

# A Warrior Luna's Awakening

## chapter 181-190

# A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Finished

Third Person's POV

Freya's jaw was set, eyes glinting with determination. "Whether I can pilot the helicopter or not is my business, not yours," she said coolly, her voice cutting through the tense atmosphere.

"Freya, I've been waiting for you," Abel Thorne said briskly, striding toward her. There was no trace of impatience in his tone, only the calm authority of a Thorne elder, seasoned by decades of pack politics.

"I'm ready at any moment to fly to the offshore island for the rescue mission," Freya responded without hesitation. Her wolf instincts were already keyed to the storm-tossed ocean, to the trapped employees who had no one else to rely on.

"Good," Abel said simply, gesturing for her to follow. "The helicopter is on the rooftop helipad."

The security guards who had previously attempted to block her path now hesitated, their human caution faltering in the presence of her commanding aura. No one dared challenge the Bloodmoon Pack operative.

Jocelyn spoke up with incredulity. "Abel, are you really letting Freya fly the helicopter for the rescue?"

Abel's gaze swept past her toward Aurora. "Then who else? Aurora? You really think she's going to do it?" His eyes lingered on the Beta pilot of the Bluemoon Airborne Wing, whose previous insistence that Freya apologize had irked him. His distaste was subtle but palpable.

Jocelyn opened her mouth, but no words came. She could only watch as Freya, followed by Silas Whitmor, Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition, ascended the private elevator with Abel.

Jocelyn's eyes narrowed, sharp and calculating. "Well, since Freya is taking the helicopter for the rescue, then you..." She paused, her voice carrying a dangerous edge.

“Ha,” Aurora muttered under her breath, “Abel really does think Freya can handle this. Just wait. Flying a helicopter over that offshore island isn’t.

simple stunt. She’ll fail.” Her steps quickened as she strode toward the elevator, her pride driving her forward. I want see her mess this up firsthand!”

“Exactly! And then she’ll have to beg you to take over the rescue!” Jocelyn followed, her own excitement mingled with anxiety.

Caelum stood silently beside them. His eyes, however, betrayed nothing, his wolf senses alert and sharp. He had seen Freya pilot a helicopter before, and he knew her skills exceeded even Aurora’s claims of mastery. In his mind, the silent prediction was chilling: **the** one who would embarrass themselves was not Freya, but Aurora.

The elevator chimed, doors sliding open to reveal the rooftop helipad Freya was already approaching **a** sleek, reinforced SkyVex Armaments helicopter, her movements fluid and precise. Silas stepped forward suddenly, hand gripping her shoulder.

“I could have found another pilot,” he said, his voice low but urgent. “It doesn’t have to be you.”

Freya shook her head, a wolfish glint in her amber eyes. “There’s no time. Every minute we delay increases the chance of a successful rescue. I’m going now.”

“**I’ll** come

with you,” Silas added instinctively, concern flashing across his **face**.

“You’re not trained for a rescue mission like this,” Freya said firmly, her wolf instincts warning her **of the dangers**. “It **would** only be a hindrance. Trust me—everything will be fine.”

Silas met her gaze for a long moment, the air between them charged with unspoken acknowledgment. “**I’ll** wait for your return,” he said finally, **a promise** wrapped in an Alpha’s patience and protection.

Freya climbed into **the** cockpit, fingers brushing over the controls as **her** Wolf senses **synchronized with** the machine. Engines roared to life, **vibrating** under her touch, and in moments, the helicopter lifted off, **cutting through the city**

**skyline** and heading toward the offshore island.

Aurora’s eyes went **wide as** she watched **the helicopter ascend** and **stabilize** perfectly **i** supposed rival. was flying smoothly, confidently, the **n**

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that Freya was bluffing, that she would falter under pressure. Yet here she was, commanding the helicopter with flawless expertise.

A surge of fury coursed through Aurora. Her mind raced: if Freya completed the rescue, she would steal the spotlight. She, who had intended to demonstrate superiority, would instead be overshadowed. No—this was unacceptable. She needed to intervene, to assert dominance before Freya could succeed.

“I’ll go too,” Aurora said abruptly, her voice dripping with determination. She turned to Jocelyn. “I’ll ensure this mission is done properly. Freya may fly the helicopter, but she doesn’t have my experience as a professional pilot. The winds near the island are unpredictable. If anything goes wrong, she’ll be at risk—and I can’t allow that.”

Jocelyn’s eyes lit up with a calculating gleam. “Very well, then. Go ahead,” she said loudly, intentionally drawing Silas’ attention. “Freya has been out of service for years—who knows how rusty her skills have become?”

Abel, nodding with quiet approval, dispatched a rescue team to accompany Aurora on the helicopter.

Aurora turned to Caelum. “You’ll come with me.”

“I?” Caelum hesitated, glancing at his injured wrist. “I’m not sure how much help I can be.”

“You don’t need to help with the flying,” Aurora said, her voice firm, authoritative. “Having you there is enough. It will give me the confidence to focus entirely on the rescue.” She wanted him to witness firsthand how she outperformed Freya, how her skills and heroism surpassed Freya.

“Caelum, you’ll accompany Aurora,” Jocelyn urged. She, too, hoped Aurora would reach the island first, securing her position as the more capable rescuer.

Caelum’s lips pressed together. He wanted to argue—the fact that Silas had not gone himself made this pointless—but against Jocelyn’s insistence and Aurora’s determined presence, he had no choice but to comply. With a deep breath, he followed Aurora toward the second helicopter, his mind silently tracking Freya’s ascent, already calculating the probabilities.

Above the city, two helicopters now tore toward the storm-lashed offshore island. One carried Freya Thorne, poised and confident, a wolf among men and machines. The other

carried Aurora, Beta pilot of the Bluemoon Pack, determined to prove herself, her every instinct sharpened by pride and ambition.

And in the silent, high-stakes sky, the pack instincts, pride, and skill of all involved would collide, each Alpha, Beta, and operative testing limits not just of technology, but of loyalty, courage, and sheer will.

Send Gifts

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## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Finished

Third Person's POV

The storm over the Ashbourne coast howled like a feral beast, clawing at the sky with invisible talons. Abel Thorne believed sending more hands into the rescue would bring safety, so he did not stop the others from boarding the second helicopter.

Aurora gripped the controls of her aircraft, the sleek blades of the Bluemoon Airborne Wing's chopper slicing through the wind. Behind her sat Caelum along with trained rescuers. Their destination—the stranded island where a storm had trapped several men.

