

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

chapter 41-50

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya's POV

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“You really don’t want to return the clothes in person?” Silas’s eyes darkened slightly as he studied me.

“They’re too valuable. It doesn’t feel right,” I replied.

+8 Pearls

He fixed me with a long, deliberate gaze, then said, “Fine. But don’t send them by courier. Since I gave them to you face-to-face, you should return them the same way.”

“LI’-”

“When to return them, I’ll have someone let you know,” he cut me off casually.

I blinked, dumbfounded. Return the clothes... and wait for his instructions?

I finished my discharge procedures, swapping my hospital gown for a cheap T-shirt and pants I bought at the small hospital shop. Stepping out, I spotted Lana waiting near the entrance. But she wasn’t alone.

Before I could process who was beside her, a figure lunged forward and enveloped me in a tight hug.

I fraze as the figure lunged forward and enveloped me in a tight hug.

“Freya, you married just to do this to yourself?”

That voice... Kade. My loyal shadow from the military camp. Unlike anyone else, only he ever called me “Big Sister” outside formal settings.

Kade Blackridge wasn't just any soldier from The Capital. He was born into prominence—the son of a high-ranking military family, and his mother **was** the director of the city's primary trauma hospital. Even now, his upbringing and training had honed him into a man of precision and command, a wolf tempered by both bloodline and discipline. His instincts were sharp, attuned to danger, loyalty, and protection, making him a natural Alpha in waiting, even if he had yet to claim a pack.

I looked up **at** him. The boyish features **I** remembered had matured into a composed, elegant **face**

over three years. That reckless energy of youth had been tempered into something controlled, precise. The wolf within him was keen, protective, and territorial—a force **I** could feel even through the brief touch of his embrace.

I recalled the mall explosion. I had called Kade, and he had coordinated evacuating the crowd with the skill of someone trained to command both humans and wolves alike. That had been our first real conversation in years. I hadn't **expected** to see him **again so** soon—let alone like this, catching me completely off guard.

“What are you doing here with **Lana?**” **I** asked, **still** stunned.

“You tell me!” Lana groaned. “Yesterday, he couldn't **reach you**, went mad, and ran to find me. If you hadn't finally answered your phone and stepped out of the hospital, **he** probably would've stormed the barracks to drag you out!”

I pressed my lips together. With so many knowing about yesterday's **events**, **it wasn't** surprising that Kade, even if absent from the banquet, would have heard. **His** wolf would **have** smelled the tension,

the danger, the betrayal.

“I'm fine,” I said, patting Kade on the shoulder.

He didn't let go.

“I'm sticky with sweat and haven't showered. It's dirty. Stop holding me,” I urged.

“You don't understand how worried I was last night,” Kade said lowly, voice taut with frustration. “How **I** hate myself for not noticing your heart before you married Caelum Grafton. If I had stopped it **in** time, none of this would have happened. And I

His **voice** faltered, leaving the thought unfinished. I let out a bitter smile. Sometimes, **I** wished I had never married Caelum.

My stomach growled.

12:49 PM PP

“You hungry?” Kade finally released me.

“Yeah... I haven’t really eaten since yesterday afternoon,” I admitted.

“Good. Now that you’re safe, let’s find a place to eat,” Lana suggested.

+8 Pearls

We climbed into the **car**, leaving the hospital behind. From a distance, I noticed a silver Maybach. Silas’s gaze followed us as we drove off. My chest tightened slightly, wolf instincts stirring—the possessive edge of an Alpha sensing what he considered his being taken, even briefly, by another.

Inside the **car**, the tension eased slightly as we drove into the city. Lana’s voice flared when she mentioned Caelum. “That bastard. Still hiring the best lawyers in The Capital for his mother and sister. Does he even think about what they did?”

Kade’s tone went cold. “No one in the four major law firms in The Capital will touch their case.”

I blinked, recalling Kade’s family—lawyers through and through. If not for his mother’s focus on running the hospital and overseeing trauma care, he might have become a legal powerhouse himself. The wolf in him, sharpened by heritage and training, would never let injustice pass.

