

The Ivory Queen Chapter 36

*** Aurora's POV ***

I wake up in a cold sweat, tears running down my face. Glancing at the clock, I realize it's only 3:50 am. Knowing I won't be able to sleep after that nightmare, I hop in the shower and clean myself off. As I change, I catch a glimpse of my back in the mirror and am disgusted by my appearance. I run my fingers along the jagged scars as far as I can reach, once again trembling at the memory of that night. There's also a large bruise on my left cheek that Oliver gave me. I hold back tears as I smear some concealer on it, wincing with every stroke of the makeup sponge.

As I'm concealing my bruise, my eyes drift off to the drawer with my secret scalpel. It takes all my mental strength to resist the urge to pull it out and use it.

It won't help, I remind myself. It'll just cause more problems.

Once dressed, I slip on my medallion and sneak out of the room with Rio and head over to the fort. I sit on the tire swing, kicking my feet and letting the cold settle deep into my bones. My mind is completely numb and I feel nothing.

Are you ok? Reyna asks.

No, I say truthfully. I hate everything right now.

You are incapable of hatred, Reyna chuckles. You don't know how to hate. Dad taught you otherwise.

He's not my dad! I snarl. He's just a man who lied to me. My entire family lied to me. I endured 5 years of torture for a stupid lie! I should just shift right now and pray the moon goddess has mercy and lets me die in peace!

No, we can't shift without Celina.

Celina? I scoff. Is she all you care about? We don't even know if Celina is still alive or even knows what we are! There's no point in waiting for her! There's no point in any of this!

Your father and mother died for you! Don't you ever disrespect their sacrifice!

And who exactly did they die for? Huh? Look at me! I'm afraid all the time. Face it, Reyna. They died for nothing. Emiliano died for nothing. I AM NOTHING!

My anger overpowers me and I feel my eyes change. Suddenly the ground quakes and I watch in fear as a large crack forms in front of me, splitting the earth in two. Rio whines and jumps into my lap.

Did I just do that?

Yes, Reyna replies. It seems you've managed to once again access your earth element.

I get off the swing and walk slowly towards the small canyon I created. I need to close this before anyone else sees it.

Feel the earth, Aurora. Center yourself and breathe, Reyna encourages.

I crouch down on the ground and place my hands on the earth, feeling all its vibrating molecules beneath me.

Focus...

I stand back up and move my hands towards each other. I watch in amazement as the earth mimics my motions and the canyon seals up completely.

That was amazing! I squeal. I'm a f*****g earth bender!

Reyna chuckles.

What else can I do?

Why don't you find out and see?

I remember the vines I grew to kill Andrew and wonder if I can grow something else. I walk over to a empty patch of dirt and think of sunflowers. I love sunflowers. I bend down to feel the earth and slowly straighten out, lifting my hand in a rising motion.

Suddenly a dozen sunflower stalks rise up from the ground. Rio c***s his little head to the side and stares at the flowers in confusion before he runs over to

them and bites at a stalk. After teaching the sunflower a lesson, he happily trots back to me.

This is incredible!

I want to see what I'm fully capable of and decide to run deeper into the woods, finding a clearing and making sure no one is around before I begin my work.

First, I move the earth to expose flat stones and cut a stone path through the clearing. Next, I line the path with neatly trimmed hedges. In the south west corner of the clearing, I grow fruit trees. To the north, I leave a large patch of grass and create a bench from thick wooden vines. On the eastern side, I form flower beds with stone and fill them with poppies, peonies, daffodils, day lilies, hyacinths, and sun flowers. Stepping back, I twirl flowery vines around the trees that surround my garden. Going back to the path, I grow several flower arches over it.

I'm so consumed in making my Eden that I don't realize I'm no longer alone. As I finish the last flower arch, I turn around to face a very confused Carter.

Oh f**k...

He looks absolutely dumbfounded. "Your eyes...How did you..." he glances around the entire garden, eyeing my work.

"Carter I can explain!" I blurt, knowing full well I can't.

"Please do," he says still very dazed by what he just witnessed.

"H-How much did you see?" I ask, hoping I can somehow come up with a very good lie based on his answer.

"Enough to know you are an Ivory twin," he answers. "How is that even possible? Your parents aren't Royals. Emiliano was clearly a silver wolf," he continues his banter. "But your mom was not a Gold wolf."

I stay frozen in place, unsure of what to say. He clearly knows his werewolf history.

"Unless she's not your real mom-"

“Shut up!” I say rushing towards him and placing my hand over his mouth.
“Someone might hear you,” I hiss.

He nods back and I release his mouth.

“How do you know about ‘those wolves’” I snap. Up until I read the black book, I had never heard of Ivory Twins myself.

“My grandfather was an elder before passing and a historian. He used to tell me about the legends of the silver and gold wolves. And of course the ‘other’ wolves,” he replies nonchalantly. “So start talking. Who are you?”

I hesitate.

Can I tell him?

You should have been more careful! She snaps. Now he knows exactly who we are!

Annoyed by her response and seeing no point in lying, I block her out and decide to confess.

“Karina is not my real mom,” I say, finally glad I can talk to someone about this. “And the man I thought was my father is actually my uncle, my real father’s brother.”

“Wait what?! Now I’m lost. You’re telling me your uncle raised you? That still doesn’t explain how you’re a royal?” He asks completely confused.

“Lower your voice,” I snap.

I glance around the perimeter of the garden, making sure the place is secure. He does the same and we both conclude that no one’s around.

“Carter, how did you find me?”

“Oh that. I was on a run and heard a lot of noises coming from this side so I came over to check if it was rogues or something,” he replies as if it’s the most obvious thing. “But that’s besides the point. Explain your family.”

I sigh, mentally preparing myself to pour out the truth I’ve been dying to tell. When I’m finished, I’m a crying mess. Carter pulls me into his arms and comforts me.

"F**k Aurora, how long have you kept this to yourself?"

"I just found out about my parents yesterday when Mia gave me the letter, but my earth element came in the day I was – um, attacked by Andrew. I-it's how I managed to kill him," I respond.

"Does Oliver know?"

I shake my head. "My wolf says it's too dangerous for anyone to know."

"It is," he replies. "You'll have a target on your back if the wrong people find out, especially since you and your sister haven't shifted. You have yet to reach your full power potential."

I feel a shiver down my spine.

"Don't worry, Aurora. Your secret's safe with me. I won't tell anyone, not even Oliver," he says quietly. "There's not a lot of available information out there about Ivory twins since all their records are enchanted, but I'll help you as best I can."

After a moment, we both settle down on the bench I created.

"Do you have any idea where and how you can find your sister?" He asks.

I shake my head. "I know very little about her. I just know her name is Celina and she controls the Water and Air elements. I'm sure we have a bond, but I have no idea how to activate it."

"Well what about that black book you were telling me about. I'm sure there's something about it in there," he says standing up. "Come on, let's go see."

He tries to take me by the hand, but I quickly pull away. I'm not ready to go back in the house with Oliver after what happened last night

"Maybe later," I say trying to act calm.

He eyes me with suspicion and I try my best to not give myself away. I fail.

"Are you ok?" He asks, his face softening.

"Yea, I just had a nightmare last night," I say, forcing a smile. "I just want to stay outside and get some fresh air," I lie.

“Do you mind if I ask what the dream was about?”

“It was more of a memory, really. My mom used to come home drunk sometimes and do things to me that I’d rather not talk about,” I reply, my voicing growing weak.

Carter’s muscles tense at the mention of my mother and I can tell he’s getting angry. I try to calm him down.

“Carter, it’s ok. I survived and I’m fine now. There’s no need to get all worked up about it.”

He takes several deep breaths and visibly relaxes. “I’m sorry,” he manages to say. “I can’t even begin to imagine the hell you lived through.”

“You have nothing to be sorry about. It wasn’t your fault.”

We sit quietly on the benches and watch as the sun peaks through the trees. I hear my stomach start grumbling and I turn bright red as Carter laughs.

“Come on, let’s get you something to eat, your highness.”

I smack him over the side of the head. “Stop it, I’m not a royal!”

“Your lineage proves otherwise, your majesty,” he grins.

