

The Ivory Queen Chapter 51

Oliver's POV

Michael is over the moon that Aurora wants to meet him and is practically fighting me to take over. Aurora has seen Michael before on multiple occasions when he's tried to take over but she's never actually spoken to him. I've been too afraid to let him near her as he can be quite aggressive and possessive.

She wants to meet me, let me out!

Would you calm do first? I need you to promise me you won't scare her.

Oh like you haven't?

Ouch.

I focus back on Aurora who is busy fidgeting with her coat. She always does that when she's nervous or anxious about something.

"Are you sure you want to meet him? I don't want to scare you," I warn.

She stops playing with her coat and nods her head excitedly. "What's his name?"

"Michael," I chuckle. "He's very excited to come out."

She blushes, making Michael and I swoon over her.

My goddess, she's so perfect.

Let me out!

I take a few deep breaths and close my eyes, giving Michael full control of my body while I sit back and watch. I open my eyes again, knowing they're no longer dark blue but silver. I can hear Aurora's heart pounding as she nervously fixes her hair. If only she knew how that simple action was driving Michael and I insane. She was too damn cute for her own good.

"Mine!" Michael basically shouts at her and she takes a few steps back.

Are you an i***t? I told you not to scare her!

He whimpers, making her stop and look at him.

"H-hi Michael," she stutters.

"Hi Princess," he replies, taking her hand and kissing it.

Aurora blushes and this time Michael doesn't hold back. He pulls her in close and slams my lips against hers. At first, she doesn't move, a bit shocked by the action, but soon she stands on her tip toes and answers the kiss, moving her lips against with mine. I didn't think it was possible to be jealous of a part of myself but at that moment, I wanted nothing more than to take back control so she could kiss me instead.

"I've been wanting to do that since the day we found you," he murmurs when he pulls away from her, panting slightly. He lifts her up and she wraps her legs around my waist. "You are so beautiful," he says, tucking a few strands of hair behind her ear.

She blushes and tries to look away but Michael wants her eyes on him.

"Such a shy, little mate," he chuckles, c*****g his head to the side. A tiny smile creeps on her face, making my heart race.

He then leans forward and licks her neck, nibbling on her mark. He can smell her arousal and he slowly reaches for her a*s and squeezes it. She moans and he begins to lift the skirt of her dress up past her hips. She tenses up, slightly pushing away from us and he grips her tighter, not wanting to let her go yet.

"No, stay!" He snaps and she jumps. "Mine!"

Stop it, you're scaring her! I scream. She's not ready for that!

Michael freezes, feeling guilty for freaking her out. "Sorry," he mumbles as he puts her down gently.

She leans forward and kisses my cheek. "I-it's okay. I know you didn't mean to scare me. I'm just not ready yet."

We take a stroll for a bit but it's quite obvious she wants to say something.

"Ask and it's yours," Michael says firmly, bringing her hand to my lips.

"C-can I see your wolf form?" She asks timidly, once again playing with her coat.

"Of course you can."

Michael gives her a quick kiss on the cheek and says goodbye as I take over again. I start to strip down, hanging my clothes on the dead grape vines. When I'm left standing in my boxers, Aurora turns around. I chuckle as I remove my boxers and get down on all fours.

My bones crack and rearrange until I complete my shift. Like every alpha, my wolf is jet black and larger than the average wolf. Even on all fours, I stand at almost six feet. I have a white spot on my tail, the signature birthmark of my particular alpha lineage.

I walk towards Aurora, who still has her back to me and nudge her back with my snout. She turns around and gasps as she sets her eyes on me. I don't know why, but I'm suddenly nervous as she silently stares at me.

She tentatively reaches out her hand to touch my snout but pulls back, losing her courage. I step into her hand to let her know I want her to touch me. She trails her fingers past my snout to my cheek bones before settling on my ear. I can't help it any longer and I lick her face, causing her to giggle hysterically.

"Stop it, my makeup!" She squeals.

I continue to lick her and she finally grabs my face and leans her forehead on mine to stop me.

"You're so beautiful," she whispers, caressing my face.

She starts to scratch behind my ears and it feels amazing.

"C-can I ride you?" She asks sheepishly.

My ears perk up and I c**k my head to the side in amusement, wanting to tease her.

She becomes flustered. "N-no that's not--"

It's just too easy! Michael and I chuckle.

I turn my body to the side and lower myself so she can reach. She takes a few deep breaths to calm herself down before she finally climbs on top of me, firmly gripping tufts of my fur in her hands. Once I've made sure she's on comfortably, I lean on my hind legs and take off.

I run through the vineyard, hearing her squeal with excitement. I only wish I could see her face as she screams for me to go faster. I oblige, quickly reaching my top speed. I zig zag between rows of grape vines until I run out of vineyard and make my way to the lake. I run around the circumference of the lake, stealing glances at our reflection in the water.

She looks so happy.

I round back to the castle, slowing down when I reach the lawn. I lower my girl down onto the patch of grass and roll over onto my back, catching my breath. Aurora kneels down beside me and gives me a belly rub before curling up beside me.

"You're amazing," she whispers with the biggest smile on her face. "I loved it!"

I roll onto my side and lick her face. I want this moment to last forever.

She stretches out her arms and looks up at the night sky. "I love you Olivier!" She screams, all giddy and smiling. "I love you with all my heart!"

I need to hold her again. I get up and run back to the vineyard to find my clothes, feeling her eyes follow me the entire time. When I return dressed and in my human form, I find Aurora playing some music on her phone as she dances around in circles.

I stand and watch her move her feet in quick steps and twirl around to the beat of the music. It takes her a full song to realize I'm there and she smiles sheepishly at me.

"What was that you were dancing to just now?" I ask, curious. She was an excellent dancer.

"Oh it's cumbia," she blushes.

"Can you teach me?" I ask and her face lights up immediately.

She grabs my hand and begins her lesson. "Cumbia is very simple. It's just a step forward, a step backward, crossover, together, and repeat," she instructs, moving her feet with every step she gives me.

After several minutes of me trying, I finally start to get it and she giggles with excitement. Goddess knows how much time we spent just dancing to this Cumbia on the lawn, spinning into each other's arms and laughing every time I mess up. She also tries to teach me something called Banda Norteño and I enjoy it even more because I get to have her body pressed up against mine. I hold one of her hands and place the other just above the small of her back and try my best to keep up as we move forwards, backwards and spin. I lose focus a few times as she sways back and forth on my thigh. I don't think I get the steps right, but she doesn't seem to mind one bit, smiling as we trip and fall over each other. I'll have to keep practicing, but that's okay, I have an entire life time to dance with Aurora. I won't be winning any contests anytime soon, but I'll be able to dance with her should she ever feel the urge.

The whole drive home, Aurora has the biggest smile on her face, completely content with how the date went. We've had problems in the past but tonight was perfect and I swear on my life, I will make sure Aurora never stops smiling when she's with me.

——BONUS SCENE——

Aurora's POV

Oliver and Carter are at the office handling business while Rosalie is in her room sleeping. She's been sleeping a lot lately. Evan, my usual companion, is downstairs with the guards deeply invested in a game of poker in the entertainment room. I don't know how to play poker nor do I enjoy gambling so I decide to hide out in my room.

I go to the closet to change into some sweats so I can comfortably lounge on the couch when the little red lingerie set catches my eye.

Put it on! Reyna squeals.

I hesitate, staring at the pretty red lace. I hold it against my body and look at my reflection in the mirror.

What are you afraid of? There's no one here. Just try it, Reyna encourages.

I take a deep breath and run out to the room to crank up music to full volume and lock the door. If I'm going to do this, I might as well enjoy myself. Beyoncé's 'Run the world' starts to play and I begin to strip.

The set is composed of a lacy red bralette and thong coupled with an embroidered garter belt and red lace top stockings. The fabric is completely see-through and leaves nothing to the imagination. I stare at my reflection, my eyes darting across the many scars covering my body. The special carving Karina gave me on my hip makes me cringe.

Don't let her win, Reyna snarls.

I think back to the day I showed Oliver my scars. I was beautiful and strong in his eyes. I remember how his lips felt as he kissed the scars on my back and how he looked back at me with so much love. I look at the carving on my hip and run my fingers along the raised skin.

I smile. "I'm a warrior." Rio barks in agreement and I laugh. "You think so?" I ask nervously. "Do you think I'm pretty?"

He tilts his little head to the side and stares at me with curiosity before barking.

What do YOU think? Reyna asks and I begin to fidget with the garter belt. Tell me something you like about yourself.

I close my eyes and take another deep breath before opening my eyes again and really looking at myself.

I-I like Umm my boobs? They're not too small....

Keep going, she encourages.

I examine myself again. I've gained a little weight since my coma so I'm not so skinny. My hips are a little fuller. I smile and turn around to stare at my rump.

Nice a*s, Reyna compliments and I blush.

I like the color of my skin. It's a nice golden brown color and it looks good with the red.

I continue to find things I like about my body and before I know it, I stand just a little taller as I stare into the mirror. I glance at my scars again, proud of the story they tell. I am a warrior.

P!nk's 'So what' starts to play and I run into the room, grabbing my hair brush to sing along. Rio barks happily and dances around my feet as song after song plays. I grab a framed photograph of Oliver and start to sing to it as well. I dance sensually to 'Dangerous woman' and 'God is Woman' by Ariana Grande, enjoying my new found freedom.

Finally, I switch to reggaeton and let my hair down, jumping on the bed to continue my performance. My hips sway back and forth to 'Yo Perreo Sola' by Bad Bunny and I feel stronger than ever before.

A few more songs play before I run back to the closet and get dressed in some sweats and a t shirt. As I take a seat on the couch, I can't help but feel happy. I'm not a slave to my scars anymore.

————END BONUS SCENE————

Aurora's POV

It's Thanksgiving day now and the kitchen is in a frenzy as we make the preparations for tonight since we've given the omegas and chefs the day off so they can spend time with their families. Oliver has also asked the extra guards we were given to go home to their families for the day and return tomorrow morning.

It's been a long time since I've had a real thanksgiving dinner. The holidays were always hard for my family so I'd always be locked away in the basement as they simply couldn't stomach my presence. My Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners would consist of a bowl of chicken broth and a loaf of bread that Maira would begrudgingly drop off at the basement for me.

I'm trying my best to keep my excitement to myself, however, for Rosalie and Oliver's sake. They are really bummed out that their grandparents from France declined their invitation to tonight's dinner. They've decided to spend Thanksgiving with Simone and David instead, not wanting them to be alone. I've never met their grandparents but from what Rosalie tells me, they're very kind and loving people. Evan and Carter's parents are here, however, so there will still be some cheer and joy in the pack house.

