

Chapter Fifty-Seven: The Pirate Queen

Maria, Selvaria, Vasishtha, and Ohan followed Clay into the hallway; the agent that was supposed to be there was nowhere to be seen, confusing Maria a bit.

“Huh...”

Clay glanced back at her, leading them back the way they’d come. “Something wrong?”

“It’s uh ... yo, that Luka guy said he’d leave an agent outside to guide us out, but ... it wasn’t a lie, yet...”

Vasishtha hummed with a small smirk. “Ah, so you know when people are lying?”

Maria felt a little uncomfortable with the fact he’d been able to lie to her. “Yeah, so ... how’d he...”

“Noted!”

Ohan’s eyes fell to the floor, cupping his strong chin. “Unless he wasn’t lying. He just didn’t plan to leave any of the agents that were with him.”

“That makes sense,” Vasishtha replied while holding his hands behind the back of his head. “That guy is pretty crafty with his words. Did he know he couldn’t lie to you?”

Clay’s eyes moved between the hallway of agents that were giving them edgy looks, hurrying by. “He did.”

Vasishtha chuckled. “Yeah, if he knew it, then I don’t think he’d be stupid enough to get caught. Oh, and here the troop comes,” he mused.

Maria watched the Mythickin, and two Legendkin rounded the corner; the agents that saw the two parties on a collision course froze up, and most went back the way they’d come at a power walk. However, a few that seemed to be field agents stayed in the hallway, tensely assessing the situation.

In the center of the party was undoubtedly Cahira, Legend of Grace O’Malley. At 5’11 with long, thick, and silky locks of fire red hues falling down to her lower back, Cahira looked precisely like the firecracker Maria thought she would. Hefty golden hoop earrings were on display, framed by her bouncing hair, pulled behind her as she walked.

Cahira wore a loose, dark blue, long sleeve shirt with the cuffs rolled back to her forearms, showing the outline of a black bikini from the unbuttoned top half of the shirt; Maria noted that the woman appeared to be in her mid to late twenties, boasting curves that might even be able to match her own, and her tight black leather pants showed off her thin waist, wide hips, and thick rear well.

She had a sharp, beautiful face, full rosy lips wearing a natural smile, and her dark blue irises playfully slid between each of them before settling on Maria, expression turning curious.

Her rings, intricate gold medallion, and bracelets combined with a heeled strut to make it all too apparent that the woman wasn’t shy or oblivious about her looks.

On the other hand, the two flanking her were far from dazzling.

To her left was the Legend of Alviiss; the dwarf of a man was probably 4’6 from Maria’s estimations, and far from attractive. Several nasty gashes were seen across his hairy bare chest and face. His dark brown eyes were almost black, and the dwarf’s nose was large and down-turned.

It looked like he took pride in keeping a greasy, tangled black beard and messy long hair because both appeared as if they hadn’t seen water in months. His wrinkled shirt and fitted pants seemed to be the only things that were clean on the squat man; his thick-lipped sneer only proved to make him even more repugnant.

Vasishtha leaned over to whisper, “The ugly midget, Arnstein Aagaard, hot babe of a Pirate Queen that could burn Agni himself, Cahira Ó Corra, and the unsightly, wannabe diva, Julia Vassallatos.

Maria actually felt a little bad for the 6’2 woman. Julia had two large canines protruding from her mouth, parting her thick lips and showing her incisors. Thick brown fur ran across her visible skin, noticeably heavier around her neck, shoulders, and hair. Her nose was somewhat oversized and smashed, while her feet were obsidian black hooves with girthy legs meant for driving her forward into a powerful charge.

Massive tusks started at the sides of her jaw, curving forward in a way to gore anyone ahead of her, and pointed ears perched on her head were perked up, listening.

Unlike a normal boar, black spikes could be seen jutting out of the fur on her arms, shoulders, back, torso, and legs; she didn’t seem to need to wear clothes since the tuft covered most of her body.