I’m on the verge of killing him but he quickly runs out of my reach. I call Rio and the three of us make our way back to the house. As we get closer, I feel dread settle in my stomach and my body tenses up.

“Hey, it was just a nightmare. You’re safe now,” Carter reassures, giving my arm a gentle squeeze.

We walk into the foyer and I unconsciously grab hold of his hand. He gives me a puzzled look, but I ignore him. Right now, I just need a friend.

The dining room is empty and I realize it’s only 7:30 am. The windows are open wide and light pierces through the glass, illuminating the room. I hear Carter gasp and turn to look at him. His shock quickly turns to anger and a low growl rumbles in his chest.

“Aurora, who did that to you?” He asks pointing to my left cheek.

Crap, I thought the concealer would hide it.

I instinctively touch my cheek and start mumbling pathetically. "I-It was an accident. I-I tripped and h-hit myself on the door knob. I d-did it to m-myself," I stutter. "Clumsy me." I shrug, forcing a smile to ease the tension.

Carter only grows angrier, not buying my story. Rio starts whining as the tension increases.

"You didn't do this to yourself," he snaps, holding my chin and gently wiping off the concealer to reveal my dark blue bruise. "Who are you protecting now?"

"No one!"

"I'm getting Oliver," he growls as he pushes past me.

"No!" I cry out, grabbing his arm and pulling him back. "It's ok, I promise!"

"What the hell is going on?" I hear Evan ask as he walks in. "It's too early for there to be shouting!" He groans as he shuffles into the dining room. He yawns and stretches himself out before walking over.

"Someone hit Aurora and she won't tell me who!" Carter informs him.

Evan instantly goes into gamma mode and rushes at me. He grabs my face and starts examining it, growing angrier by the second. He starts searching my arms for other possible marks and injuries.

"Who did this?" Evan snarls. "It was Laura, wasn't it? I'll f*****g kill that b***h!"

"No, it wasn't her! She's innocent!" I cry, hot tears spilling onto my cheeks. "Please, just let it go. It's ok! I'm ok."

"Aurora, this," he says pointing at my face. "This is not ok. You don't deserve this, understand? Now tell me who did it or I'll mind link Oliver right now," Evan threatens.

My body is trembling and I want nothing more than to disappear right now. "O-Oliver did it," my voice is so quiet, I'm not even sure they hear me.

"What?" They both snarl in unison. "He did what?"

“H-he was drunk! He didn’t- It was an accident! H-he didn’t mean it!”

I don’t sound very convincing and to be honest, accident or not, Oliver scared the crap out of me last night.

“Is this why you didn’t want come back to the house? Aurora, how long have you been outside?”

“A few hours,” I admit. “It’s ok, though. I couldn’t sleep anyways. I-I had a nightmare.”

“Aurora, what the f**k? Have you slept at all?” Carter asks.

“N-not really,” I hiccup, quietly wiping my tears.

Evan sighs. “Okay, look. If Oliver thinks he can treat you like this, he’s got another thing coming. We’ll deal with him later. You, however, are eating and going straight to bed. You can stay at my mom’s house until we figure out what to do with Oliver. Okay? No more tears,” he coos, wiping my face and kissing my forehead. “You deserve to feel safe in your own home,” he says as he pulls me into his arms.

I keep trying to explain that it was an accident but they refuse to listen and I eventually give up. Carter and Evan walk me to his parent’s house where we have breakfast with Sam and Katherine. They crack jokes and tell me funny embarrassing stories about each of the boys growing up. I know they’re trying to lighten the mood and appreciate the gesture.

When we finish, Katherine, is kind enough to let me stay in their guest room. She brings me tea, some pjs and a sleeping pill to help me rest easier. Rio curls up with me in bed as Evan and Carter promise to watch over me while I sleep. Before I know it, the pill takes effect and knocks me out into a dreamless sleep.

*** Oliver’s POV***

My head is pounding when I wake up. I glance around and notice I’m on the couch with a blanket draped over me and I’m also laying on my favorite pillow. I move to get up and realize I’m in my pjs.

f**k, I drank too much last night.

I try to remember what happened, but only remember my fight with Aurora over her shifting. I'm still angry she won't tell me what's going on with her wolf. I just want to help her! Is that so bad?

I steal a glance at the bed. She's not there. After a quick walk around the room and into the closet, I quickly realize I'm alone. I look at the clock. 11:46 am.

Aurora must have gone to breakfast without me.

I jump in a cold shower to wake up my aching muscles and change into a pair of sweats and a T-shirt. I'm greeted by Rosalie as I stumble downstairs.

"Woah, you look like absolute s**t. I hope you pull yourself together for your date with Aurora," she teases.

My heart sinks. Are we still doing the date?

Noticing my reaction, Rosalie asks what's wrong.

"Aurora and I got into a fight last night and things didn't end well."

"What was the fight about?"

"She refuses to shift for the pack run," I say, a little irritated.

"Why?"

"That's the problem! She won't tell me why! She just blatantly told me 'I can't tell you'. I swear there's nothing I hate more than secrets and she's keeping several," I sigh. "I don't like it one bit. I've been completely honest with her about everything but she's always hiding her feelings and her thoughts away from me!"

"Hmm that is tricky," Rosalie shrugs. "I'd be mad too if Carter kept things from me." She pauses, taking a sip of her coffee. "But then again, Carter hasn't spent the past five years having to keep his thoughts and feelings to himself in order to survive. Maybe you should cut her some slack."

"But I'm not them! I don't want to hurt her! I just want to help!" I say, getting frustrated.

“Oliver, I get that it’s frustrating for you to deal with her trauma, but just for a second, put yourself in her shoes and try to understand how difficult this must be for her. She’s got all this pent up pain and she has no idea how to process it!” She sighs. “Have you tried looking for a therapist?”

“I haven’t really thought about it.”

“Well it might be worth looking into and talking to her about it. I think she could really benefit from it.

“I guess,” I say glancing around the room. “Have you seen her by any chance? I woke up this morning and she was gone.”

“No, I haven’t,” she replies. “She’s probably with Evan, though, if she’s upset. You know those two are practically siblings at this point.”

I try to mind-link Evan but the connection is blocked. I can’t get through. I pull out my phone and text him. After I finish my meal, I check my messages and see no response. I feel dread settle in the pit of my stomach and my wolf starts to panic.

“Evan’s not answering,” I say, dialing his phone number. I’m sent right to voicemail.

I don’t like this one bit.

“Hey, calm down. Evan probably took her into the city and -and his phone probably died. Let me ask Carter and see if he knows anything.” Rosalie says, trying to calm me down.

She mind-links Carter. After a few minutes of trying, her face changes completely.

“He’s not answering,” she says, pulling out her phone.

She dials Carter’s number and gets no response. Now we’re both panicking.

“Did Carter tell you where he was going today?” I ask.

“Yea, he left early this morning for a run and said he would be at the training grounds all day.”

“Then let’s go look for him there,” I suggest.

We gather our things and drive out to the training grounds. When we arrive, we don't see any signs of the three of them there. I ask Adrien, the lead training instructor, if he's seen them, but no such luck. It appears Carter never even made it to training.

I'm in full blown panic mode and send several soldiers to the borders to search for them in case Aurora went to go speak with her sister. I call the guards to ask if Evan and Aurora have left the grounds but come up empty. They have to be on River Moon territory, so why aren't they responding?

Rosalie and I call Evan and Carter several more times but receive no response. I check the fort and find it lonely as ever.

Aurora, where are you?

The Ivory Queen Chapter 37

Aurora's POV

It's almost 2pm when I wake up. Carter is leaning back on a chair fast asleep with a magazine over his eyes while Evan is on the floor reading a book to Rio, who appears to be listening carefully.

"What are you reading," I mumble as I stretch. My voice is very hoarse.

"Birdman. It's an insanely good crime novel about a detective trying to stop a serial killer, but it's written from both the detective and killer's point of view. It's super twisted."

"That sounds intense," I laugh.

"It is," he says, setting the book down. "How are you feeling?"

"Much better," I lie.

