

The Ivory Queen Chapter 26

Aurora's POV

Lively chatter fills the dining room as several young omegas serve us our food. We enjoy our meal, cracking jokes and laughing at some old stories. Apparently Wesley and Oliver were friends back in high school. Wesley was a senior and Oliver was just a freshman. They used to spar with each other when Oliver first began his warrior training.

"I used to kick his a*s, three times a day, 5 days a week," Wesley boasted.

"Yeah, well you had already completed training and I was just beginning so don't give yourself too much credit," Oliver jokes, taking the final bite of his steak. "I believe I was kicking your a*s two hours ago too."

"Ha! That gash I gave you on your chest begs to differ!" Wesley laughs. "You always did leave your chest wide open. Makes it easy for someone to strike you right over your heart. I told you then and I'm telling you now, keep your chest closed."

"Hold on, let me write this down for the next time I have to spar against him," Carter teases and we roar in laughter.

As we settle back down, Kehlani grows serious and clears her throat.

"Umm well, I think we should discuss what Aurora discovered back in the infirmary," she says firmly.

Carter, Oliver, and Wesley all turn their attention to me.

"What did you discover?" Oliver says, a concerned look settling on his face.

I gulp down my water and fidget with my fingers. Oliver's face softens, noticing my discomfort, and places his hand over mine. Ease washes over me as the sparks ignite under his touch.

"I- uh. Well, ahem. I healed the wolves in the infirmary who were attacked by those rogues last week," I begin, my voice shaking. "And when I scanned the first warrior, I realized that it was not wolfsbane that was keeping her from healing herself."

“Well then what was it?” asks Wesley.

“It – uh. It was witch craft.” I say quietly.

The room falls silent as my words register in their ears.

“Witch craft?” Carter breaks the silence.

“Yeah, a witch’s poison of sorts. At least according to my wolf, anyways.”

“What else did she tell you?” Wesley asks growing interested.

“Umm, she said that it would kill them slowly if left untreated and that I could take it out but I would be in an immense amount of pain if I did,” I say softly, avoiding Oliver’s gaze. “So I did it anyway.”

Wesley watches me closely before asking, “You healed 8 wolves suffering from witch poison despite knowing the consequences to yourself?”

“I know pain,” I say calmly. “I know there’s nothing more painful than losing a loved one and those wolves have families. It was an easy choice.”

I glance at Evan, who is sitting solemnly in his chair. His glossy eyes are fixated on his plate.

“Evan-“

“I think I need some air,” he says standing up and walking out of the dining room.

I get up to follow him but Kehlani’s voice stops me.

“Let him go, Aurora,” Kehlani says quietly. “It is not easy for a gamma to watch his Luna experience that much pain on his watch. Even I had to hold back tears as I heard your cries,” she adds, wincing at the memory.

Silence consumes the following minutes, each of us lost in our own thought.

“We need to inform the other packs about the possibility of witches,” Wesley says, breaking the silence.

“I’ll send out an alert on the guard communication lines between the packs,” Carter says stepping out of the room.

“What could witches possibly want from us?” I ask.

“I don’t know. We haven’t had witches in over 50 years since the War of the Lunar eclipse and the Treaty was signed,” Oliver says, scanning his brain for possible answers.

“Well, whatever they’re planning, we need to prepare ourselves. We need to figure what type of witch or witches we’re dealing with and what it is they want exactly. We’ll have to call an emergency meeting here tonight,” Wesley says as he gets out of his seat. “I’ll make all the necessary arrangements.”

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An hour later, the Alphas once again gather for a meeting, this time in the Cerulean Sea pack house dining room. I shudder when I catch a glimpse of Alpha Miguel, Ximena and Javier entering the room, afraid their earlier outburst will be repeated. Oliver pulls me close to his seat and leans into my ear.

“You healed a child and 8 warriors today. Your father would be proud. Don’t let them take that away from you. You’re not a monster.”

I look up at Oliver and see nothing but love and adoration in his eyes. He meant every word he said and I feel my worries melt away. My mate loves me and that’s all that matters.

“Thank you,” I whisper back.

I lean forward to kiss him when I hear a low growl coming from the other side of the table, sending shivers down my spine. We turn to see Alpha Miguel baring his teeth and seething with rage.

“This meeting will not begin in her presence,” he barks at us.

Oliver’s face darkens and he jumps out of his seat. I grab his arm and attempt to pull him back but he’s too strong. He knocks me over and I yelp as I hit the ground. Realizing what he’s done, Oliver hurriedly picks me and apologizes repeatedly, caressing my face. His eyes are full of fear. He’s terrified of scaring me, but I’m not afraid of him anymore. I look him in the eyes and kiss him softly on the lips, letting him know all is forgiven.

Miguel grunts in disgust, but Kehlani and Wesley both give him a warning growl. Miguel's eyes widen in shock.

"You're defending that -that girl?" He spits through gritted teeth, motioning in my direction.

"Her name is Aurora and you will respect her while you're in my house!" Kehlani snarls.

"Wesley, what is this meaning of this?"

"I was wrong about Aurora," Wesley snaps, "She saved my son and eight of my warriors!"

"She murdered her father in cold blood."

"I know how much you treasured Emiliano," Wesley says. "And I will never forget what he did for my family, but Aurora is not a monster."

"Come on Wesley, that girl can try to act all sweet and innocent all she wants but I know exactly what she is and what she is capable of."

"You disrespect my mate again and I swear to you I will end our alliance!" Oliver roars with irritation. He pulls me close to his side and glares at the Lluvia Blanca wolves, daring them to defy him.

"You wouldn't dare," Miguel sneers, but there is clear fear in his eyes.

"Try me!"

"Enough!"

We all turn to look at the old Alpha of the Blood Moon pack, his nostrils flaring and his fist firmly on the table.

"We were gathered here for an emergency meeting," Patrick continues. "So let us begin. I do not care for your petty arguments right now."

"Agreed," Jonathan adds. He turns to me and politely motions me to take a seat. "As a future Luna, you have every right to stay. No one gets to decide whether you stay or leave other than Alpha Oliver."

The Lluvia Blanca wolves slide into their seats, completely dumbfounded by the turn of events. They have been out voted and the matter is settled.

“So Wesley, why have you called us back so urgently,” asks Patrick.

“We have gathered new Intel that pertains to the current rogue situation, and I must say, it’s quite shocking to say the least.”

The three alphas lean forward, registering every word from Wesley’s mouth.

“Explain yourself,” Patrick states.

“Well, I feel Aurora should explain this,” Wesley says, gesturing me to stand up and explain.

I freeze in my chair. Public speaking is not my forte, especially not with Miguel, Ximena, and Javier glaring daggers at me. Oliver slips my hand into his, sending sparks up my arm. My muscles relax but I’m still scared.

“Go on baby, tell ’em what you know,” he encourages me with a soft smile.

“I-I, ahem. I treated the 8 warriors today who were injured during the rogue attacks. While I was scanning the first soldier’s injuries, I realized that it was not wolfsbane that was slowing their healing... It was witch poison,” I say timidly.

Gasps erupt in the room followed by whispers. Suddenly Miguel slams his fists on the table.

“Liar!” He roars, infuriating Oliver. “I will not sit here and listen to this child lie any longer! We’re leaving and I advise the rest of you to do the same. It’s all part of some plot to destroy us. I just know it!”

Wesley tries to de-escalate the situation and blocks the entrance. “Alpha Miguel, please. Something is coming! We are all in danger!”

Miguel scoffs and looks back at the table. “The only real danger here is letting that murderous b***h here play the role of a saint and treating her like a goddamn hero. Can’t you see? She’s turning us against each other!”

Oliver begins growling uncontrollably at Miguel. I fight my fears and pull Oliver’s face down to mine. His silver eyes look at me in confusion as he rips my arms off him.

He's too far gone.

