

The Ivory Queen Chapter 76

*** Javier's POV***

I watch Celina leave and know there's no way in hell she'll ever forgive me. With my heart shattered in pieces, I turn back to Aurora.

"Aurora?" I whisper, unable to look her in the eyes. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I-I know there's nothing I can do to take back what I did and I don't deserve your forgiveness so I won't ask for it, but I need you to know I regret everything I did."

"Look her in the eyes, you coward!" Oliver snarls. "Face what you did!"

"Michael calm down," Aurora coos, pecking his cheeks. I watch as Oliver's silver eyes return to their dark blue before Aurora's voice grabs my attention.

"A few moments ago, I told you I thought I would never recover from the pain you guys inflicted on me. I was wrong. I stood here before you, feeling hopeless, with an anger so potent, I thought it would consume me just as it had consumed you all these years." She pauses, turning her head to kiss Oliver on the lips. "And then Oliver walked in ... and I found my sanctuary." She smiles at him. "I've found someone I can trust unconditionally, someone I can love without any fear of being betrayed. I thought of Evan and Carter and realized I've found friendship and loyalty again. Celina and Rosalie have given me courage and strength. After 5 long years, I've pieced myself back together and found my home."

Aurora looks back at me with her kind gold eyes and I'm taken back to a time when she and I were close friends. "I gave you a taste of what I felt..." she swallows hard and takes a deep breath. "I will never forget what you did and neither should you. It'll always be a part of our story and our history, a reminder of what hatred can do to us. A lesson to never do it again."

"I would like to move on and so for my own sake and sanity, I forgive you for what you did all those years ago and for the pain you helped cause. I choose to not let fear and hatred lead my life and hope you do the same."

She gets off of Oliver's lap and sits beside me. I can hear her heart pounding in her chest now that she's away from him and I know this simple action took a lot of courage on her part. She's still afraid of me but she refuses to let it hold her back any longer.

"I don't trust you yet but I wish you nothing but the best of luck as the next Alpha of Lluvia Blanca. As for Celina, I-I understand your pain. I know how much it hurts." She glances up at Oliver who looks her in the eyes, unashamed of his guilt. "Just be patient. If it's meant to be, she'll come to you. But you have to be prepared that it might not be."

I'm overwhelmed with emotions and take a moment to collect myself. "Thank you," I sigh in relief. "I'm glad you've found yourself again despite everything I did to destroy you. I'll work on earning your trust back, even if it takes me a life time."

I pause for a bit to keep my voice from shaking and swallow the lump in my throat. "I know things between you and Chava are really f****d up but I'll do everything I can to help him understand the truth. Even if you don't forgive him, he needs to acknowledge the truth. It might take a while, though. He has a lot of demons to work on. As for Mia, she really is sorry."

"I know she is and after thinking about it, I get why she chose to keep it to herself. She was afraid of losing me."

"What do you plan to do with Karina?" Oliver interrupts.

What should I do with Karina? She's an incoherent drunk now...

I take a moment to think before I realize it's not I who should decide.

"It's up to Salvador and Mia really. She's their mother. I'm sure they'll confront her soon and I believe her punishment should be their choice. I think they should be the ones who end this story. I know a lot of people will have a hard time believing she's to blame for Emiliano's death, most of all my parents, but in the end, it doesn't matter what they think. The truth will always be the truth, no matter how ugly it is."

Aurora smiles and nods her head to demonstrate her agreement and I look up at Oliver, seeing the fire in his eyes. If I'm not mistaken, I swear, I see a hint of jealousy there as well.

Funny... He was never this jealous when he was dating Adeline.

I clear my throat. "If it's not too late, I'd like to take you up on your offer, Oliver."

Oliver glares at me but Aurora gives him a warning look and manages to calm him down. He grunts his annoyance. "I thought Lluvia Blanca was signing with Amethyst Lake?" He says in a mocking tone.

"Lluvia Blanca is holding off on the signing until after I take over. My dad wants it to be my first official act as Alpha."

"Yeah, well good luck figuring out how to back out of that contract without pissing off Amethyst lake and starting a war."

"I'll figure something out," I reply, holding out my hand to him. "What do you say, Ol's? We were raised to lead together. I'd still like to do that."

He looks at Aurora, obviously not happy with me, but one pleading look from her is enough to make him give in. Oliver takes my hand. "Just so we're clear, we are not friends. I'm not doing this for your sake either so don't make me regret this," he snarls.

She's got him wrapped around her finger, I chuckle. Oh how the mighty have fallen.

The ring! My wolf, Adan, reminds me.

I scramble to reach into my pocket. "I almost forgot. I have something for you, Aurora." I say, pulling out a gold ring from my jeans. Oliver growls and I hold back a grin and focus on Aurora. I exhale, relieved to be moving forward with her. I've been trying to figure out a way to give this to her since yesterday.

"Your father was more than just my mother's gamma.... He was family. He got me through a lot," I take a deep breath to calm my shaking voice. "I-I uh – I was nervous for my first day of warrior training....Emiliano gave me this ring to hold onto for safe keeping. He said it belonged to the greatest leader he knew, his older brother, Mateo. It was his way of telling me to not be so afraid to lead."

I hold out the ring to her and she takes it, tears welling up in her eyes as she examines it. The gold band is encrusted with diamonds while the square center is engraved with a Lion and Eagle emblem.

"It's the Alpha King ring of Sol de Oro..." she murmurs. "It bears their coat of arms."

"I was instructed to pass it on the next great leader when the time came and well ... I-I think they would both want you to have it," I smile before bowing my head to her.

She clasps the ring in her right palm and tentatively takes my hand in her left. I can feel her trembling as she gives me hand a squeeze. She takes a deep breath and holds my hand for a moment before finding the strength to speak.

"Thank you for this," she murmurs.

I wish I could hug her and let her know I will never hurt her again. Growing up, Aurora was always so expressive, giving hugs and kisses to anyone who would take them. It breaks my heart to see her struggle just to hold my hand because of what I did. I peer back at Oliver and hold back laughter at the look of jealousy in his eyes as we hold hands.

"You can leave now," he growls and Aurora releases my hand to stifle a chuckle.

"Sorry," she laughs. "I may have told Oliver and Celina I had a crush on you growing up," Aurora whispers sheepishly and gets up to sit on Oliver's lap.

I can't stop my blush, infuriating Oliver even more. "You told him about the kiss?" I ask nervously.

Oliver's eyes widen with shock and Aurora glares at me.

"Stop. Talking. Now!" she hisses through gritted teeth.

"Sorry," I mutter, feeling uncomfortable under Oliver's gaze.

Smooth, Adan whispers.

Shut up. How was I supposed to know she omitted that part?

"You two have kissed?" he eyes her and she blushes.

"I-it was a long t-time ago," she defends herself. "Y-you've kissed Adeline and I don't mention it or get jealous!"

"I beg to differ!"

Before I know it, they start bickering about exes and crushes. Feeling like a third wheel, I get up from the couch and clear my throat to catch their attention.

"If it's okay with you, I'd like to wait here until Celina returns. I just want to make sure she gets home okay."

Aurora turns back and nods. "Are you hungry? Dinner should be ready soon."

The Ivory Queen Chapter 77

Mia's POV

"I-I'm your mate, right?" I ask.

I've pondered on his question back in the woods for almost two weeks and it seemed I finally found the courage to ask him about it.

Evan's eyes turn lime green and his wolf smiles at me. "Yes, you are."

My heart starts to beat uncontrollably.

"How do you know?"

