convinced she was being manipulated into turning against her husband, the very man who had put the creature here.

Sebastian hadn't told her about capturing a mermaid, and she told herself it was simply because he'd been busy. Whatever his reasons were for capturing her, Viola decided she shouldn't interfere or get in his way, especially knowing how these creatures had already tried to come between her relationship with him once before. When the sea witch had tried to sway him into believing that she was working with them. Viola refused to prove that claim right by helping this mermaid escape from the tank.

She wasn't going to give Sebastian another reason to believe that she was somehow involved with them, especially when their relationship was already strained enough with Nick's plans to destroy it.

"Don't call for me again." Saying that, Viola turned on her heel and hurried out of the lab-like room, unwilling to be swayed any further.

If her sister truly had become a mermaid, Wave would have known, would have seen her, and besides, Viola wouldn't have a wolf growing inside her now, she'd have a tail instead.

Thinking about Wave, she belatedly remembered that they had come together, but he had detached himself from her when the guards had almost caught him. She looked around for any sign of him, but when she didn't see her water companion anywhere, she couldn't help but mutter,

"So much for protection..."

Getting out proved far easier than getting in. Viola slipped away without any trouble from the guards.

She returned to her penthouse, panting and trying to catch her breath, even though she hadn't run, only walked as quickly as she could.

How did these sea creatures seem to know so much about her when she wanted nothing to do with them at all?

Viola thought as she jerkily pulled off her clothes and changed into something more comfortable before sitting down on her couch. First, there had been the sea witch, and Viola had no idea why she had been after her, and now there was this one in the tank. Why had Sebastian captured her?

She couldn’t stop thinking about it and soon realized she needed a distraction. She belatedly remembered the doctor’s words about taking care of herself, about eating properly, so she got up and called for dinner to be brought to her.

While she waited for the omega to bring her food, she sat on the couch and forced herself to watch a movie, even though her mind wasn’t on it at all, lost somewhere else entirely.

When the food arrived, Viola only managed to eat a quarter of it before pushing it aside and grabbing her phone to call Sebastian.

"...The number you are trying to reach is unavailable..."

Viola tried again and got the same response before slowly giving up. If he had picked up, she would have asked him why he’d captured a mermaid and locked her in a tank. She needed to understand his reasons before she could judge what the creature had told her.

But without knowing why the mermaid was even there, Viola felt restless. What if they killed her, and the creature really had been telling the truth about knowing her sister, about actually being her cousin?

Though she wanted to act as though she didn’t care, part of her was curious, wondering whether the creature had been telling the truth. She wanted to deny it, but she had seen the resemblance between them, the hair, the eyes.

Viola didn’t know what to do. She sat there, staring at the nearly full moon through the glass wall of her living room. She was caught in a terrible dilemma, and after a long moment of thought, she decided to wait until her husband returned before going back to question the mermaid again.

She hoped he would return soon, because the moment she lay down, the haunting song began to play in her head once more. This time, she grabbed her headphones and put them on.

Normally, she fell asleep easily once she lay down, but tonight was different. While blasting music through her headphones, she picked up her tablet and began researching how to be a good mother, since the anxiety of her pregnancy still lingered at the back of her mind, pressing in alongside everything else.

Where did Sebastian go? When will he be back?

What if he really did want to kill the mermaid? The thought struck her again, and she bolted upright, setting the tablet aside.

She got up, grabbed her husband’s coat, and put it on, slipping her feet into the flip-flops before leaving the penthouse.

It was already late by the time she returned to the place. This time, she sang in pink with ease, and she was let inside without any delay.

Once inside, she found the mermaid in the same position as before, pressed against the tank, palms flattened against the glass.

"I knew you would come back," the mermaid said, relief crossing her face.

"Don’t get your hopes up, mermaid. I’m not here to set you free. I’m here to ask you a few questions." Viola’s voice was firm, and she made sure not to let even the slightest weakness slip into her tone. "Don’t even try to lie to me, or I’ll kill you myself, before my husband ever gets the chance."

The mermaid stared at her for a moment before asking, "What do you want to know? And what can I do to convince you I’m telling the truth?"

"How did you know Ivy?"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 413: A new world[1,306 words]

The mermaid’s expression changed at Viola’s question.

"Ivy was taken by the sea witch. She believed Ivy was you and took her by mistake. But it was discovered later that she wasn’t you, and she was thrown into a dungeon at the bottom of the sea."

Viola’s breath caught. The sea witch again? What did she want from her?

The mermaid continued speaking, seemingly unaware of Viola’s reaction, or perhaps simply unwilling to stop.

"But my mama secretly let her out. She’s your mother’s younger sister, and she couldn’t just let her niece die like that."

"My mother is the mermaid?" Viola found herself asking in surprise, even though she wasn’t entirely convinced everything the mermaid was telling her was true yet. She had wondered more than once which of her parents was the werewolf and which was the mermaid, and it turned out the mother who had heartlessly given her children away was the mermaid. The realization only gave her more reasons not to accept that part of herself.

"Yes, your mother was a mermaid."

"Was?" Viola arched a brow, and the mermaid's eyes turned hateful for a moment as she replied,

"She was heartlessly killed by the werewolves. Your mother is dead."

Viola didn't know what to feel about that information. She held no attachment to the woman who had given birth to her and had no loving memories of what it felt like to have a mother's love. She could see that the mermaid expected her to have a strong reaction to the revelation that her mother had been killed by werewolves, but when Viola's expression remained almost completely blank, the mermaid narrowed her eyes.

"You don't care, do you?" she asked, bewildered.

"Am I supposed to? I don't know her. What happened to my sister?" Viola asked, getting straight to the most important question because Ivy was her only blood relative now.

"Ivy has been living with us ever since she was freed from the bottom of the sea. We've kept her existence a secret from every other mermaid, though, to protect her."

Viola's fingers tightened around the edges of Sebastian's oversized coat, and she could suddenly feel the fabric beneath her palms with startling clarity.

Her sister was alive? That too in the sea?

"You..." Viola swallowed, her voice barely audible. "You said she's been living with you?"

The mermaid nodded.

"Yes. She is always worried about you. She wanted so badly to see you, but she knew she couldn't just come to land, so she borrowed Mama's powers to visit you in your dreams sometimes."

Viola's chest tightened. Those vivid dreams she'd had of Ivy had been real... was that why she sometimes woke up drenched in water?

Her sister had been alive this entire time.

Viola's eyes burned, but she refused to let the tears fall. She wasn't ready to cry. She wasn't even sure she was ready to believe any of this.

