

The Ivory Queen Chapter 111

Mia's POV

Evan's heart beats rhythmically as I lay on his chest, the sound rocking me to sleep. Inez purrs contently, happy to be safely tucked away in our mate's arms.

Our mate.

I still couldn't wrap my head around how the events unfolded after the fighting stopped. Evan and Chava brought in Aurora to the pack hospital, a huge tear gushing blood on her shoulder. Evan was on the verge of a mental breakdown. His Luna was hurt and unlike my father, he could nothing about it. And that's when it happened. The most amazing thing.

As he set Aurora's body down on a bed for Celina to work, he looked around frantically.

"Where's Mia? Has anyone seen Mia?" He cried, his voice laced with worry and despair.

I heard his call from the hall and came rushing towards him. When I arrived, my heart swelled with joy instantly. Evan ran to me, pulling me into his chest.

"Thank the Moon you're okay, my love," he murmured, kissing my forehead over and over. His whole body seemed to relax and I could hear the sob forming in his throat at the thought of losing me.

While he watched over his Luna, he pulled me onto his lap, refusing to let me leave his side. He'd bury his face in my neck, kissing my skin so softly with his lips and making butterflies flutter in my tummy.

I was not an after thought to him. He had worried for my safety. I was of equal importance to his Luna and while I shared a place in his heart, his soul was mine to keep. I knew then I could love this gamma.

He plays with my hands as we watch over Carter, interlocking our fingers.

"What are you thinking about?" I ask as he brings my hand up to his lips to kiss my fingers.

“You,” he murmurs. “And the question you asked me.”

I furrow my brows and scrunch up my nose. “What question?”

“Would I give you up for Aurora?” he mutters.

Oh.

“You don’t have to say it,” I whisper. “I know you have a responsibility with Aurora-“

“I wouldn’t.” he interrupts and I stiffen, unsure if I heard him right.

“What?”

“I wouldn’t. I wouldn’t give you up. Not even for Aurora.”

At the rate my heart is beating, I fear it might burst out of my chest with joy. Those were the most beautiful words ever spoken to me.

“I was wrong to say I would,” he continues, placing a kiss on my cheek. “I have you in my arms right now,” he guides my hand down to his chest to feel his beating heart. “And my heart hasn’t stopped racing. I don’t think I could ever give up feeling the way you make me feel. Ever.”

I hang on to every word he speaks, savoring their sweetness.

“I know we got off on the wrong foot, but there hasn’t been a second you haven’t been on my mind,” he says with a smirk. “You are the most stubborn, annoying, infuriating person I’ve ever met,” he laughs. “And I’m crazy about you.”

“I’m not annoying,” I mutter. “You’re annoying.”

He frowns. “I just declared my love for you and that’s what you picked up?” he scoffs.

I shrug.

“You are unbelievable!”

I press my lips against his, shutting him up instantly.

"You didn't let me finish," I murmur. "You are the only person I want to annoy. Everyday. For the rest of my life."

Without a moment to lose, our lips meet once more, each of us savoring each other's taste. His mouth moves possessively over mine and after a few moments of fighting over dominance, I give in to him. He could win this round just once. We kiss until our lungs burn for air and then we kiss some more. He was everything I wanted. Everything I needed.

I was angry at myself for ever pushing him away but it didn't matter anymore. This man was mine.

When we finally pull away to catch our breaths, our lips are swollen and a little red. Evan buries his face in my neck, inhaling my scent when we hear someone moan.

"Rosie?" Carter groans, grabbing his head in his hands and looking around the room. "Rosie?" He looks over at us. "Where is Rosalie?"

MEANWHILE DOWNSTAIRS

Aurora's POV

I find some unpleasant visitors at the pack house upon my return to River Moon. I had sent Celina to Amethyst lake to prepare everyone for transfer and Valentina to oversee the hospital preparations at the River Moon hospital whilst Javier and Wesley take charge of the the imprisonments of the Amethyst Lake wolves. Chava goes back to Lluvia Blanca for a shower and some clothes. He hadn't left my side since the attack.

Simone looks exhausted, severe under eye circles tugging at her eyes while Adeline just looks angry.

I call for some tea, taking a seat at the head of the dinning table and motioning for them to sit. Only Simone takes the offer and plops down in a chair, her legs seemingly exhausted from carrying her weight. An omega sets down a cup of tea in front of her but she ignores it, her eyes inspecting something on her hands.

"My daughter..." she whispers and I brace myself for her to lose her mind. "Look whatever they want ... please just.. Just give it to them! Please! I'm begging you. Don't let them take my babies!"

I remain quiet, giving thought to the blood demand.

“They want my blood...”

“That’s it? Then for Goddess sakes give it to them!” Adeline snaps slamming her fists on the table. “If you love Oliver as much as you claim you do, you wouldn’t give it second thought!”

“I suggest you lower your tone when you speak to me,” I hiss, slowly rising from my seat. “You’re in my house now and I demand respect.”

She stumbles back a little but quickly composes herself. “Tsk, you demand respect?” She scoffs. “You are quite literally the worst Luna River Moon has ever seen. You’ve not only lost the Alpha, but he’s now a rogue and you’ve somehow managed to lose the beta’s wife. And you want respect? Have you earned it?”

That stings, but I don’t want her to know it so I keep my face as emotionless as possible.

“It’s not as simple as you think!” I snap. “I have no idea what they want it for and-“

“Who cares what they want it for?!” Adeline argues, raising her hands in exasperation. “If I were Luna, I would-“

“Let me stop you right there,” I say, raising a hand to her. “You are not Luna and you never will be, so let’s not speculate on what you would do. You don’t know a thing about leading this pack!”

“But I do!” Simone growls, knocking away her tea cup. “I know what’s it like and I can tell you right now, with every passing minute that you lead, the more I curse the day Oliver met you.” A few tears spill onto her cheek. “You are a disgrace to River Moon,” she whispers and I feel bile rise up in my gut. “You don’t deserve that ring on your finger.”

I look down at the blue sapphire sitting on my middle finger. I had felt I did not deserve it many times but hearing her say it out loud only confirmed my fears. I was not ready to lead a kingdom. How could I, when everything I touched died?

Despite the sting of her words, I keep my face blank.

"I have half a mind to call Alpha Jacque to deal with this mess," Simone continues.

I did not know Alpha Jacque but I knew he did not like me. I had taken away his daughter's betrothed. I was the reason his daughter would never be Luna of River Moon.

"What?"

Simone's face hardens. "Lune de Minuit would have Oliver and Rosalie back to me in a matter of hours!" She snarls. "If you don't find them within the next two days, I'll call Alpha Jacque myself! He'll straighten everything out in the process."

"Is that a threat?" I demand, circling around the table towards her.

"Take it as you will."

She casts her eyes away to the floor when I stand a few feet away from her, unable to hold my gaze.

My hand charges up a lightning bolt and before I know it, a ray of lightning flashes just above her head, missing her by a few centimeters.

"Get out of my house!" I huff and without a second thought, she and Adeline make a run for the exit.

When they leave, I feel my farce fall apart. I grab on to a chair to keep from collapsing as I start to pant, unable to swallow the sob caught in my throat. Every word they'd spoken had hurt more than the last.

They're wrong, Reyna assures. You'll find them both.

I wipe at the tears threatening to fall and harden my face. I could not afford to cry just yet. Not when I had to figure this out.