The wolf shrugs. "I'm 22 so I can sense my mate, even if my mate is too young to sense me. When I touched you, I felt our bond. It's faint but unmistakable."

"What's your name?" I ask, suddenly very timid around Evan's wolf.

"Bodhi," he says, a little blush rising in his cheeks. "Can I know my mate's name?"

I attempt to wipe my eyes, embarrassed I cried in front of him when suddenly Bodhi comes up to wipe them for me, his fingers gently gliding over my eyes. I unconsciously lean into his touch and he smiles at me.

"I-Ines," I reply, my voice just about a whisper. "It's Ines."

"Ines," He repeats the name. "Pretty."

Before I can even react, he leans forward and his lips brush up against my own. I gasp and step back, releasing Chava from the illusion.

Evan seems to take over his body too and without another word, sprints down the road. I bring my fingers to my lips, touching the spot his lips kissed as I watch him disappear into the distance. Chava's snarl brings me back to earth.

"What the f**k, Mia?" He snaps. "You know I don't like when you do that s**t to me."

"Calmate. It was just a little illusion," I sigh, walking towards the car and climbing in.

He climbs in with me and grumbles about me using my powers against him. "What did you do to Evan that sent him running?" he chuckles.

I turn towards the window to hide my blush and shrug. "Nothing."

Chava mumbles a whatever when he gets a text from Javier telling us to go home without him. He'll be staying a little longer to wait for Celina. She must have stormed off after he told her what he did.

The drive home is silent for the most part, Chava and I processing the events at River Moon. For now, I shove Evan's kiss to the back of my mind and focus on Aurora's claim against my mom. I don't know what to believe. Mom loved Aurora growing up, could she have really turned her over to a witch?

"Chava, are we going to talk about what Aurora and Celina said?" I sigh, frustrated with his silence.

"What's there to talk about? They're lying. Mom would never -" he clenches his jaw. "She didn't do it. Don't let them fill your head with lies. Our mom is innocent!"

Of course he doesn't believe her. He's too angry to see the truth.

"Do you at least understand that Aurora is innocent?" I ask, afraid I already know the answer. "You blamed her..."

"Don't act so high and mighty Mia. You did the same thing. I'm not the only monster in the car right now!" He growls at me.

Well at least he acknowledges he's a monster.

“At least I’m trying to make things right with her! Aurora didn’t deserve-“

He slams on the breaks. “What do you want from me, Mia? An apology? What!?”

“I want you to acknowledge that you were wrong! That we were wrong to hurt her!”

He glares at me. “All I acknowledge is that our father is dead. It doesn’t matter who did it. Nothing will bring him back. Not the truth, not some illusions, nothing! He’s gone!”

“Is it so hard for you to accept that you hurt her unjustifiably?” I whisper, tears spilling from my eyes.

“We’re done talking,” he says, releasing the brakes.

It breaks my heart when he gets like this, stuck on the simple fact that father will never return. It’s pointless to try to speak to him. He’ll never listen.

I sit back in my seat and wipe away my tears. What do I do when I face mom? Chava is clearly no help. Should I go on and pretend I don’t know Aurora is innocent? Do I question her about this so called witch, Tais?

I grow anxious as we pull up to the drive way of the pack house. The dinning room is a symphony of chatter and life, several wolves filing in for their dinner. Salvador grabs a plate and storms off to him room.

“Is he ok?” Maira, the cook asks. After dad died, Mom became too messed up to really take care of us and Maira stepped in. She’s family now.

“I don’t know anymore, nana,” I reply.

“Y Javier? No estaba con ustedes? (And Javier? Wasn’t he with you guys)?”

“He stayed with some friends. He’ll be back later,” I say, peering into the dining room. “Where’s mom?”

Maira gives me an apologetic look and sighs. “Where do you think?”

My heart shatters. Mom has been spending more and more time at the bars with Manuel, Alpha Miguel’s little brother, and the other resident drunkard. I hated Manuel. He never got over the fact that he lost the chance at the

gamma position to Dad and was always jealous of the respect with which he was regarded with. After Dad died, Manuel thought he would be given a chance at the position again, but he was too unreliable to be given the title and it went to someone else.

Not long after dinner, Mom and Manuel come stumbling in, reeking of alcohol and slurring pathetically. It's sad to see all that remains of my mom is this drunken woman and I know Dad would be heartbroken to see we're so lost without him.

I try to help Mom to her room, but she slaps me across the face and I crash onto the floor.

"No me toques, babosa!" she slurs. (Don't touch me, stupid!)

Ever since Aurora left, Mom has been taking out her anger on Chava and I more frequently than before. She beat us even when Aurora was still here but we never got it as bad as her. No one really knew about the abuse we took from Mom except Maira and Javier, both of whom would help us conceal our wounds before anyone could see them.

I manage to pull her up the stairs to her bedroom and try to calm her down, but Mom is like a bull when she's drunk. She claws and scratches at me, even drawing blood.

Hearing the ruckus, Maira comes running in and helps me restrain Mom until she calms down. I get her in a cold shower and wash away the stench of the bar. I comb her hair and help her into her pjs before tucking her in. Looking at the shattered remnants of my mother, I cannot bring myself to question her. I know she is guilty, her culpability being the source of her insobriety. Much to my surprise, I don't feel anger or hatred as I expected. Instead all I feel is pity.

With Mom knocked out in bed, I lock myself up in my room. I stare at my reflection in the mirror to examine my cheeks and arms where Mom hit and scratched me. My cheek is a little swollen and I press an ice pack to it. I know it'll heal by morning. When I'm sure the swelling has gone down, I change into my night gown and sit on my bed in the dark.

I pull out my phone and stare at the number I want to dial for what seems like hours before I finally press send call. I hear the dial tone ring and as the seconds crawl by, I fear she won't answer. Just as I'm about to give up, I hear Aurora's voice come through.

"Hi Mia," she says in her quiet little voice, devoid of any anger or hatred. "Did you and Chava make it home okay?"

She may not be Emiliano's daughter but she is more like him than anyone I know. I don't deserve her kindness nor her worries. Not after everything I've done to her.

"I believe you," I whimper, a sob escaping my throat. "I'm so sorry. I don't know if you can-"

"I forgive you, Mia," she replies.

"I don't deserve it..."

"What do you plan on doing with mom now that you know the truth?" She asks and her question confuses me.

"I don't know. She's already living in her own hell and she's not even all there anymore," I reply, wiping my tears. "She's just a shell. A drunk shell. And while I don't forgive her yet, I don't think it's right to punish a drunk. I think her guilt makes her suffer enough as it is," I say truthfully.

She hangs up the phone and I burst into tears, curling up in a ball. Suddenly I feel a disturbance and I look up to see Aurora and Javier in the room.

"How did you..."

She smiles sheepishly at me and stares at the ground. "I can open vortexes and travel through them. It's one of my gifts."

"Umm...t-thanks for the ride," Javier chuckles as he walks towards the door. "I-I'll see ya."

I shift nervously on my bed to make room for Aurora and she sits on the edge.

"You're mother is a poor excuse of wolf," she mutters. "But she is your mother... And you're right. Punishing a drunk would mean nothing at this point. Karina's not there anymore. She hasn't been in years. I'm glad I'm not the only one who sees that," Aurora says, tracing the patterns on my covers with her fingers. I nod my head in response. "So you gave me my nightmares...."

"I'm sorry," I whisper, closing my eyes to keep my tears from falling. "I-I have no excuses. I hated you so much and I couldn't stand to see you alive and him gone. I thought... If I hurt you, I would avenge him and feel less empty inside."

