

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

chapter 221-230

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya's POV

In his muttering I heard it: his father's voice, cruel and sharp. No use. A worthless tool has no right to exist. The words he must have carried all his life.

I stared up at him, at the face contorted by despair, and fury kindled in me—not at him, but at those who had made him this way.

“Silas Whitmor,” I said firmly, fighting his spiraling madness with my own vow. “I won’t leave you. Do you hear me? I will never leave you.”

Over and over I repeated it, pouring every shred of will into my words until his lashes trembled. Focus bled back into his eyes. Slowly, agonizingly, he returned from that abyss.

“Freya...” His voice cracked, and the iron grip on my wrists trembled.

“You didn’t hurt me,” I told him quickly, sensing his horror rising. “You only held me. Nothing more.”

His gaze flicked to where his hands still shackled me. Logic told him to release me—but I saw the fear there, the unwillingness to let go.

So I leaned closer, my voice gentler. “I won’t abandon you. Not now, not ever. You’re my mate, Silas. Mine.”

He flinched, and finally—reluctantly—his fingers uncurled. My wrists were free, but I didn’t shove him away. Instead, I wrapped my arms around his tense frame, drawing him down against me.

“You dreamed of darkness and blood, didn’t you?” I murmured. “Next time, you don’t face it alone. I’ll be there. And if I ever cross paths with your father again, I’ll break him until he can’t breathe.”

For a moment he was still. Then, like a dam breaking, his body sagged. His head dropped into the hollow of my shoulder, his lips brushing my skin as he whispered, “As long as you’re here.. I can face anything.”

His voice softened into a vow that shivered through me: “Just don’t leave me.”

I tightened my hold. Never.

The next morning, Silas walked free of the hospital. His command to Wren was absolute:

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“Find the source of Jocelyn’s perfume. Destroy it. If the Stormveil Pack shelters her in their company, the Whitmors will sever every tie.”

It was a death sentence to Jocelyn’s standing. No pack would trade her favor for the wrath of the Ironclad Alpha.

Later, as we spoke in private, he tried to mask his shame. “I thought the healers had cured me. I thought I was stronger than this. You must have seen how ugly I looked, Freya.”

“Not ugly,” I answered simply. “Haunted. But I’ll be here when the ghosts rise. They don’t get to win.”

His reply was a quiet, “Good,” but the way his shoulders ceased told me my words mattered more than he could ever admit.

On the third day, I boarded the flight back to the Capital with Silas and Kade at my side. At the arrival gate, Lana leaned against a pillar, watching us approach.

She whistled low under her breath. “Well, damn. Freya Thorne walks off a plane with not one, but two Alphas at her flank. You trying to start a riot, girl?”

Heat flared in my cheeks, though I masked it with a glare. Silas only smirked faintly, while Kade rolled his eyes at the attention their presence stirred among the crowd.

We ended up at a restaurant together, the four of us drawing stares like moths to flame. Silas and Kade carried the kind of raw magnetism that made every she-wolf in the room lean closer.

I barely tasted the food, distracted by the sharp eyes fixed on us. Then I swallowed a bite of fish, and nausea rolled through me like a wave. My hand shot to my mouth.

“What’s wrong?” Lana asked immediately, brows arched.

“Just an old stomach problem,” I managed.

But she tilted her head, lips quirking. “Stomach problem? Or... could it be you’re pregnant?”

The word hit the table like thunder.

Kade’s chopsticks clattered from his hand. His face froze in shock.

And Silas—Silas’s gaze whipped to me, pupils dilating, a hundred emotions warring in his expression.

I swallowed hard, my pulse a drumbeat in my ears.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person’s POV

Kade’s eyes

widened, his wolf flaring with raw instinct as he fixed his gaze on Freya.

“Freya... are you pregnant?” he demanded, his voice edged with disbelief and fear.

Freya froze. “I’m not—” But before she could finish, Kade was already on his feet, seizing Silas by the collar with a ferocity that rattled the table.

“How dare you?” Kade roared, his fists trembling with rage. “What vile trick did you use on her, Silas? Did you force her? Did you trap her into this?” His voice carried the weight of a protective wolf brother, but also something deeper, more desperate, simmering beneath the surface.

The thought had already clawed its way into his mind: if Freya truly carried a pup, then Silas must have marked and taken her before Kade ever had a chance to protect her. The idea was unbearable.

Silas blinked once, then the sharpness returned to his storm-grey eyes. He shook off Kade’s grip, his Alpha aura flaring. “If Freya carries my child, it will be because she chose it,” he said coldly. “Do not mistake her strength. She is not some trembling she-wolf to be cornered. She chose me.” His lip curled, disdain sharp as a blade. “And you, Kade, should remember your

brother.” place. You’re nothing more than her younger

The words hit like a strike. Kade’s wolf snarled inside him, and fury consumed his restraint. His fist flew, colliding against Silas’s jaw with a sickening crack. Silas staggered a half-step, but his own wolf answered instantly, and the Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition

launched forward, the two wolves colliding in a violent clash that rattled the restaurant walls.

“Stop it!” Freya’s voice cut through the chaos, sharp as a whip.

She shoved her chair back, storming toward them as fists and growls filled the air. The scent of dominance clashed in the enclosed space, two wolves nearly tearing through their human guise.

And yet, amidst the storm, Lana leaned back in her chair, an amused gleam in her eyes. “Pregnant? Freya, is it true?” she asked with teasing delight. “When were you planning to tell me? You know I already called dibs on being the godmother.”

Her words poured fuel on the flames. Kade struck harder, his wolf howling for blood, while Silas’s knuckles cracked against his jaw.

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Freya’s temples throbbed. She shoved herself between the two men, palms pressing against their chests with Alpha-born strength. “Enough!” Her command was more than human—it carried the bite of her bloodline, a warning neither dared ignore.

The two men froze mid-strike, their fists still trembling but halted, afraid their blows might graze her.

Her chest rose and fell as she glared between them. “I am not pregnant.” Her words fell like steel. “This is the same stomach trouble I’ve had since I was young. A couple of pills will fix it. You two nearly tore each other apart over nothing.”

She narrowed her eyes, her voice slicing like cold moonlight. “And even if I were pregnant, do you think I could be forced into it? I am not weak. No one—no Alpha, no pack—forces me to carry what I do not choose.”

Both Silas and Kade flinched as if her words were claws raking down their pride.

“If I ever carry a pup,” Freya continued, her tone unwavering, “it will be because I want it.”

Her declaration silenced the room. The two wolves shifted back, shame and stubbornness flickering across their expressions, each unwilling to meet her gaze.

Lana gave an awkward little laugh and clapped her hands. “Well then. Since no one’s pregnant, maybe we can actually eat before the food goes cold?”