Lunging at Miguel, Oliver shifts mid leap and lands gracefully on the table, towering over Miguel. He bares his teeth, snarling incessantly at Miguel. Seething in his own rage, Miguel begins shifting when Patrick abruptly jumps on the table in his wolf form. Catching Oliver by surprise, Patrick manages to sink his canines into Oliver's left shoulder and forces him off the table. He falls with a thud and I yelp in pain as I feel the same bite on my own shoulder. I fall on my hands and knees, panting furiously as I try to control my pain.

Everyone's eyes fall on me as I scream out in agony. Oliver looks horrified at what he's caused and shifts back into his human form. Wesley hands him some shorts which he quickly slides on. He runs to my side and pulls me into his arms. The pain subsides when our skin touches.

"I-I'm sorry," Oliver whimpers. Blood oozes from his shoulder.

Patrick shifts back into his human form and his beta offers him some clothes. Oliver glares at him.

"Why the hell did you do that?" Oliver snarls.

Patrick looks at him coolly. "Because tearing Alpha Miguel to shreds would only incite a war which we cannot afford at a time like this." Patrick looks Oliver square in the eye. "I am sorry for hurting you, but seeing as you did not react to your own mate, I figured it was the best I could do to keep you from making a mistake."

"I think I can handle my own battles, Alpha Patrick," Miguel snaps. Taking Ximena by her hand, he turns to exit. "We will not remain here any longer. It's clear you've all chosen a girl over our loyalty and I will not stand by and be disrespected any longer!"

"Alpha Miguel, you're making a huge mistake. We cannot afford to – "

Javier suddenly jumps over the table as I double over in pain and groan. His eyes are pitch black. Oliver pushes me behind him and steps towards Javier in a warning stance. Javier stops just in front of him, clearly fighting his urges.

Uh oh.

"f**k," Javier groans.

“Step away,” Oliver snarls. “NOW!”

I feel two hands grab and pull me. I want to scream but quickly realize it's Kehlani. “You've got some f*****g timing, Aurora,” she chuckles with a huge smirk on her face as she leads me out of the dining room.

She gives Miguel and Ximena a quick growl as we rush past them. In the hallway, several gammas chatter amongst themselves. Evan suddenly looks up, his eyes black as night. He clenches his jaw and swallows hard before rushing out of the hallway and into the kitchen.

Kehlani leads me up the set of stairs and into an empty room on the second floor, locking the door behind her. I fall to the ground as another surge of pain pulsates through my body. My wolf is practically screaming Oliver's name and I feel an ache between my thighs.

“Stay here until Oliver comes up,” Kehlani says as she turns to leave. A grin spreads across her lips. “And don't break anything when he does!”

My cheeks heat up and my wolf moans as dirty thoughts flood my mind. Kehlani leaves and I feel the fire between my thighs intensify. Every inch of me becomes electric and hypersensitive. I ache for Oliver.

Mate, Mate, Mate!

The door bursts open and the scent of apples and honey fills the room. I jump on Oliver, pressing my lips firmly on his, eager to taste every inch of his mouth. I wrap my legs around his waist as he presses me up against the wall. I smell his arousal and his hands roam my body freely, setting me ablaze. I grind against the hard lump in his shorts and he moans. I take advantage and slide my tongue in his mouth, tasting him hungrily. He places his hands on my hips to stop my movements and pulls away. My wolf whimpers, wanting more, craving more.

“You'll be in heat for three days unless I mark you,” he whispers breathlessly. “What do you want to do?”

I look into his now ebony eyes when suddenly another surge of pain eclipses my thoughts. This is too much pain for one day and I'm exhausted.

“Mark me,” I pant. “Please!”

He hesitates so I press my lips against his and he enthusiastically responds. His lips leave mine and he places light kisses down my jaw to my neck. He carries me to the bed and lays me on my back as he climbs on top of me. I move my hair to one side to give him better access and he gently caresses the crook of my neck with his tongue. I moan as he lightly sucks on the my skin where my neck meets my shoulder. I feel his teeth graze my skin and the need increases. I hold my breath in anticipation and bury my fingers in his hair. His sharp teeth pierce my flesh and I gasp in pain. After a few seconds, my mind goes numb with pleasure. I arch my back and moan as waves of ecstasy wash over me. He gently sucks on my neck, setting me on fire. His tongues seals the wound and I'm left a panting mess. He lays his forehead on mine as we catch our breaths.

"Te amo, Aurora," he murmurs.

I cup his face with my hands and give his nose a quick peck. "Je t'aime, Olivier."

He stares at me with shock before the biggest smile stretches across his face. "You just said you love me."

I nod happily and crash my lips against his. "I love you, Olivier," I whisper. "My little French snob."

The Ivory Queen Chapter 27

Aurora's POV

Last night, during my heat, Lluvia Blanca pulled out of the alliance with River Moon and the rest of the packs. Thanks to me, the Alphas now had to deal with the loss of a powerful ally, not to mention handle the repercussions of dismantling a 50 year old alliance. After Lluvia Blanca left, witches became an afterthought in the meeting, with the focus shifting to the redrafting of the alliance.

Oliver has been dealing with lawyers all morning, trying to minimize the damage of losing Lluvia Blanca as a business partner and pack ally. This unfortunately also means Adeline is with him as she controls Lune de Minuit's shares of the company.

I sigh with irritation at the thought of the two of them together. I trust Oliver, however, and focus my attention on another important matter. I'm in the study

with Rio, staring at the black book sitting on the shelf. I haven't tried to open it since the day Evan and I went to the botanical gardens. I grab the book and take a seat at Oliver's desk. My thoughts take me back to the day at the creek, when I made the vines snap Andrew's neck and killed him. The same vines that sealed the book in my hand. I once again examine the gold lock, staring at the rowan tree sitting neatly in the center.

Just relax, Reyna says. You already know what to do.

I nod my head and take a deep breath. I place my fingers on the edges of the lock and concentrate on the vines. I feel my energy flow through them and attempt to twist the lock counter clockwise while visualizing the vines receding back into the lock. To my amazement, the lock actually budes, moving slowly to the left while the vines retract into the lock. I keep twisting until the lock stops turning and the vines sit on top of the cover of the book. My wolf howls in excitement and I gasp in shock.

How the hell did I just do that?

I told you. We're not a silver wolf, Reyna chuckles.

Then what are we? I ask.

Read and you'll find out.

My hands shake as I flip the cover. The first page contains an image of twin wolves sitting with their backs touching. Their fur is pure white, but it's their eyes that catch my attention. Each wolf has both a pink and violet colored eye. I've never seen a werewolf possess heterochromia, much less with such odd colors. One wolf wears a beautiful gold sun medallion while the other wears a silver moon medallion. The medallions are encrusted with beautiful pink and purple gem stones.

I turn the page and read the title of the first chapter, The Children of the Moon and of the Sun. I stare at it in confusion.

What the hell does that even mean?

My thoughts are interrupted as Evan wanders in with his hands in his pocket. He looks at the book in my hands and his eyes widen.

“You opened it!” he says excitedly, rushing to the desk to get a look for himself. “How did you manage to get it unlocked?”

My wolf warns me not to tell him, so I just smile and shrug. Evan raises his eyebrow and raises his hands in surrender.

“Fine don’t tell me,” he teases. “So what’s it say?” He turns the book towards him and starts flipping through it. A frown forms on his lips. “Oh damn,” he says looking back at me. “I’m sorry, Aurora. That must be really frustrating.”

I stare at him in confusion. “What?”

“I mean its blank. There’s nothing on the pages. I guess your wolf was wrong about it having the answers to your questions,” he shrugs.

He can’t see the words?

The secrets in this book are for our kind only. You must never share its contents with anyone else.

Why not?

It’s not safe.

“Umm hello? Earth to Aurora,” Evan says as he waves his hand before my eyes.

I blink several times before closing the book. “Sorry, I was talking to my wolf. Umm... did you need something?” I ask.

“Oh no, we finished our game, so the guys just went to the training grounds,” he says.

“Why didn’t you go with them?”

He gives me a look that questions my intelligence. “You do realize I am your guardian, right?”

“Right, but you are not my slave, Evan. You can go with them,” I say.

He opens his mouth to protest but I interrupt him.

