

## The dark side of fate (Tamia) novel Chapter 96

~Tamia~

I left the room and headed downstairs. Linda and Avery were busy congratulating Katya, who was blushing. Katya was the first to see me since she was facing my direction.

“Luna Tamia,” She said, and I smiled at her. We were going to be sisters.

“Welcome to the family, darling,” I hugged her. She returned the hug, and I broke it and squeezed Avery’s hands, who squeezed in return.

“Katya was just telling us what made her give it up, finally,” Avery said, teasing Katya, and I raised an eyebrow at her.

“It just felt right. He... he... he was..” she was trying to find the right words.

I squeezed her shoulder gently.

“We all know the feeling. There is no need to elaborate. I am sure you two will be happy together,” I said, and she smiled.

“Oh my, there you all are,” I heard Stephanie’s cheerful voice as she approached us. I looked in her direction, and she was beaming.

“I am such a lucky woman. My sons found themselves two amazing women,” She said and turned to Katya.

“I have known you were perfect for my baby,” she said, embracing Katya, and we all laughed.

“Did you see Glenda?” she said, and we all giggled. Glenda did not look good at all when she left last night.

“Serves the bitch right. She has been trying to get her cousin in here. Putting her on Sylvester’s itinerary, busy trying to get her cousin back together with Sylvester when she should have been worried about her relationship.

Glenda thought her relationship with Dominic was certain. I was so happy to see Dominic propose to Katya in her presence. I could not help but laugh.” Stephanie said, and I could not believe what Glenda had been up to.

Not that I had an issue with Susan. Now that Sylvester and I were fated, there was nothing to worry about. Still, she would have been a serious inconvenience, and I did not want to deal with the nonsense. Good riddance.

"I am so happy, dear Avery; Marcel is over the moon. I heard him calling his family to inform them. The four of you are blessed, and I am happy to be a part of it." She said and touched my hand. I knew she wanted to speak to me privately, so we excused ourselves.

"Tamia," Stephanie said, looking at me and touching my hand.

"I am glad to see that you are capable. My son has found a true luna. One to accompany him through the difficult journey for the rest of his life.

I know you will raise a strong heir and help continue the Volkov bloodline. I am very proud of you. What you did for Sylvester cannot be quantified. You have saved our family from shame and disgrace.

My son is very kind, and those bastards have taken advantage of him repeatedly; I am glad they have met their match. I know you will deal with them.

Seeing how you played politics with those two bitches made me realise how strong you are. Whatever you need to do subsequently, please do it. Do it in my name until you are married to Sylvester.

I know you are working on many things, and William called me for consent a few minutes ago. I have instructed him to carry out your order as the lady of the north.

Please, Tamia, I know you are wise beyond your years; help my son bring peace into our lives. My son swallowed his pride and tried to maintain stability in our world, but there is war and turmoil in his life with all these hidden threats; please do all you can to expose them; I know you will succeed.

You achieved the impossible yesterday, which made me know you can," she said and sighed, looking at me seriously. It was the look of respect and adoration.

"I know what you did for him, Tamia. What you and your friends did to make those Alphas bend. Sylvester needs someone like you to balance him out. Those men are too kind. They need the three of you to balance their power. Thank you so much," she said and hugged me.

I wrapped my arms around her warmly and smiled. It was good to be welcomed, especially by a woman who doubted me and my intentions. I guess she was no longer in doubt.

"How is my grandbaby?" she asked, breaking the hug, and I giggled and touched my tiny bump.

"Growing," I said, and we laughed.

We ate breakfast, and the four of us headed to the Arena.

Everywhere was buzzing with life. People were going about their activities and watching games; it was amazing.

We went to our booth in the croquet section to watch the game.

Avery and I were playing in the evening. Linda was out, and she did not seem to care. It was funny. Linda just dumped the mallet and said she was done. She complained that it was making her sleepy. People laughed and clapped for her as she walked away.

While we watched, one of the Kappas working for Sylvester came to see me.

“Luna Volkov, you have some guests on your itinerary,” he said, and I frowned at him and then looked at Stephanie, who smiled.

“You are the lord’s mate; of course, you will have an itinerary. As long as the person’s name is on that list, it is safe to see the person, and you must see the person. As a lady of the north, you must make yourself available to Lunas from all over. Next year will be a blast for you since you will officially be the lady of the north,” she teased, and I smiled at her. I knew I was expecting Alpha Jake in the evening, but I did not know of any Luna.

“Who is it?” I asked.

“Luna Amanda Richford,” he said, naming the woman that almost ruined my life, and my stomach churned.

“What? How did that bitch get on the list?” Avery asked, fuming with anger.

“It was a humble request, and we vetted her before allowing it,” The kappa said.

“Do you know who that bitch is?” Avery said, and the kappa became worried, afraid that he had made a mistake.

Indeed he had made a mistake because Amanda shouldn’t have been allowed on the list. I knew he would lose his job and be punished severely if I made an issue of the matter, so I let it be.

“I will see her,” I said, standing and Avery exclaimed.

“Tamia!” Linda said, surprised at my words, and I smiled and nodded.

“I have to see her; besides, she can’t do anything to me,” I told them, and they relaxed.