On the ground, Jocelyn stood beside Silas, Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition. Her eyes, cold with calculation, shifted toward him

“Silas, let's go down,” Jocelyn urged softly. “Aurora will bring them back soon enough.”

Once the victims were returned, she was certain Silas would see Freya Thorne for what she truly was—nothing but smoke and mirrors, a woman surviving on borrowed glory.

Yet Silas did not move. He remained rooted where he stood, posture unyielding, gaze fixed on the dark sky where Freya's aircraft had vanished into the storm. His expression was distant, almost reverent, as though his eyes followed her across the miles.

What power

did Freya hold

Over him, that he could look at no one else?

“Silas!” Jocelyn snapped, stepping closer. Her hand closed around his right wrist to pull him back from that invisible tether.

And then she froze.

That hand—elegant, strong, once her recurring nightmare.

Years ago, those fingers had nearly gouged out her eye in a single violent moment. His touch had been as sharp as knives, a memory so vicious she had sought out healers and mind-weavers for years to banish her terror

But now... those same fingers trembled beneath her grasp.

Her breath caught. “Silas, what’s wrong? Your hand—it’s shaking.”

He drew his hand back slowly, lips pressed into a thin, grim line. His eyes lowered, staring at his own quivering palm.

“Yes,” he murmured, voice

and quiet. “It trembles.”

Because fear was blooming inside him. Fear that Freya would not return. Fear that he had not been able to follow her into the storm. The sensation coiled like a serpent in his chest, spreading through his

And then, as though confessing to the night itself, Silas whispered, “So it’s true. I love her—so deeply that fear makes my

hands shake.”

Abel Thorne’s brows lifted in shock. He had suspected Silas’s feelings for Freya, but hearing the Ironclad Alpha admit them aloud was something else entirely.

His gaze flicked to Jocelyn—and there it was, the twist of her mouth, the rage trembling in her jaw. The young woman’s **envy** burned in her eyes like wildfire.

Abel sighed inwardly and pulled her aside. “Jocelyn, some things cannot be forced. The harder you clutch, the more they slip away. What isn’t yours will never yield, no matter the sacrifice”

But Jocelyn’s silence spoke volumes. Her jealousy deepened, thick and poisonous. She had given an eye—bled for the price of **his** hand once upon a time—yet she could not hold Silas’s heart.

And Freya? Freya bled nothing, yet she commanded him.

Jocelyn’s teeth ground together. She would **never** allow it. Never

The two helicopters thundered across **the storm-dark** sea, **one after** the other. The **nearer** they drew to the **island, the**

stronger the winds became, twisting in erratic patterns, pushing and pulling like unseen predators.

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Aurora's knuckles whitened on the cyclic. Sweat gathered on her palms, though the air inside the cockpit was cold. She had flown countless hours, though mostly as a co-pilot. She had always believed herself equal-better, even-than her superiors. If given the chance, she thought, she could lead.

Yet now, with the full weight of command in her hands, faced with the vicious spirals of wind tearing around the island, her confidence faltered.

One wrong calculation and the craft would fall into the sea, blades shattered, bodies broken.

Her breath came shallow. She had not wanted this flight for honor or duty-only to outshine Freya Thorne. To rob her rival of glory. Never to wager her own life.

"Why are we slowing?" one of the rescuers asked, leaning forward with confusion.

Aurora stiffened. "The air currents are too unstable here. Too dangerous."

The man frowned and gestured toward the windshield. Ahead, Freya's helicopter, smaller yet steady, pressed forward undaunted, cutting through the storm with precision.

"But the lead aircraft-

"That's their pilot, Aurora snapped, her voice sharp. "This is my ship, my judgment. Perhaps they're lucky tonight. Or reckless. If they fall, luck will end. Are you questioning my command?"

The rescuer bit his

ngue

and fell silent.

Caelum's voice broke the tension. "Aurora," he said gently, "don't fear. I believe in you. You can take us through."

She glanced at him, lips pressed tight. But her own heart did not believe it. Not now. Not with death in every gust.

Her fingers locked around the stick until they went stiff. Then, abruptly, she pulled hard, turning the nose away from the storm front.

Gasps erupted in the cabin.

“Wait—this isn’t the right heading!” one rescuer shouted.

“Where are you going? Caelum asked, confusion lacing his tone.

Aurora’s voice was firm, but her eyes betrayed her fear. “Freya’s already gone in. Let her save them if she wishes. It was her mission from the start. We need not throw our lives into a storm that isn’t ours.”

Caelum stared at her, struck silent.

It did not align with memory. Once, she had leapt into a flooded river to save him. Once, she had run into wildfire on the border to drag strangers out.

That woman had seemed fearless, burning with the instinct to protect.

But now? Now she turned away,

His chest tightened with unease, as if some truth he had long trusted about her had fractured in the storm.

“But why?” Caelum’s voice was quiet, rough. “Once, you risked your life for me. For strangers. You never hesitated. Why won’t you take the same risk now?”

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Finished

Third Person’s POV

The storm winds clawed at the rotors of the Bluemoon Airborne Wing helicopter, snarling like wild wolves across the Ashbourne coast. Aurora’s face tightened as the craft pitched, her knuckles white against the cyclic. Every gust rattled her bones, reminding her that no accolade, no borrowed glory, was worth the cost of her own life.

Why should she risk herself for strangers?

Yet Caclum’s voice broke through the howl of the gale, questioning her resolve. His eyes—silver, steady—searched her face.

for an answer.

Aurora forced her lips into a tremulous smile, the fear in her chest twisting into something else entirely. “Because I have someone more important to protect now,” she declared.

Caelum blinked, momentarily caught off guard. “What?”

She didn’t hesitate. Not even with the rescue team listening. “You, Caelum. I care about you more than anything. **If** you Jweren’t here, I’d fly straight into that storm without fear. But with you on this aircraft, I can’t take the risk. Freya has already

gone ahead. Let her handle the rescue. If she fails, I’ll see you safely off this craft before I take the risk myself.”

The words struck him like a physical blow. His chest tightened, not with pride but with guilt. “I’m sorry, Aurora. I shouldn’t have doubted you. I-”

She cut him off with a quick shake of her head. “It doesn’t matter, Caelum. As long as you don’t doubt my feelings for you.”

In the cramped cabin, the rescuers exchanged silent glances. One rolled his eyes skyward, the gesture sharp with disdain. This had been Aurora’s plan from the beginning: demand to be part of the mission, insist on bringing along Caelum despite his bandaged arm and recent injuries, and now—use him as an excuse to retreat.

The irony was bitter. She had turned a rescue into a farce.