"You're lying," she whispered. "I can't breathe underwater, how could she?" Not to mention the fact that Doctor Gilbert had confirmed she had a wolf, so how could Ivy, who was her twin live underwater?

The mermaid's expression softened. "I'm not lying, and Ivy can breathe underwater. She has a tail too. I can prove it to you."

"Then prove it."

The words came out sharper than Viola intended, but she didn't care. Her heart was pounding so hard it hurt.

The mermaid stepped closer to the glass.

"Come closer, and I can show you. I can show you what happened to Ivy, and how I ended up here."

Viola stared at her. For a moment, she didn't move.

She didn't completely trust the creature, but some desperate part of her wanted to believe everything she had been told, especially the part about Ivy being safe.

And after everything she had endured, Viola couldn't allow herself to accept something this enormous based on words alone.

Slowly, she stepped closer to the tank, still clutching Sebastian's coat around herself as though she were seeking comfort from the familiar scent and the support it gave her.

"Show me," she whispered.

"Put your hand against mine." The mermaid said, holding her gaze, and after a few moments of hesitation, Viola raised her hand and pressed it against the cold glass. "Close your eyes. Trust me," the mermaid added, when Viola hesitated once more.

Viola closed her eyes, and at first, she saw nothing but darkness until flashes of light suddenly invaded her mind, bursting brightly behind her eyelids. The flashes became so bright that her eyes snapped open to escape them, only to discover that when she opened them, she was no longer standing in the lab-like room.

She was beneath the sea.

Water bubbled and gurgled all around her, and Viola immediately began to panic as her phobia took hold. Her breathing quickened as she instinctively tried to look for a way out, but there was nothing around her except the endless expanse of water.

Then she heard the mermaid's voice, calm and reassuring despite Viola's growing terror.

"It's not real. You're inside my memories, Serena. Relax and just experience it. You aren't actually inside the water."

Hearing that, Viola relaxed and began taking in her surroundings more carefully, finding herself breathing underwater in a place that could only be the mermaid world. It wasn't nearly as dark as she'd always imagined the bottom of the oceans and seas would be in a

mermaid world. In fact, it was bright, with every corner filled with small, glowing, fish-like creatures drifting through the water. Some swam past her, greeting her as they went.

"Princess Yasmin."

Princess Yasmin? Viola wondered, until she realized she was experiencing the mermaid's memories through her body. So she was a princess? she thought, admiring the floating, glowing fish.

Before Viola could take in everything around her, someone bumped into her while giggling. She turned to find a little mermaid with pinkish hair and blue eyes, much like the mermaid trapped in the tank.

"Mama! Hide me, I don't want aunt Ivy to find me, we're playing hide and seek!" The little girl laughed, grabbing her hand.

Viola belatedly realized the mermaid in the tank had a daughter, and she found her own hand grabbing the girl's, her lips parting without her permission as words from the mermaid's memory spilled out of her mouth instead.

"Careful, Pearl. You play too much," she scolded. "Have you finished your studies?"

"Yeah, yeah, I finished it all. I have studied the book of the Sea Goddess and the elements of water. Hide me, hide me! She's coming!" Pearl sang, swimming in circles around her and swishing her tail playfully.

"Fine, come here." She took the girl's hand and tucked her inside a large shell, saying, "Don't make a sound, or your aunt will find you."

"I love you, Mama."

The little girl waved at her mother to come closer. Her mother leaned in and kissed her affectionately before swimming backward as she closed the shell. Then she whispered into the shadows,

"I figured out your plans, Ivy. Pearl won't come out until we're gone."

Right at that moment, another mermaid swam clumsily out of the shadows and into the glow of the fish-lights. "Thank you, Yasmin," she said, her voice thick with emotion. And Viola's eyes remained fixed on her sister, who looked entirely identical to her, save for the tail.

So she was indeed alive...

"If we don't hurry, Ivy, Pearl will want to come with us. You can see your sister quickly, and we'll be back here before my mate returns and before Mama notices we're gone. Sea

Goddess, I can’t believe I’m about to sneak you onto land. I don’t even know which part of the surface will lead us to where your sister is!"

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 414: Let me out[1,559 words]

Ivy grabbed her cousin’s hand desperately. "Don’t second-guess yourself now, Yasmin. We’ve been planning this for a while and have already made the necessary calculations. I’ll just see her and assure her that she doesn’t need to keep looking for me, so she can live her life happier. You gave me the stone to easily change my tail into legs. I just need you to guide me out of the water. I’ll take it from there."

"Finn isn’t going to like this," Yasmin grumbled.

"Your mate never liked me to begin with, nor anything I do. Don’t worry. I’ll explain to Finn myself if he finds out I dragged you to the surface," Ivy said, referring to her cousin’s mate, who despised anything that came from land, werewolves most of all, and wouldn’t hesitate to kill her if it weren’t for her mother’s family protecting her.

Yasmin finally took her hand, and they swam out of their cave home together. "I hope Pearl keeps hiding there until we’re gone. We still have the festival coming, and preparations to start, Ivy, you really need to try and find a mate to protect you from the sea witch. You could get lucky, mate with a prince from another part of the ocean. I’m so excited for the day. Let’s hurry back so we can polish your tail and fins."

Ivy barely cared about mating or finding "the one." All she wanted was to reach her sister and assure her that she was doing all right, that she had a family here underwater, and that Serena could keep living her own life on land, since it seemed the dreams alone hadn’t been enough to convey her meaning. For as long as Ivy was alive, she would protect her from the sea witch.

However, things went completely wrong when they surfaced in the wrong waters entirely, not the werewolf territory at all, but human land.

"Yasmin! I thought you calculated the distance?" Ivy said with a sigh.

"I did," Yasmin replied with pursed lips.

"Look around you. This isn’t the werewolf waters. These are human waters."

"Oops. Well, I thought I had. We can still make it around. We have the speed of royals, cousin. We can use that, remember?" Yasmin winked.

Ivy laughed, splashing water at her cousin with her tail, just as they began to dive back down. But before they could get very far, something shot at them, straight toward each of their necks. When they looked up, they saw a ship ahead of them, with several men aboard holding guns.

"Werewolves!" Yasmin gritted out.

"What are werewolves doing here?!" Ivy exclaimed, suddenly feeling strange.

"Dive!"

But it was too late. A net shot out from the ship and covered them both, their bodies weakening instantly from whatever had struck them in the neck the first time. The net tightened around them, trapping their bodies and leaving them no time to escape.

Yasmin yanked at it, using her fins to try to tear it apart, but the net wasn't ordinary rope, and as they fought against it, the ship closed in on them fast.

"Yasmin..." Ivy cried weakly, lacking her cousin's strength, being half-breed, her tail unstable and unable to break the net.