I feel a presence behind me and turn to see Gwen watching me. I compose myself quickly, tucking away the pain of Simone and Adeline's words

"Hi, Gwen," I chirp, forcing a smile on my face and giving my eyes one last wipe. "I didn't hear you come in. How are you? I heard you saved Valentina and I never got the chance to thank you. How is Blood Moon? Celina healed

alpha Patrick but is he doing alright now? I'll have to visit soon to check on him and the other alphas-

"You don't have to do that," she says, a solemn look in her eyes.

"Pardon?"

"Pretend, I mean," she shrugs. "I heard what they said. Anyone would fall apart at that. So you don't have to pretend. Not with me anyway,"

I feel my cheeks flush in embarrassment and I wring my hands nervously as I think about Simone threats. Would she really call Alpha Jacques?

"That girl by the way," Gwen interrupts my train of thought. "She's weird. She has a strange vibe to her, I don't like her."

"Who? Adeline?" I ask. "I don't like her either. She's Oliver's ex."

"Must be that then," the witch shrugs dismissively. "Anyways, I've come to talk you about something serious. Something regarding those witches. I've already spoken with Carter about my suspicions but based on what I've heard from the soldiers and Patrick, I'm afraid I'm right."

"What is it?"

"It's about the sword."

Before she can elaborate any further, I get a frantic message from Evan.

"Carter's awake!"

The Ivory Queen Chapter 112

Aurora's POV

"Carter's awake!" Evan cries.

Oh goddess. I know he will be in a world of pain the second he finds out about Rosalie. How do I tell him?

"I'm sorry, Gwen. It'll have to wait. Carter just woke up and I'm sure he'll have many questions-

“What I have to say pertains to him too,” she says. “I’ll come with you.”

We rush upstairs to find Evan pinning Carter down onto the bed, Carter demanding to see Rosalie.

“Easy, bro. You need to relax!” Evan cries.

“Get off of me man! Where is my wife? I need to see her. I need to see our baby!”

“Let him go, Evan,” I command, Evan sliding off the bed.

At the sound of my voice, Carter sits up and looks at Gwen and I.

“Where is she?” He asks with desperation. I shift my gaze to the ground, unable to look him in the eyes and when I don’t answer, his voice cracks. “No…” he says, shaking his head in disbelief as a few tears spill onto his cheeks. “No, No, No, No…” he sobs, gripping his hair with hands. “No! No!”

He grabs one of his pillows and starts raining punches at it in his despair, screaming in fury.

I knew his pain all too well and I did not wish it in anyone. I sit on his bedside and pull him to my chest. He sobs as I gently stroke his hair, pain pouring from the depths of his heart. I hold back my own tears as I focus on his energy and soothe his heart until he sighs and relaxes in my arms.

“I’m so sorry,” I murmur. “I’m so sorry I did this. I-“

“She said it was your fault but I don’t blame you,” he says, pulling away from my embrace.

“Who did?” I ask, completely confused.

“The owl. It was there along with Oliver and Karina.”

Right, I recall. Oliver and Karina had been everywhere that night.

“But how did it happen?” Carter inquires, sitting up straighter and wiping his tears. “I need to know everything.”

“It was shortly after you left,” Gwen says, stepping tentatively towards the bed.

Carter nods at her in acknowledgment and patiently waits for her response. She explains what she knew and I fill in the details Valentina had given me.

“Karina took her, Carter,” I sigh. “She and-“

I can’t bring myself to say it. It wasn’t him. His actions were not his.

“Oliver?” Carter interrupts. “That... Thing wasn’t Oliver. The real Oliver would never hurt his sister. Not in a million years.”

I hold back tears as I think of the Oliver I saw that night. The one whose cold red eyes were filled with so much anger.

“He was under a spell of some sort,” the witch agrees. “Unfortunately, there’s no way of telling how long it’ll last and I can’t counteract it without knowing the precise ingredients they used. Different control spells require different antidotes.”

“I believe I owe you an apology,” Carter says to the witch who scrunches up her nose in confusion. “Thank you for trying to protect her.”

“There’s no need to apologize. I only wish I were stronger,” Gwen sighs. “I’m very sorry.”

Carter nods knowingly and we settle into silence, each processing the events of that night.

“I saw the sword in Karina’s hands,” Carter says to the witch. “You were right.”

Gwen closes her eyes and pinches the bridge of her nose. “I hate being right,” she mutters. “I’m afraid your witch problem just got a hundred times worse,” she says solemnly. “If they unlock the powers of the the Soul of Insanity... the Gods only know what kind of havoc they’ll reek.”

“Soul of Insanity?” I ask, looking around to see if I’m the only one lost.

Evan and Mia look equally as clueless so I turn to Gwen and Carter for an explanation.

“There is an ancient legend that tells of a sword with awesome power,” Carter says. “War God created it with the purpose of inciting wars and chaos and he’s succeeded. Several battles have been fought in the name of that blade.

The Soul of Insanity is said to give its wielder the ability to control an army of Moon Goddess' creations and make them unable to lose a battle."

Oh Goddess.

"That's not even the worst part," Gwen says, shifting nervously on her feet.

What could possibly be worse?

"Luckily many who have heard of the sword's existence and origins, don't know how it actually works. Without awakening it's power, the sword is just that, a sword," Gwen adds, pacing back and forth. "Unfortunately for us, those witches know very well how it works."

"How do you awaken its power?"

"There's an old poem my mum used to tell me. Let's see..." she thinks for a minute, drumming her fingers on her chin. She mumbles for a minute before she remembers it. "Okay, I've got it:

Forged by blood and Fed by souls,
the Moon and Sun awake it's thirst.

First innocence must bleed.

With the Ivory it controls

All of the beings on this Earth.

But be weary of its greed

For those who wield it shall be cursed."

Forged by blood....the Moon and Sun...

"Children of the Moon and Sun...That's why they want my blood..."

"Bingo," Gwen snaps her fingers and points at me. Her face darkens. "It's why they want Rosalie too."

"What do you mean?" Carter asks, his fear evident.

“‘First innocence must bleed.’ It means the sword cannot be activated without taking the life of a first born child, an innocent,” she says. “And If I’m not mistaken, Rosalie is pregnant with your first child, is she not?”

“Oh goddess,” I whimper.

An an ungodly cry escapes Carter’s mouth at the thought of losing his first child and he scrambles to his feet.

“We have to find them!” He cries, grabbing me by the shoulders. “We can’t let them take my baby! Aurora we have to- we have to find them!”

Evan comes up behind Carter, spinning him around and cupping his cheeks.

“Listen to me,” he says sternly. “There is no way in hell those witches are taking your baby. We’ll get Oliver, Ro and the baby back if it’s the last thing I do. Brothers remember? I’m not leaving you alone with this man.”

Carter nods as he wipes his tears and Evan pulls him into hug.

“There, there,” he murmurs, stroking his head lovingly. “Daddy Evan’s got you.”

Carter pulls away from his arms instantly and growls at him, much to Evan’s delight.

“i***t,” Carter mutters as we burst into laughter.

Oh Evan.

Mia smiles like a fool as Evan strolls over to her side and pulls her into him to kiss her cheeks and neck.

I didn’t need an explanation to know they had finally accepted each other and I’m glad in the midst of all this chaos, at least some good had come out.

“I will do my best to help too,” Gwen says, reminding me of our dire situation and pulling me from my thoughts. She takes out the letter from her pocket. “I’ve read this extensively and I think I understand their plan.”

Things getting serious again, we all gather around the bed.

“Tais and Ira are requesting your blood by the winter solstice, when your powers will be at an all time high. I can only assume this means your bloods potency and strength will peak at this time too,” she starts. “So if that’s the case, they’ll need something to counteract your abilities.”