To the rescuers, Aurora’s motives were transparent: fear. She wasn’t skilled enough to face the winds, and rather than admit it, she cloaked herself in the excuse of love. Worse still, Caèlum seemed moved, his features softened as though he believed her every word.

The lead rescuer’s lip curled, though he bit back his contempt. Instead, he toggled his WolfComm headset, linking directly to Freya Thorne’s aircraft

“How are conditions on your side?” he asked.

A voice crackled through, steadier than the winds around them. “We’ve reached the site. Preparing to extract the trapped

crew,”

“Understood. Wishing you success.”

The channel clicked dead. In the sudden silence, the rescuer turned his sharp gaze on Aurora. “Since you care so much for your passenger, perhaps it would be wiser to return to base. If Freya’s team falters, and you waste precious time circling or retreating, you’ll arrive too late to save anyone. Dead wolves can’t be rescued by cowards.”

Aurora's lips parted, but no words came. The insult cut deep, but she could not argue.

Back in Stormveil territory, the night broke open with the rhythmic thunder of rotor blades. Freya's helicopter swept down onto the rooftop landing pad of the Thorne corporate tower, its sleek frame streaked with sea-salt and storm water. Medical teams were already waiting, their stretchers lined like soldiers ready for war.

As the rescued men were unloaded, healers and medics descended upon them, checking vitals, binding wounds, and rushing them toward waiting ambulances. Relief rippled across the rooftop like a breath of fresh air after drowning.

Freya exhaled, the weight of the mission finally casing from her shoulders. Her boots touched the concrete, and for the first time since the storm had swallowed her, she allowed herself to believe: they were safe.

And then arms wrapped around her. Strong, desperate, unyielding.

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Finished

The familiar scent of iron and cedar enveloped her, her wolf relaxing instinctively into the embrace. Silas pulled her against him as if he would never let her go. His hands locked at her waist and back, his face buried in the curve of her neck.

"You're safe," he rasped, his voice hoarse with strain. "Moon above, you're safe."

The sound of it—the raw relief—sent a tremor through her chest. She lifted her hand, fingers sliding through his dark hair, grounding him, soothing the storm still raging inside him. They had been apart barely more than an hour, and yet his embrace felt like that of a wolf reunited after seasons of separation.

"Yes," she whispered with a soft, tired smile. "I came back safe."

He held her tighter, as though sheer strength could anchor her to him forever. His heartbeat thundered against her ribs, not from battle, but from fear that he might have lost her.

On the fringe of the rooftop, Jocelyn Thorne's eyes gleamed with envy, her jaw clenched so tight her teeth threatened to crack. The sight of Silas's devotion tore at her insides, feeding the venom of jealousy until it burned her veins.

Not far from her, Caelum stood frozen. His gaze lingered on Freya—not the Freya in Silas’s arms, but the one in his mind. The woman who had flown into the storm without hesitation, who had once thrown herself into the sea to rescue a child that was not her own.

The image clashed violently with the truth he thought he knew.

Because hadn’t the records shown Aurora had been the one to save him years ago from drowning? Hadn’t the reports named her, supported by witnesses?

Yet when he saw Freya brace herself against the fury of the gale, risking her life for strangers, the doubt whispered: What if...?

He shook his head, forcing the thought away, as if his own heart had betrayed him. It couldn’t be. It mustn’t be.

Still, his gaze betrayed him. His eyes fell to Freya’s hand—those slender fingers that now brushed tenderly through Silas’s hair. Once, those same fingers had combed through his own locks in gentler times.

But that touch no longer belonged to him. It belonged wholly to another.

“Caelum.” Aurora’s voice broke through, tinged with jealousy she couldn’t mask. Her hand caught his sleeve, her smile thin, her tone brittle. “Let’s go.”

Her heart seethed with humiliation. Freya had taken the risk, stolen the glory, and even managed to return wrapped in Silas’s arms. Aurora’s own retreat, her excuses, had earned her nothing but disdain from the rescuers and pity from Caelum. Tonight, she had lost everything she sought to prove.

And she could not forgive it,

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

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Finished

I hadn’t expected anyone to disturb me tonight. After the mission, after the storm winds and the adrenaline of flying into danger, I thought the silence of my quarters in the Stormveil compound would finally settle my nerves. I had just extinguished the last lantern glow when the door creaked open and a shadow stepped through.

Silas.

The Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition carried himself with that same gravity he wore on the battlefield, but tonight, something in his posture was unsettled—like a wolf pacing too long inside a cage. His silver eyes caught mine, and for a heartbeat, I forgot to breathe.

“Is something wrong?” I asked, voice low..

He hesitated only a moment before answering, “I can’t sleep.”

I tilted my head. “Can’t sleep? That’s not like you.”

His jaw flexed. “Every time I close my eyes, I see you in that storm, your chopper tilting against the gale. You vanished into the clouds, and all I could think was what if I never saw you again?” His voice was quieter than I had ever heard it, the steel stripped away, leaving only raw honesty.

I folded my arms, though my wolf stirred restlessly beneath my skin. Silas Whitmor wasn’t a man who admitted weakness. *That* he said this to me **was**... dangerous “You knew I would be fine. I’ve flown worse.”

“I know your skill,” he said, gaze dropping for a fraction, “but knowing doesn’t stop the fear. Not when it’s you.”

Something in my chest tightened. I wanted to tell him I understood, but that would’ve been too much. Too close. So instead, I arched a brow. “So what? You want me to tell you a bedtime story?”

His lips curved, faint but real. “I’m not a child.”

“Then what is it you want, Silas?”

His eyes locked onto mine, fierce and unyielding even in their vulnerability. “I want to sleep here. With you.”

My heart stumbled. Sleep? My mind tripped over the word, wondering which meaning he intended. My wolf pricked her ears, curious, tempted. “You mean... in my bed?”

He stepped closer, close enough that I could feel the heat radiating from him. “Yes. Tonight I can’t rest alone. I’m afraid...”

“Afraid?” I echoed. Fear was not a word that belonged to him. Not Silas Whitmor, who had stared down armies without blinking.

“Afraid I’ll wake and find you gone,” he murmured, almost to himself. “Afraid that fate will take you from me the way it’s taken everything else.”

I thought of the storm, of his expression when I returned, the way his arms had crushed me to him as if to anchor me in his world. “But I did come back,” I said softly. “I’m right here.”

“That doesn’t erase the fear. The aftershock lingers.” His voice broke in places he tried to mask. Then, more firmly, “Let me stay. I swear, Freya, I won’t touch you without your consent. I just need to be near.”