The boys are all gathered around the T.V. watching football and shouting nonsense at each other. Every once in a while they come through the kitchen to check the progress of our cooking or steal a taste here and there.

Men.

Rosalie's starting to show a little, her little bump cute as a button. Her pregnancy hormones are certainly spicing things up in the kitchen. She is currently having a mental break down over which type of pie she wants to make.

"This is too hard!" She weeps. "I want apple pie but I also want pumpkin and cherry pie."

“Oh Rosalie,” Gabrielle, Carter’s mother, chuckles. “That is a very tough decision.”

“Aurora, what do you think?” Rosalie snuffles, wiping her tears with her sleeve. “Pumpkin, cherry or Apple?”

Everyone turns to look at me, waiting for my answer.

“I-I don’t know... I’ve never had pie...” I reply, a bit embarrassed.

They all gawk and stare at me.

“You’ve never had pie?” Rosalie shrieks, completely dumbfounded by my response.

I shake my head.

“Well what did your family make for dessert then, sweetie?” Katherine asks.

I pause to remember the Thanksgivings I once had with my family before Emiliano died. “Umm, w-we usually had flan or cocktail de fruta,” I say sheepishly. “We didn’t eat a lot traditional Thanksgiving food, now that I think about. This will be the first time I’ll ever have turkey or cranberry sauce or most of this stuff,” I say, gesturing to the many dishes currently in progress on the counter.

“This is insanity!” Rosalie declares.

“What is?” Oliver asks as he walks in carrying a large plate wrapped in foil.

“Well it seems that our lovely Luna here has never had pies or cranberry sauce or turkey,” Gabrielle chuckles. “And Rosalie can’t seem to decide what pie to make.”

“Is that so?” He laughs. “Well I guess she should make all three so Aurora can try them all.” He sets the plate down on the counter and looks at me. “Jaime (Aurora’s personal cook) and his wife dropped these off for you.”

“What are they?” I ask.

“Tamales,” he says, licking his lips. “Hope you don’t mind but I ate one already.”

I burst into laughter and pull him into a kiss. “Was it good?”

“I don’t know, I ate it too fast. I’ll need to have another to really get a taste for it, but I’ll let you know,” he grins and I smack him on the chest.

“No more tamales until dinner!” I scold, turning back to the vegetables I was chopping for Katherine. “Now shoo! Unless you’re going to help, we have work to do.”

He hugs me from behind and kisses the top of my head before smacking my a*s and running away so I can't scold him again. I turn bright red as Rosalie wiggles her eyebrows at me.

An hour later, I hear a ding from my phone. It's a message from Mia.

[Mia: I've got your things ready. Meet me at the oak tree in half an hour]

I let her know that I'll be there and tell the ladies I've suddenly got a head ache and need to go lie down. I run off to the living room to find Carter and wave him over to me.

"Mia has my passport and ID ready. Can you take me to the border to pick it up?" I say in hushed tones.

He nods. "Yeah, we should be fine to go. Oliver is pretty occupied. Our team is losing."

I stifle a chuckle and we head off in his car. We find Mia sitting in the Oak tree, playing with an envelope in her lap. She looks a little disappointed when we approach her but quickly tries to hide it and forces a smile.

"Hey!" She waves. "I've got your stuff right here."

She climbs down and awkwardly hands me the envelope. I open it and slip out the passport. I stare at the picture of 12 year old me. I got it taken just a few weeks before my 13th birthday.

"Thanks," I say, slipping the passport back into the envelope. "Umm... H-happy Thanksgiving.."

I turn to leave but she grabs my arm. Carter gives her a warning growl and she lets go.

"Can I talk to you for a sec?" She asks, her voice a little shaky. "A-Alone."

Carter turns to look at me and I nod my head, handing him the envelope. He sighs and heads back to the car to wait. She points to the tree.

"You're not going to push me, are you?" I laugh and she looks horrified.

"N-no! I wouldn't do that, I promise!"

"It was a joke, Mia," I say and she relaxes a little.

"Oh."

We climb the tree and sit in awkward silence for a few moments before she finds the courage to speak.

"So what are you guys making for dinner tonight?" she asks, picking at a couple of leaves sprouting on the tree branch we're sitting on.

“Umm... they’re making a lot of food I’ve never tried before. I’m kind of excited. I’m having turkey and all kinds of pie,” I giggle with excitement. “You?”

“Mom still refuses to make turkey,” she laughs. “She’s making her famous chicken instead and Luna Ximena is making pozole. My mouth’s water just thinking about it.”

We talk for a little longer, reminiscing all the Thanksgivings we used to have together before that dreadful night. She even talks to me about her personal life a bit and informs me that she’s a statistics major at the local community college and plans to transfer to SF State after next year. For a moment it feels like we’re actually sisters, just catching up. No tension or fear and I soak it all in. I thank her for helping Oliver with my date and give her some details of how our night went.

“...I’m glad you’re finally getting to celebrate again...”

“Yea...me too.”

Mia looks at me, her lower lip trembling. “I -“

She burst into tears. I’m stunned, unsure of what to say.

“I’m so sorry,” she sobs, her entire body shaking. “What is wrong with us? How could we just... do that to you?”

I shrug. “It doesn’t matter anymore. I’m happy with my family at River Moon now.”

She winces when I call River Moon my family, but I ignore it. Lluvia Blanca stopped being my pack a long time ago and I did not regret choosing River Moon as my new home.

“All those years that we wasted...” she whimpers, “when we should have been more united than ever. He would have wanted that! Dad would have wanted us together when he was gone, but we failed. We didn’t honor his wishes.”

I don’t know how to respond. She’s right, Emiliano had always preached kindness and forgiveness to us from a young age. We were never allowed to be mad to each other for long because we were siblings.

“Siblings are supposed love each other unconditionally,” he’d say. “Because you are family. You protect and take care of each other. Whenever you feel lonely or afraid, remember you have each other.”

I never forgot about them. I loved them unconditionally even if they didn’t.

“I miss him so much!” She sniffles., wrapping her arms around me. “I miss our family.”

Before I can respond, my phone starts going off and she pulls away from me. I check the caller ID.

Oliver.

Shit he's probably wondering where I am.

"H-Hello?" I answer.

"Where are you? I've been looking everywhere for you! Ro said you had a head ache and went to rest but you're clearly not home!" He snaps.

I swallow hard. "I-I'm at the border... with Mia."

"So you just went without telling me?"

"I-"

"You know I'm getting real tired of you running off without telling me where you're going. Real f*****g tired..."

"I'm sorry."

"I'm coming to get you."

"No it's okay, Carter is here. He'll take me home."

"I said I'm coming! Stay put!" He snaps before hanging up the phone.

"He's mad, isn't he?" Mia asks.

I nod. "He's coming for me right now."

"Well, well, well. Would you look at that...Mi hermanita and a murderer sitting in a tree, how sweet."

Aurora's POV

Salvador's voice makes my skin crawl and I instinctively wince. Mia and I both freeze for a few seconds, scared to face him. I start shaking and Mia holds my hand to comfort me.

"What are you doing here?" she asks. "Did you follow me?"

He says nothing so we both finally find the courage to look at him. There's a smug look on his face as he leans against the tree, blocking our only way down.

“So this is what you’ve been doing all this time, huh, sis? Aurora saves your a*s once and you suddenly love her again?” he snickers. “How cute. You know, I knew you were lying when you kept trying to find excuses to run off but I just thought you were sneaking off to meet some boy or something. But look at the surprise I found!”

He smiles coldly at me, sending shivers down my spine. “So how’s life been with the River Moon mutts, Aurora? I bet you milk the whole victim story, don’t you? Got all the Alphas wrapped around your little finger,” he laughs bitterly. “I bet you’ve sucked them all off and f****d-“

“That’s enough, Chava!” Mia snaps. “Respect your sister!”

“Sister?” He sneers, c*****g his head to the side and staring at us with an amused look on this face. “Oh come on, Mia. You and I both know she’s not our sister.”

I stare back at Mia with shock. She told him?

Salvador laughs, shaking his head. “What? You thought I didn’t know?”

“How long have you-“

“I’ve known for years. Heard Mom and Dads arguing about you all the time when we were kids. Dad told me not to tell and I kept his secret.”

I stare blankly at him. He’s known for so long and never told me?

“You know, I’ve missed you Aurora. We used to have such a good time together.”

Another shiver runs down my spine as several cruel memories come flooding back.

“Remember the supply closet in the laundry room? Remember how I’d lock you in there all night and project your biggest fears? Bloody Mary...Rogues.... Dad’s body.... Man that was fun! You were so afraid to face your crime and my Goddess did you scream!” he laughs hysterically with a crazed look in his eyes. “And just when I’d think you’d tired yourself out, you’d start screaming again!”

“You did what?” Mia asks, a look of horror on her face.

“Oh don’t act innocent now, Mia!”

“I never hurt her!” she retorts, but I can sense her nervousness.

“Oh but you did!” he laughs. “You sat back and watched as we tortured the b***h and then when she’d fall asleep, you’d have your fun with her.” He sets her gaze on me. “You see Aurora, your dear Mia here, would sneak into your room at night and give you nightmares. She’d f**k with your brain every night to make sure you never got a moments rest. Even in your sleep, she

wanted to make you suffer. She'll never admit it but I know she enjoyed every second of your pain. She wanted to make you pay for what you did!"

My heart sinks. I defended Mia against Oliver and Evan when they called her a monster. I thought she never hurt me....

Tears tug at Mia eyes and she grabs me frantically.

"N-no... Aurora please. I'm sorry," she cries.

I slap her arms away and scoot further away from her. I fight back my tears and stare at her in disbelief.

She turns back to Salvador, fire in her eyes. "I was wrong to do that to her! She didn't deserve--"

"Yes she did!" Chava snaps coldly. "She deserved it and more for what she did!"

"I didn't kill him!" I cry, unable to bear this conversation any longer. "It was the Rogues!"

"Ah, yes the rogues. And you, the mighty healer, couldn't save him!"

"I-I hadn't shifted yet! I couldn't--"

"Oh, how convenient! And so Dad died protecting your pathetic useless a*s, didn't he? Does that not make you his true killer? Is it not your fault he's dead?"

Tears stream down my face as I fill with guilt. He's right...

"Hey, I just got a call from Rosalie. She's having a little episode concerning the potatoes. Could you guys wrap this--" Carter stops in his tracks when he catches sight of Chava. "What the hell is he doing here?"