“That’s perfect!” Lana laughed. “You’ve got skills. No wonder Freya took care of you like a mother at the camp!”

Kade lowered his gaze. “If you hadn’t looked after me at the camp, I’d have been out in months. You did everything for me. Of course I owe you.”

I felt a warmth in my chest, wolf and human alike stirred by loyalty, protection, and gratitude. My wolf instincts hummed— territorial, protective. Kade’s devotion was clear, but so was mine.

The night was far from over. And in this pack of intertwined loyalties, desires, and grudges, my instincts told me to stay alert. Wolves smelled danger. I could feel it even through the hum of the city.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

+8 Pearls

“Not bad at all. I wish I had a brother like you,” Lana muttered, then her eyes lit up. “Hey, Kade, since Freya and I are the same age, why don’t you call me ‘Big Sister’ too? Let me be a sister for once.”

Kade shot her a look that could strip fur from a wolf. “You want to be my Big Sister? Can you carry me through three kilometers in the dead of winter to the hospital? Or beat me down until I submit?”

“Nope,” Lana muttered, touching her nose. She couldn’t do either.

“Besides,” Kade said lazily, “my Big Sister isn’t anyone you can just become.”

That tone made Lana freeze mid-step. I had always known Kade could be calm and steady around me, like a well-trained wolf, but he was also the little tyrant of The Capital. Anyone foolish enough to test him would pay dearly.

“Alright, Lana, I think you were just joking,” I said, trying to ease the tension.

Kade

Kade’s eyes shifted to me. “Joke or not, there’s only one Big Sister for me. And that’s you.”

The dishes arrived, and I hungrily dug in. My stomach hadn’t felt this empty since yesterday afternoon. Kade ladled soup into my bowl, arranging my favorite dishes in front of me. His careful, protective gestures made Lana roll her eyes. To her, he **was** no fearsome little tyrant—he looked more like a golden retriever fawning for favor.

When I had eaten most of the food, Kade suddenly asked, “When are you getting the divorce?”

I froze. I hadn’t told him. Lana did too.

His eyes narrowed, voice low and sharp. “After what happened... you’re still not getting the divorce? Do you really love Caelum that much? Love him enough to endure his other women? Love him enough to endure his family treating you like

this?”

I **stayed** silent.

He seethed. “What’s so good about Caelum that makes you cling to him? A woman like you doesn’t deserve him! Should I **go over** there and force him to **sign** the papers?”

"I'll divorce him," **I said** firmly, staring at the bare ring finger of my right hand. My wedding ring had long **been** removed.

"Exactly **as**

I said," I murmured. "There's nothing **to** cling to. Caclum had nothing **to offer**, and I **have** nothing to **lose**."

My feelings for him had died in the three years since my parents passed. The man who **once gave** me comfort and warmth no longer existed in my life.

Kade's eyes glinted suddenly. "Alright. Then **I'll help** you find the **best** legal team. We'll handle your **divorce** efficiently."

"No need," I said. "I **can** manage it myself. If **it gets** difficult, **I'll** ask for your help."

His brow softened. "Fine. **I'll** wait for your good news."

We finished the **meal**. I called **the** police to let them know I'd come **in**

to **give** a statement. Lana and Kade insisted **on** coming with **me**. Lana, **as** a witness from the banquet, also filed her report.

From **the** officers, I learned that Giselle and Eleanor were being held, requiring high bail for release. **The** two **men** who **had** tried to attack **me** admitted everything **was** orchestrated by them. Aurora, lacking solid evidence against **her**, **simply provided a** statement and was released.

When we left the station, I planned to **take a taxi** home.

"**I'll** take you," Kade said.

*I can take **a** cab myself. You've already spent enough time with me today," **I replied**.

1219 PM **PP**

"No. I'm taking you," he insisted. "Do you hate me for it? You don't like me escorting you?"

+8 Pearls

I looked at him—22 **years** old, trained at the barracks since Alpha Blackridge sent him there. Once a hotheaded brat, now **steady** and composed. I could feel the weight of time on him.