I'm actually freezing, my body aches and there's a tickle in my throat. Evan gets up and sits on the edge of the bed. He motions me to get closer and he begins inspecting my cheek. His hazel eyes burn with anger.

"I'm ok, Evan," I say trying to calm him down. I give him another shy smile hoping to convince him.

He ignores me, placing a hand on my forehead. The tickle in my throat gets too intense and I bring my forearm to my mouth and cough for a solid 30 seconds. It's enough to wake Carter up. He looks up at me confused.

"s**t, you've got a fever," Evan says. "Probably from being outside in the cold all morning."

Carter frowns at me. "Aurora, what the hell were you thinking going out in the cold like that?"

I shiver and Evan wraps a blanket around me. "I just wanted to get some air," I reply weakly. "I'm sorry."

I try my best not to cry and quickly wipe away a stray tear. Evan's face softens up and he pulls me into his lap, wrapping his arms around me to stop me from shivering so much. Katherine and Sam come running in with a cup of tea, urging me to drink.

Evan's parents are incredible. Katherine is a beautiful woman who looked absolutely fantastic for a women of 46, with gorgeous dark skin and voluminous 3c curls reaching her shoulders. Sam was equally handsome with kind green eyes, dirty blonde hair and the same crooked smile Evan boasted. Prior to today, I had never met Sam or Katherine but I now understand why Oliver, Rosalie and Carter adored them so much. They were incredibly sweet. As soon as I set foot in their house, I was treated like family. Sam is goof ball like Evan, cracking jokes and making me laugh so hard I cried.

"Thank you, Katherine," I say as I finish the tea.

"Oh hush now, sweetie," she chuckles. "You are always welcome here. Now just wait until I get my hands on that Oliver. I'll teach him a thing or two about how to treat a girl," she scolds and I can't help but laugh. She softens her face and gives me a hug. "Oliver really is a good boy, just has a bit of a temper on him. You shouldn't worry too much. He'll come to his senses. He always does."

"Mama," Evan calls out. "Any updates on him?"

She sighs. "I just got a call from Gabrielle (Carter's Mom). He's got guards on alert and several search teams combing through the territory looking for her. And I believe Rosalie is worried sick about you," she says pointing at Carter. "It won't be long until he figures out you're here."

I tense up and my hand goes instinctively to my cheek.

"Hey, don't worry. Carter and I will make sure he never puts hands on you again, you hear me? So just relax. Everything's gonna be ok," Evan reassures me, rubbing my aching back.

"Oh s**t, I've got 13 missed calls from Oliver and 17 from Rosie," Carter says, checking his phone. "I've got 20 texts too."

Evan pulls out his phone and turns it back on. "20 missed calls and 14 messages," he replies. "We're in trouble," he adds with a chuckle.

I feel guilty putting the guys through this. "I'm sorry," I whimper.

"Nope, we'll have none of that," Evan says giving me a squeeze. "You are my best friend and as your best friend, I am required to help you. It's in the best friend hand guide. Look it up sometime."

He winks at me and I laugh. I love this silly boy. He really has become my best friend.

"What am I? A sack of potatoes?" Carter interjects.

"Aww, is baby boy Carter jealous that our Luna likes me better?" Evan teases.

Cater rolls his eyes at him. I outstretch my arm to him and he happily plops on the bed and pulls me out of Evan's arms to give me a hug.

"I've got your back, your majesty," he whispers into my ear.

"Luna, are you hungry? I made you some soup, I can bring you a bowl if you like," Katherine asks.

"How come you're never this nice to me when I come to visit?" Evan whines.

She smacks him over the side of the head before turning to leave.

"You see what I have to deal with?" He complains, rubbing his head and combing his fingers through his short curls.

"You have a very kind mother," I say quietly. "You're very lucky."

"I know," he replies. "She's the best and she's your mom too now. I don't mind sharing."

I laugh at his silly antics and lay my head on his shoulder. Katherine comes back with several bowls of soup which the boys scarf down immediately. I'm not that hungry but force myself to eat since the boys literally watch me.

"You know I can do without the audience," I joke.

"Just making sure you eat, Luna. You're sick and you need to feed your body if you want to get better." Evan says, pushing a spoonful of soup into my mouth.

"I'm happy to see you and Evan get along so well," Sam laughs. "He always wanted a little sister. Now he has one. You can watch those- uh -cartoons he likes so much with him!" he says, grinning ear to ear.

"Dad!" Evan groans in embarrassment and I burst into laughter.

As I finish my bowl, we hear knocking at the front door. Sam checks to see who it is and comes running back into the room.

"It's the Alpha and his sister!" Sam says in hushed tones. "Lock the door. I'll stall for as long as I can!"

He steps out and Carter locks the door behind them and shoves a dresser in front of it to block the entrance.

Evan wraps me back up in the blanket and pulls me into his arms. My heart is racing and I fight the urge to burst into the tears. We hear shouting at the front door followed by angry footsteps. Oliver and Rosalie storm inside, stopping in front of our door. Oliver tries turning the door knob with no luck, infuriating him.

I whimper and Evan holds me tighter. Rio starts going crazy, barking and growling at the door.

"Open up now!" Oliver shouts.

We stay still and Oliver bangs on the door. Hearing his angry pounding reminds me of all the times Karina used to pound on the door whenever I tried to lock myself in the basement. I don't even know why I bothered. The

beatings were always ten times worse when I did and she always managed to get in.

“Carter, OPEN UP NOW!” He commands using his Alpha voice.

Carter struggles against the command. I make eye contact with him and nod, giving him the ok to let them in.

“I’m sorry,” he mouths as he walks to the door and removes the dresser.

I wrap my arms around Evan’s neck and hold on for dear life as I hear Carter unlock the door. Evan repositions the blanket over my head and holds me tighter.

“I got you,” he whispers.

Oliver and Rosalie burst in through the door. Rosalie runs to Carter and smacks him square in the jaw.

“What the actual f**k! Why didn’t you answer my calls? You had me worried sick!” She snaps at him. “I thought something happened to you!”

He doesn’t respond and pulls her into his arms, instantly calming her down. Meanwhile, I can feel Oliver’s angry stare on Evan and I. Rio jumps on the bed and snarls at him, baring his teeth.

“LET GO OF MY MATE!” He commands Evan.

Evan obeys orders, dropping his hands. I, however, refuse to let go of him. Oliver comes over and tries to yank me off of him. Rio charges and bites down on his arm. Oliver pushes him away and Rio goes flying off the bed, landing on the ground with a thump and a tiny yelp. He gets back on his feet and keeps barking.

“Oliver back off,” Carter snaps, shoving Oliver out of the way and standing in front of Evan and I. “You need to calm down.”

Oliver wraps his hands around Carter’s throat, pinning him against the wall and applying pressure. Carter starts gasping for air, desperately trying to push Oliver off but he’s too strong for him.

“Don’t f*****g tell me what to do!” he snarls.

“Oliver let go of him!” Rosalie pleads trying to pry his fingers off Carter’s neck. “Let go!”

Oliver loosens his grip but keeps Carter pinned against the wall.

“Young man, you better think about what you’re doing and who you’re hurting in my house!” Katherine warns. “Your Luna is watching. Is this the man you want her to see?”

He turns to look at me and I quickly hide my face from him and bury it in Evan’s chest, his scent helping me to keep from crying.

“Please stop,” I whimper. “Just let him go.”

Oliver drops Carter on the ground and walks over to me. His voice is soft when he speaks. “Come home with me,” he pleads. “I promise I’m not mad anymore. I forgive you, just-just come home.”

I feel a growl rumble through Evan’s chest.

“You forgive her?! Goddess, you are something else, you know that?” Evan scoffs.

“What the hell is that supposed to mean?” Oliver snarls.

“Son, don’t,” Sam scolds Evan as he places his hand on his shoulder.

My lungs decide this is the best time to act up and I go into a coughing fit. Evan rubs my back and pulls the blanket tighter over me.

“Is she sick?” Oliver asks sitting on the edge of the bed. “Baby, are you sick?”

“She has a fever and a cough,” Evan says bitterly. “She was outside all night thanks to your dumbass.”