Julia certainly was a frightening sight with her glowing red eyes, and monstrous visage but Maria didn’t find her quite as ugly as Vasishtha painted her, and the pink bow tied to the end of her two-foot-long tail added more to her personality.

“Awwh, if it isn’t the seal lovers,” Arnstein laughed with his northern Norwegian accent, broad chest heaving. “I see you still got the little bundle of fat, girlie?”

Selvaria glared at the dwarf, wrapping her arms protectively around the creature as it squeaked, squirming a little in her arms.

However, before Clay could say anything, Cahira popped her tongue, glaring down at the man; her Irish accent reminded Maria of Fiona’s bubbly voice. “Aye, Arnstein, didn’t ya say you’d be nicer?”

Arnstein glanced to the side with a low grunt, folding his arms.

“Isn’t that against his nature?” Vasishtha chuckled, adopting a positive posture as they stopped in front of each other, hands held behind his head. “By the way, lookin’ nice today, Cahira! I like the pants, really sets the mind ablaze.”

Cahira gave him a charming smirk. “Of course, it does.” She ran her left hand through her hair, smile turning sad. “I heard you’d be headin’ off ... we just wanted to say sorry we got off to a rough start. It was nice havin’ Selvaria to sail with, but things kind of went into the shitter when I lost mi temper. What ‘bout you, Julia?”

The mythical boar woman sighed, rubbing between two spikes on her arm. “Yeah, I just kind of saw red and went for it ... still, I’m surprised you were able to just toss me to the side like that.” She finished with a weak laugh.

Selvaria looked a little conflicted. “Umm ... I ... you’re apologizing?”

Ohan folded his arms across his chest, and a smile lifted his features. “I thought you would have wanted one last fight before we headed off.”

“Eh, I’m more of a builder, but I ain’t scared of gettin’ into a brawl,” Arnstein grumbled. “Damn, that sword hurts, though...”

“Your skin’s pretty tough,” Ohan returned, causing the dwarf to grin.

“Aye, maybe ya aren’t so bad after all! Still, can’t keep yer liquor, though.”

Cahira gave a hearty laugh. “That was a fun first night at sea!”

Maria scratched her head, giving them a questioning frown. “Uh ... yo, what’s up with that? I heard y’all were at each other’s throats, and here you are talkin’ like buddies that just got into a bit of a fight. Shit, what was that all about?”

“The fight?” Cahira’s blue eyes fell to the baby seal. “I found the baby seal when we were all on the hunt for experience and food. Selv wanted it as a pet, and I wanted the experience. Simple as that, and we had a fight! Haha, she can hit like a truck, but damn, you’ve looked better, girl. What happened to you?”

Selvaria’s cheeks turned red as she stared down at her seal. “... I need to go back to the ocean.”

“Ah, okay, well, uh ... mind if I join?” Cahira asked with an innocent smile.

Clay’s brow furrowed. “Based on past experience, I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“Oof,” the Pirate Queen winced, rubbing her neck. “Aye, okay, I get it, but what kind of a lass would I be if I didn’t own up to mi mistakes? If anythin’ it’s all these restrictions that are gettin’ me antsy. I haven’t been able to get out to sea in days; you know what I mean, Selva, right?”

“... Mmh, yeah ... I do,” she mumbled, hands loosening around her seal before stroking it, causing the squeals to cease.

“I like it!” Vasishtha cheered. “Aye, what do you say, Maria? Is the gorgeous woman lying? Hmm?”

The pressure Maria felt upon seeing them lessened by the sentence. “Uh ... yo, any of you wanna start a fight or gonna stab any of us in the back?”

Cahira giggled. “I mean, I don’t right now! I just want to have mi freedom. Isn’t that right?” She asked, glancing between the two beside her.

“Meh,” Arnstein grunted. “I just want ta work with my hands and see what I can build. They’ve got me covered there, and damn that sunlight; I ain’t goin’ out!”

“Oh, the turning into stone thing,” Vasishtha laughed. “Yeah, that’s gotta suck!”

