Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 471: Found her wolf[1,190 words]

Viola opened her eyes, disoriented and confused at first, met with darkness. But within the darkness was the sound of water gurgling, and her confusion deepened until her vision began to clear and she became aware that she was in water. She didn't know what she was doing there or how she'd gotten there, and Viola tried to swim, but none of her limbs seemed capable of moving, she remained suspended in the middle of what looked like the sea.

From confusion, her heart began to beat with fear. She couldn't think or make sense of anything at that moment; it was as though her mind had been emptied of every thought. Then she heard a whimper from below her, sounding like that of an injured dog.

When she looked down, she saw the bottom of the sea, and her insides twisted at the sight of what lay there.

A large wolf lay there, chained with countless padlocks, its entire body covered in plants that had grown at the bottom of the sea, concealing most of its fur. One wouldn't have known it was a wolf if not for its blue eyes looking up at her helplessly, the current of the water moving gently across its black nose and eyes.

'You're finally here. I have waited for you for years.' Came the words in her head that belonged to the creature, startling her into blurting out,

'Why are you here? Who are you?!' Viola asked, looking down at the wolf, whose eyes began to close, as though sleep were pulling it under and it couldn't stay awake. But before its eyelids closed, shutting out those blue-green eyes, its voice rang out in her head again and replied,

'You are my human, and I am your wolf, but we can't be together, for your body has suppressed me. Let me out...'

Her wolf. Viola's heart leapt. She began to part her lips to ask how she was supposed to free the wolf when she couldn't even move her own limbs, when she felt a touch against her shoulder. Her vision blurred for a moment before it cleared again, only this time she was no longer underwater, but staring up at the ceiling of her room.

"Are you all right? You've been spacing out since you woke up."

Viola made the mistake of moving her head toward the voice, and an intense pain shot through her neck, making her moan as she tried to suppress a cry. The pain was so sharp that it brought tears to her eyes.

"You have a cast around your neck, Luna Viola. Don't try to move too much, or you'll be in pain," Gilbert's voice came from beside her again as he looked down at her, unable to help but think they had been seeing too much of each other lately.

Viola stared up at him with red-rimmed eyes, still irritated and bloodshot from being strangled.

She parted her lips to speak and realized her voice was gone, and she looked at Gilbert with widened eyes. He assured her with a gentle hand against her shoulder, "It's only temporary. You'll be fine, your vocal cords were affected when... he strangled you."

Viola saw flashes of Sebastian's murderous eyes as he strangled her and shuddered involuntarily, her fingers clenching at her side as a shiver ran down her body. Was she afraid of him now? She thought in panic at the reaction the thought of Sebastian had triggered in her, but she pushed it away and motioned with her hands for Gilbert to help her into a sitting position.

He understood and quickly helped her, but just as she was sitting up, Elder Natasha entered the room and asked her nephew, "How is she doing?"

Gilbert turned to his aunt and replied, "She'll be fine, thankfully her neck wasn't broken. We'll take off the cast in a couple of days. How is the Alpha, Aunt?" The doctor asked on the Luna's behalf, knowing from her eyes that she wanted to ask that question herself.

"The Alpha is no longer her concern from here onward. She forced us into taking this step. From today on, the Luna will have an escort, and she is not to ask after Sebastian." Elder Natasha declared, and seeing the displeasure in those blue eyes, the elder she-wolf added, "It's his wish. Until he overcomes this, you are to be kept far away from him."

Viola felt a fresh sting in her already-aching neck at those words, because he had promised her that he wouldn't try to keep her away, but it seemed that was exactly the outcome of this, he would shut her out because he believed he was protecting her.

Though the thought of him made her shiver with anxiety, having nearly died so painfully in his arms, she found some comfort in remembering the warmth of him before that moment.

Viola made gestures with her hands until Gilbert understood that she wanted something to write on, and he handed her his tablet. "You can use this."

She nodded her head in gratitude, then began typing her reply to the elder. "Don’t you dare touch a hair on his body, he didn’t mean to hurt me!"

Elder Natasha smiled slightly as she said, "Don’t worry, we’re not torturing him, I wouldn’t have allowed that. He’s being held down and is currently trying to fight the spell himself, with your pictures around him rather than you. If you want to help him, stay out of his way and let him do it himself. Your only job now is to keep that little one protected at all costs, because it will be our only hope of preserving the Supreme Alpha’s bloodline if things were to go wrong."

Though Viola never regretted having been pregnant with Sebastian’s baby, she couldn’t help but think that these elders were so confident in this course of action precisely because they knew that if anything happened to Sebastian, he’d already left them his heir.

"I will find a way soon. Don’t execute him." Viola typed and showed the screen to the elder, who said,

"I will delay it as long as there’s hope, and if there’s still no hope by the end of this month, he will have to mark you and then the let you go." Having said that, the elder she-wolf turned to her nephew. "I heard Zoe is missing. Haven’t you been looking after her, as her boyfriend?"

There was displeasure in the elder’s tone, since she’d learned her nephew was dating the Alpha’s sister and had hoped for an announcement of a mating ceremony, but instead, Zoe had gone missing, and no one had known until now, not even him.

Gilbert looked guilty as he said, "I was consumed by work, ma’am, but once I’ve made certain the Luna is fine, I’ll join the Beta in the search." He assured her, for even though what he felt for Zoe wasn’t the love of a mate, she was still someone dear to him, and her sudden disappearance put both him and everyone else on edge.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 472: Answers in Aquaville[1,342 words]

"You are something, boy, you made her your girlfriend and didn’t bring her back home when you knew your mother was looking forward to seeing you mated. As the only son in the family, you should know better."

Gilbert had been adopted by the Rodrigos without any hesitation because they had only daughters, and when they found a helpless five-year-old after the flood, they took him in without a second thought and made him their own. Though the Elder was scolding him, it

wasn’t because she saw him as someone who had been adopted, but as a boy they had raised as their own and who needed to always remember his responsibilities.

"Make sure you give your all in finding your girlfriend and protecting her. There have been suspicions that she might have gone to see that no-good Nick. The Beta is going to take this upon himself and go there himself. Be there as her man, and don’t let another person play the hero for your woman. The Rodrigos are possessive of their women," she reminded him, giving him an even look.

"Yes, ma’am. I’ll do my best," Gilbert replied, even though he had already made his decision that, after this, he would announce his real mate.

"I’ll go check on the progress of the search. Luna..." The Elder turned to Viola after finishing her scolding of her nephew, whose relationship with Zoe she had only just learned about.

"I hope you know that you carry the future of our pack and of this world. Your life matters more than anyone’s right now." She reminded Viola of her responsibility, just as she had reminded the doctor of his. Then the Elder turned and left the room as there was so much to do in so little time.

Viola couldn’t help but feel burdened by so many things, especially now that Zoe was missing on top of everything else. Realizing she couldn’t just sit still and do nothing, not after the dream she’d just had of her locked wolf chained beneath the sea, Viola typed something on the screen and showed it to Gilbert.

"I need to use the restroom."

"Oh, sure." He came around and helped her up from the bed, and Viola gave him a faint smile before walking the rest of the way to the bathroom, locking the door behind her.

Once inside, she turned on the water in the bathtub and watched it fill to the brim before dipping her hand in and swirling it in circles, like how she was taught by the mermaids. In no time, a black hole began to form in the middle of it, and Viola glanced back over her shoulder toward the door before slipping into the hole, disappearing from the tub.

Back in the room, however, Gilbert reached for his tablet to look something up and noticed there was another line written below the note where she’d asked to use the bathroom.

"Don’t let them know, Gilbert. I have gone to the sea to find answers. I need my wolf to fight for my husband and family..."

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Viola had no idea where the portal Wave had opened for her would take her, but she appeared somewhere with her Tidekin swirling around her, the motion of the portal delivering her there only making her neck ache worse. She bit back the discomfort to look towards the creature.

