

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

chapter 231-240

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

apter 231

Third Person's POV

Lana's words instantly sharpened Kade's attention.

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"I just saw Aurora walk into that roadside inn with some man," Lana whispered, her voice laced with suspicion. "It felt wrong. Let's go inside too-see what exactly she's hiding."

The wolf-borne instinct in her gut screamed of deceit. Between Aurora and that man, there was something rotten, something unfit to be exposed under moonlight.

"Aurora?" Kade's eyes narrowed into cold slits. He loathed the Bluemoon Beta's daughter with a visceral disgust. If there was filth to uncover in her life, he would gladly rip back the veil and watch her dignity

burn.

"Perfect," he muttered, his wolf stirring under his skin. "If there's scandal, I'll be the one to drag it into the open."

They exchanged a knowing glance, then moved together toward the inn's shadowed doorway.

Across the street, a sleek black car rolled toward the traffic lights. In the front seat, a man leaned forward, squinting through the glass.

"Wait-Victor, isn't that your young wolfling? Your family's little stormbringer? He's walking with a woman. *What*, did he finally get himself a mate?"

From the backseat, Victor lifted his gaze lazily toward the sidewalk. One glance, one heartbeat later, his pupils contracted sharply. His body stilled, the wolf within him going rigid. His eyes locked on the feminine silhouette beside his nephew. Even at a distance, even from behind, he knew her.

Lana Rook.

The name hit him like a silver-tipped blade.

“What the hell—did they just walk into an inn?” the man in the passenger seat exclaimed, baffled. “Victor, your wolfling’s got taste, hasn’t he? But shouldn’t he be at a five-star lodge if he’s trying to charm a she- wolf? Not a filthy roadside den.”

“Turn back. Stop the car.” Victor’s voice cut like winter steel.

The driver hesitated. “What?”

“I said, stop the damn car.” His tone was a low growl now, lethal and final.

Kevin caught sight of Victor’s face in the reflection of the rearview mirror and fell silent. He had known Victor for decades, and only once before had he seen such a storm darken his friend’s expression.

It was years ago, the night Victor received a call. A breakup: A severing. He hadn’t spoken a word then, only carried a darkness in his eyes that threatened to consume him whole. Kevin had thought his friend had gone mad. The meticulous lawyer, the future Alpha-inheritor, so disciplined and controlled—reduced to a beast prowling in grief.

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That same darkness was in his face now.

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The driver braked hard, pulling over. Victor stepped out, his coat sweeping behind him, a cold presence emanating like a blizzard rolling off a mountain peak. Kevin scrambled to follow, muttering under his breath.

“Don’t tell me you’re really going after your nephew... He’s old enough to make his own messes. And that woman—damn, why does she look so damn familiar? Like I’ve seen her somewhere before. Wait. Hold on

The realization struck him mid-sentence. His words faltered, choked.

“...like your ex.”

Victor didn’t answer. He didn’t need to. The killing frost in his aura was confirmation enough.

Kevin's throat went dry. Spirits above, was it possible? That woman—the one Victor had once loved, the one everyone swore was too small for him, too insignificant. A girl with no status, no name worth a song, who had walked away from the heir of the Ashfords like he was nothing.

And Victor had never taken another mate since. Not once.

People whispered he must still crave her, but Victor had dismissed every mention with a mask of indifference. Kevin had believed it was over, a trivial past. Yet seeing him now, bristling with such icy rage, it was clear. It had never been over.

Meanwhile, inside the inn, Aurora stepped into the dim, peeling room behind Lee. Her nose wrinkled in distaste at the stench of mold and dust. She despised such places.

“What do you want?” she snapped.

Lee's smile was sharp, feral. “To talk about my payment. The little matter of the tail sum we agreed on.”

Aurora stiffened. The tail sum. Nearly fifty million marks.

Her blood ran cold. She had no intention of ever paying him. At the time, she had strung him along, promising him the moon once she became Caelum's Luna. By then, who would care whether she was his true savior or not?

But now—now she wasn't Luna yet. If Lee revealed the truth, if Caelum discovered she was nothing but a fraud...

“I don't have that kind of money,” Aurora hissed. “I'm not Grafton's Luna. Not yet.”

“But **you** are still the Bluemoon Beta's daughter,” Lee countered, voice laced with mockery. “Money can always be found, if you're desperate enough. One month. If I don't see the tail sum, I'll tell Caelum everything. That you were never is savior. That you deceived him from the start.”

Aurora's wolf clawed at her insides, furious and afraid. If the lie collapsed now, she would lose everything -the Alpha, the alliance, the future she had clawed toward with bloody nails.

And she knew Lee wasn't bluffing.

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Third Person's POV

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Aurora bit down on her lip, hatred flashing in her eyes. Lee's words cut deep, and she knew they carried truth. The Grafton family already disapproved of her match with Caelum. If he were to discover now that she was not his true savior, he would cast her aside without hesitation.

Not yet. She could not let that happen.

For now, she needed to steady Lee, play along, and buy herself time. Later, she would find a way to silence him permanently.

"Fine," Aurora said coldly, her voice taut with restrained fury. "I'll agree. But this arrangement between us -no third wolf must ever know."

"Of course," Lee replied, smug satisfaction curling his lips.

Meanwhile, in the room next door, Lana pressed her ear tightly to the wall, a glass cupped against it in hopes of amplifying the muffled voices. Her wolf's instincts were sharp, but the walls seemed impenetrable. After a long, fruitless attempt, she pulled back with a scowl.

"What the hell? Even a rundown roadside inn has walls this thick?" she muttered under her breath.

Kade shifted irritably on the chair. "You dragged me into a den like this for nothing? Just to listen to whispers through a wall?" His wolf aura flared, restless.

"We need to know what they're talking about," Lana hissed back, unwilling to admit her frustration. She had even bribed the innkeeper to confirm which room Aurora had entered.

Kade gave her a look of disdain. "Even if you listen all night, you'll hear nothing worth a damn. If you want the truth, we should just smash the door down and drag her out." His wolf craved confrontation, violence sparking in his eyes.

"That would only alert her," Lana argued.

Just then, a knock rattled the door. Lana and Kade exchanged wary glances. Finally, Lana rose, moving cautiously toward it. She cracked it open by a sliver-

And froze.

Her blood ran cold when her gaze met the face she least wanted to see: Victor Ashford.

He stood outside, his expression carved from ice, his storm-grey eyes piercing through the narrow gap in the doorway. The aura of an Alpha/inheritor radiated off him, suffocating and relentless.