“Link us if there is an issue,” Avery said, ready to do damage to Amanda. Both she and Linda hated the woman for what she did to me. It was no news that Leo didn’t want her, and she had lied and forced her way into my home. I honestly wondered what she wanted to tell me.

I left the booth with the kappa and went to a booth prepared for me to receive my guests.

According to my itinerary, I had three lunas waiting to see me. It was a bit weird, but I said it was okay.

Amanda arrived looking heavily pregnant with swollen eyes. I did not care if she had been crying. She wanted Leo to herself, and I let her have him. She rubbed her tummy gently and sat down. I did not know if it was an insult or just out of habit.

“Good morning, Lady Tamia,” she said, greeting me with respect, and I smiled at her in response.

“I want to thank you for what you did for Leo and me that day. I owe you my life. I wasn’t expecting that level of kindness. Thank you,” she said, and I smiled at her.

“As you can see, it all served us well. You have your fated now, and I am out of your lives,” I said, and she bowed her head in shame.

“I am sorry. I did a lot of things that I am not proud of. I did not know it would end up like this. I lied against Leo to get into your home, but I swear it wasn’t deliberate. My father put me up to it; it was either that, or he would have found another way; knowing how ruthless he was, I had to back the story he told to the alphas. Leo and I only made out, and he wanted to reject me. He tried to reject me so many times..” she said, and I did not want to hear the rest.

Leo was a weak man. That was why it was difficult. There was no way she could stop him if he really wanted to.

“Can we not talk about Leo’s supposed rejection? You aren’t the only luna on my list, you know,” I cut her abruptly, and she chuckled.

“Luna...” she said, “I am not his luna. He refused to marry me. I just put it there, so they will let me see you. Leo has vowed never to replace you. Your room has been empty. He sleeps there sometimes,” she said. It touched me, but he made his bed.

“What do you want from me, Amanda?” I asked her, and she wiped away her tears.

“Please, I need Leo to move on. He doesn’t love me. Black is doing all he can, but Leo keeps holding back. He is riddled with guilt. Maybe you can talk to him and give him closure,” she said in tears.

“Please, Luna Tamia. I am begging you. He needs your permission to move on. He rarely eats and rarely sleeps. He is an empty shell of the man he used to be. Please, I need your help. You have been his friend for a long time; you have known him for a while. I know he will listen to you. I am not asking him to love me, but I want him to live. I want him to eat, sleep and find a new reason to press on. Please, he is driving himself to an early grave, and only you can help him. I am begging you,” she said and was about to kneel when I stopped her. Amanda was desperate; I could see it in her eyes. She wanted Leo to move on with her. I did not want her working herself up and going into labour in my booth, so I decided to pacify her.

“I will speak to my mate to allow me to speak to Leo. I will try my best,” I told her, and she burst into tears.

“Thank you, Luna Tamia. Thank you so much. Words cannot express my gratitude,” she said and got up.

Her time was up because she requested only ten minutes. She was supposed to be a VIP because she was mated to the leader of the east, but Leo had refused to give her my former office.

I will talk to him; maybe when he knows certain things, he will move on. The woman is desperate and helpless. One thing that caught my attention is that Ramsey made her lie and threatened to do worse if she did not support his lie. Meaning he wanted Amanda in our home for a reason.

I did not know whether Amanda was a pawn or an unwilling accomplice.

I saw the other two Lunas who only wanted to invite my friends and me to their homes.

Remembering what happened to me in Brighton, I told them I would think about it. I could forgive Iris for bringing me poison when I did not know I was pregnant; now, I had to be careful.

I returned to our booth at the croquet pitch, but the morning game was over by then, so we had to move to our main booth to while away time.

Avery and Linda wanted to know how the meeting with Amanda went, so I told them everything on our way to the booth. Avery laughed while Linda was irritated.

“Boohoo, she would lay on her bed of thorns; Tamia, she made it,” Linda said, and we all laughed; even Stephanie joined this time. Other than Katya, all four of us had been burned by our husbands’ fated at one point, so they all understood.

We got to our booth, which was filled with gifts and cards. To my surprise, they were all addressed to me.

"Kind-hearted Lady of the north," One read, and I picked up the other, but Stephanie stopped me.

"Don't just open things because they are addressed to you. You will be a lady soon; believe me or not, you have enemies. There is the staff that will open it to be sure it is not harmful before you touch it," she said, and I saw her signal some people to take the things away.

One of the cards caught my eye; it was a simple card with a white tulip taped to it.

"This one looks harmless, Stephanie. May I," I said, reaching for it.

I had picked it up before she spoke, and I opened it.

The content was appalling. The words were cut out from magazines and papers.

"You were not meant to be involved, Luna. But it seems to move him, you have to be moved; watch your back because we are coming for you," it read, and I was in shock.

Stephanie saw it and collected the card from me. There was another with a red rose, and I picked it up.

"A traitor like you deserves to die. How can you fall for the very man that laid waste to the lives of your people? Have you no shame? Or did you plan it all along? Watch you back, Luna, because we are coming for you," it read, and I began to search through the cards.

I found six altogether, and none had anything pleasant.

I tried to pick a scent, but the flower taped to it covered the scent it might have had. It was sent meticulously.