“Huh?” Maria lifted an eyebrow. “Yo, I can make sunlight. Wanna test it out?” She asked with a devilish grin at the dwarf.

Arnstein’s bored expression instantly turned to fear as he jumped behind Cahira. “Jævla jenta; hold helvete borte fra meg!”

[Damn you, girl; keep the hell away from me!]

Everyone gave the dwarf a questioning chuckle as he slowly backed up, keeping the Pirate Queen between Maria and him, disappearing around the corner.

“Guess he’s out,” Cahira said with an amused smile.

“Umm, me, too,” Julia mumbled. “I’m kind of ... I have some plans today.”

“Ah,” Cahira nudged her, blue eyes teasingly appraising the boar woman as she fidgeted. “That one fella that’s been eyein’ ya, huh?”

“Y-You don’t have to say it,” she mumbled, cheeks darkening as her ears fell back and tail wrapped around her leg.

“Damn,” Maria snickered, “y’all are nothin’ like I imagined! Aye, Clay, I got no beef with lettin’ the pirate lady join the party. I get the feels, my man! Let the woman spread her arms if she wants to hit the beach ... uh, you need to go anyway, right?” She asked, glancing at Selvaria.

The girl’s eyes lit up, nodding emphatically.

All eyes turned to Clay, including the field agents that had stopped to witness the exchange. His hard brown irises were staring at the Pirate Queen, giving him a blue puppy-dog stare. “... Fine.”

“Yes!” Cahira pumped her arm before giving Maria a pleading look. “Hey, uh ... any chance I can join y’all’s group because ... yeah, this place is like a prison! At least your fella seems reasonable,” she laughed, sweeping back a stray lock of hair.

Maria thought about it, and an idea started to form in her head.

Clay shook his head. “I only...”

“Yo, yo, Clay, my man,” Maria grinned, causing his lips to pull in at her tone, vision shifting with confusion. The others waited for her reply with the same expression. “Uh, yo, so, let’s not be hasty; let me talk to the big man. I got a plan!”

“You ... have a plan?” Clay slowly asked.

“Aye, don’t look so surprised, chino, damn,” Maria growled, motioning for them to stay there. “Yo, give me five minutes, okay? Damn...” She mumbled, leaving the whole group speechless while walking into a room nearby.

She caught two female office workers hiding inside what she assumed was a storage area. Opening the door wide, she jutted her thumb back. “Out, I gotta make a call.”

The women gave her a frightened glance before rushing into the hallway; the others watched them go before mumbling to one another. Julia waved Cahira off before leaving, but Maria was too focused on the thoughts rolling around in her brain to pay it much notice.

Closing the door, she pulled her phone out of her purse, dialing Tom. She tapped her foot against the carpeted floor with pursed lips, and this time, it took nearly ten rings before he answered.

“Maria, what’s up?”

“Busy?” She chuckled softly. “Cause I got a potential recruit!”

“... Oh? I can make time; go ahead, I’m listening.”

Maria licked her lips, folding her left arm across her stomach while holding the phone in front of her, easily able to hear him in the closed-off space. “So ... you know that group that went wild, right?”

“Yes?”

“What if I told you that, uh ... it was all just bad timing? The tension was high, ya know what I mean? You was sayin’ it yourself; the guy here’s kind of an ass.”

“Not exactly my words, but in general, I suppose?” Tom muttered with a light laugh.

“So, check it; those three others, they just showed up and apologized, and one wants to hang out!”

Tom released a heavy sigh, leaning back in his seat before taking the phone away from his ear to mumble a few things to someone. He returned with a tentative tone. “Maria ... just because they apologized ... wait, if they ... you’re saying it wasn’t a lie? They really meant it?”

“Well, at least to a degree,” Maria grunted, pulling around a lock of hair to play with it. “I mean, it looked like they had to swallow a bit of pride, but that’s good, right? This pirate chica wants to hang, and even asked to join us in Miami, yo! I think this Luca asshole is really gettin’ to her, and I’m just sayin’ people can do some crazy shit when they’re pissed, ya know?”