The tension loosened, if only slightly, and the four sat down again. Yet the air remained thick, every glance between Silas and Kade like a spark threatening to ignite the tinder again.

Dinner ended in uneasy silence, broken only when Silas turned to Freya. His gaze lingered on her face, softer now, almost protective. “We’re going to the healer after this,” he said firmly.

Freya blinked. “You’re not feeling well?” Her mind flashed to the lingering effect of the cursed perfume Jocelyn Thorne had used against him days earlier.

“Not me,” Silas replied. “You. Your stomach. I want a healer to look at you properly.”

She shook her head. “I don’t need a healer for something this small. I know my own body. A couple of herbs and rest will do-”

“You’re going,” Silas interrupted, his tone brooking no argument. His Alpha authority brushed against her senses, demanding compliance, but Freya’s wolf bristled at the command.

Before she could bite back, Lana leaned in with a smile. “Freya, just go. It’ll give everyone peace of mind. Better than choking down random herbs from the apothecary, right?”

Freya hesitated, then sighed. “Fine. I’ll go.”

“I’ll come too-” Kade began, only to be interrupted when Lana’s hand clamped firmly on his

arm.

“Actually, I need to talk with you about some legal issues at SkyVex Armaments,” she said smoothly. “Company trouble. Needs your sharp mind.”

Kade narrowed his eyes. “You don’t have legal trouble, Lana.”

She smiled sweetly. “Of course not. But you’re clever enough to know when you’re being asked not to play third wheel. Why torture yourself?”

Kade’s jaw tightened. His wolf growled low, but he forced himself back into his seat.

When Silas and Freya left the restaurant, the younger wolf turned to Lana with eyes like storm clouds. “How long have you known?”

“Known what?” she asked lightly.

“That they’re together.” His voice was sharp, demanding.

Lana tilted her head, considering. “A while now. A month, maybe. Freya talks to me. I noticed things.”

Kade’s face darkened. “And you didn’t tell me?”

Her lips quirked in a sad smile. “It wasn’t my place to announce your sister’s heart. She chose him, Kade.”

He stiffened, then gave a hollow laugh. “So I was too late again.”

For a moment, the infamous troublemaker of the Capital—the wolf feared and admired by so many—looked nothing more than a young man, broken by something he could never claim.

Lana’s heart softened. “Love isn’t about timing or control,” she said gently. “Sometimes it’s just... fate.”

Kade lowered his eyes to his empty hands. “Fate, huh? Then why does it always feel like it mocks me?”

Meanwhile, Freya and Silas walked side by side beneath the night sky, the city lights of the Capital burning like distant stars. At the healer’s hall, she received a simple pouch of herbs for her stomach and stern warnings to rest. Silas stood silently through it all, his hand brushing hers once, a fleeting gesture of possession—and perhaps of fear that she might slip from him

again.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person’s POV

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Freya stepped out of the healer’s hall, the cool night air brushing against her skin. Silas’s expression was tense, eyes dark as he looked at her.

“Why didn’t you ever tell me you had this old stomach problem?” he asked, voice low but threaded with worry.

Freya gave a small shrug, the edges of her lips curling in a faint, wry smile. “It’s nothing serious. Serving in the Iron Fang Recon Unit, you learn to expect your body will sometimes rebel. Bruises, upset stomachs, minor illnesses—they come with the territory. Do you... mind?”

“Mind?” Silas repeated, his jaw tightening. His hand gripped hers with surprising firmness, thumb brushing over her knuckles in a gesture of possessive care. “Yes, I mind. I don’t want you to suffer, not even for a moment. I want you healthy, Freya. From now on, I’ll make sure you eat properly, I’ll make sure your stomach is cared for. I won’t allow you to hurt yourself like this again.”

Freya’s chest warmed at his words. She remembered nights when she had pushed herself to the brink, working alongside Caelum Grafton for his ventures in the Bloodmoon Pack, enduring stomach cramps and severe pain without complaint. She had even visited emergency halls at midnight, yet Caelum had never looked up from contracts or strategic plans, never spared a thought for her suffering. He had always claimed it was for her future, for a better life, but love—or the lack thereof—was as clear as day when compared to Silas now.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the Capital, Lana had taken Kade to a nearby lounge. Kade’s wolf prowled restlessly beneath the surface of his human form, a storm of emotion raging behind his storm-grey eyes. Lana didn’t trust him to drink alone, so she stayed, keeping her own wolf tethered, guiding him when the alcohol began to dull his sharper senses.

He slumped into the seat, the glass in his hand trembling slightly. “I’ll... I’ll call someone to pick me up,” he muttered, fumbling for his WolfComm. “I’m too... too drunk. Just... come get me at the lounge next to your office.”

Lana watched as he managed to complete the call, then poured himself another shot. Her wolf growled internally at his stubbornness. “Stop. If you drink any more, you’ll end up in the healer’s hall next.”

Kade’s stomach turned violently, and he doubled over, spewing into the ornate rug at his feet. Lana recoiled just in time, catching the smell but avoiding the mess. His wolf whimpered, ashamed, as he collapsed against the sofa, drenched in the evidence of his own recklessness.

9:44 Fri, **Sep** 12

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The lounge was quiet except for Kade’s labored breathing. Lana sighed, bracing herself. Carefully, she shifted him to the far side of the sofa, protecting him from further exposure to his own mess. With precision borne of years of wolf instincts and experience handling injured comrades, she unbuttoned his outer jacket and peeled it off, tossing it aside.

Next came his shirt. She moved to undo the first few buttons to help him breathe, working slowly to avoid waking his restless wolf. Just as she reached the second button, the lounge door opened abruptly.

A cold, controlled voice sliced through the room. “So, you’re tending to Kade now? Planning to strip him down just like you tried with me back then?”

Lana froze, every nerve alight with alarm. The voice... it could only belong to one person.

A tall, commanding figure stepped into view, draped in a black suit that hugged his lean frame perfectly, aura of dominance and poise radiating like a wolf marking territory. His eyes, narrow and piercing, scanned the room with surgical precision. Lana’s heart sank. It was none other than Victor Ashford—her ex, whose Alpha influence in the Capital was near-legendary.

“Quite the coincidence,” she managed, forcing a smile, though her wolf growled low, warning her of the tension.

“Indeed,” Victor Ashford said smoothly, advancing into the room. His gaze fell on Kade sprawled drunkenly on the sofa. “If I hadn’t come, would you have really stripped my nephew? Just like back then?”

Lana’s cheeks burned red. “I wasn’t—he was vomiting. I was just helping him get out of the mess. That’s all.”

Victor’s eyes narrowed, steel-sharp. “Then why undo his shirt buttons?”