Someone or some people were not happy about what happened at the hearing, and they knew I helped out, but how?

"Calm down, Tamia, you are sweating. I need you to be calm for the baby's sake," Stephanie said, and I did not know what to do. How could I be calm when I had somehow become a target in a game I did not know who the players were?

~Tamia~

I could not believe what had just happened. I have heard of these notes and how the owners used them to scare people into doing what they wanted. Whoever was running this show had suddenly become desperate.

I held on to the cards.

They had no instructions, just warnings and threats, so it was either the person or people who sent them wanted me to back off from whatever they believed I was involved in or headed, or they simply wanted to scare and destabilise me.

They had succeeded in destabilising me but not scaring me. If anything, I was more curious and motivated.

I wondered who I might have touched for them to do this.

Maybe Liam, Gezel or Amanda. It was unclear unless Lily somehow found a way to alert Gezel.

The problem with that theory was that Lily was being watched, and she did not know it. I needed to start thinking of everyone as 'smart'.

"Dear," Stephanie said, sounding worried, and I smiled at her.

"Your hands are shaking, Tamia. It is okay to be scared," Stephanie said, and I looked at my trembling hands.

I shook my head and tried to be stable, but I could not stop my hands from shaking.

"It is wrong for the lord's mate to show weakness," I told her, and I could feel the tears threatening to fall.

I battled them.

I wasn't afraid, really; I was angry. Angry that whoever it is felt it was okay to do this shit.

I was done playing games. I needed to pick Gezel up soon, but I would pacify myself with whatever Liam would divulge.

"We need to move to the estate now," I said to Stephanie, and she frowned.

"Really?" Linda said, sounding excited.

"I have a lovely dress I would like to wear tomorrow that I forgot to bring. I also want to do something for Sylvester. See it as an early wedding gift," I said, and Linda frowned. Then realisation dawned on her, and she smiled.

"I really miss my room there too." She said, and I nodded.

It was paramount that we act normal.

“Meanwhile, send these cards to the authorities so they can figure out the sender,” I said and handed the cards to the Kappa in the booth.

I knew I was being watched by the sender or by their scouts. I needed to take immediate action for them to follow or report to their master or masters.

If I went to the mansion without doing something about the cards and threats, they would know I had something important there. But by dealing with the cards’ issue immediately, they will not suspect anything at the mansion.

“Green-eyes, are you okay?” I heard Sylvester’s voice in my head, and I looked at Stephanie, who looked away.

“Why did you tell him? It will destabilise him,” I said to her, a bit annoyed.

“Yes, darling. I am fine,” I replied.

“I am on my way to you now. I have cancelled my itinerary for the day. Please be calm. Knight senses your anxiety,” he said, and I looked at my hands, which were still trembling and realised I needed to bring it under control.

Soon, Sylvester, Theodore and Marcel arrived, and Sylvester held me close to him.

He collected the cards from the Kappa and went through them. Then he handed it to Marcel.

I really did not want Sylvester to read the cards. Some had death threats and insults in them.

He was mad by the time he was through with them.

“Do you want to go home?” he asked, and I looked at him.

“I want to sleep in our bed at the Estate,” I told him, and he nodded without question.

“Anything you want. I have told Alpha Jake to meet us there so we can go through the photos,” he said, and I shook my head immediately.

This whole card thing had made me forget that Alpha Jake had come to Lucland specifically because of that.

Could it be that someone did not want my meeting with the alpha to hold?

“Have him escorted here so he can identify the person that led the attack on his pack. Oddly, these people would send these cards when Jake arrived. He is here to show me

the enforcer that led the attack on his people. Could it be possible that it is a big clue, and they want to destabilise us?" I asked, and Sylvester was silent.

Then he took out his phone and called alpha Jake.

"Brighton, meet me in my main booth now..." I heard him say, and then he paused.

"Fantastic. Have Corrigan and Albert escort you here. It is an order," Sylvester said and hung up. I frowned at him, wondering if I heard him right.

"Corrigan?" I said, and he nodded.

"He said he was with Devin and Leo, so I said they should come too. This thing is bigger than the north. Whoever is doing this is trying to disrupt the natural order, divide us and emerge as ruler. Leo is peaceful, and Devin wants the south to be left out of politics. There is no way they have a hand in this. These people have a wide network. It is time we expand ours." He said and looked into my eyes. I could see fear in them, and I knew it got to him this time.

"It has hit home for me. Anyone with the effrontery to threaten my mate and unborn child has crossed the line. I can no longer be lenient about this, Tamia. I will swallow my pride and work with those two to get to the bottom of the matter," He said, and I could see the determination in his eyes and his fear. So I rested my forehead against his and let him breathe in my scent.

"I am here, darling," I linked him, reminding him I was okay and he should relax.

He held me close. He relaxed. I looked around and saw more kappas surround our booth.

"I want to question Liam tonight," I linked Sylvester.

"What about the mother? Is Levi going to arrest her now?" He asked, and I nodded.

"Her too. I want to know what's going on," I said, and he kissed my neck.

Just then, I smelled Leo, and I looked in his direction.

He was walking towards our booth with Devin and Jake in tow.

I did not know how I would feel about seeing Devin again after what transpired between us in Brighton.

