

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

C 271

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV

s

Caelum's gaze never wavered from Giselle. Eleanor's protests fell on deaf ears, her words barely registering against the intensity radiating from the Alpha of SilverTech Forgeworks. "Apologize," he demanded again, voice low and commanding, resonating with the latent power of his wolf bloodline.

"I... I didn't do anything wrong! Why should I apologize?" Giselle spat, defiance flickering in her wide eyes. "Freya Thorne is spreading lies! Saying her family is full of warriors and loyalists... If her family were really so noble, why have you never mentioned them before?"

The words struck Caelum like a physical blow, hammering at the core of his chest. Pain rippled through his chest, sharp and insistent, as if the accusation had opened a wound long buried. He realized, with a sting of bitter truth, that he had never truly understood Freya. Never really tried to know her, despite having shared a life under the same roof.

If he had truly known her... perhaps things could have been different. Perhaps they would never have reached the Lunar Severance Phase.

"Giselle," Caelum's voice hardened, wolf-fire simmering beneath his calm exterior. "The one spreading lies is not Freya. It's you. Apologize to her now—or I will not recognize you as my sister any longer."

Giselle's mouth fell open, disbelief contorting her features. "Brother... you're actually taking Freya's side? You would... disown me for her?"

Eleanor's face contorted in outrage. "Caelum, are you out of your mind? How can you side with Freya over your own sister?"

"Apologize!" Caelum barked again, his presence unyielding, his voice like the growl of a wolf asserting dominance over the pack.

Giselle shrank, her shoulders curling as she gauged the depth of her brother's resolve. She glanced from him to Eleanor, weighing her options. Finally, with reluctance etched into every movement, she muttered, "I... I'm sorry."

“Too late.” Freya’s tone dripped with disdain, cold and merciless. “Giselle, you and your mother are already under investigation. That incident at the hotel, where you tried to drug me, is about to go to trial. And now, you’ve added insult to injury by insulting a veteran, Another charge will be added to your case.”

Freya’s eyes flicked toward Lana Rook. “Shall we go?”

s

“Let’s go,” Lana agreed, brushing off the tension, as the temple visit had already served its purpose.

Giselle’s legs wobbled, fear overtaking her bravado. “Brother... I just made a few remarks... how does that become insulting a veteran?”

Eleanor’s voice rose, frantic. “Caelum! This Freya... she’s trying to crush us! You can’t let her get away with this!”

Caelum’s amber eyes remained fixed on Freya as she moved toward the temple’s exit. Something in him stirred—regret, a gnawing ache that had nothing to do with Giselle’s accusations. He had so much left unsaid, so many apologies he needed to offer. He couldn’t let her leave just like this.

When Freya and Lana reached the parking area outside the temple, Caelum closed the distance quickly, urgency radiating from him. “Freya... wait! I need to talk to you!”

Freya stopped, turning slowly. Her expression was sharp, detached, her wolf senses already flaring with caution. “Caelum, you may call me ‘Ms. Thorne’”

His chest tightened. “I... I’ve only ever called you that out of habit.”

“If this is about your sister, there’s nothing to discuss. My mind is made up. When the trial comes, your sister’s crimes will only multiply. You wasting your time here with me is futile- go find your lawyers instead,” Freya replied, her words crisp and commanding, the authority of a true Alpha woven into every syllable.

Lana smirked. “I wonder if the current Caelum Grafton can even afford good lawyers. SilverTech Forgeworks won’t last another month if new funding doesn’t come through. Bankruptcy may not be far off.”

Caelum’s face darkened, eyes narrowing. “How do you know that?”

“Not just me,” Lana said, shrugging with a wolfish grin. “Everyone in the industry knows. By the way, your \$50 million loan is still frozen at the bank because of your so-called ‘savior, Aurora. You might go bankrupt before the funds are even released.”

The words struck him like daggers. His face burned red, then paled, a mixture of shame and disbelief coursing through him. “Savior...” the word burned, an ironic reminder of how utterly blind he had been.

Freya's wolf instincts flared, her stance solid and commanding. She turned slightly, the evening wind brushing past her like a silver cloak of authority. "If you have words to say, speak them now, or they will remain buried forever. I am not here for pleasantries, Caelum. I am here for truth, justice, and the honor of my pack."