"Mermaidia, I have waited for you to call! Welcome home!" Came Wave's excited voice as he stared at her, but the creature's excitement faded when he saw her neck and red eyes. "You're hurt."

She gave it a nod and Wave looked displeased before he declared. "Let me heal you."

Saying that, Wave came forward and wrapped himself around her neck, and immediately Viola felt relief wash over her like a balm on a burn, her neck righted itself, along with her bloodshot eyes, and her breath came easier.

She reached up and removed the cast, then asked hoarsely, "Where is my sister, and the others?" She looked around at the expanse of water. "I need to see Natasha right now."

"I'll take you to her." Saying that, the creature took her hand and began pulling her deeper down, and as they descended, Wave said, "The mermaids have been talking about how to bring you back to them. They say you carry the Child of the Sea's powers of healing for the merfolk, and that you belong here, Mermaidia. Have you come to stay?" He asked, sounding hopeful at the thought.

"No. I am not staying. I will return soon, I just need to speak with Natasha." Viola said, but Wave's voice turned grave as he turned to her. "Then you shouldn't have come right now, Mermaidia. They won't let you leave again, something is happening to the sea that is connected to you and—"

Wave's voice trailed off before he could explain further, because light surrounded them as they reached the bottom of the sea, where mermaid homes were scattered around in different shapes and sizes, decorated with sea ornaments that would have fascinated Viola if she weren't here on a mission.

"What is happening to the sea?" Viola asked curiously but Wave didn't continue speaking about that topic.

"And here comes Finn," Wave whispered, as the guardian of the sea swam toward them, his mighty build and a trident clutched in his hand, with two other mermen trailing behind him.

"Welcome to Aquaville, Mermaidia. We have been expecting your arrival, please swim with us." Came the words of her cousin-in-law, his face hard as stone and intimidating.

Aquaville, Viola thought to herself, so that was the name of their world. "Why are you expecting me? Where is Natasha, and my sister?" She asked, swimming with them since

she had no other choice right now, taking in her surroundings as mermaids peeked out from their colorful shell-like homes, some pointing at her legs and looking disgusted.

"Come with me, I'll take you to them." He reached out and held her elbow, and in a flash, they teleported away from the middle of the mermaid town, appearing in a more deserted area where a large decorative cave stood, one she recalled seeing in Yasmin's memories.

They swam into the open cave and entered the brighter inner chamber, where Viola quickly realized Natasha and the rest were having dinner, and the little mermaid, Pearl, was playing with the Tidekins. But everything stopped the moment she entered.

"Serena," came Ivy's relief filled voice, she had been picking at her food, but upon seeing her twin, she swam forward, hugging her tightly. "What brings you here? You shouldn't have come here right now." She whispered, looking worried rather than glad, and Viola realized Wave had said the same thing and asked,

"Why?"

"Ivy, don't scare your sister, let her come in and join us. It's good she's here, we can sit as a family and eat." Said Yasmin, coming forward to pull Viola in. But Viola said,

"I didn't come here to stay nor eat." Her eyes turned to the elder mermaid, Natasha, who sat silently, and she said, "I came here to see you. I need to know how to get rid of my suppressant and free my wolf. What did you give me to suppress my powers?"

Natasha, who had been sitting there with her tail stretched out silently, finally straightened at her niece's question. "Would you mind taking a swim with me, outside?" She asked, and Viola, who was here on borrowed time, looked frustrated but nodded, turning to her twin, who said,

"I'll come with you."

As the three of them swam out of the cave, Yasmin looked at her mate and said, "I hope Mother convinces her to stay and save the mermaids, rather than those creatures. Our root are dying. Do you think she'll stay?"

"I don't know. But Aquaville certainly needs someone with her powers to bring more life back to it. She belongs here more than she does there."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 473: Answers in Aquaville_Part 2[1,428 words]

Viola swam in silence next to the older mermaid, her sister holding her hand as though she'd protect her if anything went wrong, even though she hadn't sensed the danger yet, and Viola made sure to keep her guard up, sensing the mermaids were planning to keep her here.

"Your mother used to like swimming around in this direction," Natasha suddenly said, breaking the silence that had made Viola look around at their surroundings. There wasn't much to see besides water and plants, with strange-looking creatures swimming around them.

"Won't you ask me about your mother?" Natasha asked as they swam farther away from the cave.

Viola remained quiet, and Natasha glanced at her before continuing. "Ivy asks about her all the time. Your mother was very skilled at making medicines and all sorts of concoctions when we were little. In fact, the suppressant I fed you was made by her."

She paused for a moment, her expression softening at the memory. "She used to mix her medicines with her song of colors. In all of Aquaville, no other mermaid could sing all the colors the way she did. Yasmin tells me you sing well too."

Viola turned to the mermaid, whose face held a fond expression, as though the memories of her sister were dear to her, and Viola felt her hostility ease slightly as curiosity took over. "Did she use the song of colors to suppress my ability?"

Natasha nodded. "She made the concoction the moment we found the mark on you. Madeline would sing and mix colors, something no other mermaid could do. When she fell in love with your father...she gave herself legs with the song. She drew from all the colors to suppress your wolf and your powers too. She wanted you to grow up normal, without suspicion, and she wanted to raise you on land to protect you from Nerrisa."

Viola's eyes narrowed as she said, "But then you took us away from her and never gave her the chance with us."

Natasha's eyes filled with guilt and hurt as she stopped swimming. They had arrived at a strange part of the sea where several oval-shaped forms floated suspended in the water, each one held in place by thick, vine-like roots wrapped around its top, making them look almost like strange fruits hanging from a tree.

Each of the oval-shaped thing was covered in blue leaves that glowed faintly, casting a soft light into the surrounding water.

Natasha swam toward one of it in particular before stopping beside it and turning to look at Viola.

"Here is your mother's grave." She placed her hand against it, its leaves glowing the brightest among the rest. "I have wanted to show it to Ivy, but I waited until you two were together."

Viola swam closer, standing side-by-side with her sister before their mother's grave, and they stared at it in silence. Viola had never imagined mermaids had graves, and had never expected to be before her mother's right now. She stared at it with a mix of emotions she couldn't quite name, since she'd never known the woman.

"Why is it glowing brighter than the others?" Viola asked quietly, noting how dim the light on the other grave was, some of them didn't even have the light and looked like stones.

"Her memories are still intact. I kept them for you, for someday. This is the royal grave, belonging only to our family, those of us with royal blood carry abilities that remain even after death. The blue light holds her memories of life before her death. It glows brighter because no one has come to watch it yet. We can only watch each memory once, I already watched the one of her death."

Natasha said, emotion thick in her voice. "The rest are all from before her death, I haven't watched them. If you want to know your mother, come forward and see who she was."

Viola looked at her mother's sister, then nervously at the glow. She didn't know if she was ready for this, but since she was already here, she saw no harm in knowing the woman who had given birth to her. She looked at her sister, and they shared a look of understanding.

"Place your hands against her and close your eyes." Natasha explained, watching as the twins placed their hands against their mother's preserved body, kept untouched by the leaves' power.

Viola placed her hand against it and closed her eyes. It felt as though her hands were pressed against ice, so cold she shivered, and she felt the urge to curl her fingers away, but the light bursting behind her eyelids kept her still.

The bright light dimmed, and then she found herself watching memories, as though viewing a movie behind her closed eyes.

Two mermaids could be seen swimming and playing together, laughing, holding hands and spinning each other around. Viola didn't need an introduction to know she was watching her mother and her aunt as little girls, who looked no more than ten.

They spun until they grew dizzy, released each other's hands, and stumbled off in different directions, falling and laughing.