"Don't worry. I'll get us out of here."

Yasmin used the fin of her tail to tear a gap in the net and shoved her weakened cousin through it. Ivy began sinking toward the bottom of the ocean, but just as Yasmin started to follow after her, she was shot again, and another net dropped over her. That was when she lost consciousness.

Viola gasped out of the memory, stepping back from the glass. "You saved Ivy's life..."

•••

Viola lay in bed, unable to sleep, the mermaid's words, she had a name now, Yasmin, circling her mind like a broken record. Viola hadn't wanted to believe any of it, but the memories she'd been shown, and the terror of whatever had been used to shoot at them on their necks, were undeniable. She had no real reason left to doubt, not unless she wanted to delude herself for the sake of her husband, who had captured the mermaid with the intention to kill her.

Viola stared at the ceiling, uncertainty pressing on her mind and chest. Yasmin, as Viola had begun calling the mermaid, ever since discovering she had saved her twin's life, had told her that if anything happened to her, her mate wouldn't let Ivy go free either. He would blame her and hand her over to the sea witch or worst, kill her.

"He doesn’t like her much," she’d been told. But despite learning everything about her sister and the life she lived beneath the sea, Viola still couldn’t do what the mermaid expected of her, not without first confronting her husband and understanding his reasons.

"Let me out, please. I don’t need you to do much, just take me to the nearest river, any open body of water, and I’ll find my way home. I can’t die here. My daughter needs me. My mother, my mate... please, Serena..." Yasmin had pleaded, crying pearls, and Viola had felt torn, conflicted.

"I’m sorry, I can’t let you out yet. I’ll talk to my husband and see what I can do, but until then, bear with me. I’ll see you again." Viola had said, hoping the mermaid understood, before leaving quickly, afraid she’d be swayed even further into opening the tank and freeing her, the way her heart suddenly longed to do.

Viola had assumed her twin sister must be living in cruelty somewhere, even if she was alive, but glimpsing her relationship with Yasmin had shown her that Ivy was living safely, surrounded by their mother’s family. Mother. The word felt strange on her tongue, since Viola had never had someone who made her feel a mother’s love, nor any blood relative at all.

She had longed for family so badly that she had once betrayed her own sister for it. And though the Lindens had given her some love, it had come wrapped in enormous conditions and expectations she’d had to meet. But now she’d suddenly discovered she had relatives after all, only they came from a world entirely apart from the one she’d wanted.

Still, she was glad Ivy had found a home there, and the least she could do for her sister now was try to return her cousin to her, to mend what was breaking apart there before it was too late. As for herself, Viola thought, turning onto her side, she wanted to be here, and nowhere else.

She had a wolf now, and she would awaken it, and find her father’s family, because no matter how hard she tried to convince herself otherwise, she couldn’t accept her mermaid heritage with open arms. Accepting it would mean turning away from her family here, and forgiving a mother who had failed her so completely that Viola couldn’t feel even an ounce of grief over her death.

She must have done something truly wicked to be killed by the werewolves, after all, heartless enough toward her own children that she’d wanted them dead. What Viola didn’t understand was whether she and Ivy had been conceived out of love, or out of some other circumstance entirely, because if you loved the father of your children, loved the relationship you shared with him, your children would feel like a treasure, something to be cherished, not discarded to be killed.

Viola pressed a hand against her stomach and let out a sigh, closing her eyes in an attempt to sleep for a little while, not for her own sake, but for the sake of the baby she wasn’t even certain she wouldn’t fail, even though she knew she was in a much better place than

she had been in the past. It was still a life-changing discovery to find out she was pregnant at the moment she least expected it, all while carrying a powerful suppressant in her body that could potentially affect the child's future.

How Ivy had managed to grow a tail, while she, despite having such a massive dosage of suppressant in her body, had a wolf instead, was still a mystery to her...

She needed to tell her husband as soon as possible, and she needed him back just as urgently, because things kept happening while he was away.

Viola had just closed her eyes and was beginning to drift off, despite everything, she still had pack responsibilities to carry the next day in her husband's absence, when she thought she heard a cracking noise. Her eyes snapped open to the moon-glow of the room.

The lights were off, as usual, since the full moon was approaching, and to honor it, werewolves needed its glow. She sat up carefully, listening for the sound again, but heard only silence.

Viola was just beginning to think she'd imagined the cracking sound and was about to lie back down for more sleep when her bedroom door suddenly slammed open with tremendous force.

She jumped off the bed, instinctively reaching for the gun she kept tucked inside her nightstand drawer, where it had always been kept for moments exactly like this.

Intruder! The thought flashed through her mind as adrenaline surged through her body.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 415: The ghost in the bathtub[1,431 words]

Far away from Silver, in the hidden mansion where the twins had once made their switch in the past, the nearly full moon hung high above the small, disguised cottage that concealed the vast underground mansion beneath it.

From deep below the seemingly ordinary house came the sound of violent coughing, loud enough to be heard even from the front doorstep of the mansion. The cough was so dry, ragged, and heart-wrenching that hearing it alone was enough to make anyone cringe.

The cough came from a man kneeling on the floor of his bathroom, clutching his chest as he spat blood onto the white tiles beneath him. When the fit began to subside, he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, his handkerchief already soaked red in his trembling hand.

Alex cursed under his breath and sank onto the floor, leaning his back against the toilet as he struggled to catch his breath. He remained there for a long moment until the trembling in his body finally subsided.

His silver eyes drifted upward to a portrait he had hung on the bathroom wall, just as he had in every other room of the house. Looking at her smiling face only shattered his already broken heart even further, and silent tears slid down his face as a fierce longing gripped his throat, burning like acid all the way down to his chest.

"Natalie... I miss you more with every day that passes. The loneliness is killing me." He whispered to her image, swallowing convulsively to suppress his emotions. The walls of this house pressed in on him more each day, to the point he could barely breathe freely anymore.

Sebastian hadn't brought their monthly prisoners, the ones they used to suppress the other half of their shared curse, and Alex suspected his brother wasn't doing anything about curing him, or arranging for them to switch again this month.

Maybe he wouldn't even come this month...

He didn't have much time left, and his heartless twin wouldn't even allow him to see their sister before he died, or let him step outside this hellhole and see what life was like again. He was slowly losing his mind, talking to shadows in this house while his brother went on living his life, married to his own wife, probably happy, probably experiencing what it felt like to fall in love with the right woman and to have someone to hold to bed every night.

