

FATED: THE ALPHA'S UNWANTED LUNA

Chapter 7: Mate_Part 2

Before Viola could register anything else about him or feel insulted that he called her dirty, he surprised her by swiftly, yet somewhat gently, pulling her up from the ground like a small doll. His hands stayed on her arms to steady her when she swayed weakly. Then his arms came around her body. She stiffened for a moment when something warm, something that smelled impossibly good, enveloped her, draping over her shoulders. She belatedly realized it was his coat and her heart trembled.

It had been so long since she'd had something this warm and comforting around her. The scent was unmistakable, Clive Christian No. 1. A cologne she had once wanted to buy for Evan as a present, but the price had been far beyond her budget back in high school. The scent had stayed with her then, something she had loved, and now it was all around this strange man who, instead of attacking her because of her pheromones, was placing his coat around her shoulders.

If he used such an expensive cologne, it meant he wasn't the Alpha of some small pack who had come for the festival. Not to mention his aura, now that she was standing so close to him, it was undeniable. She couldn't see his face, but she knew he was looking down at her from the great distance of his impossible, towering height. Goddess, he was tall, solidly built, the kind of presence that made her feel small without him having to say a word.

Viola raised her hands quickly, attempting to remove his coat from her shoulders as she bowed her head. But before she could pull it away, the man's hands pressed firmly against her shoulders, holding the coat in place.

"A thank you would go a long way, *senorita*. Leave the coat. It will help keep the unwanted away until you reach your pack," came that deep, accented voice, one that made him sound unlike any man she had ever known.

'Good, leave the coat for her and let's go and find another mate.' his wolf scoffed. 'I don't like this one.'

With his coat around her, it would mix with her scent and keep anyone who might have perceived her pheromone from coming closer, giving the illusion that she was claimed.

Knowing now that he had no intention of harming or forcing himself on her, not that big Alphas degraded themselves in such a way, he likely already had a mate, and her scent was probably nothing but an unpleasant intrusion to him. Viola began to step back out of respect, wiping her wet cheeks, but he stopped her.

Then she felt his thumb press under her chin, lifting her face just enough so he could see her in the moonlight. He turned her face from left to right as if studying it.

"What happened to your eye?" she heard him ask, a little hint of displeasure in his voice. Why did he sound displeased? she wondered, moving her chin away. Why was he standing so close? She didn't like it.

"Nothing," she murmured quietly.

"That doesn't look like nothing. Do you have a tendency to be clumsy as well as reckless and careless? Coming out without concealing your pheromones?" he drawled, his gaze fixed on her right eye, which looked as though she might soon lose her sight.

'Damn, she's not even beautiful,' his wolf scoffed. 'She's blind in one eye and far too thin. She'll die before tomorrow if you take her. Reject her right now.'

Why was he being nice? Viola wondered as she looked at him through her good eye. Alphas didn't pay attention to people like her, nor did they care enough to ask what had happened to them. And did he just call her careless? She stepped back slightly so she could look at him properly without craning her neck so much. Only then did she belatedly notice his strange eyes in the dark, silver eyes that glowed like the moon behind him, making her dizzy and lightheaded.

"I'm not careless..." she muttered, not seeing the need to tell him that the man she had once loved had struck her eye.

"What brought you out here without concealing your pheromones, then?" he asked, lifting his hand to tuck her frizzy hair behind her ear.

Viola wanted to step back again, but the man didn't seem to understand what personal space was and followed her movements, staying just a step behind whenever she moved.

Furthermore, she remained spellbound by his unusual silver eyes. She'd never known anyone with eyes like that except one person... but with her lightheadedness, she couldn't remember who it was. Where had she seen a man with silver eyes? Which of the Alphas had those eyes?

"I was running an errand for our Luna..." she whispered, though she couldn't hide the sharp edge of anger in her voice at the thought of what Leni had done.

"You don't like your Luna, do you, Mi amor?" he questioned.

"No," she said honestly, and that earned a low, quiet sound from him that might have been a laugh.

Instead of lowering his hand, she felt him move it from her ear to her cheek, his thumb pressing against her lower chapped lip, rubbing it as if to feel its dryness.

Viola knew she should step back, but, may the goddess help her, this man was the first person to communicate with her like a normal person in four long years. She didn't want to let her mind grow hopeful, yet she couldn't help but wonder... perhaps, could he be her mate?

She felt vulnerable, and yet willing to let anyone who wouldn't hurt her touch her, even hold her. She had been starved of comfort and gentleness for so long that her eyes burned from the quiet way he handled her. Was she overthinking it, or was she simply desperate to find her mate, to escape the treacherous fate she had found herself in, and to make every one of those who had hurt her pay?

Alphas were not kind to nobodies, unless that person was their mate. And this man... he wouldn't be this gentle or nice if he wasn't being controlled by a mate bond.

She has blue eyes that reflect the moon, the stranger thought, looking at them. And her lips are too chapped for my liking.

'Lick my ass, man! She's a wolfless. We don't want that,' his wolf screamed. 'You better not think about telling her she's our mate. You remember why we are here, don't you?'

'Shut up,' he muttered, pushing his wolf to the back of his mind.

Viola felt him slide his finger gently against her closed lips. She instinctively parted them, not understanding what he was doing, and her tongue brushed against his finger, dampening it. He used the slight moisture to carefully rub over her dry, cracked lips, as if trying to soothe them. The unfamiliar tenderness made her pull her head back on instinct, and she licked her lips once, unconsciously, as the dryness eased.

She didn't like to be touched, but for some reason, this person was touching her anyway. She could still taste his finger on her tongue, and it made her frown at him as he was making her feel strange in a way.

"You don't know what personal space is..."

"Not when it has to do with a mate. Where do you come from?" he asked, finding her displeasure toward him amusing. People rarely showed displeasure; the moment they knew who he was, they cowered instead. His hand fell away from her face, but his silver eyes never left hers.

A mate! Did he just say a mate? Viola's heart thudded hopefully.

"The Moonwillow pack..." she replied, feeling strangely empty without his hand on her face, and foolish for allowing a stranger to touch her that way. But then he could be her mate, and if he was—

She felt tired, utterly exhausted, and wished she could rest her head against him, the heaviness in her body weighing her down. She really wished he would be. He had said a mate.

But something about the stranger changed immediately at her words. He put distance between them at once, stepping back as if an invisible line had been drawn.

Though his face remained hidden in the shadows, his aura had shifted, turning frigid and oppressive, sending a shiver down her spine as the air around them grew suffocating.

"Keep the coat. My scent will keep the unwanted away from you until you reach your pack," he said emotionlessly, his voice stripped of all the warmth and gentleness he had been using until now. "Be careful out there, señorita. Big bad wolves eat little wolves like you."

Then he added, colder still, "And one more thing. I hope we never meet again, because if we do, I will be forced to wring your neck and kill you to break the bond. Goodbye."