“To help him breathe!” Lana’s voice was sincere, bolstered by her own wolf’s protective instinct. Her gaze met his unflinching, ice-cold eyes. The subtle intimidation of his stare alone made her wolf crouch, defensive but restrained.

He studied her for a long moment. Lana pressed on, voice calm but firm. “I have no ulterior motive. Kade isn’t someone I’m interested in. Even if he were standing there half-naked, I wouldn’t... I wouldn’t think anything.”

Victor’s eyebrow arched slightly, and then he moved with decisive efficiency, lifting Kade onto his side of the sofa. “How much has he had to drink?”

“Less than three bottles,” Lana replied, leaning back slightly to watch him, aware of the commanding presence beside her. Victor’s wolf trailed Kade’s movements, a subtle undercurrent of dominance ensuring the younger wolf’s safety.

9:44 Fri, Sep 12

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Lana's heart was still racing. Victor's gaze lingered on her briefly, a silent warning and a reminder of their shared past—a past where wolves had fought, marked, and bled alongside humans, bound by territory, loyalty, and unspoken rules of

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Lana froze mid-step, her wolf stiffening in her chest. Victor's offer to escort her home felt less like protection and more like a subtle reminder of past dominance.

"I'll send you back," he added, glancing at Kade sprawled drunkenly across the lounge sofa.

Lana's pulse spiked violently. She wasn't about to let her former mate drive her home. "No- no, you just take care of him. I'll... I'll find a driver myself," she said quickly, fidgeting as her wolf bristled at the proximity of danger, sensing Victor's presence as a predator still very much aware of the terrain.

Victor's dark eyes narrowed, almost imperceptibly, but the intensity was enough to make Lana's wolf crouch in caution. His thin lips parted, words deliberate and cold: "Follow."

She exhaled sharply, realizing resistance was futile. Victor's control radiated like an invisible chain, strong enough to tether even a wolf as stubborn as hers. Reluctantly, she moved to the passenger side, climbing in with a mix of frustration and submission.

Victor settled behind the wheel, the vehicle's sleek black body reflecting the dim neon lights outside the Ashbourne lounge. Lana gave the address, her tone clipped, unyielding, though her pulse raced as her wolf instinctively watched his every movement. The car slid smoothly into motion, the engine's low growl echoing her racing heartbeat.

Inside, the air was tense. Silence draped over the car like a heavy cloak. Lana's eyes kept flicking toward Victor, whose gaze remained fixed on the road ahead. Time seemed to stretch. Victor had grown since their last encounter—no longer the boyish figure of years ago. His posture was rigid, yet refined; his presence exuded a quiet, intoxicating authority, like the moonlight illuminating the alpha in his prime. The wolf in her chest growled softly, unnerved yet inexplicably drawn to the aura of power radiating from him.

The car slowed near her building. Lana quickly unbuckled her seatbelt, preparing to escape into the safety of her apartment complex. Her wolf bristled, alert to every sound, every movement outside. But before she could step out, Victor's voice cut through the quiet, low and deliberate:

"After we parted ways... have you ever regretted it?"

Her body stiffened. “No. I’m relieved we broke up,” she said firmly, trying to mask the tremor in her chest, trying to hide the residual fear her wolf instinctively sensed.

Victor’s hand shot out, seizing her wrist with a strength that was firm, measured, and

9:44 Fri, Sep

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unnervingly intimate. His eyes bore into hers, dark and unreadable. “Relieved? You truly hated being with me?”

Even as his grip held her wrist, there was restraint—a wolf marking its territory without inflicting harm, keeping control while allowing freedom to exist in theory.

“I didn’t hate being with you... I was just... like a wolf fed too much rich meat,” Lana replied with a faint laugh, her wolf lowering its head slightly in submission, trying to hide her internal conflict. “Eventually, it grows tiresome.”

Victor’s piercing gaze remained unblinking, and for a long moment, the only sound was the hum of the car engine and the distant city noises outside.

“Victor... can you release me now?” Lana asked, forcing calm into her voice, though her chest tightened from the latent tension.

He finally released her wrist. Lana slid out of the car with a deliberate grace, wolf instincts still coiled beneath her calm exterior. She offered a teasing remark as she closed the door behind her. “If ever you miss the past, Victor... don’t think I wouldn’t consider revisiting it. Even something once tiresome can be appetizing again, occasionally.”

She caught the glint of cold amusement—or perhaps irritation—in his eyes before turning, walking away with deliberate independence. Wolves might be drawn to their territory, but some prey preferred to choose their own path.

Lana’s wolf relaxed fractionally, though it remained alert, scanning the city streets for potential threats. In the grand scheme of things, Victor Ashford was no longer a wolf she needed to hunt—he was a challenge she could safely disengage from.

The next day, Lana accompanied Freya Thorne on a shopping trip. The Capital’s SkyVex Armaments district buzzed with energy as urban wolves and humans moved through the markets, carrying bags brimming with goods.

“By the way,” Lana said, brushing a loose strand of hair from her face, “you didn’t come back to my place last night. Were you at Silas’s instead?”

Freya’s lips curved into a faint, knowing smile. “Yes. I wanted to, but Silas... insisted I stay. He claimed it was because of the scent. That the perfume incident earlier had triggered memories, and he feared another night of restless dreams.”

Lana raised an eyebrow, curiosity piqued. “So... are you planning to cohabit with him?”

“Seems like it,” Freya admitted without hesitation. Her wolf twitched at the thought, protective yet intrigued by the presence of another alpha in close proximity.

9:44 Fri, Sep 12

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Lana’s smirk turned mischievous. “Just make sure you take precautions. Unless, of course, you’re ready for a child.”

Freya laughed, shaking her head, her wolf’s fur bristling at the teasing. “Even if we’re cohabiting, it hasn’t come to that step yet.”

“Yet,” Lana said knowingly. “And don’t tell me you haven’t ever felt the desire to... consume him entirely.”

Freya’s ears twitched. Perhaps a little, but she refused to answer directly, letting the subtle tension hang between them like the scent of musk and pine after a storm.

Their conversation paused abruptly as Freya’s gaze hardened. Across the plaza, near the gleaming towers of SilverTech Forgeworks, Caelum Grafton’s mother, Eleanor, and sister Giselle, carrying large shopping bags, were walking alongside Aurora, the newly appointed female pilot of the Bluemoon Airborne Wing.

Freya’s wolf growled low in warning. The Capital was sprawling, yet here they were—enemies of the past, manifesting in the present, crossing paths like the inevitable collision of predator

and prey.