“Evan, I’m in the pack house,” I snap as I stand up and place my hands on his shoulders. “Go beat someone up. I promise I won’t leave the house.”

He hesitates. I give him a stern look and he sighs, giving in. He turns to leave before giving me one last look. I narrow my eyes and shoo him away.

Turning my full attention back to the book, I begin to read the first chapter.

While all werewolves are the creation of the Moon Goddess herself, Silver wolves were her first and most precious creation and are often referred to as the Children of the Moon. Apart from being significantly stronger than the average werewolf, silver wolves are gifted with special powers. The list of gifts varies but each silver wolf bears only one ability. Being the favored creations of the Moon Goddess, silver wolves are of noble blood and therefore cannot be commanded by a normal Alpha.

The Silver wolves, however, are not the Moon Goddess’ only special creation. During the creation of the werewolves, the Sun God bestowed upon the Moon Goddess a vial of light which she used to create a powerful race of werewolves: the Gold wolves. Born with golden fur as a tribute to the Sun, these wolves can each control an element: Air, Water, Earth, or Fire. Gold wolves are of Royal blood due to their creation stemming from both the moon and sun and typically rule over expansive regions and multiple packs. They can command both silver wolves and regular wolves, but cannot command each other.

A thought pops into my head.

Am I a gold wolf?

Nope. Reyna says. Keep reading.

The chapter goes on to describe the history and power of the Gold and Silver werewolves. I’m annoyed. If I’m not a silver or a gold wolf, then what the hell am I? My growling stomach interrupts my reading. I look at the clock and see that it’s only a little past 2 pm.

Damn it, it’s too early for dinner.

I close the book and lock it. The sound of my chair sliding across the floor wakes Rio up from his nap and he quickly jumps up in excitement.

“Come on boy, let’s go get a snack!”

We run down to the kitchen and find it vacant. I search the cabinets and grab a hot chocolate mix and fix myself a cup. In the bread box, I find my personal stash of Mexican breads and select a pink concha. Rio starts barking incessantly so I follow his gaze behind me. Three girls stand near the exit glaring at me. My stomach drops as I instantly recognize them as Erin’s friends: Leila, Hannah, and Laura. I give them a nervous smile and lower my gaze to avoid their hate filled eyes. I grab my hot chocolate and concha and move towards the exit but one of the girls moves in my way.

“Umm, excuse me,” I whimper, dread settling in the pit of my stomach.

Leila shoves me with her shoulder, catching me off guard and I fall on the ground. My mug shatters and the hot liquid spills all over me.

“So this is our Luna?” Leila spits as I fumble with the ceramic shards.

“Pathetic. And to think Alpha Oliver lost the Lluvia Blanca alliance over this witch,” snickers Hannah.

My eyes burn with tears as I continue to nervously pick up the shards. I cut my finger and let out a small whimper. Rio starts barking at the girls until Hannah steps forward and kicks him in the stomach, causing him to yelp.

“No, please don’t hurt him. He’s just a puppy,” I plead.

I try to crawl towards him but Laura stops me by placing her boot over my left hand. She applies pressure and I scream as she crushes my fingers, the ceramic debris cutting into my flesh. When she’s done, she squats down to my eye level and yanks me by my hair.

“Thanks to you, the borders between Lluvia Blanca and River Moon are closed,” she snarls. “I’ve only lived here for less than a week with my mate and now I can’t even visit my family back at Lluvia Blanca, you f*****g b***h!”

She slaps me across the face, splitting my lip. She stands back up, and motions for her friends to leave.

“No importa quien seas ahora, siempre seras una mierda {It doesn’t matter who you are now, you’ll always be shit},” she calls out as they all exit, leaving me to cry on the kitchen floor.

I try to stifle my sobs as I pick up Rio in my arms. I examine his tiny stomach and see no bruising or cuts. He licks my face, assuring me he's not injured, and I put him back down. With my good hand, I clean up the shards of ceramic and wipe down the kitchen floor. I wash my cuts under the kitchen sink and realize my middle and index finger are broken. I find the first aid kit and dress my cuts. Taking some popsicle sticks from the cupboard, I make two makeshift finger splints.

Upstairs, I quickly change out of my stained clothes and into my PJ's before crawling into bed with Rio.

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TRIGGER WARNING: Suicidal thoughts

I've been in bed for a while, shaking with fear. For five years, my own family tortured me while my pack took out their frustrations on me. I had grown used to their hate. Now, I was the soon to be Luna of the River Moon pack and yet here I was again being belittled and abused. It seems no matter where I go, I would always be nothing but a waste of space.

I hear Evan burst through the door and rush to my side. I bury my face in my pillow, ashamed to meet his eyes. Rio jumps up immediately, eager to greet him.

"Oliver called and said you were in pain. What happened?" he asks, his voice strained with concern.

My mate is always worrying about me. Why can't I just be good and not cause trouble for him?

I don't answer. Evan climbs onto the bed to reach me and I panic, scrambling off the bed and running to the bathroom. I lock the door behind me.

"Aurora, open the door! Hey! Open up! Let's talk," he shouts, pounding on the door.

I ignore his pleas, searching for the scalpel I hid in my drawer. Tears well up in my eyes when I find it, countless painful memories flooding my mind. My hand trembles as I place it against my wrist. Angry tears continue flowing down my face and I take a deep breath.

Aurora, don't. Reyna says with great sadness.

Just one more time. Please, I just need one more...

More tears flow down my face as I try to concentrate. I steady my hand and press the blade down a little harder, still not breaking the skin.

Think of Oliver, she pleads.

I freeze in place and let out small scream of frustration. Oliver would be crushed if he saw a new cut on my wrist. Completely ashamed of myself, I tuck the scalpel back into the cloth and stuff it into the drawer. I climb into the bathtub, pulling my knees to my chest and sob so hard, my entire body shakes. Evan continues pounding on the door, his anger growing with every passing second. The door flies off its hinges, colliding with the floor as he bursts in.

"Aurora!" he shouts, trying to grab me.

I slap his arms away from me, but cry out in pain as I remember my broken fingers. Evan grabs me by the wrists, forcing me to stop. He sees my bloodied hand and pants with rage.

"What happened?" he snarls. "Who did this?" he says lifting up my injured hand.

I shake my head furiously, refusing to give an answer.

"Aurora?"

"Don't touch me!" I cry. I yank my wrists from his grip and bury my face in my knees. Rio growls at Evan, warning him to back off.

"Aurora who-"

"It doesn't matter! Just leave me alone! I hate it here!" I scream. "You should have just let me die. Why didn't you just let me die?"

Evan's face flushes with fury. "How could you say that? We care about you! We love y-"

"Just get out! Get out!" I shout, shoving him with my good arm.

“No! I won’t. I won’t leave you like this! Aurora talk to me. Please talk to me,” he pleads, grabbing my wrists to stop me from shoving him.

“Don’t touch me! Stop touching me!” I yell at him, pulling my arms back.

A look of hurt and shock washes over his face as he stares back at me. I slump back in the bathtub, quietly sobbing. I’m so tired, I just want to sleep. I curl up on the tub floor as Rio hops in the tub and wedges himself against my body. Evan pulls out his phone to dial Oliver, asking him to come immediately.

“It’s going to be ok, Aurora. Oliver is coming,” he says gently. He sits down quietly with his back against the bathtub. We remain silent as we wait for Oliver.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 28

Oliver’s POV

I’ve been in back to back meetings with lawyers and business executives all morning. I gave orders to our guards that Lluvia Blanca wolves are no longer allowed on our territories and closed the borders between the two packs. Enforcing the split between us is going to be difficult. For 50 years, we have relied and fought alongside each other. We have mated with each other. My own Luna was a Lluvia Blanca wolf and while Aurora’s family is vile in every sense of the word, I’m sure the split will take its toll on her. But there’s nothing I can do at this point. Lluvia Blanca refuses to respect her as my Luna and I will not stand for that. She is Mine.

As I continue signing documents and overseeing transfers, Adeline walks in.

“Oli?”

I don’t answer, focusing on my work.