“They’ll need to know my weakness,” I mumble, following Gwen’s train of thought.

“Exactly, so if we can trick them into thinking you’re powerless whilst they collect your blood-“

“Then we can use our powers to save Ro and Oliver and take the sword.”

“Bingo!” Gwen chirps.

I feel elated at the possibility of defeating them at their own game.

“There’s just one little problem,” Gwen chuckles sheepishly. “It’s going to take a while to figure out exactly what combination of ingredients they plan to use to weaken your abilities and figure out how to counteract them. Unfortunately, time is not exactly on our side here.”

“Well then there’s not time to waste,” I say before looking at the boys and Mia. “While Gwen and I work on this, I need you guys to finish the arrangements for tonight.”

“Tonight?” Carter asks.

“We’re holding a Moon Warrior ceremony,” I say solemnly. “We lost a few warriors that night... We must honor their sacrifice as Moon Goddess intended.”

Carter nods, likely eager to take his mind of Rosalie. “I’m on it.”

They head out to make the arrangements while I open a portal to the garden. I make my way to a flower bed with some space.

“My weakness,” I sigh, looking around the clearing for any intruders. I can feel Reyna growing uncomfortable with the situation. This was supposed to be a secret.

But I need to save Oliver and Rosalie...

“It’s Flame Lilies and Queen of the night flowers.”

From the corner of my eye, I see the witch nod nervously as she thinks.

“Okay,” she mutters to herself, shaking her hands and cracking her neck. “I can do this.”

“You look like you might pass out,” I chuckle.

“Sorry... I’m just... there’s a lot riding on this,” she replies sheepishly.

“Gwen, I won’t get mad if you can’t do it,” I say, forcing a smile. “I’ll find another ready to get them back.”

She nods and I get to work, growing a few gorgeous flame lilies. If it weren’t for their effect on me, I’d actually pick a few and keep them in the house. The flowers have wavy vibrant pink petals with yellow that make them look like flames and their stamens stick out horizontally at the base of the flowers, making them look like fire wood.

Next I grow some Queen of the night flowers, their cute little white flowers closed as the sun is still out.

“These flowers need to bloom and they only bloom at night. You’ll need those petals and the root of the flame lilies.”

Gwen nods, the gears in her head working. “We’re going to need some more herbs...”

Salvador’s POV

I return to River Moon, showered and refreshed to find the pack house in a frenzy as wolves prepare for tonight’s ceremony. Running inside, I unfortunately run into Evan.

“Watch where you’re f*****g going, moron,” he snaps, pushing past my shoulder.

Now who the f**k does this a*****e think he is? Marco snaps

“f*****g mutt,” I mutter.

He stops in his tracks. “What did you say?” He growls.

“You heard me.”

“You think because Aurora forgives you, I won’t kick your a*s?” He snarls.

That’s it! This pricking is asking for it! Marcos snarls, begging for control.

He’s just trying to provoke you, you stupid wolf. Let it go...

“I don’t have time for your idiocy. Where’s Aurora?” I ask, rolling my eyes at him.

“You know, you’ve got some real nerve walking around here demanding s**t,” Evan laughs with no emotion. “Why don’t you do us all a favor and crawl back up Satan’s asshole where you belong. We don’t need you here.”

Gotta hand it to him, the i**t’s kinda funny.

“I don’t care if you like me. Aurora and I are family and no matter what you think, I will always be her brother.”

“You’re a f*****g monster, is what you are,” he spits back. “And once a monster always a monster.”

“So what does that make me?”

We both turn to see Mia standing in the doorway of the foyer, arms crossed over her chest and a scowl on her face. Evan stiffens, knowing he’s made a mistake and I can’t help but chuckle at the way he squirms under her gaze.

Boy did he f**k up.

“Mia, I-I didn’t mean that,” he tries to explain.

“Do you actually forgive me or will you always think I’m a monster?” She says, her voice quiet.

“No, of course not!” He says, rushing to her and taking her in his arms. She glares at him and when he tries to kiss her, she turns her cheek. “Babe, I’m sorry.”

“Can you forgive Chava?”

His face hardens and he sighs. “Mia-“

“Then how can you forgive me?” She asks..

He glares at her, clenching his jaw in anger before taking a deep breath and sighing.

“Fine, you win,” he mutters through gritted teeth. “I’ll give the a*s wipe a chance.”

She grants him a kiss, much to my disgust. I gag, making Mia blush and pull away while Evan glares at me.

Mia smiles and nods towards the door. “She’s in the garden.”

I walk out of the house after asking a few wolves for directions, before making my way to the garden. As I grow closer, Marcos starts going haywire.

What the hell is up with you? I ask him as he starts panting.

I don’t know, he says. It just feels like something important is about to happen.

As I approach the garden, I hear Aurora’s voice accompanied by the most melodic female voice I’d ever heard. The air fills with the scent of strawberries and sweet grass, a mix I never thought I’d find so intoxicating.

In the distance, I see Aurora’s white hair flowing in the wind but besides her stands a girl with fiery red curls, both of them with their backs towards me.

When they hear my footsteps, both of them spin around on their heels to look at me. Aurora offers a hello and a wave but I’m completely mesmerized by the girl standing next to her, her gorgeous green eyes hypnotizing me.

Mate.

The air fills with her sweet aroma, soothing me but it’s the words she’s chanting that make the hairs on the back of my neck stand up and bile burn my esophagus.

Witch.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 113

Salvador’s POV

No f*****g way is my mate a witch!

“You know in some countries it’s considered rude to stare,” the witch says, a hint of irritation lacing her words. “Americans...” she mutters before continuing her incantations.

Aurora giggles and when I scowl at her, she pretends to find her nails very interesting.

“What did you need, Chava?” She asks, raising an eyebrow when I keep looking at the witch. “Oh have you met Gwen? She’s an Earth witch helping us figure out Tais and Ira’s plans-“

“Earth witch?” I ask, wondering why the hell Aurora would even consider trusting one of them. “Why is she here? How can you trust her?”

“I trust you, don’t I?” Aurora snaps. “After everything you did to me, I’m still willing to forgive you,” she adds, her face hardening. “So why can’t I trust a witch who’s done nothing but help since she arrived!”

Her hands burst into flames, making me stumble back a few paces. At my reaction, Aurora takes a few deep breaths to calm herself and the flames extinguish.

“So what do you need?” She asks calmly.

“Nothing,” I mutter. “I just came to help.”

“Great,” she chirps, tapping the basket in Gwen’s arms. “You can hold these herbs for Gwen while we gather the rest of her supplies.”

When I don’t move, Gwen bursts into laughter.

“I don’t bite,” she chuckles, snorting a little.

Marcos howls in excitement as she approaches me. I hold out my arms, my eyes watching her every movement. When her fingers accidentally brush up against mine, I feel little sparks tingle under her touch. She pulls her hand back in shock, both of us dropping the basket.

“What was that?” She blurts out, caressing her hands while staring at mine.

“What was what?” Aurora asks, pulling out a root of some sort.

“That-that spark,” Gwen replies. “I’ve never felt that before.”

Aurora stops what she’s doing and looks up at us.

“Chava?” she calls out, straightening back up and dusting her hands. A little sparkle lights up her eyes.

She knows...

“Chava?”

“It’s nothing!” I snap, bending down to get the basket we dropped and picking up some of the weird plants that spilled out.