"Girls, will you stop that before one of you bursts your heads open and leads the sharks here with your sweet blood?" An elder mermaid scolded, as she arranged shells around the cave to decorate it, and the girls spoke at the same time,

"Sharks don't come here, because Papa will kill them with his trident. Mama, you're just trying to scare us so we don't play." They complained to their mother.

"Go ahead and burst your head then, and see, this time it won't be sharks but the land monsters." Their mother said as she swam toward them, seeing how scared and wide-eyed they looked. She laughed at their reaction and pulled them in for a hug. "Come here, you two."

"Mama, is it true that land monsters can come here and eat us?" Madeline asked her mother, looking terrified at the notion, since they had been taught to fear the land dwellers, especially the monsters.

"They can't come this far down, we're safe in our homes. The only sea creatures in danger from them are the fish, and those who break the rules and go up there, just like Azmira had and died. That's why we're forbidden to go to the surface, no matter what." Their mother told them, and Natasha said,

"I will never go there."

But her sister's curiosity got the better of her. "Mama, have you seen them before? What do they look like? Are they hideous? Wasn't Azmira scared of them when she fell in love with her killer?"

Madeline's questions made her mother reach over and pinch her cheek.

"Silly girl, always the curious one." She smiled before answering. "To answer your question, yes, they're hideous in both forms. They smell terrible too, and they're hairy. You never want to see their kind. And as for Azmira, no one ever knew what went through her mind when she fell in love with one of them, but everyone knows she regretted it before he killed her."

Their mother spoke in a grim tone, her voice carrying a hint of dread. But before the conversation could continue and the curious little mermaid could ask any more questions, their father, the King of the Sea, swam into view with several of his mermen.

They were dragging something behind them.

Their mother was quick to turn to her daughters. "Go play outside, you two, I'll call you when lunch is ready." She shooed them away, but the moment they swam out, Madeline swam back and peeked her head in to watch.

"Maddy, Mama will be mad if she sees you peeking. Let’s go play." Natasha pulled her sister’s hand, but the other twin jerked it back with a click of her tongue as she said,

"Quiet, or she’ll hear us. I just want to see. Aren’t you ever curious what they look like? Papa’s brought back another monster he’s turned to stone to keep in the prison, I want to see it." Whispered Madeline, staring at the mermen unwrapping the creature that had been frozen into a statue and would be taken to the sea prison until it got sold for decoration to the other mermaids.

The king had the power to turn land dwellers into stone if they trespassed into the deep waters.

"Where did you get this one?" Their mother asked their father as they unwrapped it.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 474: The mermaid love[1,370 words]

Maddy saw her father frown in displeasure as he said, "The little idiot was swimming down with some human equipment. He crossed the boundary, so I turned him to stone. He’s one of the monsters, I froze him in his human form."

"You shouldn’t bring things like this home and take it straight to the prison, Nalu. The kids are growing, and they’re soon going to start seeing and understanding this. You should—"

Maddy didn’t get to see the stone figure, nor finish hearing what her mother was saying, as Natasha pulled her away before they got caught.

"Hey, I just want to see it once." Maddy pursed her lips, and her twin rolled her eyes. "Mama doesn’t want us to see it, so we won’t see it."

Maddy wasn’t pleased, and her curiosity about what the people living outside the water looked like only grew, she wanted, more than anything, to see life outside the sea.

That night, as they ate and settled to sleep in their cave room, Maddy was unable to fall asleep, having caught a glimpse of the stone figure her father brought back and seen what the land dweller walked with, feet.

She looked at her twin, who was sleeping, and quietly swam away from her, out of the cave, her Tidekin following behind and asking, "Where are you going?"

"Shh, keep your voice down. I want to see the prisoner Papa brought back." She whispered.

However, Maddy never got to see or even reach the chamber before she was caught by her mother and taken back to her cave, scolded for roaming around.

Every day, the curiosity grew in her heart, all the way into her teenage years, but by then, Maddy no longer wanted to see the stone. She wanted to see the real thing.

Which was why, on the mermaids' Sea Festival, when all the merfolk swam closer to the surface to perform the celebration and sing together, Maddy slipped away from the crowd and swam all the way up to the surface. Sunlight hit her for the first time of her life, and she was so fascinated by it that she stared up at it until dots swam before her eyes.

Staring at the sun for so long left her vision strange when she finally looked away, and she nearly missed the ship coming across the top of the water until she heard loud sounds and laughter and quickly ducked behind a large rock jutting out of the water.

The person laughing stood on the deck of the ship, talking to a woman next to him. He had black, ebony hair that ruffled in the wind, and wore a yellow shirt, unbuttoned at the front to reveal a hard chest, with matching trousers. He was tall, and... handsome, and Maddy found herself mesmerized by him.

"I thought Mama said they were hideous..."

Maddy stared at the man, unable to look away, until, as though he felt eyes on him from her direction, he stopped talking and looked toward her. Their eyes locked, and everything seemed to freeze in the curious mermaid's world, something inside her heart shifting. She watched his eyes narrow as he ordered,

"Stop the ship, there's a woman in the water!" He yelled out, and Maddy snapped back to her senses just as her twin surfaced and dragged her back under, right as the man jumped into the water as though to rescue her.

It was sheer luck that the man didn't see them as they hid and watched him searching around, as if trying to find the woman he'd glimpsed, until he couldn't hold his breath any longer and surfaced. They heard him talking to his people on the deck who had rushed at his shout,

"I saw someone, I could swear it!"

"Then where is she? You're probably too drunk, you're starting to hallucinate, Brother Vincent. Let's get you out of the water, Mother is waiting at home for the grand dinner."

Maddy pulled away from her sister and surfaced just as the ship was pulling away, watching from a distance as the woman wrapped a cloth around the man, ruffling his hair.

"Vincent..." Maddy whispered, her blue eyes glimmering like stars.

"You are in so much trouble, Maddy. I am so telling Mama you broke rule number one!" Natasha had said as they swam back home.

However, Natasha never told their parents, knowing there was a punishment for breaking that rule about the surface. They kept it between themselves, and Maddy couldn't get the man she'd seen out of her mind.

From that day on, the mermaid no longer found contentment in the sea and found herself drawn to land. More than once, she slipped away in hopes of seeing him and never did, and everytime it left a hollow feeling in her chest.

Eventually, Maddy couldn't take it anymore. She made the decision on a whim, having grown into an adult mermaid with all her abilities surfacing, she now had the power to change shape, and so she gave herself the one thing forbidden to mermaids: legs. And she went to land after saying goodbye to her family, who were asleep.

Viola, watching all of this, saw how fate had brought their mother back to meet their father after she'd defied the sea's rules to have feet. Forced to live on the streets, knowing nothing about land, she was so naive that she nearly got gang-raped on the streets of... Mooncreek Pack. The same pack that had been flooded...she thought privately to herself.

Viola watched with tension in her bones as her mother struggled against the men attacking her in the alley where she had been sleeping.

Then, out of nowhere, a man appeared and ordered them to back off, and when they refused, a fight broke out in the street, one that reminded Viola of her own first meeting with Sebastian, in the forest, and made her think maybe it was fate.

"Are you all right?" The man asked Maddy, who was crouched in the corner, scared and shivering, clutching the tattered cloth she'd managed to secure since arriving on land a month ago.

Maddy shook her head. "They were hurting me..."

"That's all right, miss, I've got you. Come here." Said the man, holding his hand out to her. "I'll make sure they never lay a hand on another woman again. Come on." He coaxed, and Maddy moved out of the corner, about to place her hand in his, until her eyes fell on his face and she froze.

"Vincent..." She muttered, taking the man by surprise.

"You know my name," he said, and then let out a husky laugh. "Of course you'd know my name, everyone knows the Alpha heir, don't they?" He mused, taking her hand and helping her out of the corner, adding, "Only, not everyone says it right to my face, you're a brave one. What's your name— whoa!" He remarked when she suddenly threw her arms around him, crying into his chest as she hugged him tightly.