"So you hurt me to feel better?"

"Y-yes," I whimper.

"Did you?"

Her question surprises me but I shake my head. She frowns.

"I'm tired Mia," she sighs, closing her eyes. "I'm tired of being afraid. I'm so tired."

"I-"

"Mia, I understand why you lied but that doesn't make the situation any better," she says, her voice strong but soft. "Dad would want me to move on. I can't do that by holding onto my anger and fear. So I'm giving you one last opportunity but I warn you. Hurt me again and I'll forget you exist."

"One chance is all I need, Aurora. I'll do everything in my power to show you that I want to be your sister."

She nods a quietly.

Salvador pops into my head.

"I'm worried about Chava," I groan with frustration.

She hums but says nothing.

I take her hand. "Will you forgive him?"

Aurora sighs and shrugs her shoulders. "Chava is a different story. What he did... It's not that simple with him."

"What about Mom?"

She shakes her head. "I will always love Karina... Despite everything, she's the only mother I ever knew. Even if it was all a lie and she traded me to a witch, she took care of me."

“But....?”

“But I don’t want her in my life anymore,” she murmurs. “She made her choice. I’m making mine. Like I said. I’m moving on and she doesn’t exist anymore.”

I nod. “I see.”

We settle into comfortable silence and my eyelids grow heavy. “Go to sleep,” she chuckles. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?”

“Yeah,” she nods. “I expect to see you at my ceremony tomorrow. 7pm sharp.”

Her words wake me up immediately and I sit up to give her a hopeful smile. She wants me at her ceremony?!

“I want you there,” she smiles, getting up from the bed and opening a portal. “Good night, Mia,” she smiles before disappearing into the portal.

I remain utterly speechless in bed, giggling like a maniac. She wants me there.

Evan’s kiss flashes in my mind and my heart sinks. Evan will be there and while I can’t feel our bond, it hurts knowing my future mate already loathes me.

Bodhi doesn’t hate us.. Ines chirps. He kissed us!

But his human hates us, Ines. Don’t get your hopes up. You know he’s going to reject us.

Ines whines, the thought of Evan rejecting us hurting her.

Maybe we can change his mind! She says, hope lacing every word.

No! If he doesn’t want me, than I don’t want him! He’s a big, stupid i***t, anyways. He’s ungrateful. He’s annoying... Good riddance! I’m better off without him!

I like him too... Ines says quietly.

Oliver's POV

Carter informs me that he's currently on his way back from the airport, all of Celina's guests safely with him and the guards I sent for them.

Once I finish my call, I head over to the bedroom just as Aurora comes out from the closet dressed only in one of my t-shirts. I feel my c**k harden at the sight of her figure prancing around the room in just my shirt but I know s*x is the last thing on her mind. I tuck away my urges and get ready for bed.

When I finally climb into bed, Aurora is facing the wall, her eyes closed and her breathing steady. I wrap an arm around her waist and pull her towards me, her body fitting perfectly against mine. She grabs my hand, interlocking our fingers and sighs contently.

I know dealing with those three assholes took a toll on her but I'm glad my presence offers her some comfort.

"Oliver?" she whispers.

I bury my face in the crook of her neck. "Yeah?"

"Do you think you could teach me some French?"

I burst into laughter. That's what on her mind right now?

"Why?"

"Because," she argues. "You speak Spanish perfectly but all I can say is 'Je t'aime'. I want to know more!"

I roll my eyes but I'm secretly glad she wants to learn something for me. "Fine, what do you want to learn?"

She thinks for a minute before responding.

"How do you say 'I promise'?"

"'Je le promets'. What are you promising?"

"To be a good Luna," she says quietly. "How do I say that?"

My mind drifts off to the ring hidden in my desk drawer.

“By answering this question,” I say, taking a deep breath. “Veux-tu m’epouser? {Will you marry me?}”

She turns to me and scrunches up her nose. “How can I answer if I don’t know what you said?” She pouts.

I lean forward and kiss her nose. “Just say ‘oui’.”

“But what am I agreeing to?” she protests, her lips curving into a smile.

“Say oui.”

I try to keep my face as expressionless as possible but it feels like my heart is about to burst out of my chest. It’s such a simple question but by far the most important to me.

Just say ‘oui’, baby. Please.

“Oui,” she giggles. “Oui, oui! Now tell me what I agreed to!”

If only she knew she just made me the happiest man on this planet.

Aurora Artaud... Michael whispers. It has a ring to it.

“I’ll tell you later! Go to sleep,” I say, desperately trying to contain my happiness.

“Oliver!”

“Good night!” I call out, rolling onto my side to turn off the lights and closing my eyes.

“Sometimes I can’t stand you,” she grumbles, settling it into my arms.

I wake up to the sound of crying and I immediately search for the source only to realize it’s Aurora.

The clock reads 3 am. I look down at the tiny angel in my arms, fat tears rolling down her cheeks. Her eyes are tightly closed and her hands grip the sheets.

She must be having a nightmare, Michael growls.

I gently roll her over so she faces my chest and she naturally buries her nose in my neck. My fingers massage her scalp and I start to hum my lullaby to her. Within minutes, her whimpering stops and she settles back into peaceful sleep.

Her nightmares are rare now a days but there was a time where she'd have them almost every night and multiple times throughout her sleep.

She may have forgiven them but the damage was done. The pain still haunts her.

I lay awake, trying to calm my anger when I hear Aurora's soft voice break the silence.

"Oliver?" She whispers.

I freeze in place, unsure if she's awake or asleep. She kisses my neck and I relax.

"I don't know what you asked, but if it means I get to spend the rest of my life with you..."

I can hear my heart pounding in my ears with her every word.

"Oui."

The Ivory Queen Chapter 78

***Aurora's POV ***

I wake up to soft kisses on my cheeks, forehead and nose before a husky voice urges me to open my eyes.

"Wake up, my love," Oliver whispers, nibbling on my ear. "It's your big day today."

I groan, pleading for five more minutes before burying my face in his chest. Oliver chuckles, brushing my hair lightly with his fingers. Since I refuse to get up, Oliver slides his hand down my side towards my butt and gives my a*s a squeeze.

“No more waiting,” he chuckles. “I’ve waited almost 6 months for this day. I want my Luna.” My eyes flutter open and he smiles at me. “There she is. Absolutely perfect.”

His lips crash onto mine and I smile against his kiss. He climbs on top of me and settles in between my legs before grinding his hips against mine.

“Ok! I’m awake!” I giggle, playfully smacking his chest and pushing him off. “You’re heavy, get off!”

Oliver shuts me up with a kiss and whisks me off to the bathroom where he sets me down on my stool.

I watch as he draws a bath, adding oils, bubbles, and lots of rose petals. Pleased with his work, he turns to me and asks me to strip before doing the same himself. He eases into the tub and I settle between his legs, my back to his chest. I feel his lips on my shoulder and I close my eyes to enjoy his touch.

He takes the sponge and starts to wash my body, gently scrubbing my back and shoulders. I let him work when I feel him reach my core, his fingers teasing my entrance. I bite my lower lip and I hear him chuckle in my ear as my body stiffens.

“Relax, baby girl,” he soothes. “I want you to do something for me...”

I give him my full attention.

“I want you to play with yourself,” he whispers, taking my hand and guiding it towards my honey pot.

I feel my cheeks burn with embarrassment. I’d done it a few times but never in front of Oliver.

“W-why?”

He bites my earlobe playfully. “I want to watch you... I want to see how you unravel,” he smirks.