:

64

s

In that moment, Caelum felt the full weight of her presence—storm-forged and wolf-blooded, a force that even a powerful Alpha like him had to respect. Freya Thorne was no longer the woman he had thought he knew; she was a pack unto herself, commanding loyalty, fear, and admiration in equal measure. And he realized, painfully, that every misstep of the past three years had led to this reckoning.

The parking lot was quiet, save for the distant hum of the Capital at night. Wolves of blood and ambition circled invisibly, scenting power, loyalty, and weakness. And in that quiet, charged moment, Freya took the first step away, leaving Caelum to reckon with the truth—and the regret that had been his companion far too long.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV

∴

f

64

+5 Free Coins

Caelum stood rigidly in the fading sunlight, eyes locked on Freya as her figure disappeared toward the edge of the parking lot. His chest heaved, the tension of the moment pressing down like a heavy wolf's paw. He didn't approach her for Eleanor or for Giselle; the matter of Giselle insulting Freya was her own to bear. No, he had come for himself, driven by regret gnawing at his core.

"Freya..." His voice wavered slightly, low and earnest. "I didn't come for my mother or my sister. Giselle will face the consequences of her own actions. I... I just wanted to apologize. I hope you can forgive me. If I had known you were my savior, the one who saved my life, I would have cherished you above anyone else!"

Freya stopped, her gaze calm, the wolf in her eyes unwavering. She tilted her head, an almost imperceptible smirk on her lips, though her amber eyes were sharp as a hawk's talons.

“Do you not believe me?” Caelum pressed, heart pounding, clawing at the heavy weight of three years of mistakes.

Freya’s laugh was soft but sharp, carrying the authority of a wolf Alpha who had endured far too much. “So, if I am your savior, then you would have cherished me. But if I weren’t, all the ways you treated me during our three years of marriage... none of it would have been wrong, correct?”

Caelum’s brow furrowed, confusion and regret twisting his features. “I... I’m just saying, I truly regret how I treated you. Freya, I... I really regret it.”

Freya’s gaze hardened, voice dripping with disgust. “Caelum Grafton... you are truly a despicable man.”

“What?” he whispered, stunned.

“Your so-called regret,” she continued, sharp as a wolf’s fang, “exists only because you discovered I saved your life. If I hadn’t, you would have felt nothing. If saving a life matters so much to you, if repaying a debt is all that dictates your conscience, then you should have made that clear from the beginning. You should have married only your savior.”

His chest tightened, guilt weighing heavier with each word. “But... my savior... is you.”

Freya stepped closer, letting the evening wind swirl around her, wolf instincts flaring as she assessed the Alpha before her. “And if it hadn’t been me, Caelum? Then I would have been left to wither in our marriage, ignored by you, subjected to manipulation and control. All these

s

years... your feelings for Aurora, because she didn’t save your life, evaporated into nothing?”

Caelum froze, speechless, caught in the feral teeth of her logic.

“Caelum,” Freya continued, voice low and sharp, a predator pacing its territory, “if your emotions hinge solely on who saves your life, then perhaps you should throw yourself into the river again, see who rescues you next. Only this time... do not make the mistake of misidentifying your savior.”

With that, she turned, every motion radiating control and authority. Freya Thorne, Alpha of her own destiny, wolf-blooded and untouchable, slid into the vehicle waiting at the edge of the lot. Lana Rook followed without hesitation, their presence exuding the same lethal grace as Iron Fang Recon Unit operatives moving through a battlefield. The car glided forward, tires humming against the asphalt, leaving Caelum standing frozen, the last vestiges of the sun fading behind him.

Eleanor and Giselle arrived moments later, breathless, the tension of the confrontation still clinging to their skin. Eleanor’s voice was sharp, tinged with panic. “Caelum! What about Freya? Did you warn her not to leave Giselle to fend for herself?”

Giselle’s voice followed, whiny and anxious. “And brother... the trial is almost here! Can’t you hire better lawyers for us? The two we have now are practically nobodies. With your money, a few extra coins could make all the difference!”

Caelum's amber eyes flared, wolf-blooded authority radiating from him in waves. "Nothing, Giselle? Nothing? I told you, the company's finances are in crisis. If things don't resolve, SilverTech Forgeworks faces bankruptcy. And yet you still assume I have money to spare?" His teeth clenched, jaw taut, and his wolf instincts bristled. "Giselle, besides spending money, what have you actually contributed?"