"I have looked for you all over the land. I thought you weren't real..."

Vincent, the Alpha heir of Mooncreek, was taken aback by the woman hugging him, but being who he was, easygoing by nature, he put his arms around her and patted her back.

"Shh, you found me now. Where is your home, miss? I can walk you there."

Vincent soon realized he'd found himself a stray with no home to speak of, and not wanting to leave her alone, for reasons that twisted something in his chest, he took her back to the pack house, and soon Maddy was assigned to work among the omegas.

She stayed there for months.

"Aren't you getting a little too attached to that girl?" His sister asked him one night, while Maddy was cleaning his shoes in his room.

"Mind your business, Clara. I just find her fascinating, that's all." Vincent said, looking at Maddy, who raised her head to look at him before shyly glancing away, since just before his sister walked in, they'd been kissing.

"I hope you remember you're betrothed to another. Stop leading the poor girl on."

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 475: No longer safe[1,193 words]

After Clara left, Vincent went to Maddy, took the rag from her hand, and pulled her up to sit on his lap. "Why do you suddenly look so sad, my dear? Is it what Clara said?"

Maddy kept her head down. "You are going to be married in a few months, and crowned in a year..." She raised her eyes to him. "You will no longer be mine."

Vincent lovingly cupped her cheeks, tracing them with his thumbs as he said, "I will always love you." He kissed her, a kiss that led to something else and it was then that she conceived the twins, both of them carrying love in their hearts for one another.

Maddy, who never went back to the sea and avoided water at all costs, soon realized she was pregnant just a few weeks before Vincent's mating ceremony, and she didn't keep it to herself, she told him right away.

Vincent looked shocked at first, and then he took her hand and dragged her to his room, grabbed his trunk, and began packing his things and placing them inside.

"What are you doing, Vinc?" Maddy asked nervously.

"We're leaving Mooncreek. I don't want my father to find out about your pregnancy. They won't spare you, and I don't want to marry or mate with my fiancée. I don't love her. Father only wants me to be with her for future alliances, and we'll both be miserable if I stay. I can't let you go."

"Vinc..." Maddy muttered anxiously.

He stopped packing and turned to look at her. She hesitated before admitting, "I'm scared."

At her words, he dropped the clothes in his hands and strode toward her, pulling her into his arms. He gently stroked her hair as he assured her, "Don't worry. I will protect you with my life if I have to."

With that, he took her hand, and together, they left the pack in the middle of the night.

The couple eloped far away, to an island that put Maddy closer to the sea than she should have been. Her pregnancy grew with each passing month, no one knowing where they were, and with it grew Maddy's fear that he would discover she was a mermaid once she gave birth to the child.

Vincent worked every day, wanting to make her comfortable and help her and himself adapt to a life without the privilege he was used to as the Alpha heir of Mooncreek. Maddy hated carrying that secret when they shared all secret together and decided to tell him one night.

"What is it, my darling?" Vincent asked, when she said she had something to show him.

"I have wanted to tell you this, but I couldn't find the chance." Maddy pulled him toward the water outside their little house, and Vincent tried to stop her.

"Don't get in that water, you have a phobia of it."

Maddy shook her head, "Not anymore," as she took off her clothes and stepped into the water, and right before his eyes, she revealed her shimmering tail and scales. She watched her man freeze in shock.

"This is who I am, Vince. If you want all of me, you'll have to accept this part of me too." She said, looking at him, but right at that moment, before he could react, the sound of a helicopter could be heard from above, its light shining down on them, illuminating the mermaid in the water and the frozen Vincent.

Maddy’s eyes filled with panic as she realized she’d revealed her true self at the exact moment Vincent’s people had finally found them.

"You’re a mermaid..." He said, beginning to step back away from her.

The helicopter landed on the island, and Vincent’s father and his men climbed out, yelling, "There’s a mermaid in the water! Get her! Vincent get away from that creature!"

Maddy had no choice but to begin swimming backward, away from the land, her eyes on Vincent, who remained frozen until his father’s men pulled out guns and aimed them at her. He acted then, striking them and yelling out,

"Get away from here, Maddy! Don’t fucking shot her!"

Maddy couldn’t move until a gun fired in her direction, and she ducked beneath the water to escape being killed. She’d been underwater so long by then that, combined with her pregnancy, she began to feel strange and restless, because she believed her husband was waiting for her.

When Maddy surfaced again an hour later, Vincent had left with his father, and their little home stood empty. She was left alone on the island, with a single note waiting for her on the dining table where he had been sitting their meals, before she had interrupted their life together.

"It’s no longer safe for you. Don’t come back to Mooncreek, or they will kill you. I’m sorry, Maddy, you should have told me earlier."

Maddy took the note, pressing it to her chest as she broke down into a heart-wrenching sob that tore her apart. She had lost him, just like that.

Having nowhere else to go, the mermaid stayed on the island until she ran out of resources and couldn’t bear being there any longer, missing the few months she’d spent with him. Then she decided to go back home.

Going back home was a mistake. Maddy was met with her parents’ disappointment and how much they had changed toward her, as she had left without warning them.

"We warned you about those monsters since childhood, and you went and got pregnant for one of them. That is not how we raised you, Maddy, and your father knew you’d come crawling back once this happened, and here you are." Her mother said, and Maddy couldn’t help but reply,

"I don’t regret it, Mama. I just need to stay here for a while, until Vincent comes looking for me. I know he will come."

Her parents didn’t argue with her, believing she was simply in denial, and Maddy stayed. But as her due date approached and Vincent still hadn’t returned, she found herself peeking toward the surface every day, hoping to catch a glimpse of him.

Eventually, she went back to him instead, making another mistake.

When she arrived, she was met with the news that Vincent had been crowned, and that he had mated with the fiancée he had never wanted.

Maddy was so heartbroken that she went back to her mother, crying, "How could he... he said he loved me, Mama. You don’t marry another when you love someone else. You accept them no matter what they are..."

That, too, was a mistake, because her heartbroken cries only stoked her mother’s rage, and her father’s as well, for a monster had hurt their daughter and now left her in a state she would never be the same again. It wasn’t until the damage was already done that Maddy realized her parents had flooded Mooncreek and caused the death of many people.

"Nooo!" Maddy had cried, desperate to go save her beloved, but she was held back, and right at that moment, she fell into labor.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 476: Wolf unlock[1,665 words]

Viola, who had been watching, could no longer bear the weight of all the grief and pain her mother had gone through, and she jerked her hand away from the leaves that kept her mother’s body, pressing it instead against her own stomach.

Natasha, who had been watching her, continued, "Your mother gave birth to the two of you while grieving your father. But despite everything she was going through, she loved you both the moment you came into the world, with those little feet covered in scales that I thought were hideous. She was willing to give everything for the two of you."

Viola looked at her aunt as Natasha continued, "She told me she believed your father still loved her and that she would bring him back someday. But before that, she wanted to take the two of you up to land and live there, cutting all ties with our parents."

Natasha’s expression tightened with guilt as she looked away for a moment.

"I didn’t want that to happen. So, while she slept, I took you both away from her..."

Until this moment, Viola had only ever heard about her mother, she had never seen the woman. But now that she had witnessed the love between her parents, she felt her heart torn in two, knowing that they had they been together, she and Ivy would have grown up

in a loving home. But their father had never been able to accept their mother for who she truly was...

"Why did you show me this?" Viola asked, looking at the grave where her sister still watched the memories behind her eyes, silent.

Natasha looked at it and said, "Your mother brought your father's body back after the flood. I never knew when or how she managed to do it, but it must have been sometime between the moment she gave birth to you and the moment she asked to be left alone. That's the grave beside hers, the one without the light, because he wasn't a merman."