“Oli, is she really worth all this trouble? We just lost a major business partner. Wake up! We can’t do this every time someone-“

“Aurora is my mate. No one has the right to ask her to step down from her rightful place as my Luna.”

“So you would willingly put our packs in financially stress? That’s not a leader. That’s not the Oli I know.”

“For the last time, stop calling me that!” I snap, my anger making her take a step back.

She smooths her hair and promptly walks towards the door. “You will be the downfall of this pack,” she mutters as she slams the door behind her.

I sigh in relief as she leaves. Little does that b***h know I already made an agreement with Wesley last night. He will be buying the shares that Lluvia Blanca releases and the Cerulean Sea Pack will become our greatest allies.

A sense of dread takes over my thoughts and I feel Michael getting agitated.

What’s wrong? I ask.

Aurora needs us.

A burning sensation radiates from my fingers and across my palms. The pain intensifies around my middle finger before it stops abruptly. Aurora must be in trouble. I call Evan to go check on her while I gather my things to leave.

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Ten minutes into my drive home, I get a call from Evan telling me to come home quickly. I pick up the speed and arrive at the house. I run to our bedroom, fear rising inside me. When I walk into the bathroom, the door is lying on the floor. Evan is sitting in front of the bathtub, his eyes filled with overwhelming sadness. He gets up and pats me on the shoulder.

“She needs you,” he says as he exits.

I make my way to the bathtub and see Aurora curled up with Rio in her arms. My heart sinks as I notice her eyes are puffy from crying. She looks so broken. I get on knees and rest my head on the tub, looking down at her. She doesn’t move and just stares into empty space. I listen to her breathe for a moment, watching her chest rise and fall. Rio jumps out of her arms to greet me. His eyes are sad too.

“Aurora?” I finally say. “Baby what-“

“Go away,” she whimpers, her voice soft and weak. Fresh tears well up in her eyes which she quickly wipes away.

“No!” I say forcefully, my voice causing her to jump a little.

She looks at me with those incredible golden eyes, pursing her lips. When she finally speaks, her voice shakes.

“I’m tired,” she whispers. “I just want to sleep. I don’t want to be here anymore.”

She bursts into tears, unable to contain her pain any longer. I climb into the tub and pull her into my arms. She protests, pushing her arms against my chest and screaming, but I refuse to let her go.

“Don’t say that. Please don’t say that. I-” my voice breaks. I couldn’t bear the thought of losing her. “I love you.”

She finally gives in, burying her head in my chest and sobbing. I hold her tighter. After a few seconds, I cup her face in my hands, forcing her to look at me.

“Why do you want me?” she asks. “I’m nothing. I don’t matter!”

“You matter to me!” I snap. “You matter to me more than you’ll ever know!”

“Why? A-All I’ve done is-is cause trouble for you!” She hiccups. “First with your parents, then with Erin and the rest of the pack. Wesley couldn’t stand me, and now Lluvia Blanca wants to leave the alliance! I’m not worth it!”

“Baby look at me. You are worth so much more than you give yourself credit for. You are the kindest person I know. You didn’t have to help Kehlani and her baby, but you did it out of the goodness of your heart. You were so brave for facing your family and going to help your sorry excuse of a sister. You are selfless. You saved 8 perfect strangers despite knowing the toll it would take on you. And you make me smile every time I look at you. You’re so stubborn and-and silly. You’re kind and gentle. And my goddess you’re so beautiful,” I murmur softly.

Her eyes well up with tears so I quickly kiss them all away. She reaches for my cheek with her hand and winces, before retreating her hand back. It’s too late, however. I gently grab her wrist, careful not to hurt her, and pull it up to my face to examine her hand. Michael growls furiously, trying to take control.

“Who did this?” I ask, attempting to restrain my anger.

She's quite for a moment, clearly trying to decide whether or not to tell me. I lose my patience.

"Aurora!" I snap, making her hide her face in my chest. She shakes her head.

"Promise me you won't hurt them," she mumbles.

"I can't make that promise."

"Then I won't tell you!"

I grunt in frustration. "Aurora this is not the time to be stubborn! Just tell me who—"

"They did this to me out of their own pain! I will not be the reason they are hurt again," she fires back.

She struggles to get out of my arms but I tighten my grip, not wanting to let her go. This, of course, is a bad idea as I feel her slam her knee into my groin, causing the air to swiftly leave my lungs. She pulls herself out of my arms and leaves the bathroom with Rio following suit.

After massaging my balls and praying I'm not sterile, I get up to find her. I limp into the main bedroom and see her face down on the bed, screaming her frustrations into her pillow. Rio's laying lazily at the foot of the bed.

I climb into bed and lay next to her, not saying a word. If she wants me to promise I won't hurt them then I'll make that promise. I'll just have them exiled for all eternity or better yet, I'll have Carter kill them. I technically wouldn't be hurting them. I smile at the second option.

"What are you smiling about?" She grumbles, eyeing me with suspicion.

I look at her innocently. "You're cute when you're mad."

"Liar," she mumbles.

I feign hurt and she laughs. I didn't realize how much I needed to hear her laugh and I smile. She blushes, making me even happier.

"I promise I won't hurt them," I murmur, leaning in closer to her and pulling her body to my chest. She's so small, like a little pebble. My little pebble.

She looks up at me with those big honey eyes and I feel those damn butterflies flutter in my stomach and my heart skips a beat.

Focus, Michael warns.

“Pinky swear?” She asks holding up her pinky and looking at me with puppy eyes.

My heart flutters. Why does she have to be so cute?

“What are you, five?” I say, rolling my eyes and laughing. Hurt flashes in her eyes and I instantly regret making fun of her. “Pinky swear,” I say, clearing my throat and locking my pinky with hers. She lets out a deep breath.

“Hannah, Leila and Laura,” she says rapidly.

Erin’s friends...

I have to fight back my wolf as he struggles for control. He wants them dead. I don’t realize I’m shaking with anger and growling until Aurora’s voice snaps me out of my trance.

“You swore!” She snaps. “You can’t go back on a promise!” She buries her head in my chest and cries.

“Why are you protecting them?” I fire back.

She doesn’t respond, letting her emotions flow out. When she’s done, she pulls away from my chest and looks fiercely at me. “Because I refuse to become like them. I don’t want to be filled with hate. I don’t want to be cruel!”.

I glare back at her, hoping to affect her in some way, but she refuses to give in. I growl in annoyance and accept her decision.

“Thank you,” she sighs in relief.

She pushes up against my chest, hooking her right hand on my neck and pulling me close to her face. Her plump lips brush up against mine in a gentle kiss. She then lowers her head and snuggles up in my chest. I mind-link Meghan to come examine her hand.

Within minutes Meghan arrives, properly dressing her wounds and slipping on two finger splints on her left hand. Aurora can remove them tomorrow night.

When Meg leaves, Aurora settles back in my arms and before long, we're both happily asleep.

Aurora's POV

A knock at the door wakes me up. I try to move but two arms are wrapped tightly around me, keeping me in place. My right hand is pressed up against Oliver's chest while my left arms lays across his side. His legs are intertwined with my right leg and my left leg is stretched across his waist. I blush. This is the first time we've shared the bed together and I've never felt safer. I snuggle my head into his chest, breathing in his scent and listening to his heart beat. Another knock interrupts my peace. I kiss his neck softly to wake him up and he chuckles quietly into my hair.

"Olivier," I whisper. "Someone's at the door."

He groans, pulling me closer. I inhale his sweet scent and smile against his neck.

"Five more minutes," he mumbles.

Rosalie bursts through the door. "Oliver, get up!"

Oliver groans in annoyance and releases me from his grip. We both get up and I steal a glance at the clock. 6:23 pm. We slept for 3 hours.

"What the hell do you want?" Oliver groans.

"Mom and Dad are here," she says coldly. "They're waiting for you in your office."

My stomach drops and my muscles tense up. They're here?

Oliver's face hardens. "What the hell are they doing here?"

"Just go. I'm tired of answering their stupid questions." she grumbles, rolling her eyes. She turns to me and gives me a reassuring smile. "Don't worry, Aurora. If they try anything, they'll have to go through me."