"Bankrupt? How could the company go bankrupt?!" Giselle exclaimed, incredulous. "Brother, you built it from the ground up in three years! Surely you can find a way out of this!"

Caelum's lips twisted into a bitter smile, wolf instincts clawing at his patience. A way out? Perhaps. But if Freya were still at SilverTech Forgeworks, perhaps none of this would have happened. Aurora's interference, those misguided attempts at repayment... everything had spun out of control. All the misfortune could be traced back to her. If not for Aurora, he would still have a loving wife, a thriving company, and a future full of promise.

Even with the authorities recovering Aurora's misappropriated 50 million credits through WolfComm, the law's procedures would take three months to process. Three months—a lifetime in the corporate battlefield. By then, bankruptcy might already be inevitable. Caelum's wolf instincts rumbled, urging him to think, to plan, to strike before it was too late.

Meanwhile, at the office of Victor Ashford's law firm, Kade reclined casually on a leather sofa,

12:06 Sun, Sep 21

:

64

s

observing Victor at the desk. "Uncle," Kade drawled, "you called me here just to watch you work?"

Victor, reviewing files with methodical precision, finally looked up. "Kade... what is relationship with Lana?"

your

"Friends," Kade replied, voice cool and measured. Without Freya, he and Lana would have had no connection at all.

"Just friends?" Victor's eyes narrowed, wolfish suspicion flickering in his gaze.

"What else?" Kade's lips curved into a sly grin. "Do you expect me to be... more than friends with her?"

Victor paused, letting the weight of years of wolf instinct, pack hierarchy, and human emotion filter through his mind. Slowly, he spoke, "Do not entertain thoughts of her."

Kade nearly fell off the sofa, laughter bubbling up. His uncle truly thought Lana was some sacred prize, untouchable. “Relax. I have no interest in her. Honestly, Uncle... are you still holding a flame for her? Hoping to rekindle something?”

Victor’s response was a simple, sharp nod. “Yes.”

Even after years, even after separation, Lana lingered in his mind. Seeing her enter a hotel with Kade had sent a sting of green-hot jealousy through him, raw as wolf-fire. His obsession, unshaken by time or distance, remained.

He remembered every moment of her: the way she moved, the way her amber eyes cut through the shadows of his thoughts, the wolfish elegance that left a permanent mark on his heart. Even now, separated by miles and duty, the pull of her presence was undeniable, irrepressible—a predator’s mark on his soul.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person’s POV

Victor’s voice was steady, but the weight beneath it pressed like iron.

“Have you ever met her current boyfriend?”

Kade raised a brow, lounging carelessly in the chair across from him.

+10 Free Coins

“Boyfriend? Can’t say I have. But knowing Lana’s nature? It wouldn’t surprise me if she did. She’s got the kind of fire that draws wolves like moths to flame.”

Victor’s lips pressed into a thin line. Lana was a contradiction he could never unravel. Fierce with her enemies, generous with her friends. She burned bridges as quickly as she forged them, and yet people still circled back to her warmth.

Kade tilted his head, studying his uncle with a grin that was almost too sharp.

“Tell me, Uncle Victor, even if Lana has a new mate in her life, are you seriously considering winning her back?”

“Is there a problem with that?” Victor’s reply was quiet, cold, and unyielding.

Kade blinked, momentarily taken aback. His uncle’s determination was carved from stone. “Well... if you’re asking me, Lana doesn’t seem like the kind of she-wolf who goes back to the past. She’s not one to eat from the same kill twice.”

Victor’s gaze swept across his nephew like the slash of a blade.

“That’s enough. You can leave now.”

Kade only shrugged, rising to his feet. But as he reached the doorway, he couldn't resist tossing one more spark onto the fire.

"By the way, Lana told me once she's into younger wolves these days. If she doesn't want you, Uncle, don't force her. Not every hunt ends with the prey you want."

The words hit harder than Victor wanted to admit. His grip on the fountain pen faltered, the metal scratching across parchment. He said nothing, but the silence weighed heavier than a roar.