Panic clawed at Lana's chest. Should she slam the door shut and pretend she had seen nothing? Or open it fully and face the storm head-on?

Before she could decide, the door to the next room creaked open Aurora stepped out, followed by Lee.

Heart jolting, Lana yanked Victor inside, slamming the door shut before they could be noticed.

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"You-" Victor began, his brow furrowed.

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But Lana pressed her palm over his mouth, silencing him instantly. She gestured for him to stay quiet, tilting the door open just enough to peer outside.

Aurora's voice slithered into the hallway, cold and sharp.

"One month. No more. If you dare appear before me again in that time, you'll ruin everything. And if Caelum suspects, you'll lose every coin."

Lee only chuckled, the sound mocking and cruel. "One month, Aurora. If the marks aren't in my hand, I'll tell him everything. That you're no savior, only a fraud."

Aurora's glare could have cut steel. She spun on her heel and stalked away, her wolf bristling with unease, leaving Lee smirking at her retreating figure. After a moment, he sauntered back into the room and shut the door.

Only then did Lana close their door fully. Her pulse still raced as she turned to Kade. "You heard that, didn't you? Aurora's hiding something big."

"I didn't catch the words," Kade admitted with a lazy grin, his wolf lounging like a predator who knew the prey had already trapped itself. "But I can tell you this-you're in deep trouble."

Confused, Lana frowned—until she realized with horror that her hand was still pressed against Victor’s mouth. His skin burned under her palm, heat like fire searing into her. She yanked it away as though scalded.

Her laugh was nervous, brittle. “What a coincidence. running into you here again.”

Victor didn’t speak. He didn’t need to. His glacial stare bore into her, the weight of his silence more crushing than any words. His presence filled the cramped room with Alpha authority, making Lana feel like a criminal hauled before judgment.

“You’re here for Kade?” she blurted, desperate to deflect. “Then you two talk. I’ll just... go.” She reached for her bag, intent on escaping.

Victor’s voice cracked through the air like a whip. “I didn’t realize you’d grown so fond of my nephew. Last time it was stripping his clothes off. Now it’s sneaking into an inn together?” His eyes flicked between them, a flicker of something sharp—something jealous—hidden beneath his frost.

Kade nearly toppled off the sofa, “Lana, when the hell did you strip me?”

She flushed scarlet, “You were drunk and puking, I was helping you! That’s all!”

Victor’s lips curled in a razor-thin smile. “Indeed. Had I been any later that night, you’d have stripped him

bare.”

The air in the room thickened with tension. Kade’s gaze burned like fire; Victor’s cut like ice.

Lana stood caught between them, suffocated by the clash of two predators whose dominance warred in silence. Her wolf whimpered beneath their dueling auras, the pressure unbearable.

She wanted to scream. These two weren’t here to fight her enemies—they were here to torment **her**.

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So much for handsome men. Looks meant nothing when their presence felt like being dragged over hot coals, or drowned beneath ice.

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Third Person's POV

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Lana lifted her chin, her amber wolf-eyes flashing in the dim glow of the inn's lantern. "I was only trying to unbutton his collar," she snapped, hands raised in defiance. "Let the poor bastard breathe a little! That's all!" Her finger jabbed sharply toward Kade. "And besides—I already said it before, didn't I? Even if Kade stripped naked and danced right in front of me, I wouldn't feel a flicker of interest!"

Victor's brow arched, his voice like the weight of a storm pressing down on the small, rented room. His presence was suffocating—Alpha-bred, the kind that could crush bone without lifting a claw. For a moment, the tension in the air eased, though his expression remained carved from stone.

Kade's wolf bristled. His face flushed red as his snarl cracked through the silence. "The hell did you just say?" His fists curled at his sides, barely keeping from shifting. "Me—naked, dancing in front of you? Are you insane, Lana? What the hell's in that head of yours?"

"..." Lana shrank back, muttering under her breath. So what if he cursed her out? It wasn't like she cared. All she wanted was to prove her damned innocence.

Victor's eyes narrowed. His tone cut sharper than claws. "If you have no interest in Kade, then why," his words dripped with venom, "did you come to an inn with him?"

"Because..." Lana's voice wavered before snapping back with a desperate rush. "We were following someone! That woman who left earlier—Aurora. She's my friend's sworn enemy."

Kade straightened, nodding fervently, his jaw clenched tight. "She's telling the truth, Victor. Why the hell else would I come to a place like this with her? You know me. You know the kind of women I like."

Victor's gaze turned glacial. He did know. Kade's wolf had long since imprinted on Freya Thorne—the Bloodmoon she-wolf, once his commander in the Iron Fang Recon Unit. She was the one name that lingered in his nephew's blood like a fever. And when Freya had wed another, Kade had vanished abroad, his wolf restless, unmoored.

“If there’s nothing else, I’m gone.” Kade pushed to his feet, restless energy rippling from him like static. He didn’t want to stay caged in the same room as Victor’s scrutiny.

“Wait.” Lana’s voice pitched upward. “The man with Aurora today—you should look into him. He reeks of coin and shadow. I swear, he’s holding something over her, some kind of leverage. Money’s moving hands. You can smell it.”

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Kade paused in the doorway, gave a short, sharp nod. “Fine. I’ll check. But I don’t give a damn about Aurora’s games.” He waved dismissively, his broad shoulders tense as he stalked out.

The door slammed, and silence devoured the room.

Lana finally exhaled, realizing too late how close she stood to Victor. Just the two of them now, caught in the dense air like prey in a snare.

“Well, then, I’ll be going too.” She took a step, but Victor’s arm shot out with Alpha speed, barring her way

with the ease of a wolf who had led armies.

His gaze pinned her where she stood. “You’re not going to explain yourself?”

Her lashes fluttered, lips parting. “Explain... what?” Then her face lit up with a nervous smile. “Oh! Don’t worry about the room. The charges are already paid.”

Victor’s temple twitched. His jaw clenched so hard the veins stood stark along his neck. Of all the wolves in the packs, only this woman had ever been able to ignite his temper so effortlessly.

“You mean to tell me,” he growled, voice low and rough as gravel, “that because you wanted to trail Aurora, you would come here—alone—with a man? That you would risk everything to snoop?”

“I didn’t come with just any man,” Lana fired back. Her wolf bristled, but her heart thudded wildly in her chest. “It was Kade. That’s different.”

Victor’s eyes darkened to obsidian. “Kade isn’t a man to you?”

