



Chapter 6

I eventually got up, I have a job to do. I missed morning training, so I head straight to the cafeteria. I sit by Avia and Samantha, who are sitting by another boy. He has black hair and black eyes. His skin has a gray undertone to it. If I had to guess, he's probably around 14. "Hey, Iris. You feelin' any better?" Samantha asks as I sit down. "You didn't get any food."

"Yeah, I feel better, I'm just not hungry, I'll eat at lunch." I lie. I don't want to eat at all. I feel so gross, I want to throw up. I can still feel him. I can still taste it.

"Hey, Iris." My whole body shivers when I hear his voice. I slowly turn around. Milos.

"What do you want?" I glare at him.

"That's no way to treat your superior." He grabs my chin, pulling me towards him.

"Let go." I grab his arm. He lets go and walks away, sending me a glare as he does.

"What was that about?" Avia looks at me questioningly.

"Nothing." I take a bite of my bread.

"Oh, okay." She says looking away. "Anyway, this is Lyvah, he's 14. He's from Urx as well!"

"Oh, nice to meet you." I hold my hand out and he shakes it. "I'm Iris." "So I've heard. It's nice to meet you. You're very pretty." He smiles.

"Thank you. You're not too bad yourself." I smirk back. "You're on day shift, huh?"

"Yeah, until the day after tomorrow, Friday, at least." He answers.

"What happened to your eye? If you don't mind me asking."

"Oh, nothing, just a scratch." I look down at the table.

"Sorry, you okay? At least it looks cool. Sorry." He talks fast.

"Yeah. Haha." I half laugh.

After breakfast, we have morning meeting. Right now me and Avia are watching over the president. He's doing paperwork and we are standing in his office by the door. There are older guards standing post outside the office.

"How are you kids?" He asks us.

"I'm good!" Avia beams.

"How are you?" I ask.

"Thank you for asking. I'm doing quite well." He smiles at us.

"It makes me so sad, seeing young ones like you two here. I wish I could do something about 13 years and up joining the military. I keep trying, but the board won't approve or pass the overturning of the law." He frowns.

"It's okay. It's nice to see someone trying, at least." I smile at him, hoping to cheer him up a little. "Thank you for trying." Avia thanks him.

"No, thank you kids. You are so brave." He pauses. "I might take a break from all this paperwork. Care to join me in the garden?"

"Sure! Come on, Iris, let's go!" Avia smiles at me.

"Okay." I follow Avia and Dante out the door. Dante's an older man, probably about in his 40s. He has brown hair, that is turning gray, and green eyes.

"This way." He instructs. We turn a corner and go out some doors. A garden sits on the outside. With an old looking stone fountain and some plants.

"Whoa...!" I mutter. My mother always loved flowers. I look around. Some Foothill Penstemon sit right at the entrance to the garden. If you keep walking, past them are some purple Forget-Me-Nots. I walk around the circle-shaped garden. There's Newberry Gentian, Alkali Chalice, Mendocino Gentian, Explorer's Gentian, Alaska Bluebell, Bluebell Bellflower, and other flowers. Mostly blue and purple.

"I love Bluebell Bellflowers." I say to myself, sitting on a bench.

"I'm surprised you know the name of that flower. Most people don't know the names of flowers, especially since they are rare nowadays." Dante walks up to me.

"My mother loved flowers." I pause. "She always told me all about them."

"Ah." He simply says before walking away. I look at the spot beside me on the bench, and see a book laying there. "Uraykia's Flowers." I look up at Dante, who is talking to Avia now. He turns to me and smiles. I smile back and start flipping through the book.

Me and Avia are sitting in our room after guard rotation. It's 7:30 and we are each sitting on our own bed. Samantha is at the nurse's because of an injury she got at training.

"We need to escape soon." I say.

"What about tomorrow?" Avia suggests.

"Damn, not that soon..." I trail off. "But... I mean, I guess I could make it work. Okay. Tomorrow."

"Oka-"

"I'm backkkkk!!!" Samantha barges in the room.

"Fuck! You scared me!" Avia shouts.

"What are y'all talkin' about?" She asks innocently.

"Uh, nothing." I say.

"Nothin'? Well, let's talk 'bout somethin'!" Samantha sits down on her bed, and starts chattering away with Avia.

I bump into a guard and then duck around a corner.

"Hey! Brat! Watch where you're going!" He shouts at me, but doesn't follow.

"Only 10 cents..." (Amount x 70 = modern money amount.)

I rob a few more people, and sneak into the cafeteria. I grab some bread and stick it in my bag, then I move to the canned foods.