Mate! Talk to our mate! Please! Marcos pleads

When I touch a pink flower, it burns my flesh.

“Ahh! What the f**k!?” I cry out, caressing my hands and pointing to the flower. “What the f**k is that!?”

Gwen grabs my hand to examine it, the sparks soothing the pain. I let her hold my hand despite my disgust and take the opportunity to study her closely. She is incredibly beautiful, her flaming red hair curling wildly against her creamy pale skin. Her green eyes have flecks of gold and she has tiny freckles across the bridge of her nose. She blushes a little when she notices me staring.

“You must be a silver wolf,” she whispers, staring closing at the burn as it slowly heals itself. “So even touching the flowers is dangerous for you...?” she says to no one in particular. “Fascinating...”

“Fascinating?” I snarl, pulling my hand back while Marcos whimpers to let her touch me again. “A flower just f*****g burned my hand and you find that fascinating? Are you sick in the head?”

She scrunches up her nose in indignation. “Listen wolf!” She snarls. “Don’t insult me! I’ve done nothing to you, so don’t project your anger onto me!”

“You witches are inherently evil!” I snap back. “It’s only a matter of time before you stab us all in the back!”

“Chava enough!” Aurora commands, storming over to us. “That is no way to speak to your mate! Apologize!”

Oh for f***s sake Aurora!

“Mate?” The witch asks, lifting a brow in confusion. “What mate?”

Aurora glares at me, waiting for me to answer and when I don’t, she growls.

“I would give anything to have my mate back right now and here you are refusing to acknowledge yours. You’re pathetic, Chava,” she snaps, pushing past us and walking back in the direction of the house. “All of you are pathetic!” She calls back.

“Aurora, she’s a f*****g witch!”

“And you’re an a*****e!” She huffs.

I stare blankly at her, hoping she might understand where I’m coming from.

I can’t love a witch, Aurora. Not after what they did to Mom and Dad.....

Her face softens and she sighs.

“Chava, that’s your problem. You hate with such ease.” She shakes her head disapprovingly and I can tell she’s holding back tears. She wipes at her face and puts on an emotionless smile. “Look, I’m no one to tell you how to live your life, so do as you please,” she says. “And Gwen, you can use Oliver’s office to work. Let me know if you need anything else. I have to check on my pack and the transfers.”

Before we can say anything else, she opens a portal and disappears. Gwen and I stand in silence, each unsure of what to do with ourselves and lost in our own thoughts. After a few awkward minutes, Gwen walks over to the garden and starts picking more herbs, tossing them in the basket.

“So I’m your mate?” She asks as she works.

“I guess so,” I shrug.

She sighs, stopping her work to look at me.

“Don’t take this the wrong way,” she says, wiping her forehead. “But I’ve lived nearly a century without a man and I don’t plan on changing that. I don’t crave a soul mate, nor do I need some possessive wolf telling me what to do. I like my freedom and that’s a concept most werewolves don’t seem to understand.

You live in packs, I live a solitary life and I like it that way. So if it's alright with you," she sighs, getting up and handing me the overflowing basket. "I'd like to pretend this whole mate thing doesn't exist. You live your life, I live mine. Deal?" She sticks out her hand for me to shake.

No! Marcos whines. I want my mate!

I stare at her hand hesitantly as Marcos protests her offer.

I can't love a witch...

"Deal," I say, taking her hand.

She gasps as the sparks send pleasurable tingles up and down our arms. When she tries to let go, Marcos takes over, doing something incredibly stupid.

Tossing the basket aside, he tightens my grip on her hand and pulls her to my chest. She looks confused as he wraps an arm around her waist and kisses her lips ever so gently. She remains stiff as a board for a few seconds as Marcos slowly devours her lips before she gives in and returns the kiss. Her arms snake around my neck, her fingers gripping my curls.

I have to admit, she tastes so amazingly sweet.

She's a goddamn witch! I remind myself

I try to fight my way back to the surface but Marcos wasn't going down without a fight, unwilling to let her go anytime soon. Our lips move in sync and when he slips my tongue inside her mouth, she moans wildly, making Marcos crave her even more. As the kiss grows hungrier, she seems to come to her senses, pushing her arms against my chest in protest.

Finally regaining control of my body, I release her lips and push her away, wiping my mouth in disgust. We stare breathlessly at each other, both of us trying to understand what happened.

"Well that was umm..." she mutters, smoothing her blouse. "I don't understand-

"There's nothing to understand lady. That was my wolf, not me," I snap, furious with Marcos.

"I have a name, you know?" she snaps. "It's Gwen."

"Gwen. Lady. Look I don't really care what your name is," I shrug unapologetically.

"Stupid wolf," she mutters, reaching down once more to pick up the basket. She practically chucks it at me, some of those weird pink flowers spilling onto my arms and burning me.

I cry out in pain and she laughs.

"Oops," she giggles. "Pick those up, won't you, dear?"

I glare at her. "Pick them up yourself. You dropped them."

She scowls in return. "Well if you're not going to help, then shoo. Leave me be. I have a task to complete and I don't have time to be dealing with an i***t and his horny wolf."

Marcos laughs at her comment, much to my annoyance.

"There's no way in hell I'm leaving you alone to do goddess knows what. I'm supervising you, witch. I won't have you hurting my family."

"Well then make yourself useful and hold the bloody basket!" she huffs.

Aurora's POV

I spend the remainder of my day speaking with the families of the fallen warriors and helping Carter make the preparations for the Moon Warrior ceremony. Gwen and Chava work on the counter spell in Oliver's office, Chava refusing to let the witch out of his sight. I hope they take this time to figure each other out. I'm also informed that the Amethyst Lake wolves are being transferred and settling into their rooms with the help of Celina and Valentina. Javier would be bringing the released men to the hospital tomorrow morning. He had to deal with his own pack.

The Moon Warrior ceremony was the highest honor paid to a fallen pack member, reserved only for the bravest warriors who died in combat or wolves who had gone above and beyond to serve their pack. Emiliano had a Moon Warrior ceremony after his death, although I was not allowed to attend.

With the preparations completed around 11 pm, I go to my room to change into a customary white linen dress for the occasion. The allies had held their own Moon Warrior ceremonies the night before and they agreed to help us celebrate the lives we lost in the battle. I gather my wolves outside the pack house where Carter and Evan distribute small torches to the families of the fallen and candles to the rest of the pack and allies. Several toddlers, including Taylor rush to hold my hands as we all walk together to The Meadow, a field of night phlox in the eastern part of our territory where our dead are laid to rest. A small creek runs through the field and when midnight approaches, a sweet fragrance fills the air as the flowers begin to bloom.

Fourteen pyres are built along the water's edge of the creek, each one carrying the body of a fallen pack member. The bodies were washed in special oils, wrapped in linen, and adorned with night phlox flowers before being placed on the pyre.

I stand before my pack and allies, a little nervous to address the people I was responsible for.

Just speak from the heart, Reyna encourages.

Right, speak from the heart.

"Two nights ago, fourteen warriors gave their life for their pack, fighting until their final breaths to protect the people they loved. And while they are gone, their sacrifice will not be forgotten."

I look at the crowd of mourning pack members, hoping my words can help soothe their pain.

"My dad once told me brave people are never truly gone," I smile, thinking of Emiliano. "They live among the stars beside the Moon, watching and waiting for us to join them."

I had spent many nights looking at the stars, imagining him watching me from the night sky. I would speak to the stars when I was afraid or sad and I knew in my heart, he heard every word.