Her throat bobbed. Not like that. She had always seen Kade as nothing more than an unruly younger brother. But how could she explain that to a wolf like Victor, whose gaze stripped lies bare and left nothing but bone?

“Or what?” Victor’s voice dropped into a dangerous rumble as he leaned in, shadow swallowing her smaller frame. “If it hadn’t been Kade beside you—if it had been a colleague, a subordinate, any other male—would you have dragged him here too?”

Lana’s shoulders curled inward under his stare. She tried to keep her voice steady, though the heat of his wolf pressed into her bones. “Of course not. Don’t twist this. Kade and I... we both care about Freya, we both despise Aurora. That’s the only reason I pulled him in. And like I said—I don’t have feelings for him. I’d never lay a hand on him.”

Victor’s mouth curved, but there was no humor in it. His eyes gleamed with a hunter’s cruelty. “Then who would you lay a hand on, Lana?”

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The air thickened, heavy with tension. His question wasn’t just words—it was challenge, Alpha to she-wolf, testing the truth that pulsed under her skin.

Lana’s heart lurched. Her wolf stammered inside her chest, caught between fight and submission. The first name on her tongue, reckless and sharp as a blade, slipped free before she could bite it back.

“Anyone,” she whispered, eyes locking with his, “but you.”

The silence after was brutal. Victor’s expression darkened, his wolf aura rolling like thunder, crashing through the fragile walls of the inn.

Lana realized too late what she had said, but the words hung between them, electric and irreversible.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Silas's POV

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When Freya returned from the military sector, her scent carried something different—lighter, edged with hope. I noticed it the instant she crossed the threshold of the place we now shared. My wolf twitched inside me, restless, sensing the shift before her lips even parted.

She had gone to report to Aldred, the old commander, about her assignment protecting me as Ironclad Alpha. But the moment I looked at her, I knew that wasn't all she had gained.

"What is it?" I asked, unable to ignore the flicker in her eyes. "Your mood feels... brighter than usual. Something good happened?"

Her lips curved, and for a heartbeat, she looked almost like the Freya I'd imagined in my loneliest nights—unguarded, alight.

"Yes. It's good news." Her voice trembled with joy. "There's a new lead about my brother, Eric."

The name hit me like a blade to the gut. My grip on the teacup faltered. Scalding liquid sloshed over my fingers before I could steady it. The burn barely registered, but she gasped softly, rushing toward me as if the world had narrowed to my hand alone.

"Silas!" Her small hands caught mine, pulling me with surprising strength to the washbasin. The water roared as she turned the tap, forcing my hand under the icy stream. The heat of the burn dulled, replaced by the cool shock.

Her touch—firm yet trembling—held me there. Her wolf was worried for me. For me.

I should have focused on the pain, but all I could think about was her words.

"Your brother," I managed, my voice low, rough. "You said there's a lead?"

"Yes, from the military." Her eyes darted up to mine, fierce with emotion. "They found a drone. The serial matches one Eric operated before he disappeared. The Iron Fang Recon Unit confirmed it. They're sending people to recover it, and if it still holds data..." Her voice cracked with hope. "Then maybe I'll find him soon."

The water splashed over my hand, but the only burn I felt was in my chest. My wolf twisted inside me, snarling in warning. If Eric returned, what would that mean for me? For her?

I clenched my jaw, but the tremor in my fingers betrayed me.

“Does it hurt?” she asked softly, tilting her head up at me.

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I swallowed, forcing myself to meet her gaze. “If I told you it hurt—would you care?”

Her answer came without hesitation, cutting through the armor I’d built over years.

“Of course I would. You’re my mate—my partner. If you’re in pain, I’ll always care. But that doesn’t mean you can ignore your body. I want you to take care of yourself, Silas. I want you to live. To be well.”

Her words hit deeper than any blade ever had. No one had spoken to me like that before. Not my parents, who only measured me by my strength. Not my grandfather, who drilled me into a weapon and demanded I grow sharp enough to lead the Whitmors. Not even my most loyal warriors, who followed me out of duty, not love.

In the past, wounds meant nothing. I’d bled in silence. I’d told myself if I died, so be it—perhaps it would even be a release. But now? With her watching me like this, urging me to care for my own flesh... the thought of dying suddenly felt like betrayal.

I let her hold my hand under the cold water until the sting faded to a dull throb. She dabbed it dry with tissues, her movements careful, reverent almost. Then she asked, “Where’s your medicine box?”

I almost laughed. “I don’t keep one.”

Her brows furrowed. “You don’t?”

“I don’t live here often,” I admitted. “This place is just somewhere I use when I can’t stand the Whitmor estate.”

Her gaze swept the sparse apartment, the barren shelves and unadorned walls. I could tell she understood then why it lacked warmth.

Without another word, she pulled out her WolfComm, ordering burn ointment from a delivery runner. Then she looked up at me again, as though nothing could shake her determination.

“What do you want to eat tonight?” she asked.

My wolf stirred, unsettled by the domestic question. “Anything. What about you?”

She tilted her head thoughtfully. “If you don’t mind, I’ll make noodles. Simple, but filling. We can **eat** them together.”

I blinked. “You’ll cook?”

Her grin was quick, mischievous. “Don’t look so surprised. I can cook. Back at the Recon Unit, I

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made noodles for the squad more than once. They said it was good.”

A sharp edge rose in my chest before I could stop it. The words left me harsher than I intended. “Did Kade eat them too?”

Her surprise gave way to laughter. “You’re jealous of Kade?”

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I clenched my jaw. “He’s been through things you and I haven’t. He knows sides of you I don’t.”

She reached out, brushing her fingers lightly over mine, and the storm inside me calmed. “He’s my comrade. My brother-in-arms. That’s all. You are my mate, Silas. You’re the one **I’ll** share my days and nights with from now on.”

Something inside me cracked, dangerously fragile. I wanted to believe her. Needed to.

By the time the delivery arrived, she was already bustling in the kitchen, sleeves rolled up, hair brushing against her cheeks as she washed vegetables and sliced meat. I followed her, unable to stay seated.

“You should rest,” she chided, noticing me hovering. “You’re hurt.”

“I’ll stay quiet,” I said, leaning against the wall where I could watch her. “I just... want to be near you.”

She hesitated, then gave a small smile. “Fine. But don’t get in my way.”

So I stood there, arms folded, my wolf strangely content just to watch her move. The sound of chopping, the steam rising from boiling water—it was ordinary, human. Yet in her presence, it felt sacred.

The apartment had always been cold, empty, just another place to escape duty. But with her in the kitchen, her wolf scent lacing the air, it was transformed. Warm. Alive.