Oliver pulls me into his arms and kisses my forehead. "They won't hurt you. I won't let them."

I nod my head and try to calm down my nerves but fail miserably. My hands are shaking. Oliver trails his fingers down my arm and interlocks his fingers with mine.

Leaning down to my ear, he whispers, "You are brave and you are strong. I love you." He kisses my lips and pulls me out of bed.

I go to the closet and change into some jeans and a long sleeved shirt. I meet Oliver and Rosalie at the door. Rosalie grabs my left wrist and gives it a gentle squeeze.

"I'll protect you too," she whispers with a smile.

At the door of Oliver's office, Carter and Evan are waiting patiently for us. They both look tense, making me more nervous. The five of us walk in together and I freeze when I see the witch herself, Adeline, along with David and Simone Artaud. David is sitting in Oliver's chair while Simone is standing behind him. They both narrow their eyes at me so I hide behind Oliver. Adeline is standing by the desk, an evil smirk dancing on her lips.

A low growl escapes Oliver's throat and out of the corner of my eye, I see Evan and Carter take defensive stances. Rosalie gives my wrist another squeeze to reassure me.

"What are you doing here?" Oliver says through gritted teeth.

"I'd watch that tone young man," Simone snaps. "Don't forget who you're speaking to."

"You are intruders as far as I'm concerned," Oliver remarks coldly. "Need I remind you, I'm no longer your son?"

"You will respect your mother in my presence, do you understand?" David spits, glaring at him.

"I will not respect anyone who does not respect my Luna and I!"

"You ungrateful—"

"Dad, that's enough!" Rosalie snaps, fuming with anger. She regains her composure and takes a deep breath before speaking. "Just tell them why you're here."

“We’re here so you can explain to us how you single handedly lost the Lluvia Blanca alliance. An alliance that had survived for almost 50 years before your poor leadership flushed it down the drain!”

“I did not lose anything. They stepped away after refusing to set foot in the same room as my Luna!” Oliver retorts.

“So it’s true. This is all about that stupid, insignificant little brat?” Asks Simone, pointing an accusing finger at me. “Oh Moon Goddess, you’ve marked her!”

Evan, Carter and Oliver all snarl at her comment. My heart sinks and I do my best to hold back my tears. They really do hate me.

Adeline snickers at my reaction and Oliver growls at her, catching her off guard and making her take a step back.

“Insignificant? Our Luna is a silver wolf and a healer!” scoffs Evan. “She’s more powerful than – “

“Learn your place boy, unless you want to know what real power looks like!” David cuts him off. He turns his attention back to Oliver and I. “I had hoped it would never come to this but seeing as you continue to defend that worthless girl, I can’t ignore this anymore. Your actions have proven to me that you are unfit to lead this pack, Oliver,” he says as he rises from his chair. “I hereby relieve you of your title as Alpha of the River Moon pack.”

The Ivory Queen Chapter 29

Aurora’s POV

Oliver bursts into laughter, but David’s glare suggests he means business and he stops.

“I am the official Alpha of this pack. You have no right to take my pack away from me,” Oliver declares.

David smirks. “I, David Artaud, challenge you, Olivier Honoré Artaud, my son and current Alpha of the River Moon Pack, for the Alpha position.”

“Dad you can’t be serious?” Rosalie says in disbelief. “This has to be some kind of joke, right?”

“Do you accept the challenge?” David asks, ignoring Rosalie completely.

“No!” I scream, causing everyone to look at me. I pull Oliver’s face down to me. “Oliver please don’t do this!”

“This is not your choice, little girl. It has nothing to do with you,” Adeline sneers stepping forward. “If Oliver wants to accept the challenge, he has every right to do so!”

I can’t stand this b***h anymore and my wolf threatens to take over. I push past Oliver and stand directly in front of Adeline. Her 5’7 frame towers over my own tiny body, but I refuse to be intimidated any longer. “This has everything to do with me. Oliver is my mate,” I spit.

I can’t see him, but I know Oliver’s smiling with pride as I claim him as mine.

Anger flashes in her eyes as she lifts her arm to swing at me. Oliver catches her arm and crushes it before her blow reaches my face. The sound of bones cracking fills the room. She screams, but he doesn’t let go.

“You touch my Luna and it’ll be the last thing you do!” He snarls.

“Oliver!” David snarls but Oliver ignores him.

A look of horror washes over Adeline’s usually composed face and I feel bad for enjoying it. I wrap my fingers around Oliver’s wrist and tug a little. “Let go,” I murmur.

I feel his muscles relax and he loosens his grip before tossing her arm away from us. He wraps his arms around me, taking deep breaths and inhaling my scent.

“Oliver, please don’t do this,” I whimper. I turn to Simone, hoping she’ll knock some sense into her husband. “Please! You can’t possibly agree to this!” I plead. “It’s your son and your mate! You can’t be okay with this!”

“A good Luna does not get in the way of the Alpha and his affairs,” Simone says solemnly, looking at the ground in front of her. “Besides, I think he’s made it very clear that he no longer considers himself a part of our family.”

I’m panicking now. Why am the only one opposed to this? Alpha challenges are to the death. Only the victor comes out alive.

Unless the loser yields in battle, Reyna reminds me.

You are not helping! Neither of them will! One of them is going to die.

“Oliver please don’t,” I plead with him as tears well up in my eyes. I can’t risk losing him over this. My pleas fall on deaf ears, however.

“I, Olivier Honoré Artaud, accept your challenge for the Alpha position of the River Moon pack,” he says with clear confidence.

The wind is knocked out of me with every word he says.

David smiles triumphantly at his son. “Since I am your challenger, you are free to choose when and where the challenge is to take place.”

“The Training grounds this Thursday at sunset,” Oliver growls, facing his father head on.

“Eager to end this, I see. Very well.” His father nods in agreement and takes his wife by the arm. “Je vous verrai en deux jours, Oliver.”

Together they walk out of the room without so much as a good bye. Adeline follows closely behind, still whimpering from her injury.

When they finally leave, Oliver turns to me, but I refuse to look at him. He hangs his head knowing he’s upset me. He walks towards me and takes me in his arms but I don’t hug him back. My body is frozen with the fear of losing him.

“Aurora, please understand. I swore to defend this pack with my life and I am swearing to defend you. I can’t back down from a challenge.”

My heart is pounding in my ears and my breaths are becoming fast and shallow. I can feel my throat is closing up. I don’t respond. I know he’s right, but I’m scared. I’m so scared.

“Aurora?”

“I-I can’t ... breathe,” I pant. Before I even realize it, I’m running out of the room.

I hear him call after me, begging me to come back and talk to him, but I don’t want to talk. I just want to cry. I run past several wolves and out the front door.

I don't know where I'm going, I just run. I run past the now familiar houses down the main road. When I reach the daycare, I make a sharp turn into the woods. Although there is barely any light out, I still manage to find the hidden trail using my enhanced vision.

"Aurora!" Oliver calls out, very close behind me.

I ignore him and keep running until the fort is in my line of vision. When I reach the ladder, two strong arms grip my hips, pull me back, and spin me around. My emotions get the best of me and I let my feelings of anguish flood out of me. I bury my head in Oliver's chest as he pulls me close to his body, shielding me from the cold. I cling to him for dear life, afraid he might disappear.

"I love you so much, nena," he murmurs, lifting me off the ground slightly. "How could I not fight for you?"

"I'm so scared Oliver. What if – what if you don't–"

"Do you have so little faith in me?" He chuckles. "I'll have you know, I am the strongest warrior in this pack."

"That's not funny," I say quietly as dark thoughts fill my mind. "I couldn't bear to lose you."

"And I could never give you up, especially not for the approval of my father, nor for anyone else's. I will fight for you and my pack with every fiber in my body. Trust me, I have no intention of losing. Besides, I have a date on Friday with a very special girl and I don't plan on standing her up," he says, winking at me.