They arrived and greeted Sylvester respectfully. They respected his office. I could see Devin's difficulty, but Sylvester was lord, and he was on his turf.

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Sylvester, Marcel, Theodore, Devin and Leo decided to take a walk. I could see the tension between the men, and I hoped they would set aside their differences and make something of this.

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“You never invited me to that party,” He said, and I smiled at him.

I indeed promised that I would invite him to a function in the north, but I didn’t eventually.

“A lot came up,” I said, not wanting to tell him that his children might have slipped something poisonous into my food.

“It is okay, my Lady. I have a lot of respect for what you are doing for Lord Volkov. If it wasn’t for you, I would have hated the man. Seeing he is a victim in a large conspiracy really made me feel bad about my conduct,” Jake said. I frowned at him, wondering how he had come to that conclusion so quickly.

“Your ex-husband spoke to Devin and me extensively on the matter; honestly, I feel used. I would have teamed up with Devin to take him down after what happened to my people. I am glad I did not join in. I also heard about the uprising group. Could it be possible that they are just like me, and someone is pulling all these strings to have other people do their bidding?” he said, and I frowned.

I had not thought of it that way. The truth was if Alpha Jake had gone ahead with his plan to work against Sylvester, it would have been a new kind of heat, and we would not know who to link it to.

What if all these people have a bone to pick with Sylvester? What if they feel they are doing the right thing? I also have to consider that aspect.

“Speaking to you is always insightful, Alpha Jake. It is good to have a wise older man like you around. The truth is you might have a point. I wouldn’t want to shut down that idea,” I said, and he smiled at me.

“I am sure we can figure this out, but honestly, it still comes down to that awful council. They gave the enforcer that attacked me the order to do so,” he said, and I nodded.

“I still need to know who it is so I can trace where and how he got his order,” I said, and he nodded, understanding my vantage point.

I switched on the tablet, and everyone leaned in to see what I was doing.

Sylvester was already signed in to his email, so I just searched for Kappa William’s email and opened it. The internet was fast, so the attached file downloaded quickly.

We went through the picture for almost an hour.

Jake was able to pick the faces of some of the people that attacked his pack, some of which were deceased.

I believe the attack on Brighton was their last battle.

Jake wasn’t a pushover, neither was his son or nephew and knowing the amount of rage they harboured, it was possible that they would do damage to the attackers.

We continued going through the images, and he finally pointed to the person that led the attack.

I looked at the photo, and it was the person now occupying Bryce Golubev’s former position.

His name was Enzo Mikhailov.

I did not need anyone to tell me he was related to Jacob Mikhailov, the council’s spokesman.

The Mikhailov family had just found a way to put themselves at the top of my list of suspects.

I opened Enzo's resume and saw how he quickly moved up the ranks.

I did not know if we should move in on them or if we should just arrest Enzo and question him.

"You are sure it is this man?" I asked Jake because the Mikhailovs were nobles. I did not want to create unnecessary enemies for Sylvester.

"Yes, I am. He was the one that took his time to tell me that he would spare my life because he wasn't ordered to kill me but to show me what would happen if I ever defied Lord Volkov again. I remember his face. I did not know he was a Mikhailov. If I had, I would have told you," He said, and I could see the rage in Jake's eyes.

The memory of the disgrace was still fresh in his memory. I could understand his pain. Knowing his people were sacrificed to push an agenda hurt him deeply. It would hurt me too, if I were in his shoes. No one was dispensable. This was just wicked and wrong.

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“I still need to know who it is so I can trace where and how he got his order,” I said, and he nodded, understanding my vantage point.

I switched on the tablet, and everyone leaned in to see what I was doing.

Sylvester was already signed in to his email, so I just searched for Kappa William’s email and opened it. The internet was fast, so the attached file downloaded quickly.

We went through the picture for almost an hour.

Jake was able to pick the faces of some of the people that attacked his pack, some of which were deceased.

I believe the attack on Brighton was their last battle.

Jake wasn't a pushover, neither was his son or nephew and knowing the amount of rage they harboured, it was possible that they would do damage to the attackers.

We continued going through the images, and he finally pointed to the person that led the attack.

I looked at the photo, and it was the person now occupying Bryce Golubev's former position.

His name was Enzo Mikhailov.

I did not need anyone to tell me he was related to Jacob Mikhailov, the council's spokesman.

The Mikhailov family had just found a way to put themselves at the top of my list of suspects.

I opened Enzo's resume and saw how he quickly moved up the ranks.

I did not know if we should move in on them or if we should just arrest Enzo and question him.

"You are sure it is this man?" I asked Jake because the Mikhailovs were nobles. I did not want to create unnecessary enemies for Sylvester.

"Yes, I am. He was the one that took his time to tell me that he would spare my life because he wasn't ordered to kill me but to show me what would happen if I ever defied Lord Volkov again. I remember his face. I did not know he was a Mikhailov. If I had, I would have told you," He said, and I could see the rage in Jake's eyes.

The memory of the disgrace was still fresh in his memory. I could understand his pain. Knowing his people were sacrificed to push an agenda hurt him deeply. It would hurt me too, if I were in his shoes. No one was dispensable. This was just wicked and wrong.