“Trouble,” Freya muttered under her breath. Lana followed her gaze, understanding

immediately. Fate, it seemed, had a penchant for sharpening the claws of wolf packs, even in the most mundane settings.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV

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Giselle, ever the brat of the Siverfang Pack and the sister of Caelum Grafton, was the first to approach, her posture haughty and her wolf pulsing with a sharp, entitled energy. She fixed Freya with a sharp, predatory grin. "Freya Thorne. How is it that no matter where I go, I keep running into you?"

Freya's gaze was icy, her wolf tightening like a coiled spring beneath her skin. "I'm just as curious," she said coolly, her voice steady as she met Giselle's insolent stare. "I didn't know you had the leisure to stroll through the city. Though, I suppose after your court hearings, you won't have much time for shopping anymore."

Giselle's smirk widened, venomous. "You must be hoping to see me and my mother behind bars. Too bad for you, your calculations are off. My brother hired a top-tier lawyer. Neither my mother nor I will suffer any consequences."

Lana's wolf snorted under her breath, her voice sharp with scorn. "Only a fool thinks they can escape justice. You and your mother tricked Freya into that hotel room, tried to drug her— everybody saw it on the hotel's giant screen! Tell me, which third-rate lawyer gave you the idea that you'd walk away unscathed?"

Giselle was momentarily silenced. Eleanor stepped forward, indignation burning in her eyes. "How dare you speak like that? My son is wealthy—how could he possibly hire a third-rate lawyer?"

Lana's laugh was low and bitter, wolfish, sharp enough to cut through the tension like a fang. "Wealthy? Everyone in the industry knows Siverfang Pack has been bleeding funds. Your son's 'wealth' exists only because Freya made it possible. Without her, how much could he truly earn?"

Eleanor's lips curled in anger. "Freya? What could she possibly do? My son built everything himself. Thankfully, he divorced that woman, and now with Aurora as his co-pilot, only a pilot of her caliber deserves to be my daughter-in-law."

Lana's laughter was sharp as the bite of frost in winter air. "A pilot? We'll see how long Aurora lasts in that role!" Her wolf snapped, tail flicking as if ready to pounce.

Aurora's expression stiffened, her pride pricked. "Freya, no matter what, you shouldn't allow your friend to speak this way about me," she said, her voice carrying the faint but unmistakable tremor of nervousness. Wolves don't always admit fear aloud—but Freya could smell it on her.

9:44 Fri, **Sep** 12

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81

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"I don't see it as defamation," Freya replied calmly, wolf coiled beneath her skin, ready to strike. "The City Fire Department's report should be out soon. How about we make a little wager? Let's see if you can continue as a co-pilot once that investigation is public."

Aurora's eyes flickered with something like guilt—or perhaps fear—but Giselle and Eleanor looked utterly baffled. "What investigation?" they asked in unison.

Aurora's gaze darted nervously, a flicker of shadow passing over her wolf. "Nothing. Ignore her."

Freya's wolf growled softly, sensing the lie, the subtle scent of evasion. Giselle and Eleanor were entirely unaware of the scandal—Aurora's failure to rescue a fellow pilot during a live-streamed emergency had become headline news, yet the two women had never bothered to follow it. Giselle was too occupied with shopping, beauty products, and luxury bags; Eleanor with calls to the old country and television dramas.

Lana stepped closer, her wolf bristling as she mirrored Freya's silent warning. "Aurora, you witnessed a colleague ignite and didn't save them. You admitted it on the live stream. Do you really think you can remain co-pilot after that?"

Aurora's face paled, her pulse quickening. Her wolf wanted to flee, but social instincts rooted her in place.

Before tension could escalate, a new voice cut through the air—rich, measured, and carrying the authority of an alpha. "Even if Aurora didn't act, in critical moments, one might prioritize personal survival," Caelum Grafton interjected, stepping forward. His wolf's scent was calm, a controlled predator measuring the pack dynamics around him. "The colleague's death could be unfortunate. There's no need to smear Aurora."

Freya's gaze sharpened, wolf instincts snorting in warning. "Really?" she said icily, staring at Aurora. "Was it really just unfortunate? Or was it negligence? Did your inaction cost that life?"

Aurora's chest tightened, her wolf shrinking back under the predatory focus of Freya Thorne. "What... what are you implying?" she stammered. "Are you accusing me of guilt? If I were truly guilty, wouldn't the authorities have arrested me?"

"Perhaps they will," Freya said softly, wolf senses picking up the slightest tremor in Aurora's pulse. Her words were calm, but the weight behind them carried the bite of inevitability.

Aurora shivered. The world seemed to constrict around her, her wolf curling defensively. There had been no one else around during the incident—how could Freya possibly know? She shook the thought away, trying to maintain composure. "Freya, your accusations only reveal your envy. I am righteous. The law will not apprehend a good person without reason."

"Good?" Freya's laughter was sharp, wolfish, a low growl under the surface. "Are you even a

9:44 Fri, Sep 12

good person?"

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81

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Caelum frowned, stepping closer, wolf protective yet restrained. "Freya, how can you speak this way about Aurora?"

Eleanor's expression darkened, disgust evident in every line of her body. "It's fortunate my son divorced you!"

"Indeed," Giselle added, voice dripping with superficiality, "Aurora even treats us to luxury shopping trips—designer clothes, bags. Not like you, Freya. Three years of marriage, and the gifts were insignificant trinkets you praised as treasures."

Freya's grin sharpened, wolf tail flicking with disdain. "Yes, and he used a two-hundred-dollar ring as a wedding token. Did he think that was enough?"

Caelum's expression shifted, uncomfortable under the weight of public scrutiny and Freya's biting words. Eleanor's hand shot forward, striking toward Freya. "You little—how dare you speak of my son like that!"

Freya's reflexes were fast as lightning, wolf instincts guiding her movement. She caught Eleanor's hand mid-swing and spun it aside effortlessly. Eleanor stumbled back, clutching her wrist, hissing in indignation. "You-Freya Thorne! I'll call the authorities for assaulting an elder!"

Freya's eyes glinted, wolf senses flaring. "Go ahead. I've nothing to fear from lies or threats."

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

[A Warrior Luna's Awakening](#)

[Ascension 226](#)

Third Person's POV

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Freya's gaze remained icy as she watched Eleanor make her theatrics, clearly trying to manipulate the scene in front of onlookers. Siverfang Pack's matriarch, as always, thought she could control everything with bluster and theatrics-but Freya's wolf coiled tightly in her chest, a silent growl rumbling under her ribs at the audacity of Eleanor's act.

Caelum, standing just beside his mother, spoke in a low, firm tone, his wolf emanating a controlled but sharp aura. "Freya, you'd better apologize to my mother right now."

Freya's amber eyes flicked to him, her voice cutting through the tension like a hunting knife. "She attacked me first. I see no reason to apologize."