Evan’s comment is enough to send Oliver into a snarling frenzy and Evan replies with the same energy.

“Evan!” Katherine snaps. “That’s enough from you too. Both of you need to calm down. You’re behaving like children in front of your Luna.”

They both stop and I hear tenderness in Oliver’s voice when he speaks to me again.

“Aurora come home, I’ll have Meghan look you over.”

“You don’t have to go home if you don’t want to,” Evan whispers in my ear and hugs me tightly. “You can stay right here if you want.”

“She’s coming home!” Oliver erupts, trying to take me out of Evan’s arms.

I scream and he lets go immediately.

“Baby, I’m not mad anymore. I won’t hurt you,” Oliver says with sadness in his voice.

I curl back up in Evan’s arms as he once again wraps the blanket around me.

“I’ll come home,” I whimper.

But I’m not staying. I just need to grab my things.

Reyna tries to protest so I block her out. Oliver attempts to reach for me, but I yelp and squirm away from him.

“P-please don’t touch me,” I beg, shaking my head. “E-Evan can take me.” Evan’s body tenses up. I know he doesn’t want me to go. “Please Evan?”

After a but of silence, he nods and shifts my body as he lifts me up. I bury my face in his chest to hide the bruise from Oliver. Carter walks over and helps Evan gently wrap the blanket around me. I see a hint of jealousy in Rosalie and Oliver’s eyes so I tap Carter on the shoulder.

“I’m ok, go with Ro. She needs you,” I whisper.

He walks over to Rosalie and steals a kiss from her lips, melting away her the tiny bit of jealousy in her eyes. I thank Katherine and Sam and Evan carries me back to the house while Oliver walks beside him, stealing glances at me every so often.

As Evan sets me down near the bed, the blanket slips, exposing my bruised face to Oliver and Rosalie.

Oliver’s eyes quickly fill to pure rage when he catches sight of the bruise on my cheek. He comes closer to inspect it but I quickly step back. I don’t want him touching me. He ignores my fear and grabs me by my chin to have a look.

I feel the sparks when our skin touch, but I'm also terrified of him. My legs start to shake.

"Who did this to you? Who did this?" He snaps, pointing at my bruised cheek. "And don't you dare lie to me."

I stare at him dumbfounded. He really doesn't remember? I want to scream but all I manage to get out is a pathetic squeak.

"You're such a sack of s**t, Oliver," Evan steps in, pulling me away from him. "How could you pretend to not know?"

"What the f**k are you-"

"You did this to her!" Evan shouts. "How could you, man? After everything she's been through, how could you f*****g hit her?"

Oliver looks angry. "You're lying. This isn't funny, Evan. I would never do something like this to her. Ever!" He tries to come closer but I flinch and hide behind Evan. Oliver looks back confused, straining to remember last night. "N-No. No. I didn't." He turns to me. "I couldn't-" He takes a few steps towards me. "Tell me it isn't true. I didn't hit you last night, did I?"

Evan wraps his arms around my shivering body. Carter starts searching through the cupboards for more blankets.

"Aurora, I didn't mean it. I-I was drunk. Please forgive me! Don't be scared of me, please," he begs, getting on his knees.

Forgive him. He didn't mean it! Reyna whines. Our mate wouldn't hurt us on purpose!

I go into another coughing fit and Carter wraps me up in two blankets.

"Aurora, I'm so sorry. I-I don't even remember hitting you, I was so, so drunk -"

He continues to explain himself and begs for forgiveness, but I'm no longer listening. Instead, Karina's drunken episode keeps replaying in my head. Last night brought me back to all the horrors I survived with my family. All the evil I refuse to speak about.

My heart starts pounding and I focus on my shallow breathes. I feel like I'm choking and I can't seem to get enough air in my lungs.

The fear, the anger, my secrets, my coughing... it's all too much and I start to feel light headed and dizzy. I lean into Evan for support and before I know it, I'm surrounded by darkness.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 38

Aurora's POV

The wet earth feels amazing against my bare feet. I look around and am pleased to be surrounded by so many trees and flowers. I look down and notice I'm wearing a plain white dress. I examine my arms and legs. No scars. Before me, a small purple orb of fire floats in mid air. It's beautiful. I reach out to touch it but it disappears before I can, reappearing a few feet further away from me. I try to catch it and soon ensue on a chase after it. It takes me deeper into the woods before I completely lose sight of it.

I look around and realize I'm all alone, there's not a creature in sight. For some reason, however, this doesn't bother me. A peaceful quiet surrounds me and I stretch out on a patch of grass. I could stay here forever.

My peace, however, is suddenly interrupted by a soft voice.

"Aurora," it whispers as a gentle breeze washes over me.

"Hello?" I call out. "Who's there?"

I hear it whisper my name again, this time much louder, and decide to get up. A gust of wind pushes past me and I hear my name loud and clear. I follow the direction the wind is blowing towards and discover a large stream, the purple fire orb waiting patiently along its shore. I walk up to it, mesmerized by its violet flames. I catch a glimpse of my reflection in the water and nearly jump when I notice my black hair is now white and practically glowing.

I suddenly get the feeling that I'm no longer alone and look up to see a figure standing across the stream. A pink orb floats beside her. I look closer and am shocked to see that the other person is me.

Is she a reflection? I wonder.

We both venture into the water, taking slow and tentative steps. As we grow nearer, I realize the other me has silver grey eyes, nothing like my honey gold eyes. The floating pink orb beside her is made entirely of water.

Curious about one another, we both reach out to touch our hands. When our hands meet, I feel a jolt of warm electricity flow between us and we both step back.

“Who are you?” I ask.

“I could ask you the same thing...” she replies.

“My name is Aurora.”

Her eyes nearly pop out. “You’re Aurora?”

I nod and a sweet smile spreads across her face.

“I’m Celina.”

“Celina?”

The sound of my own voice wakes me up. As my senses return, I realize I’m being embraced by two strong arms around my waist and shoulders. I feel safe and snuggle up closer, wanting to take in all their warmth. Reyna purrs happily as I inhale their honey and green apple scent.

Honey and green apples?

My eyes burst open as panic takes over. I push Oliver’s body away from me, yanking his arms off of me. He opens his eyes, grabbing my arms to stop me from hitting him.

“Aurora stop! Please stop it!” He pleads.

But I don’t and scramble out of bed. I look around the room and recognize it as a hospital room. I’m wearing a hospital gown and my medallion is sitting neatly on the table next to the bed. My face burns up and I grab a blanket and wrap it around myself. I feel a body come up behind me and hold me tightly.

“Aurora calm down!”

Recognizing Evan’s voice, I turn to face him and wrap my arms around him.

“Hey there ... calm down,” he says softly, hugging me back.

I take several deep breaths and catch my bearings

“What happened?” I ask.

“You passed out at the house,” Oliver answers, his voice quiet. “You’ve been out cold for hours.”

I glance back at him and my heart breaks. He’s extremely pale and his eyes are puffy from crying so much.

“You had us worried there for a while. Your fever kept spiking up and down and your heart rate was crazy! Meghan couldn’t figure out what was wrong with you. The only thing that finally helped stabilize you was Oliver,” Evan explains.

“I can leave if you want,” Oliver says, his voice shaking.

I watch quietly as he stares solemnly at the ground, getting off the bed and adjusting his clothes. Just then, Carter and Meghan walk in.

“You’re awake!” Carter says excitedly, pulling me into his arms and lifting me off the ground. “Thank Moon Goddess!”

I hug him back and I hear Meghan’s voice begin to speak to me.

“Aurora, I’d like to run some tests to make sure you’re ok and then I’d like to talk to you about some things.”

Meghan checks my vitals and sends me upstairs to get some blood work done and a CT scan. Once the tests are complete, I’m taken back to my room.

“Well your vitals are great, but we’ll have to wait for the blood and CT scans to get a better picture of your health,” she says, looking through my chart. “I’d like to keep you here over night until I can confirm you’re ok to go home.”

I nod in response.

“Aurora, I have some questions in regards to your wolf,” she continues, shifting in her seat.

I give her a puzzled look.

Questions? About what?

I steal a glance at Carter and see that he's equally confused.