"He was just leaving," Mia says climbing down the tree. She stands in front of Chava and shoves him back. "Let's go, Chava."

He raises his arms in surrender, a smirk hanging on his lips. He turns around and starts walking. "Enjoy your Thanksgiving, Aurorita," he calls out sweetly. "I'm sure a murderer's appetite can be quite intense."

Carter snarls, making Chava chuckle with satisfaction. Mia and Chava disappear into Lluvia Blanca's woods, leaving just Carter and I by the tree.

"What did he say?" Carter asks.

I can't bring myself to tell him the truth, Chava's words tearing at whatever trust I had left to give.

“N-Nothing,” I shrug, wiping away the tears on my cheeks. I look up at the grey sky to collect myself before climbing down. “So what was wrong with the potatoes?” I ask, forcing a smile.

Carter looks sternly at me. “Don’t change the subject. What was he doing here?”

“He-uh, he followed Mia here,” I say, taking a seat at the base of the tree and leaning my back against the trunk.

“And what did he say?”

I close my eyes and focus on my breathing, pushing away all the bad thoughts in my head. “It doesn’t matter. I’ll be okay.”

He sighs in defeat knowing he won’t get any more information out of me. “I don’t know how Oliver does it.”

I open my eyes and look at him again. “What do you mean?”

“THIS!” he snaps, raising his arms to up with irritation. “You are the most evasive person I have ever met! You never want to talk about anything. You just bottle everything up and smile like you’re ok when you’re clearly not! It’s not healthy, Aurora. You need to talk about it, you need to let it all out.”

“There’s just no point in talking about it. It was about the past and you can’t change the past so why bother talking about it?” I sigh. “Besides, all it ever does is make you guys angry or sad for me.”

“Aurora-“

“It’s Thanksgiving, Carter! I would just like to spend one day without being reminded about what happened to me. I just want to eat and enjoy your guy’s company today, okay?”

“I’m telling Oliver.”

I exhale loudly. “Yeah, well he’s already mad at me so it doesn’t really matter at this point. He should be here soon.”

“Great,” he groans. “He’ll hand me my a*s too then.”

Carter takes a seat beside me and I lean on his shoulder. We sit in silence. Fifteen minutes later, Oliver comes running in his wolf form. Carter and I get on our feet, bracing ourselves for a scolding of a lifetime. Oliver shifts, changes into some sweats, and storms towards us.

“Explain,” he snaps, crossing his arms and glaring at us.

I decide to speak for both of Carter and I since I know Oliver will be easier on me than him. “M-Mia wanted to w-wish me a happy Thanksgiving and chat for a bit... C-Carter was the closest person by..... so I asked him to take me.”

He snarls. “That doesn’t explain why you chose to not tell me!”

I wince as he raises his voice, so Carter steps in.

“It’s my fault, I forgot to tell you we were coming,” Carter says.

Oliver sighs, clearly annoyed with both of us right now.

“Please don’t punish him. He was just trying to help me,” I interject before Oliver becomes infuriated.

“Carter, go home. I’d like to speak with her alone.”

“Oliver-“

“GO!” he commands and Carter walks to car and drives off.

I look down at my hands and fidget with my sleeves as I wait for Oliver to scream his head off at me. But he doesn’t. Instead he pulls me into his arms and holds me. It takes me a few seconds to react to his hug, but I finally get my arms to move and wrap around his waist.

“I don’t want to fight with you anymore over this Aurora. I really don’t,” he sighs. “I know you are trying to make amends with Mia and that’s fine, but please don’t keep me in the dark about it. Especially when there are Rogues after you.”

I nod my head against his chest and hold him tighter.

“Chava was here.”

Oliver tenses up. “What!”

“He followed Mia. I just thought that you should know...”

“What did he want? Did you he hurt you? He didn’t hurt you, did he? Where the f**k was Carter?”

“Carter was in the car giving Mia and I some privacy and no, Chava didn’t hurt me. He just followed Mia. He wasn’t too happy to know we’ve been meeting here.”

“I don’t want you meeting here with Mia anymore. I don’t care that he didn’t hurt you, I don’t trust Salvador. I barely tolerate you meeting Mia as it is. If you two have something to talk about, tell her to come to the house. I’ll let the guards know to let her through.”

“Ok,” I say, remembering the little tidbit Chava gave me about Mia and my dreams. I don’t think I’ll be meeting with Mia anytime soon. “Can we go home now?”

I spend the next two hours helping the girls in the kitchen and getting ready for dinner. I change into a long lacy dress and heels and do a light makeup look. The boys are practically drooling as they wait for us to finish getting ready. Finally, we have the boys set the table and carry trays of food to the dining room, while we finish cleaning up the kitchen. Rosalie bursts into tears when Carter and Evan place the forks to the right of the plate and the glasses to the left.

“No this is all wrong, you uncultured swine!” she screeches. “Forks always go to the left of the plate while the knives and spoons are on the right. And these glasses go there! DO IT RIGHT OR YOU DON’T EAT!”

I have to hold back laughter as I watch a terrified Evan and Carter scramble to fix the table settings.

“I love pregnant Ro,” Oliver whispers in my ear.

“I heard that!” she snaps. “And don’t think for a second I’m letting you off the hook Mister Alpha. Get your a*s moving and bring in the turkey!”

“Yes ma’am!” he salutes Rosalie and runs off to the kitchen.

I’m practically in tears as Rosalie continues to bark orders at the men, who keep looking to us woman for help. Of course, we offer none. Oliver fixes Rio a plate and sets it down by the dining table so he can join us for dinner.

Finally, we all take our seats at the table. I notice a little sadness in Oliver and Rosalie’s eyes as we look at the empty seats at the far end of the table where their parents and grandparents would have sat. I reach for both of their hands and give them a little squeeze.

“I would like to say a few words before we eat,” Katherine says and we all take each other’s hands. “I know this has been a very difficult year what with the rogue attacks and our Luna having fought for her life for four months, but we have many things to give thanks for. Our Luna is safe and in good health and our Alpha proved himself to be worthy of his title. We will be welcoming new life soon and I wish Rosalie and Carter nothing but the best in the life ahead of them. My Evan has a little sister to take of and I couldn’t be happier with the friendship they share. Rosalie and Oliver, I know you two are heartbroken regarding your parents but please remember the people in this room are your family and we love you very much.”

“Kathy you can’t do this to me! You know I’m emotional right now!” Rosalie weeps and Carter leans over to kiss her cheeks.

“Thank you Kathy and everyone else for being here. It’s been a rollercoaster of a year but I’m happy. I have my mate and my family with me and that’s all that matters,” Oliver says, grabbing my hand and kissing each finger.

I hear Evan gag and Katherine subsequently smacks him over the side of the head. Everyone begins to dig in and I watch as the room fills with laughter and joy.

...Dad died protecting your pathetic useless a*s...Is it not your fault he’s dead?

I close my eyes and count to ten as I try to calm myself down. I don’t realize I have a death grip on my fork until Oliver reaches over to squeeze my hand.

“Are you alright?” he asks, his eyes fill with concern.

I force a smile and reach for the tamales. “Yeah, I’m fine! Just got a little emotional there, that’s all. It’s so nice to see everyone so happy!”

I quickly look away to peel my tamale but I can feel his stare. I pile on some mash potatoes and turkey on my plate before reaching for the homemade salsa.

...She enjoyed making you suffer...she wanted to make you pay for what you did... Is it not your fault he’s dead?

I gasp and jerk my arm back, accidentally spilling the entire salsa bowl all over myself and my plate. Everyone stops and looks at me.

“I’m sorry. I’m such a klutz,” I apologize, pushing my chair back to stand up. “I’m gonna go change real quick. I will be right back!” I say with extra cheerfulness.

Oliver reaches up to grab my sleeve. “Aurora, what’s going on?”

“Don’t worry about me. Eat your food,” I chirp and run off upstairs.

I hear the pitter patter of Rio’s paws follow me and I fight back my tears as I reach the room. I close the door behind Rio and look up at the ceiling, refusing to let the tears fall. I run to the closet and take off my dress and slip into a cute purple blouse and jeans.

“Don’t cry, don’t cry, don’t cry,” I mutter to myself as I fan my eyes.

There’s a lump in my throat and my heart is pounding. I feel the walls closing in on me and I want to scream. A few tears manage to escape my tear ducts and make their way down my cheeks as a small sob escapes me. Rio whines and whimpers as he senses my growing anxiety. I try to take several deep breathes when I suddenly hear the door burst open and Oliver’s scent fills the room.

“Baby, what’s wrong?” he asks, his voice trembling. “Why are you-“

I take a few steps away from him and force a smile on my face. “O-Oliver I just need few minutes...” I pant. “I-I’ll be fine, just give m-me a few-“

He doesn’t let me finish, pulling me into his arms and holding me tightly. I sob into his chest, grabbing fistfuls of his shirt and letting my sorrows out.

“Tell me what’s going on? Why are you crying?” he asks, upset to see me crying.

“I-I don’t deserve this! I-I killed him! He’s d-dead because of me. It’s all my fault!” I cry, my entire body shaking with every sob.

“Baby you’re not making any sense! What happened?”

“Salvador... he said I killed dad and he’s right. I killed him and I don’t deserve to be happy!”

“No, that’s not true at all! You were just a kid! You didn’t kill him,” he tries consoling me. He grabs my face and brings it up to his, forcing me to look into his eyes. “You of all people deserve to be happy.”

I shake my head, denying his kind words. “No, no, no-“

He nods his head. “Yes, yes you do baby. You deserve to find peace and to live your life happily, nena. Emiliano made a choice to protect you, to give his life for you because he knew you were worth it. You are worth dying for. Don’t let Chava or anyone else fill your head with lies. You did not kill Emiliano and you did not deserve what your family did to you. Moon Goddess works in mysterious ways and she let you live for a reason. She brought you here to me for a reason. Don’t question it. Just live. Live for Emiliano. Live for you. Please.”

He kisses my forehead, sending warmth throughout my body. Another sob rolls through me and I wrap my arms around Oliver’s neck. I let Oliver hold me until I finally calm down. Rio wedges his body in between and licks our faces.

“I’m sorry, I’ve ruined everything today...” I hiccup, stroking Rio’s head.

“No, you didn’t. This has been the best Thanksgiving ever. I’ve got my girl in my arms and my family sitting downstairs. That’s all I need,” he says, wiping my tears. “Now take a few deep breaths and lets go finish our dinner. Rosalie made her pies especially for you and it would be a shame if Evan and Carter ate them all before you got a taste,” he chuckles, kissing my nose.