When Kade was gone, Victor pushed away from the desk and walked to the washbasin. He braced his palms on the porcelain, staring into the mirror. The reflection staring back was strong, the same proud, stern features he had carried into countless battles—but the wild, untested spark of youth had long faded.

So she liked younger wolves, did she?

The thought tore through him like claws. He remembered the album he had once glimpsed in her home—pages of photographs filled only with young men, their faces vibrant, their eyes unscarred by war. Was her new mate one of

1/3

:41 pm T

+10 Free Coins

them?

And if she truly did not want him... would he be able to let her go this time?

The question lingered like a curse.

Far across the city, in a guarded estate under the banner of the Bluemoon Pack, Aurora sat propped against her pillows. Her pregnancy had granted her temporary release, but chains of another kind weighed heavy. That very night, she reached for her communicator and sent a message.

"Caelum," she whispered into the WolfComm, "I want to see you."

When Caelum Grafton arrived, his presence filled the room like a storm at sea. Alpha of the Silverfang Pack, head of SilverTech Forgeworks—he carried both titles like armor, but tonight there was no warmth in his stance. His gaze landed not only on Aurora but also on her parents, who waited inside.

Aurora's mother, Eleanor, rose immediately, her hands clutching at his sleeves.

"Caelum, our Aurora depends on you now. No matter the cost, you must secure the finest lawyers. She cannot be left to rot in prison. Promise me you'll protect her."

Aurora's father chimed in quickly, his tone imploring.

“You’re not a stingy wolf, Caelum. Aurora carries your pup now. How could you possibly abandon her in her hour of need?”

There was a time when those words might have pierced Caelum’s heart. Once, even when coin was scarce, he would have fought tooth and fang to protect the woman he loved. But not now.

His voice was cold as frost when he asked, “And how much is your family willing to pay to secure those lawyers?”

“Pay?” The elder wolves froze. Their eyes darted between each other in alarm. “The Bluemoon Pack may have riches, yes, but that is the Alpha branch. We are but the second bloodline—we have nothing of our own. Aurora’s uncle refuses to be tainted by this scandal and has already distanced himself from us. Caelum, surely you won’t abandon her as well. That would be ungrateful beyond measure!”

“Ungrateful?” Caelum’s lips curled in a snarl as he turned toward Aurora. His gaze pinned her like a spear. “Your family has never given me reason for gratitude. So tell me—what exactly do I owe?”

Eleanor gasped, fury in her eyes. “How dare you! Without Aurora, you wouldn’t even be alive today. She saved your life!”

At that, Caelum’s composure shattered. A bitter laugh tore from his throat, sharp as steel scraping stone.

“She saved me? Is that what you’ve been told?” He stabbed a finger at Aurora, his voice rising. “Ask your daughter again who truly saved me. She’s lied to you all, just as she lied to me.”

Aurora’s face drained of color. Hastily, she motioned for her parents to leave. “Father, Mother—please. Let me speak to him alone.”

4:41 pm G

+10 Free Coins

When the door closed behind them, Aurora rose from the bed. She moved to Caelum, her steps light but her expression desperate.

“Caelum, listen to me. I know there have been... misunderstandings between us. But my feelings for you are real. And now...” She reached for his hand, guiding it gently to her stomach. “Now, there is more. Eight weeks. By next spring, you will be a father.”

But Caelum recoiled as though her touch burned. He snatched his hand back, fury trembling through his frame.

“How dare you speak to me of this? Do you have any idea what you’ve done? Because of you, I lost my mate bond. Because of you, my marriage lies in ashes. Because of you, SilverTech Forgeworks is drowning in debt. I was forced into a Lunar Severance Phase, Aurora! My company’s funds are locked by the Ironhold Consortium, and the courts won’t release them for months. You’ve driven me to ruin.”

Aurora's eyes widened, her voice rising in panic.

"No! That was never my intention. I only wanted to free myself from Lee's threats. I thought if I paid him to twist the truth, he could be silenced and imprisoned. If Freya Thorne hadn't interfered, it would have worked. The funds would have returned in weeks, not months. I never wanted to hurt you."

Her words only fanned the flames. Caelum's fury boiled over, his wolf rising beneath his skin. His fangs flashed, his eyes glowing with the molten gold of Alpha rage.