Ok, good. He hasn't said anything.

"What do you mean?" I ask.

"Well, while we were trying to figure out what could be the cause of your illness, Oliver mentioned that you still haven't had your first shift," she states. "He also mentioned that your wolf doesn't appear to be interested in shifting."

I turn to Oliver who looks like he'd rather be anywhere else but here right now.

Really? This again?

"Why does it matter that I don't want to shift?" I ask defensively. "What does that have to do with anything?"

Meghan frowns, clearly aware that she is treading on thin ice with this subject. "Our wolves are a part of us," she begins, picking her words carefully. "To deny them access to the outside world and not shift is detrimental to our health."

Angry, I lash out at Oliver. "Seriously, Oliver? You're that angry I won't shift and do the pack run that you've brought Meghan here to convince me to do so?"

"No, Aurora that's not what I -"

Meghan interrupts him, her voice turning serious. "Aurora, your wolf was awakened over 5 years ago. Refraining from shifting will kill you. You need to let your wolf out soon. I think this fainting episode is a sign that your wolf's health is starting to deteriorate."

"My wolf is fine," I sigh. "I was just ... overwhelmed and a little tired."

"Is there a reason your wolf refuses to shift?" Meghan asks. "Do you feel her growing weak or fading perhaps?"

Weak? I'm not weak! Reyna snarls.

I shake my head. "No. In fact, I feel her getting stronger with every passing day ever since I came to River Moon."

Our mate makes us stronger! Reyna gushes.

“So why doesn’t she want to shift?” Oliver asks, his voice just above a whisper.

We have enough on our plate with Carter knowing. No one else must find out until after our shift when we can protect ourselves better.

“She says it’s not the right timing.” I sigh, annoyed with the subject. “She has a mind of her own. I can’t force her to shift.”

“What does she mean by ‘not the right timing’?” Meghan asks.

“Well isn’t it obvious?” Carter interjects and I feel myself tense up.

Please don’t betray me, Carter. Please I’m begging you.

“Silver wolves only shift under special conditions. For one thing, they don’t shift on their 13th birthdays like the rest of us. They’re special to Moon Goddess so they can only shift on the first full moon following their awakening.” We all look at him with confusion. He sighs with irritation and proceeds to explain further. “Aurora can’t complete her first shift until there’s a full moon,” he explains, rolling his eyes. “Which would be on the 30th of this month.”

Oliver perks up. “That’s a little more than a week from today. Well we can definitely have the ceremony then.”

10 days? I have to find Celina in 10 days?

That’s plenty of time... You’ve already confirmed that she’s alive.

But that was just a dream! I snap. Besides we only spoke for like 20 seconds. I have still have no idea where she is or how to meet her!

That wasn’t a dream...

There you go being cryptic again!

Oliver interrupts my internal dialogue. “Why didn’t you just tell me that, Aurora? I would have understood.”

I should have thought of this lie myself. Now how am I supposed to come up with a good excuse?

Carter once again comes to my rescue. "Silver wolves are very secretive due to how highly sought after they are. It's the reason they don't typically live in packs but rather family clans so they can stay hidden and safe. It's very rare for a silver wolf family to submit to an Alpha and his pack. Gold wolves are no different in terms of trust. To befriend either a silver or a gold wolf is an accomplishment in it of itself. It's Aurora's nature to keep secrets. I'm sure the rest of her family is the same."

"How did you know about her shift if silver wolves are so secretive?" Evan asks.

"The only reason I knew is because my grandfather spent his life studying the children of the Moon and Sun and he taught me what he knew. Like I said, I'm sure Aurora's wolf was only acting on instinct."

Carter looks to me for confirmation and I nod in return. "With all the rogue attacks happening, my wolf just didn't feel safe telling you when my shift was. I'm sorry," I lie almost seamlessly and surprise myself with how convincing I sound.

Oliver seems to accept this lie, making me feel like crap. I curl up in my bed, suddenly exhausted from keeping up this farce. With the situation now cleared, Meghan excuses herself to go check on other patients and receive the results of the CT scan, leaving me alone with the boys.

"Aurora, do you think we can talk? Alone?" Oliver asks, clearly nervous I might reject him.

I sense Carter and Evan's uneasiness. They're still angry at Oliver and quite frankly, I'm still afraid.

"Please? I promise I'll leave as soon as I'm done," he pleads.

Reyna whines, begging me to forgive him already. I turn to face Evan and Carter. "It's ok. I'll be fine."

They make their way outside, reminding me they'll be by the door and to call out if I need anything. Alone with Oliver, I pull my knees to my chest, making

sure the blanket covers my legs and wait for him to start. He sits on the edge of the bed, fidgeting with the blanket.

"I-I don't remember much of what happened when I came home last night. All I know is I was angry at you. I was angry that you weren't telling me the truth. I was just so full of anger that you were keeping things from me that I couldn't see past my own feelings. I didn't try to understand what you wanted. I ignored your feelings and I wasn't being the mate I promised to be. I'm sorry." I look up at him and see the guilt in his eyes. "Aurora, what exactly did I do to you? I don't remember anything and it's killing me that I don't know what happened."

I swallow hard and take a few breathes before I explain myself. "I hate the smell of alcohol. My mom used to do the worst things to me when she was drunk," I pause, trying hard to hold back tears. "When you came home last night and I smelt the booze, you reminded me of her," I confess. "You elbowed me in the face by accident but that wasn't what scared me. You made me relive one of the worst nights of my life, Oliver and I remembered all the other times she used to beat me until I couldn't move anymore ... until her own muscles ached from beating me."

Oliver crawls closer to me, cupping my face gently in his hands. "I'm so sorry. I'm so, so sorry. I don't think there are enough words to explain just how much I hate myself right now for doing this to you. I don't- I don't deserve your forgiveness! I'm so sorry I hurt you. I'm so f*****g sorry," he cries, gasping for air. "I don't know what's wrong with me."

I feel those amazing sparks spread across my face as he touches me. But I don't want to give in to him so easily.

"Oliver this can't keep happening. You can't keep letting your anger get the best of you!"

"I know," he nods. "I'm sorry I keep putting you through more trauma," he whimpers. "Ma-maybe you are better off living with Evan's parents. That way I can't hurt you anymore."

I think about his proposal. My mind drifts off to the day he attacked Evan for our accidental kiss and the angry look in his eyes from last night. I hate his controlling demeanor.

But what about the good? Reyna argues. What about his soft kisses that keep away the nightmares? What about all the times he's defended and protected you the way no one has in years. What about the way he makes you feel safe with just his touch?

"I don't want to live without you Oliver," I finally respond.

He looks up at me with hope in his beautiful blue eyes.

"But that doesn't mean I can't," I add, making the smile on his face fall. "I will give you one more chance," I say holding up one finger towards him. "One more chance to prove to me that you can control your anger and that you will never hurt me again. And if you fail, I will leave, Oliver. I promise you I will leave and I will never come back to you. Even if it kills me inside, I will leave you."

He grabs my hands and kisses them gently. "Thank you. I-I promise, I won't ever touch you or hurt you again."

"Pinky swear?" I say, holding up my pinky towards him.

I know it may seem childish, but to me, pinky swears are the most sacred of promises. My dad – err- Emiliano and I used to make all of our promises this way and never once were our promises broken. Ever. Oliver stares at me with confusion but I am dead serious and he locks his pinky with mine.

"I pinky swear," he declares. "I will never hurt you again."

He looks into my eyes and I can see the sincerity in his. He won't hurt me like that again. I crawl into his arms, resting my back against his chest and pulling the blanket across my legs. He runs his fingers down my arm and into my hand, interlocking them with mine. He pulls my hand up to his lips, kissing each knuckle tenderly.

I can feel Reyna jumping with joy that I've forgiven our mate and rest happily in Oliver's arms in comfortable silence. Oliver gently caresses my bruised cheek, inspecting it slowly and a deep sadness settles in his eyes. He leans forward to kiss it, sending tingly sparks across my face.

"I'm sorry I missed our date," I finally say, breaking the silence.