Alex felt cheated of life. He felt abandoned, forgotten, and utterly alone. His brother had taken everything from him, and yet Alex couldn't bring himself to resent him enough to wish him dead. He only wished that Sebastian might one day feel this same pain, might lose his own wife too, and finally understand why Alex could never forgive what he had done to him. He had killed his beloved wife and their unborn child...

He had taken away his wife and child, and more than anything, Alex thought it would have been better if Sebastian had killed him too when the elders had pressured him to do it years ago, before he had ever met her.

If his wife hadn't died, their child would have been a few years old by now, he thought bitterly, the memories and what-ifs only making the pain in his chest grow even worse.

Alex was about to stand up when he suddenly heard water gushing into his bathtub. He turned toward it in mild surprise. He hadn't turned on the tap, and yet the bathtub was filling on its own. He remained seated, utterly still. Ghosts no longer frightened him. He had lived alongside them for far too long now.

The water continued rising until it reached the brim and began spilling over the edge, flowing across the floor toward where he sat and soaking the fabric of his trousers. Then, without warning, a head broke the surface of the water.

It might have frightened any sane person, but Alex was barely fazed.

It was a young woman with dark hair and striking blue eyes, her head just breaking the surface of the water as she turned to look at him. She looked just as startled to see him as he was to see her, and after a brief moment of frozen silence, she slowly began sinking back beneath the water, as though she hadn't meant to intrude on his privacy... or had somehow appeared in the wrong place.

"Who are you?" Alex asked, before realizing that wasn't really the question he should be asking, it should have been *how the fuck did you get in there* but a lonely bastard like him would welcome even the company of a ghost.

The head stopped disappearing beneath the water, and the blue eyes stared back at him. The sight was strange, almost eerie, like a mummy crawling head-first out of water, but he only sat there, staring into her eyes.

"I'm sorry, I came through the wrong bathtub," came the woman's voice, though she spoke from underwater, and it sounded garbled, unsettling in a way. "If you don't mind, I'll quietly go back the way I came, and you can carry on talking to the photo on the wall."

Alex frowned. "Don't go. Wait. What's your name? Are you a ghost?" He asked, wondering if perhaps his head was too full of wine, talking to a disembodied head floating in water. He must be having delusions but Alex didn't care.

The eyes looked confused at his question, and then, as if realizing something, she nodded. "I am. I visit lonely souls like you, sir. But I think I've come at the wrong time."

Alex chuckled softly. "Lonely soul indeed. And no, you haven't come at the wrong time at all. Does my ghostly company have a name, at least?" He asked, humoring the ghost and somewhere happy that he had company.

"It's Ivy, sir." She said, wanting nothing more than to sink back beneath the surface and return to the sea. Using her Tidekin's portal to try to reach her sister had clearly not been a good idea.

"Ivy," he tested the name. "I never imagined ghosts had names, Ivy. Would you like to come out of the water and join me for dinner? I make wonderful meals, I imagine even ghosts appreciate good food. I don't have guests here often, but don't worry, I know how to be a proper host." He said, rising from the floor with the eagerness of a child offered candy after a bitter dose of medicine.

But the head sank deeper into the water as he stood, and she said, "Sorry, sir, I—"

"It’s Alexander. You can call me Alex. What were you saying, Miss?"

Ivy laughed nervously, convinced this man was mad, and that she had swum straight into a madman’s bathroom, talking to a disembodied head as though it were perfectly normal. Shouldn’t he be screaming and trying to make sense of what was happening in his bathtub?

"Alex, I’m sorry, I have other places I need to be. If I have the time, I’ll come by for that dinner. Good night."

"Don’t go!" Alex called out, rushing toward the tub, but by then she had already vanished beneath the water. His heart tightened painfully as he sank back onto the floor, reaching a hand into the water that was already swirling away through the drain.

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Meanwhile, beneath the sea, Ivy pulled her head back under the water and muttered, "What a strange man. Probably a mad one too," she thought, scratching the back of her head nervously. She had honestly believed she was about to be beheaded for appearing in the wrong bathtub.

"Did you see my mama, Aunt Ivy?" Pearl asked immediately, swimming closer to her aunt. Ivy looked down at her and sadly shook her head.

"Not yet. I didn’t find her, but don’t worry. I’ll keep looking until I do."

The little mermaid’s head dropped, her expression falling.

"Papa said he’ll hand you over to the sea witch if Mama doesn’t come back. I miss my mama..."

The little mermaid began to cry, pink pearls slipping from her eyes one after another. Caught in an impossible dilemma, Ivy could only hug her niece tightly and silently pray that the Tidekin she’d sent to her sister’s bonded Tidekin would deliver the message in time. It seemed Wave was having a difficult time traveling between the land and the sea because he had been tampering too much with the sea witch.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 416: Manipulation[1,050 words]

Wave appeared inside one of the apartments in the High Tower instead of his Mermaidia’s room, and he yelled in exasperation, water gurgling out of his mouth and splashing onto the person’s floor because it would now take him time to find her penthouse after failing to appear there directly. This was what he got for being struck by the sea witch.

Wave had been messing with the sea witch's portal to protect his Mermaidia, but she had struck him with her powers, and now he had lost his sense of direction, which was why he hadn't been able to return to his companion after leaving her to see the mermaid trapped inside that big nobody-water tank.

"But I have to find my Mermaidia and tell her what her sister said," Wave whispered to himself so he wouldn't forget that too. If only his Mermaidia were a real mermaid, she could have fixed him after the witch struck him, but now it would take time for him to recover, and Wave hated his fate.

Wave crawled across the floor like a water snake, wishing that in his next life he would be given to a real mermaid who wasn't in love with the enemy and who would always want his company.

He was moving along, trying to mind his own business and get the hell out of the apartment he had somehow found himself in, when he suddenly saw a foot coming down toward him. Wave quickly shrank back, curling into himself as he watched the foot land exactly where he had been only a moment ago.

"Shoot, how did water end up here?" came a female voice.

When Wave looked closely, he recognized her as his Mermaidia's friend, the one she always kept around, the one he thought talked too much and laughed too loudly. He also thought she was far too beautiful for a werewolf.

Zoe, who had been walking toward her desk to jot down a new design idea, frowned at the puddle of water on her floor and wondered how it had gotten there. She lived alone, and there was no reason for water to be sitting in the middle of the room.

Without thinking too much about it, she fetched a mop and cleaned it up. She had just finished cleaning the water away when her phone suddenly began to ring on her desk. She looked toward it with a frown. Getting a call at this time of the night was unusual for her, and this was normally the time she spent working.

Zoe dropped the mop without ceremony, and it landed right on top of the water creature hiding from her sight, splitting him cleanly down the middle. Wave huffed in annoyance, glared at her back, and spat more water onto the floor just so she would have to clean it again.