His eyes were wolf eyes then, glowing faintly in the dim light—pleading, restless, full of a loneliness so sharp I almost flinched. The refusal balanced on my tongue, but I couldn’t push it out. Not when I saw him like this.

After a long silence, I exhaled. “Fine. Stay. But just sleep.”

Relief flickered across his face, softening that usually untouchable exterior. He followed me to the bed, and when he lay down beside me, the mattress dipped under his weight, the space suddenly far too small. His scent—a mixture of pine, iron, and the faint burn of steel forge—surrounded me, making it hard to think clearly.

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Finished

I shifted, leaning across him to tug the blanket from his side. But before I could pull it free, his hand shot out, wrapping firmly around my wrist.

My pulse skipped. “Silas?”

His voice was husky, almost teasing but underpinned with heat. “I promised not to touch you without permission. But what about you, Freya? You’ve got me pinned here... don’t you want to do something?”

My eyes widened. I hadn’t realized until that moment how compromising the position looked—me braced above him, one hand supporting myself by his shoulder, the other stretched across his chest as I reached for the blanket. My body half- draped over his, his face so close I could feel the whisper of his breath against my cheek.

He tilted his head slightly, exposing his throat in the smallest, most dangerous invitation a wolf could give. His lips parted, words flowing like smoke. “Tell me you don’t want to.”

I should have pulled away. I should have snapped at him for being reckless. Instead, curiosity sparked. I let my fingers trail from his collarbone upward, brushing the corded muscle of his neck until they lingered at the sharp rise of his Adam’s apple.

He swallowed under my touch, his throat moving against my fingertips. To my shock, color rose at the edges of his ears, a flush betraying the composure of the Ironclad Alpha.

“You... I murmured, eyes narrowing. “Silas Whitmor, are you actually blushing?”

His lips twitched, but his voice was low, rough, and entirely sincere. “Freya, whatever you do to me, I’ll accept. Anything. I’d let you mark me, command me, break me—just so I could feel you want me as much as I want you.”

The air between us thickened, humming with a tension that was more dangerous than any battlefield. His usual icy demeanor had melted into something raw, unguarded, vulnerable. And gods help me, it drew me in.

For the first time, I realized how much power I held over him. Silas Whitmor—Alpha of an empire forged in iron and fire—*lay* beneath me willingly, offering not dominance, but surrender.

And the wild, dangerous part of my wolf wanted to take it.

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## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Silas’s POV

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Finished

I never thought one look from a woman could undo me, but when Freya leaned over me that night, her wolf-bright eyes locked on mine, I was stripped of every defense.

Her gaze clung to me as if she couldn’t pull away, and I prayed she wouldn’t. My lashes trembled with the force of holding myself back, but then I let them lift, revealing the truth I usually buried deep.

“Freya,” my voice rasped, raw and hungry, “do you... want to do something to me?”

My lips were parted, slick with the heat of breath I couldn’t control. I knew what I was asking. I knew how desperate it sounded. But the craving burned too deep to mask.

And then her head dipped.

Her mouth pressed to mine, firm and sudden, stealing every thought I had. My wolf roared inside me, demanding more, demanding her. I closed my eyes and kissed her back, careful but fervent, as if one wrong move might scare her away. My lips begged hers to stay, to give me more, to claim me as surely as my soul longed to claim her.

When the kiss broke, I was trembling with want. Her taste lingered, sweet and sharp, and my chest ached for more.

But she only pulled the blanket up, flattening it over both of us as she lay down beside me, her breathing uneven but determinedly calm.

“That’s it?” I blurted, staring at her profile in the dark. My wolf clawed at me, furious that she had stopped. “Just one kiss? Nothing more?”

Did she not feel it—the pull,

the bond clawing between us? Was I not enough to rouse her hunger the way she ignited mine?

“Am I not... attractive to you?” The words spilled before I could choke them back. “Or did I do something wrong?”

For *the* first time in my life, I felt like some nervous pup, unworthy of her flame. My heart hammered, uncertain, raw.

She turned, eyes steady, voice low. “No, Silas. You’re... incredibly attractive. You did nothing wrong.”

Then why—why stop when she had me burning alive?

“Then why didn’t you continue?” I pressed, desperate.

Her gaze sharpened, and gods help me, it made me feel like the supplicant I was. “Because it wouldn’t be fair to you.”

I froze. “What do you mean?”

“I like you,” she said bluntly. No hesitation, no game. “But I don’t know if I love you. And until I know that... I won’t let it be only about desire.”

The words struck me harder than any blade ever had. She—so fearless, so principled—was holding back not because she didn’t want me, but because she refused to take what wasn’t bound by love.

Only when she loved

would she truly claim me.

And I—Silas Whitmor, Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition, hardened by blood and war—found myself nodding, nearly breaking under the force of her honesty.

“I’ll wait,” I whispered, lifting her hand and pressing my lips to her palm. Her skin burned against my mouth, and I lingered there, breathing her in. “Freya, I’ll wait until the day you love me. No matter how long. I’ll do anything.”

She stilled, her breath hitching. I felt her pulse quicken under my lips, and it lit hope in my chest like fire.

That night, I didn’t let go of her hand. Not once. I held it until my wolf finally eased, until sleep dragged me under, though I knew she lay awake, restless with thoughts of me.

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Finished

Dawn found me restless again. I rose before her, unable to banish the ache in my chest, and took refuge in the washroom. The shower scalded my back, but the heat never erased the scars etched there.

I had just reached for my robe when the door opened.

She stepped in.

Freya froze when she realized I was half-naked, droplets tracing down my hair and spine. She turned sharply, reaching for the door. “Sorry—I didn’t know anyone was in here—”

“Ugly, isn’t it?” My voice cut out of me before I could stop it.

Her steps faltered. “What?”

“The scars,” I said flatly, still facing away. I could feel them burning under her stare, the ridges of pain carved into my flesh years ago. “They’re hideous, aren’t they?”

I didn’t reach for the robe. I let her see. The lash marks, layered and jagged, souvenirs of a childhood spent beneath cruelty. Even faded by time, they told the story too clearly—how a boy had been beaten until the wolf inside him howled and bled.

expected silence. Disgust. Maybe pity.

Instead, her voice broke, raw and sharp. “No. Not ugly.”

And then—her hand touched me.

I went rigid, breath caught in my throat as her fingers traced the scars, gentle where once there had been only pain.

“You don’t think they’re ugly?” My voice cracked, betraying me.

She shook her head, firm. “If scars are ugly, then I’m ugly too. I have plenty of my own from missions. Would you call me hideous?”