"Life does not end with death," I continue. "So tonight we will dance beneath the stars. We will remember all the laughs and joy brought to us by our loved ones. We will rejoice that they are now with Moon Goddess and we will sing our love to them. Most of all, we will remember their sacrifice. They helped

save 150 wolves from tyranny and pain, and for that we must be proud. So smile. They are watching us tonight.”

Carter brings forth a bowl of ashes and one by one, each pack member dips in their fingers for the marking ritual.

Every member leaves an ash mark on the bodies of our fallen members to represent each pack member they died protecting. By the end of the ritual, all the bodies are covered head to toe in ashes.

Next, the family members step forward to say their own goodbyes, placing flowers on the bodies before using the torches to set the pyres ablaze. The pack stands back to allow the family members to shift, howling to the moon and wishing their loved ones a safe journey to the stars.

After a few minutes, several of us shift and join in the howling, while others gather around to tell stories of the members we lost. Children play and sing songs of remembrance in the field of flowers, several asking me to grow them flower crowns. The night fills with smoke and the sweet smell of night phlox and we can almost feel their spirits joining in the celebration. We laugh and rejoice; our pack members finally returning home to the kingdom of Moon Goddess. United as one entity, we celebrate life in our own way. We were in pain but we were also honored for the time we were given on this earth with those we lost.

When the sun begins to rise and the pyres begin to die down, we gather the remains of our loved ones, placing them in urns before we make our way over to the pack cemetery to bury their remains. Carter had managed to get 14 temporary headstones for the occasion, the official ones coming in later in the week. After a moment of silence, I walk over to the graves, growing little vines of multicolored flowers to decorate them. When I’m finished, lilies, poppies and apple blossoms fill the gravesites.

As we gather around for a final goodbye, a large shadow flies over us. My blood runs cold when I look up to see none other than the despicable Owl sitting in a nearby tree, it’s red eyes watching me.

“Luna Aurora, my sincerest condolences,” it smirks. “But do your pack members know you are to blame for all of their misfortunes?” the owl chuckles, looking at the crowd of confused faces. “Not only did your dear Luna and her sister disrespect us, but she also brought in a witch who’s been

casting all sorts of spells without our permission,” it pouts. “Well that simply won’t do.”

It flaps its wings, fluffing up its own feathers. “The witch has to go. You have 3 hours to remove the barrier spell and make her disappear or your precious pack will pay the consequences. I don’t make threats lightly so act quickly.”

The owl looks at Carter and I, grinning from ear to ear. “And don’t forget,” It sneers. “You have until midnight to give me your answer.”

The owl takes flight, disappearing into the woods. I turn to see my pack members staring at me with fear. They were scared.

“Luna Aurora,” Alpha Patrick says worriedly. “I believe we need to hold a meeting.”

The Ivory Queen Chapter 114

Aurora’s POV

Alpha Patrick, Wesley, and Jonathan gather around the dining table as we wait for Javier, Malik and Jared’s arrival to start the meeting.

I stare at the damaged table, looking at the burn marks I made when I first activated my fire element. I run my fingers along the charred wood, remembering Oliver running after me to calm me down when I hurt him.

My Olivier....

We hear the doors to the dining room suddenly burst open and I look up to see Javier and Celina walk in together holding hands. My heart almost bursts with joy that my sister was finally giving her mate a chance.

A tiny smile creeps up on Celina’s face as she takes her place beside him at the table while Javier couldn’t look prouder to have his mate at an Alpha meeting.

“I expect details!” I demand, making her blush.

I steal a glance at Oliver’s spot at the dining table, his empty chair taunting me with his absence.

The doors open once more and the Alphas from both Maple Moon and Desert Sky arrive. We all take our seats and I stretch a little, exhausted from the Moon Warrior Ceremony.

“Welcome,” I smile at Alpha Malik and Alpha Jared. “I’m sorry to have our first meeting together under such circumstances, however, we have some pressing issues to discuss. But first,” I say, turning to everyone. “I want to begin by thanking you all for answering the call for battle and for helping us protect River Moon from Nikolai’s forces.”

The alphas nod their heads at the acknowledgment.

“I also want to extend my condolences to your packs. We all lost some members that night,” I say solemnly.

“Thank you, Luna Aurora. Now,” Patrick clasps his hands together. “Let’s get down to business,” he says, wiping his forehead worriedly. “Where is Gwen?”

“Upstairs,” Carter replies. “She’s removing the barrier spells on the house like the witches asked.”

“And when exactly is she leaving?” Jonathan snaps irritably. “We don’t exactly have a lot of time!”

I almost growl at him, standing from my chair. With the tension rising, I take a moment to step back and breathe. I was already on edge, I didn’t need an Alpha riling me up.

“She leaves in 30 mins,” I sigh, closing my eyes as I exhale. “She’ll be staying at Artaud Inc for the time being.”

“Is that far enough away?” Wesley asks.

I rub my temples as I think. “I don’t know. The witches just said to make her disappear, so I’m assuming off of River Moon territory.” I scan the room. The only ones present are the Alphas, Celina, and Carter.

Can you trust them? Reyna asks.

Well I’m running out of time, so I guess I have too.

I take another deep breath. “In requesting she leave, Tais and Ira have confirmed my suspicions that someone close to me is betraying us. I can only

assume Gwen's presence makes it quite difficult for the witches to spy on me."

"Do you have any suspects?" Wesley asks. "Anyone you think could possibly be working with the witches and tipping them off."

I shake my head.

"Well who are your enemies?"

I think for a minute before a few people come to mind. "Simone and Adeline," I sigh, grimacing at their cruel words from yesterday. "But they can't be it. A mother would never put her child at risk, especially not with Rosalie pregnant and Adeline would never hurt Oliver. Simone is a terrible person, but she loves her kids."

"So Simone and Adeline are out," Patrick sighs. "Who else?"

"Erin and Andrew's parents?" Carter suggests. "They could be seeking revenge for their deaths!"

I think for a second before once again shaking my head. "Tais killed Erin. Do you think Diana would willingly work with the person responsible for her daughter's death? Besides, they haven't been to the pack house since the ceremony."

"That would be true if they actually blamed Tais and Ira," Carter says. "But much like Karina, they probably blame you more for everything. I mean the woman you once called mother is working for those bitches despite the fact that they killed her mate. I wouldn't put it past them. They'd only need to be here once to be able to help those witches take Oliver."

He's not wrong.

As I rack my brain for more possibilities, Gwen walks into room.

"It's done," She announces, plopping down in a chair with a groan and wiping her face in exhaustion. Much like the rest of us, she had been up all night working on our plan.

"How is the antidote coming along?" I ask.

She groans again, laying her head on the table and covering her face with her arms. She shakes her head before looking back up at me, regret in her eyes.

"I tried all night," she sighs. "I read all of my spell books and that little excerpt you wrote down for me but I've got nothing!"

"What is she talking about, Luna?" Patrick asks "Care to explain what it is Gwen can't seem to figure out?"

I nod and clear my throat. "D-did any of you happen to notice Karina carrying a sword of some kind?"

Alpha Patrick starts laughing. "Are you kidding?" he laughs dryly. "She almost impaled me with that thing!"

The other Alpha's confirm they saw her with the black sword. After hearing about the legend from Gwen, I held onto hope that perhaps it was a mistake and Tais and Ira had other plans, but it seems that was all just wishful thinking. They had the Soul of Insanity.

"Have you ever heard of the Soul of Insanity?" I inquire, drumming my fingernails nervously on the table.

"Soul of Insanity?" Alpha Malik asks. "I'm afraid I'm not following."