## The dark side of fate (Tamia) novel Chapter 98

~Sylvester~

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Wolves needed someone they could follow, or they would lead chaotic lives. Was this person or people so hungry for power that they were willing to destroy order just to get what they wanted?

Tamia knew exactly what I wanted. Being with her now made me understand the relevance of being fated. Her scent calmed me down more so than before. She knew how to help my mood; burying my nose on her neck helped me relax.

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I had to swallow my pride and ask for their help.

Seeing how Devin looked at my mate got to me. I doubt it was just the mate bond that pulled him to her.

There was nothing but longing in his eyes, and just like Leo, he too, regretted losing his opportunity.

Did it ever occur to them that fate wanted it this way? However dark and twisted it may seem, Tamia and I ended up being fated after passing through others.

In a world where it was impossible to meet a fated, I believe we were blessed to be given second chances.

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"I see you and Tamia are yet to smooth things out," I said, and he could not say a word. Then I looked at Devin.

"We were hoping you would play a sport," I said to lighten the mood, and he smiled, but his smile did not touch his eyes.

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"You have made your bad luck rub on her. She is too sweet for anyone to hate her. This is because of her association with you," Devin accused me, and his words got to me, but I kept it to myself.

"Well, I couldn't help it. She is my mate now, so I have to do what is best for her and love her the best way I can," I said, and Devin banged the table.

I did not let it affect me. I looked at him, and his eyes were misty.

"She rejected me because of you. She was my fated, and she let me go because of you. How much sacrifice can you make? You took her from Leo and made it impossible for her to love her fated. Are you happy now? You selfish prick. You had all the women at your beck and call, but you had to take my fated from me!" he said, and I was calm, knowing I needed his help. I let him vent.

"He let go of his fated for her, too, Devin, so let it go. I told you they loved each other from the onset, and she would reject you, so do not try to pin this on Lord Volkov. You had your chance, and you blew it just like me, Devin, so let it go." Leo said, sounding a bit short, and I knew Devin's words got to him.

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"Susan Sullivan. Nicolas Sullivan's niece, the captain of your polo teams," I told him, and his eyes widened.

"If I didn't know better, I would have suspected you brought my ex to disrupt my life with Tamia. But seeing that you weren't at the ball to gloat, I realised it was a coincidence, but I must thank you because you helped me get that out of the way." I said, and he still looked angry.

"She was mine, Sylvester. I would have loved her. I might not be a lord, but I would have given her my best. I spent all my years waiting for my fated. Never loving or committing to anyone, and you took her from me," he said with pain, and I realised that was why he had made himself scarce.

I sighed and bowed my head.

"It wouldn't have worked, Devin. By the time you found each other, she was already carrying my child," I said, and Leo made a fist and tried to calm himself down.

Devin was in utter shock. He had realised something.

"That was why there was no pain," Devin murmured, still in shock.

"What do you mean?" I asked him, and he bowed his head.

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"Children, they say, is a type of bond. That is why a child signifies that the bond between two wolves is permanent. She was already bonded to you by then, so it made the rejection easy," he said, and I could hear the pain in his tone.

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## The dark side of fate (Tamia) novel Chapter 99

~Sylvester~

I wondered what Vino wanted to discuss with me. The guy honestly gave me the creeps, but I knew I needed to be polite; so far, he had sided with me most of the time during the council hearings, and he had let Tamia get away with a lot. The least I could do was hear him out.

“Hey,” I linked Marcel and Theodore.

"The meeting is over with Leo and Devin, and they are willing to work with us because of Tamia. Meanwhile, Vino asked to see me, so I want to see him briefly in the booth. I will join you guys soon. We will be heading for the estate today. Cancel all our participation. I think we have played enough," I said, and they agreed. It would have been fun to unwind and win a cup before our wedding, but there was just too much to do, and the time was very little.

"Meet me in my meeting booth," I linked Vino, returning to where I had the meeting with Leo and Devin.

I went there and sat down to wait for Vino. He arrived looking dirty in his football jersey. I did not know he was playing football. The guy was just invisible to me. I needed to make more effort to know what my council members were up to.

He greeted me with respect, and I smiled at him.

"Vino, how may I be of service?" I asked him, and he smiled and made himself comfortable.

"How are you, your eminence?" he asked, and I chuckled.

"Please call me Sylvester. We aren't in the council hall," I said, and he smiled.

"It is an honour to call you by your name," the man said, and he was creepy.

Sometimes I wonder why he admired me. I had done nothing. Other than succeeding my father, I had done nothing, yet he treated me like his idol. It was weird, but there were strange people like that, and Vino happened to be one of those people.

"So?" I asked Vino getting impatient.

"I am really in a hurry," I said nicely, and his smile dropped.

"if I may?" he said, and I knew he was asking to speak freely, so I nodded and told him to go ahead.

"Too much has been happening lately, and I do not know if we need to be worried," he said, and I frowned at him.

"The petition these alphas raised would affect all of us. I am glad they changed their minds," he said, and I frowned at him.

"You were likely to benefit from it the most," I pointed out since he was the head of the council. He bared his neck immediately, a sign of submission and respect.