“Don’t say things like that. From the moment you entered the camp, I never hated you,” I said.

A smile tugged at Kade’s lips. “Then let me take you.”

I sighed and turned to Lana. “You go ahead. Kade will take me home.”

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Freya’s POV

+8 Pearls

Lana shrugged as she watched the tall, imposing man fumble like a lapdog, opening the car door for me. If the heirs of The Capital, familiar with Kade’s reputation as a “little tyrant,” saw him acting so obediently in front of a woman, they’d probably choke on their wine.

Kade drove me to the gate of my villa.

“**You** live here? Not far from me,” he said.

And yet, despite being so close, the past three years hadn’t offered a single crossing of paths.

“The Capital isn’t that big,” I replied.

“Then I’ll come find you here,” Kade said.

↓.

Pragers

“Don’t.” I felt the low rumble of his wolf stir. His composure faltered for only a moment before I added, “I’m planning to move anyway.”

His expression brightened. “Fine. When you do, call me—I’ll help with the move.”

I waved goodbye, stepping into my villa.

Inside, Caelum Grafton stood by the door, his cold gaze pinned to me. “Who just brought you back? Silas Whitmor?”

I frowned. “No. A former colleague from the military.”

“Military colleague?” Caelum’s brow furrowed, suspicion flashing. “Since when are your colleagues that rich? That car didn’t **cost less** than a few million.”

I ignored him, heading to the stairs to wash away the sweat and fatigue clinging to me. But Caelum grabbed my arm before I could pass.

“Can’t answer me? Freya, you keep accusing Aurora and me of betrayal, but you... when exactly did you and Silas **get** involved?”

I **stiffened**. Silas? He **was a** predator in his own right, but **we weren’t**

involved.

“I **have** nothing to do with **Silas**, Caelum. **Stop** projecting your own filth onto others,” I spat, voice icy.

His **face flushed** red, then he bellowed, “Then **why** did **Silas answer my call to** you? Why did he say you **were asleep**? Were **you...** in his bed?”

I shrugged off his hand. “I don’t **need** to prove **my** innocence **to you**. If Silas answered your call, it’s thanks to your mother and sister’s underhanded schemes. Were it not for them using **vile** methods, I wouldn’t have **needed** him to escort me to the hospital for sedation!”

“What?” Caelum froze, stunned.

I didn’t wait for **a reply I went**

upstairs, letting the **shower** wash **away sweat, fear,** and rage.

When I emerged, dressed and composed, Caelum **sat on the** edge of the bed, looking as though he’d swallowed **a** bitter pill

“Freya... I’m sorry. I shouldn’t **have** doubted you. I was just... worried,” he murmured.

“Worried?” I let out a bitter laugh. “Do you think I could ever trust your words again?”

Embarrassment flickered across his features. “Regardless, I know my mother and **sister** caused you harm. But, we’re family. If you forgive them, this could all **pass**.”

I **lifted** my chin, eyes cold as winter steel. “I will not **forgive**, Caelum. Some things cannot be pardoned.”

His **jaw** tensed. “They are my mother and sister!”

+8 Pearls

“So what? Just because they are, I must forgive them when they’ve harmed me? Do you even realize what I could have suffered yesterday?”

“You-” His voice faltered.

“Two strangers would have toyed with me, stripping me bare while your mother watched, savoring every moment. Giselle would film it, spread it online, all to see me ruined. And you-what? You’d just stand by?”

I saw the color drain from his face. His chest heaved, wolf instincts clashing with human guilt.

“I... I promise. It won’t happen again. Just this once-please forgive them! My mother is old, fragile. Giselle is young, can’t have a record,” he pleaded.

I lifted my red-stained lips in a cold smile. “So... I’m supposed to be the one sacrificed?”

His wolf bristled at my words, heart pounding in panic. My indifference was a razor at his throat-threatening, absolute.

“Freya... I will treat you well. I’ll make it up to you, double... triple,” he rushed forward, trying to wrap me in his arms.