I take a moment to collect myself, putting some eyedrops in my eyes to hide the redness from crying before I follow Oliver back downstairs. Evan gives my hand a squeeze as I take my seat.

“You okay there?” he asks.

I nod my head. “Yeah, I was just a little overwhelmed. But I’m okay now. Oliver helped me realize I am exactly where I’m supposed to be.”

Evan raises his glass. “A toast to our brave Luna and our mighty Alpha!”

The Ivory Queen Chapter 52

Aurora's POV

It's Thanksgiving day now and the kitchen is in a frenzy as we make the preparations for tonight since we've given the omegas and chefs the day off so they can spend time with their families. Oliver has also asked the extra guards we were given to go home to their families for the day and return tomorrow morning.

It's been a long time since I've had a real thanksgiving dinner. The holidays were always hard for my family so I'd always be locked away in the basement as they simply couldn't stomach my presence. My Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners would consist of a bowl of chicken broth and a loaf of bread that Maira would begrudgingly drop off at the basement for me.

I'm trying my best to keep my excitement to myself, however, for Rosalie and Oliver's sake. They are really bummed out that their grandparents from France declined their invitation to tonight's dinner. They've decided to spend Thanksgiving with Simone and David instead, not wanting them to be alone. I've never met their grandparents but from what Rosalie tells me, they're very kind and loving people. Evan and Carter's parents are here, however, so there will still be some cheer and joy in the pack house.

The boys are all gathered around the T.V. watching football and shouting nonsense at each other. Every once in a while they come through the kitchen to check the progress of our cooking or steal a taste here and there.

Men.

Rosalie's starting to show a little, her little bump cute as a button. Her pregnancy hormones are certainly spicing things up in the kitchen. She is currently having a mental break down over which type of pie she wants to make.

“This is too hard!” She weeps. “I want apple pie but I also want pumpkin and cherry pie.”

“Oh Rosalie,” Gabrielle, Carter’s mother, chuckles. “That is a very tough decision.”

“Aurora, what do you think?” Rosalie sniffles, wiping her tears with her sleeve. “Pumpkin, cherry or Apple?”

Everyone turns to look at me, waiting for my answer.

“I-I don’t know... I’ve never had pie...” I reply, a bit embarrassed.

They all gawk and stare at me.

“You’ve never had pie?” Rosalie shrieks, completely dumbfounded by my response.

I shake my head.

“Well what did your family make for dessert then, sweetie?” Katherine asks.

I pause to remember the Thanksgivings I once had with my family before Emiliano died. “Umm, w-we usually had flan or cocktail de fruta,” I say sheepishly. “We didn’t eat a lot traditional Thanksgiving food, now that I think about. This will be the first time I’ll ever have turkey or cranberry sauce or most of this stuff,” I say, gesturing to the many dishes currently in progress on the counter.

“This is insanity!” Rosalie declares.

“What is?” Oliver asks as he walks in carrying a large plate wrapped in foil.

“Well it seems that our lovely Luna here has never had pies or cranberry sauce or turkey,” Gabrielle chuckles. “And Rosalie can’t seem to decide what pie to make.”

“Is that so?” He laughs. “Well I guess she should make all three so Aurora can try them all.” He sets the plate down on the counter and looks at me. “Jaime (Aurora’s personal cook) and his wife dropped these off for you.”

“What are they?” I ask.

“Tamales,” he says, licking his lips. “Hope you don’t mind but I ate one already.”

I burst into laughter and pull him into a kiss. “Was it good?”

“I don’t know, I ate it too fast. I’ll need to have another to really get a taste for it, but I’ll let you know,” he grins and I smack him on the chest.

“No more tamales until dinner!” I scold, turning back to the vegetables I was chopping for Katherine. “Now shoo! Unless you’re going to help, we have work to do.”

He hugs me from behind and kisses the top of my head before smacking my a*s and running away so I can’t scold him again. I turn bright red as Rosalie wiggles her eyebrows at me.

An hour later, I hear a ding from my phone. It’s a message from Mia.

[Mia: I’ve got your things ready. Meet me at the oak tree in half an hour]

I let her know that I’ll be there and tell the ladies I’ve suddenly got a head ache and need to go lie down. I run off to the living room to find Carter and wave him over to me.

“Mia has my passport and ID ready. Can you take me to the border to pick it up?” I say in hushed tones.

He nods. “Yeah, we should be fine to go. Oliver is pretty occupied. Our team is losing.”

I stifle a chuckle and we head off in his car. We find Mia sitting in the Oak tree, playing with an envelope in her lap. She looks a little disappointed when we approach her but quickly tries to hide it and forces a smile.

“Hey!” She waves. “I’ve got your stuff right here.”

She climbs down and awkwardly hands me the envelope. I open it and slip out the passport. I stare at the picture of 12 year old me. I got it taken just a few weeks before my 13th birthday.

“Thanks,” I say, slipping the passport back into the envelope. “Umm... H-happy Thanksgiving..”

I turn to leave but she grabs my arm. Carter gives her a warning growl and she lets go.

"Can I talk to you for a sec?" She asks, her voice a little shaky. "A-Along."

Carter turns to look at me and I nod my head, handing him the envelope. He sighs and heads back to the car to wait. She points to the tree.

"You're not going to push me, are you?" I laugh and she looks horrified.

"N-no! I wouldn't do that, I promise!"

"It was a joke, Mia," I say and she relaxes a little.

"Oh."

We climb the tree and sit in awkward silence for a few moments before she finds the courage to speak.

"So what are you guys making for dinner tonight?" she asks, picking at a couple of leaves sprouting on the tree branch we're sitting on.

"Umm... they're making a lot of food I've never tried before. I'm kind of excited. I'm having turkey and all kinds of pie," I giggle with excitement. "You?"

"Mom still refuses to make turkey," she laughs. "She's making her famous chicken instead and Luna Ximena is making pozole. My mouth's water just thinking about it."

We talk for a little longer, reminiscing all the Thanksgivings we used to have together before that dreadful night. She even talks to me about her personal life a bit and informs me that she's a statistics major at the local community college and plans to transfer to SF State after next year. For a moment it feels like we're actually sisters, just catching up. No tension or fear and I soak it all in. I thank her for helping Oliver with my date and give her some details of how our night went.

"...I'm glad you're finally getting to celebrate again..."

"Yea...me too."

Mia looks at me, her lower lip trembling. "I -"

She burst into tears. I'm stunned, unsure of what to say.

"I'm so sorry," she sobs, her entire body shaking. "What is wrong with us? How could we just... do that to you?"

I shrug. "It doesn't matter anymore. I'm happy with my family at River Moon now."

She winces when I call River Moon my family, but I ignore it. Lluvia Blanca stopped being my pack a long time ago and I did not regret choosing River Moon as my new home.

"All those years that we wasted..." she whimpers, "when we should have been more united than ever. He would have wanted that! Dad would have wanted us together when he was gone, but we failed. We didn't honor his wishes."

I don't know how to respond. She's right, Emiliano had always preached kindness and forgiveness to us from a young age. We were never allowed to be mad to each other for long because we were siblings.

"Siblings are supposed love each other unconditionally," he'd say. "Because you are family. You protect and take care of each other. Whenever you feel lonely or afraid, remember you have each other."

I never forgot about them. I loved them unconditionally even if they didn't.

"I miss him so much!" She sniffles., wrapping her arms around me. "I miss our family."

Before I can respond, my phone starts going off and she pulls away from me. I check the caller ID.

Oliver.

Shit he's probably wondering where I am.

"H-Hello?" I answer.

"Where are you? I've been looking everywhere for you! Ro said you had a head ache and went to rest but you're clearly not home!" He snaps.

I swallow hard. "I-I'm at the border... with Mia."

"So you just went without telling me?"

“I-“

“You know I’m getting real tired of you running off without telling me where you’re going. Real f*****g tired...”

“I’m sorry.”

“I’m coming to get you.”

“No it’s okay, Carter is here. He’ll take me home.”

“I said I’m coming! Stay put!” He snaps before hanging up the phone.

“He’s mad, isn’t he?” Mia asks.

I nod. “He’s coming for me right now.”

“Well, well, well. Would you look at that...Mi hermanita and a murderer sitting in a tree, how sweet.”

The Ivory Queen Chapter 53

Aurora’s POV

Salvador’s voice makes my skin crawl and I instinctively wince. Mia and I both freeze for a few seconds, scared to face him. I start shaking and Mia holds my hand to comfort me.

“What are you doing here?” she asks. “Did you follow me?”

He says nothing so we both finally find the courage to look at him. There’s a smug look on his face as he leans against the tree, blocking our only way down.

“So this is what you’ve been doing all this time, huh, sis? Aurora saves your a*s once and you suddenly love her again?” he snickers. “How cute. You know, I knew you were lying when you kept trying to find excuses to run off but I just thought you were sneaking off to meet some boy or something. But look at the surprise I found!”

He smiles coldly at me, sending shivers down my spine. “So how’s life been with the River Moon mutts, Aurora? I bet you milk the whole victim story, don’t

you? Got all the Alphas wrapped around your little finger,” he laughs bitterly. “I bet you’ve sucked them all off and f****d-“

“That’s enough, Chava!” Mia snaps. “Respect your sister!”

“Sister?” He sneers, c*****g his head to the side and staring at us with an amused look on this face. “Oh come on, Mia. You and I both know she’s not our sister.”

I stare back at Mia with shock. She told him?

Salvador laughs, shaking his head. “What? You thought I didn’t know?”

“How long have you-“

“I’ve known for years. Heard Mom and Dads arguing about you all the time when we were kids. Dad told me not to tell and I kept his secret.”

I stare blankly at him. He’s known for so long and never told me?

“You know, I’ve missed you Aurora. We used to have such a good time together.”

Another shiver runs down my spine as several cruel memories come flooding back.

“Remember the supply closet in the laundry room? Remember how I’d lock you in there all night and project your biggest fears? Bloody Mary...Rogues.... Dad’s body.... Man that was fun! You were so afraid to face your crime and my Goddess did you scream!” he laughs hysterically with a crazed look in his eyes. “And just when I’d think you’d tired yourself out, you’d start screaming again!”

“You did what?” Mia asks, a look of horror on her face.

“Oh don’t act innocent now, Mia!”

“I never hurt her!” she retorts, but I can sense her nervousness.

“Oh but you did!” he laughs. “You sat back and watched as we tortured the b***h and then when she’d fall asleep, you’d have your fun with her.” He sets her gaze on me. “You see Aurora, your dear Mia here, would sneak into your room at night and give you nightmares. She’d f**k with your brain every night

to make sure you never got a moments rest. Even in your sleep, she wanted to make you suffer. She'll never admit it but I know she enjoyed every second of your pain. She wanted to make you pay for what you did!"