“That is why I want to see you. I knew I would be the prime suspect, and seeing how people have been set up lately, I believe whoever is doing this is trying to set me up. Please, Sylvester. I have no hand in this. Think of it like this, if they pass it, you, Marcel or Theodore, will likely become head of the council. Please. I do not want you not to distrust me. I saw the way you and everyone looked at me after the hearing. It got to me. I have no hand in this, Sylvester,” he said, sounding scared, and I smiled at him.

“Do not write yourself off, Vino. All the culprit has to do is find a reason to disqualify the three of us, and you have a seat,” I said, and he looked even more worried, so I decided to help him relax.

“Do not worry, Vino. I do not think you are behind it. The Alphas must have just wanted some autonomy and did not think it through before raising the petition. Glad they did not do damage in the process,” I said, and Vino smiled, looking a bit relaxed.

“I am glad you see it that way. I was worried that I was being set up like Sir Dominic,” he said, and I laughed and stood up.

“Would that be all?” I asked him, and he nodded.

I left him in the booth and walked away quickly.

I didn't want to get into conversations with him, and I did not want him to invite me to anything he was doing at the Lawrence Mansion in Lucland. I walked briskly until I got to my Primary booth, where Tamia was. Jake was still with them, and they all seemed to be discussing something serious.

My mother looked furious, and I knew they had found something. I cleared my throat, and Tamia looked at me.

” Enzo Mikhailov,” she said, and I frowned at her;

“He was the enforcer that led the attack and left a message claiming he was from you,” She said.

I remembered Jacob's role and wondered what the Mikhailovs had against me to work against me like this.

I tried to compose myself because I did not want whoever sent those cards to suspect something was off. We needed to act as normal as possible, but I was desperate to get Tamia away from the arena.

“Shall we?” I said aloud.

“Please, Alpha Jake, stay with us for a few days in The estate before you return home. It is my way of apologising to you,” I told the alpha, and the look in his eyes showed he understood what I was doing.

“With gratitude, my Lord. I wasn’t able to identify the person. You know how war is. The memory is a blur,” he said, and I nodded, telling him it was okay.

“It was simple logic. Whoever sent those cards wanted something, so they would likely listen to our conversation and watch our actions after seeing them.

I linked Marcel and Theo and headed to the car park to enter our vehicles.

I left Dominic and Katya at the arena because one of us had to present medals to the swimming teams. He would handle all my official duties concerning the games while I remained at the estate, investigating the issues we were facing.

The ride was smooth, and I was relaxed, knowing I had gained two powerful unlikely allies. I knew Tamia would be curious to know how the meeting went with Leo and Devin.

It would be discussed as Pillow talk, especially Leo. I was worried for the man; he seemed to be hanging on a thread mentally.

We arrived at the estate, and everyone rushed to their wings and rooms. My mother handled Alpha Jake’s reservations, and they seemed to be friendly with each other, so I knew he was in good hands.

The moment Tamia and I entered the room, I pinned her against the wall and kissed her to calm the stormy sea of fear inside me. She returned the kiss with the same passion.

“Thank you,” I said and broke away from her.

“How did your meeting go?” She asked, and I looked at her.

“They are willing to work with us. Devin thinks Amanda might be working for her father. He has the same misgivings about Ramsey,” I said, avoiding talking about Leo.

Even though she loved me, I knew Tamia cared about Leo and knowing he was suffering would affect her mood. I would still tell her when we decide to rest.

“Kappa Levi has arrested Amy Zakharov, and they are on their way. The irony is her husband was the one that gave her up.” Marcel linked me, and I was happy we had some people in custody.

Hopefully, it won’t lead to a dead end this time around. I needed to catch someone and end this nonsense once and for all.

"Vino came to see me," I told Tamia while she was taking off her clothes to slip into something comfortable. She turned to look at me and frowned.

"Why?" She asked, and I sighed.

"He said the petitions the alphas raised made him look suspicious, and he came to tell me he had no hand in it. He was genuinely afraid I would suspect him. He believed someone was trying to set him up like they did Dominic," I said, and Tamia laughed.

"Is he stupid or what?" she said, and I wondered why she would say that.

"The uprising has no reason to set him up. Dominic was set up to cover the track of the people that attacked Brighton. Why would they want to set Vino up," she asked, slipping out of her undergarments, and I realised she had very valid points.

Vino was really stupid.

There was no reason for them to set him up unless they wanted me to waste my time investigating him and creating a problem between us.

"I think they have a motive, Tamia," I said, and she looked at me standing naked. Her body was gorgeous, and I was trying hard to focus on my thought and not drool.

"If I suspect him, I will investigate him, and we will have problems. Look at it like this, so far, Vino has somehow, in his way, given us liberty in those hearings.

With him working against us, those hearings would be more difficult. It would be easy to recruit him to their side if I start suspecting and tormenting him," I said, and she giggled.

"You are thinking too hard about this. The people who sent me cards today do not seem like they were thinking in that direction, Sylvester.

If anything, they seem desperate and boxed in.

He has no relevance in all this," she said, and I did not want to argue with her.

"I guess you are right. The things that have happened have put me in a position where I overthink things." I said, and she came to me and dropped to her knees. I knew what she wanted to do, and I welcomed it.

"Let me help you take the edge off," she said, and all I could do was a growl in response.