"The sword Karina wields is special," Gwen explains. "Once activated, Tais and Ira will be able to control an army of werewolves and be virtually unstoppable. Every werewolf would be under their command and not even the Ivory twins would be able to save us."

The air thickens with worry.

"And how exactly does one activate the sword?" Jonathan asks. "And how do we keep them from doing so?"

"That's what Gwen was working on all night," I say. "You see, in order to activate the sword, Tais and Ira need the blood of the Ivory Twins and of an innocent first born child."

"So that's why they requested your blood," Patrick murmurs, connecting the dots in his head. "And Rosalie.."

I nod. "They have her and her baby, her first born. Now the only thing they're missing is our blood."

"So what exactly is your plan?" Jonathan persists.

I turn to Gwen and she nods. "Like any other werewolf, Ivory twins have weaknesses and we suspect these witches know it. What Gwen and I want to do is figure out a way to counteract the effects of my weaknesses so that when I meet them for the blood delivery, I can-"

"YOU WANT TO GIVE THEM YOUR BLOOD?" Jonathan growls, standing up from his seat. "ARE YOU MAD?"

Carter is up too, growling at the Alpha for raising his voice at me and I grab his forearm to calm him down.

"Please sit," I say sternly. "Both of you. Let me explain."

Carter reluctantly settles back in his seat but Alpha Jonathan remains standing.

"Explain yourself Luna, because I'm not understanding," Jonathan snaps, his tone angering Reyna.

Calm down, I growl at her.

Tell him to calm down, she retorts.

I glare at him and he finally slides back in his seat. "I wouldn't give Tais and Ira my blood. I would just make them believe that I am," I grunt. "It's likely those witches will have some concoction prepared to render Celina and I powerless so if Gwen and I can figure out a way to counteract the effects of the my weakness-"

"You could use your powers to save Oliver and Rosalie during the blood draw," Wesley finishes my thought .

I nod, but one look around the table lets me know not everyone was pleased with this idea.

"That's taking a huge risk, Luna," Jared says. "And we don't have the luxury to fail."

“But what else can we do?” I almost scream in frustration at him. “What choice do we have?”

“Not this one!” Jonathan says, pushing his hand through his hair. “If your plan fails, those witches get your blood and we’re all f****d!” he snaps. “They get free reign over all of us and you would be useless against them.”

“But if we succeed, we could stop Tais and Ira once and for all. We could save Oliver and Rosalie!”

“Can you guarantee that this potion of yours will work?” he questions, placing both hands on the table to support his weight as he leans forward. “Can you tell me with out a shadow of a doubt that my wolves and those of your allies will not pay the consequences of your failure and that you would not be putting all of our lives in danger?” He turns to Gwen. “Can you do this, witch?”

Gwen stares at her hands sheepishly. “I-I can try my best-“

“THAT’S NOT GOOD ENOUGH!” Jonathan snaps, making her flinch.

My hands burst into flames. “SIT DOWN ALPHA,” I command and he glares at me as he obeys the command.

“You are asking me and my wolves to put our lives in your hands,” he says through gritted teeth. “You, a child who is still learning how to use her powers! You can’t ask this of me and I can’t be the only one who thinks this!”

I scan the room of dejected faces and know he is right. They don’t trust my plan.

“Alpha Patrick?” I call out, my voice small. “Do you have anything to say?”

He exhales deeply, forming a triangle with his fingers over the bridge of his nose. “How confident are you that you can counter their spell, Gwen?”

My heart is practically bursting out of my chest as we wait for Gwen to reply. She remains silent for a moment, carefully thinking out her words.

“I-,” she closes her mouth and frowns. “I haven’t... this is a very tricky spell but I’m trying. I just need some time to figure it out..”

I can almost feel my soul leave my body as Alpha Patrick nods his understanding.

“Aurora-“

“Please let me try,” I beg. “Please... It’s my mate. Please let me save my mate. Please-“

It feels like an elephant is sitting on my chest as I hold back a sob and gasp for air, pleading with them to let me save my mate.

“I am sorry, your Majesty,” Alpha Patrick says quietly. “I cannot support your plan.”

“No.. ” I shake my head in disbelief. I turn to Wesley, hoping he might help me out. “Wes, please. I-It’s Oliver.. H-He’s your friend... Don’t let him die!”

“I’m sorry,” Wesley whispers, refusing to look me in the eye. “I can’t help you.”

A sickening feeling settles in the pit of my stomach and I want to scream, but the wail is caught in my throat. I look at Javier, Malik and Jared all who stare at the table, their silence shattering all of my hope.

“Please!” I cry but my pleas fall on deaf ears.

From the corner of my eye, I see Carter clenching his fists in the arm rest as tears spill onto his cheeks. When he looks up at me, his eyes look lifeless.

“My wife...” he whimpers. “and my baby...”

I place my hand over his to comfort him but he yanks his arm away as if disgusted by my touch.

“They were right,” he snarls. “You are to blame for everything that’s happened!”

He gets up from his seat and storms out of room, his words ringing in my ears. I stare at the door, willing the tears back but I’m failing miserably.

“When Midnight falls, Luna, you must write NO with the chalk,” Patrick says quietly. “I can’t imagine what you are feeling right now and I am deeply sorry for what you’re about to experience but it’s for the good of all werewolves. We cannot sacrifice all of our lives for just your mate.”

His words register slowly and I slump back into my chair as the ringing in my head intensifies.

We're going to lose Oliver and Rosalie! Reyna wails.

No! I refuse to give up!

"It's never going to end!" I argue. "It's Oliver now but it could be Scarlet next or any one of your wolves!" I scream in protest. "Those witches won't stop! You know they won't!"

"And hopefully by then, we'll figure something out but we cannot risk you giving them even an opportunity to take your blood!" Jonathan retorts.

His face softens when a few tears spill onto my cheeks and I quickly wipe them away.

"I'm sorry, Luna. I truly am. But this is how it has be."

With my heart hardening by the second, filling with ice and hatred for those witches, I nod silently. I felt numb, my hope, my will, my strength gone with their decision.

"Gwen, are your things ready for you to leave?" Patrick asks and the witch nods. "I'll escort you to Artaud Inc. then." He turns to the Alpha's once more. "Meeting adjourned. We'll return before Midnight to help Luna Aurora with--"

"Help?" I laugh coldly. "You've just killed me."

"Aurora," Celina murmurs as she walks over to me, trying to wrap her arms around me, but I find her presence suffocating.

"Don't touch me," I snarl, pushing her arms away. "Don't f*****g touch me!"

I push her with all my force and she collides with wall. Javier is on his feet instantly, rushing to help her up.

"You've found your own mate only to help take away mine!" I snap, wiping at my tears furiously. "Don't you ever speak to me again! Don't you ever call yourself my sister!"

Celina's eyes fill with tears. "You don't mean that," she whimpers. "I know you don't."

I close my eyes to focus on my breathing. "I need to be alone," I say, my bottom lip trembling. "Excuse me," I mutter, storming toward the door only to

be blocked by Wesley. "Move," I whisper, my hands shaking harder by the minute.

"Aurora I don't think-"

"I said MOVE!" I command and he shifts off to the side obediently.

I only had one thing on my mind and I dash out of the room, eager to get my hands on it. Evan rushes to me the second I step out of the dining room but I ignore his pleas and storm outside. I walk briskly towards the fountain as Evan runs after me and catches up, wrapping his arms around my waist.