“Of course not!” I turned halfway, meeting her eyes.

“Then neither are yours,” she said fiercely. “What’s ugly is the one who gave them to you. These scars don’t make me recoil, Silas. *They* make me want to heal you.”

Her words tore me open. And then—her lips pressed against my back.

I stiffened, every muscle tight, my wolf howling with the shock of it. Warmth spread through the ruined flesh, through my blood, through my very soul. She was kissing the places I hated most branding them with tenderness I never thought I deserved

In the mirror above the basin, I saw her—Freya Thorne, fierce, proud, unyielding—kneeling against my back, her mouth soft against the scars.

My throat closed. I had fought battles that shattered mountains, but this undid me.

And yet—gods forgive me—I was a coward even now. Because while her kisses seared away my shame, another thought coiled in my chest.

That I was using her compassion, her instinct to nurture, as a chain to bind her to me.

I wanted her to love me. So badly I’d take even her pity and twist it into something more.

If she knew that, would she still look at me the same way?

“Freya,” I whispered, voice-breaking as my wolf pressed against the edges of my skin. “I...”

But the words failed.

Because what I really wanted to say was I need you to love me, and I’ll bleed, burn, crawl through ash until you

And I didn’t know if that was devotion—or something darker.

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

Finished

Silas caught my hands before I could pull away. His grip wasn't rough, but there was a tremor of urgency beneath it. When he turned to face me, his dark eyes gleamed with a rare, unguarded light.

"If you don't despise me for what I am... me than anyone else ever has. Promise me that."

wzed to face me, his dark eyes gleamed wear it, Freya. Don't just say you'll accept me. Prove it. Be better to a

For a heartbeat, I just stared at him. The Ironclad Coalition's Alpha, the man who carried scars on his back like a map of suffering, looked at me now like a wounded pup begging not to be abandoned. I almost laughed at the absurdity of it, but instead a helpless smile tugged at my lips.

"All right," I said softly, squeezing his hands. "I'll treat you better."

The words seemed to undo something inside him. His control, always taut as a drawn bow, snapped. He hauled me against his chest, one arm clamping around my waist like steel, and his mouth crashed down on mine.

His lips were cold at first, cautious, as though even kissing me might break some sacred trust. But when I didn't pull away- when I tilted my head and pressed back-he deepened the kiss with a hunger that stole my breath. His restraint burned away, leaving behind raw need.

By the time we stumbled out of the bathroom, my cheeks were blazing, and my lips were swollen and red. Even the hollow of my throat bore the evidence of his fervor-small marks that throbbed faintly against my pulse. My wolf stirred uneasily inside me, whispering that his claim was dangerous, intoxicating, and far too easy to accept.

Silas, on the other hand, looked utterly unbothered. His breathing was steady, his face calm, his body loose with confidence.

I couldn't help glaring at him. "Why are you looking at me like that?" I asked, as he casually began dressing right in front of

1. me.

He smirked, never breaking eye contact. "Because you're staring at me as though you've discovered something."

"I'm staring because you're too damn calm," I retorted. "Like what just happened was... normal for you."

His laugh was low and warm, rumbling in his chest. Then, without warning, he caught my hand and pressed it against his chest-right over his heart.

“Does that feel calm to you?” he whispered.

Under my palm, his heart dammed against his ribs, fast and frantic, as though my presence alone had set

aflame.

his blood

“Freya... to you, maybe it was just a kiss. But to me? You’re the first woman I’ve ever truly wanted. The first I’ve kissed, the first I’ve lain beside without shame. You’re not just the first—you’ll be the last.”

I froze, my eyes widening. My brain tripped over his words, stumbling to catch up.

“You... what? You can’t possibly mean-”

But I thought back to our first kiss. How clumsy he’d been, how stiff and untested. It wasn’t my imagination—he really had been awkward, inexperienced. Silas, heir of the Whitmore line, had given his first kiss to me.

The revelation rattled me so badly that for the next several days, I kept replaying it in my mind. How was it possible that someone like him powerful, feared, cold—could still be unclaimed, untouched?

Yet if he was a student, he was a quick learner. Each time he stole a kiss in passing, his lips moved with more confidence,

pore insistence, until it was my turn to be breathless and off balance. And I didn’t push him away. The truth was, I liked it. More than liked it. The pull between us was undeniable. And besides... wasn’t he my chosen mate?

At night, the lines between restraint and surrender blurred further. After that first night together, he never asked again—he simply appeared at my door, slipping into my room like it was his right. At first, I wanted to refuse. To remind him that we weren’t there

yet, that I wasn’t sure if my feelings for him were strong enough to withstand the storm of his world.

3:03 PM P

Finished

But then he’d look at me with those haunted eyes, or worse, he’d smile with that wicked, knowing curve of his mouth, and I caved. I let him in. Again and again.

And yet... for all his power and hunger, he never crossed the line. His hand would brush along my skin, teasing, daring me to ask for more, but when I didn't, he'd simply hold my hand as sleep dragged us under.

My wolf understood the unspoken vow in that gesture—Until she asks, I won't take.

It both comforted me and drove me insane.

Meanwhile, the human world spun on outside our cocoon. The incident with the Consortium's trapped workers had spread like wildfire across every network. Footage of the rescue efforts went viral, sparking debates across the packs.

For once, the press didn't slander us—they praised us. Praised the Coalition, praised Whitmor, praised the Stormveil branch that had joined the mission. Everywhere I looked, commentary hailed our speed, our cooperation, our unity.

One night, as I sat on the edge of Silas's bed scrolling through WolfComm, my screen lit with an unfamiliar number.

"Hello?" I answered cautiously.

"Miss Freya Thorne?" A woman's voice, polished and professional, greeted me. "This is with Halston Broadcast. We're producing a feature on the recent rescue efforts, and we'd like to invite you onto our program."

I almost laughed. "Sorry, but I don't do talk shows. Not my thing."

"Please, reconsider," the woman pressed. "Every other participant has already agreed, and we want the full story. Aurora, for instance, has confirmed her attendance. You flew beside her that day, didn't you?"

Aurora.

The name soured on my tongue. My wolf bristled instantly, hackles rising. That Beta's daughter—newly minted pilot of the Bluemoon Airborne Wing—had the audacity to stand in front of cameras and bask in glory that didn't belong to her?

My fingers tightened around the phone. "Fine. I'll come."

"Wonderful," the producer gushed.

I hung up before she could say more, my pulse already quickening. If Aurora thought she could twist that rescue into her story, she was about to learn the hard way that Freya Thorne didn't sit quietly while others stole her pack's honor.