We spent a few hours in our bedroom, making love, and soon it was evening.

Tamia and I showered together and left for the dining room to have dinner. Then we were to question Liam on everything he knew about the organisation he was working for. I was relaxed after making love to my mate, and I looked forward to learning what was happening from Liam's angle.

We ate dinner in silence, and the moment we were done.

Marcel, Theodore and I went to question Liam. Tamia wanted to question him, but we decided we would go first, and then the women would go after. That way, we would likely get more from him than if all six of us were present.

Marcel, Theodore and I headed to the interrogation room in the dungeons of the estate, and I was feeling a bit impatient.

We had been walking blind for a while now, and answers were needed to help us through the situation.

Liam was cuffed with silver and sat on a chair with his cuffed hands resting on the table. It was also clear that he had been crying. He was only seventeen and bound to crack sooner than an adult.

I looked at the boy and smiled at him.

"I know you are a minor, Liam Zakharov," I said, and he widened his eyes.

"I have discussed this with your father, and I am surprised that the son of someone as prestigious as Alpha Christian Zakharov would get involved with a terrorist group.

I will go easy on you if you tell me the truth. Still, if you don't, I will treat you like an adult and make sure you are dealt with mercilessly until you beg for death. Still, it will never come because those dealing with you would enjoy your suffering.

I am sure you would not want that, so I implore you, to be honest, and say everything precisely as it is.

Do you think you can do that, or would you need the motivation to come from our enforcers?" I asked, and he shook his head, tears streaming down his face.

"I will speak, your eminence. I will tell you everything. Please do not hurt me. I made a mistake; please do not hurt me," he said, crying, and my heart broke that someone would do this to such a young man with a promising future. As things were, he would be lucky to keep his life because he had committed treason. Even though I was willing to spare his life, he would never succeed in his father and would never be recognised as a Zakharov.

These people had ruined his life, and I doubted they cared. He was just another means to an end.

## The dark side of fate (Tamia) novel Chapter 100

~Sylvester~

Liam looked very afraid, staring at me from the table. His tears flowed freely, and I did not know how to make him comfortable.

Looking at him now, I could see his father's features. I cleared my throat and asked that they bring him some juice.

"Have they been feeding you?" I asked him, and he nodded reluctantly.

I figured he might not have been eating. I felt sorry for him.

I could not be as cruel as I intended to be, knowing his age and the fact that he might be misguided.

"How about we start from the top," I told him and narrowed my eyes, looking at him.

"I know little of the back story and how you pretended to be kidnapped so your father would do their bidding. I know everything, so I would advise you to be honest. The offence you have committed is treason, and I am sure you are a smart young man to know the repercussions of your crime. If you tell me the truth and it yields something, I will waive the death penalty and life imprisonment. You are too young for it. Do not let this matter escalate beyond this room. I will quietly send you home to your father if you tell me the truth, young man. Today some people threatened my mate, so I am not feeling kind," I told him. He nodded quickly and swallowed.

Someone brought the juice, and they helped Liam take a sip. I could see some relief in his eyes which meant they were not feeding him. Knowing he was a minor made me feel bad, and I asked Theodore to look into the prisoners' feeding.

It was wrong to starve them. Anyone in the estate's dungeons is awaiting trial and is just a suspect. It was wrong to treat them as convicted criminals.

"I am listening," I said, giving Liam the floor, and he nodded immediately.

"About two years ago, I started chatting online with a girl called Elaine. I received an email one day inviting me to download an app called Friendzone and make new friends. It wasn't in my spam box. It was in my inbox, and I wondered who must have sent it because it did not look like an ad. Being a lonely child eager to make friends, I ignored all the warning signs and downloaded this app. It was called Friendzone. I would later find out that the app was private and it belonged to an organisation. After downloading the

app, I was asked to register my real name and upload my ID to start making friends. As eager as I was, I wasn't stupid, so I joined in as a guest with just my first name and nothing more.

I received a lot of friend requests, and I was excited.

Unfortunately, I could only accept the request to interact with them if I was fully registered. So I went against my better judgement and registered fully on the app.

Uploading all that was required of me. My full name, ID, phone number, age, address, everything. They asked for everything, and I foolishly gave it.

True to the conditions, I was verified and allowed to accept the requests; I did so and messaged everyone that sent me a friend request. There were about twenty-three altogether," He said and looked at me with shame.

"I felt I had hit the jackpot for someone that did not have any friends to having twenty-three potential friends. I felt like I wasn't a weirdo anymore, and maybe I had finally found a community that I could belong to," he said and bowed his head to show remorse.

"None responded except for Elaine. She was pretty, and she was about a year older than me. You needed to see her Alpha, she was gorgeous, and I could not believe my luck. We finally talked, and she told me all I needed to know about her. She was an orphan who lived alone in Gad and worked in a bakery. She wasn't financially buoyant, but she was getting by. I must admit I had a crush on her," he said and looked to the side.

I could see that he was relieving his experience, and I could also see that he slowly realised what might have happened to him. He was catfished.

"We got talking, and six months later, she said she had feelings for me. I did not need to overthink it. She was a huge upgrade, and I did not want to lose her. She asked and pleaded for me to find a way so we could be together and soon decided I would go to Gad," He said and chuckled painfully.