Tom sucked on his lower lip before popping his tongue a few times. “... I can see your point. What about the other two?”

“Uh, that boar chica? Yo, she’s got some chico here that’s into her, so ... yeah, I don’t think she’ll be wantin’ to move, but Cahira? Yeah, she’s three-hundred, yo, and I can make sure she means it. I’ll ask her some questions and make sure she behaves. Rachel and her might get along, hehe.”

“Give me a moment to think about it,” Tom mumbled, chair squeaking as he shifted his weight.

“Aye, I’m just sayin’, we’re puttin’ together a crew for the thing ... you know, the thing?”

“... I get it, Maria, I get it,” Tom replied. “It’s not that simple, though,” he sighed. “There’s a lot of opposition to concentrating so many Legendkin and Mythickin in Miami alone.”

“Hey, you told me to play nice and make friends, right? Seems like she’s the one that’s offerin’ the hand, I’m just sayin’.”

“I hear you,” Tom said, and she could imagine him rubbing his bald head with his low groan. “... Geez, I hate all these political games ... I haven’t mapped out all the major players yet ... usually, it’s simple. Um ... okay, Maria. I’ll make some calls to get her some consideration ... you promise me you’ll make sure she doesn’t cause any trouble?”

“Uh ... jefe, what kind of trouble we talkin’ here? Hehe, eh ... I cause a lot of trouble, too, ya know?”

“... Don’t remind me. I’ve been worrying about Scarlet and Rachel, but after her talk with the President, I haven’t heard a thing from her. So, it seems things are turning out well on their side.”

“Nice! Yeah, I can’t wait to meet up with the crew. What’s up with the Pixy?”

“Pixy ... ah, hehe, an inside joke? Um, I heard that her Marine escort air jumped out of the plane with her, leaving one of the new members of the team onboard that was too scared.”

Maria popped her tongue. “A Marine, scared of an air jump?”

“Yeah, I don’t know,” Tom mumbled, “I just get random reports about things. Uh ... if she doesn’t cause any more property damage or any big incidents ... just make sure she understands that she’s under review.”

“Got it, jefe! So, ya gonna make the call?” Maria grinned, twirling her hair with her index finger and thumb. “She’s talkin’ about goin’ sailing, and that shit sounds fun.”

“... Don’t you have an interview coming up?” Tom asked suspiciously.

“Yeah, I know,” Maria huffed, tossing the lock back. “Still got like, uh ... two hours and ten minutes! Shit ... that is kind of a low-key short time, though. Uh, we’ll figure it out!”

“... I swear, this job is going to kill me by the end of the month,” Tom moaned. “At least I get to go home in the next few hours ... spend some time with the wife.”

“Oh?” Maria grinned. “Make sure to get a little rest, huh?”

Tom laughed. “Okay, Maria, I can at least pull some favors to give her the rest of the day with you, but we’ll see about her joining you in Miami. Plus ... where would she go?”

“Aye, aye, I’ll worry about that, kay? You just make it happen, and I’ll take care of everything else. She kind of sounds fun, ya know, and I wanna help a chica out when she’s feelin’ oppressed by the system!”

“Okay, okay,” Tom replied. “Go wait by the front desk, and I’ll make the calls. It shouldn’t take long, and ... actually, it might be easier to get this done than I thought,” he mumbled. “Huh ... just wait in the lobby.”

“Got it, gran jefe! Yo, and we gonna go fishin’!”

[big boss]

Tom didn’t hang up after her comment, making her brow crease. “... You know you need a license to ... gah, nevermind...”

Maria left the closet with a toothy grin, showing a victory-sign. “Yo, Tom’s on the case!”

Clay's mouth opened, working around his jaw for a moment while glancing from her to the Pirate Queen's excited expression.

"Really, yer not pullin' mi leg?" Cahira asked.

"Eh?" Maria's eyes widened as the Irish girl dashed forward at a shocking speed to basically tackle her with a hug.