For the first time in years, I let myself imagine a future: marriage, a shared home, her laughter echoing against these walls. I imagined cooking for her every day, learning what flavors she loved, setting bowls before her with pride.

And my wolf, usually restless, snarling for blood and dominance, went quiet—lulled by the simplest of visions: a life, not just survival.

Because of Freya.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person’s POV

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Victor’s face was as dark and cold as winter steel when he and Lana stepped out of the shabby inn. He looked at her as if she owed him a debt she could never repay.

For Luna’s sake, wasn’t she supposed to be praised for drawing such a sharp line with an ex- lover?

Why did he look as if he expected her to confess that she still wanted him—wanted to claim him—before he would be satisfied?

Years ago, she had overheard his friends questioning his taste.

“Victor, why are you wasting time with Lana? She’s... plain. Not a spark of fire in her. Don’t tell me you’re just tired of feasts and wanted some bland porridge for a change?”

“Exactly. Nothing special about her. Do you realize how many Pack daughters and she-wolves with Alpha bloodline would kill for your attention?”

And then one friend had asked the question that had lodged like a thorn in her chest:

“Victor, don’t tell us you’re serious about her?”

She had been standing outside the door, her heart in her throat, praying–begging—that he would say yes. That even if she was plain, even if she was nothing compared to those dazzling she–wolves, he still wanted her.

But the words that came through the door had frozen her marrow.

“Serious? No. She’s just... something to pass the time.”

At that moment, Lana felt as if the earth had split beneath her feet, dropping her into a pit of ice.

What she thought had been a fated bond, a rare spark of true affection, was nothing more than a distraction for him.

She had once thought herself lucky. Reality proved she was pathetic.

She didn’t even remember how she had stumbled away from the doorway, only that she hadn’t had the courage to barge in and confront him.

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Later, with trembling hands, she had called him. Her voice had been steady only because her heart was already in pieces.

“It’s over,” she had said.

He’d only answered with one cool question: “You don’t regret this?”

“I don’t.” That was the lie she forced out.

And that was it. They severed whatever tie they had. No dramatic fight. No desperate plea. Just silence.

From then on, they had lived their lives without ever crossing paths. Just as he had said, she was merely something to pass the time. Without her, he could always find another distraction.

She had thought she would never see him again.

Yet fate, cruel as it was, forced them to collide in humiliating ways. Twice now, after so many years. And both times, she had felt as if the Moon Goddess herself were mocking her.

As they parted ways outside the inn, Lana didn't bother with goodbyes. She turned sharply, crossed the road, and slid into her WolfComm-driven car. Without another look back, she drove away, as though speed itself could outrun the shadow of Victor Ashford.

Because truly—she and Victor were better off never meeting again.

“Lana, what's with you? You've been spacing out these last few days.”

Freya's voice broke into her thoughts, dragging her back from memories she'd rather leave buried.

“Ah!” Lana jerked, her wolf bristling in embarrassment. She had tried—truly tried—not to think about Victor, but her mind betrayed her again and again.

Was this what they meant when they said first loves were unforgettable?

Damn it. Forgettable or not, she had to bury it.

Shaking her head, Lana forced her voice calm. “It's nothing. I was just wondering when Kade will finish digging up the truth about that man Aurora went to the inn with.”

That, at least, was true. The matter gnawed at her like a wolf chewing bone.

Freya narrowed her eyes. Her instincts as both warrior and strategist's bloodline made her sharp. “It won't be anything good.”

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She could already smell the rot clinging to Aurora's story. The Bluemoon Beta's daughter had built her rise on fragile lies—Freya could feel it in her bones. The woman had claimed

to be Caelum Grafton's savior once, but the details never lined up. And there was still the fire years

ago...

Aurora had been the last to see the co-pilot alive before the blaze took him. The man's death had been ruled the earliest of all casualties, pinned on an unextinguished cigarette butt.

Freya had investigated that scene herself. The place where the fire started wasn't somewhere people usually passed. Which meant—if Aurora had been there, if she had truly seen the co-pilot burn—then she must have also seen who had thrown that cigarette.

So why had she said nothing?

Why had she let the blame fall neatly on the dead man's shoulders?

A normal wolf might remain silent out of guilt. To watch someone die and do nothing would weigh heavily on the conscience.

Unless... Aurora had been protecting the real culprit.

Or worse—she had been the one with the cigarette.

Freya's wolf bristled at the thought, a low growl vibrating in her throat. Secrets like these could bring down entire packs if left to fester.

And Aurora, with her polished smile and newly earned wings in the Bluemoon Airborne Wing, was hiding far too much.

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Freya's POV

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I jolted when the thought struck me.

“Tell me, Lana... do you think Aurora smokes?”

Lana blinked, clearly startled. “What? Why would you suddenly ask me that?”

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My wolf stirred uneasily, hackles rising. “I can’t shake the feeling that the border fire wasn’t just her standing by and doing nothing.”

At my words, Lana’s eyes sharpened. She froze for a breath before muttering, “That’s something we’ll have to dig into. But no... I’ve never actually seen Aurora with a cigarette.”

Neither had I. But absence of proof wasn’t proof of innocence. My gut told me she hid more than anyone realized. And my instincts—born of Stormveil blood, sharpened under the legacy of the Bloodmoon Pack—had rarely been wrong.

Yes. This was a trail worth following.

“Anyway,” Lana broke in, brushing her hair back with an impatient flick, “are you free tonight?”

“Depends,” I said lightly. “Free enough.”

Her eyes narrowed. “So you had plans, didn’t you?”

“Not exactly. I was supposed to have dinner with Silas,” I admitted, my chest tightening with something I refused to name. “But it’s fine. I’ll call and let him know.”

Lana snorted, lips curling into a wicked grin. “Careful how that sounds. Anyone overhearing would think you and Silas are already mated and settled. You sound just like a bonded pair.”

Her teasing struck closer to the bone than I wanted. Because she was right.

These days, when I returned home from the offices or Stormveil briefings, I often found myself at the market, picking up vegetables and meat, bringing them back to cook. Silas still insisted on helping in the kitchen, despite the bandage that wound around his burned hand. He didn’t know how to sit still—his Alpha presence demanded participation, even in the smallest domestic rituals.

We’d eat together. Then he would clean, stacking dishes into the wash basin before letting the machine finish the work. Sometimes we sat in the den, watching news reports or dramas, or

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talking through books. **Silas** had a breadth of knowledge that surprised me constantly, and our conversations—spirited, sometimes sharp—always left me burning inside.