She paused, her gaze lingering on the unlit grave.

"She brought him back in the hope that someday, the Child of the Sea would return and bring the dead back to life, just as every mermaid who knew of what Azmira had once been capable of. They believed we would have the Child of the Sea again."

Viola frowned, still holding onto the ache she carried for her mother's tragic ending.

"Mermaids and werewolves cannot coexist, Serena. You have to choose a side to embrace. If you embrace the powers of the Sea, I will kill your wolf completely, and your potential as the Child of the Sea will awaken itself. You will have nothing more to do with werewolves, and all those dead mermaids, and your father... will be revived by you.

"But if you choose to stand with the wolves... you will only ever be their curse-breaker, and nothing more, and your connection to us will be severed the moment you embrace your wolf, because you can't have both. Azmira was a mermaid. Which do you want, Serena?" Her aunt posed the most difficult question anyone had ever asked her.

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Viola stared at the pink wall of the royals' cave, unsure how long she'd sat there deep in thought, trying to process everything she'd just learned about herself. Her aunt hadn't pressed her to decide right at the grave, instead, she'd swum back with them in silence, quietly telling her to take her time with a decision this life-changing, one she might never be able to undo.

"What should I do, Ivy?" Viola asked quietly, turning to look at her twin, who had come to settle beside her without a word, offering silent support.

Viola knew she could never turn away from Sebastian, it was unthinkable, given that they were fated mates. She would carry the pain of that choice in her heart for the rest of her life, and her child would grow up without a father. But then again, after seeing her parents, something inside her longed to know them, to experience what it might have been like if they were still alive.

Viola wanted both things, and choosing just one didn't feel right at all. She wished Natasha had never shown her those memories of their beautiful mother, a woman who had died searching for them on land. Who could have killed such an innocent, lovely woman? She couldn't help but wonder.

"I wish I were the one born with this burden, Serena. I would have made it easier for you, since I don't have anyone I love the way you do. Life is full of strange wonders, we're twins, yet we don't carry equal powers to help each other." Came Ivy's words, her smile bitter. "Don't let Aunt Natasha pressure you into a hasty decision. She wants you to embrace the powers of the Child of the Sea because she wants to bring our grandparents back to life too, so we can all be a family.

"She's not a bad person, but she is putting you in a hard spot. I won't tell you which side to take, sister, that choice is yours. Follow what your heart wants."

Viola looked at her endlessly kind sister and felt a lump rise in her throat as she said, "Won't you hate me, if I follow what my heart wants? I know you want to see our mother too..." Unable to hold back her emotions any longer, Viola broke into sobs. "My heart wants to be with Sebastian..."

Ivy stared at her sister, a woman who, even as a child, had never cried or shed a tear for anyone, no matter the circumstances, and realized just how deeply she loved this man. Making her stay here would be nothing short of ruining her life. She pulled her into an embrace and whispered,

"Then be with him." Ivy said. "Save your man and start your family. Mom and Dad will understand, wherever they are, and so do I. Go back home, Serena."

Viola, hearing her sister's selfless words, hugged her tighter, so grateful that her heart felt heavy, as though she'd swallowed a stone. "What did I ever do to deserve a sister like you, Ivy? I thought you'd hate me for the rest of our lives for what I did at the orphanage, and here you are, being my greatest supporter."

Ivy pulled back from the hug and held her sister's shoulders as she said, "I've been wanting to tell you this, Serena. At that orphanage, I gave you the chance to take my place. Even if you hadn't done it yourself, I would have made you take the clothes and pretend to be me. Now put that behind us and let's focus on getting you out of here. Will you stop crying?" Ivy said, with a small glare when she saw her sister's lips still quivering, even though the tears themselves were invisible under the sea, lost among the water surrounding them.

Ivy had never held anything against her twin, who had taken her place when Viola had only followed her own plan, dropping the dress the Lindens had given her to change into so Viola could wear it instead. As much as Ivy wanted to meet their parents, she knew her sister had always been her whole world.

Viola hugged her twin again before finally composing herself. "Thank you, Ivy, for everything."

"Don’t mention it, that’s what sisters are for." Ivy patted her back with a smile.

"I want to go home."

"Then home you shall go, sister. But first, there’s something I want to tell you." Ivy said, her eyes curious as they met her sister’s. "Does your Sebastian have a look-alike, or a twin, or something?" She asked.

Viola nodded. "Yes, he does. He’s a twin. Why do you ask?" She questioned, knowing Ivy wouldn’t bring something up out of nowhere unless she had something to say.

Ivy shrugged. "I stumbled upon a man a while back. When I saw your Sebastian, I thought he looked like someone the moment I laid eyes on him, so I went back to check and make sure. I found the other one in a terrible state. I couldn’t just leave him there, coughing and looking like a dying man, so I helped him to bed and, unintentionally, or maybe intentionally, cured him with my song."

She hesitated before adding, "I haven’t told you this, but I inherited Mother’s healing song, in a way. He was so pitiful and alone in that big place, and—"

Ivy was pulled into her sister’s embrace again before she could finish. "Oh my goodness, Ivy, you have no idea what you’ve just done. You’ve lifted such a weight off Sebastian, and he’s going to be so glad and happy, thank you so much!"

Sebastian, who she knew had been tearing himself apart over his twin, would be overjoyed to learn he hadn’t died after all, and that her sister had cured him. Viola suddenly felt she couldn’t wait to tell him. But just as they were hugging, their aunt, their cousin, and the Sea Guardian swam in.

Viola pulled back from her sister and turned to them as her aunt asked, "Have you made your decision, dear? You’ve already spent two days here, and everyone is curious and impatient."

Viola hadn’t realized that watching her mother’s memories had taken two full days until she surfaced from them, and she knew she couldn’t afford to waste any more time. She announced,

"I have decided, I want my wolf unlocked. I can’t stay here in the sea. I’m sorry, but if it’s meant to be, fate will bring another Child of the Sea. It just can’t be me." She spoke, even knowing the decision was a difficult one. But since there was no middle ground, and she had to choose a side, it had to be her wolf.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 477: Waking the wolf[1,288 words]

Viola saw the hurt in Natasha’s eyes and the disappointment in the others, but there was nothing she could do about it. When it came to making a choice like this, she knew she was bound to disappoint them.

"We can’t force you to embrace the powers of the sea, since you have to do it willingly, with your heart in it. But I hope someday you won’t regret this, Serena. Awakening that wolf will suppress your mermaid side, and you might never be able to come here again or be a part of us."

Why did it feel like she was being disowned by the mermaids in the subtlest way? Viola thought to herself.

"Will I lose my mermaid abilities?" she asked.

"I don’t know. We’ve never had a Child of the Sea who was a half-breed, and time might be the only thing that tells us what you will lose and what you will keep. But you won’t be able to come down here, that much is certain, and I think it will be for the best for all the merfolk who had their hopes raised."

That was the least Natasha could do for her sister’s daughter: give her the freedom of choice she hadn’t given Maddy, a decision that had ultimately led to her death when Natasha took her daughters away.

Viola turned to her sister, who gave her a small smile.

"I will come to you if you miss me."

Viola turned back to her aunt. "I agree. Give me back my wolf, please." She said softly, and watched as Natasha looked toward her daughter and son-in-law.

"She’s made her choice. We all have people we wish to bring back, but she has made her choice, and now we need to give her what she picked." Saying that, the mermaid took her daughter’s hand, then her son-in-law’s, and said, "Let’s unchain the beast by countering her mother’s song."

Viola watched them take their places, her sister joining them, and she was soon placed in their middle as they began to sing together. Almost immediately, she felt the strongest, strangest sensation building in her chest, one that knocked her to the ground.

"It’s going to be a very painful process, Serena, your bones will break and reform to welcome your new form. It might take some time to end." Came her aunt’s belated warning, arriving only after she was already deep in the throes of the pain.