"Thank you so much; I've wanted to feel the sea breeze fer days!"

Maria cleared her throat, arms frozen in the air as the woman's soft breasts pressed against her own, strangling grip compressing her. "... Aye, aye, uh ... I still gotta ask you some questions," she mumbled, smelling the unmistakable scent of the ocean on her silky hair.

Cahira retreated with a determined expression on her elegant face, bangs covering her left eye. "Ask whatever you want!"

"Aye," Vasishtha grinned, moving over to stand beside Maria. "How hot am I? Hot, huh?"

"What?" Maria asked with a groan.

The Pirate Queen shrugged her shoulders. "Meh, a seven, I guess."

"Oof," Selvaria winced, still petting her seal.

Vasishtha's mouth dropped open, vision darting to Maria.

"Eh ... lie?" Maria mumbled, glancing back at the gorgeous red-head.

"Mmh," Cahira brushed back her bangs, glancing to the side. "Well, technically, if we're rounding, probably an eight, but specifically, mmh ... a 7.6."

"7.6?" Vasishtha asked with utter shock.

"You asked?" She said with an innocent smile. "Uh, Ohan," she mumbled, eyeing the Legend of Yasuke, "8.2."

Ohan nodded in an accepting manner. "Good to know."

"Wow, high standards," Maria mumbled, glancing between the two very attractive men.

Cahira just smiled, holding her hands behind her back. "That isn't what you really wanted to ask me, though, right?"

"No," Maria slowly replied, watching the Indian Legendkin spiral into an internal struggle of disbelief.

"7.6 ... 7.6?"

Selvaria piped up. "You won't kill Galatea?"

"Nope! I was just frustrated that you ate a bunch of seals and wouldn't let me kill the one I'd found."

The Leviathan's lips came together as she glanced down at the baby in her arms. "I was starving, so I ate the Killer Whales and the seals, but ... but this one really caught my eye ... it was just so cute, like it was pleading for me to protect it," Selvaria mumbled, smiling at the damp seal in her arms.

Cahira shrugged. "Meh, it's a cruel world."

Clay cleared his throat, folding his arms. "Will you run away?"

"Nope," she chimed. "I'll go where you want me to."

"You won't cause any damages to anything?" Maria questioned.

Cahira giggled. "I mean, I love to riot and party, but no. I'll behave."

Maria grinned. "I think you'll get along great with the gang!"

"Oh?" She asked, blue eyes sparkling again. "Does that mean?"

"Eh, there's stuff in the works," Maria replied with a forced smile. "It's not a sure thing, but we'll see what can be worked out."

Cahira's left arm pressed against her right breast while releasing a drawn-out sigh. "... Well, at least there's hope for green seas ahead."

Clay turned his attention to Maria. "What were the instructions?"

"To wait by the desk!"

"... Okay, let's go."

They made their way back, meeting the agent Luka had sent along the way; he was more than a little shocked to find Cahira with them, but Clay bluntly told him they didn't need his help from this point on.

The group drew every eye, but no one wanted to butt in with the insanely decorated Master Sergeant leading the pack, hard face stone cold.

It didn't take long from the time they entered the lobby for approval to come; Maria was a little shocked to not see the Special Agent in Charge as they exited the building, and Selvaria turned, bowing to the man at the reception desk, petite voice whispering, "Sorry," before leaving through the front door.

Cahira seemed at a loss for words as they cleared the final door to the front, passing agents standing on guard. "... What kind of connections do you have, Maria? I half expected them to lock me up and throw away the key after I went wild."

Maria snickered. "Yeah, we caused a lot more damage than that in Miami," she said, pointing up at the damaged building as workmen managed the debris. "Yo, my hermanito was kidnapped by this gang; me and the girls went in on em, ya know?"

"Ooh, that does sound like a lot of fun!" Cahira smiled.

Vasishtha did a few easy flips in the air, shouting for joy as the open sun struck his skin. "Yahoo! Feels good to be out of lock-up! If I knew it would be that bad, I wouldn't have even come to the U.S."