"Aurora, talk to me. What happened-"

I crouch down a little and jab my elbow into his stomach, causing him to loosen his grip. I grab his arms and yank them off, hell bent on getting what I wanted.

I need it. I crave it and for once, Reyna doesn't protest.

"Aurora!"

I ignore Evan as I jump into the fountain, gasping slightly at the coolness of the water. The fountain was deeper than I thought and I sink until the water reaches my chest.

"Aurora, what are you doing?" Evan cries, reaching the base of the fountain.

I take a gulp of air and slip beneath the surface of the water, keeping my eyes open. Looking around the bottom of the fountain, I try to go deeper when I feel an arm yank me back out.

"Aurora stop!"

I gasp for more air before throwing a punch at Evan and sinking back into the water to search for the scalpel.

Where the f**k is it?

I hear a splash as Evan dives in after me. He pulls me out of the water and I try to fight him off, flailing my arms and legs about.

"Let me go," I scream. "I have to find it!"

I kick and scream until my throat starts to hurt.

"You won't find it in there!" He snaps.

I freeze and look up at him.

"Oliver had me take it out a long time ago," He sighs. "He didn't want you hurting yourself anymore."

I feel another sob coming.

Oliver protected me even from myself... why couldn't I have protected him?

We hear footsteps approaching and turn to see the Allies, Celina and Gwen coming to meet us. Bitterness ripples through my heart. They all had their mates safe and sound or within reach... but what about me?

A few tears well up in my eyes and I wipe at them angrily, yanking myself free from Evan's arms.

"I'm so sorry I've failed you," Gwen says quietly, unable to look at me. "I'm so sorry."

Of all the people standing here, she was the only one who had been willing to save Rosie and Oliver.

My chest tightens in anguish as I rush to her and give her a good squeeze. "You didn't fail me," I whisper.

I hold onto her for a while as she whispers a few words of encouragement to me, the decision made by the Allies slowly sinking into my bones. Cold and wet, I start shivering.

"Come on, Aurora. Let's get you dried off," Celina says as Wesley drapes his coat over my shoulder.

I shrug the coat off and head down the walk way,

"I'm going on a run," I mutter, my back now to them.

"I'll come with you," she says, taking a step towards me.

I spin on my heel instantly, palms up in flames.

“You stay the hell away from me,” I snarl, freezing her in her tracks.

Sprinting down the walkway as they call after me, I shift and disappear into the woods.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 115

*** Celina's POV***

We search all day for Aurora but unfortunately for us, her powers make her virtually untraceable. With our time almost up, Patrick takes Gwen to Artaud Inc. while the rest of us continue to search for the missing Luna. I try mind-linking her but her walls are up, blocking me entirely.

“It's going to be okay, Cel,” Javier says, kissing my forehead. “We'll find her.”

Tears spill onto my cheeks. I had felt awful not speaking up earlier, but what could I do? I know she wants Oliver back but there was no way in hell we could give those witches our blood.

As the sun settles over the horizon, Aurora finally returns, sticks and dirt in her hair.

“Goddess, what did you do?” I gasp as I rush to her. “Where were you? We were worried sick looking for you-“

She doesn't reply, pushing past me as she walks into the house, her gaze cold and lifeless.

“Aurora,” Evan calls out, catching her wrist as she attempts to climb up the stairs. “Aurora, please wait.”

She freezes in her tracks, her back to us. “I'm tired,” she croaks, her voice raspy. “I need a bath.”

“I'll help you,” I call out, hoping she might open up to me but much to my dismay she continues climbing up the stairs.

“Don't bother,” she mumbles. “I'll be fine on my own.”

“Kid,” Evan coaxes as he climbs after her. “Kid, I-“

“Oh for f***s sakes, leave me ALONE!” she shrieks, Evan screeching to a halt. “I don’t need your help! I don’t want you help! I want to be left ALONE!” The pain in her eyes is excruciating and I force my gaze onto my feet to keep from crying for forgiveness. “I’m tired,” she whispers as she disappears into the hallway.

We remain still in the foyer, unsure what to do with ourselves. Mom and Dad return from the pack hospital, the men and women finally reunited.

I inform them of the decision made at the pack meeting and they both seem to understand.

“She’s devastated,” Danny says as he pulls me into a hug. “But she knows in her heart it’s the right decision. And that’s what’s killing her.”

“I feel awful,” I whimper into his chest. “I get my love but I feel like I’ve just taken hers.”

“You did no such thing,” Valentina reassures. “You can’t blame yourself for things out of your control,” she says, rubbing my back.

“She deserves to be happy!” I cry into my Dad’s chest. “After everything she’s been through... I-it’s not fair!”

“I know,” Dad says, squeezing me harder. “It’s going to be okay, though. Your sister is strong... She’ll figure out how to survive this.”

My parents console me for a while longer as we wait for Aurora to come down for dinner. When she does, she’s wearing one of Oliver’s sweaters, his scent still lingering on its fabric. She walks silently into the dining room, her eyes red and puffy as she stares blankly at the food on the table. A tiny smile creeps up on her face as her gaze shifts between the food and Oliver’s seat.

Jaime rushes to her, placing a sope de pollo on her plate as we had requested. They were her favorite. We all hold our breaths as we wait for her to take a bite and swallow quietly. When she looks back up at us, her eyes glisten with unshed tears that she quickly blinks away.

We eat in silence, all of us watching her take bite after bite, a bit relieved to she was eating.

Well at least she isn’t starving herself anymore, Sarahi sighs.

With her sope gone, Aurora wipes her mouth and clears her throat, catching our attention.

“Call the allies,” she orders, getting to her feet. “As my last act as Luna of River Moon, I will be the one sentencing the Alpha to his death.” She says nothing more as she turns to leave.

We follow her into the living room where she curls up on the couch, Rio and Santos climbing on with her.

“Aurora, what do you mean last act as Luna?” I ask.

She shrugs. “Well isn’t obvious? Oliver gave me this title and with him and Rosalie gone, the title goes to the next in the command line.”

“Carter is no shape to lead,” Evan sighs. “We still need you as our Luna.”

She shakes her head furiously, holding her head in her hands. “I can’t do this anymore, not without him. I’m done. I just want to disappear after this.”

We try to talk some sense into her but no matter how much we plead, she refuses to give in.

As the hour draws near for the decision to be executed, she grows restless, whimpering into her pillow. If we try to comfort her, however, she growls at us, refusing to let us touch her. Carter eventually comes out of hiding, a bottle of vodka in his hand. He too is restless, calling Aurora endless names and obscenities. Evan tries to comfort him, but no matter what he says, Carter hears none of it, too busy lost in his drunken despair.

Patrick, Jonathan, Malik, Jared, and Wesley arrive ten minutes before midnight, a solemn look on all their faces. Aurora sits up on the couch, producing the envelope with the chalk from her pocket and setting it on the table. When the clock strikes midnight, we all turn to look at her, holding our breathes in anticipation.

Aurora stares at the chalk but does not move.

“Do you want me to do it?” I ask meekly, reaching for the chalk.

Her hand catches my wrist and squeezes it harshly.

“Do. Not. Touch. It,” she snarls. “I’ll do it.”

I nod frantically, retracting my arm and massaging my wrist. Aurora picks up the chalk, her lip quivering as she holds back a sob. A few tears spill onto her cheeks and she wipes them with the back of her hand before hardening her face. Her hand trembles as she presses the chalk to the coffee table, and for a few seconds, she doesn't move.

"Aurora," Alpha Patrick sighs. "You have to do it."

"Just give me a minute," Aurora pleads. "Just a minute."