"It's alright," he replies, leaning forward and kissing my cheek again. "We can try again soon. What's your schedule like this coming week?" he chuckles softly in my ear.

I bring up a finger to my chin and look pensive. "Oh I don't know. I'm a very busy girl, ya know?" I tease.

He holds up two fingers. "Two days. I have an important business meeting coming up on Monday. After that, I'm all yours."

"Ok," I say, poking his dimples. "Two days."

I sit in his arms for a while, tracing my fingers along his jaw line and down his neck and chest. He watches me as I explore his body, sitting perfectly still. I reach up and touch every curve on his face, poking his dimples and caressing his cheeks.

"Aurora?"

"Mhmm?"

He hesitates. "I-I think you should see a therapist. It's not healthy to keep all your feelings bottled up," he sighs. "I know you don't like talking to me about those things, but it might be useful to speak to someone else."

I scrunch my nose in disagreement.

I don't want to talk about those things. I just want to forget and move on...

"Aurora, don't shoot it down completely. Just think about it, ok? I know you want to forget but you need to let it out. You need to process what happened-"

"I know what happened to me, Oliver. I'm not confused about the last five years. In fact, I even understand why my mom did those things to me. I know why Salvador tortured me. I know why Mia pretended I didn't exist. I know what I felt all those years and I don't want to relive it with some random person who doesn't understand the situation and who doesn't care about me!" I huff, a few tears spilling over. I take several deep breaths to calm myself down. "Look, I know you're just trying to help, but I don't want to speak with a therapist."

"Then let someone in, Aurora, please!" His face turns serious.

I stopped confiding in people about the horrors I survived after what happened in that stupid supply closet. Could I really trust Oliver with my pain?

He is our mate for a reason...

"What if what I have to say is too evil or disgusting? Would you think less of me?"

"Of course not!" He grabs my face and pulls it closer to his. "You are the bravest girl I've ever met and you have the biggest heart," he smiles. "Nothing you say could ever make me love you any less." He wipes my tears with his thumbs and kisses me gently on the forehead. "You must have been so scared all those years," he whispers. "I'm so sorry."

I hide my face in his chest and shift my legs up closer, causing the blanket to slide off onto the floor. He looks down at my newly exposed scarred upper right thigh. My hospital gown has ridden up quite a bit and just barely hides my most horrific scar. Oliver carefully grabs the hem of my hospital gown and gently pulls it down. I grab his wrist to stop him and he looks at me with confusion.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 39

*** Aurora's POV***

Trigger warning: Violence depicted

I start talking quickly before I lose the courage to tell him about the shameful carving on my body.

"My mom was never a really a drinker when I was growing up, but then Dad died and she-," I begin, unsure of what I'm saying. "S-she needed to grieve."

Oliver tenses up so I place a hand on his cheek to let him know that I'm ok.

"She would drink until she blacked out then take out all her anger on me. I'm sure if I were to ask her today about what she did to me, she wouldn't even remember half of it," I sigh. "This one time, I came home from school with a bruise on my neck. A couple of kids had slammed my head against the lockers and one of the locker knobs was smashed up against my neck and made this big ol' bruise," I laugh bitterly, at the cruel memory. "She thought it was a hickey. That night, she went out for drinks like she always did and came

back beyond wasted. S-she's not a particularly nice drunk and went on a rampage when she returned. I don't remember what I did but I know I upset her. She-she came down to the basement and pulled out a knife."

I feel Oliver's heart beat faster in his chest.

"She made me undress myself from the waist down and took the knife," I continue, my voice trembling as I fight back tears. "And carved the word 'Put{a}' {slut} on me," I sob. "So that every time I got dressed, I would be reminded of what she thought of me."

I look down to lift the hospital gown up higher and lower my panties a little, exposing my skin up to where my thigh meets my hips. The word "Put{a}" sits permanently on my hip bone, forever disgusting me. I look back up at Oliver and see a mix of anger and anguish in his eyes. I know he will never forgive her for what she'd done to me.

"Oliver, please say something," I croak, growing anxious with his silence.

He traces his fingers along the scar making my skin tingle and gently pulls the gown back down to cover me. His eyes shift between silver and blue as he trembles with rage.

"How could she do this to you?" he finally explodes.

I grab his face and try to calm him down. "Oliver, I'm ok. Look at me, look at me," I whisper. "I survived."

He struggles to contain his tears and looks away. "What else did she do to you?"

I don't respond. My entire body is covered with hideous scars, each one with its own cruel story. How do I explain five years of torture?

"Judging by your silence, I'm guessing too much to tell," he snarls, balling up his fists.

I pull my body away from him and hop off the bed. Hurt flashes in his eyes and he reaches out to pull me back. I sigh.

"I want to show you something," I say, trying to relax him.

He nods and lets go of me. I walk to the door and lock it from the inside.

Am I crazy?

Reyna laughs. No. Eventually, you'll have to show him. So why not now? she encourages.

I remember showing myself to Rosalie and Kehlani. I'd never felt so free.

I slowly walk back towards the bed, taking deep breaths to slow my racing heart. With shaking hands, I reach over my shoulders and tug on the strings of my gown. I undo the last string and the gown falls to ground, leaving me just in my panties. I'd forgotten I wasn't wearing a bra and turn red with embarrassment while my hands immediately go up to hide my breasts. I hear his breath hitch as I stand almost naked in front of him. I look into his eyes, expecting to see disgust or pity but I'm shocked to see neither. Instead there is only love in his eyes.

He reaches out a trembling hand to touch the scars along my abdomen, paying particular attention to target shaped burn scar in the middle of my stomach. I know he wants to ask where it came from, but he remains silent and instead leans forward to kiss every scar on my torso, making my skin tingle and goosebumps rise. He gently nudges me to turn around and I comply. I feel him gently trace along the scars on the backs of my legs before he suddenly grabs my hips and leans forward to kiss the tequila scars on my back. I flinch a little, but quickly relax as his soft lips cause sparks to tingle across my body.

"You are so beautiful," he says.

I'm dumbfounded by his reaction. "But my scars-

"Are a part of you," he murmurs. "You're a warrior, Aurora. You have battle scars that show just how strong you truly are. You're the strongest person I've ever met and your scars tell a story. A story of all the pain you endured, every obstacle you overcame, every scream you ever cried. How could I not love them when they show me who you are?"

He doesn't think I'm ugly?

I told you, Reyna purrs. He loves us.

"I love you Aurora and there is nothing that could ever change that. No amount of scar tissue or pain will ever stop me from wanting to spend the rest

of my life with you. You are the most beautiful girl I've ever laid eyes on and you are perfect just the way you are."

I turn to face him, searching his eyes for the truth. He looks back at me with so much love, my heart skips a beat. No one's ever looked at me this way before. He reaches up to grab my arms and gently pulls them down to my sides.

"Mine."

I hold my breath while he stares at my bare b...reasts and hear a growl rumble through his chest as he licks his l!ps. Losing all semblance of self-control, he leans forward, running his tongue up my belly and in between my b...reasts. A gasp escapes my l!ps at the sensation. I feel myself getting we..t and I blush as dirty thoughts flood my mind.

Calm down, Aurora! I snap.

Reyna purrs excitedly and my heart starts to race as I anticipate his next move. He looks up at me as he begins to massage my right b...reast, rolling my n****e between his thumb and forefinger. My n*****s harden with excitement, begging for his attention. I moan and he grins, greedily taking the encouragement. He pulls me onto his lap and I straddle him as he takes my left n****e in his mouth, lightly suckling it. I arch my back and pull his head closer, pushing myself deeper into his mouth.

"Oliver..." I moan, closing my eyes and letting the pleasure explode inside me.

He rolls me onto my back and climbs on top of me, continuing to work his experienced tongue against my n*****s until I drip between my th!ghs and tremble. I feel his erection grow against me, exciting me even more and I rock my h!ps against him. He moves his l!ps up my chest to the mark on my neck and grazes his teeth against it. I tilt my neck to the side to give him better access and he bites down on it. I cry out as waves of ecstasy wash over me. Suddenly, he pulls away from me, panting and I whimper in frustration.

"We should stop," he pants, getting up from the bed. "I don't want our first time to be in a hospital room," he chuckles.