"Threats?" His voice thundered. "You bribed Lee to tell me you were my savior, when you knew damn well it was Freya. Freya Thorne of the Stormveil Pack, daughter of Arthur and Myra—she is the one who dragged me from the jaws of death, not you. And you let me spit on her name, again and again, while you stood in silence!"

Aurora flinched, but she did not back down. Her hands clenched over her belly as though the child within could shield her.

"I lied because I was afraid. Afraid of losing you. Afraid of what would happen if you knew the truth."

But Caelum's eyes blazed like a wildfire devouring the last of his patience. His voice was a growl torn from the core of his beast.

"You've already lost me, Aurora. You lost me the moment you betrayed not just me—but her."

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV

Aurora's voice was soft, almost pleading, yet sharp enough to cut.

+10 Free Coins

"I just think... you and Freya Thorne are already divorced. There's no need to keep clinging to the past. Besides, I'm the one you love. Does it matter so much whether I was the wolf who saved you or not?"

Caelum Grafton's growl thundered through the room. His golden eyes flared with Alpha fire.

"Of course it matters!" he snarled. "If you were never my savior—if Freya was the one who truly dragged me back from the brink—then how could I justify betraying her again and again for you? Aurora, do you realize how deeply you've ruined me?"

Aurora staggered back a step, shock flashing across her face.

"Ruined you? How can you say I ruined you?" She sounded as though his words were foreign, like wounds she never thought he'd inflict.

Caelum's chest heaved, fury boiling over.

"Isn't it obvious? If you hadn't lied about being the one who saved my life, I would never have cast Freya aside. I would never have severed my bond."

Aurora's expression twisted with disbelief. "So you're placing all the blame for your divorce on me? Caelum, tell me -who was it that heard I had returned from abroad and came running to my side like a wolf pup desperate for scraps? Who was it that obeyed whenever I called, who showered me with gifts just to stay in my orbit?"

Her words lashed like whips. She stepped closer, eyes burning with scorn.

"If you truly loved Freya so much, why was I able to command you so easily? Why was your marriage ring to her nothing more than a cheap trinket? You never valued her, Caelum. Not really. If your so-called savior had been some nameless she-wolf with no pack, no bloodline, no status-would you have worshipped her then? No. You would have tossed her a handful of coins and moved on. But me?" Her voice rose, trembling with both rage and pride. "I was Bluemoon's daughter. I was Vice Captain of the Airborne Wing. And that's why you clawed your way to me. Admit it."

Every word was like a strike across Caelum's face, and his wolf roared in his chest. With a snarl, he lunged forward, his hand clamping tightly around her throat.

"Silence!" His voice was feral, the command of an Alpha in full wrath. He couldn't stand another second of her poison in his ears.

Aurora clawed at his grip, her face reddening as she choked.

"Caelum...you... are *you* going to kill me?" Her voice rasped between gasps. "If you do, you'll be a murderer. My parents are right outside-do you think you can escape their judgment?"

+10 Free **Coins**

Her words cut through the haze of bloodlust. Caelum's grip faltered, his hand jerking back as though burned.

Aurora crumpled to the floor, coughing violently, clutching her bruised throat. She lifted her eyes to him, wide with disbelief. This was not the man she had once thought she owned. Not the man who had once hovered at her side, showering her with attention.

She had believed-foolishly-that once he learned of her pregnancy, everything else would be forgiven. That he would bend again, because a child bound them together. But now... now she saw clearly. Perhaps he had never truly loved her at all.

"You said you loved me," Aurora croaked, voice broken, raw. "You swore it. And now you want to kill me?"

"Love you?" Caelum's laugh was hollow, bitter as ash. His eyes burned with hatred. "Aurora, after everything you've done, how could I love you? If it weren't for the law, if killing you wouldn't condemn me to a cell, I would tear your throat out right here and now."

Her hand pressed protectively to her belly, desperation clawing its way into her tone.

“But I carry your child. Would you kill your own pup as well?”

Caelum froze. His breath steadied, and his lips curled into a sneer.

“The child. That’s why I came.” His voice was cold steel. “You will end it. You will tear this burden from your womb. Don’t think you can use this pup as a leash around my neck.”

Aurora’s eyes widened in horror. “You... you want me to child?”