Carter looks at Aurora with such anger, Evan and Chava stand close to her in protective stances just in case he attacks.

A few seconds pass by before she drags the chalk across the surface of the table, forming the letters N O neatly on the wood. When she's finished, Aurora's grip on the chalk tightens, turning it to dust. She does not say a word as she settles back onto the couch. She does not shed a tear, nor does she scream or shout at the top of her lungs. She just sits perfectly still, sucking in a big gulp of air and holding it in until her face turns red before she lets it out slowly.

I try sitting beside her but one glare from her lets me know she did not want comfort. Evan's sudden gasp catches our attention and he points to the table.

"Look!" he says.

Before our eyes, white letters appear on the wooden table spelling "WRONG ANSWER" out in capital letters.

I force my gaze to my feet, unable to meet Aurora's eyes. No one goes home, not wanting to leave Aurora alone even if she didn't want to be comforted.

She curls up on the couch in silence. Hours crawl by until day breaks once more, the morning bringing no news of Oliver or Rosalie. The cooks make breakfast and I try to coax Aurora to eat, but she turns over on the couch, her back facing me.

—

The sun rises and falls, the sky filling with stars again as midnight and the solstice quickly approach. Aurora has yet to utter a single word. I crouch beside the couch, hoping to get a reaction from her.

“You need to eat and get some rest,” I say sternly, bringing a bowl of soup for her.

She gets to her feet, smoothing down her clothes a bit before pushing past me and walking towards the foyer.

“Where are you going?” I call out as we all follow her out the front door of the pack house.

“I-I need to tell Simone and David,” she says, picking up the pace. “They need to know what I did.”

“Not now,” I say, managing to catch up to her and pulling on her forearm. “Simone and David can wait -“

“Wait for what?” Simone asks as she and David walk into the walkway unannounced. Simone looks around the group, taking in the situation. “Have you found my son and daughter?”

Dread settles into the pit of my stomach as Aurora looks up at her, agony welling up in her eyes and threatening to spill onto her cheeks.

Simone’s breath hitches as she clutches her chest, David barely catching her as she collapses against him. She opens her mouth to scream but nothing comes out and she gasps for air.

“My babies...” she cries. “My babies! Oh goddess, my babies!”

“I’m sorry Simone,” Patrick says quietly. “But she had no other choice.”

Simone’s pain turns to pure rage. “No other choice? No choice!? She had one job to do! One! Protect this pack and it’s members! And she failed.” She sneers, turning to Aurora. “You failed! You took my babies from me! I hope to Moon Goddess you never find love again because you don’t deserve to be happy anymore after what you’ve done-“

And for the first time today, Aurora finally loses her composure, charging at Simone and knocking her to the ground. Her hands go around Simone’s neck, squeezing with every ounce of strength she had left to give. David and Evan try to pull her off but Aurora had finally snapped, activating her telekinetic powers to keep them both away. Simone squirms beneath Aurora’s weight, clawing at her hands to escape but it’s not use.

As much as I'd love for Aurora to finish her off, I knew Aurora was not a killer. She would regret this one day.

"Aurora let her go," I call out as walk over to her and grab at her shoulders.

It's like she's in a trance though, unwilling to move as she keeps squeezing Simone's throat until she finally goes limp.

Panicking, I tug on Aurora's arms and she luckily lets me pull her off of Simone. I place my fingers on Simone's neck and check her pulse, feeling the faint pumping against my fingertips.

"She's still alive," I sigh in relief, dusting myself off as I stand.

Aurora releases David and Evan, the former rushing to his wife and lifting her in his arms. He growls at Aurora and is met by Chava and Evan's growls. Aurora doesn't even respond, though, once again shutting of her emotions.

"Get her out from my sight," Aurora mutters. "And if she ever speaks to me that way again, David," she adds with a voice filled with ice. "I'll kill her. I mean it, I'll kill her."

David gives a final growl before turning on his heel and marching away. We watch him disappear down the main road when the sound of flapping of wings makes my blood run cold. We look up to see the black owl rushing towards us, its bulging red eyes glaring at us and a tiny envelope in its talons. As it flies over us, the envelope falls into Aurora's hands before the bird disappears from sight into a portal.

We all watch Aurora frantically open the envelope and pour out a black USB drive into her hand.

A USB drive?

Aurora seems to understand what it's for because she rushes inside the house without a word. We run after her and find her plugging in the drive onto the TV in the entertainment room.

A video of a shirtless Oliver appears on the screen, his arms chained above his head from the ceiling. He looks badly beaten and bruised, blood and sweat dripping down his chest as he stares directly at the camera.

Oh no...

"It's going to be okay, baby," he whispers, making Aurora burst into tears. "It's not your fault."

Karina emerges from the shadows behind him, a silver dagger in her hand. She looks at the camera and smirks knowingly before placing the dagger to Oliver's chest. He growls at her as she presses the blade on his skin, drawing blood. She drags the blade across his chest as he hisses in pain, blood spilling onto his pale skin.

She proceeds to make a series of cuts and slices on him, Oliver desperately trying to contain his pain as he trembles.

Oh Goddess, she's going to torture him.

Aurora whimpers as some one off camera hands Karina a whip with a spiky ball at the end.

"Aurora don't look," Evan pleads, pulling her into his arms to shield her eyes as Karina cracks the whip on Oliver's back.

Aurora pushes him away, her filling with tears as the whip tears into Oliver's back. Karina picks up the pace of her whipping and soon Oliver's screams ring in our ears

"Turn it off!" Evan snaps at no one in particular.

Aurora remains frozen, too busy watching the video to react. Frustrated, Evan reaches for the remote only for Aurora to grab it first and clutch it to her chest.

"NO" she whimpers. "We did this to him ... so we're going to watch. We have to watch."

I shake my head. "I really don't think that's a good idea-"

"I DON'T CARE!" she growls, silencing me instantly.

"Oh goddess," Mia cries, pulling our attention back to the screen.

Karina has the Soul of Insanity in her hands, pointing the blade over Oliver's heart.

“You made the right decision,” Oliver pants. “It’s okay. You’ll be okay.”

Aurora’s sobs were heart shattering as she hangs onto his every word.

“Close your eyes baby,” He pleads. “Please close-“

“Shut your blubbering, Alpha,” Karina snarls, slapping him across the face.

Oliver looks defiantly at her. “f**k yo-“

Before he can finish his sentence, Karina buries the blade in his chest, Oliver’s body stiffening instantly. Bleeding spills from his lips as she turns the blade left and right, digging it deeper in to his heart.

The wound pumps out large amounts of blood onto his stomach and drips down to his feet. Aurora lets out an earth shattering scream, collapsing onto her knees.

“NO!” She wails, Karina pulling out the sword from his chest, leaving a gaping wound over his heart. “No Oliver! Goddess, please no! No! No!”

She runs to the TV, banging on the screen and screaming obscenities at it. Evan attempts to comfort her, wrapping his arms around her waist and pulling her away.

“No!” She shrieks in protest, flailing her arms and legs to escape Evan’s grip.

“I love you,” Oliver rasps before his body goes still, the chains being the only thing left to hold him up.

It’s enough to send Aurora over the edge. She manages to escape Evan’s arms, her hands and wrists bursting into flames. She tilts her head up to scream, purple fire exploding from her mouth.

Mesmerized and afraid, we all take a step back from her.

She screams for what seems like hours, letting the world know she had lost her mate and when she’s finished, the flames extinguish and her limp body crashes onto the floor.