I stare into his gorgeous dark blue eyes, searching for any possible sign of regret and find none. He leans forward, placing a kiss on my forehead and wipes away my tears with his thumbs.

"It is a painful thing to lose a father, Oliver. Your mother... s-she'll hate you if you win. A-Am I w-worth losing your family over?" I stammer.

He lifts my chin with his thumb and forefinger. "You are my family now. You are the only person I'm not willing to lose."

He gently brushes his lips against mine, the sparks overwhelming my senses. I kiss him back and he lifts me up by my thighs, making me gasp. His tongue takes advantage and slips into my mouth. I hook my left arm around his neck while my right hand roams his hair. After a few minutes we pull back breathlessly for air.

“Eres mia, {You’re mine}” he smiles.

My stomach growls, ruining the moment. I blush with embarrassment as he laughs at my reaction.

“Always hungry, aren’t you? Let’s get you something to eat,” he chuckles. He doesn’t put me down, but instead shifts my weight so that he holds me bridal style.

“I-I can walk,” I stutter and he smiles at me.

“I know,” he chuckles. “But I like having you in my arms.”

I don’t argue and he carries me back to the Pack house, putting me down when we reach the main foyer. We make our way into the dining room and to my surprise, there are other wolves eating cheerfully, passing jokes and chatting about their day. I smile when I see Carter, Evan and Rosalie taking their seats. When they hear us walk in, the chatter stops and everyone greets Oliver. I, however, am ignored by everyone (with the exception of my friends) pissing off Oliver.

“Your future Luna is in your presence. Show some respect!” He commands.

The wolves obediently greet me, but the damage is done. They are being forced to acknowledge me and I know they still loathe me. I can’t blame them. I’ve done very little to garner their affection and acceptance since my arrival.

Stringing together some confidence, I stand up straight, meet their ticked off gazes, and smile. I don’t want to live in fear in my own pack anymore. Oliver slips his hand in mine and gives me a light squeeze for comfort. I instantly relax with his touch.

From the corner of my eye, I see Laura and her mate, Noah, sitting at the far end of the table. Hannah and Leila sit near them, an evil smirk hanging on their lips. Seeing this, Oliver growls and their smirks evaporate. I can tell he’s using all his strength to hold back his wolf. The pack seems to sense this too

because they all stiffen with fear. Its clear he's losing his battle as his eyes turn silver and he shakes violently with anger. I step in front of him and cup his face in my hands, pulling him down towards me. Our eyes meet.

"You promised," I whisper. I give him a stern look to show him I meant what I said. I did not want him hurting them.

He clenches his jaw and balls his fists up before he finally let's a out a large breath. His face softens and his eyes shift back to their dark blue.

"Sorry," he grumbles quietly.

I give him a quick kiss on the lips and wrap my arms around his waist. He pulls me close and buries his face in the crook of my neck, inhaling my scent. His muscles relax and I feel his smile against my skin.

When we pull away from each other, I realize the entire room is staring at us in shock. I can't help but blush at the sea of eyes watching us as Oliver lifts me up and takes his seat at the head of the table with me in his lap. Noticing their stares, Oliver snarls and they turn their attention back to their food. The chatter slowly starts back up again. An omega serves us some mole, rice, beans and tortillas. I smile at my plate. Oliver still insists on serving me Mexican food, but I don't complain. I love it.

"Little Aurora finally managed to whip the big bad wolf," laughs Evan.

We roar with laughter. Oliver sends a warning glare at Evan, making him laugh even harder. When we finish our meal, Oliver calls for a packing meeting in the yard. I'm nervous. His announcement of the challenge is sure to fuel more anger towards me. As we make our way outside, Evan pulls me aside into the living room.

"How are you feeling?" He asks.

I know he's talking about my fingers and the bath tub incident but I don't want him to erupt like Oliver almost did.

"Hey, it's ok. You can trust me," he insists.

I sigh and decide to tell him what the girls did to me. When I'm finished, he's practically on the verge of shifting.

“Evan please don’t do anything! You’ll only make things worse for me. Please let me handle this my way. I don’t-“

“Don’t do anything? They cornered you like an animal and tortured you when no one else was watching and you want me to sit back and do nothing? I am your guardian! I knew I shouldn’t have left you alone!”

“Evan, do you even realize why Laura did this to me? I took away her family from her! I failed her as a Luna and I’ve failed this pack. I can’t even imagine how many more families I’ve affected by making Lluvia Blanca leave the alliance.”

“Lluvia Blanca leaving the alliance is not your fault. They chose to leave on their own. They chose anger over the well-being of their pack. Miguel failed Laura and he failed his pack, not you,” he snaps, running his fingers through his hair. His face softens. “Aurora, you can’t keep letting people get away with hurting you.”

I know he’s right but I can’t bring myself to retaliate against them.

“Please Evan, just this once don’t do anything. If-if this happens again, I give you permission to take matters into your hands. Just not now. Please!”

He hesitates, clearly still upset with them. “What did Oliver say about the matter?”

“I-I made him promise not to hurt them,” I say sheepishly.

Evan gives me a suspicious look. “And he agreed?”

I nod my head and he let’s out a annoyed growl.

“Fine, I’ll let you handle this this one time. But if they so much as touch you again, I will not hold back,” he warns.

I smile at him and pull him into a hug, thanking him. Oliver interrupts our moment, snatching me from Evan’s arms and snarling at him.

“Mine!” He snarls.

Evan raises his hands in surrender with a huge grin on his face. I give Oliver a kiss on his cheek, instantly calming him down. Evan makes a whipping motion

with his arms before running off to the meeting location in the garden. Oliver rolls his eyes and leads me outside.

“Don’t be nervous, baby. You don’t need to talk, you just have stand beside me as my Luna,” he reassures me.

I nod, ignoring the knots forming in my stomach.

River Moon has over 800 hundred pack members, making it the largest of the Allies and one of the most powerful in Northern California. Oliver calls for the heads of households, the elders, and warriors to be present at the meeting. As we stand before roughly 250 pack members, my anxiety kicks into full gear. This will be the first time I appear before important members of the pack and I just know they’re going to hate me.

“As many of you may know, last night Lluvia Blanca left the alliance,” Oliver begins. “In response, the border between our two packs has been closed and we are no longer allowed to wander onto their territory.”

Murmurs erupt in the crowd but Oliver is quick to silence them.

“The Cerulean Sea pack will be taking over the partnership we shared with Lluvia Blanca. As for our other allies, Blood Moon and Jade Crescent, our agreements remain unchanged,” he continues. “Earlier this evening, my father and past Alpha came to visit us, upset about the loss of such a loyal ally. He believes me to be unfit to lead you all and has therefore challenged me for the title of Alpha of the River Moon pack.”

Shock and anger washes over the crowd. A thousand questions are shot at Oliver. He lifts his hand and silence falls amongst the crowd.

“The challenge will take place this Thursday at sunset here at the Training grounds. Now I’m sure you have many questions, but all I can say is this: I would not be fighting my own father if I did not absolutely believe I am fit to lead you. You are my pack and I will defend you, my Luna and my title with my dying breath.”

This last statement is met with cheering from the crowd. There is no doubt Oliver is beloved by his pack. Since he took over the pack almost a year ago, he’s proven to be an incredibly smart and tactical Alpha. He was even negotiating with the Desert Sky and Maple Moon packs to bring them into the

alliance and thus turn the Allies into an powerhouse in California and bring peace to the Region.

“Is she the reason you’re fighting your father?” Laura calls out, pointing a finger at me. “Is she the reason Lluvia Blanca stepped away from the alliance?”

All eyes turn to me and I fidget with my fingers to calm myself down. I try to act strong by meeting their cold gazes, but I’m shaking. Oliver holds my good hand in his, running circling over my knuckles with his thumb.

“My Luna is not to blame for Lluvia Blanca’s actions nor my father’s challenge. They made their decisions out of their own hate and anger,” he pauses, making sure his every word is understood by the pack. “Aurora was nothing but helpful during the Alpha meetings we held yesterday and even won over the support of the Cerulean Sea, Jade Crescent and Blood Moon packs with her abilities. She is a silver wolf with the gift of healing.”