However, Zoe was too busy wondering who could be calling her to hear the sound of the water splashing. She reached her desk and picked up the phone. The moment she saw the caller's name, her eyes widened, and she answered immediately.

"It's about time, Nicolas," Zoe complained the instant she picked up.

Hearing that name, Wave, who had been about to sneak away, stopped and frowned, his watery face twisting with anger.

The other monster who had hurt his Mermaidia.

He immediately changed direction and crawled closer to listen to their conversation so he could report it to his Mermaidia if anything useful came from it.

Zoe didn't wait for Nick to reply before speaking again.

"I've been trying to call you ever since we left Grim Pack, and you haven't been answering any of my calls anymore. What has gotten into you, dear cousin?" she asked, feeling tears prick her eyes because Nick had always been more like a brother to her, and having him ignore her when they had always been so close hurt deeply.

"I guess you haven't heard then," Nick said through the phone, his voice sounding strained and hoarse, as though he had been crying.

"Heard what? Are you all right?" Zoe asked worriedly as she left her desk and walked toward the glass wall, biting nervously at her nails.

"How can I be all right after what Vee did, Zoe? I can never be all right again. We trusted her. We did everything we could for her sake, but... this is how she repays us." He forced his voice to sound as though he were struggling to hold back tears, silently thanking his luck that Zoe hadn't been told everything.

Nick had called her tonight with a plan already in mind, but that plan had changed the moment he discovered that Sebastian, that fucker, and his beloved hadn't told Zoe about his love for Vee. That worked in his favor because it meant he could still use Zoe as an ally.

"What did Vee do? What's been going on lately? I feel like nobody is telling me anything." Zoe said anxiously, no longer knowing what to think.

Ever since that night when Vee had disappeared, Zoe had noticed a huge change in her sister-in-law. When they returned, Viola had gone ahead without waiting for her, almost as though she were angry with Zoe. Normally, they texted each other every day and chatted in their group chat, but when Zoe logged in afterward, neither Viola nor Nick had come online, and she had been left feeling terrible, wondering if she had somehow done something to ruin their friendship.

Zoe had wanted to go to Viola, but she had decided to give her some time. However, Nick's words made it seem as though there was much more to the situation than she had realized, and she suddenly felt anxious.

Wave, on the other hand, listened to the conversation and huffed, wishing he could tell this beautiful monster she-wolf that the man was talking to was about to lie. Unfortunately, he didn't have the ability to speak to anyone except his Mermaidia.

"I... I don't even know how to start this, Zoe, but I have to tell you. Your brother has banished me from Silver and sent me away to live with the packless." He cried over the phone, sobbing so convincingly that Zoe's heart lurched with panic.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 417: Sebastian![1,082 words]

"When did that happen? Why would hermano banish you? I haven't heard anything about it," Zoe exclaimed, unable to believe her brother would do something like that without a reason to the person he knew she considered a brother and her closest friend.

"Vee made him do it..." Nick said.

Before Zoe could recover from the shocked gasp that escaped her, he continued.

"I made the mistake of confessing to her about the old crush I had on her when we first met. I never expected her to get angry and accuse me of ruining our friendship. I wasn't asking her to like me. I was only being honest and letting her know because I planned to start dating someone else, but she blew everything out of proportion."

Zoe couldn't believe what she was hearing. She massaged her forehead.

"Did this happen while we were at Grim Pack?" she asked, suddenly realizing it explained why Viola had gone missing at exactly the same time Nick had disappeared from the hall.

"Yes. I told her in the garden while we were having one of our usual conversations, and I was drunk..."

"Why would you tell her that, knowing she's in love with my brother?" Zoe scolded. "You did the same thing with Sofia, remember? She turned you down because she loved Javier and said she was in love with—"

"Sofia didn't blow it out of proportion and run to tell my brother. She understood it was just an old crush that would eventually pass. But Vee didn't. She got so angry and told Cousin Seb that I had feelings for her. He didn't think twice before throwing me out of the pack as though I meant nothing to him. Zoe... I'm homeless."

Zoe felt her heart twist with pity and conflicting emotions. She didn't know whose side to take, and honestly, she didn't want to choose sides at all because she truly loved both of them.

She didn’t believe everything had happened exactly the way Nick described it because Vee wasn’t that heartless.

Though she would never doubt her brother’s capability for harsh decisions, because Sebastian was capable of something like that. Maybe Viola had simply told him about Nick’s confession, and Sebastian had acted on his own without Viola ever intending for things to go that far.

"I’ll talk to them and convince him to revoke your banishment. I’ll—"

"That’s not what I want, Zoe. Your brother has already made up his mind. He even wants me dead now. He sent men to kill me today."

"Oh, dear Goddess..." Zoe muttered, covering her throat with her hand. Sebastian... she had hoped he would stop killing family members she cared about after Alex.

"Can we meet, Zoe? I need to talk to you about something."

Wave looked at the she-wolf, expecting her to refuse.

Instead, proving him right once again that werewolves were hopelessly dense, she asked,

"Where?"

"I can’t come out today because I don’t know if they’re still out there looking for me, but I’ll send you the location where we can meet. Don’t let them know I called you, please, Zoe. Promise me you won’t tell him? I don’t want to die."

"I won’t tell my brother. Calm down, Nick. I’ve always had your back, and I’m not going to abandon you now," she said compassionately, every word coming from a place of genuine sincerity, while his own words were nothing more than carefully calculated lies after Sebastian had ruined his original plans just few hours ago.

"Thank you, cousin. I knew I could rely on you. I’ll talk to you again."

With that, he ended the call.

Zoe remained staring at the dark phone screen, hating how her family was slowly falling apart when all she had ever wanted was for them to stay together and be happy.

She didn’t know why Nick had chosen that moment to confess his feelings to Vee, and she didn’t understand why Vee would tell Sebastian about it.

"I’ll have to talk to her tomorrow," Zoe muttered, knowing Sebastian would listen to whatever his wife said. Even though she had promised Nick she wouldn’t tell anyone, she

would have to speak to Viola if she wanted any hope of getting Nick welcomed back into the pack.

Zoe’s eyes drifted to Alex’s twelve-year-old photograph on her nightstand, and she whispered,

"I wish you were here. Maybe things wouldn’t have turned out this way, Alex."

Wave watched tears roll down the she-wolf’s cheeks as she placed her phone on the nightstand.

His watery eyes slowly shifted to the device.

Then he crawled toward it.

A long arm of water stretched out from his body, wrapped around the phone, and pulled it into the middle of himself before he quietly crawled away with it toward the sink.

That was all he needed from her.