My heart sinks. I defended Mia against Oliver and Evan when they called her a monster. I thought she never hurt me....

Tears tug at Mia eyes and she grabs me frantically.

"N-no... Aurora please. I'm sorry," she cries.

I slap her arms away and scoot further away from her. I fight back my tears and stare at her in disbelief.

She turns back to Salvador, fire in her eyes. "I was wrong to do that to her! She didn't deserve-"

"Yes she did!" Chava snaps coldly. "She deserved it and more for what she did!"

"I didn't kill him!" I cry, unable to bear this conversation any longer. "It was the Rogues!"

"Ah, yes the rogues. And you, the mighty healer, couldn't save him!"

"I-I hadn't shifted yet! I couldn't-"

"Oh, how convenient! And so Dad died protecting your pathetic useless a*s, didn't he? Does that not make you his true killer? Is it not your fault he's dead?"

Tears stream down my face as I fill with guilt. He's right...

"Hey, I just got a call from Rosalie. She's having a little episode concerning the potatoes. Could you guys wrap this-" Carter stops in his tracks when he catches sight of Chava. "What the hell is he doing here?"

"He was just leaving," Mia says climbing down the tree. She stands in front of Chava and shoves him back. "Let's go, Chava."

He raises his arms in surrender, a smirk hanging on his lips. He turns around and starts walking. "Enjoy your Thanksgiving, Aurorita," he calls out sweetly. "I'm sure a murderer's appetite can be quite intense."

Carter snarls, making Chava chuckle with satisfaction. Mia and Chava disappear into Lluvia Blanca's woods, leaving just Carter and I by the tree.

"What did he say?" Carter asks.

I can't bring myself to tell him the truth, Chava's words tearing at whatever trust I had left to give.

"N-Nothing," I shrug, wiping away the tears on my cheeks. I look up at the grey sky to collect myself before climbing down. "So what was wrong with the potatoes?" I ask, forcing a smile.

Carter looks sternly at me. "Don't change the subject. What was he doing here?"

"He-uh, he followed Mia here," I say, taking a seat at the base of the tree and leaning my back against the trunk.

"And what did he say?"

I close my eyes and focus on my breathing, pushing away all the bad thoughts in my head. "It doesn't matter. I'll be okay."

He sighs in defeat knowing he won't get any more information out of me. "I don't know how Oliver does it."

I open my eyes and look at him again. "What do you mean?"

"THIS!" he snaps, raising his arms to up with irritation. "You are the most evasive person I have ever met! You never want to talk about anything. You just bottle everything up and smile like you're ok when you're clearly not! It's not healthy, Aurora. You need to talk about it, you need to let it all out."

"There's just no point in talking about it. It was about the past and you can't change the past so why bother talking about it?" I sigh. "Besides, all it ever does is make you guys angry or sad for me."

"Aurora-"

"It's Thanksgiving, Carter! I would just like to spend one day without being reminded about what happened to me. I just want to eat and enjoy your guy's company today, okay?"

"I'm telling Oliver."

I exhale loudly. "Yeah, well he's already mad at me so it doesn't really matter at this point. He should be here soon."

"Great," he groans. "He'll hand me my a*s too then."

Carter takes a seat beside me and I lean on his shoulder. We sit in silence. Fifteen minutes later, Oliver comes running in his wolf form. Carter and I get on our feet, bracing ourselves for a scolding of a lifetime. Oliver shifts, changes into some sweats, and storms towards us.

"Explain," he snaps, crossing his arms and glaring at us.

I decide to speak for both of Carter and I since I know Oliver will be easier on me than him. "M-Mia wanted to w-wish me a happy Thanksgiving and chat for a bit... C-Carter was the closest person by..... so I asked him to take me."

He snarls. "That doesn't explain why you chose to not tell me!"

I wince as he raises his voice, so Carter steps in.

"It's my fault, I forgot to tell you we were coming," Carter says.

Oliver sighs, clearly annoyed with both of us right now.

"Please don't punish him. He was just trying to help me," I interject before Oliver becomes infuriated.

"Carter, go home. I'd like to speak with her alone."

"Oliver-"

"GO!" he commands and Carter walks to car and drives off.

I look down at my hands and fidget with my sleeves as I wait for Oliver to scream his head off at me. But he doesn't. Instead he pulls me into his arms and holds me. It takes me a few seconds to react to his hug, but I finally get my arms to move and wrap around his waist.

"I don't want to fight with you anymore over this Aurora. I really don't," he sighs. "I know you are trying to make amends with Mia and that's fine, but

please don't keep me in the dark about it. Especially when there are Rogues after you."

I nod my head against his chest and hold him tighter.

"Chava was here."

Oliver tenses up. "What!"

"He followed Mia. I just thought that you should know..."

"What did he want? Did you he hurt you? He didn't hurt you, did he? Where the f**k was Carter?"

"Carter was in the car giving Mia and I some privacy and no, Chava didn't hurt me. He just followed Mia. He wasn't too happy to know we've been meeting here."

"I don't want you meeting here with Mia anymore. I don't care that he didn't hurt you, I don't trust Salvador. I barely tolerate you meeting Mia as it is. If you two have something to talk about, tell her to come to the house. I'll let the guards know to let her through."

"Ok," I say, remembering the little tidbit Chava gave me about Mia and my dreams. I don't think I'll be meeting with Mia anytime soon. "Can we go home now?"

—

I spend the next two hours helping the girls in the kitchen and getting ready for dinner. I change into a long lacy dress and heels and do a light makeup look. The boys are practically drooling as they wait for us to finish getting ready. Finally, we have the boys set the table and carry trays of food to the dining room, while we finish cleaning up the kitchen. Rosalie bursts into tears when Carter and Evan place the forks to the right of the plate and the glasses to the left.

"No this is all wrong, you uncultured swine!" she screeches. "Forks always go to the left of the plate while the knives and spoons are on the right. And these glasses go there! DO IT RIGHT OR YOU DON'T EAT!"

I have to hold back laughter as I watch a terrified Evan and Carter scramble to fix the table settings.

"I love pregnant Ro," Oliver whispers in my ear.

"I heard that!" she snaps. "And don't think for a second I'm letting you off the hook Mister Alpha. Get your a*s moving and bring in the turkey!"

"Yes ma'am!" he salutes Rosalie and runs off to the kitchen.

I'm practically in tears as Rosalie continues to bark orders at the men, who keep looking to us woman for help. Of course, we offer none. Oliver fixes Rio a plate and sets it down by the dining table so he can join us for dinner.

Finally, we all take our seats at the table. I notice a little sadness in Oliver and Rosalie's eyes as we look at the empty seats at the far end of the table where their parents and grandparents would have sat. I reach for both of their hands and give them a little squeeze.

"I would like to say a few words before we eat," Katherine says and we all take each other's hands. "I know this has been a very difficult year what with the rogue attacks and our Luna having fought for her life for four months, but we have many things to give thanks for. Our Luna is safe and in good health and our Alpha proved himself to be worthy of his title. We will be welcoming new life soon and I wish Rosalie and Carter nothing but the best in the life ahead of them. My Evan has a little sister to take of and I couldn't be happier with the friendship they share. Rosalie and Oliver, I know you two are heartbroken regarding your parents but please remember the people in this room are your family and we love you very much."

"Kathy you can't do this to me! You know I'm emotional right now!" Rosalie weeps and Carter leans over to kiss her cheeks.

"Thank you Kathy and everyone else for being here. It's been a rollercoaster of a year but I'm happy. I have my mate and my family with me and that's all that matters," Oliver says, grabbing my hand and kissing each finger.

I hear Evan gag and Katherine subsequently smacks him over the side of the head. Everyone begins to dig in and I watch as the room fills with laughter and joy.

...Dad died protecting your pathetic useless a*s...Is it not your fault he's dead?

I close my eyes and count to ten as I try to calm myself down. I don't realize I have a death grip on my fork until Oliver reaches over to squeeze my hand.

"Are you alright?" he asks, his eyes fill with concern.

I force a smile and reach for the tamales. "Yeah, I'm fine! Just got a little emotional there, that's all. It's so nice to see everyone so happy!"

I quickly look away to peel my tamale but I can feel his stare. I pile on some mash potatoes and turkey on my plate before reaching for the homemade salsa.

...She enjoyed making you suffer...she wanted to make you pay for what you did... Is it not your fault he's dead?

I gasp and jerk my arm back, accidentally spilling the entire salsa bowl all over myself and my plate. Everyone stops and looks at me.

"I'm sorry. I'm such a klutz," I apologize, pushing my chair back to stand up. "I'm gonna go change real quick. I will be right back!" I say with extra cheerfulness.

Oliver reaches up to grab my sleeve. "Aurora, what's going on?"

"Don't worry about me. Eat your food," I chirp and run off upstairs.

I hear the pitter patter of Rio's paws follow me and I fight back my tears as I reach the room. I close the door behind Rio and look up at the ceiling, refusing to let the tears fall. I run to the closet and take off my dress and slip into a cute purple blouse and jeans.

"Don't cry, don't cry, don't cry," I mutter to myself as I fan my eyes.

There's a lump in my throat and my heart is pounding. I feel the walls closing in on me and I want to scream. A few tears manage to escape my tear ducts and make their way down my cheeks as a small sob escapes me. Rio whines and whimpers as he senses my growing anxiety. I try to take several deep breathes when I suddenly hear the door burst open and Oliver's scent fills the room.

“Baby, what’s wrong?” he asks, his voice trembling. “Why are you-“

I take a few steps away from him and force a smile on my face. “O-Oliver I just need few minutes...” I pant. “I-I’ll be fine, just give m-me a few-“

He doesn’t let me finish, pulling me into his arms and holding me tightly. I sob into his chest, grabbing fistfuls of his shirt and letting my sorrows out.

“Tell me what’s going on? Why are you crying?” he asks, upset to see me crying.

“I-I don’t deserve this! I-I killed him! He’s d-dead because of me. It’s all my fault!” I cry, my entire body shaking with every sob.

“Baby you’re not making any sense! What happened?”

“Salvador... he said I killed dad and he’s right. I killed him and I don’t deserve to be happy!”

“No, that’s not true at all! You were just a kid! You didn’t kill him,” he tries consoling me. He grabs my face and brings it up to his, forcing me to look into his eyes. “You of all people deserve to be happy.”