I'm slightly disappointed but nod in agreement and gather up the gown from the floor and put it back on. He walks over to the bathroom and returns with a damp wash cloth.

“Take it off,” he says, pointing towards my groin.

I blush bright red and he laughs. I remove my panties and he walks over to me and slowly moves his hand up my gown. He gently wipes between thighs and throws the cloth away in the hamper before grabbing my overnight bag and handing me a fresh pair of panties. When I’m finished changing, he unlocks the door.

He sits on the edge of the bed and looks at me. I blush as I feel his eyes roam my body and I remember his lips on me.

He gives me a mischievous grin. “What are you thinking about?”

I turn a deep shade of red and fumble with the gown. “N-nothing,” I stutter. My wandering eyes land on the hard lump in his sweats and I lose the ability to form coherent thoughts.

He looks at me with amusement, raising his eyebrows. “It’s rude to stare, ya know?”

“I-I’m hungry,” I blurt out.

I did not just say that!

I mentally kick myself while Oliver looks at me with shock before bursting into laughter. I want the earth to swallow me whole as I burn with embarrassment.

“I think I can help with that,” he teases.

“N-no, that’s not...that’s not what I-“

Oliver has mercy on me. “I’ll bring you something to eat,” he laughs. “Besides, I think I need a cold shower,” he winks. He kisses me on the lips and walks out, leaving me alone to compose myself.

Reyna?

Yes?

I smile to myself. He touched me.

And how did that make you feel?

I wanted more, I blush.

She laughs. There's nothing wrong with wanting our mate.

That's not it, I say, butterflies fluttering in my belly. He touched me and I didn't once think of Andrew...

Thirty minutes pass by before Oliver and Evan return with soup for me. Oliver makes me sit between his legs on the bed while he spoon feeds me and Evan watches with amusement. It seems the boys have figured out their differences while they went to fetch my food.

"You've single handily managed to turn Oliver into a love sick puppy. This is incredible," Evan jokes, scrambling for his phone. "Carter has to see this."

Oliver snarls at him, making Evan burst into laughter as he snaps a picture. I lean over and k!ss Oliver on the cheek, relaxing him instantly. He grabs my hand and k!sses my fingertips. Evan bursts into another fit of laughter.

"Back when we were training, Oliver was the toughest, scariest wolf you'd ever met. He could take on four opponents at once like it was nothing," he laughs. "Now look at him! You got him wrapped around your finger!"

"Evan, shut up before I kick your a...ss right here!" Oliver snaps.

"Oh, did Evan hurt the big bad wolf's feelings?" I tease, winking back at Evan.

Oliver rolls his eyes. I pull his ear to my mouth.

"You're my big bad wolf," I murmur.

His eyes darken as he looks back at me and I pull him into a k!ss. I hear Evan groan with disgust.

"I can't wait for you to find your mate and act gross," I laugh as I pull away from Oliver.

Evan groans with annoyance. "Not a chance!"

"\$50 bucks says you turns into mush the second you see her," Oliver bets him.

"You're on," he replies.

I roll my eyes at their immaturity. "I'm surrounded by idiots," I mumble.

I ignore their offended looks and turn back to my soup. After I eat, Evan excuses himself and Meghan comes in with my CT scans. It appears I'm all clear to go home in the morning and Oliver looks excited. When she leaves, Oliver and I curl up on the hospital bed and I drift off to sleep in his arms.

We're up early in the morning, Oliver eager to take me home. Meghan drops by to see us off. When we arrive at the house, Oliver carries me in, refusing to set me down for a second.

"I can walk!" I protest as we ascend one of the stair cases.

"I'm never letting you go again," He teases. "Your mine!"

He carries me to our room and sets me down on the bed. "Where's Rio?" I mumble

"Evan took him out for a walk, they should be back in about half an hour."

Oliver gets off the bed, walks to the closet, and throws a silk robe at me. "Put that on," he calls out before he disappears into the bathroom.

Confused, I do as I'm told and strip down and wait for him to return. He comes out, seemingly pleased with himself and carries me into the bathroom. I'm hit with the amazing smell of cinnamon and roses. There are candles lit in every corner of the bathroom and the bathtub is filled with steamy hot water, rose petals, and a sizzling pink bath bomb. I stare at him in amazement.

"I hope you like it," he smiles. "You deserve to relax for a bit."

He slowly unties the string of my robe, keeping his eyes on mine and it slips off my shoulders so I'm bare in front of him. His eyes darken but he's clearly on a mission and refuses to give in to his urges. He lifts me up and gently sets me into the bathtub. The hot water feels so good on my tight muscles and I let out a sigh as I sink lower into the water. Oliver turns to leave.

"You're not joining me?" I blurt out. I blush furiously as I realize what I just said and he smirks at me.

“Do you want me to?” he asks, clearly amused.

“I...”

He chuckles softly. “Sorry Aurora, but I don’t have that much self-control. I might make you mine if I join you.”

My mind goes a million miles an hour at the thought of him ravishing my body with his soft lips and Reyna becomes restless, liking the idea.

Mine! She squeals. Mine! Mine!

He crouches down beside the tub, carefully massaging the bruise on my cheek. I lean into his hand, enjoying his touch.

“Profitez de votre bain, mon amour,” he whispers.

My knees go weak when he speaks French.

He kisses my shoulder, sending sparking throughout my body before stepping out to let me enjoy the quiet to myself. I sit back and let the hot water work its magic on me, letting my mind drift aimlessly.

After a while of soaking, I clean myself off and get out of the tub. I get dressed in a plain black t-shirt, jeans, a cardigan and apply some concealer and foundation to my bruise. I walk barefoot out to the bedroom with a hairbrush in hand. Just then, Oliver walks in dressed in black jeans and a white t-shirt and a towel draped on his shoulder. His hair appears to be wet. He must have taken a shower in the hallway bathroom.

I hear the pitter patter of paws and Rio runs in, jumping with joy to greet me.

“Did you enjoy your bath?” Oliver asks.

I nod happily and wiggle the hair brush in his face. “Will you braid my hair?” I ask with my sweetest voice, giving him puppy eyes.

I give him a quick peck on the lips and he instantly complies, taking me over to the couch. He gently brushes my long black hair and combs through the tangles. He then proceeds to pull my hair into a loose French braid. When he’s finished, he gives my thighs a quick pat and I rush to the bathroom to see his work.

“Remind me to thank Rosalie the next time I see her!” I call out from the bathroom and he laughs.

I grab a pair of ballet flats and slip back out into the main room. I search for my overnight bag and pull out my gold medallion. Oliver groans.

“No, please don’t wear that! I can’t smell you when you have it on,” he pouts. “I miss your scent.”

I give him a stern look and I place it on my neck. “I have to wear it. It’s a gift from Moon Goddess. It would be disrespectful not to,” I say, walking over and kissing him on his cheek.

He frowns, displeased with my answer.

“Tell you what, I’ll only wear it during the day and at night I’ll leave it on the night stand,” I say, trying to compromise.

He sighs but accepts my proposal.

With Rio at our heels, we make our way down to the dining room for breakfast and enjoy some crepes with fresh fruit and Nutella. As we finish our meal, Oliver receives a call from Wesley.

The smile on his face quickly disintegrates as he gets to his feet.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 40

*** Aurora’s POV ***

“How many?” Oliver asks. His eyes are a storm of fear and concern. “We’ll be there as soon as we can. I’ll send the emergency medical team and some warriors over immediately.”

He hangs up and his blue eyes fog over as he mind-links his orders. Carter and Evan come running in.

“Evan, stay here with Aurora,” he commands. “Carter, let’s go.”

“Oliver wait! What’s going on?”

“There’s a massive rogue attack at Cerulean Sea,” he says kissing my forehead. “Stay here with Evan. We’ll be right back, I promise.”

He turns to go but I pull his arm back.

“Oliver, I can help. Let me go with you and I’ll heal al-“

“No, you’re staying here with Evan.”

“But I can-“

“Enough, Aurora!” He snaps. “You’re staying here with Evan where you’ll be safe.”