He needed evidence to show his Mermaidia. He needed to prove that the monster who had hurt her was hiding inside this strange little thing and poisoning the she-wolf’s mind against her.

Wave only hoped he would find his Mermaidia’s room this time.

To squeeze through the sink drain, Wave crushed the phone until it was small enough to fit.

Once he slipped through the drain with it, he happily sang to himself, proud of how clever he had been and excited that he had finally managed to help his Mermaidia, who would surely be proud of him once he reached her with the monster who had hurt her while he wasn’t there to protect her.

"You’re in trouble, Nick. I’m taking you to her!"

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Meanwhile, in Viola’s room, where she had been disturbed from her sleep by a strange noise and the violent slam of her bedroom door flying open, she instinctively reached for the gun. As the shadow stepped through the doorway, just as Sebastian had instructed her to do when he had given her the weapon days ago for her protection, her finger moved to the trigger, nearly pulling it, when the figure suddenly collapsed onto the floor.

The smell of blood and a familiar scent reached her nose before she fully registered what had happened. She hurriedly switched on the lights, gasping at the sight before her.

The gun slipped from her hand as she cried out, "Sebastian!" She rushed to his side, where he lay slumped on the floor, bleeding heavily, his face as pale as a ghost and twisted with pain and barely restrained rage.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 418: Wolf’s fur[1,389 words]

Without wasting another moment, Viola dropped to his side. "Oh my God, what happened to you?" she cried out, searching for the source of the blood as she realized his entire shirt was soaked through, and the floor beneath him was collecting a growing pool of crimson.

He gently pushed her hands aside. "I’ll be fine... ugh..." he gritted out, trying to remove his shirt himself and deal with the source of his pain, but Viola immediately reached for it.

"Let me do it," she said.

He moved her hands away again.

"I can do it. Leave it." Sebastian gritted out through the pain.

"Stay still," Viola insisted firmly, glaring at him in warning.

He carefully lowered his hands, allowing her to tend to him.

Viola composed herself, fighting back the nausea rising in her throat at the sight of so much blood, even though she wasn’t squeamish and was used to seeing it. She didn’t know how he had been injured or where he had been, but she knew panicking wouldn’t help. Treating him first and questioning him afterward was the right course of action.

She couldn’t peel the shirt off normally because it had stuck to his skin, and without knowing exactly where the wounds were, she tore it open down the front instead, ripping the fabric apart.

She gasped at the sight of multiple gunshot wounds across his stomach, but Viola was familiar enough with gunshot injuries by now that she didn’t allow herself to panic, especially after confirming they were ordinary silver bullets, not the special kind used in the earlier assassination attempts that had nearly killed him.

"Call Gilbert. I need the bullets out so I can heal," Sebastian said, watching her study the wounds with her expression growing pale but her lips had pressed into a displeased line.

He hadn’t intended to come to her first with injuries like this, but she had been the closest person to reach once he entered High Tower, by the time he made it to Gilbert, he would

have lost too much strength. Sebastian had come to her with the intention of having her help him reach the doctor, but she surprised him instead.

"I can handle it. Lie down." She said, gently pushing his shoulders back so he'd lie flat.

Sebastian wanted to resist, not wanting to put her through this, but she looked so certain that he gave in, even as the pain burned through his flesh like fire and he wanted the fucking bullets out of his flesh.

Sebastian watched his wife move around the room, opening drawers, disappearing into the closet, and returning with a first-aid box before kneeling beside him again, her eyes fixed on his wound.

"After I'm done with this, you are going to tell me exactly where you went, and how you got yourself shot." She said calmly, though he could tell she was furious.

He parted his lips to answer, but unbearable pain shot through him instead, his jaw clenching as she dug the first bullet from his skin.

There were three bullets total, one lodged deep in his lower abdomen, and Viola thought, had he been human, she would have lost him right there on the floor. A wave of turmoil surged through her, but she forced herself to stay composed and focused.

By the time she finished removing the third bullet, he was breathing heavily, weakened against the floor, his eyes barely open.

Viola worked quickly after that, her hands steady even though her heart was still hammering from the fright of finding him in this condition.

She cleaned each wound with careful strokes, wiping away the blood that had soaked into his skin and pooled on the floor beneath him.

The silver had burned the edges of his flesh, but already the wounds were beginning to knit back together, his Alpha healing working, slowed only by the metal that had been inside him.

She pressed clean gauze over each site, then dampened a soft cloth and began wiping down his chest, his stomach, the hard lines of his arms, clearing away the last traces of blood and sweat until his skin felt warm and clean beneath her fingers, all the while wondering where he had come from, what had happened to him.

His eyes closed completely. His breathing evened out. It would take a few hours for him to heal fully now that the bullets were out, and he might sleep through most of it.

Viola watched his face for a long moment, the pale exhaustion, the dark lashes resting against his cheeks, and something tight, furious, and terrified twisted inside her chest all at once.

She had almost shot him herself.

For one heart-stopping second, she had believed the shadow in the doorway was Nick, and her finger had been only a breath away from pulling the trigger. The thought made her hands tremble now that the danger had passed.

Looking down at them, Viola suddenly saw fine hairs sprouting across the backs of her hands. She froze, staring in disbelief as she realized they were fur. It rose through her skin like goosebumps, the soft color of a newborn pup's coat, before sinking back beneath her skin just as quickly as it had appeared.

It was the first time she had ever witnessed anything like that happening to her.

She slowly turned to her seemingly sleeping husband, clutching one hand against her chest as she was reminded once again of the suppressant in her body. But Sebastian's condition made it the wrong time to bring up such a conversation, so she swallowed the questions rising in her throat and kept them to herself for now.

Viola rose, went to the bed, and pulled a pillow free. Returning to him, she gently lifted his head and slid the pillow beneath it, so he wouldn't have to lie flat against the hard floor any longer. Then she sat back on her heels, letting out a long, shaky breath, the adrenaline finally beginning to drain from her body.

She was still leaning slightly away, thinking about how he had gotten shot and whether he had been ambushed in another assassination attempt, when a strong arm suddenly curved around her waist and pulled her down against him.

Viola gasped as her body settled against his bare chest, the heat of him startling after the cool air of the room.

Before she could speak, Sebastian's mouth found the side of her neck, warm and deliberate, trailing slow, open-mouthed kisses along the sensitive skin. His lips moved lower, tracing the curve of her collarbone, then lower still, until they brushed the soft swell of her breast through her nightdress.

A rush of heat flooded through her instantly. Caught in a mild heat state because of her pregnancy, her body had become far more responsive, far hungrier for him. Even the lightest touch from her mate was enough to set her blood alight with arousal and dampen her underwear.