I blink hard and face forwards. “Are you sure you don’t want me to-“

“Trust me, watching you lose it is a pleasure in it of itself.”

I nod my head and slowly slip a finger inside my slit, gently messaging my inner walls. With my other hand, I cup one of my breasts, teasing my n****e. A soft moan leaves my lips and Oliver kisses my shoulder. I feel his c**k harden against my back, turning me on.

“What are you thinking about?” he asks, his smirk never leaving his lips.

“Y-you,” I whimper, continuing to work my fingers in and out slowly.

“And what am I doing to you?”

I press my thumb against my little bundle of nerves and my hips buck.

“Y-you are -” I stop to rub my clit in circular motions and lose my train of thought.

Oliver snaps me out my daze by pinching my n****e. “Focus baby. What am I doing to you?”

“f*****g me,” I moan, rubbing harder. “S-soo good.... So f*****g good.”

He starts kissing my neck and before I know it, his teeth sink into my mark. My legs jerk as a minor explosion erupts between my thighs and I cry out in pleasure. Dazed, my hands desperately seek an anchor and I grip the sides of the tub as I ride my high.

Oliver has other plans, however, and I feel his fingers slip between my slick folds, finding my clit with ease. I clamp my legs together, unable to bear any more pleasure but Oliver’s free hand pulls back one of my thighs to give better him access and he plunges in deeper.

“Oh goddess,” I gasp as he moves his fingers in and out with quick thrusts. I suck in my breath when I feel him tease my clit, rolling his thumb over it.

He finally snaps and lifts me onto his shaft in a single swift motion. I scream his name as he starts pumping me up and down along his rod, water splashing onto the floor. His grunts and my moans echo off the tile walls for several minutes as we both seek out our release. Oliver’s hand creeps up between my breasts and latches onto my neck. I instinctively grip his arm and gasp as the euphoria pulsates from my toes to my temples when he gently squeezes the sides of my throat. He growls in pleasure at my reaction and pumps harder until we both experience our earth shattering o****m.

“You’ve never done that before,” I pant when the post orgasmic haze settles and he laughs.

“Well I wasn’t going to choke you on our first night,” he chuckles. “I want to ease you in to the things I like to do.”

“There’s more?” I giggle excitedly and feel him lean in closer.

“There are a lot of things we have yet to try,” he whispers, licking my ear. “So many ways to make you scream my name.”

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After we finish our activities and our bath, we quickly get dressed. Downstairs, the house is in a functional frenzy as wolves carry equipment and party decorations out into the expansive back yard that will serve as the venue for tonight. All non-werewolf personnel are required to wear badges in order to enter the property. Oliver was very much afraid Tais would try to sneak in with all the chaos going on.

The kitchen is in full swing as the cooks and several assistants begin preparing the dishes and baking the desert items for tonight. It looks like we’ll be having a mix of Mexican and French cuisine.

In the dining room, we find Celina and Evan having breakfast, although neither of them seem to actually be eating. I heave a heavy sigh and they both look up at me. Evan plasters a smile on his face while Celina presses her lips into a line.

“Good Morning Luna, ready for your big day?” Evan chirps. I see the sadness in his eyes and I know something is bothering him.

I would try to read his thoughts but it’s a difficult skill. I still don’t know how I managed to telepathically choke Javier, Chava and Mia. Besides, reading his thoughts would be an invasion of privacy, so I decide against trying it. I give him a smile and slide into my seat next to him as some omegas serve me some pancakes. “I’m more interested in how you’re doing,” I say, reaching for his hand. “How is my big brother doing today?”

He ruffles up my hair and I push his arm away. “I’m okay,” he shrugs. I narrow my eyes at him but he doesn’t give in.

Now who's being a stubborn brat?

I turn to Celina who is busy picking at her food. "Are you still mad at me?" I ask.

She stops and looks up at me with a confused look. "Mad at you? Why would I be mad at you?"

"Y-you locked yourself in your room. I-I just thought you-"

Her face softens. "It's not you I'm angry with, it's Javier. Hearing what he did... what they all did to you... I just needed some space," she says.

"I see..." I reply, taking a bite of my food. "I... invited Javier and Mia to my ceremony..." I say, slumping back into my chair, closing my eyes, and bracing myself for Evan and Celina's anger.

"Why am I not surprised?" Evan mutters.

Celina bursts into laughter and I open one eye to peek at both her and Evan.

"What on earth are you doing?" She chuckles.

"You guys aren't not mad?" I ask, sitting up straight.

I glance at Evan and he smiles at me. "You wouldn't be you without your forgiving heart, Aurora. If you want them there, then I have no right to object."

Celina shakes her head. "It's your big day. I may hate them with the fire of a thousand suns but at the end of the day, it's your decision whether or not you want to forgive them."

I let out a breath and feel a weight lift off my shoulders.

"But..." she continues.

Uh oh.

"Just as I respect your decision to forgive them, I hope you can respect mine not to," she says, giving me a stern look. "That is my choice and I would appreciate it if you didn't try to push me. If, and I mean if, I ever forgive Javier and them, I want it to be because I felt they changed, not because I was coerced to feel that way."

“That’s fair,” I smile, grateful she’s not furious with me.

Celina’s family join us for breakfast and I’m formally introduced to Diego and Danny. They seem lovely.

Suddenly, Rosalie bursts through the door.

“You’re still eating? Aurora! We’re on a schedule! Chop, Chop! We have some many things to get through. Our spa day starts now!” Rosalie squeals.

My stomach starts to rumble. “But I just got here!” I laugh

“You have 10 minutes to finish you meal!” she grins. “And then you’re all mine!”

She turns on her heel and promptly leaves. I turn to look at Oliver, a little frightened about what Rosalie had in store for me and he just shakes his head and grins.

“You’re on your own,” he chuckles.

—

I finish my breakfast and Celina and I make our way to my room where we find an entire army of women waiting for me. I see hairstylists, makeup artists, masseuses, manicurists, and several estheticians. Rosalie perks up when she sees me, seemingly pleased with herself.

“My dear, you just sit back and relax,” she giggles. “You’ll be absolutely perfect by the time we’re through with you.”

For the next several hours, I’m pampered like a princess. At first, I was a little nervous of letting the masseuse touch me but of course, Rosalie and Celina’s presence helps me get through it and I enjoy Petra the masseuse’s magic touch. Afterwards, I’m waxed and rid of all unwanted hair. This of course, was my least favorite part, but very necessary. I’m amazed a woman can have so much hair!

Following that, I’m lathered in oils, serums, lotions and creams until my skin is practically glowing. Much to my surprise, I enjoy an little aromatherapy session, the smells helping me float away into a temporary oblivion. It was wonderful. I get a manicure and pedicure, singing along to my favorite songs

with my sister and my best friend by my side. I choose a simple midnight blue nail polish with a matte finish and a gold accent on my ring fingers.

The makeup artist applies some dark browns and blacks to my lids, creating a sultry smokey eye look topped with some beautiful dark blue glitter and winged eyeliner. A little foundation, concealer, blush, bronzer, highlighter, and mauve lipstick later and my makeup look is complete. I refuse to look in the mirror, however, wanting to surprise myself in the end.

The hairstylist gushes over my flowing white hair, admiring its gleam and length. My hair flows down past my waist and is naturally pin straight.

"It's like looking at Daenerys," she squeals. "This is going to be so much fun!"

The stylist curls my hair and weaves the top half of my hair into a series of intricate braids, pinning them to the crown of my head. The other half flows freely down my waist in loose curls. She embellishes the look with a few hair jewels and leaves some hair to frame my face.