I my ow

“Yes.” His voice was ice. “I don’t need this child. And you... you’re unworthy to bear the blood of Silverfang. A liar like *you* will never carry my heir.”

The words struck her harder than his hands ever could. Unworthy?

Once, it had been Caelum who wasn’t worthy—nothing but a poor wolf clawing his way up the ranks, clinging to scraps of power. She had been the prized daughter of Bluemoon, the brilliant pilot, the one with beauty, status, and a future as bright as the skies she commanded. She had looked down on him then, pitied him even. And now -now the tables had turned.

Her eyes glistened with fury and humiliation. “I won’t. I won’t destroy this child. And don’t think you can walk away so easily. If you want your name unsullied, if you want your reputation intact, you’ll fight for me in court. You’ll buy me the best lawyers and make certain I walk free. Unless you’d prefer the world to know the mother of your pup is a convicted criminal.”

Caelum’s eyes narrowed dangerously. “You dare threaten me?”

Aurora straightened her shoulders, though her body still trembled. “I’m not threatening. I’m telling you the truth. You can’t shake me off so easily.”

His lip curled in contempt. “I will never mate with you. Even if you give birth, you will not set foot in Silverfang’s halls. You will never be Luna.”

4:41 **pm**

10

+10 Free Coins

Aurora’s voice cracked with rage. “No? And what then? Do you think Freya Thorne will return to you? Do you really believe she still loves you? That she’ll take back the wolf who betrayed her again and again?”

At the sound of Freya’s name, Caelum’s fury dimmed, replaced by a sudden, sharp clarity. His eyes gleamed.

Freya.

If she returned... if she forgave him... then perhaps everything could be rebuilt. The ruins of SilverTech, the debts, the shame—all of it might vanish if she stood by him once more.

The thought struck him like lightning, and for the first time in weeks, hope flared in his chest.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

c 275

Third Person's POV

+10 Free Coins

The moment Victor stepped into the bar's private lounge, the noise that had filled the space seemed to collapse into silence.

A dozen pairs of eyes turned his way. It wasn't intentional—he simply carried that kind of presence. The kind that silenced laughter, froze movement, and forced every wolf in the room to acknowledge his arrival.

Lana sat at the head of the long velvet couch, a glass of blood-red wine in her hand. Around her, several of her company's subordinates were still mid-toast, the remnants of their celebration clinking faintly before tapering off. On the opposite side of the lounge, a cluster of hired male companions shifted uncomfortably, their bright smiles faltering under the weight of Victor's gaze.

Lana blinked, surprised, then rolled her eyes as if the sight of him were an inconvenience rather than the storm he truly was. She leaned back in her seat, legs crossed, lips curved in a lazy smile.

Victor ignored the rest of the room and strode directly toward her, his dark gaze unyielding.

"So this is your idea of a night out?" His voice was low, edged with ice. "Since when did you develop this habit, Lana?"

She arched a brow, feigning carelessness. But her glance swept the lounge, noting the startled looks on her employees' faces. Tonight had been meant as a celebration—a contract signed, a step forward in their hunt for dominance. She had brought her people here to drink, to bask in victory, and yes, to enjoy the company of well-trained male models. Why not? Wolves worked hard; wolves celebrated harder.

She tilted her glass, watching the crimson swirl. "And what brings you here, Victor? Did the Capital Alpha's prized lawyer suddenly forget what privacy means?"

His gaze sharpened. "I asked first."

The tension between them pulsed like a live wire. A subordinate finally broke the silence, whispering from Lana's left, "Lana, who... who is this?"

Lana frowned, unwilling to let anyone glimpse the truth of her history with him. "Just a lawyer I know," she said coolly.

Without waiting for another question, she stood, heels clicking against the polished floor. She grabbed Victor's wrist and pulled him out of the lounge before anyone else could speak. The heavy door closed behind them, muffling the thrum of music.

Out in the dim hallway, she spun on him, her eyes flashing. "Why are you here, Victor? What's your real purpose?"

But Victor wasn't one to be cornered. His voice was maddeningly calm, his expression composed in that infuriating way she remembered all too well. "I told you already. Answer mine first."

4:41 pm

+10 Free Coins

Lana clenched her teeth, fury boiling in her chest. Talking to Victor was like battling a wall of iron—unyielding, suffocating. She cursed herself inwardly. How had she ever been so foolish to entangle herself with him?