However, this wasn't the moment, not with everything they still needed to talk through. But her husband's sinful mouth was doing things to her that she couldn't resist.

"Sebastian, not now..." she said, a moan slipping past her parted lips as he nuzzled against her skin.

"I need this to heal faster, love. I need my strength," he rasped against her skin before adding, "And you're wet for me."

His hand slid between her thighs, his fingers brushing over her sex as he felt the warmth of her dampness.

Viola lost the battle to continue the conversation the moment his hand covered her there. Furthermore, he was right. Intimacy and physical contact between mates heightened healing, the surge of arousal triggering restorative responses within a werewolf's body.

She arched into his next kiss, her fingers sliding into his hair as she reached down and began shedding her nightdress, letting it slip from her shoulders and pool around her waist.

Sebastian's hands guided her the rest of the way, slow but certain despite his wounds. He eased her down onto him, the thick length of him pressing into her in one smooth, careful thrust that stole the breath from both their lungs.

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A/N

I created a discord server, if you're interested in joining, see the link below in the Author's Thoughts.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 419: Tell him about her condition[1,262 words]

Viola braced her hands on either side of his head, careful of his injuries, and moved with him, taking him deeper with every gentle roll of her hips. His mouth stayed on her skin, lips and tongue working over the sensitive spots, while his hands held her waist, steadying her, urging her closer.

"You almost shot me, honey," he clicked his tongue, and a groan left his lips as she moved against him.

"I thought you were someone else, and you're the one who gave me the gun for protection. Next time, don't come back to me full of bullets," she breathed.

He let out a small laugh. "My apologies. It wasn't my intention. I'll try not to do that again, though next time I'll announce myself before I enter your room."

She glared at him because she didn't want there to be a next time. However, the words failed her as the slow motion of him thrusting up into her from beneath stole her breath away completely, leaving her speechless.

The pleasure built fast and sharp, sweetened by the knowledge that every stroke fed strength back into him. When she came, it was quiet and intense, her body tightening around him in long, rhythmic pulses. He followed moments later with a low, broken sound against her skin, his release flooding her as his arms locked around her back.

Afterward, she found herself held against his side, her head resting on his uninjured shoulder, his breath warm against her neck. One strong arm remained tight around her waist, as though he refused to let even an inch of space form between them.

"Thank you," he murmured, the words rough and low against her skin. "I feel much better now."

Viola's eyes opened. The tenderness of the moment still lingered in her body, but the fear and anger rose again just as strongly. She shifted enough to look at his face, her voice quiet but edged with the emotion she'd held back while working on him.

"Where were you, Sebastian? And how did you end up shot full of silver?"

"I went after Nick," he said, an edge creeping into his tone.

Viola wasn't surprised. She had suspected as much all day, but the anger in his eyes made it clear he hadn't gotten his hands on his cousin the way he had hoped, and it made her wonder what had happened and whether Nick had been the one to shoot him. Nick. The name was becoming an angry reminder to her lately.

"What happened?" she asked, resting her hand against his bare chest, trying to soothe his anger as much as she could.

"He has his own army of packless, and he's building a pack of his own. I found out he's been siphoning off Silver's resources to build another pack with technology just like ours. They call him Supreme Alpha, and there are more than a thousand of them, far more than I expected, men and women trained as warriors to stand beside him."

His arm tightened around her as he still couldn't seem to understand how Nick had gathered that many people behind his back, and if he succeeded in building that pack, they would eventually rival Silver itself, especially with the technological expertise he possessed.

Though Sebastian hated admitting it, when it came to technology and developing new weapons, Nick was more skilled than anyone else he knew in his pack. If the pack he was building was allowed to continue growing, it would become known across the werewolf world within the next year, and his power and influence would double.

"What are we going to do about him and the pack?" Viola asked worriedly. No matter how much she told herself not to fear Nick, he was beginning to unsettle her more than ever before.

"I'll have to bring them all down with the support of the other packs. To get to him, I'll need to go back better prepared."

Sebastian had gone in thinking he'd be facing a few hundred packless, but even after he and his men had killed more than a hundred of them, they hadn't come close to reaching even half the number of warriors his cousin commanded.

Though he hadn't gotten Nick, the fight hadn't been for nothing. Sebastian had studied their layout and now knew exactly where he would strike the next time he returned.

"How about next time, you stay behind and let your warriors handle it?" Viola suggested, and he looked down into her eyes.

"This is my fight, baby. He touched you, and touching my woman is like hitting me in the face. If I'm going to get Nick, I'll do it myself," he said in a voice she knew there was no arguing with, and even if she tried, it wouldn't get her anywhere.

Viola immediately realized there was no way to stop him from hunting Nick, not unless she found some other way to make sure Nick paid for what he had done. More than anything, she wanted revenge on Nick too, but not at the cost of her husband's life.

She parted her lips, ready to finally tell him about her pregnancy, reminded of it the moment he'd called her "baby," but then she noticed his eyes go distant, as though he were speaking through a mind-link, and she waited.

By the time he finished, he was already slowly getting up from the floor. "I need to attend to something urgent. I'll be back within the next thirty minutes, but don't wait up for me, love. Get some sleep." He leaned down, kissed her forehead, then pulled his trousers back on and straightened up.

"Wait, where are you going now? You just got here, you need to rest." Viola said, displeased, since she hadn't even gotten through half of what she needed to discuss with him.

"It's urgent, sunshine. I've gotten all the rest I need for now, thanks to you." He said, already backing away, adding, "I love you," before rushing off.

"Wait..." But her words fell on deaf ears as her husband hurried out the door.

Viola rubbed her forehead before sitting down on the edge of the bed, using her hands to push her hair back from her face. She stared at her bare feet on the floor. This wasn't how she'd imagined telling him about her pregnancy, or asking him about the mermaid he'd captured, and requesting that he release Yasmin if he had captured her for the reasons she suspected.

Werewolves only ever captured mermaids for two reasons: to gain more power or to eat the fish part of their bodies for its nutrients. Viola had never had anything against those customs because, until now, she had never seen a mermaid as a living, talking being. Furthermore, this one happened to be related to her sister.

If Nick hadn't ruined everything in their lives, things would have been easier, and Sebastian wouldn't have been a man forced to juggle hundreds of things at the same time.

That night, Viola tried to wait up for him, but at some point she must have fallen asleep because she woke the next morning and reached out to the space beside her, only to find it empty, disappointingly so.

He hadn't returned, she realized. His scent wasn't anywhere on the sheets.