"You look beautiful sis," Celina smiles as her stylist finishes up her own curled look.

I thank the women and they take their leave. Rosalie searches for my velvet box containing the gown Wes and Kehlani gifted me and helps me slip it on. I pair the dress with some open toed platform lace up pumps with a chunky heel. When I glance in the mirror, I'm stunned by my reflection. The dress hugs my body beautifully and the blue shade compliments my dark skin. The neck line shows just the right amount of cleavage and the thigh slit that reaches just above my knee gives me an elegant look.

"You are so gorgeous, sweetie," Katherine beams as she, Gabrielle, and Valentina make their entrance.

"My goddess, you're stunning," Gabrielle says. "I don't think I've ever seen a more beautiful Luna!"

Rosalie hugs me from behind, her baby bump pressing up against my back. "You will be the greatest Luna of this pack," she whispers. "I just know it." She turns me around to face her. "We are so lucky to be led by such an incredible warrior."

My stomach fills with butterflies as the reality of the situation kicks in. This day seemed like a such a distant fantasy, one that I just could never reach and up until this moment, I had given very little thought to the responsibilities I would be taking on as a pack leader. After today, 800 wolves would be counting on me to protect them, to make the right decisions and lead with grace and by example. I could not stumble or I would risk the lives of the people I swore to protect. I was only 18 and unlike Oliver, I hadn't trained my whole life for this moment. Was I really the right person to lead this pack?

"You look just like your mother did at her coronation," Valentina smiles, interrupting my thoughts. Her eyes fill with tears. "She would be so proud of the woman you are, mija. So proud. And your Dad, goddess, he'd be over the moon to see you so grown up."

I feel tears tugging at my eyes. My mom, the Gold queen. She was supposed to teach me how to lead. She was supposed to show me how to be the best queen I could be. She was supposed to hand me her crown when I was ready. And Dad... he was supposed to tell me I looked beautiful and hand me over to the love of my life and my new pack. He was supposed to threaten to kick Oliver's a*s if he ever hurt me. They were supposed to be here.

Emiliano and Karina, the only parents I ever knew, were not here either, taken in different ways by the same witches who killed my birth parents.

The dress suddenly feels tighter and I'm having a hard time getting air into my lungs. I can hear my heart pounding in my ears and a small whimper escapes my lips.

"Aurora?" Celina asks.

I force a smile and hold back tears but she sees right through it.

"Just breathe," she soothes and reaches for my hand. I feel a a jolt of electricity flow between us and my heart starts to slow down significantly. I inhale deeply and sigh when the air fills my lungs normally again.

"I-I need a minute," I whisper, swallowing hard. "Just a minute, please."

She gives me a stern look but my pleading eyes convince her to leave me be. "Everyone out," she orders, shoving everyone towards the door.

I walk toward my night stand and pull out the wooden box containing my most precious possessions. I reread my mother and father's letters and hold their picture near my heart for strength. Their little sun was going to be a Luna today.

Aurora... you're okay. You will be a great Luna. Don't be afraid, Reyna coos.

It's not that...I just wish my parents were here. Or Emiliano. A Luna should have her family at her ceremony...

Relax, sweetie. You're just sad. In an ideal world, your family would be here. Mom would be here. But-

Reyna's sentence is cut short by the sound of a knock at the door.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 79

Aurora's POV

"Aurora?" Evan calls out. "I-it's me, Evan."

I store away the letters and kiss my parents picture goodbye before I walk to the door. Evan wraps me up in his arms the second he sets foot inside the room.

"Hey kiddo," he whispers, pulling back and taking my face in his hands. "What's wrong? You look amazing by the way."

"T-thank you," I blush. "I-I just wish my family were here."

He softens his face. "Aurora, they are here. They're standing right outside prepared to love you for the rest of their lives. Your sister and your aunt came all this way to see you off on your big day. Oliver hasn't stopped smiling all day and won't shut the f**k up about seeing you," he chuckles. "And I'm right here, ready to walk you down to meet your Alpha. We may not all be blood related but we love you so much."

His kind words warm my heart and I pull him into another hug. "Thank you," I whisper. "I needed this."

"Anytime kid," he smiles. "Oh by the way, Oliver doesn't want you wearing that tonight." He says, pointing to my medallion on my neck.

I scrunch up my nose. "Why not?"

"Because he wants everyone to see you for who you truly are and not hide behind that medallion. Now let's go, Oliver is anxious to have his Luna."

I remove my medallion and catch a glimpse of my father's alpha ring. I grab it, rolling the ring between my fingers and I kiss the emblem.

Wish me luck, Dad.

I stash the ring and medallion away and lock them in my box before turning back to look at Evan. He bows before me and I blush, still not used to the bowing. Evan looks dashing in a dark blue and black suit and black shirt. His handsome hazel eyes pop against his dark attire.

He offers me his arm and together we march downstairs towards the garden. The entire yard is beautifully lit with fairy lights and small torch lights. All the décor is in River Moon's pack colors, midnight blue and gold. A small aisle lined with sunflowers cuts through the middle of the yard and pack members stand on either side. At the far end, Oliver and the pack elders wait for me on a stage. Behind them, Carter and Rosalie stand by offering me encouraging smiles. As I approach the pack, everyone bows their heads in reverence. When I get closer to the stage, I see a single tear run down Oliver's cheek and his dimpled smile makes my heart skip a beat.

He looks incredible in his gorgeous dark blue tuxedo, white shirt and black bow tie. His hair is combed back in a neat quiff and his face is clean shaven. At his side, my little Rio sits wearing his own little tuxedo and bow tie and I hold back a giggle at how proud and handsome he looks.

My boys look absolutely perfect.

When I take the stage, Oliver and the elders bow. I take a few timid steps and Oliver locks his fingers with mine and lifts my hand up to kiss it.

"Tu es magnifique, mon amour. Ready?" He asks.

I give him a small nod and he kisses my cheek before addressing the pack and our guests. I don't really pay attention to what he says, too busy calming my racing heart. I look out into the crowd and see so many familiar smiling faces. Celina and her family stand proudly in the first row and Celina looks at me with so much love. I'm so glad she came. Carter and Evan's parents are

there as well. I hold back laughter when I see Sam's goofy smile as he offers me a thumbs up. I see Mia looking beautiful and smiling up at me, Javier at her side.

Laura and her mate Noah beam at me. Leila and Hannah are there as well, though not nearly as happy. Marie, Clyde, Emma, Taylor and William glow with joy. Ezra, Zoe and Isaiah wave their hellos at me and I wave back. On the right side of the aisle, the Allies stand proud and tall offering me their congratulations with a simple nod. I almost squeal when Kehlani holds up little Matthew's arm to wave at me. Also among them are the alphas from Desert Sky and Maple Moon, although I can't tell who is who.

I'm ashamed I was ever upset about not having my family present. My family has been here the entire time and I'm finally ready to take my place as Luna.

The elders step forward and introduce themselves briefly before beginning the ceremony.

Elder Amelie brings forth a gold tablet and sets it down on the table for me. There is a small bowl shaped indentation sitting between the images of two wolves on the face of the tablet while precious blue stones and beautiful designs are etched in the remaining space. Elder Collette presents me with golden dagger, wrapped neatly in black cloth and sets it down as well.

"Are you ready, my dear?" Elder Auguste asks.

"Yes, I am ready."

He smiles at me and turns to the crowd. "Repeat after me:

"I, Aurora Salome Altamirano-Reyes, do solemnly swear to preserve, to protect and to serve the members of the River Moon pack. I swear to uphold the values of this pack and lead with strength and grace to the best of my abilities.