At this revelation, several gasps are heard amongst the crowd and their cold gazes turn to shock.

“After the rogue attacks on our allies, not only did she save her sister, Mia, but she also managed to heal 8 severely injured wolves from Cerulean Sea and cure Alpha Wesley’s son,” Oliver continues, barely able to restrain his growing anger. “So I will not stand here and allow anyone to slander her any longer!”

Oliver steps forward, causing Laura and the pack to step back in fear.

“And you,” he says pointing a finger at Laura. “The only reason you are still breathing right now is because your Luna chose to spare your life. If it were up to me, you’d already be six feet under. But let me be perfectly clear. The next time you ever try to lay a finger on her, I’ll rip Noah’s throat out while you watch, And then I’ll rip yours,” he snarls.

“Oliver th-that’s enough!” I cry out, pulling him back by his arm. I steal a glance at Laura who is on the verge of tears. Oliver turns to look at me, his silver eyes filled with rage.

“That’s enough,” I whisper. I snuggle up to his chest, grabbing fistfuls of his shirt. His heart begins to slow down as he wraps his arms around me.

“Meeting adjourned,” he growls but the crowd remains frozen, still processing Oliver’s threat to Laura.

Before he can lose his patience I decide to step in. “T-his meeting is o-over. P-please go h-home and rest,” I stutter, still clinging onto Oliver.

I hear movement behind me and sigh in relief as pack members begin to disperse. Oliver’s hand reaches for the back of my thighs and he lifts me up bridal style. I look at him with surprise and am glad to see his eyes shift back to blue. Seeing that he’s still very angry, however, I decide not to say anything as he carries me back to our room.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 30

Aurora’s POV

Oliver carefully lays me on the bed without a word before making his way to the closet. When he returns, he’s shirtless and wearing only pajama bottoms. He tosses a t-shirt, pj bottoms and fluffy socks at me then heads to the bathroom. I change quickly and wait for his return. He comes back and I watch as he silently reaches for a pillow.

“Oliver? A-Are you mad at me?” I ask sheepishly.

He freezes, his muscles tightening beneath his skin. After a few painful seconds, he sighs and turns to look at me. “No baby, I’m not,” he replies calmly.

“Then why are you not talking to me?” I ask quietly. “Is it because I told you to stop in front of the pack?”

His face softens as he crawls onto the bed and pulls me into hug. My skin tingles under his touch.

“I’m not mad at you. I-I was just angry at the way everyone seems to misjudge you before getting to the know the real you,” he says. His voice trembles as he continues. “The same way I misjudged you when we first met.”

I understand now. He’s angry at himself.

“Oliver look at me,” I say taking his face in my hands. “You did hurt me. But ever since that night you’ve worked hard to redeem yourself. I’m not scared of

you anymore, Oliver. Everyday I fall more and more in love with you. You've gone the extra mile to make me feel comfortable. You didn't make me share your bed. You've given me space when I've asked for it. You protect me like no one else has in the past 5 years (even though sometimes you go a little overboard). You made me feel pretty for the first time in years. And you defend me against your family and your pack," I sniffle. "You are not the same man who rejected me all those months ago."

He pulls me into a passionate kiss, leaving me breathless when he pulls away.

"I love you, Olivier," I say quietly.

"I love you too, Aurora," he replies.

I remain in his arms a little longer before skipping off into the bathroom to get ready for bed. When I return, Oliver is laying on the couch with his phone in his hand.

I watch him quietly. Earlier today when I woke up in his arms, I felt safer than I ever have before. Even though sleeping with his shirt on has helped significantly, it hasn't stopped the nightmares from haunting me in my sleep. I still wake up screaming and only calm down when I feel Oliver's hands hold mine. Sometimes I wake up with Oliver sleeping on the floor next to me, making sure I don't have any more nightmares.

"Oliver?"

He looks at me with concern.

"W-will you sleep with me?"

A little smirk spreads across his face and I blush furiously after realizing what I just said.

"Th-that's not w-what I meant. I-" I'm a stuttering mess and he laughs at me.

He gets off the couch and walks slowly towards me. His face turns serious.

"Are you sure you want to share the bed with me?"

I'm beet red but nod in response. A cute smile spreads across his lips and he lifts me off the ground excitedly, carrying me to the bed. He puts me down

gently and runs back to the couch to grab his laptop and phone, turning off the lights on his way back to the bed. He throws the phone on the night stand and opens his laptop. He puts on "the Breakfast Club" and places the laptop at the foot of the bed before crawling in. He sits with his back against the headboard, patting the space between his legs and opening his arms. I crawl towards him and sit with my back against his chest while he wraps his arms around me. I pull the covers over our legs and Rio jumps up and curls up by the laptop. I lean into his body, enjoying the rise and fall of his chest. Throughout the movie, Oliver plays with my hair and kisses my neck or shoulder, making me feel warm and safe.

Rio's cute wet nose sniffing my hair wakes me up in the morning. Realizing I'm awake, Rio licks my face furiously, wanting to play. I giggle as he hops on top of me, making Oliver groan.

I try to get up but Oliver's strong arm is tightly wrapped around my waist. I blush when I feel Oliver's erection pressed up against my lower abdomen. I realize Oliver is laying flat on his back and I'm practically on top of him, nestled tightly between his legs. My left leg is bent at angle and raised over his right leg while my head and torso rest on his chest and stomach. I grab Oliver's wrist and try to lift it off me but I hear him laugh as he wraps his other arm around me.

"Where do you think you're going?" He chuckles into my hair, taking in my scent.

"N-Nowhere," I stutter, turning redder by the second. "I-I-"

"You're so cute when you're nervous," he says as he shifts his body so I'm no longer on top of him.

I curl up next to him, burying my face in the crook of his neck and tracing shapes on his chest. He wraps his left arm around my shoulders while Rio curls up in his right.

"I could stay like this for the rest of my life and be the happiest man ever," he whispers to me.

I look up at him, my eyes settling on his perfect lips. I push myself forward, eager to taste him. My kiss is sweet and gentle at first before it becomes

fueled by passion. Our mouths move in sync and it isn't long before his tongue brushes up against my lower lip. I deny him access and he groans in frustration. I pull away with a smile and sit up straight. Oliver looks at me with confusion.

"We have to get ready. We have a whole day ahead of us," I say sheepishly, attempting to get off the bed.

Oliver rolls his eyes and tries to stop me from leaving but I easily evade his hands.

"Tease!" He calls out as I happily skip towards the bathroom and start to get ready for my day.

After I shower, I change into some high-waisted jeans, a long sleeved blouse and my converse. I start blow drying my hair on the couch as I wait for Oliver to finish his shower.

As I begin braiding my long straight hair into a messy updo, Oliver comes out dressed in black adidas sweats, a grey active hoodie and sneakers.

"Can I help you?" Oliver asks pointing at my hair.

I stare back at him like an idiot. "What?"

His cheeks turn rosy. "Can I braid your hair?" He asks timidly.

A smile creeps up on my face and I nod. He sits behind me on the couch and takes my hair in his hands. He undoes the braid I started and runs through my locks with his fingers before weaving my hair into a loose French braid. He leaves a few pieces out to frame my face and works carefully so as not to pull on my hair too hard. I almost fall asleep with how gentle he is. When he reaches the nape of my neck, he gathers all of my hair into a low side ponytail then goes back to pull the edges of the braid to loosen it a bit more. Feeling satisfied with the look, Oliver leans forward and kisses the top of my head.

"Done!" He says proudly.

I get up excitedly and run to the bathroom to examine his work. I'm amazed at how well done the braid is!

"Where did you learn to do that?" I ask with genuine curiosity.

“Rosalie taught me when you were in the hospital. I-uh, I used to practice on her. I wanted to be ready for you when you woke up,” he says quietly. “Do you like it?”

My heart is on the verge of bursting with happiness. “I love it!” I say jumping on him and showering him with kisses. “I can’t believe you did this for me.”

“I’ll do anything to make you happy,” he murmurs back.