And this time, I wouldn't be fighting with guns or claws. I'd be fighting with truth,

Silas shifted beside me, glancing at the tension in my face. His hand slid over mine, grounding me, his wolf brushing against mine in quiet support

“Another battle?” he asked softly.

I smiled, sharp and humorless. “Yes. And I intend to win.”

**Send Gifts**

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Silas's POV

Finished

I could smell her frustration before she said a word. Freya's wolf bristled, her irritation rolling off her like heatwaves. She hated Aurora with the kind of cold, cutting fury that could peel flesh from bone.

I leaned closer, tilting my head as I studied her. “If you don't like her, I can end this for you. One word, Freya, and Aurora disappears from the game.”

Aurora was just the Beta's daughter from the Bluemoon Pack, and even with her shiny new badge as a pilot in the Airborne. Wing, she was nothing compared to me. I could crush her future with a flick of my fingers.

But Freya's eyes narrowed, flaring that dangerous amber glow that made my wolf sit up inside me. “No. The ones I want to deal with—I'll deal with myself. Aurora doesn't deserve your hand in this.”

Her words curled like smoke inside me. Pride. Defiance. She didn't need me to fight her battles. And still... I would tear down the sky for her if she asked.

“Fine;”

“Fine,” I said, lowering my voice, letting a note of promise slide in. “But when you need me, you ask. Whatever it is, I'll make it happen.”

She gave me a brief look—half grateful, half stubborn—and the matter was closed. For now.

The day of the broadcast came too quickly. I accompanied Freya to the Halston Broadcast studios, ignoring the whispers of staff that rippled the moment I stepped through the doors. Wolves and humans alike froze when they saw me walking into a television station like it was enemy territory.

None of them expected me to show. And they sure as hell didn't expect me to sit down among the mortals like just another face in the crowd.

One brave staffer finally found her tongue. "Mr. Whitmor, are you here... as a guest?"

I arched a brow, letting the weight of my presence bear down just enough for her to sweat. "No. I'll sit in the audience."

The girl nearly choked on her own tongue. Audience? They'd probably never let an Alpha of my stature in the front doors without a camera pointed at his face.

Now I was choosing to be background furniture. I could see the gleam in her eyes- visions of ratings and headlines already flashing in her skull..

Good. Let them salivate.

Inside the studio, Aurora was already perched on one of the couches, all painted smiles and false sweetness. When Freya entered, Aurora's expression cracked, revealing the snarl underneath before she smoothed it back into a smirk.

"Well, look who finally decided to bask in the spotlight," Aurora sneered. "I thought you were too noble to seek attention. Turns out, you just wanted your moment under the lights like the rest of us."

Freya's reply was sharp as a fang. "At least I saved lives, Aurora, Funny, I can't recall a single soul you managed to pull from the wreckage. So tell me, why are you even here?"

Aurora flushed, then pasted on a brittle smile. "You should be grateful I didn't swoop in. My aircraft was right behind yours. If you'd failed, I would've stepped in. I was praying you'd succeed, Freya. Truly"

My claws itched to tear the smugness off her face. Freya tilted her head, her voice dripping venom. "Ah. So the helicopter frozen in the sky that day-that was you. I thought it was a rookie afraid of the wind currents. My mistake."

Aurora's face went crimson.

And then, of course, Caelum Grafton had to open his damned mouth. "That's unfair, Freya. Aurora was monitoring conditions. If you hadn't been able to complete the rescue, she would've taken over."

My lip curled. Typical Silverfang arrogance, rushing to defend the Bluemoon darling. Freya didn't even waste real anger on him-just a cold, cutting laugh. "Believe her if you want, Caelum. You always did."

3:00 PM

Finished

The host intervened with a cheerful clap of hands, pretending not to feel the charged dominance filling the room. “All right, let’s get ready for recording.”

I leaned toward Freya, my voice low. “I’ll head to the audience.”

She nodded once, trusting me without question. And that small gesture—it sank deeper than she knew.

I took my seat in the front row. Caelum slid in nearby, his scent souring the air. My wolf snarled inside me, but I leashed it. This wasn’t the battlefield—yet.

The program started, the host launching into their rehearsed lines about bravery, teamwork, sacrifice. The cameras panned across the participants, then turned exactly where I knew they would—straight to me.

And Caelum, though he was little more than a side note in the lens.

The big screen filled with my image. I saw the shock ripple across the audience. Most of them didn’t even know my name, but they knew power when they saw it. They knew a predator when one sat among them.

The host turned sly, grinning. “Both of our pilots brought guests today. Gentlemen in the front—may we ask who you are to them?”

The trap was sex. They wanted the reveal, the headline, the spark to send their ratings sky-high.

Before I could open my mouth, Freya beat me to it.

“He’s my boyfriend,” she said, calm, unapologetic.

For a second, I thought I’d misheard her. But the word rang clear, echoing through the studio like a battle horn. Boyfriend. Claimed. Mine.

My wolf roared in triumph inside me, its tail lashing, teeth bared in savage satisfaction. My lips pulled into a smile I couldn’t restrain, *sharp* and bright.

On the screen above us, I watched my own face shift Alpha composure cracking into something warmer, something unguarded. My eyes gleamed, my mouth curved. And gods, I didn’t care who saw.

She’d given me a place *at* her side. Publicly. Before the packs, before the world.

Not as a weapon. Not as a Coalition Alpha. But as her male.

For the first time in years, I felt like I could breathe.

The host gawked, then quickly covered it with professional delight, already imagining the storm this revelation would cause. Ratings, headlines, speculation—they could have their feeding frenzy.

All I cared about was the fire in Freya’s eyes when she said it. And the fact that for the first time in her life, she’d let the world see me standing at her side.

**Send Gifts**

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## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

\* Finished

The moment the host leaned toward me, voice brimming with excitement, I knew exactly where his thoughts were heading.

“So,” he said, eyes bright, “how did the two of you meet, and what made you decide to be together? Could you share a little

with us?”

Heat brushed my cheeks, but I forced myself to remain composed. This wasn’t supposed to be about me, not tonight. This stage was for the rescue mission, not for prying into my private life.

“Tonight’s interview,” I said evenly, “isn’t meant to be about me personally. It wouldn’t be fitting to go into that here.”

I saw his expression flicker with faint disappointment, but the man recovered quickly, shifting his attention toward the woman sitting opposite me.

Aurora.