I shake my head, denying his kind words. “No, no, no-“

He nods his head. “Yes, yes you do baby. You deserve to find peace and to live your life happily, nena. Emiliano made a choice to protect you, to give his life for you because he knew you were worth it. You are worth dying for. Don’t let Chava or anyone else fill your head with lies. You did not kill Emiliano and you did not deserve what your family did to you. Moon Goddess works in mysterious ways and she let you live for a reason. She brought you here to me for a reason. Don’t question it. Just live. Live for Emiliano. Live for you. Please.”

He kisses my forehead, sending warmth throughout my body. Another sob rolls through me and I wrap my arms around Oliver’s neck. I let Oliver hold me until I finally calm down. Rio wedges his body in between and licks our faces.

“I’m sorry, I’ve ruined everything today...” I hiccup, stroking Rio’s head.

“No, you didn’t. This has been the best Thanksgiving ever. I’ve got my girl in my arms and my family sitting downstairs. That’s all I need,” he says, wiping

my tears. "Now take a few deep breaths and let's go finish our dinner. Rosalie made her pies especially for you and it would be a shame if Evan and Carter ate them all before you got a taste," he chuckles, kissing my nose.

I take a moment to collect myself, putting some eyedrops in my eyes to hide the redness from crying before I follow Oliver back downstairs. Evan gives my hand a squeeze as I take my seat.

"You okay there?" he asks.

I nod my head. "Yeah, I was just a little overwhelmed. But I'm okay now. Oliver helped me realize I am exactly where I'm supposed to be."

Evan raises his glass. "A toast to our brave Luna and our mighty Alpha!"

The Ivory Queen Chapter 54

Aurora POV

I fly out to Idaho tomorrow and I'm getting anxious. Carter and I have already hatched up an excuse to get me out of River Moon without causing too much suspicion. We'll be pretending to take Rio to the vet which should give us enough time to travel to the airport in San Francisco without anyone trying to stop us. I don't like lying to Oliver but I can't have him getting in the way of my shift. I know he'd try to stop me if he found out and my shift is simply too important to risk right now.

While Oliver is at training, I pack my overnight bag, stuffing my passport and ID in one of the pockets. I also stash about \$600 in cash that Carter gave me at the bottom of my bag.

I hear the boys return from their workout and put away my bag under the bed and quickly clean up any evidence of my trip. I slip on my medallion and go downstairs to greet the boys for lunch. After we eat, we all head for the entertainment room so the boys can play Call of Duty. Rosalie curls up next to Carter and falls asleep quickly. I sit next to Oliver but after a while get bored with the game. Oliver lifts his arms up, never once taking his eyes off the screen and continuing to press the buttons on his controller. I climb onto his lap and he lowers his arms around me, his scent and warmth enveloping me. I lay my head against his chest and let the beat of his heart rock me to sleep.

About an hour later, I'm abruptly woken up by the sound of several warriors running in and I sit up in Oliver's lap. I feel his muscles tense.

"We were just informed that Rogues are headed towards our southern border. There's maybe 200 or so and they're all marching towards us as we speak," reports a guard.

200 rogues? Where the hell are they coming from?

Oliver and the boys are immediately on high alert and the game is shut off. Carter wraps his arms around Rosalie protectively and she whimpers with fear.

"I want every non-warrior in the safe house immediately. Evan, take Aurora and ten of her guards to the safe house. Carter, round up the warriors and lead them to the southern border. I'll get a hold of our allies and meet you there shortly. Let's go, move it!"

Everyone scrambles to fulfill Oliver's orders and he lifts me off his lap.

"Carter, please be careful," Rosalie warns.

He gives her a few comforting kisses before running off to get the warriors.

"Oliver, I can be more useful at the pack hospital or even on the field!" I cry, knowing I can help.

"Aurora, no. I need you in the safe house where I know you'll be protected, especially now that I know you're being targeted by them. I don't want a repeat of what happened at the Cerulean Sea Pack hospital, Go with Evan."

"Oliver, there is no antidote for the witch's poison. I am the only person who can heal the bites. I have to-"

"Don't argue with me right now! I can't fight knowing you could possibly be in danger. I need you in the safe house or I'll lose my mind, do you understand? Evan and the guards will protect you with their lives. Now go!" He commands.

I hate when he gets overprotective but I know he's just afraid that something will happen to me. I stand on my tippy toes and kiss him on the lips. "You better come back to me," I warn him, fighting back angry tears.

He sighs, leaning his forehead against mine. "It's going to be okay. I love you."

“I love you too,” I reply.

Evan takes Rio, Rosalie and I down to the safe house. It’s honestly not a safe house but instead a series of hidden underground tunnels dug into the earth and stabilized with wooden beams. The tunnels all lead up to a gymnasium sized compartment made of concrete where the elderly, women, children and non-warriors stay hidden during attacks. Evan has the guards posted at some of the main entrances to the safe house and in some of the tunnels. Since these guards are from different packs, they’re given radios for communication.

As we reach the main compartment, I hear a familiar voice call out to me.

“Luna! Luna!” Taylor cries, running up to me for a hug.

I kneel down and spread my arms out wide to receive her. “Hey cutie, what’s wrong?” I ask, wiping the fat tears falling down her cute chubby little cheeks.

“I’m scared,” she mumbles. “There’s bad wolves outside and daddy is out there!”

“I know but your daddy is working really hard to keep them away, remember? He’s a hero. He won’t let anything happen to you, ok?” I say hugging her tightly.

“But what about Mrs. Cotton?” She whines.

I rack my brain to remember if there’s a pack member by the name of Mrs. Cotton and come up empty.

Emma explains. “Mrs. Cotton is her stuffed animal. We ran here so quickly I forgot to grab it for her and she’s pretty upset about it.”

“Who’s gonna save Mrs. Cotton, Luna?” Taylor whimpers.

I give her a hug and sit her on my knee. “Moon Goddess will protect her, Taylor, just like she’s protecting your daddy out there and you in here.”

“Really?” She asks.

“Mhmm. And you know what? Right now I need your help.” I call out to Rio and he trots over. “This sweet baby angel here is Rio. He’s very scared right now and could use a very special friend to help him get through this. Do you think you can help him?”

She nods her head excitedly and wraps her tiny arms around his neck. He proceeds to lick her cute little face and she giggles. "Puppy!" she squeals.

Several other toddlers come running over to see Rio and before I know it, Rio is swarmed by children. He's more than happy to be the center of attention though, and licks their happy faces. Emma thanks me, but I can see the worry in her eyes.

"How are you holding up, Emma?" I ask placing my hand on her shoulder.

"You would think I would be used to it by now," she shrugs, clearly fighting back tears. "But the worry never goes away. I'm just so scared all the time... I hate myself for saying this but sometimes I hate that he's a werewolf..." A few tears fall down her cheeks and she quickly turns around to wipe them.

Right, I forgot that she's a human...

"Oh god, I don't want Taylor to see me like this. I need to be strong for her. And I'm sorry, I didn't mean to insult you or the pack! I love werewolves. They're-"

"It's okay, you don't have to explain yourself," I reply, pulling her into a hug. "And William is going to be alright. He's a strong fighter. He'll come back to you and Taylor."

She gives me a small smile.

"So how did you two meet?" I ask, trying to distract her.

"Oh," She blushes. "I used to be a cashier at a grocery store and he -uh- came into my checkout lane to buy bagels. The second we looked into each other's eyes, I felt a pull towards him. Little did I know that was the mate bond. Anyways, he just kept coming back, always getting bagels, always in my checkout lane," Emma giggles. "I just kept waiting for him to ask me out and when he did, I was so nervous I spilled his change all over the floor. God, that was embarrassing!"

I laugh with her. "How long before he showed you what he was?"

"He eased me into it," she chuckles. "He would talk about wolves and how cool they were or about myths and stuff. After about 3 months of dating, he took me on a night picnic here on pack territory and he showed me his wolf. I

was terrified! I thought he was going to eat me!” We burst into laughter. “Needless to say, I didn’t speak to him for weeks after until he came to find me again at the grocery store. I was still afraid of him but I knew I couldn’t stay away for much longer. I love him and I know he would never hurt me.”

“Does your family know?” I ask.

“No, I’m afraid it will scare them. We visit my family often, though, so it’s fine.”

We chat for a little longer before she goes off to check on Taylor. I offer comfort to several women and elderly folks afraid for their mates and their children. Evan never leaves my side, staying in contact with the guards for my protection. After about 30 minutes, I search for Rosalie and find her sitting with Gabrielle and Katherine. She looks upset.

“What’s wrong Ro?” I ask, crouching in front of her and holding her hands.

“I just can’t stop worrying about Carter. I know he’s just doing his job, but I can’t stop thinking that something is going to happen to him and I’ll have to raise this baby on my own!” She weeps.

I understand her fears. Oliver and Carter are the pack leaders and will always be on the front lines in these attacks. I squeeze her hand and give her some calming energy. She sighs in relief and smiles contently.

“I don’t know what you did, but thank you,” she says, rubbing her belly.

“Stress isn’t good for the baby,” I say, holding her hand. “I just gave you a some peace for a bit while we wait. Rest for now. I’m sure by the time you wake up, this will all be over.”

She lays her head in Gabrielle’s lap, who begins to stroke her hair and tell Rosalie some stories to keep her mind busy. Suddenly, Emma starts crying frantically and I rush to her side. “Emma what-“

“Taylor! I can’t find her! I can’t find my baby!” she wails. “She was right here! She was right here! I turned away for two seconds and she’s gone!”

“Emma calm down, we’ll help you find her,” I say, trying my best to keep from having my own panic attack.

Evan radios the guards in the tunnels to start searching for Taylor while some of the mothers try to keep Emma calm or help search for the girl here. I glance at the children surrounding Rio but she's not among them. There's a sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach.

Something's not right. Reyna agrees.

"We can't find the girl," Evan whispers in my ear. "None of the guards have seen her. I mind-linked a few warriors on the battlefield to keep a look out for her, but I haven't gotten word back from them."

"Does William know?"

He shakes his head. "No. It'll distract him. He needs to keep a level head right now."

Several agonizing minutes crawl by before we hear a call come through the radio.

"We found the girl! A rogue almost killed her but we managed to fight it off in time before it did. She has a bite on her leg. Poor little thing is screaming. She needs the Luna!" The guard shouts through the radio.

"Let's go!" I say, charging to one of the tunnels.

Evan pulls me back by my arm. "No. We should wait for them to bring her back here."

"And risk them getting followed and leading the rogues here?" I snap. "You heard them, Taylor is screaming. The best thing to do is get Taylor to a secure location and keep the pack members in here safe. You and I have a better chance of saving her if we get to her location."