Neaned against him briefly, recalling the same words he’d whispered when he proposed. Promises made in warmth, now empty. I had been foolish to believe.

I pushed him away, my voice firm, unwavering. “Caelum, I’m moving out. Until our divorce is finalized, we will see each

other no more.”

The room seemed to chill, the wolf in both of us bracing for territory, distance, and the inevitable reckoning to come.

Send Gifts

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

+8 Pearls

“You’re moving out?” Caelum’s voice cracked slightly, disbelief and something sharper-territorial anger-hiding beneath the

calm.

“Yes. Do you really think after everything that happened, I’d continue living here?” I said, my voice even, controlled. “Besides, it won’t be long before the divorce is finalized. I’m just moving out a few days early.”

He froze, eyes narrowing. “A few days? You mean that ridiculous contract with my mother? That signature... she tricked me into signing it without my knowledge. I never never wanted to divorce you!”

I didn’t flinch. “Whether you knew or not doesn’t matter. What matters is that I want a divorce. I’m done, Caelum.”

His gaze darkened, jealousy flaring for a brief, human instant. “Is this because of Silas? Because you found someone better than me?”

I couldn’t help the bitter laugh that escaped me. “Caelum, when I married you, you were penniless. Every cent for your business, your start-up, came from me. If I were chasing status, I wouldn’t have chosen you.”

The color drained from his face. I could see him remembering those early days, a young wolf struggling for territory, underestimated by everyone. And yet, I had given him respect, belief, a tether to cling to. His proposal had been less about love than grasping at that lifeline I offered.

“Then if it’s not Silas, **is** it... the one hundred million your mother promised you?” His gaze drilled into me, sharp, demanding.

I met it evenly. “I’m exhausted. Three years of this marriage drained me—every ounce of patience, every shred of my feelings for you. That’s why I’m leaving, that’s why I want a divorce.”

I said it calm, measured, almost cold. Even my eyes, when they met his, betrayed nothing.

But I could feel it—the Alpha wolf inside him stirring, panic, betrayal, and an aching possessiveness flooding his chest, coiling down his limbs. His hands glistened with cold **sweat**.

“You.. you **have** no feelings for me?”

” His voice trembled, though he tried to mask it.

“Yes. Nothing left,” I said plainly.

The **flash** of **rage** and disbelief on his face was instantaneous, raw.

“**All because** of my mother and **sister**? Sure, they plotted against **you**—but what about you? You plotted too, didn’t you?” He was shouting now, claws of frustration raking the air. “You recorded everything with **the** cameras, played it in the banquet hall... you could **have** warned me **earlier**, avoided **all** this!”

“I did **call**,” I said, voice cutting through the room.

“What?” His **eyes** widened.

“At first. When your mother and Giselle were planning their... **vile** scheme, I called you. If you had answered, none of **this**

would have happened. Things could have ended the way you wanted. But you didn’t.”

He froze, realization and guilt hammering against **his chest**. He remembered the call, the banquet hall, the live feed **flashing** on the screens... and he had ignored it, letting his pride, his **fear** of me making a scene, and Aurora’s presence override instinct.

“If you’d taken that call...” His jaw tightened, regret slicing through his Alpha pride.

called. You didn’t answer because, deep down, you never truly cared about me. My calls meant nothing **to** you. And your family? They treated me with the same disdain,” I said, each word precise, **sharp**.

“Freya... I’m sorry! **I’m** sorry!” He stumbled over apologies, frantic, the wolf within him pacing at the edges **of** his control.

+8 Pearls

But I **stayed** calm. My expression serene. “Even without yesterday... I would still have no feelings for you. Let’s end this cleanly, Caelum.”

My tone was flat, matter-of-fact, as though discussing the weather rather than the collapse of a three-year union.

The more composed I remained, the more his wolf clawed at his chest, howling in frustration. How could I be so calm, so detached, after all we had shared? Three years of marriage, and I treated it like it meant nothing.

“So... no amicable ending? Or is this divorce about that one hundred million?” His gaze sharpened, conflicted between Alpha instinct and human desire.