I give him a quick kiss on the lips and peel myself off him. “So what’s the plan for today?” I ask him.

“I have to go to the training grounds today with Carter and Evan after breakfast,” he sighs. “Wesley is also stopping by to help with training and to finalize our deal.”

My ears perk up at the mention of Wesley.

“Is Kehlani coming?”

I like Kehlani.

“Maaaybe,” he answers with a smile. “And I believe Ro has been begging me to let her take you out to the city.”

I’m excited. I love the boys but they can be a little overbearing and protective. I would love to spend the day with Rosalie and Kehlani.

As we make our way downstairs for breakfast, I’m stunned to see a few wolves waiting in the foyer. Some are carrying trays of food and pastries or little beautifully wrapped packages. I instinctively grab hold of Oliver’s hand as we walk down the steps.

“Oliver, what’s going on?” I ask in a low voice, feeling dread settle in my stomach.

An older woman steps forward to greet us at the bottom of the staircase.

“Marie, what’s going on?” asks Oliver, motioning towards the small group of wolves.

“Good morning Alpha, we’re so sorry to bother you so early but a few of us would like an audience with the young Luna,” she says quietly, her voice pleasant and kind.

Oliver and I exchange glances and we both look at her in confusion. Seeing our puzzled expressions, another, much younger wolf named Clyde, steps forward.

“You see, Alpha, we- we came to apologize to her. After the meeting last night and hearing how she’s saved so many lives, we realized we judged her too quickly. We let rumors get the best of us and it clouded our judgement,” he says sheepishly, turning his head towards me. “We are terribly sorry, Luna and we hope you find it in your heart to forgive us one day.”

I’m speechless. I stare at the group of pack members expecting cold gazes but am met with nothing but warm smiles. Tears tug at my eyes and I try my best to hold them back

“Aurora?,” Oliver shakes my hand, waking me from my daze. “It’s up to you whether or not you want to hear them out.”

Suddenly, a little girl, no more than three, wriggles away from her mother and rushes to hug my legs. She looks up at me with the biggest blue eyes I’ve ever seen.

“Luna! Luna! I made you a gift!” She says holding up a beaded bracelet with mismatched colorful beads. “Do you like it?”

“Taylor!” Her mother snaps at her, motioning for her to get back. She gives me an apologetic smile. “I’m so sorry, Luna.”

I bend down to pick up the little girl in my arms.

“It’s alright,” I respond. Turning to little Taylor, I point to the bracelet. “Can you put it on me?” I ask sweetly.

Taylor giggles and slips the bracelet over my wrist. I carry her back to her mother.

“Thank you, Taylor for this beautiful bracelet,” I smile. “I love it.”

Taylor gives me a toothy grin as I hand her over to her mother. I look back at the small crowd.

“W-would you like to join us for breakfast?” I ask timidly.

I brace myself for their rejection but much to my surprise, they eagerly accept. We all make our way to the dining room. Little Taylor asks to sit next to me and I happily oblige. As we eat, they tell me about themselves and what they do for a living. Taylor’s father, William, is a warrior at the borders and the same grey wolf who tried to keep me from going into Desert Sky territory when I ran away. Her mother, Emma, is a human and stay at home mother. Marie and her husband, Stewart, are elderly but Marie was once a preschool teacher while Stewart was a pack doctor. Clyde is a mechanic while his wife, Lucy, is a nurse. She was one of the many who helped take care of me while I lay comatose.

When the meal is finished, I am presented with food and gifts. I am very touched by their sentiments and am on the verge of tears as they once again apologize for their coldness. Oliver is extremely pleased with the turn of events and wouldn’t stop smiling as his pack showered me with kindness.

“I knew they would love you,” Oliver says once we’re alone as he lifts me into his arms.

I wrap my arms around his neck and legs around his waist.

“All they needed was to get to know you,” he says kissing my cheek.

I nod, deep in thought. Oliver watches me closely, tucking a loose strand of hair behind my ear.

“A penny for your thoughts?” He murmurs into my ear, his breath tickling my neck.

I smile. “I’m thinking that I’m going to miss you while you’re at the training grounds,” I respond.

“Ugh you guys are gross,” Evan butts in with fake disgust as he and Carter walk in.

Carter smacks him over the side of the head and he groans.

“Are you ready Oliver?” Carter asks.

Oliver sighs as he puts me down. He gives me a quick peck on the lips.
“Kehlani will be here in about an hour and Rosalie is probably still sleeping. Until then please stay in the room or office. I don’t want a repeat of yesterday. If you need anything call Ro or an Omega for help. I’ll text you when Wesley gets here. Do you understand?”

I nod and he gives me another kiss before it taking off with the boys. I sprint up the stairs and lock myself in the Oliver’s office.

I grab the black book from the shelf and take a seat at Oliver’s desk. As I’m reading, I feel a sudden pain in my lower abdomen, followed by a sting across my face.

Oh no, I’m feeling Oliver’s training...

I feel a burning sensation on my shoulder and try to massage my pain away.

Oh goddess, I’m going to feel his entire fight, aren’t I?

Another surge of pain radiates from my right calf making me scream.

Just breathe. Focus your energy on yourself. Close the connection, Reyna states calmly.

I’m panting from the growing pain in my leg.

I can’t.

Breathe.

I take several deep breathes as more pain erupts from different parts of my body. I concentrate on my energy, emptying all thoughts from my mind. Slowly, the pain fades away as a wall goes up, stopping my connection with Oliver. I sigh in relief as the pain completely subsides.

Better? Reyna asks.

Much better.

I take a few moments to gather myself and turn my attention back to the black book. I stare at the twin wolves and let my finger wander the page before

stopping at the beautiful medallions hanging around their necks. My gaze is drawn to their beautiful eyes. I almost feel like I recognize them but I know that's impossible. I've never seen a pure white wolf in my life, let alone one with heterochromatic eyes. I turn the pages to where I left off yesterday.

Given the immense power possessed by the Children of the Moon and of the Sun, it came as no surprise when many creatures tried to harness all of it. Not long after their creation, Witches, Vampires, and Demons hunted Silver and Gold wolves for their powers. Seeing her creations being slaughtered by the thousands, the Moon Goddess mated a silver and a gold wolf to create a hybrid: the Ivory twins. The Ivory twins are a set wolves who act as the protectors of the Silver and Gold wolves, sharing multiple abilities to fend off malicious creatures. Every 150 years, The Moon Goddess mates a silver and Gold wolf to conceive a pair of Ivory Twins to protect her creations.

I can feel Reyna's growing excitement as I continue to read.

Each twin controls two of the four elements; the eldest controlling Earth and Fire while the youngest controls Water and Air. They also possess healing and telekinetic abilities, among other gifts.

Unlike other wolves, Ivory twins must have their first shift in the presence of each other. Failing to do so will result in death.

Overwhelmed with this information, I stop reading. I still not understand what the point of all this is. If I'm not a silver wolf nor a gold wolf, and there's no plausible way I could be an Ivory twin, then what the hell am I?

You already know what we are... Reyna says cryptically, frustrating me even more.

No, Reyna, I really don't and I'm getting sick and tired of these games, I snap. Just tell me what I am!

She sighs. We are one of the Ivory twins.

What?

We are one of the Ivory Twins, she says matter of factly.

My head feels like it's about to explode. How is that even possible?

No, we can't be. For one thing, my dad's mate is not a gold wolf. Mom is very clearly a regular wolf. Two, I don't have a twin. Salvador is 2 years older than I am and Mia is 1 year younger. And three, I can't control the elements. I made vines appear once and that's about it. I don't know anything about Fire or telekinesis or any other gift. I'm just a healer. I'm sorry, Reyna, but you're wrong.

Reyna laughs at my annoyance. You asked me what you were and I answered. Now it is up to you to figure out the rest. Think, Aurora. Is everything you think you know about yourself true?

What are you talking about? Of course it's true!

Before she can respond, I hear a knock at the door. I quickly close the book and lock it before shoving it back in the shelf and pulling out a random healing book. I unlock the door and open it.

I almost scream when I see who it is.