I swear to stand by my Alpha's side, to guide and to lead him down the right path should he ever falter. I swear to offer him my knowledge and wisdom so that we may both lead River Moon with peace and understanding.

I swear so to do, until my final breath."

As I repeat the words, I catch a glimpse of Rosalie bawling her eyes out and I resist the urge to run up and hug her. Elder Henri takes the dagger and reaches out for Oliver's hand and then mine. He makes a small incision across both of our palms then guides our hands towards the tablet, placing Oliver's bloodied palm on one wolf engraving and mine on the other.

The second my palm touches the cold tablet, my head fills with the voices of my pack.

"Welcome Luna!" I hear them cry.

It is a bit overwhelming and after a few seconds, my head starts pounding as more and more voices mind-link me.

"This is so strange!" I giggle and the crowd bursts into laughter.

Elder Auguste calls for my attention. I am now an official member of the pack but the ceremony has yet to be completed. Oliver and I then squeeze our palms and a few drops of our blood fall into the tablet's little basin and mix.

For a moment, the world stops and all I see is Oliver staring back at me. He leans forward and presses his lips against mine, the sparks electrifying every cell in body. They are stronger than I've even felt them and I know our souls are tied for eternity. This man is now my life.

Our kiss is interrupted by Elder Auguste clearing his throat and he urges Evan to step forward, who then kneels before me and offers me a goofy smile.

"You're doing great," he whispers.

"Gamma Evan," Elder Henri interrupts. "It is now time to officially offer yourself to your Luna."

Elder Amelie wipes the dagger and it offers it to Evan. Evan slices his palm, a little blood pooling in his hand and he bows his head in reverence.

Elder Henri continues. "Repeat after me:"

"I, Evan Silas Gérard, do solemnly swear to serve and protect my Luna, to prioritize her safety and her life above my own. I swear to uphold my duties as her guardian and gamma to the best of my abilities, until my final breath."

His eyes switch to green and his wolf, Bodhi, makes the same promises. I place my sliced palm onto his to accept him as gamma and I feel a pinch at my temples. Our gamma bond is now official and he will forever be my guardian.

He gets to his feet and pulls me into a bear hug.

Several cameras flash and Evan leans down to my ear and whispers, "Well Luna, you may not need protecting from simple wolf such as myself but-"

"Evan Silas Gérard, you are more than enough for me," I interrupt him. "You are the gamma I need."

"Spoken like a true Luna," Oliver adds.

Elder Amelia comes forward and speaks to the crowd, a small box in her hands. "Luna Aurora, I now present you with the Luna ring-"

Her words stop as we hear gasps amongst the crowd. Simone walks down the aisle toward us, an emotionless expression on her face.

Oh no. Please not now!

When she reaches the stage, she bows her head while Oliver growls at her. "Mom, don't you dare ruin this for her!"

She says nothing and pulls out a small black box from her dress pocket and opens it up for me. As she speaks, her eyes are glued to the beautiful sapphire ring with a gold band sitting atop a velvet pillow.

"This ring has belonged to every River Moon Luna since we first established ourselves here in the United States. I had hoped that I would one day give it to Adeline," she sighs. "But Oliver chose you instead. My feelings for you have not changed but after some thinking I realized I love my son more than I hate you... and I would like to be a part of his life again." She clears her throat and looks me in the eyes. "So this belongs to you now. Take care of my son, Luna."

I tentatively take the ring from her and she takes a knee. Everyone in the crowd follows her lead and bows their head. One glance at Oliver tells me he's displeased with his mother, but I refuse to let her ruin the mood and lean over to kiss his cheek. A little smile tugs at his lips.

"May Moon Goddess bless you eternally, you're majesty," Elder Aguste says and the four elders take his lead and kneel before me.

"River Moon pack, I present to you, Luna Aurora," Oliver says, beaming with pride.

Everyone gets to their feet and erupts in cheers and whistles. We hold a brief intermission before the pack run and I take advantage to speak with Celina and her family. As we talk, I catch a glimpse of the two people I've been meaning to speak with for a while now: Erin and Andrew's parents. I excuse myself from the group and make my way through the crowd.

"Diana?" I ask the blonde woman in front of me.

She turns and gives me a cold smile, the man beside her glaring at me and together they bow. "Luna Aurora, what can we do for you?"

"I-I just wanted to clear some things up with you-

"There is nothing to clear up," Diana snaps. "My son and my daughter are dead and we know whose fault it was. But if you're concerned about our loyalty, you have nothing to fear. My husband and I are loyal members of this pack and we will follow our leaders until our final breath, regardless of who they are and what they've done."

"I see," I sigh, knowing there is no point in arguing with them. "I am sorry for your loss. I know how painful it can be to lose-

"You know nothing!" Arthur scoffs. "You've never lost a child, let alone two!"

"Perhaps not," I say, pursing my lips. "But I've lost two sets of parents, so I know what it's like to lose someone you love."

"It seems you are the common denominator in both of our sorrows," Diana retorts. "Everything you touch, dies. What can we expect of River Moon?"

Reyna scoffs. Let me handle this, she snarls before taking over.

"You birthed a rapist and a psychotic b***h," Reyna laughs. "But thank you for your loyalty. I can always appreciate two loyal pack members, no matter how useless they are."

Diana's jaw drops as Reyna gives me back control and I give her an innocent smile.

"Enjoy the ceremony," I chirp, turning on my heel and walking away quickly back to Oliver.

"What did they say?" he asks.

Oliver would murder them if he knew what they said.

"Nothing you need to worry about," I smile. "They know they're place."

"Aurora-"

"Oliver," I tease and he scowls at me. "Did I ever tell you that look amazing in blue? Very handsome."

He rolls his eyes but a tiny smile tugs at his lips. "Tell me something I don't know."

I giggle as he pulls me into him and kisses my forehead.

After the intermission, all River Moon wolves between the ages of 18 and 65 meet at the edge of the woods in their wolf forms for the pack run. Oliver and I undress by a tree and step out before our pack as wolves. In my wolf form, the power I hold is undeniable and everyone once again kneels before me.

"You may rise," Reyna declares and everyone follows the command.

Suddenly my mind is once again bombarded with my packs thoughts.

"Wow, our Luna is gorgeous!" "Your white fur is stunning, Luna" "Goddess, your eyes!"

"You've made quite the impression, your highness," Carter chuckles. "Your wolf is definitively unlike any other."

"Thank you," I reply.

Oliver's black wolf comes up behind me and nips at my ear.

"Ready when you are," he says.

We howl, filling the night with our song and others quickly join. For the next hour, the River Moon wolves follow in our footsteps. The entire experience is like a dream and I know I'll never forget this night. We cross streams and splash in the water, chase each other's tails, hunt small animals and race. By the time we return back to the house, River Moon is one entity and I know I can lead these people with Oliver by my side. There may be obstacles I'll have to overcome but my pack will always stand behind me. I will not fail River Moon.

Ira's POV

A lot of planning has gone into the preparations for tonight and I grow anxious as the moment I've been looking forward to draws near. As I watch the pack welcome their new Luna, I feel my hatred for her grow.

She looks just like her mother, I grin, reminiscing the fallen Queen's demise. You better enjoy him, Aurora. By the end of tonight, you and Oliver will be no more.