Then her gaze lifted to his face, that cursedly perfect face—sharp cheekbones, lips carved like stone, eyes that seemed to strip away every pretense. She sighed inwardly. Right. That was why.

"Fine," she said at last, tossing her hair over her shoulder. "It's normal, isn't it? Wolves come to bars, they drink, they enjoy themselves. Sometimes that includes a little extra company. I started after I began making real money. Why else do we fight so hard, if not to live comfortably? To feel good?"

His eyes narrowed. "So this makes you feel good? Ordering companions to sit at your side?"

"Yes," she shot back without hesitation. "It's entertaining. There's variety. Everyone likes options, don't they?" Victor stepped closer, shadows sliding over his tall frame. "And your boyfriend doesn't mind?"

Her smile curved slyly. "Of course not. My boyfriend's generous. Very generous."

The black of his gaze darkened, predatory, dangerous. He moved another step closer.

Lana instinctively retreated until her back hit the cold wall of the hallway. Her heart thudded against her ribs. He loomed over her, one hand braced beside her head, his scent filling the narrow space between them—smoke, iron, and the raw dominance of an Alpha-blooded wolf, even though he bore no title.

"Lana," Victor murmured, his voice deep, roughened with something she didn't want to name. "Do you truly have a boyfriend?"

His stare pinned her, searching, as though he could unravel every lie with a single glance.

Heat prickled at her neck. For a dangerous moment, she wanted to shove a blindfold over those eyes, to strip him of that control, to flip him beneath her and- No. Stop. Stop thinking like that.

She sucked in a breath, lifting her chin. “Of course I do. Why would I lie to you?”

Victor studied her for several long seconds. The silence grew taut, nearly unbearable. Then, slowly, he stepped back. He pulled a cigarette from his pocket, lit it, and took two sharp drags before letting the smoke curl lazily between them. He didn’t smoke it further, just let the flame consume it in his hand.

Damn him. Even standing there like that, the ember’s glow painting his jawline, he looked like something torn from a poster—too perfect, too untouchable.

She shook her head. No. Not again. She refused to fall for the same face twice.

“Well, Victor, enjoy your cigarette,” she said, turning on her heel. “I’ll be getting back. My staff are still waiting.” She let her tone linger on the last word. And so were the male models.

She was nearly to the door when his voice cut the air behind her.

“Lana. I don’t care who your boyfriend is. Leave him.

4:41 pm **G**

+10 Free Coins

“I don’t care who your boyfriend is,” Victor Ashford’s voice rang out, steady and cold as steel, “Leave him. Come back to me.”

Lana Rook stopped dead in her tracks. For a heartbeat, she thought she had misheard him. Slowly, she turned her head, eyes narrowing with incredulity.

A low laugh slipped past her lips. “Back to you? Impossible.”

The cigarette trembled between his fingers, ash spilling onto the floor. His control cracked for just an instant. “Why not?”

Her smile sharpened. “Because I like my boyfriend. Isn’t that reason enough? And Victor, don’t you think you sound a little arrogant? Do you truly believe I’d throw away what I have now just because you demand it? You’re not the sun. The world doesn’t revolve around you.”

She folded her arms, the glitter of amusement in her eyes deliberately cruel. “Besides, haven’t you heard the saying? A good wolf doesn’t return to old hunting grounds. And compared to the fresh, green fields I enjoy now... why would I waste my time chewing on stale grass like you?”

The words landed like claws raking across his pride. His jaw tightened, the glow of the cigarette flaring as his grip nearly crushed it.

But Lana didn't linger to see the storm gathering in his expression. She turned away, heels clicking against the stone floor, and pushed the lounge door back open. Laughter and music spilled out once again, swallowing her up.

She didn't spare Victor another glance.

Behind her, in the dim hallway, Victor Ashford stood motionless. His shadow stretched long against the wall, cigarette burning itself out between his fingers. His expression had darkened into something dangerous, a silent vow forming in the depths of his gaze.

Lana *Rook* might think she could walk away. She might think she could cut him off like an old chapter in her life. But Victor knew otherwise. Wolves didn't let go of what was theirs.

And in his heart, no matter how much she mocked him, she was still his.