"All this while I thought I came up with the idea alone, but now I realise she put it there," he said, and I nodded.

"My father did not want me to go to Gad. He said the west wasn't safe for someone like me. You had just conquered what was left of it; they were yet to fully accept the direct rule.

He said if it was anyone else, it would be okay, but as the son of the head Alpha of the north, I might be in danger.

I thought he was being unfair, and I threw some tantrums. I told him I had gotten admission to study there, and that was where I would go to further my education.

My mother did not oppose me; she encouraged it and fought my father for it.

Eventually, he caved, and I was off to Gad.

Still, Elaine and I could not be together because my father had placed me in a hostel where they were required to put me under strict watch.

The living condition there wasn't really great, and Elaine and I would often hang out.

While we hung out, she would tell me the people's history in Gad and how your father ruined the west.

She also told me you were the reason she was orphaned because of the war you fought to conquer the rest of the west. I believed her, and soon I started following her to strange meetings.

She said it was a place people affected by the war went to heal. It was also a place for a selected few. I felt it was weird because people in Gad spoke highly of you and loved you dearly. She made me believe it was a pretence out of fear.

In this group, they had a leader called Moses. He had no last name, just Moses, and he was an eloquent speaker.

He spoke of the evils of Monarchy and how it had plagued our world. I was made to believe that other than the north, the rest of the regions lived in fear of being conquered.

I was made to believe people lost their homes, families and lives because of the monarchy.

We were made to believe that an accountable leader was what we needed to ensure the safety of our people and four regions.

They made us believe a lot of things. I honestly saw them as a hate group, but Elaine did not seem hateful.

She just seemed like someone from whom everything had been taken, and she was looking for a place to belong.

There was no crime, so soon, I opened myself up for it.

I would tell my mother what I had learned, and she would tell me not to tell my father as it could lead to trouble. I wonder why she was protecting me.

Elaine spoke to me about asking for my father's help. They somehow had a notion that the only thing that was protecting them from your wrath was the council.

They had copies of sanctions and orders you signed, which resulted in huge suffering in other regions.

The latest they had was that of the east.

You took the eastern leader's mate for yourself, and they told me you could do the same to my mother.

They said it was common practice, and every region had suffered that form of injustice.

They had documents with your signature authorising war and killings simply because people refused to agree to your requests. They made you seem like a monster, and the truth was, soon, I wasn't torn about it anymore; I believed them.

It started looking more like our world would be better if you and your officers were no longer in power and the council was the one in charge, and I felt it would be a great prospect.

One day I took a leap of faith and asked them how I could help. They said being the future heir of my family, I was already helping.

They made me feel like a child, and I wanted to prove myself badly. Moses teased me about living in a hostel under my father's watch, and they could not trust me with specific responsibilities.

Even Elaine started treating me like a child, so I decided to prove myself to her.

I called my mother and demanded that I was sixteen, and according to the laws in Gad, I was allowed to own my own place.

She did not argue with me, but my father kicked against it.

We were at it for a bit, and my mother came to Gad to see who I would share the apartment with.

She liked Elaine immediately, and finding out she was an orphan made my mother feel sorry for her. Soon my mother was able to help me move in with Elaine.

Other than kissing and watching television, we never did anything. I respected her, and she respected me too.

Soon they started giving me small responsibilities.

I would follow Moses to receive wire transfers and other stuff.

Knowing that I would be charged with that responsibility one day, Moses said I should request a false Id claiming that I would feel safe if I wasn't bearing my surname. I did as he told me, which was when my father drew the line.

I needed a parent's consent that came with my family seal for any agent to create a false Id for me because I was a minor, so my mother secretly consented, and that was how I became Liam Bricks.

One day Moses got agitated in the meeting and said you were onto the organisation, and you were coming to kill what was left of us.

I did not want anything to happen to Elaine and all her friends in the organisation, so I asked them to brainstorm and see how we could help. Moses now came up with the plan to make my father raise a petition to take you and your officers out of the office and place the council in charge. That way, you won't have the power to attack us, and everyone will be safe.

It was a good idea, except for the fact that my father had no reason to do so; unable to come up with a good cause, Elaine said we should pretend that I had been kidnapped. They should threaten to kill me and come for his family if he didn't do it.

She said if my father loved me truly, he would do it to save my life. I did not feel great about it, but I did not want to say no to Elaine. So we made a video of me in captivity begging my father to do whatever they asked if he wanted me to come home.

It was a believable video, and it was sent to my father.

My father responded and promised to do as they asked as long as they showed him proof of life every day. They agreed, and he went to work.

One day I returned home, and Elaine told me Moses was ill and that I should help receive a money transfer and wire it to a specific account.

She said the task was given to her, but she did not feel too good and needed to rest.

Wanting to please her, I did it and used my fake ID to receive the money. No one told me I wasn't to use it; in fact, Moses had implied I needed the Id for that very purpose.

I had already used it when a clerk at the bank said they usually used secret words to accept the transfer from the client.

I did not think much of it.

I wired it to the anonymous account that Elaine asked me to wire it to.

I returned home that day, only to find that she had left the apartment,” he said, and his tears fell freely. He felt used, and he knew exactly what had happened to him.