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Sebastian fell to his knees, spitting out a mouthful of blood onto the floor as he breathed heavily, as though he’d run a marathon, his heart pounding like it would burst from his chest. He slumped against the wall, his shoulders sagging in defeat, knowing there was no way to fight the thing inside him, every time he looked at her picture, he went savage and destroyed it.

Now his eyes stared at the broken frames scattered on the floor, her smiling face cracked in two, and he felt a kindling of rage stir in his gut. It was the picture they’d taken at the amusement park, the one he’d later framed and hung in his rooms and office, and now it lay shattered. He couldn’t tell if the rage he felt was because she was still alive, or because he’d destroyed something so precious to him.

He reached out a trembling hand to pick up the broken image, but the moment he brought it closer, Sebastian felt like a murderous monster again, wanting, wishing, she were there so he could strangle her to death.

He flung the frame away and began striking himself instead, all the rage in his heart turned inward, wishing he’d never lived to see a day like this.

"You love her, bastard! She is your beloved, feel affection, not hate! That feeling is not yours! Viola Kade is your fucking wife, a woman you would give your life for, lay it down for! Do you understand that, Sebastian Kade? Wake up!" He yelled, the walls around him trembling and shaking with his outrage, until he felt they might collapse on him.

But when the rage finally left his body, he fell weakly to the floor, blood now trickling from his nose as well. For how long, he thought. For how fucking long...

As though his thoughts had been heard, the door to his cell opened, and the elders filed in one by one.

"You can put an end to this, Alpha. You have suffered enough." Came the words of Elder Brenna, as she looked at the bloodstains on the ground, some dried, some fresh. It was a wonder he had any blood left in him at all.

He looked at them without moving from where he lay, then rolled onto his back, staring up at the ceiling. "What brings you here?" He asked them, masking his emotions to keep a hard look in his eyes.

"We came to free you of this, since your wife isn't going to." Said Elder Calum.

"How is she?" Sebastian asked.

"Still in the healing house. It's been four days now, and we haven't heard from her, Gilbert says she's fallen unconscious. You did quite a bit of damage to her, boy." The head elder told him, and saw no reaction from him.

"I see..." Was all he said. "Is that what you came here to tell me, then?"

"No." Elder Natasha sighed. "I'm here to talk to you about the grim reality. Time is ticking away. Our pack has been falling into all sorts of misfortune and bad luck since your spell took hold, and it's said such curses carry bad luck with them that will affect people around them if not dealt with. We're starting to get people's complaints and a huge fall in our pack, and things aren't looking good, not with the fear that you'll kill your wife before she can even give birth."

Sebastian listened to their words, staring at the specks of dust floating through the air around him, illuminated by the light streaming through the small window.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"You know what to do, Alpha. You and I spoke about this two days ago." She said, watching how haggard and exhausted he looked.

Sebastian barely reacted, even though he understood her perfectly. If the bad luck kept mounting and his wife didn't find a way through it, like she'd promised them, then he should give up. Agree to be executed. It would free Viola of worry and give her the chance to focus on herself and their unborn child, as they had offered to wipe her memories of him afterwards.

Sebastian felt a sting at the back of his head that traveled all the way to his eyes, a burning sensation rising in his throat until his Adam's apple bobbed up and down.

"I suppose making the decision myself will spare her from having to make it, in the future. Can I ask you for a favor, Natasha?" Came his dull voice, carrying no emotion, even as his eyes shimmered.

"Anything." She said.

Sebastian turned to look at the elders. "If she gives birth to our child, I don't know if they will be twins, but regardless, don't burden either with my responsibility until they're old enough. Let them be children, let them be happy. And tell my wife... I'm sorry."

Saying that, he held out his hand, and the elder dropped an empty small bottle into his palm. He brought it to his canine teeth, which grew longer, and a black liquid slid from them into the bottle, one that would turn into a mark the moment it touched a female's blood.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 478: Becoming one[1,409 words]

The sun was bright in the sky that day, its rays shining so brilliantly that the vast surface of the sea reflected the light back. However, a glow rose from below the sea, brightening even the darkest depths and shining all the way up to the surface.

The light lasted only a few seconds before fading, and a few minutes later, two mermaids surfaced, carrying an unconscious Viola and laying her on the shore, where the waves touched her and slid back, her eyes still closed.

"Let's go before someone sees us," Yasmin said to her cousin, who was looking worriedly down at her twin.

Viola had fallen unconscious after long, agonizing hours of her bones breaking and reshaping to welcome her wolf. In the end, she'd blacked out once the suppressant fully released, and they'd had to bring her back to the surface, since she might no longer be able to breathe underwater now that her mermaid side had been given up.

"I can't leave her here alone. I'll wait until she regains consciousness, you can go ahead." Ivy said, brushing wet hair away from her sister's pale face. "We still don't know if she's become one with her wolf spirit yet."

"My mother said it will take time for her to adjust to sharing her body with another presence, and that she'll have to search for the spirit within herself before she wakes. That could take days, let's go find some of her friends and bring them here instead." Yasmin suggested, uneasy with the land and even more uneasy at the thought of being caught again.

"No, let's wait for her. We don't know where her friends are at this moment and could get caught trying to find them." Ivy said, reaching out and holding her sister's hand in hers tightly.

However, as they talked, every word was being heard by Viola, who couldn't seem to open her eyes no matter how hard she tried as she was stuck inside her own mind. She found

herself staring at a mighty wolf standing before her, now fully unlocked, standing in its full, towering glory, so tall she had to tilt her head back just to meet its blue-green eyes.

"We're finally meeting, Viola. You have the strangest name, I don't like it much." Came the wolf's words, as it began to circle her like she was its prey, its paws making soft sounds she tried to track as she turned with the creature, unable to make out its fur color in the dark, only its eyes visible.

"I thought we were supposed to merge together once you were unlocked." Viola voiced her thoughts, a small frown on her face, and the wolf snorted at her words as though it found them amusing or stupid.

"I am already inside you, but I haven't given you the reins over me yet, because I don't think you can handle containing me. I've been locked away too long, and we've wasted the years you were supposed to spend taming me and getting used to me. Now I'm full of energy and uncontrollable power that can't keep me contain inward, how do you propose we settle that?"

Viola had heard that Alpha wolf spirits were hard to tame once inside a person, and that it was meant to be done at the age one first awakened it, but years had been wasted for hers, and now she wondered if she could ever control the mighty beast before her, who looked like she couldn't wait to burst out and face the world with all that pent-up energy.

Viola was clueless about how it felt to have a wolf and now that she was facing hers, she didn't know how to begin this get together.

"We'll come to an agreement, and find control, once we get out of here, wherever here is. How do I get out?" Viola questioned, having no idea how to wake herself up, locked as she was inside her own mind with a wolf spirit who apparently had a personality all her own. Viola watched the creature settle down to the bottomless darkness and stare at her.

"Then wake us up, Viola. Cyan can't wait any longer," the wolf said. "You are wasting our time when I'm impatient to finally see the world with you."

"Cyan?" Viola questioned, and she could have sworn the wolf rolled her eyes.

"Me. I am Cyan. I existed long before you. I was the wolf spirit of a girl who named me Cyan, but she was killed right after she awakened me. After that, I was passed down to you. I've been locked inside you all this time, and now I hope I won't be killed off again, only to be reborn into someone else who will eventually die."

Cyan sounded almost bored as she spoke, watching her human with guarded eyes.

Viola understood something then. This same wolf must have been meant to break the curse, passed from one curse-breaker to another, all of whom Nerrisa had killed. She

realized Cyan would probably remain sassy and guarded until Viola earned her trust completely and showed her that they were here to stay together.

But Viola didn't think she had much time to convince Cyan that she wouldn't die and leave her to be reborn into another human who might not last any longer than the ones before her.