The Bluemoon Beta’s daughter lounged on the studio sofa as though it were her rightful throne. Her sleek uniform had been tailored to perfection, the gleam of her flight insignia catching in the lights. I’d thought perhaps she would play coy. Instead, her lips curved with a calculated smile.

“Then perhaps we should ask you, Miss Aurora,” the host continued. “The gentleman who accompanied you here—your /friend?”

Her chin lifted an inch higher, pride burning in her eyes as she gestured toward the front row. “He’s not just a friend. He is the founder and Alpha of SilverTech Forgeworks... and my fiancé, Caelum Grafton.”

The words hit the room like a thunderclap.

I wasn’t the only one stunned into silence. Caelum himself, the man who had always carried himself with an untouchable certainty—stared at her, his face draining of color. The cameras didn’t miss it. They captured every twitch of his jaw, every unguarded second of his shock.

My brows drew together. Caelum Grafton, Aurora’s fiancé? Since when?

The host, thrilled by the drama, seized upon the claim. “So Miss Aurora arrives with her fiancé! I heard during the rescue mission he boarded your aircraft as well. He must have cared deeply, fearing for your safety.”

“Yes,” Aurora replied smoothly, tilting her head toward him with an expression of tender adoration that was anything but genuine. “Caelum loves me very much. Isn’t that right, Caelum?”

All eyes turned on him.

I caught it in his gaze that flicker of doubt, of unease. He hadn’t been prepared for this. Aurora had thrust him into a corner with nowhere to run.

For an Alpha, he looked uncharacteristically small.

“Yes...” His voice was low, strained. “I love you.”

A tight smile pulled at Aurora’s mouth. Triumph. She could already see the headlines. Once the episode aired, once her words were broadcast to every pack in the region, her claim would become truth. Caelum would be bound to her. A public engagement couldn’t be undone without disgrace, not for an Alpha.

I didn’t understand. Caelum had always seemed to carry Aurora in his heart, like some treasured ideal. She was his “white moon,” the legend whispered. And yet, the hollow look in his eyes told a different story—that he was already regretting her

Chains.

None of it was my concern. Not anymore.

The host, oblivious to the tension cutting through the room, pushed the interview forward. “Let’s move to the real matter. Can the two of you—our heroic pilots—tell us what went through your mind when you heard lives were in danger? Did the

1/2.

Finished

risks ever make you hesitate?”

Aurora leaned forward, seizing the moment. “Hesitate? Never.” Her voice rang with righteous conviction. “When lives are at stake, when fate demands courage, it is our duty to act. How could I possibly shrink away?”

The audience erupted into applause. Some even rose to their feet, clapping fervently as the host looked on with open admiration.

**you** were

“Remarkable. Truly admirable. Miss Aurora, you are not only the Bluemoon Airborne Wing’s new pilot, but I hear also part of the border fire rescue five years ago. A hero then, a hero now! Let’s give her another round of applause.”

The ovation swelled again, thundering in my ears. Aurora’s lashes fluttered as though she were soaking in the adoration like sunlight.

My stomach soured. I remembered that border fire. I remembered who had bled and who had burned. And I remembered who hadn’t been there.

The host turned at last to me. And you, Miss Thorne? How did you feel in that moment, knowing the task was dangerous? Did fear ever touch you?”

My lips curved in a humorless smile. “At that moment, I only thought of one thing—that lives were on the line. The world doesn’t revolve around Aurora. Pilots aren’t so rare a breed that she should set conditions. She tried to use trapped civilians as bargaining chips, and I refused to allow it. So I flew.”

A sharp silence fell.

The host’s eyes

widened. “What?”

Aurora shot to her feet, fury staining her cheeks crimson. “Freya, how dare you! That’s a lie, a filthy slander!”

Her aura flared, Beta-born power sparking against mine. But I held her gaze, cold and unyielding, and slowly drew WolfComm from my pocket.

I tapped the screen, and the studio filled with sound.

I leaned back in my chair, arms crossed over my chest, and let the truth hang heavy in the air.

Let them see her for what she was.

**Send Gifts**

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya's POV

The audio played loud enough to strip the air from the room.

Finished

“Freya, aren’t you a retired soldier? Don’t you always like to parade your so-called kindness? Well, I’m giving you a chance to

prove

it now.”

Aurora’s voice—sharp, manipulative, dripping with venom—echoed through the studio.

The audience’s gasps fell into silence. A silence so thick I could hear the hum of the cameras capturing every second. Aurora’s face turned a blotchy red, her composure cracking like thin glass under a wolf’s claw.

With a strangled sound, she lunged across the narrow space between us, fingers outstretched to snatch the WolfComm from my hand.

I blocked her with my free arm, my stance instinctive—military and wolf-born. She wasn’t taking anything from me.

The recording continued, merciless.

“As long as you apologize to me, and I’m satisfied, then of course I’ll pilot the helicopter. But if you don’t... if my mood sours, and my hands slip while flying, well—who knows what might happen? If those Bloodmoon employees trapped out there die because of delayed rescue, it’ll be on you.”

By the time the last word fell, the crowd was staring at her like she was a creature dragged from the shadows of the wilds- something foul and unrecognizable.

This was the Bluemoon Pack's "hero"?

Aurora stumbled back, her face drained of all color. "N-no. That's not real! It's fabricated!" She forced a shrill laugh that only made her look more desperate. "I didn't use trapped civilians as leverage. I only... I only wanted an apology because Freya had smeared my name before."

I rose slowly, holding the WolfComm loosely at my side, my eyes locking on hers. Cold. Unforgiving. "And what exactly did I smear you with, Aurora? Do

you have proof of these accusations? If you don't, then perhaps I should say you're smearing me right now."

Her lips twisted into a snarl, but her words faltered.

The audience watched, rapt. No one missed the dominance tug-of-war between us.

"You've got plenty of ways to hide evidence!" she hissed. "That doesn't erase the fact that I flew to save lives!"

My laugh was low, sharp as a blade's edge. "Flew? Your craft never reached the rescue site."

Her spine stiffened, jaw jutting. "I was observing the situation! **If** your side failed, I was ready to intervene."

"You mean-if my side succeeded, you were ready to swoop in and claim the glory." My words struck like claws, raking deep.

Aurora's nostrils flared.]

And then, from the rows of seated rescuers, a voice cut through the tension like lightning splitting the sky.

"That's not what you said on the aircraft."

Every head turned. One of the men who'd been on Aurora's chopper stood, face set with grim resolve. "I remember it clear. You said you wouldn't risk advancing because your fiancé was on board. That if Freya's craft encountered trouble, you'd land **first** in a safe zone, drop Caelum Grafton, then maybe-maybe-you'd continue."