"Regardless," Caelum's tone hardened, wolf bristling beneath the skin, "my mother is a senior. Even if she scolds you or strikes you lightly, can't you tolerate it?"

Lana standing a step behind Freya, let out a low, wolfish laugh, her tail flicking in barely restrained amusement. "Ha! I've never heard such a ridiculous joke. Caelum, you're divorced from Freya-what reason does she have to tolerate you or your mother?"

Aurora stepped forward, her wolf a quiet shadow of pride and propriety. "Freya, you shouldn't encourage your friend to insult my elders," she said, though the faint tremor in her voice betrayed her inner unease. Wolves can hide their fear, but never fully.

Freya's gaze sharpened, wolf coiled, dangerous. "I'm not insulting them," she said softly, though every syllable carried the weight of her predator's focus. "But perhaps the

investigation report from City's Fire Authority will clarify whether your inaction had consequences, Aurora."

Eleanor's hand flexed in frustration, her wolf growling faintly beneath her skin. Giselle added her voice, shrill and sharp. "Freya, you just can't stand that my mother favors Aurora over you! Tell me, what makes you deserving of her kindness? Can you compare to Aurora?"

Before Freya could respond, a massive electronic screen in the center of the mall flickered to life. The familiar, polished voice of the City news anchor boomed across the shoppers, drawing every gaze in the vicinity.

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"... Following a thorough investigation into the border wildfire five years ago, the Fire Department has submitted its findings to the local government. After review, it has been decided to revoke Aurora's title as Fire Hero..."

Aurora's wolf stiffened. Her tail twitched, heart slamming against her ribcage. She staggered slightly, her body trembling as disbelief washed over her. How could this be? She had spent

9:44 Fri, **Sep 12**

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81

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years covering every angle, paying favors, ensuring her reputation remained untarnished-and now the title was gone.

Before she could process the loss, another news clip began to play, sent from a press conference held by Wing, the aviation conglomerate she worked for. Freya's wolf's senses heightened, eyes narrowing as she observed the Alpha's reaction.

"...Following the internal review, Wing has decided to terminate Ms. Aurora's employment. Effective immediately, she will no longer serve in any capacity with Wing..."

Aurora's wolf recoiled, pulse pounding. Her face drained of color as if the life had been sucked from her. The text message notification pinged almost simultaneously on her WolfComm device. Trembling hands opened it. Confirmation: Wing formally terminating her labor

contract.

“Mom, what’s going on? Why are they taking her title? And Wing—is she really being dismissed?” Giselle demanded, confusion and a flicker of panic in her voice.

Eleanor frowned, trying to appear composed despite the sudden upheaval in their carefully curated social world. “What is this about?”

Caelum stepped forward, voice measured, wolf controlling the surge of tension in the air. “Mother, hold your questions. Let’s understand the situation first.”

Giselle, fidgeting, pressed, “Will she still be a co-pilot?” Her wolf quivered; the thought of losing status unsettled her more than she’d like to admit.

Lana’s laugh rippled through the mall, wolfish, carrying an edge that drew a few startled glances from passing shoppers. “Aurora’s downfall is deserved. She ignored a colleague in peril, had a fire extinguisher at hand, and yet abandoned them. Now, not only is her Fire Hero title revoked, but Wing has terminated her contract.”

Freya’s amber eyes glinted dangerously, wolf coiled and taut. “Let’s not forget, Aurora’s original rise to co-pilot was largely due to the Fire Hero recognition. Now that’s gone, her position in aviation could very well vanish as well. I wonder which pack—or company—would dare take her in again.”

Every word Lana spoke carved deeper into Eleanor and Giselle’s expressions. The elder matriarch’s face twisted from indignation to disbelief. Giselle’s scowl turned almost frantic. The mall’s shoppers had begun pointing, whispering, the scent of scandal spreading through the air like a predator’s musk.

Aurora’s face flushed, red-white in contrast, and she muttered, voice tight. “Caelum... I want to return home immediately.”

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181

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“Of course. I’ll take you back,” he replied, wolf guiding every movement, yet restrained to avoid exacerbating the situation further.

Suddenly, Eleanor lunged, grabbing Caelum’s arm, anger spiking like a wolf scent in the wind. “So that’s it? I see now why you took us shopping—so we’d soften to your loss, so we wouldn’t speak up!”

Aurora’s jaw tightened. She wanted to defend the act, but the wolf inside her recoiled, aware of the power dynamics at play. “Aunt Eleanor... it’s not like that,” she began, voice careful, precise.

But Eleanor's wolf surged, claws metaphorical and sharp, her ego wounded by the social exposure and the loss of prestige. "Don't lie to me! Do you think we won't notice?"

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A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV

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Eleanor's eyes burned with disdain as she turned on Aurora, the mask of approval she had worn earlier slipping away in an instant. Her wolf aura lashed out like a whip.

"You're no longer a co-pilot, and now you carry a stain so deep it reeks of disgrace. How dare you presume to be worthy of my son?" she spat, her voice sharp enough to draw heads from nearby shoppers. "Caelum, I forbid you from staying with this woman."

"Mother!" Caelum's face darkened, his wolf bristling under the sting of her words. His mother's outburst, in such a public place, was humiliating—especially in front of Freya, who stood silently, her golden eyes glinting with predator's amusement.

Aurora stiffened, humiliation tightening her chest. Her wolf pressed against her ribs, restless and cornered. "Eleanor," she bit out, the formal address ringing hollow, "Caelum and I are bound by true affection. You have no right to tear us apart."

But in her heart, she knew better. She was cornered, stripped of her title, her position, and now clung to Caelum as her last foothold. Without him, her wolf would spiral into nothingness.

A sharp crack tore through the air. Eleanor's hand struck across Aurora's face, the sound of the slap echoing like a whip in the cavernous shopping hall. Aurora staggered, pain blooming hot across her cheek,

"True affection?" Eleanor sneered, wolf aura heavy, choking the space around them. "You're nothing but a scheming temptress. A usurper. A mistress who seduced my son."

Aurora's wolf snarled in protest, but her pride bled through her eyes as she clutched her stinging cheek. "Even if you are Caelum's mother, you cannot treat me this way!"

"Can't I?" Eleanor snapped.

From the sidelines, Lana gave a mocking laugh, her wolf sharp and unrestrained, enjoying the spectacle. “Aurora, weren’t you the one who told Freya not to quarrel with her elders? You boasted that if it were you, you would endure anything—insults, even blows—for the sake of respect.”

Aurora’s throat constricted, words jamming like broken glass. She had said that—smugly, when she thought it made her superior to Freya. Now those words turned back on her like a poisoned blade, burying deep.