"What are you doing?" I freeze. Lyvah.

"Um... Avia's hungry." I lie, turning around.

"And you need all that food for her?" He raises a brow.

"I-"

"Are you planning to escape?" He whispers, taking a few steps forward. I back up. "Can I come?"

"Huh?" I respond to his unexpected request.

"Can I come with you if you are escaping?" He asks again.

"Um, I mean, if you are strong enough, help us collect stu, and don't get in the way then... I guess?" I whisper still a little confused.

"Okay! Also, I assume you are bringing your sister, is that all? Or are there others?" He looks around the room, grabbing some cans and handing them to me.

"No, just me and her... And you now." I take a can from him.

"Okay."

"Lets hurry and get out of here." I look around the corner and tip toe back through the hallway and to mine and Avia's room. I wave for Lyvah to come in. He does. We hide the food and money around the room. Avia walks in while we are doing so.

"Why is Lyvah here?" She questions, suddenly alert.

"He's coming. Hope that's not a problem." I say sort of dismissively.

"Help us hide this stu."

"Uh, okay, and okay." She says quietly.

"Okay, so remember the plan. I'll leave early because I feel sick, and Avia will come to help me. We will grab all the stu and prepare until guard rotation. While everyone is busy, Lyvah will meet us out front. We will run into the forest and get a bit of a ways away before setting up camp." I go over the plan one more time. Lyvah and Avia nod in agreement and we all split up to go to our posts. It's 6:30. Half an hour until guard rotation. I go to one of the older guards, clutching my stomach.

"Ack... I don't feel so... Well... Ugh..." I fake pant and stumble a little bit. "Can Avia help me... to our room?... It's almost rotation anyways." I ask the female guard.

"Fine. But if you are still sick tomorrow, Avia can't help you." She says before turning to go get Avia. I lean on the wall and wait for her. Once she walks up to me, she wraps an arm around me and helps me to our room. She opens our door and walks in with me, the second she closes the door, she lets go of me and we both start collecting our stu.

We get all the bags together and set them on our bed.

"6:45. Almost go time." Avia comments.

"Hello! Oh- What are y'all doin'? What'd I miss?" Samantha walks into the room.

Fuck. I forgot about her. This is the worst possible timing...

I walk up to her. "I'm sorry."

"What you sorry f-?" I cut her off, bashing my fist into her head. She goes limp. I catch her.

"Iris! Why did you do that?" Avia runs over to me and the now unconscious Samantha.

"We can't save witnesses. She'll be fine, just wake up with a headache." I pick her up. She's about 5'0, and I'm only 4'9, so it's a little awkward, but I get her to her bed. I grab my bag and head out the door. Waving for Avia to come. The hallway is empty. We head to the front entrance, and walk through it. We round the corner of the building and crouch in a bush, waiting for Lyvah. After a few minutes, he comes out. We wave him over, and take off.

"HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!" A guard shouts at us. We ignore him, running faster.

We get into the forest and run until we feel like collapsing. We stop and set up camp. Sitting down, I open the bag and grab out some bread.

"We have to eat this before it goes bad. So lets eat it first." I say, ripping it up and handing out the rations. I pull out a water bottle for each of us. "Remember, it has to last, so drink slowly." I remind them. It's quiet other than the sound of birds and chriing.

"So, why did you want to run away." Avia tries to start a conversation.

"Because the military sucks, no matter which way you look at it. Also, you two seem cool." He admits.

"Thank you, you seem pretty cool too." I smile at him. He smiles back. Once we are done eating, we settle down to sleep, as it's probably about 8:00 now.

"No! Get off of m-" I cut myself off, waking up.

Another nightmare...

"You okay?" Lyvah asks. He's sitting beside me.

"Yeah, just a nightmare." I mutter.

"I'm sorry. I get those a lot too. Hug?" He offers. I hug him and it's silent for a moment.

"This way!" I hear his voice... Milos... They are looking for us. The hug breaks and Lyvah looks at me with fear in his eyes.

"Avia, wake up!" I shake her awake.

"What, wha-" Avia starts.

"I heard something, this way!" A shout cuts him off.

"Shit." She starts picking up her bedding. I do the same, and Lyvah follows his suit. Once Lyvah is done packing his stuff, he comes to help me with mine. I reach to grab my last blanket, but he does too. Our hands brush. His cheeks glow bright red. I move my hand and grab the blanket, stuffing it in my bag quickly, while looking away from him, embarrassed. We finish cleaning up our stuff, and start heading away from the voices.

"What now?" Avia asks. "I don't hear them anymore, should we keep going?"