The studio detonated in noise. Shocked cries, gasps, curses.

Aurora's face blanched as though her very blood had been drained away.

12

Finished

The host, ever the vulture circling chaos, pounced. "Miss Aurora... your fiancé boarded with you, yes? But isn't the point of such a mission to save those in danger? Why would you prioritize dropping him off first? Isn't that risking lives unnecessarily?"

Aurora's throat bobbed. She forced a brittle smile. "He—he was there to help! To support the mission."

I turned my gaze toward Caelum Grafton, seated stiffly under the spotlight of the entire hall. His hand was bandaged still, the lingering reminder of wounds taken in the chaos. He didn't move, didn't deny, didn't confirm—just sat there like a wolf with his paw caught in an iron trap.

The host pressed harder. "Then why the hesitation? Why not fly straight in? Were you more concerned with protecting your fiancé than those waiting for rescue?"

The whispers from the crowd sharpened into outright accusations.

"She never meant to fly in."

"She brought him on board just to parade him around."

"Unbelievable—using hostages as bargaining chips, now this?!"

Aurora trembled under their scrutiny, her aura collapsing in on itself. Beta-blood or not, she was prey before the pack now.

The rescuer who had spoken first didn't stop. His voice grew harder, louder. "Truth is, I don't think she ever intended to save anyone. That helicopter never moved closer, not once. She sat back, making excuses, and waited. I asked myself that day if she was here to rescue, or to make sure her image stayed untarnished. Today, after hearing that recording? I don't have to ask anymore."

More voices rose in agreement, the other rescuers nodding, muttering their support. Some even called out from their seats.

"If she cared so much for her fiancé, she shouldn't have dragged him along."

"Heroes don't gamble with lives for their own pride."

"She's not a savior. She's a fraud."

The swell of disdain rolled through the hall like a storm surge, impossible to stop.

Aurora's lips worked soundlessly. She raised a trembling hand, pointing at the rescuer. "You—you've been bribed by Freya. How much did she pay you to say this?"

The man's gaze was steady, unyielding as an Alpha's vow. "I wasn't paid anything. I speak what I saw, what I heard. I'd swear it before any Elder Council. This **is** the truth."

Others nodded again, murmuring, their conviction forming a wall no lie could breach.

Aurora wilted before it, her body rigid, her complexion the ashen hue of defeat.

**Send Gifts**

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV

Finished

Aurora staggered, her body trembling as though her legs could no longer carry the weight of the hall's eyes. With a strangled sound, she covered her face and bolted toward the backstage exit.

"Aurora!" Caelum's voice rang out, sharp and frantic. The Alpha of the Silverfang Pack shot to his feet, his silver gaze blazing, and hurried after her.

On stage, Freya sat unmoving, her eyes cold as she watched them disappear through the doors. Her wolf pressed close to the surface, hungry to lash out, but she forced it down and turned back to the hall.

The audience, the cameras, even the host—all seemed caught in the tension. Then Freya leaned forward, her voice calm, steady, each syllable edged with the authority of wolf-blooded truth.

"Tonight, the real heroes have already been named," she said. Her gaze swept over the audience, the ground rescue wolves scated among the crowd. "It isn't those who make speeches. It's the ones who dive into flame and rubble, risking their lives for strangers. Their courage is what we should honor. Their sacrifice is what we should learn from."

The words struck like a vow spoken beneath the moon. Slowly, the murmurs softened. The host, seizing on the moment, guided the conversation back toward the night's program.

Backstage, chaos festered.

Aurora had collapsed into the greenroom, her voice shrill with rage.

“Freya planned this! She wanted me humiliated in front of the packs!”

Caelum tried to soothe her, his tone low, steady. “Don’t worry. I’ll handle it. The show is recorded, not live. A few favors, the right price—your shame will never see daylight.”

Hope flickered across Aurora’s pale face, and she clutched his sleeve like a drowning wolf clinging to driftwood. “You... you can do that?”

“Of course,” Caelum said, arrogance lacing every word. “The Silverfang name opens doors. Trust me.”

Relief bled into her expression—until her WolfComm vibrated.

The voice on the other end was not Caelum’s. It was distorted, metallic, cruel.

“Murderer... Aurora. You’re a murderer. Did you think your sins would stay buried? I have proof. I’ll place it where the whole hall can see. Then they’ll know you’re no hero.”

Aurora’s hands shook so violently she almost dropped the device. “Who are you? I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

The voice only chuckled.

“It doesn’t matter if you deny it. What matters is that soon, the world will know. You’re no savior. You’re bloodstained.”

The line went dead.

Panic flared inside her! If evidence truly existed... if the crowd saw it... her entire life would unravel. She stormed from the greenroom, desperate to stop it—

-and walked straight into shadow.

A figure waited in the dim corridor, grotesque mask grinning with jagged red. The iron-wrapped bat swung without warning. The blow cracked against her skull. Aurora crumpled, a strangled cry escaping as the world tilted.

The last thing she saw before darkness claimed her was that mask’s hollow eyes, staring into hers.

Onstage, the program shifted into a recess. Freya finally exhaled, shoulders loosening when Silas appeared at her side. The Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition carried the storm in his stance, his presence grounding her like steel.

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Finished

“Freya,” he said quietly, his voice almost too low for the cameras still lingering nearby. “When this airs, every pack will know we’re together. Are you certain you won’t regret it?”

Freya turned her head toward him, studying his sharp features. His question was not political—it was personal, almost pleading.

“Regret?” she echoed with a faint laugh, edged like a blade. “What is there to regret? I chose you. Why would I hide it?”

Some of the tension bled from his shoulders, though not all. “I thought you might prefer to keep it private. To protect yourself. To... keep your options.”

Her lips curved, her gaze unwavering. “Are you the one who dislikes the world knowing, Silas?”

“Of course not.” His reply was fierce, immediate. “The opposite. I want every wolf in every pack to know you are mine. Especially him.”

There was no need to name Kade Blackridge. The soldier’s shadow lingered always at the edge of Silas’s gaze. The man who had once carried Freya from battlefield flames.

Silas’s hand brushed her bandaged arm, fingers reverent. His lips ghosted over the cloth, eyes burning with a raw, unshakable claim.

“I won’t let distance, or rivals, or fate itself take you from me. You are mine, Freya. No matter how far you run.”

The vow hung between them, heavy as a brand beneath the moon.

Freya’s wolf bristled, not in defiance, but in recognition. He was staking his claim, and a part of her wanted the world to see it.