Her wolf whimpered with humiliation.

She reached desperately for Caelum’s sleeve, her voice trembling, almost pleading, “Caelum...”

But before he could speak, Freya’s voice sliced through the chaos, cool and edged with derision. Her wolf pulsed dominance, amber gaze pinning him. “Caelum, since you’re so devoted to filial piety, shouldn’t you remind Aurora of her own words? That your mother is a senior, and even if she scolds her or raises her hand, Aurora should endure?”

Caelum froze. The weight of Freya’s words crashed against him, his wolf’s throat closing with shame. He could not answer—his loyalty to his mother clashed violently with his bond to Aurora. His jaw clenched, but the words refused to form.

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Eleanor, emboldened, unleashed another torrent of venom, her wolf baring its fangs. Aurora’s pride shattered under the weight, and at last she snapped back, her voice shrill with desperation. The retaliation only stoked Eleanor’s fury further, and soon Giselle, Caelum’s sister, joined the fray, her wolf spitting insults like venom.

The argument descended into a full-blown pack squabble, claws unsheathed not in flesh but in words sharp enough to scar. Eleanor’s shrieks, Aurora’s desperate protests, Giselle’s taunts—their wolves clashed with snarls that seemed to reverberate through the walls of the shopping mall.

“Mother! Aurora! Enough!” Caelum roared, stepping between them, his Alpha aura flaring to keep the peace. Yet even his dominance couldn’t entirely smother the chaos. The scene had already drawn too many eyes. Wolves and humans alike whispered, some raising their WolfComm devices to record, the scandal seeping into the air like blood in water.

Freya watched with arms folded, her wolf calm, regal, every inch the predator surveying prey that had turned on one another. She turned to Lana, lips curving faintly. “We’ve seen enough. Let’s leave.”

Lana’s eyes gleamed with mischief. “Leave? I could watch this ‘dogfight’ all day. Not long ago, they were united against you, and now look—mother, daughter, and lover tearing each other apart. It’s art.”

Freya arched a brow, her wolf flicking its tail in amusement. “Stay if you want.”

Lana gave the gathering crowd another glance. Several were openly recording, murmuring with growing excitement. She smirked. “No, you’re right. This will hit the network before long. I’ll enjoy it replayed a hundred times over.”

Together, the two women walked out of the mall, their wolves brushing the air with dominance, leaving the chaos behind them.

Just beyond the glass doors, a sleek black vehicle was parked. Silas stepped out as Freya approached, his broad frame and commanding aura marking him instantly as the Ironclad Coalition’s Alpha. He moved smoothly, as though this meeting was planned all along.

“Done with your shopping?” he asked casually, his wolf giving a respectful brush of recognition as he took the bags from her arms without hesitation. His hands dwarfed the delicate handles, setting them. effortlessly into the trunk..

Freya tilted her head, studying him. “Yes. But the mall’s central screen... the sudden broadcast of Aurora’s scandals. That was no coincidence, was it? If I’m not mistaken, this mall is under Whitmor holdings.”

Silas’s eyes darkened, the flicker of a predator’s grin tugging at his lips. “You’re right. And Aurora dared to humiliate you in my territory. If she thought she could wound you, she will pay the price My Luna is not prey. She is the storm.”

Freya’s wolf stirred with satisfaction, silent but fierce.

Meanwhile, across the city, Jocelyn Thorne sat in her chamber, her fingers tracing over a set of old photographs she had recovered days earlier. Her wolf fur bristled with unease. She had already confirmed with Ken Thorne, the patriarch, that the boy in the photographs was Eric Thorne—Freya’s brother.

But why did his face feel so familiar? Why did her wolf’s instincts itch with recognition, as though this wasn’t merely a brother long/absent, but a ghost that lingered closer than she had ever admitted?

Suddenly Jocelyn’s breath hitched. She lunged to her shelves, pulling free a leather-bound family album.

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Pages turned rapidly beneath her hands until she froze, her wolf's breath catching in her throat.

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A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV

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Caelum had barely managed to soothe Aurora's trembling rage and persuade her to return home when he escorted his mother Eleanor and younger sister Giselle back to the Silverfang Pack's villa. Ever since his separation from Freya, Eleanor and Giselle had moved into his residence, their presence a constant reminder of pack duty pressing upon his shoulders.

The ride back was heavy with Eleanor's fury. Her wolf aura pressed against the car walls, sharp and unrelenting.

"This Aurora," she spat, her tone like venom, "she is unreliable and reckless. I once thought having a female pilot from the Bluemoon Airborne Wing as a mate would give our Pack prestige. But what happened? She was discharged—disgraced—and now she's all over the news for cowardice. If word spreads through the packs, if the Packs whisper that Silverfang's future Luna abandoned her comrades, how will I hold my head high? They'll rip into us like carrion birds!"

Giselle, seated beside her mother, smirked as she pulled up feeds on her WolfComm. "It's not just whispers anymore, Mother. Look." She angled the screen toward Eleanor. The video was clear: Aurora, in her pilot's uniform, stumbling back as flames engulfed a fellow wingmate. An extinguisher was within reach, but Aurora had fled, her confession caught on camera. The footage had gone viral, every comment below it dripping with outrage.

“She admitted it herself,” Giselle read aloud with relish. “She saw her comrade burning and chose to run. Listen to the comments: ‘Coward.’ ‘Traitor to the wing.’ ‘No Luna of worth.’” She laughed, though her eyes gleamed with envy. “If she marries into Silverfang, every insult will fall on us. On me.”

Eleanor clutched at her chest, her wolf howling in protest. “Caelum, I tell you now—I forbid Aurora from setting paw across the Silverfang threshold. If you marry her, I will end myself before the Pack and let my blood stain the Primal Stones!”

“Mother!” Caelum’s head throbbed, his wolf caught between loyalty and love. “Aurora was terrified, yes, but fear does not make her evil. She never meant to betray her comrades. Must she be cast aside because of one mistake? Must I abandon her just because she lost her station?”

Eleanor’s eyes flashed, wolf dominance rolling from her. “It is not one mistake—it is a scar that brands her for life! If you keep her, every Alpha in the Capital will sneer at us. She will stain Silverfang’s bloodline.”

*Brother, listen to Mother,” Giselle chimed in, her voice sweet but edged with poison. “Aurora’s name is ruined. If you wed her, every time I step outside the villa, wolves will whisper behind my back. “There goes Giselle, sister to the Alpha who mated/with a coward.’ Do you want that for us?”

Caelum’s jaw tightened. “Yet not long ago you both praised her. You told me she was strong, worthy, destined to soar higher than most females. What’s changed?”