"Things will be different from now on, Vasishtha," Clay quickly responded at the comment.

"That's what I like to hear!"

Maria hummed while glancing between her four new acquaintances. "There's some awesome stuff in the works, my homies. Just wait for a few days, and you'll see."

"I'm getting excited," Cahira whispered, managing her hair as the wind picked up. "Shame, I might not be able to join..."

"It's not set in stone yet," Maria said with a thumbs-up. "Yo, but you get to join the party my family's throwin'!"

"Wait," Ohan spoke up, pointing at the limo they were walking toward. "We're going in that?"

"Yup!" Maria darted forward before the driver could get out to open the door, causing him to retreat back to his seat. "Yo, Jasper, Reed, check it out! We got some new peeps, uh, that's Selvaria, and uh, her seal..."

"Galatea," she promptly replied, scooting in to sit beside the bodyguard. He gave the seal a lifted eyebrow, clearly uncomfortable as the creature's big black eyes stared up at him, little whiskers twitching with his sniffs.

"Cahira," Maria introduced, both men stiffening as the gorgeous red-haired woman entered, sitting beside Jasper.

"Vasishtha, and Ohan," she finished, entering after the group with Clay bringing up the rear to shut the door.

“Uh ... Ms. Espinar,” Jasper forced a chuckle. “You picked up a ... charming extra person.”

Cahira gave them a bright smile, crossing her legs while adjusting her shirt and hair. “Thanks for having me!”

Reed nodded at the newcomers before addressing Clay. “Are there any changes in the plan?”

“Uh,” Maria piped up, “aye, yo, Clay, how soon can we make it to the beach?”

“Fifteen minutes or so, I’d say,” Reed mumbled, eyeing the seal with a questioning look.

“You have an interview in an hour forty-five,” Clay reminded.

“I know, I know,” Maria mumbled, “but we still got time, right? How far is the place from the beach?”

“... I’ll check,” Clay sighed, giving Cahira a calculated glance. “In the meantime, if we could head toward the ocean, Mr. Reed.”

“Of course,” he replied, giving the driver the directions while Vasishtha and Ohan examined every inch of the expensive vehicle, including the wine cabinet. They began moving as Reed asked, “Is there a reason why?”

“Me,” Selvaria meekly replied. “I’ll die in a day if I don’t go.”

Silence fell within the cab.

“... Say what?” Maria exclaimed. “Shit! Yo, why didn’t you say somethin’, chica?”

“Yeah,” Vasishtha and Ohan asked in unison.

“Selv, I thought you just got tiny, girl,” Vasishtha said with a worried expression.

Ohan nodded. “When were you going to tell us?”

Selvaria’s fingers tightened around her hand as she stared down at her seal. “... I didn’t want you guys to worry; they told us we’re going to Miami, too ... Miami has the ocean.”

“Selv,” Cahira’s tone grew heavy as she whispered, “is it because...”

A lump dropped down Selvaria’s throat. “... Mostly, Julia, but I need a large body of water or...”

“Mostly...” Cahira’s sad eyes fell to her hands, pressed against her thighs. “I’m sorry.”

“It’s fine,” Selvaria smiled. “You already apologized. Galatea and I don’t hold grudges.”

The rest of the car ride was in silence, Maria reflecting on her own near-death experience.

I need sunlight to live, and Selvaria needs the ocean. Mythickin get some awesome abilities, but damn, we also have it pretty rough.

Each of them glanced to the left as they reached the beach; they weren’t far from a dock with parking nearby, but the driver dropped them off.

Maria smiled upon feeling the ocean breeze, and they walked along the harbor, following Selvaria and Cahira to an empty part of the pier. The Leviathan’s eyes were sparkling, and the placid expression Maria had seen on the girl was lifted into a cute, teenage girl about to open her birthday presents as her thick tail weaved back and forth.

“Go on,” Cahira giggled, giving a playful shove that sent Selvaria flying off the dock.