It almost felt like a dream, him coming back shot, bleeding, her fear for him, until she turned and found the pillow, the first-aid box, and the torn shirt still lying on the floor.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 420: Sister's message[1,428 words]

Viola sat for a moment on the bed, trying to make sense of her tangled thoughts and her displeasure at how completely yesterday had gone sideways without her even getting the chance to have a proper conversation with her husband. It was understandable that he had come back injured, but she hadn't even gotten more time with him before he'd left again, and she couldn't help but wonder how long things would continue this way, probably until Nick was dealt with and finally out of their lives.

Frankly speaking, Viola had no idea why Nick was so obsessed with her that he had gone to such extremes. From his diary, which Sebastian had told her about, it seemed Nick had held resentment toward him since childhood. He believed his cousin had been given everything in life and had never been grateful for it, so now he wanted Sebastian to experience losing everything he treasured... including his wife.

He was ruining their time together, but that didn’t mean she would let him ruin their lives. Once she got Yasmin freed and safely back to the sea, Viola thought, she would be able to focus properly on her own life and make sure Nick didn’t succeed, even if it meant using her mermaid powers to track him down and drag him out of hiding.

Viola got up and, as usual, began her morning routine, intending to find Sebastian later and, if remotely possible, sit him down for a proper conversation because they desperately needed to talk.

Carrying the news of her pregnancy alone wasn’t easy, and she wanted to see his reaction to finding out they were going to have a pup in winter. She also needed to tell him about the risk of the suppressant passing into the baby’s bloodstream.

It was far too important to keep to herself any longer, and the burden of it weighed on her just as heavily as everything else.

Viola was determined to follow Doctor Gilbert’s instructions and take care of both herself and their unborn child.

She was already overwhelmed by everything happening around her. More than anything, she longed for life to return to normal, for everything to simply be all right.

Viola was in the shower, deep in her thoughts with water falling over her head when Wave plopped out of the bathtub drain with a loud, "Waah!" that made her peek her head around the shower glass to look.

The moment she saw the creature, she signed in relief before her eyes narrowed at the black object he was dragging within his water.

"Mermaidia! I finally found your house! I couldn’t find it no matter how hard I tried!" the creature said in obvious relief, almost sounding as though he were about to cry.

Wave would have indeed cried if it wouldn’t have wasted the time he needed to deliver his news. He had emerged from more than fifty different drains before finally finding hers, and the worst part was that someone had flushed him down a toilet, leaving him to carry the humiliating waste of these werewolves inside his watery body.

It had taken him a long time to cleanse himself completely, and the memory of the ordeal alone was enough to make him want to cry all over again.

Viola grabbed a towel and wrapped it around herself as she stepped out of the shower. "What is that you have there?" she asked, narrowing her eyes at the creature who had abandoned her when they went to look for the mermaid in the tank. So much for a companion, who was supposed to protect her.

Wave spat the ruined device onto the bathroom floor as he said, "That is Nick! I caught the monster in that beautiful she-wolf's room. Put it to your ears, Mermaidia, and he will speak to you. Though I had to crush him a little to fit through the drains, I hope he is not dead. He even went down the wolves' smelly waste. Take a look at him and see if he survived." The creature nudged the ruined, now unrecognizable device toward her.

Viola stared at it.

Did he just say that thing had gone down the wolves' waste? She grimaced at the thought.

She wouldn't have even known it was a phone if it hadn't been for the familiar, crushed phone case she recognized as Zoe's.

"Wave, that's a phone... and it's Zoe's too. How did you end up in her apartment?" Viola asked, picking up the destroyed device and turning it over in her hand.

"I don't know what that is, Mermaidia. I just know the monster is inside it. Is he dead then?" he asked, peeking curiously at the thing.

Viola knew there was no way to explain a phone to a creature of the sea, and rather than even attempt it, she asked, "You heard her talking to Nick?"

He bobbed his head.

"About what?" she asked, and Wave suddenly looked thoughtful, as though he were trying to remember exactly what he had heard.

"I don't remember the details because I'm still healing from the sea witch, but he told her you are the reason for his banishment. He wants to poison her heart, and the she-wolf is dense because she didn't suspect him."

Viola stared at Wave as he recounted everything he could remember, then let out a sigh, realizing she would have to tell Zoe about Nick's manipulative ways and what he had done, which he was now trying to twist against her. She couldn't afford to have Zoe believe she had ruined their family.

"Zoe isn't dense. She's just too kind and trusting of people. Let me finish my shower, and then we'll find her. Goodness, this thing stinks." She dropped the phone back onto the floor and got to her feet, grimacing.

"I told you it went down the smelly place. Won't you talk to Nick?" Wave asked, regarding her with a frown on his watery face. He had gone through all the trouble of bringing her Nick, and she had simply discarded him without even trying to call him forth. Yes, he knew the monster smelled, but that didn't matter when she could deal with him.

"That’s not Nick, Wave. That’s a phone. You use it to contact people through it... like a talking magic portal," she added as an example, and watched understanding dawn on his face, as he had once told her how mermaids communicate with each other in the seas.

"Oh, like how we communicate through the water-energy currents in the sea," he said thoughtfully.

Viola, who had stepped back into the shower, hummed in agreement.

"Wave, you said the sea witch hurt you. Why is she always after me? Not just me, I realized my sister is hiding from her too. What does she want from us?" Viola asked, unable to get past the fact that a creature she had never even seen before had become so obsessed with reaching her. From the way things looked, it seemed she wanted Viola even more than Ivy.

"Don’t know. I wasn’t created when the sea witch first started wanting you, Mermaidia, but she is very scary, along with her Tidekin. I fight her Tidekin everyday, the one who makes portals between land and sea for her. She—"

Wave suddenly cut himself off as he remembered the real reason he had been looking for her before stumbling into Zoe’s apartment and getting distracted.

"Oh! Oh, Mermaidia! Your sister’s Tidekin sent you a message and told me to tell you urgently, but I couldn’t get here urgently because I ended up in—"

"My sister?" Viola’s eyes widened at those words, momentarily forgetting everything else. She turned off the shower and peeked her head back around the glass. "You met her?"

"Not her. Her Tidekin. I can’t meet her because I have—"

"What did it say? Oh, Wave, you talk too much sometimes, and I can’t listen to everything you say. Tell me what the Tidekin told you first before anything else."

"It told me to send you this message," Wave said.

Viola looked at the creature expectantly, waiting for the message, but he simply stared back at her with a smile, saying nothing.

"Wave, where is the message?" she asked impatiently, growing more anxious by the second.

The creature blinked, then snapped out of his smile.

"Oh! I forgot to make it sound out for you." Saying that, Wave lifted his watery hand and extended it toward her.

"Bring your hand forward, Mermaidia."