“What’s changed,” Eleanor snapped, “is that her mask has shattered. She is no longer Bluemoon’s shining daughter. She is nothing but shame.”

Caelum’s voice deepened, his wolf rising, protective. “She is also my savior. Do you forget? Without Aurora, I would not have survived. How can I turn from her now, when the world scorns her? Would you have me dishonor the bond of gratitude and love both?”

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Eleanor’s lips trembled, but her anger burned hotter. She pressed a hand dramatically to her chest, tears forming. “Then you would rather watch your own mother die of grief? Is that the Alpha you will be?”

Caelum rubbed his temples, helpless. His wolf prowled within, torn between blood and bond.

Giselle's eyes glinted as she twisted the knife. "Brother, Aurora's debt is already paid. You gifted her jewels -millions worth, enough to compensate ten lifetimes. I remember the ledger Freya Thorne threw at your press conference. Fifty million in gems, wasn't it? That's more than she deserves."

Envy flared in her chest at the memory. Caelum had never gifted her so much as a silver chain.

Caelum opened his mouth to argue, but his WolfComm buzzed sharply. He answered, and as the voice on the other end spoke, his expression darkened. "I have to return to SilverTech Forgeworks," he said abruptly, rising. "The stock is plunging. Investors are panicking over Aurora's scandal. They're tying her disgrace to me, to us."

Eleanor cursed under her breath. Giselle only smiled thinly. "See? Already she drags you down."

Without another word, Caelum stormed from the villa, his wolf bristling at the storm brewing around him. At Forgeworks, crisis meetings ran deep into the night. By the time he finished smoothing over the bleeding wound of Silverfang's reputation, it was already dark when he reached Aurora's dwelling.

Aurora flung herself into his arms the moment she saw him, her wolf clinging desperately. "Caelum! I feared you wouldn't come."

His arms closed around her automatically, though his mind was heavy. "Of course I came."

Her eyes burned, frustration and desperation written across her face. "I never thought it would come to this. Yes, I faltered in the fire, but I fought too! I pulled others from the blaze, yet they strip me of my title as though I am nothing. And Bluemoon-" Her voice cracked, wolf growling low. "They dismissed me without warning. They will regret it. I will rise again, stronger, untouchable. I will make those who spit on me bow."

She looked up at him then, her wolf's plea naked in her eyes. "Do you believe me, Caelum? Do you believe I will reclaim my honor?"

He forced a smile, though it tasted bitter. "I believe."

Relief softened her face. She exhaled shakily, clinging tighter. "Good. Then, let us not delay any longer. Your mother and sister may scorn me, but when this storm passes, we should announce our union. Let us be betrothed. I cannot endure more wasted years."

Caelum's smile faltered. His wolf shifted uneasily, "Aurora... not now. We must wait."

Her body went rigid, "Wait? Do you regret us?"

“No,” he said quickly, then faltered. “It’s only... Silver Tech Forgeworks reels from today’s disaster. The Pack watches me, the Council whispers. My mother and Giselle refuse to accept you. For now... we must be patient.”

Aurora’s wolf bared its teeth in wounded pride. She stepped back, eyes narrowing. “Patient? Or

abandoned?”

Caelum swallowed, trapped between the woman who had once saved him and the Pack whose gaze **never**

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relented. The night pressed heavy, full of judgment, and the wolves howled beyond the villa walls.

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A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

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I was still staying in Silas’s apartment, even though he had made it clear he wanted me to move into the Whitmor main estate. To him, it was natural—he was the Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition, and I was the woman he’d chosen. But to me, it felt wrong. We weren’t married. I wasn’t ready to step into his ancestral home and face the weight of that commitment.

“When do you plan to marry me then?” Silas asked suddenly.

I nearly choked on the tea I hadn’t yet swallowed. “Marry you?”

He leaned closer, bracing his hands on the sofa on either side of me, caging me in with the raw, feral authority only an Alpha could carry. His presence pressed down on me like the shadow of a predator in the wild. My wolf stirred uneasily beneath my skin, caught between instinctive submission and a stubborn defiance.

“Or is this just a game to you?” he murmured, his voice low, dangerous. His dark eyes glittered with a heat that was both alluring and suffocating. “A diversion, until you tire of me and cast me aside?”

That look in his eyes—it was hunger, possessive, almost primal. For a heartbeat, I truly felt like prey cornered by a beast who would not take no for an answer.

I forced myself to push him back gently, setting my teacup down on the table. “We’ve barely been together. Talking about marriage now is... too soon.”

But he didn’t retreat. His arm coiled around my waist in a swift, inescapable grip, drawing me against him. His lips hovered close to mine, his voice soft but edged with command. “You mean you’ve never imagined it? Never thought of being mine fully?”

There was something in his tone—an Alpha’s demand wrapped in the velvet lure of desire. His eyes, usually sharp and cold, now shimmered with a warmth that reminded me of moonlight. He was dangerous, yes. But gods, he was also devastatingly beautiful in this moment. Like a predator courting, softening its fangs only to draw you deeper into its snare.

My throat tightened, and I swallowed hard. I wasn’t blind to the yearning in him. Nor the gentleness beneath all that dominance. He wanted me. All of me.

But marriage... My first had been a battlefield, a mistake I had clawed my way free from during the Lunar Severance Phase. I wouldn’t stumble blindly into another bond. Not again. Not without certainty.

“I’ve already been through one broken union,” I whispered, my voice steadier than I felt. “If I marry again, I need to be sure. Silas, I care for you—I like you more than I ever expected—but I don’t yet know if it’s deep enough to bind my life to yours. Give us time. Let us truly know one another before we speak of

VOWL.”

His grip didn’t loosen. If anything, it tightened, as if he could anchor me to him through sheer force. His eyes darkened with an intensity that made my heart pound. “And what if time convinces you otherwise? What if you wake one day and decide I’m not enough?”

The fear beneath his growl caught me off guard. Slowly, I lifted a hand, brushing my fingers along the sharp line of his cheek. “Then it means you deserve someone better suited to you. Someone who can give

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Mon, 15 Sept

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you everything without hesitation. But I don't think that will happen. Because day by day, I find myself... drawn closer to you."

I saw the way his gaze softened then, the hard Alpha mask cracking for just a heartbeat. I leaned forward and pressed my lips to his—this time my choice, my initiation. "I think," I murmured against his mouth, "I'll only grow to like you more."

His eyes lowered, lingering not on my face but on my body. No—on my belly. His breath caught, and for a moment, he froze. Something flickered across his expression, a shadow of thought I couldn't quite grasp.

"Silas?" I asked softly. I had felt the shift in him, the sudden tension when moments ago he had been lost in me.

"Nothing," he said too quickly.