"I can't promise you much, Cyan, but help me get out of here, and we'll be fine together. As long as we have each other's backs, we'll be fine. Our mate is out there, and he might need us to come—"

"You found our mate?" Cyan exclaimed, suddenly rising onto all fours.

The thought alone seemed to excite her. If Viola had already found their mate, then her human had come much farther than all the ones before her who had died.

Viola nodded, and Cyan immediately asked, "Is he our true mate? Will I feel his wolf, or is it one-sided?"

"We'll have to find that out now that you're here. But we'll never know if we stay here," Viola said, noticing the glint that appeared in the wolf's eyes at the mention of their mate.

The wolf snarled. "You should have told me that sooner. Let's get us out of here, shall we? But fair warning, there will be hell to pay for bringing me out into the open and not allowing me to take control sometimes, too."

Cyan walked forward until she stood face-to-face with Viola. When Viola told her she would take anything she could throw at her as long as they left this place, Cyan's expression softened into something almost satisfied.

Then her body began to dissolve into mist.

The mist slowly seeped into Viola, sinking into her body until the wolf standing before her disappeared completely.

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In Silver, many of the pack members gathered at the place where it had been announced the Alpha would be executed. Though it was said to be a private execution, many had come out to witness the so-called honorable killing of their Alpha, a man who had surrendered himself to it in order to spare the pack from the destruction he was otherwise bound to cause.

Killing an Alpha, especially the Supreme Alpha, wasn't easily done, not unless his head was severed from his body, and Sebastian had allowed them to do as they pleased with him, so long as his wife would be safe.

As the crowd gathered to watch on the screens set up around the pack, the executioner walked into view, a sword coated in wolfsbane in hand, and everyone grew anxious. Some, with twisted hearts, even felt a thrill of excitement that their Alpha was giving his life for them and were curious to see what color his blood was.

Not long after, Sebastian was led to the scene, dressed in the same outfit he had worn years ago when he was officially named the Supreme Alpha. Only this time, he wore it to give up his life and his position for his family.

He walked with dignity, men flanking him on either side, carrying himself as though he were about to command the crowd rather than meet such a fate. His expression looked as though it had been carved from granite, his eyes cold as steel, while the faint click of his leather shoes echoed with every step.

Fated: The Alpha's Unwanted Luna - Chapter 479: The Luna’s wolf[1,394 words]

"Why do I feel like we are doing the wrong thing?" The head elder said, watching the Alpha walk up onto the platform that was outside the main pack house that wasn’t in use by him. Though he had agreed to it without so much as an argument, she couldn’t shake the feeling off as his late father had put the boy in their trust and care.

"It’s one of the rightest things you will ever do, Nat. We are elders, forced to make decisions for the betterment of the majority, and just like we once made the hard choice of placing Sebastian on the throne instead of his twin, we have to do this now. He’s bound to become a monster that destroys us all one day." Elder Brenna said, trying to put the other elder’s mind at rest, even though it wasn’t in her nature to comfort anyone.

At this point, Brenna simply wanted a pack free of future threats, and their current Alpha, trapped under the hijacking spell, was bound to become exactly that, a man who could never be with his wife again without wanting to kill her.

"I hope everything goes well," Elder Natasha muttered, watching Sebastian take the seat placed for him. Rather than kneel like most facing execution, he sat and rested his elbows against his knees and bowed his head forward, offering his neck to the executioner’s blade.

Sebastian closed his eyes. In that moment, his mind held no thoughts save one: he hoped everything would go well for his family and that, someday, Viola would forgive him for taking such a drastic step to free her from the burden he had become.

He had thought of countless ways out of this, but he hadn't been able to find a single one that would guarantee her safety. And hurting her repeatedly... Sebastian couldn't bear it anymore.

Living under the hijacking spell was far worse than death. One day, he might actually succeed in taking her life, and that would be the worst outcome of all. Sebastian would rather die than become the cause of her death.

Fighting the spell was wearing him down regardless, leaving him weaker with every passing moment. He was becoming a shadow of the powerful man he had once been, and being awake yet helpless would do nothing but burden Viola, Sebastian thought.

So he gave himself over to the decision.

"Do it now," he ordered the executioner.

Then he held his breath, believing it would be his last.

However, just as the man raised the sword to bring it down and take the Supreme Alpha's head, a voice rang out, yelling, "Stop!"

Everyone turned toward the voice, even the camera feeding the pack members the broadcast swiveling toward it, revealing the Luna, who, until that moment, everyone believed was still in critical condition.

"Supreme Luna," Elder Natasha called, walking from the elders' seats toward the woman, who turned furious eyes on her that made her stop short, for those eyes carried an intensity that hadn't been there the last time she'd seen her, days ago.

"Don't 'Supreme Luna' me. Didn't we discuss this? Didn't you give me your word? How dare you put him up for execution?!" Viola demanded, fury making her voice shake, for had she arrived even a moment later, the sword would have already come down on his neck.

"I was only—" the head elder began, before Sebastian's voice cut in.

"I made this decision myself, because it's the only way out for everyone." He spoke without looking at her. "What use am I to you otherwise, if seeing you only makes me lose control?" He asked, his voice emotionless, everything locked down inside him.

"Let me be the one to make that decision. And my decision is for you to be here, with me. I want you by my side through thick and thin, and I will accept you in every form, weak, powerful, or even blindfolded. Now get off that platform, Sebastian Kade, and face me." Viola ordered firmly. "I have a surprise for you that's going to make killing me a bit of a challenge."

Sebastian felt the temptation to look, but he knew what would happen if he did, and kept his head bowed as he said, "Go back inside, I don't want to see you." He deadpanned, and Viola realized the stubborn man wouldn't look at her even if refusing was killing him. She grew annoyed as she saw men step forward to escort her away so the execution could resume.

'Are you going to show them, or should I?' Cyan asked, as the men came forward, and Viola realized that right now, everyone still saw her as someone easily controlled, despite knowing she was the prophecy. Showing them what she could do now seemed like the best option, especially since containing the wolf was already proving difficult since they merged and having the presence speak to her and demand things was foreign.

"I guess we have to settle this the hard way, Seb. And when this is over, you have a lot of apologizing to do, again." Saying that, Viola surrendered to her other form, her bones beginning to crack and break right before everyone's eyes.

Fur rose along her skin, and her clothes tore as her limbs shifted and began to change form. It was the first time she was taking this form, and the pain doubled what she'd felt merging with her wolf spirit, Viola couldn't suppress her scream of agony, which soon transformed into a long, loud howl the moment she completed the shift and it seemed to shake the very ground everyone stand on.

Everyone froze in shock as the wolf rose to all fours, its fur the blackest anyone had ever seen, releasing an aura so intense that the crowd instinctively stepped back, some trembling and falling down to their knees.

The wolf's coat was dark, streaked with blue along its back that shimmered under the sun. A wolf that black wasn't something people saw every day, they were rare among normal wolves, and the last black wolf anyone remembered had come from Mooncreek. But this one carried an energy only the Supreme Alpha himself could have matched, paired with the most striking eyes that glared at everyone there.

All the elders stood frozen at the sight of her wolf, and when they saw the crescent-moon-shaped mark began to shine on its shoulder, they understood at once why the prophesied she-wolf was said to be so powerful. One by one, they found themselves dropping to their knees, bowing to her instinctively.

Many expected her to attack them, but she didn't spare them so much as a glance, facing instead the Supreme Alpha, who had lifted his head at last, his eyes finding hers despite everything he'd sworn to himself moments ago.

The moment their gazes met, Sebastian felt himself slipping, the room tilting, his own voice growing distant somewhere inside him as something darker rose to take its place, drowning him out even as he fought to stay present behind his own eyes, to see his wife in her wolf form.