“Are you going to stay safe?” I retort. “This works both ways, Oliver.”

He glares at me. “I’m done arguing with you.”

“Well I’m not!” I shout back. “There are children at that pack. My friend is there and her baby is there! You can’t ask me not to help her when she’s been there for me!” He hesitates and I take the opportunity to make my argument. “Evan can guard me and I promise I’ll only be at the hospital. I won’t go anywhere else. Please, let me help!”

Oliver looks at me, clearly unsure of what decision to make. He turns to Evan.

“If something happens to her, I’ll-“

“You have my word, Alpha. I will guard her with my life,” Evan replies.

I’m going? He’s letting me go!

Oliver kisses my forehead. “Goddess I better not regret this,” he murmurs. “Move out!” He orders.

We all walk out of the house and the boys hide behind some trees to shift. Evan kneels before me and I hop on before several of our warriors join us on the run to the borders.

Cerulean Sea is a war zone when we arrive. I see rogue bodies lying lifeless on the ground while Cerulean Sea, Blood Moon, and Jade Crescent soldiers

continue fighting. Oliver and our soldiers jump into the action, killing several rogues in a matter of seconds.

As Evan carefully maneuvers his way through the battlefield, I get the unsettling feeling that I'm being watched. I crouch lower on Evan's back and search my surroundings but see no one.

I must be nervous, I tell myself.

Finally after about 10 minutes of hiding and sneaking around, Evan and I arrive at the Cerulean Sea pack hospital.

Unknown #1 POV

"Master, the girl came just as you predicted. She arrived with the River Moon idiots," I mind-link my master.

"Is she using her powers?"

"No, master."

"Has she shifted?"

"No, master."

I hear a growl in my head and I whimper as pain surges through my body.

"What is that stupid b***h playing at?!" Master roars.

"I-I don't know, M-Master," I stutter, the fear growing inside me.

Master is silent for a while and I become anxious.

"I want to see," she orders.

Oh no...

Suddenly a piercing sensation radiates from my eyes and I cry out in pain as Master takes over my vision. I lift my head from behind the bush I'm hiding in and steal a peak at the stupid girl.

"I see the girl is indeed marked...You werewolves and your stupid mates... pathetic...but it might come as an advantage. Have some of your

mutts corner her in that hospital. I want to see if she knows how to use her powers. The rest can retreat,” Master orders.

“Yes Master.”

“I want you to follow the girl from now on. I want to know her every move.”

“Yes Master.”

“Don’t disappoint me, you mutt,” Master snarls before giving me back my eyes and cutting our link.

I sigh in relief when the pain fades. I mind-link two of my men to go after the target.

Just you wait, Aurora. Master is coming for you...

****Oliver’s POV****

My wolf whines as I watch Evan take Aurora to the pack hospital.

It’s ok, Michael. Evan’s got her. He won’t let anything happen to her.

I turn my attention back to the battlefield and charge at a rogue attacking Carter. I pounce on the rogue, sinking my teeth in his neck and ripping out his throat.

Suddenly, pain surges through my side and the wind is knocked out of me. A filthy rogue pins me down by my chest and attempts to snap it’s disgusting teeth at my face. His matted grey fur, his nasty yellow eyes and his musty smell are enough to almost make me puke. I use my paws to hold him back as he inches closer and closer to my face. The rogue is then abruptly ripped off of me by a black wolf.

Wesley.

Wesley snaps the rogues neck and looks back up at me, giving me a quick nod. I get up on my paws and return the gesture. I charge and kill several rogues, quickly losing count.

Why are there so many of these fuckers?

I continue to fight and kill those filthy bastards, somehow managing to avoid being bitten. Suddenly, I hear a young Jade Crescent wolf cry out as a rogue sinks its teeth into his throat. I run to his aid, biting down on the rogue's left flank. The rogue lets out a piercing howl and releases its grip on the young wolf. It turns its attention to me, snarling viciously. I bare my teeth at it and it charges at me. It manages to scratch my shoulder with its claws, drawing blood. Enraged, I slam into it head on, knocking it to the ground. I bite down on its neck, snapping and killing it instantly.

Before I have time to react, all the remaining rogues start to retreat back into the woods. Several of our soldiers try to follow them, hoping to capture a few.

Finally, I sigh. Looks like we won this battle.

I hear the young wolf whimper, grabbing my attention. Blood oozes from his wound and he whines as he lays paralyzed with pain on the ground..

I have to get this boy to the hospital.

I clamp my jaws onto his hind legs and drag him forwards. Alpha Jonathan comes up to help me when I get a mind-link from Evan.

"Alpha, Rogues in the hospital. We need help!"

Aurora...

Aurora's POV

Evan shifts and slips on a pair of shorts before we make our way to the infirmary where several wolves are being dragged in. Dr. Melanie sees us enter and rushes over.

"Luna Aurora, thank Moon Goddess you're here. We need your help with someone!" She says, leading us towards the pediatric wing. "One of our soldiers brought him in. He's badly wounded."

She takes us to all to a room. From outside, we can hear whimpering and crying and my heart shatters when I realize it's a child's cries. Dr. Melanie leads us in and the crying grows louder. A young boy, no more than 6, writhes in pain in bed. As I come closer, I see a huge bite mark on his tiny abdomen so I rush to his side.

"Hey there, sweet boy," I coo, smoothing his curly hair in an attempt to calm him down. "It's ok." I turn to Melanie. "What happened?"

"He was alone at the borders when a rogue attacked him. It's how we realized they were here."

"I-I want my mommy!" He pleads, tears running down his little face.

"It's ok. We'll get you to your mom soon, ok?"

I place my hand on his chest, letting my energy flow through him. Just as I thought, there is witch poison in his system.

"I'm going to need that vial of lavender oil," I call out.

Evan comes over to my side, shifting uneasily on his feet.

"I have to do this, Evan."

"I know," he sighs, giving me a quick squeeze. "Just make it quick."

I turn back to the boy and begin my work, allowing the electricity to enter his body from my fingertips. Immediately, I feel a burning sensation shoot up my arm and I cry out while my temple throbs and the pain in my hand intensifies. I scream as I absorb the last of the poison. His wound stops bleeding and quickly closes up as he lets out a sigh. I let go and Evan quickly lays me down on the floor as I tremble with pain. Gritting my teeth, I try to hold back my screams and ball up my fists until my knuckles turn white.

"You need to breath. Aurora, breathe!" Evan whimpers as I continue to cry.

A nurse runs in with the vial of lavender oil and hands it to Evan. He places it's underneath my nose and I inhale deeply. Beads of sweat form across my forehead as the pain slowly subsides and I start to cough.

Evan helps me to a chair and I try to slow my breathing. The little boy hops off the bed and walks to my side, grabbing hold of my hand.

"Are you ok?" He asks, wide-eyed.

"Yeah, just a little dizzy," I reply, forcing a smile.

He looks so worried and scared. Tears well up in his eyes which he quickly tries to wipe away.

“M-My name is Aurora,” I say, trying to calm him down.

“Rora?” he repeats and chuckle at his mispronunciation.

“What’s yours?” I ask.

He blinks hard and snuffles. “I-Isaiah.”

“Isaiah, you are so brave!” I say pulling him into my lap and he begins to cry. “You are so brave. You’re mommy would be so proud of you for being so strong.”

His body trembles. “I’m sorry!” He hiccups. “I-I shouldn’t ha-have gone to the bor-ders by myself!”

I grab his little face and wipe away his tears with my thumbs. “Hey, what matters now is that you’re ok. Just promise me you won’t do it again.”

He nods and wipes his eyes furiously. I kiss the top of his head, making him blush.

“More soldiers just came in for treatment. I have to go,” Melanie calls out as she turns to leave. “I’ll check in with you soon!”

I nod and lift little Isaiah in my arms. “Are you hungry? I’m kind of hungry.” I chuckle, rubbing my belly.

He wraps his arms around my neck and nods. As we make our way down to the cafeteria, Evan grabs hold of my arm and stops me.

“Somethings not right,” he says, sniffing the air.

Suddenly, two rogues come stalking down the hallway. They stare at us with sickly yellow eyes and snarl.