I let a dry, ironic smile **cross** my lips. “Fine. Keep your money. We’re divorcing.”

The shock in his eyes was palpable. He’d expected hesitation, bargaining—maybe even some softness. But I gave him none.

I wanted the divorce. No more negotiations, no more compromises, no more lingering in a cage I'd outgrown. And the fact that he realized it, that his Alpha pride couldn't dominate my resolve, only made him more humiliated.

Send Gifts

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Third Person's POV

+8 Pearls

"If you really go through with this divorce, you'll end up with nothing! You'd better think carefully." With those words, Caelum stormed out of the Thorne estate, his strides long and sharp, almost like a predator retreating to avoid a confrontation he wasn't ready to face.

The room fell silent. Freya Thorne scanned the spacious house. It was time to move. In truth, she didn't have much here **anyway**—most of what she owned was portable, easy to carry.

Over the next two days, Caelum's mind was divided. On one hand, he scrambled to raise bail money for Eleanor and Giselle; on the other, he searched for lawyers who could potentially absolve them of criminal liability. Freya refused to sign any reconciliation document, which meant his mother and sister faced prosecution. Even if the court eventually issued suspended sentences, they would carry a permanent record—something Caelum, as Alpha of the Silverfang Pack and head of SilverTech Forgeworks, could not tolerate.

Yet not a single one of The Capital's four major law firms was willing to touch the case. Night after night, he barely slept, pacing through the corridors of his private club, frustration gnawing at him like a restless wolf.

Aurora, ever considerate, approached. "Drink less. About your mother and Giselle... we can still think of a way. I can ask my uncle if he knows any lawyers willing to help."

Caelum's eyes softened slightly. "Aurora... thank you. Despite what Giselle did to you, you'd still help her?"

Aurora shook her head gently. "I'm not petty. Giselle is your sister; it doesn't change anything. I won't hold grudges." Ryker, leaning against the bar, smirked. "That's why I say, Aurora's so much more generous than someone like Freya. She holds

grudges **over every** little thing. If she hadn't caused such a scene, your mother and sister wouldn't still be in custody."

Caelum frowned. "Enough about Freya."

At that moment, Aurora caught sight of her uncle, Vaughn, entering the club. But it was the man accompanying him who made her eyes light up. She nudged Caelum. "Look, that's my uncle. Let's go greet him. And the man with him—Kade **Blackridge**. In The Capital, his name carries weight. Any lawyer, any bank, anyone in this city would give him **respect**. If he's willing to help, we won't struggle to find a capable attorney."

Caelum froze. "That man **is**...?"

"Kade Blackridge. **The Capital's** notorious young powerhouse, He just returned from abroad recently. **His** connections are deep, his background stronger than most can imagine. Aligning with him **is** a privilege," Aurora explained.

Something flickered in Caelum's mind.

Aurora continued, "And don't **forget**, your company is still tight on funding. If Kade decides to **help**, getting a loan approved by the banks could **be** just one word from him."

Caelum's pulse quickened, Alpha instinct stirred—territorial, ambitious, calculating. Opportunity and leverage were wolves circling the same kill.

Ryker grinned, **eyes** gleaming. "**He's young**

, and yet... impressive."

Aurora **gave** a soft hum, a hint of pride mingled with envy, "Luck of birth, I suppose. **He's** an only child. Father commands in the military hierarchy, mother heads a leading medical institute. A union of **strength** and intellect. Unlike me... I'm merely the second branch of the Bluemoon Beta family. All true wealth and power belong to my uncle. I claw my way up, only to earn status as the first female pilot of Airborne Wing Name and title, but little **real** power."

She glanced at Caelum, head of the legendary SilverTech Forgeworks. From **a** fledgling company to a publicly listed powerhouse in three **years**—his achievements dwarfed **even** Bluemoon Group's potential. A future with him could secure influence, respect, and standing. A calculated ambition sharpened in her mind.