I glance over at my allies for the night. I just hope these stupid wolves know what they're doing.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 80

Oliver's POV

Aurora and I lead our pack back to the pack house yard where the party is in full swing, the dance floor set up and music blasting through the speakers. We make our way to the tree where we stuffed our clothes and once alone, Aurora shifts back into her human form. As I look at her beautiful body, I lose control of my urges. I've been thinking about this since I first laid eyes on her tonight. I shift into my human form and lift her off her feet, pressing her naked body against mine and forcing her to wrap her legs around me for stability.

"Oliver, what are you-"

I don't let her finish her sentence, sealing her lips with my own and pressing her up against a tree. She gasps when her skin makes contact with the bark of the trunk and I take advantage to devour her mouth, desperate to taste every corner. When I pull back, she's panting and I can hear her heart pounding against her rib cage.

“Oliver you- you scoundrel!” she snaps, smacking my bare chest and I burst out laughing.

Scoundrel?

“Are you insane?” she huffs. “Someone could see us!”

“Therein lies the thrill,” I tease, leaning forward and kissing her.

My words set her on fire and I smell her delicious arousal. I bury my face in her neck, running my tongue along her mark and her breath quickens significantly. I shift her up a bit and latch on to her left n****e, my favorite of the pair, suckling it lightly until I feel her precum ooze onto my stomach. Her soft moans only drive me crazier and I lose my patience, lowering her so that my c**k lines up perfectly with her entrance. With a swift thrust, I enter her and she attempts to hold back a scream but I scold her.

“Don’t hold back,” I growl. “I want to know how this d**k drives you crazy.”

She lets out a beautiful moan and I give her slow and forceful strokes, wanting to make her scream my name. She wraps an arm around my neck and buries her fingers in my hair while the other claws at my back. I hiss as she scrapes her long nails against my skin, enjoying the mix of pleasure and pain she’s inflicting. Aurora rocks her hips against me then leans forward and bites down on my shoulder. I love when she bites me, her desperation to process the pleasure I give her driving me over the edge. After a few pumps, I lift her up in my arms and lower her down onto the ground so she’s flat on her back on the damp earth. I lift one of her legs over my shoulder, delivering open mouth kisses to her gorgeous brown skin and straddle her other leg before settling inside her once more. Within two thrusts, I hit her magic spot and she calls out my name, begging me to hit it again. I would take my time to tease her a bit but I was desperate and hit it over and over again. Her eyes roll back and her nails dig into the earth as I hammer into her at full force.

“...F**k... Harder, please!”

I oblige and pick up the pace, slamming into her a bit faster. A few tears line her eyes as I f**k her before she starts clenching down on me in a vice grip.

We bite down on each other’s marks and both of us experience an o****m like never before. I swear I see stars and I give her a few light strokes as I relieve myself inside her, filling her up with an endless stream of my seed.

“I think I outdid myself,” I chuckle as I look down to see c*m spilling onto our legs and pull out. I get on my feet and take her once more in my arms.

“I think you’re an i***t,” she mutters as she catches her breath.

I lean forward and kiss her sweetly, pressing her against the tree as she giggles. “I’m putting a pup in you by the end of the night.”

She pulls back and kisses my nose. “How many are we having?”

I smile at her, brushing a few strands of hair away from her face. “As many as you want.”

Within seconds, I harden again. Her eyes light up as I slip inside for another round of pleasure, this time against the tree.

When I finish up, I look back at her and feel an overwhelming happiness. “Veux-tu m’épouser?” I ask her again, needing her to say yes once more.

She bursts into laughter. “Oui oui!” She laughs, wiggling her eyebrows and leaning over to kiss my cheeks. “I still don’t know what I’m agreeing to, though.”

“You will soon,” I smile, kissing her lips lightly. “I love you.”

“I love you too,” she giggles, biting my lower lip playfully. “I didn’t think I could ever love someone this much. I didn’t think I would ever get my happy ever after-“

“But now you have me and I promise you, I will make you the happiest Queen in all the land.”

I put her down and find a spare t shirt stuffed in a nearby tree and help her clean herself off before wiping myself down. She slips the dress on again and asks me to help her with the zipper. When we’re both done getting dressed, she turns to me and in all seriousness asks how she looks.

“Like my Luna,” I whisper, pulling her into yet another kiss. “Absolutely beautiful.”

She blushes as I take her hand and we both walk back to the party.

Rosalie narrows her eyes at us as we approach our table. "You two couldn't wait until the party was over?" She smacks my shoulder. "And you ruined her lip stick! Ugh, come on Luna. I'll fix you up."

She grabs Aurora's hand and pulls her away towards the house, grumbling about how annoying I am. Wesley walks over and leans down by my ear.

"Mind telling me what the f**k Javier is doing here?" he asks, a little annoyed. "Last I checked, Lluvia Blanca was still an enemy pack."

I roll my eyes at the mention of that bastard. "Aurora," I grunt. "She forgave him last night and invited him and Mia."

He chuckles. "Is it safe to assume you've not forgiven him?"

I stand up and excuse myself from the table, asking Wesley to follow me towards the refreshment station. "Doesn't matter what I feel about him. He is Aurora's guest tonight and I will not go against her wishes, even if I can't stand him. Aurora cares about him and the Lluvia Blanca wolves," I sigh. I think this the best time to inform him of Javier's request. "Javier has asked to join the Alliance again once he takes over Lluvia Blanca."

"And you're only now just telling me?" he growls. "Do the others know?"

I shake my head. "He asked last night and trust me, after finding out what he did to Aurora, I wasn't too keen on letting him back in," I sigh. "Look, Aurora wants Lluvia Blanca back in the alliance. There are a lot of innocent lives at stake and quite frankly, we could use their support if we want to defeat Tais and her sister. I was hoping I would have a bit more time to prepare everything for the next Alpha meeting and come up with a strategy to help him get out of the supposed alliance Miguel is forging with Amethyst Lake."

Wesley frowns but seems to understand our concern. "Javier was a friend before all of this...." he sighs. "Okay, fine. What do you know about the treaty with Amethyst Lake?"

"Nothing yet. Javier hasn't said much about it."

"Well he's right here. If he wants to join, we're going to need some straight answers."

I agree and we head over to Javier and Mia's table.

“Javier,” I clear my throat.

“Oliver. Wesley,” he nods. “Where’s Auro-“

“Don’t worry about her,” I snarl, turning to Mia. “I need you to leave. We have some things to discuss.”

She leaves without a fuss, going to get a drink and striking up a conversation with some old school mates of hers.

“I get the feeling you’re not here to catch up.”

“The Alliance with Amethyst Lake,” Wesley says as we both take a seat at his table. “Tell us about it.”

Javier sighs. “The plan was to join Amethyst Lake, Maple Moon, Desert sky and Lluvia Blanca in alliance similar to that of the Allies. Amethyst Lake was willing to accept on the condition we give them some land we hold near River Moon’s border. I don’t know why but that was their condition,” he shrugs.

Why would Amethyst lake want to share a border with us?

“But I see now there was no chance of the alliance taking place,” he adds, nodding towards the Maple Moon and Desert Sky alphas congregating at a table and chatting amongst themselves. “Looks like you managed to secure Maple Moon and Desert Sky before we could even begin negotiations,” he chuckles.

I roll my eyes. “I warned you that treaty was a mistake, but you’ve always been a cocky son of a -“

I feel two arms wrap around my neck from behind..

“Boys, what are you three up to?” Aurora asks, her breath tickling my neck as she kisses my jaw.

I look back to see Celina and Kehlani right behind her, Kehlani carrying a chubby Matthew in her arms. Kehlani hands her son over to Wesley and he gently cradles him in arms. Matthew plays with his toes and giggles to himself.