"No, let's rest for a bit, then we can keep going." I say.

"If I had to guess," Lyvah looks up, "It's around noon. We should eat some."

"I agree." I nod. I pull some more bread and water out of the bag and hand out rations.

"We should head to a town, buy some fresh vegetables." Avia suggests.

"Maybe," I pause to think, "We might have to steal them. Fresh vegetables are expensive."

"She's right." Lyvah agrees.

We finish eating and then head west since there is a town that way. When we arrive, people give us weird looks. I put a hand on the sword around my waist.

"Calm down, it'll be okay." Lyvah runs over to the stander.

"There! Fresh vegetables and fruit!" Avia hands me a shander and looks at the food excitedly. She picks up an apple and inspects it.

"Can I get this? Please, Iris?" She turns to me, showing the apple.

"Fine." I say, since she's drawn too much attention for me to steal it. I fish through my bag for money and hand it to the stand owner. We continue to look through the stands, Avia and Lyvah asking for things. I buy some of them, and steal some of them, depending on the price.

Once we are done at the shopping stands, we go to the edge of town and set up camp. I give Avia her apple and pass out the rest of the bread. We eat in mostly silence.

"We should sleep now. It's getting dark." Lyvah says.

"Yeah, but what about the soldiers looking for us?" Avia looks around worriedly.

"We can take turns watching out for them. I'll take first shift. I don't really sleep much anyway." I offer. Avia nods, and Lyvah gets comfortable.

I get Lyvah to take next shift around midnight. I don't want Avia or Lyvah having to stay up too long, so I watch most of the night. Once Lyvah is awake, I smile at him and lay down. I fall asleep about an hour later.

In the morning, we go back to the stands and get a few more things before heading out of the town. I want to be as far from the presidential guards as possible.

"Which way should we go?" Avia asks.

"There's a town more to the west." Lyvah offers.

"This way! I heard something!" I hear a woman shout.

"Fuck! Come on!" I grab Avia and Lyvah's arms and start running. We run into the forest and I let go of their arms, telling them to hide. I hide in a tree, Avia hides in a bush, and Lyvah hides in a ditch. I hear footsteps approaching and scoot farther into the leaves.

"Found you! Haha!"

"Damn."

"Let's play again, Neptune!"

"Okay."

"But this time don't hide in a bush, or I'll find you again!"

Shit! Avia!

I try to get down from the tree and tell her to move, but I see Milos approaching the tree I'm in.

Fuck!

"Avia! Move!" I shout, then I jump down from the tree and take off. Milos sees me, but I duck behind a tree and lose him for a second. I turn around and see Avia running. She hides in the ditch with Lyvah, and I climb another tree. I see a woman with brown hair walk past the tree. I am about to climb down to move again, but I hear a twig snap. I whip my head around and see Pierce behind me.

"Fuck!" I fall backwards off the tree. I wait for the hard impact with the ground, but it never comes. Instead, I fall into strong arms. I look to see who it is. Milos. I try to get off of him, but he grabs me tighter. He swings me over his shoulder and walks towards the other guards.

"I got one." He points behind him.

"The others are in that ditch over there."

"No! Let me go!" I punch Milos's back and kick my legs. He grunts and throws me into a carriage, tying a few minutes later, he comes back with Avia and Lyvah.

"Are you okay?" Lyvah asks me.

"Yeah, are you? Are you okay, Avia?" I question them.

"I'm fine, I'm sorry this is happening." Lyvah frowns.

"I'm okay too. Do you think we can escape?" Avia is cut off.

"You will be punished for this." Another guard glares at us. I spit in her face. Milos sees this and comes over and slaps me in the face.

"Hey!" Avia yells, this earns her a slap of her own. Milos gets in the back with us, and shortly after the carriage starts to move.

We can't escape with these two back here...

We arrive back at the base, and Milos takes Lyvah inside.

"Your punishment has been decided by my boss. It was my idea though. So, feel free to thank me." Milos smirks.

(TRIGGER WARNING FOR S3XU@L ASSULT)

He grabs Avia, but instead of taking her inside, he pins her arms above her head and starts kissing her neck.

"Hey! Get off of her you freak!" I scream at him, getting up, but falling because of my legs being tied together.

"Oh?" He picks Avia up, and brings her inside before coming back. He grabs me and...

"Are you okay? Did he do anything to you? I swear I'll kill him!" Avia yells, pacing.

"No, he just yelled at me, I'm fine." I lie. I have a headache and my whole body hurts. I want to run away.

"Come on you two, it's time for your punishment." A guard comes into our room. She leads us outside.