No, no, not here, not now, I want to see her! He could still hear himself screaming it somewhere far off, but the thought grew fainter with every second, until his eyes turned to murder and it was no longer entirely his own hand reaching for the executioner's sword.

"Let's get this over with, Seb. Come kill me, if you can." Saying that, she turned on her heels and broke into a run, and Sebastian yanked the sword free and went after her in long, powerful strides, some last fragment of himself screaming uselessly beneath the surface as his body obeyed a will that was no longer his.

Only after the two of them had left the scene could the people finally breathe again and lift their heads.

"What if he kills her?"

"How did she get a wolf? Shouldn't we send men to stop him?" Elder Calum said, worry thick in his voice and eyes, but the head elder shook her head.

"Let them be. I think she might just be the one to break him free, this time around. He can't easily kill her, and I think it's him you should be worried about."

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Viola, unused to her wolf who seemed to be running with a force that felt like flying, could barely control her from the inside, but she tried her best not to lose the connection when she felt Sebastian closing in hot on her heels.

She dashed into the trees, leaves crunching and tearing beneath her powerful paws.

'Should I tire him out?' Cyan asked, her voice sounding a little too excited about the chase, when Viola felt only panic, worried she'd provoked him and would now have to fight him to keep them both alive or he would kill her with that sword he was holding.

'Stop at the clearing, and let me shift. We have to face him head-on.' Viola said to Cyan, who sounded immediately disappointed that the chase was ending and her human would take over her when she hadn't ran as much as she wanted to.

’I haven’t run as much as I wanted to yet.’ Cyan complained. But right at that moment, before Viola could reply, promising that once they broke the spell off Sebastian they’d race his wolf properly, the breeze stirred, and one might have mistaken it for wind, if not for Sebastian’s full weight landing against the wolf’s back a second later, tackling her to the forest ground with a force that shook the tree she collided with, stirring up dusts and dried leaves.

Cyan stumbled several times on the ground, hitting trees before regaining her footing, turning furious eyes on Sebastian. Under the spell, his own wolf lay dormant, unreachable, so Cyan couldn’t sense or recognize him as her mate, right now he was just a man who had annoyed her and knocked her to the ground.

’Oh, now you’ve done it. I will bite the meat right off your bones!’ she growled in fury, and Viola quickly took control before Cyan could lunge at Sebastian, who had already risen with the sword in hand, coming for her.

Viola shifted back into her human form, feeling an unfamiliar strain run through her bones from all the shifting she had done. She looked down and was surprised to find that her clothes hadn’t disappeared during the transformation like they did for others. The few tattered pieces of fabric she still had were somehow still clinging to her body.

It would take time to get used to this. She could barely stand on her own human feet after the shift, her legs unsteady beneath her, but she forced herself to steady her balance before looking at her husband.

’If we’re going to fight him, let’s do it in my human form. Just lend me your strength, Cyan.’ She spoke to the wolf, who gladly gave over her strength, and when Sebastian came at her with the sword raised to cut her down, Viola ducked and drove her fist into his chest, sending him stumbling backward off balance.

’Cyan! That was way too much strength!’ Viola gasped, watching Sebastian slam into a tree hard enough to crack its trunk and send a shower of leaves raining down around him like snow.

’That’s for hitting me first. Now focus, before he kills us with that blade, I think we have to beat the spell out of him.’ Cyan said, clearly unhappy that her mate was trying to kill them after she’d spent years locked away because of his curse, only to finally face him like this. This wasn’t how Cyan imagined her reunion with their mate.

Viola watched as Sebastian recovered almost instantly, but now his eyes carried an even sharper edge of fury as he told her, "You’ve gotten stronger, I see. Let’s make this more interesting, shall we, no sword. Just you and my bare hands."

He threw the sword aside, and in a flash he closed the distance and stood before her. Before Viola could dodge, he’d already landed a punch to her face. But with her wolf’s healing and strength behind her now, she returned it, double, straight to his face, before

tackling him down with her knee hooked behind his, and once he went down, she wrapped her arm around his neck, locking him in place on the ground.

Even without her wolf, Viola had long relied on her human strength and the combat skills she'd learned at school in Moonwillow, and she never thought she'd one day have to use them against Sebastian of all people.

"Come back to your damn senses, Sebastian!" Viola gritted out, pouring every ounce of her strength into keeping him pinned beneath her.

Sebastian thrashed violently beneath her, both hands clawing at the arm she had locked around his neck as he tried to wrench himself free. His shoulders twisted against the ground, and he bucked his hips hard, attempting to throw her off. But Viola hooked both legs tightly around his waist, using her weight to keep herself anchored against him as she fought to maintain her hold.

"Sebastian, fight it!" she shouted, tightening her grip when he nearly managed to roll them over.

'Beat the spell out of him, woman.' Cyan said. 'I've heard of it before, a hijacking spell can be broken if the host defeats the person controlling them from within. He was weaponized against you before you had me, before you had your full strength. Beat him and see, the darkness will leave him.' The wolf spoke with the authority of someone who had lived through another host before Viola, carrying more knowledge than her human ever had about more things.

Viola, hearing this, hesitated, even though she felt she had the strength it would take to beat Sebastian in his current state, she didn't want to do it. But while she hesitated, he didn't, he drove his elbow into her ribs, a jab so painful it stole her breath for a moment.

"Okay, now you've done it!" Viola's anger flared, and before she knew it, she'd flipped their positions, pinning him to the ground and straddling him this time. Once there, she began delivering punches on him and anywhere else she could reach.

'Cyan, not the face, I love his face, and you will ruin it for me!' Viola protested, when her wolf began steering her punches to his face.

'He'll recover. Now let's break some ribs and show him who's boss! We'll beat the evil right out of his body!'

Despite the barrage of punches, Sebastian still found the strength to knock her off him. But the moment he began to rise, Viola grabbed a fistful of sand and hurled it into his eyes.

He cursed and immediately squeezed his eyes shut, and something inside him seemed to jolt back into place. The moment his eyes closed, the presence possessing him seemed to recede, as though shutting out his vision also shut the entity out from within him.

"Amor? Are you all right? Did I hurt you?" His panicked voice came through as he tried to sense her.

"No, but do me a favor and keep your eyes closed. Let me catch my breath," Viola said, exhausted. "We're going to try every possible way until you're free. And it has to be now or never."

She wasn't sure how much longer she could keep this up, but she refused to give up while there was still a chance to save him.

'I thought you said beating him would wake him up. He's bloody, and nothing's happened.' Viola said to Cyan, who replied,

'Perhaps he's different, or I might be wrong. Maybe we should beat him some more?'

Viola yanked at her own hair in frustration until she heard Sebastian ask, "Have you really awakened your wolf?"

She turned toward him, both of them still panting from their struggle.

"I have..." she admitted in a resigned voice. "But I'm starting to think it's useless when it comes to helping you. I thought I would be able to help you with it..."

"Don't be discouraged, mi amor. I wish I could see what you look like." His voice softened before, as though a thought had just occurred to him, he added, "We could try something, if you're willing."

He calmly wiped the blood trickling from his nose and down over his busted lips. Once he was sure he had her attention, he continued.

"Mates can heal each other if they have their wolves and are truly fated mates. Can you give me some of your blood?"

Viola stared at him for a moment, caught off guard by the request. Her exhaustion seemed to disappear beneath a sudden spark of hope.

"My blood?" she repeated, glancing down at herself before looking back at him.

She hadn't thought of that before, but now that he mentioned it, she remembered the many cases where fated mates with full wolf blood had been able to help heal one another. And now she was no longer wolfless. She was a full she-wolf with the powers needed to feel the bond between mates.

She turned to where the sword lay and walked to it. She picked it up from the forest ground, then walked back to stand in front of him, bringing her palm up and pressing the blade against it.