On the nights when duties pulled me to paperwork, he set up his own work at the opposite desk. The study had grown into a space built for two, as though the house itself recognized the bond we hadn't spoken aloud.

It was

... comfortable. Too comfortable.

And that unsettled me more than I dared confess.

Lana's sly voice cut through my thoughts. "Tell me the truth, Freya. Have you and Silas... you know." She wagged her brows.

I rolled my eyes. "No, we haven't. Could you please keep your thoughts at least somewhat clean?"

Her gasp was theatrical. "You mean to tell me you've got a male like that—broad-shouldered, battle-tempered, Alpha-blooded—and you're only looking? Not touching? Freya, that's a crime against womankind!"

I gave her a withering look. "Only you could twist 'restraint' into 'losing out.'"

She laughed, unashamed, and clapped me on the shoulder. "Fine. If you won't act on your instincts, then tonight I'll broaden your horizons. You're going to see what foreign wolves call entertainment."

That evening, I let Lana drag me through the bright-lit streets of the Capital, until we stopped at the massive stone-and-glass archway of the Grand Theater. The scent of hundreds of wolves pressed together in anticipation filled my nose—pheromones buzzing, laughter ringing.

Inside, the stage burst alive with pounding music. A troupe of foreign males danced beneath a storm of water cascading from the rafters. They were bare-chested, clad only in tight black leather pants, muscles gleaming as the falling water beaded and streamed down their bodies.

The crowd roared. She-wolves screamed. Some practically clawed the air as if they could drag the dancers into their arms.

Beside me, Lana shrieked louder than most, her enthusiasm shameless. “Look at him, Freya! Those abs–by the Moon, that body could kill!”

I shook my head, but couldn’t deny the artistry. The dance was rhythmic, primal, almost a battle display, wolves moving like predators under rain. It stirred the audience, though it stirred nothing in me.

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Because the truth was, only one male could make my heart pound like that. Only one face haunted me even now–Silas, his storm–grey eyes burning like iron in firelight.

The thought of him sent a shiver through me.

My WolfComm buzzed, interrupting my thoughts. The caller ID glowed with his name.

I pressed it to my ear. “Silas?”

The growl of his voice vibrated down the line. “Where are you? What’s all that noise?”

Before I could answer, Lana leaned close, practically shouting into my ear. “Freya, look at that one–he’s going to pull a lucky she–wolf from the audience! Imagine being that close!”

I winced and held up a hand to silence her.

“Freya.” Silas’s voice was steel. “Tell me where you are.”

“I’m with Lana. Watching a performance. It’ll be done around ten. I’ll come back on my own.”

“No,” he cut me off flatly. “I’ll come for you.”

“Silas, that’s not necess–”

The line went dead.

Lana’s eyes gleamed when I lowered the WolfComm. “That was him, wasn’t it? Silas?”

“Yes,” I admitted.

“And he’s coming to pick you up?” She let out a low whistle. “Sweet. Sounds a lot like a bonded pair to me.”

I flushed but said nothing.

The performance continued, the rainstorm intensifying, the crowd reaching fever pitch. Wolves howled their excitement, bodies pressed shoulder to shoulder. The air reeked of sweat, pheromones, and wild hunger.

And then—darkness.

The entire theater plunged into black. The music cut off. The water stopped midstream, droplets falling like blood in silence, Gasps, then nervous laughter, rippled through the audience.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person’s POV

The theater went black.

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For a heartbeat, the Grand Hall of the Capital was swallowed in shadow, and every wolf inside felt the sudden prickle of unease. Murmurs rose, sharp and restless, and the dancers on stage froze mid-step, their powerful forms caught in darkness.

“What’s happening? Why did the lights go out?” someone barked from the crowd. Panic laced the air, pheromones spiking in a frenzy of alarm.

The backup generators hummed to life, and pale light spilled across the vast interior. A staffer’s voice carried through the amplifiers, shaky but clear:

“We apologize. There’s been a fault in the equipment tonight, and unfortunately the performance cannot continue.”

The uproar was immediate.

“What do you mean, canceled? We came here just for this!”

“Unbelievable! Don’t you check your systems before a show?”

The complaints mounted, voices layering like a rising pack howl, until the announcer spoke again—words sharp enough to cut straight through the noise.

“As compensation, every ticket will be reimbursed at triple its value. Moreover, anyone holding tonight’s ticket may return for the show at the Grand Theater of the Capital, free of charge, with upgraded seating.”

The uproar ebbed at once. Surprise flickered, followed swiftly by delight. Three times the money,

and another show for free? The wolves of the Capital loved a bargain as much as blood. The mood shifted, grumbles replaced by chatter and grins.

Under the direction of the staff, the audience filed out in neat, orderly lines, though the lingering musk of disappointment still clung to the air.

Lana groaned as she trailed beside Freya, her voice dripping with exasperation. “Of all nights, the one time we come, and the tech decides to collapse. Do you know how close I was to being picked as the lucky one on stage, Freya? I could have had one of those gods of muscle dripping water right in front of me.”

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Freya chuckled softly. “Next time, Lana.”

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“Next time,” Lana sighed, her shoulders slumping. “Though fate clearly doesn’t like me very much tonight.”

They reached the broad archway of the theater’s exit, the cool night air of the Capital rolling in, carrying the scents of stone, steel, and wolf musk. The hour was barely past nine—early, by the rhythms of the city.

“Silas probably hasn’t arrived yet, right?” Lana asked, pulling her jacket tighter. “Why don’t you call him? If he’s not here, I’ll run you home.”

Freya opened her mouth to agree, but her gaze snagged on the sleek line of a Maybach parked not far from the entrance. The doors opened, and a tall, commanding figure stepped into view, his stride purposeful, his aura unmistakable.

Her heart stuttered. He had arrived early.

Silas.

The Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition carried himself with that same chill that kept lesser wolves at bay. His broad shoulders cut a severe silhouette against the glow of the streetlamps, his expression unreadable, his storm-grey eyes fixed on her with an intensity that made her pulse quicken.

But Freya's shock deepened when another car door slammed shut behind the Maybach. A second figure emerged from the vehicle parked in its shadow.

Victor.

Her breath caught. The timing—was this coincidence? Or something far more dangerous?

Freya turned instinctively toward Lana, but her friend's wide-eyed expression mirrored her own disbelief. Both women stood frozen as Silas and Victor advanced toward them, side by side, two predators cutting through the dispersing crowd.