“This is a party,” Aurora scolds. “Not an Alpha meeting, so play nice and leave Javi alone.”

“Javi...” I repeat in a mocking tone and she laughs before kissing my lips.

“Don’t get jealous,” she whispers. “I’m all yours, remember?”

Then why is he here? Michael snarls, his jealousy burning me up inside.

I glare back at Javier but he’s too busy staring at Celina to notice and I can sense her discomfort. I growl and he shifts his eyes back to me and clears his throat.

“I’m glad to see Matthew is doing better,” Javier says nervously. “I remember he wasn’t doing too well. We kept him in our prayers.”

“Thank you,” Kehlani says, squeezing his shoulder. “Luna Aurora saved him the day of that -ahem- unpleasant meeting.”

“Oh...” he says, looking guilty as hell.

“Don’t worry, you’re not the only one around here who was wrong about Aurora,” Kehlani says, grinning at Wesley.

“I apologized!” He snaps.

Aurora chuckles. “I believe everyone at this table at one point or another said some hurtful things to me,” she says, giving me a triumphant smile. “But it’s alright. All is forgiven. Now Javi, if you’ll excuse us, I’m hungry and I need my mate back.” She tugs on my tux and pulls me to my feet.

Kehlani and Wesley walk to their table while I lead Celina and Aurora back to ours.

Aurora opens up her mind-link as we walk. “I know you hate that he’s here, but I am very grateful that you’ve been civil thus far.”

I take a glance at Javier.

“I hate him more than you’ll ever know, but if he makes you happy, I’ll-“

“He doesn’t make me happy. You do...”

That alone makes me sigh in relief. Her inviting Javier worried me more than I wanted to admit. It’s true I had a history with Adeline but it was forced, I was never in love with her. It was just s*x and business. And while Aurora has

never said she loved Javier romantically, she did share a very special connection with him at one point, one I would never understand.

“Olivier, I only want him here so River Moon and Lluvia Blanca can move forward with the alliance and so I can put the past behind me. I also want to give Celina a chance to get to know him more before she definitively decides she doesn’t want him in her life. Nothing more. You’re my King. My only King.”

She interlocks our fingers and kisses my hand, squashing all of my doubts instantly. When we reach the table, I pull Aurora onto my lap to eat with me. She piles on all sorts of foods and deserts onto her plate, leaving me to wonder how the hell she’s so tiny and fit. She eats shamelessly, asking questions about some of the French dishes.

“What’s this called?” she asks, licking her fingers. “It’s so good!”

“Coq au vin,” I smile.

She repeats it to herself, stumbling through the pronunciation. “And this?” she points to another dish.

“Steak au poivre.”

She gives me a toothy grin. “You should speak French more often. I think it’s very romantic.”

This is an opportunity I simply can’t pass up. “Et je pense que nous devrions baiser derrière les arbres plus souvent,{And I think we should f**k behind the trees more often),” I smirk, knowing she has no idea what I just said.

She nods absentmindedly as she bites into her steak. “Oui.”

Rosalie gasps while Evan, Carter and I burst into fits of laughter, making Aurora blush. “What did he say?” she asks timidly.

Rosalie smacks my head and scowls at me. “We are eating! We don’t need to know about your tree s*x fantasies!”

Celina covers her mouth, hiding her laughter while Aurora scowls at me and tries to get off my lap. I tighten my grip on her and apologize.

“No, baby. I’m sorry, that was mean,” I chuckle. She struggles against me. “Je suis amoureux de vous. Pouvez-vous me reprocher de fantasmer sur vous? {I’m in love with you. Can you blame me for fantasizing about you?}”

“Shut up, you jerk,” she mutters, elbowing me in the stomach.

I retaliate by pinning her arms to her sides and crashing my lips against hers. She continues to struggle before she starts to giggle and kisses me back. I love pacifying her this way.

Evan gets up and returns with a bottle of tequila and several shot glasses. “All right my friends, let’s get this party started!”

I tense up at the sight of the alcohol, knowing it makes Aurora uncomfortable. I’m about to tell him to put the bottle away when Aurora stops me and reaches for the bottle and a glass. I watch in shock as she pours a out a shot and hands it to me.

“Aurora what are you-“

“I trust you,” she shrugs. “You can have a drink if you want. I know you won’t hurt me.”

I hesitate. I haven’t had a sip since our fight that night and while I’ve never been an avid drinker, I did miss having a drink with Evan and Carter. Before I get a chance to say anything, though, Celina takes the drink and downs it like its water, looking back coolly at us.

“You took too long,” she says, pushing the glass over to Aurora. “Hit me again.”

Aurora fills her glass again and Celina chugs it like a champ. Evan hands me a glass and Aurora fills me up. I only take four shots, not wanting to get carried away.

I pull Aurora away from the table as Evan and Celina continue drinking and introduce her to the alphas of Desert Sky and Maple Moon, Malik Farhat and Jared Alonto, respectively. We chat for a bit, talking about the impending Alpha meeting for the treaty negotiations between our packs.

“So have you made your decisions to join the Allies yet?” Aurora asks after a getting to know them.

"I have my concerns for my pack," Jared says. "Maple Moon is situated between River Moon, Amethyst Lake and Lluvia Blanca, all of whom are currently at odds with each other. If we pick sides, Amethyst Lake is sure to retaliate and I'm not sure I'm willing to subject Maple Moon to a possible war. We don't have the luxury of having silver wolves in our pack and our numbers are small compared to those of our neighbors."

"The recent rise of Rogue attacks aimed at the Allies is also factor affecting our decision," Malik adds. "So far, Desert Sky has had no rogue activity and we've had no intrusions since...well... you. I'm afraid if we enter the Alliance, I'll only be putting my pack in danger. Not to mention, we share borders with Lluvia Blanca and River Moon and we've managed to stay civil with both packs. We don't need to jeopardize those relations."

"I understand your concerns. Your pack's well-being must always come first," Aurora reassures them. "But should you choose to join, the Allies become just that... your allies. If trouble comes, you can rely on us to lessen the burden and help. It's true we've faced a rise in attacks but we've managed to minimize the damage because we know we can count on our allies when we need them. We share resources to ensure every pack stays strong and healthy for years to come." She pauses to let them digest her words before continuing. "As for your concerns with Lluvia Blanca, we're actively working to reconcile with them. Javier is taking over in less than two weeks and has already expressed desire to re-enter the treaty. We're currently working on a new draft and hoping to present it to our Allies at the next Alpha meeting."

I stand back in awe of my Luna. She says she's afraid to lead with me but here she is effortlessly negotiating with two packs like a natural. I can't help but smile to myself as she argues her case and the two Alphas listen carefully. If they raise concerns, she addresses them and offers a solution.

"You are smaller packs, but that in no way makes you insignificant. Every pack has something to offer and I believe we can all benefit from working together. Of course at the end of the night, the choice is yours and River Moon will respect whatever decision you two make," she finishes.

Malik turns to me, seemingly pleased with Aurora's speech. "You have a very astute Luna, Alpha Oliver. I'm looking forward to the next Alpha meeting to see this partnership in action."

"Congratulations on the ceremony, Luna Aurora," Jared smiles. "Your pack is lucky to have you."

Aurora blushes and thanks them for their kind words as they leave.

As we sit back in our seats to watch everyone on the dance floor enjoying themselves, Adeline comes over to offer her congratulations. She's clearly had a lot to drink as she stumbles over. I'm about to tell her to f**k off when Aurora grabs my wrist.