Evan looks like he wants to argue, but he knows I'm right. "Is there any place where you can stash her until we get there?" Evan asks into the radio.

"Umm... we're by the daycare. We'll try to get her inside, but I can smell a lot of rogues nearby."

"Get her inside carefully and try to keep her quiet. We'll be there in five," Evan orders.

We take off running to through the tunnels, finding one that is only a few blocks from the daycare center. At the entrance, Evan shifts and pokes his head out to check if the coast is clear. Not sensing any danger, he nods his head forward for me to follow him. As we maneuver between some trees, I get the sense we're being followed and ask Evan to stop behind a tree. As he sniffs the air, we hear the snap of a tree branch behind us. We turn around to find ourselves being ambushed by several rogues, led by none other than Erin herself. She shifts into her human form, her glowing red eyes piercing daggers at me. Evan eyes fog over and I know he's mind linking for help. He takes a protective stance in front of me and snarls at her. Her eyes return to their murky brown color.

"I knew ordering that hit on the little girl would come in handy," she chuckles, tilting her head to the side and smirking. "You can't help but play the hero all the time."

My blood boils when she admits to what she's done and I can feel Reyna's rage. Erin takes a few steps towards us and Evan gives her a warning growl.

"Why are you doing this?" I snap. "How could you hurt a little girl? She's just a child."

"Oh Aurora, you can't possibly be this dense. You know exactly why I'm doing this... your majesty."

She knows?

Evan tilts his head in confusion at me but I ignore him and keep my attention on Erin and her minions.

"We can do this the easy way where you come with me willingly or we can kill Evan and you'll still come with me. The choice is yours," she smirks.

Evan steps forward, leaning on his hind legs and preparing to launch.

"Thought so," she sighs, "Attack!" She commands and the rogues start closing in on us. "Remember, Master wants her alive!"

Master?

We're outnumbered and I know Evan won't be able to take them all. Three rogues step forward and attack him. He easily out maneuvers them but as

rogues keep filing in, it becomes clear he won't win. When a rogue gets dangerously close to me, Evan springs into action and charges at it. The distraction works and a rogue is able to lunge at Evan. A second rogue takes advantage and bites into Evan's hind legs and drags him down. My blood runs cold as two more rogues jump in to attack him.

There's no getting out of here alive if I don't activate my powers...

With my decision made, I curl my fingers, slowly lifting both my arms up and making the roots of the nearby tree rise from the earth. I throw my hands forward and the roots spring into action, wrapping around the legs of the rogues attacking Evan and lifting them 10 feet off the ground. I slam my arms down and the roots smash the rogues into the ground with full force. The sound of cracking bones is nauseating and blood pools around the bodies.

The remaining rogues seem unfazed by my display and launch towards me. I stomp my foot on the ground, causing a tremor to ripple through the earth and split it in two. Rocks and small boulders are exposed and I fling them at the oncoming rogues, killing several with the blows. I continue to grow roots and crush multiple rogues to death. Soon, the forest floor runs red with blood. I catch a glance at Evan who is laying on the ground with severe wounds pumping out blood. His breathing is labored and I hurry to finish the final rogues off.

Moon Goddess, please help me!

I jerk my hands up, lifting two giant chunks of earth and slamming them into the last two rogues. The wolves fly into the air and crash nearby with a thud. I uproot a tree and let it fall on top of them, killing them instantly. Erin tries her best to hide her fear as I approach her but I can hear her heart pounding against her rib cage. I crouch down, placing my palms firmly on the ground. Several vines shoot out from the ground, wrapping tightly around her legs and pulling her to her knees. She laughs hysterically as more vines shoot up and wrap around her wrists, trapping her in place. I slowly walk towards her, staring into her wicked eyes..

"You're a lot stronger than I anticipated," she admits, a smirk still hanging on her lips. "I thought twenty rogues would be enough to get you but boy was I wrong.... So what now? Huh? Are you going to kill me like you killed my brother?" She asks, spitting in my face.

"Who is your master?" I snarl, wiping my cheek.

“Wouldn’t you like to know?” She cackles. “Let’s just say my master knows you very well...”

Irritated, I grow spines on the vines and they dig into her porcelain flesh, causing her to scream in agony.

“The spines will keep growing longer until you answer my question,” I warn.

She laughs against her pain. “My Master has many names and many wolves willing to help her out. You’d be surprised how many want you dead. We’ve got allies in every corner waiting to have their turn at you.”

“Who the f**k is your master!”

She snarls at me. “Your eyes... they’re the same color as the day you killed Andrew. There’s no denying what you are, you b***h!”

Enraged, I grow another vine and wrap it around her neck, squeezing slowly until she starts gasping for air.

“Tell me who!”

Suddenly, several warriors arrive including Oliver and Carter. They shift and stare at me in horror as they see the blood shed around me and Erin entangled in my vines. Shocked, I lose focus and release my grip on Erin. She gasps for air, massaging her neck. All the roots and vines move back into the earth, leaving nothing but corpses lying on the ground.

“Your eyes...” Oliver whispers.

The Ivory Queen Chapter 55

Aurora’s POV

The magnitude of the situation hits me. I’ve just revealed myself not only to Oliver, but to Evan and the rest of the warriors. Everyone is about to find out what I am and I’ve just put all their lives in danger.

“What the hell?” Oliver mumbles, completely bewildered by what he just saw.

“There’s no time to explain!” I shout. “She’s behind the attacks! We need to figure out why!” I say, pointing a finger at Erin.

“She’s crazy Oliver! She just started attacking me! She tried to kill me!” Erin screeches, showing her bruises and cuts as proof.

“No-no, she’s lying!” I cry.

No I can’t be the villain again. Not again.

The warriors step back in fear as Erin keeps accusing me. After a few seconds of assessing the situation, Oliver finally reacts.

“Shut the f**k up” Oliver snaps at Erin and orders some warriors to take her to the dungeon. He turns to me and pulls me into his arms, holding me tightly and kissing the top of my head. His heart is pounding. “Are you hurt?” He asks pulling away and searching for wounds.

I’m grateful he believes me and that he’s dropping the subject of my powers for now.

“No,” I shake my head and take in his injuries. He’s got a gash on his shoulder, several claw marks on his back and countless bruises.

“I’ll be fine,” he says, noticing me staring at his wounds.

Evan wheezes and I rush to his side.

“Evan, I’m right here,” I whimper. “You’re going to be alright.”

I start to work on his injuries, letting jolts of electricity flow into his body. I’m glad none of the injuries are poisoned. He’s lost so much blood so it takes longer to heal him. After five solid minutes of healing, his wounds finally start to close up. Evan lets out a sigh as the last injury heals and gets to his feet before shifting. He wraps his arms around me as stumble a little, drained from the exertion of energy. Oliver growls but I shoot him a death glare to stop overreacting .

“I’m sorry... I wasn’t strong enough...” he croaks, his body trembling.

“It’s ok... I’m ok,” I say, trying to calm him down.

“Your powers...”

I shake my head “Not now.”

I feel light headed and exhausted. I've used way too much energy and I want to sleep. Oliver takes me from Evan, gently lifting me up bridal style and I curl up against his chest. The sparks are so warming and inviting, I just want to sleep.

No, don't fall sleep, I scold myself. Taylor still needs you.

"Taylor needs me," I murmur, trying my best to keep my eyelids open.

"Later. You need to get back to the safe house and rest. The attack isn't over yet. Some of the rogues hid and we still have to finish sweeping the territory," Oliver explains.

"Taylor needs me!" I snap. "She was bitten, Oliver! She's only four! I need to get to the daycare center now!"

Oliver sighs knowing I will never forgive him if he doesn't let me heal her and he starts sprinting towards the daycare center. Evan and Carter escort us there. When we arrive, one of the guards comes running out, wiping a few tears from his eyes.

"She's really hurting, Luna," he says.

The guard takes me inside as the boys go off to get some clothes. Taylor does not see the Alpha, Beta and Gamma butt naked. I'm taken to a couch where Taylor cries in agony.

"I want mommy!" She wails.

"I know sweetie," I whisper, placing my hand on her leg.

I notice she's squeezing a stuffed animal in her hand.

She must have gone off to get Mrs. Cotton after all...

"Taylor, I need you to be brave for Mrs. Cotton. We don't want to scare her now do we?" I say, trying to calm her down.

She shakes her head and cries. "It hurts too much!"

I hear the boys come in and I feel ok to start the healing knowing they're here.

"Ok sweetie, it's going to be ok."

Pushing through the exhaustion, i place my hands on her tiny body. The electricity instantly creates a burning sensation at my fingertips that spreads like a wild fire up my arm and towards my temples. I hold back a scream, tears welling up in my eyes. Before I know it, my entire body feels like it's on fire. Another wave of pain hits me and I start to tremble. A sob escapes my throat and I scream into my arm to keep from scaring Taylor. A few more surges of pain flood me before the wound finally closes and Taylor lets out a tiny sigh. I let go of her and my temples start throbbing. I start shrieking and Oliver orders the guard to take Taylor to her mother.

I take huge gulps of air, desperate for the pain to subside. With no lavender oil on site, I'm forced to endure the pain for several minutes before it starts to subside on its own.

"That's it baby, breathe," Oliver murmurs as my heart rate starts to slow.

After a few deep breaths, Oliver helps me to my feet. Worn out, I lean on Oliver to keep from falling down. Carter informs us the pack is safe and the rogues are gone.

"Get on my back, I'll take you home," Oliver says, turning his back to me.

I can feel his anger emanating from him and I know he's pissed I never told him about my powers. I hesitantly climb onto his clawed back, careful not to hurt him and wrap my arms around his neck. He grabs the backs of my knees and hoists me up. We run back to the house and Oliver carries me to our room, setting me down gently on the bed. He refuses to look at me and talks only to Evan and Carter.

"Evan, you better explain what the f**k you two were doing outside the safe house-"

"If you want someone to blame, blame me. I told him to take me out of the safe house. I put us in that situation. It was my fault." I sigh, not wanting Oliver to punish Evan for my mistakes.

Oliver ignores me and keeps talking to Evan. "Go down to the dungeon and make sure Erin doesn't escape before I and the other Alphas get a chance to interrogate her. Carter, get the elders to the house."

"What do you want the elders for?" Carter asks.

“Just do it!” He commands.

Carter gulps and gives me a look of compassion. I ask him to pick up Rio on his way back before he takes off to fulfill Oliver’s request. Evan runs off to the dungeon, leaving Oliver and I alone.