The air thickened. Other females, still streaming out of the theater, slowed and stared, unable to help themselves. Two males, each breathtaking in his own right—Silas, cold and forbidding, radiating the harsh dominance of an Alpha whose aura warned all to stay back. Victor, in contrast, was elegance forged sharp, a wolf cloaked in discipline and subtle authority.

Whispers flitted through the crowd. Some females all but trembled, wishing for the courage to approach, to beg for a name,

a contact. But Silas's **presence** was a wall of iron—one glance, and no one dared trespass.

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Lana exhaled sharply. “Since Silas is here for you, Freya... I’ll be going.” Her voice was brittle, edged with nerves.

Freya glanced at her, concern stirring. She knew fragments of Lana’s past with Victor. She knew her friend had once cared for him deeply—enough to burn—but had ended things abruptly after a year. When Freya had pressed, Lana had brushed it off with a shrug and a laugh. “It didn’t work. We weren’t right. Who in this age only loves once, anyway?”

Since then, Lana had thrown herself into work, into fleeting passions, into the thrill of chasing stars and admiring men without chains. She carried herself as if that past had been nothing but smoke.

But Freya had noticed. The way Lana carefully avoided his name, the way she steered clear of places Victor might be, the way her smile thinned whenever someone mentioned him.

Was she really over him? Or was this just her way of surviving?

Freya’s question hung silent as Victor’s voice cut through the air, smooth but sharp as a blade. “What’s this, Lana? The moment you see me, you turn to flee?”

His tone carried a sting, and the muscles in his jaw flexed.

Lana laughed, light and brittle, forcing her spine straight. “Silas came for Freya. Of course I should leave. Unless you’d prefer me to stand here as the unwanted lantern between you two?”

Victor’s lips pressed into a tight line, his gaze shadowed.

Silas turned his eyes to Freya, ignoring the exchange entirely. His voice was low, imperious. “Let’s **go**.”

Freya hesitated, torn, looking at Lana. “Are you sure...?”

Her friend nodded briskly. “Go. I actually have something to say to Victor. You being here only makes it awkward.”

Freya caught her arm, whispering, “Truly? You’ll be alright?”

Lana smirked faintly, though her eyes glittered with a challenge that wasn’t aimed at Freya. “Victor isn’t some beast of the Void. He won’t devour me. Trust me, I want this conversation.”

With lingering unease, Freya allowed Silas to guide her away. His hand brushed hers, firm, anchoring, and the bond that simmered unspoken between them pulsed hot through her

veins.

As they disappeared into the night, Lana pivoted to face Victor fully. Her smile curved sharper

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now, tinged with bitterness. “Tell me, Victor... am I imagining things, or did you come here tonight for me?”

Victor’s silence was damning. His eyes darkened, his lips tightening as he recalled the earlier scene—the business gathering, Silas stepping aside to call Freya, and Lana’s voice carrying far, too far. Her laughter, her teasing words about muscled dancers, about near contact, about desire.

Every syllable had hit him like a claw to the chest.

This woman. Always so careless. Always chasing spectacle. Did she truly hunger for any wolf with a body and a grin?

Jealousy burned him raw, though he wore his composure like armor. But his silence betrayed what he would not admit.

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A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person’s POV

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Victor had told himself for years that he was finished with Lana

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She was his ex, a chapter long since closed. He had buried that story deep, swearing he felt nothing but indifference now. Yet here he was, standing beneath the lamps outside

the Grand Theater of the Capital, his boots planted in the same pavement where her scent still lingered. He had followed Silas's car here, against all reason, against all logic, against his own vow to never be drawn back into her orbit.

Why?

He couldn't answer, not even to himself.

Lana tilted her head, her lips curving into a taunt that cut sharper than any blade. "If I asked whether you came here specifically for me... what would you say, Victor?"

His eyes narrowed, silver-grey flashing like the edge of a drawn weapon. Instead of answering, he turned the question back on her, voice low, rough, almost feral. "If I said I did... what would you do then?"

Her brows arched, challenge glinting in her gaze. "What? Are you trying to tell me you still carry a torch for me, after all these years?"

Victor's jaw flexed. Torch? The very idea was laughable. Impossible. He scoffed, though the sound came out darker than he intended. Carrying a flame for her?

Back then, he had only agreed to their relationship because she had pursued him with the persistence of a she-wolf locked on her prey. She had been relentless, charming, wickedly determined. And when they were together, she had played the part of the devoted mate flawlessly-until the moment she had ended it with all the mercy of a killing blow.

No hesitation. No lingering glance back. She had discarded him like a toy she had of, leaving him to feel like the fool who had misread every signal.

grown tired

Cold spread through him as he let the truth fall like a blade between them. "Lana, do you honestly think that's possible?" His tone was ice, every word precise.

Her smirk faltered for a heartbeat, but she steadied it with defiance. "Then why are you here?"

Victor's stare darkened. He had asked himself the same question the moment he'd stepped out of his car. The same question still clawed at him.

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+5 Free Coins

He drew a breath, chest tight, and when he spoke, the words tasted of ashes. "Tell me... were you truly done with me? Did you really grow sick of me that easily?"

Lana froze. She had expected anger, perhaps scorn, but not that. Her heart skipped, and for a fleeting moment she glimpsed something raw beneath his armor. Then, with deliberate cruelty, she nodded. "Yes. I was. I grew tired of you."

No hesitation. No mercy.

Victor's face hardened, his expression slipping into shadow. His lips pressed thin, and for the first time in years, his carefully constructed calm cracked.

Lana lifted her chin, unyielding. "There. You have your answer. So let me give you something else—don't appear before me again. It doesn't matter if we were lovers once. I don't want to keep bumping into you. My mate would be jealous, and I'm not interested in that kind of drama."

The word mate struck him like claws to the chest.

Victor's aura surged without warning, his dominance bleeding into the night air, sending a few nearby wolves scuttling back in instinctive submission. His voice was dangerously quiet. "You have a mate?"

"Of course." Lana's laugh rang bright and cutting. "What? Did you imagine I'd spend these years alone, pining for you? That I'd waste my youth clinging to old memories?" Her eyes glinted with mischief, but her voice carried a bite. "No, Victor. I've moved on. I have someone. Someone who accepts me as I am."

He said nothing. He couldn't.

The silence stretched taut as steel wire. Wolves passing nearby lowered their heads, unsettled by the clash of scents—her mocking defiance, his storming fury.

Victor clenched his fists at his sides, nails biting into his palms. He knew she might be lying. He hoped she was lying. And yet, the thought of her with another wolf, with another male's scent draped over her skin, gnawed at him until his chest felt hollow.