I frowned. "Don't lie to me. I've told you before—I don't want secrets between us. If I choose to give myself to someone again, it will only be to a mate who trusts me, and whom I can trust in return."

His jaw tightened. He was silent for a long while, before a bitter smile pulled at his lips. "I don't want to become what my father was. He tried to trap my mother, to bind her with blood and children. He thought control could keep love from slipping through his hands. But she still left. She left him as if he was nothing."

He shut his eyes, the pain raw and naked in his voice. "And I fear, Freya... that you'll leave me the same way."

My chest ached at the vulnerability in him. For all his Alpha strength, Silas was haunted by abandonment. His fear wasn't of losing dominance—it was of losing the one thing he couldn't command: loyalty freely given.

I reached for his hand, entwining my fingers with his. "Then don't chain me, Silas. Just let me choose you. If you keep being the man I can admire, the Alpha I can trust, then I promise—I won't leave."

His eyes snapped open, fierce and searching, as though he wanted to etch my words into his soul. And in that moment, I knew this wasn't just courtship. It was the slow,

dangerous binding of two wolves circling closer, teeth bared and hearts unguarded, daring each other not to break away.

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III

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV>

+5 Free **Coins**

Freya cupped Silas's face between her hands, her voice steady yet carrying a softness that wrapped around the Alpha's restless spirit.

"Don't worry. You'll never become like your father. And I am not your mother. I would never take my own life."

For a heartbeat, Silas froze. His obsidian eyes locked on her, wide and disbelieving, until at last the hard line of his mouth broke, curving faintly upward.

"You're right," he murmured hoarsely. "You're nothing like her. You're stronger. You burn with life, Freya- fire that no storm can snuff out."

There was truth in that. Even when she had been cornered by betrayal, hunted in shadows, Freya Thorne had clawed her way back. She was born of Bloodmoon steel and Stormveil resilience; submission was not written in her blood. She would never choose silence in death over defiance in life.

Silas tightened his hold around her, voice rough, almost pleading.

"My mother despised my father. She hated everything about him. But you—you like me. You'll love me, won't you?" His tone cracked with vulnerability, as if he begged for a vow strong enough to shatter his deepest fear.

Freya's amber wolf-eyes softened. "Yes. I like you. And I will love you. I already am, perhaps more than I realize."

The Ironclad Alpha pulled her into his arms, burying his face in the crook of her neck. His breath fanned against her pulse, inhaling the scent of wild pine and storm that clung to her skin. Her presence soothed him in ways words never could. She had the power to send his heart into turmoil, and just as easily to quiet the storm.

And he he was becoming incapable of surviving without her.

The next day, Aurora stepped into the towering glass halls of Bluemoon Wing, her posture straight, jaw lifted, trying to summon the pride that once carried her through ranks of pilots. She had come to plead her case before the executives—to convince them not to discard her after years of service.

But the faces that once greeted her with courtesy and admiration now turned away as if she were diseased. Their wolf auras were cold, some **even** disdainful. One elder wolf, a senior officer, met her squarely with hard eyes.

“You should be grateful, Aurora. Being dismissed is mercy. Do you have any idea how much your recklessness has cost Bluemoon Wing’s reputation?”

Aurora’s hands clenched. “Reckless? I didn’t refuse to save anyone. I only prioritized my own survival when the aircraft was failing. What crime is that?”

The officer sneered, his fangy glinting faintly under the fluorescent lights. “If, when danger strikes, a pilot **values** her own hide above her passengers, what wold would entrust their life to you? And don’t **flatter yourself**. Had it not been for the ‘Fire-Rescue Heroine’ medal you received five years **ago**, do you think

your skill alone would have carried you so quickly into the role of co-pilot?”

The words slammed into her like claws. Aurora staggered back, eyes wide.

“What did you just say?”

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“You heard me. Your flying is average. Your leadership? Mediocre. Wing pushed you forward because you were a propaganda darling. Now? That image is shattered. We have no reason to keep you.”

Humiliation scorched her face. She had always believed she was destined to be Wing’s first female captain, the prodigy who rose above the glass ceiling. She wore her uniform with pride, her every flight logged with devotion. Yet here, in their eyes, she was nothing more than a symbol that had outlived its usefulness.

When she stepped out of the office, the whispers began. Wolves she once called colleagues glanced at her with sneers, their voices dripping venom as they gossiped. Mockery followed her down the hall like a scarlet brand.

Her nails bit into her palms. Rage burned where pride had been wounded. One day, she swore, they would choke on their contempt. One day, they would bow their heads in awe.

Then her WolfComm buzzed in her pocket. A name flashed across the screen, and her heart skipped. Her face paled, then darkened. She answered.

Meanwhile, in a quiet café, Lana leaned across the table toward Kade, her voice edged with irritation.

“That night—you were drunk. Why did you let your uncle come to fetch you?”

Kade arched a brow, lounging lazily in his chair, his aura stretching with the lazy dominance of a predator who knew no one here dared challenge him.—

“Why not? He had the time. He came.”

“You know perfectly well what history he and I had. And you let him pick you up? Did it never occur to you how awkward that would make things for me?”

“I assumed your hide was thick enough not to care.” His smirk was sharp, unapologetic.

Lana’s eyes rolled so hard they nearly vanished into her skull. “Unbelievable. Tell me—did he say anything to you afterward?”

Kade’s wolfish grin widened. “Should he have?”

Her lips pressed tight. If not, then good. Better left buried.

But then, from the corner of her eye, Lana caught sight of something across the street. She stiffened. There, slinking half-hidden beneath a hood, was Aurora. And she wasn’t alone. A man walked beside her, **his** hand brushing hers as they slipped discreetly into a run-down lodge.

Lana’s eyes narrowed to dangerous slits. Aurora’s furtive behavior screamed of guilt. The man’s scent was unfamiliar. Why was the Bluemoon Beta’s daughter speaking into a roadside den with another wolf?

Her lips curled. Interesting. Very interesting.

Without a word, she grabbed Kade’s wrist and pulled him up.

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“Come with me.”

“Where?” Kade growled, annoyed at being yanked around like a pup.

“To that inn.”

The young Alpha found himself, for the first time, skulking like a rogue as Lana dragged him across the street. His jaw clenched. He had walked The Capital’s streets unchallenged, never once lowering his pride. Yet here he was, sneaking like a thief.

“What the hell are you doing?” he hissed.

“Quiet,” Lana snapped. “Keep your voice down. Don’t draw attention.”

Kade nearly barked a laugh. Did she really think two powerful wolves skulking in broad daylight was less suspicious than simply walking in? He muttered under his breath, but followed anyway. Because now, curiosity burned even in him.

What game was Aurora playing? And who was the man at her side?

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