“We’ll meet you out there.”

The girl just seemed to teeter off the edge, without a fight while carrying the seal.

Maria was a little taken aback, but after the large splash, an enormous bulge appeared in the water, sending a low wave cascading over the concrete wharf.

“There she goes,” Vasishtha chuckled, pointing at a much larger and more monstrous version of Selvaria’s tail rise out of the water, showing massive hardened scales and spikes with a bright blue glow.

The top current changed, showing the outline of a large creature swiftly weaving back and forth while she left the port.

Jasper and Reed were utterly caught off-guard, not knowing the tiny teenage girl was a terrifying sea monster in disguise.

“W-What ... you’re saying that girl is...” Jasper mumbled.

Clay responded without a hint of surprise. “A Leviathan Mythickin ... how will she know when we need to return? We cannot spend more than forty minutes here.”

“Lucky you brought me along,” Cahira winked, snapping her fingers toward the side of the pier.

Roaring red flames rose from the side of the dock, creating a beautiful red and black sailboat where nothing had stood before; it was 42 meters long, with a 7-meter beam, 3-meter draught, and a mast height of 26 meters. Maria eyed the four, sleek black cannons with gold trim, realizing most of Cahira’s firepower must come from her ship.

It was mostly black with gold trim while hosting crimson sails imprinted with an elegant design of the O’Malley coat of arms.

A ramp appeared from the fire upon its completion.

“Welcome aboard!” Cahira gestured to the stunned audience, except Ohan and Vasishtha that simply walked up without hesitation.

“... Awesome,” Maria grinned, rushing to the deck. “You can just pop this up anywhere?”

“No, hehe,” Cahira laughed, following after her as the others carefully tailed behind.

“There be conditions, but it’s one of mi primary skills. I was just so pissed that I only needed a bit more experience to upgrade mi ship again, and you’d stolen mi ticket. It started out as a rowboat, believe it or not,” she mumbled. “I got a ton of points from a pack of Killer Whales that were followin’ those seal packs.”

“Crazy...” Reed mumbled, stepping on the boat as if it’d disappear just as quickly as it appeared.

“Well,” Cahira snapped her fingers, making the ramp vanish in flames while moving to the front. “I control everything on this ship; I want it to go forward, then I have some control over the winds ... still, it’s better to have the winds, and using the rows is a bit tiring over time. Let’s get this party started!” She cheered, and the boat lurched forward.

Maria grinned as the salted wind threw her hair back, watching dozens of people on the docks watch them sail off with slack jaws.

Yup, totally made the right choice in bringing her along!

“Yahoo!” She cheered, rushing to the front to stare into the rising and falling waves.

They drew away from the port at a fairly consistent pace, but nothing like a speedboat; still, it was nice being out at sea. It didn’t take long for them to find Selvaria since she pulled up beside the sailboat, and she got her first look at the Leviathan, swimming beside the boat with the baby seal resting on her back outside of the water.

Selvaria was nearly as long as the boat, weaving back and forth through the water like a snake, and Maria caught a glimpse of sleek but powerful webbed hands and feet on her body. Her tail was long and powerful with a sharp fin at the end that could probably cut through steel in Maria’s eyes.

Her long neck pulled out of the water, large aquamarine eyes shining with a glowing inner delight, and Maria guessed the girl was smiling at her, but her monstrous sapphire fangs and slick black tongue sent a shiver down her spine.

The Leviathan's glistening dark azurite plated scales appeared to fan out to provide a rough defense or pull in to become sleek and smooth. Her red spikes and horns were illuminated with a fierce light, and the blue was even more highlighted than before.

Clay's voice was hoarse as he addressed her; the boat slowing to allow for a more casual pace. "... We only have fifteen more minutes before we need to head back."

Selvaria let out a low cry that sent chills through Maria's body as the soundwave rippled through her frame like the pounding of a subwoofer, and she dove back under the waves.

"She heard," Cahira commented with a giggle. "... Probably."