"You came here to watch males flaunt themselves on stage," he said finally, his voice jagged, "and your so-called mate doesn't care?"

"He cares," Lana said sweetly, "but he's generous. He lets me enjoy myself. If he hadn't been busy tonight, he'd have joined me." Her lips curved as she dealt the final strike. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to meet him. Goodbye, Victor."

She turned sharply, her heels clicking against the stone, her figure disappearing into the night

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with the same careless finality she had wielded years ago.

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Victor stood rooted, his eyes locked on her retreating back. His lips compressed into a thin, bloodless line.

He had prided himself on his control, his restraint—the very traits that had made him a force in the Silverfang courts. Even when trials shifted, even when witnesses betrayed him, even when enemies clawed at his throat, he had remained unshaken, unflinching.

But tonight, her words had stripped that composure bare.

A mate.

His chest clenched in on itself, a brutal, unfamiliar ache spreading outward like wildfire. He wanted to deny it, to laugh it off, to cast her claim aside. But the scent of her confidence, the deliberate ease of her voice—it gnawed at him, relentless.

Why did the thought of her belonging to another wolf carve him open in a way no battlefield

ever had?

Meanwhile, not far away, Freya slid into the backseat of Silas's Maybach. The leather smelled of cedar and steel, the Alpha's scent woven deeply into the car itself.

She glanced at him, brows furrowing. "You were early. I thought you'd only arrive closer to ten." Then, suspicion narrowed her eyes. "Silas... tell me the truth. That sudden power failure inside the theater—was that really an accident?"

His jaw shifted, and when he inclined his head in quiet confirmation, her breath caught.

"You caused it?" she whispered.

"Yes," he said simply, unflinching beneath her gaze.

Shock rippled through her. "Why? Was it just to drag me out early?"

His voice dropped, quiet but fervent. “I didn’t want you watching them. I didn’t want you close to them.” His eyes softened, but his aura remained fierce, claiming. “Does that make me small, Freya? Petty? Perhaps. But I can’t stand the thought of you giving your attention to others. Not when you’re mine,”

Freya’s chest tightened at the vulnerability flickering beneath his Alpha exterior. For all his power, for all the iron he wore like armor, Silas Whitmor was afraid—afraid of losing her.

She reached out, fingertips brushing against his face, softening the tension in his features. “I wasn’t there for them. I was there for Lana. You don’t need to be afraid.” Her voice was steady,

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warm. “You’re my mate. In front of me, you don’t have to guard yourself so hard.”

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Silas’s lashes flickered, his composure nearly undone. He had commanded armies, ruled coalitions, broken rivals. But with her, he was fragile in a way he barely understood.

His lips parted, a whisper breaking from him like prayer. “Then tell me... are you interested in only me?”

Her cheeks flushed at the rawness of the question. The driver’s presence loomed in the front seat, but Silas’s eyes burned with such hope, such need, that she could not deflect him.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

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When Silas leaned closer in the car, whispering his vow that I could only ever be interested in him, my cheeks burned hot. I was not the type of she-wolf who spilled tender words in front of others, especially not with the driver sitting stiffly in the front seat pretending not to hear. But I could not let Silas's unease fester any longer.

"Yes," I told him, steadying my voice even as my pulse thundered. "I'm only interested in you."

The moment those words left my lips, his expression shifted—storm clouds breaking into rare sunlight. A slow, dangerous smile tugged at his mouth. He caught my hand, lifted it with reverence, and pressed a kiss to my fingertip. His lips were hot, searing me with a claim as primal as any mate mark.

"Then from now on," he murmured, his voice low and commanding, "you can only be interested in me. No other male."

I knew the driver's ears were burning, but Silas did not care. Who would believe that the Ironclad Alpha—cold, ruthless, feared even among Alphas—could sound like an anxious young wolf desperate for reassurance?

Even back at my apartment, my fingertips still tingled from where his lips had touched me. The echo of his words clung like a phantom bond.

I drew a steadying breath and turned to him. "Silas, don't ever pull something like that again. If you don't like me watching certain performances, just tell me. There's no need to stir up chaos to drag me away. I don't want our issues spilling onto others."

He tilted his head, eyes unreadable. I pushed on, softer now. "And you need to trust me more. Respect that I'll spend time with my friends. I'm not going to fall for some dancer on a stage. To me, it's nothing more than performance—form, grace, movement. Nothing deeper."

We were still in our fragile stage, I knew. Every couple had to endure the grinding of stones before sparks became flame. This was our trial by fire,

His dark eyes gleamed faintly. "Fine," he said at last, his voice softer than I expected. "I'll listen to you. I won't do that again."

Relief washed through me, but it didn't last. His gaze sharpened again, a flicker of possessiveness beneath his calm. "But, Freya... I need you to give me confidence too."

"Confidence?" I blinked at him.

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+5 Free Coins

“Yes.” His tone was velvet, edged with steel. “Look at me more. Let me feel that I’m the only male who draws your attention. Make me believe you’ll not just love me, but love me deeply.”

When his voice dipped low like that, it sent a shiver racing down my spine. It was a wolf’s growl softened into seduction, and my body responded before my mind could resist.

“What exactly do you want me to do?” I asked, wary but curious.

Instead of answering, he surprised me with a question. “Did you enjoy tonight’s performance?”

I hesitated. “It was... good. Those shows are professional. There’s beauty and strength in the movements. If it makes you uneasy, we could even watch together next time.”

Silas lowered his lashes, shadows darkening his face. “Rather than watch together, I’d prefer this—if you want to see a male dance, I’ll dance for you.”

I froze. “What?”

“I’ll dance,” he said, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

I gaped at him. “You? Dance?”

“Why? You think I can’t?” His eyes sparked with challenge.

I swallowed hard. I had never imagined the Ironclad Alpha of the Coalition—the wolf whose name alone made rivals hesitate—saying something so absurd.

Before I could gather myself, he tugged at the tie at his throat. The silk slid loose, and he began unbuttoning his jacket.

Every inch of clothing he shed tightened a coil in my stomach. I’d seen plenty of half-dressed males in training yards, even tonight on that stage, muscles gleaming under spotlights as strangers screamed for them. But none of that prepared me for this.

Silas stripped down with unhurried confidence, each motion deliberate, his eyes never leaving mine. By the time his shirt hit the floor, my breath was shallow, my heart slamming against my ribs like a trapped thing.

He came closer, heat radiating from him, the raw scent of Alpha dominance threading the air. His gaze locked with mine, molten and unrelenting. “What kind of dance do you like?”