The silence between us is suffocating. Oliver pacing back and forth only makes me more anxious so I decide to break the silence. “I know you’re mad but please, just let me explain,” I say, trying my best to keep him calm.

“Mad? You think I’m mad?” He laughs bitterly. “Aurora, I’m f*****g frustrated! I’m tired! I’m so f*****g tired of being lied to all the time! You refuse to be honest with me when I’ve been completely honest with you! Does that seem fair to you?”

“N-no,” I mumble, feeling tears burn my eyes. “I’m so sorry…”

He sighs. “If you won’t tell me what’s going on then maybe the elders can explain it to me. I’m tired of being left out of the loop.”

“Oliver, if you would just let me explain!”

“Why? So you can lie to me again?”

Tears fall down my cheeks. “I pinky swear, Oliver,” I whimper, holding out my pinky to him. “I won’t lie.”

His face softens when he sees my tears and takes a seat at the edge of the bed. He locks our pinkies together. “Don’t you dare lie.”

I take a deep breath, unsure where to begin. “I told you my parents were royals but I failed to mention that they were a special pair. My mother carried the royal line. She was a gold wolf and like every gold wolf, had an elemental gift, hers being fire. My father, on the other hand, was not a royal but instead a silver wolf like uncle Emiliano.”

“I’m not understanding. So what are you? A gold wolf or a silver wolf?”

I shake my head. “Neither. I’m a special type of wolf, one that only exists when a silver wolf and gold wolf are mated by the Moon Goddess. I’m what’s called an Ivory twin.”

“Ivory twin? I-I’ve never heard of that,” He says, scooting closer to me.

“That’s probably because Ivory twins only exist once every 150 years and very little is known about them.”

“Why couldn’t you just tell me that from the beginning? Why all the lies?”

I take a deep breath before explaining. “My kingdom began to crumble when my mother became pregnant with my sister and I. I guess everyone knew what we would become and the power we would hold. Ivory twins are extremely powerful beings, valuable to a lot of creatures. I have spent the last 18 years in hiding, not knowing who I was or where I came from for one reason and one reason only. I’m a weapon, something a lot of beings want to possess.”

I immediately regret saying that and cover my mouth as Oliver’s eyes turn silver and Michael takes control.

“You. Are. Mine! No one can take you from me!” Michael snarls. “Who is after you?”

“Michael calm down,” I say, crawling over to him and sitting in his lap. I take his face in my hands and force him to look at me.

“Who is after you?” He snaps. “Don’t lie!”

“I want Oliver back,” I whisper. “I love you, Michael but I need to speak with Oliver, please.”

He hesitates before pressing his lips against mine. I melt into him for a second before I remember my task at hand. When I pull back, Oliver’s beautiful blue eyes stare back at me..

“Who is after you, baby? I won’t let anyone take you from me!” He says, grabbing my face and kissing my cheeks.

I shake my head. “I don’t know. My mother’s kingdom fell under constant attack by creatures who wanted my sister and I. There was a war. That’s why I kept quiet about who I was,” I whimper. “So many lives have been lost because of what I am, I couldn’t bear the thought of having a war erupt here in River Moon because of me. I know it was wrong to hide this from you but I was just trying to protect River Moon. But I guess it was all for nothing. Somehow Erin and her master found me.”

“Erin’s master?”

I nod. “Erin said there’s a ‘Master’ behind all the attacks.”

A growl rumbles through his chest. “I’m going to kill her!”

“Oliver calm down,” I say grabbing his face again. “That’s not important right now! This is just another reason why I didn’t tell you about me. You’re too overprotective!”

“Overprotective? You just told me there are creatures after you! This is exactly why you should have told me!” He argues, struggling to keep his composure. “You can’t keep stuff like this from me.”

“No, telling you or anyone else would’ve put a target on River Moon. Creatures have been searching for me since before I was born, before I even knew what I was. Telling people would have made it easier for them to find me before I could complete my shift. Besides, I had to keep my sister safe too. From what I can tell, no one has managed to find her and I’d like to keep it that way.”

“So what? Were you just planning on never telling me?” He snaps, his eyes full of hurt.

I don’t answer for a few seconds, mentally preparing myself for his wrath when I tell him about the shift. “I’m sorry, I was going to tell you after my first shift,” I say rapidly. “with Celina...”

“Celina?”

“I can’t shift without my twin. It’ll kill me.”

“So what? Is Celina flying in on Monday?”

I shake my head. “Oliver, please don’t be mad...” whisper, my entire body trembling.

Too late. There’s a storm in his eyes. “What were you going to do?”

“I-I uh-“

“What were you going to do?” He snaps.

"I was going to leave..." I whimper.

Oliver starts breathing heavily, the anger in his face clear as day.

"I would have only been gone for two days!" I explain, desperately trying to calm him down. "Celina and I planned to meet somewhere where no one could find us so that we could be safe."

"Where?"

"I can't tell you that."

"You are out of your f*****g mind if you think I'm letting you go with her," he snarls.

That pisses me off. "Oliver, I wasn't asking for permission. I can't shift without-

"Then she'll come here where I can protect you!"

"I don't need protecting. I'm case you forgot, I took on 20 rogues just fine on my own!"

"You're not going!"

I sigh. This is exactly why I didn't want to tell him about the shift. We hear a knock at the door and I get up to let Carter and Rio in. Rio curls up in his bed, exhausted from all the attention he got today.

"The Elders are here. They're in the office waiting," Carter announces.

"Send them back," I say, grabbing Oliver's wrist. "You can't tell them about me. You can't tell anyone about me until after my shift."

He glares at me before turning to Carter and telling him to send the Elders home. We sit alone in silence for about a minute when Carter returns.

"Alpha, the Allies are waiting downstairs for a chance to interrogate Erin. What should I tell them?" Carter asks.

"Stand in for me and lead the interrogation."

"Yes, Alpha," Carter excuses himself and takes off.

Oliver turns to me and has me explain what little I know about my shift.

“Silver, Gold and Ivory wolves keep their secrets very well hidden, Oliver, for good reason-”

“Damnit, Aurora, stop beating around the bush! I am your f*****g mate, not some monster trying to kill you! Just tell me the truth,” Oliver snaps impatiently.

I jump at his harsh tone and fidget with my fingers to keep calm. “According to my research, Ivory twins can only shift during an equinox, a solstice, or a full moon. I must also complete my first shift with my twin. Not doing so will result in death... That’s why I have to leave with Celina, so we can shift-“

“Then Celina can come here! You’re not going anywhere so long as there’s people trying to hurt you!”

“But there will always be people after me!” I argue. “I’m not safe anywhere but at least shifting somewhere secluded and secret, I can protect the people I love from getting hurt,” I say, looking him in the eyes. “Erin and her people already know I am here. If you bring my twin here, you’ll put both of us at risk of being attacked before we can even complete our shift. It’s safer to shift in an undisclosed location where no one will find us.”

Oliver slams his fist against the wall and I jump. His eyes shift between blue and silver as he battles against his anger. “Then I’m coming with you. That’s my final offer, Aurora.”

He’s not going to give in, is he? I sigh.

No, I don’t think so.

I move my hand on top of his fist, hoping to calm him down and he starts to relax. I take a deep breath before looking back at Oliver. “I need to speak with Celina about this. She and I both agreed to do our shift alone. The last time someone tried coming, he-“ my voice breaks as I remember the last night I ever spoke to Emiliano.

“You’ve tried shifting before?”

I nod. “The night Emiliano died, we were going to meet my Aunt and Celina for our first shift. I was waiting outside for him to grab something when..... when

the rogues found us,” I sigh. “Celina and I decided we didn’t want escorts coming with us because we didn’t want to put anyone else at risk.”

He looks like he’s about to explode. “Are you kidding me? How could you possibly think doing the shift alone would be a good idea?”

I become infuriated by his comment. “It’s so easy to judge us when you’ve never had to watch the person you loved most die right in front of you because they were trying to protect you! You didn’t lose your entire family because of what you were!” I huff. “We didn’t want escorts because we’re tired of letting people lose their lives for us!”

Oliver’s face softens. “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to offend you,” he sighs. He runs his hands through his hair and exhales. “I just I can’t lose you. You are the most important person in my life, Aurora. If something ever happened to you...”

I curl up against his chest and hold his hands. “I know... I know you’re just scared something might happen, so I’ll talk to Celina right now.”

I hold my medallion between my fingers and concentrate on Celina.

“You’re eyes,” Oliver gasps.

“Oliver, I need to focus!” I scold him and he promises to be quiet.

“Celina, we need to talk...”

“Oof, that doesn’t sound good,” she mutters. “What’s wrong?”

“We were attacked by rogues and it looks like I was their target. I had to use my powers and Oliver knows everything now, including that you and I need to shift together.”

“Oh my Goddess, Aurora. Are you ok? We’re you hurt?” She asks, panic in her voice.

“I’m fine but now Oliver knows about us and he...” I sigh. “He won’t let me go to you unless he can come along too.”

“But we agreed no escorts!”

“I know, but he’s afraid that something might happen to me. He knows I’m in danger now and he can’t just sit back anymore. Please try to understand him!” I plead

“Urgh! Fine, since he’s giving us no choice, he can come. I guess tia Valentina can come too then. She’s been begging me all week honestly. Okay, let’s do this.”

Apparently, the pack has a private jet, however, after a bit of bickering, I convince Oliver to let us fly commercial to avoid detection. I want to avoid anyone being able to pinpoint our destination. Celina proceeds to give me the details of my flight and Oliver is able to get a seat. Of course, Oliver being Oliver, he upgrades us to first class. I have him print out our tickets and delete all the emails, flight confirmations, and search history for our safety. I cut the link with Celina and he smiles at me triumphantly.

“I guess you got your way,” I say, rolling me eyes.

He shakes his head. “No. If I had gotten my way, Celina would be coming here.”

“Whatever. I’m going to go stash these tickets in my suitcase and go help the injured at the pack hospital. You, mister Alpha, have an interrogation waiting for you,” I say, kissing his lips.

“I don’t want you healing until after we return from our trip. You’ll need all your strength for your shift.” I’m about to protest when he interrupts me. “I know you want to help and you can... when we return. The poison works slowly so the wolves will still be there when we get back. Please?”

“Oliver, that’s a lot of pain you’re asking them to endure.”

“I know, but I begging you to please wait until we return. Besides, you just healed Taylor and Evan and used up so much energy. Just rest.”

The last healing session took a huge toll on him so I decide to fulfill this one request. “Fine, but I’m not resting just yet. I’ll meet you down stairs after I change for the interrogation. I have questions of my own.”