“You’ve... trained?” My voice cracked.

“No,” he admitted. “But I can learn. I’ve always been a quick study. If you want to see me dance, I’ll master it.”

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His wolf stirred, brushing mine with the weight of his intent. My throat tightened. This untouchable Alpha was offering to stumble through something so far beneath his station, just to please me.

“Though...” his eyes flickered down, shadows crossing his expression, “I have **scars**. If they ruin the sight for you, I can remove them. There are healers—scars can be erased now. I’d do it if you want.”

I sucked in a breath. “Silas!” My voice cracked sharper than intended.

He looked startled.

I reached up, cupping his face, holding him still. “I don’t care about scars. They’re proof you’ve fought, survived. Proof you’re strong. The only male I care about—the only one I’m interested in—is you.”

His lashes trembled, and for the first time, I glimpsed uncertainty beneath his armor.

I didn’t give him room to doubt again. My arms slid around his neck, pulling him down into a kiss. His lips were fire against mine, tentative at first, as though he feared I’d recoil. That hesitation nearly broke me.

He was Silas Whitmor, Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition, a wolf who commanded armies and forged alliances with nothing but his presence. Yet with me, he kissed like a male who thought himself unworthy, who feared his mate would leave him at any moment.

The taste of him, the feel of him, sent something cracking in my chest. My nose stung with sudden heat.

“Silas,” I whispered against his mouth, trembling, “I want you.”

The words spilled out raw, unguarded, pulled straight from the depths of my wolf.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya's POV

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+5 Free Coins

Silas's entire body jolted as though struck by lightning. His eyes widened, filled with disbelief as he stared at me.

"You... what did you say?" His voice trembled, barely more than a rasp, and even his breath hitched as if he were afraid to exhale.

For a heartbeat I thought he might have misheard me—or worse, that he believed I hadn't meant it. That fear shadowed his expression, the dread that this was nothing more than his own desperate fantasy.

I smiled faintly, meeting his gaze with steady certainty. "Silas, I want you. Do you want me?"

His throat bobbed as his Adam's apple slid hard, the sound almost audible in the charged air between us. How could he not want me? His wolf pressed at the edge of his control, its hunger bleeding through.

"I want you, Freya," he whispered hoarsely, reverence and hunger twined in his tone. "I want you so much it's tearing me apart."

The next second, his arms swept around me, strong and sure, lifting me effortlessly off the ground. He cradled me as if I weighed nothing, carrying me across the room until my back met the softness of the bed.

My breath caught. I'd shared this bed with him countless nights since returning to the Capital. Nights of quiet closeness, the simple weight of his body beside mine. But tonight was different. Tonight, the thought of what was about to happen set fire to my skin and sent my pulse into a frantic rhythm. 1

He lowered me onto the bed with startling gentleness, hovering over me, his dark eyes searching mine. "You're sure? You won't regret this?"

I arched a brow. "And if I change my mind?"

His lips pressed into a thin line, his stare steady and unwavering. "Then even if every part of me burns for you, I won't touch you. Not unless you want me."

Something inside me softened. He was an Alpha—he could have taken what he desired without question. Yet here he was, promising restraint, promising to wait for me.

I laughed softly, tugging at his arm until his balance gave way and he toppled onto the

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mattress beside me. My hand pressed to his chest, feeling the thunder of his heartbeat beneath my palm.

“I won’t regret this,” I murmured. “And you–don’t you dare regret it either.”

Then I pulled him down and kissed him, hard and certain. My fingers moved lower, fumbling at the leather of his belt until it loosened beneath my touch.

His entire body shuddered. Wherever my hands grazed, his skin flushed hot, trembling faintly, like a warrior barely holding back from unleashing everything inside. He knew–I was finally opening my heart fully, letting him in where no one else had ever been allowed.

“Freya,” he breathed against my lips, his voice breaking with raw emotion. “I love you.”

The words made my chest ache. He had once thought his body nothing but a scarred vessel, a shell unworthy of adoration. But now, he was offering all of himself to me–as Alpha, as man, as wolf. If this body could please me, he seemed to believe, then perhaps it had worth after all.

That night, the Ironclad Alpha trembled against me again and again, breaking apart in my arms. His rough gasps, the low growls of need, the unrestrained sounds that escaped his throat –they painted his desire in every note. His body was taut with tension, alive with shivers of pleasure and hunger.

Through it all, I felt his love in every touch, every movement. He cherished me as though I were his salvation, and I realized that, to him, I was.

By the end, I was utterly spent, every muscle quivering as though I’d fought through a battlefield. My fingers could hardly twitch, exhaustion dragging at me heavier than any combat training ever had.

Through a haze, I felt the brush of lips against my forehead, feather–light, reverent.

“Freya,” his voice whispered ragged in my ear, “don’t ever leave me.”

Fool, I thought hazily. How could I ever leave you?

That was the last thought I carried into sleep.

Morning came far *too* soon. I stirred, blinking blearily against the light.

“Awake?” His voice drifted warmly from beside me. “If you want to rest more, stay in bed. I’ve already taken care of it—you don’t need to go in today.”

I froze. “Wait. What do you mean you’ve taken care of it?”

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He leaned casually against the bedframe, already fully dressed, looking maddeningly fresh while I felt like I’d been trampled by an entire pack. “Lana called this morning, asking why you hadn’t shown at SkyVex. I told her you were exhausted from last night and needed to take the day off. So I asked her to give you leave. Forgive me—I didn’t wait for your permission.”

My eyes widened. “You-what?”

Moon above. Lana. If her imagination hadn’t already run wild, she’d probably be halfway to the Bloodmoon Pack by now to gossip about it.

It wasn’t that I minded people knowing. I had chosen this, chosen him, and I wasn’t ashamed. But the thought of Lana’s knowing smirk and relentless teasing was enough to give me a headache.

I rubbed my temple and forced myself upright—only to wince as every muscle in my body screamed. The soreness ran through my limbs like fire.

And then I looked down.

My skin was littered with marks—red and purple, bold declarations of his claim. My jaw dropped.

Goddess help me. How many times had we...? Heat flamed across my face as I yanked the blanket up to cover myself.

When I dared a glance at Silas, he was already buttoned, belted, groomed to perfection—radiating the calm power of an Alpha who'd conquered the night.

I nearly groaned aloud. How was it that after a night like that, he looked like he'd just stepped out of a strategy council, while I could barely move without whimpering?

The difference between male and female wolves after a night of passion was brutally unfair.