Aurora looped her arm through Caelum's and guided him toward her uncle and Kade, Ryker tagged along, **grinning**, "Maybe

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Kade will like me and we can be friends!”

+8 Pearls

Aurora’s smile remained polite, but her wolfish eyes showed contempt. Ryker was nothing more than Caelum’s Beta and long-time friend. Without Caelum’s support, he’d still be a mechanic, barely scraping by. Yet here he dreamed of gaining favor with Kade Blackridge—a laughable overreach.

Soon, the trio reached the private room where Vaughn and Kade had stopped.

*My uncle, I saw you and Kade enjoying some leisure, so I brought Caelum and a friend to greet you.” Aurora said, smiling.

“Ah. Aurora,” Vaughn chuckled. “And this must be the niece I told Kade about. She’s the first female pilot at Bluemoon Airborne. Perhaps one day, Kade, you’ll be flying under her command.”

The room hummed with quiet admiration. Other onlookers whispered their respect. “Ms. Aurora is incredible—first female pilot at Bluemoon Airborne. Truly remarkable.”

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Third Person’s POV

+8 Pearls

Aurora, daughter of the Bluemoon Pack’s Beta, basked in the flattering words swirling around her like warm spring air.

The daughter of Bluemoon’s Beta is naturally unlike any ordinary woman.

Every compliment felt like a rich reward for the grueling years she had clawed her way through to become the first female pilot of the Bluemoon Airborne Wing.

“Where,” Aurora demurred with practiced humility, her voice as smooth as glass. “I was simply lucky to become the Airborne Wing’s first female pilot.”

“You certainly were lucky.”

The lazy drawl sliced through the polite hum of the gathering. Kade’s sharp gaze locked on her.

“I heard,” he continued, “that back when you were just an ordinary flight officer, you were sent abroad to deliver a shipment of aid. Your co-pilot died unexpectedly on foreign soil, and together with the captain, you managed to bring back a number of stranded pack members—earning yourself high merit. That’s how you were promoted to co-pilot. Without that... well, with your record, you wouldn’t have climbed that high so quickly.”

Aurora’s expression flickered—just for a second.

It meant Kade had looked into her. But why? She had never crossed paths with him before this night.

“That kind of merit is rare,” someone at her side quickly added. “And at the time, the territory she went to was riddled with war and bloodshed. That kind of courage isn’t something just any woman can match.”

Kade’s lips curved—not in a smile, but in a cold, mocking twist. “Then you must not have met many women.”

The well-meaning supporter’s **voice** died in their throat.

Aurora tilted her chin slightly, irritation pricking at her composure. She knew well that Kade Blackridge **was** not someone she could afford to offend. But neither **was** she willing to let a few careless words trample on the hard-won glory she had bled for.

“**Kade,**” she said evenly, “I may have been lucky to become co-pilot, but not every woman can **step** into that role, even if fortune hands her the chance.”

“So being a co-pilot is such an accomplishment?” Kade’s tone was almost amused. “In the military wings, **there’s** no shortage of women who **can**

fly, Before **I** met **you**, **I** thought you were a self-reliant, relentless kind of woman. **Now, it seems...** you fly a **plane** and think yourself invincible.”

His mind flickered to someone truly formidable—**Freya** Thorne.

She had once flown a warbird straight through the burning clouds **of** cannon fire, risking everything **to** save pack civilians and comrades alike. She had been prepared to die doing it.

The thought brought a faint warmth to Kade’s otherwise cold **demeanor**.

Aurora’s cheeks flushed red, then paled. **His** words were like **the crack** of an Alpha’s strike across the face. The rest of the guests shrank **back**, unwilling to get caught in the crossfire.

Fortunately, Caelum stepped forward, breaking **the** taut air. “Kade. An honor to finally meet you.”

Vaughn, Aurora’s uncle, seized the chance. “Kade, you’ve only just returned to **the** Capital, so you might not know—Caelum **is** one of the rising stars in the tech world. His company went from nothing to a full listing **in** just three years.”

hope we’ll have **the** opportunity to work together,” Caelum added smoothly.

“Young and accomplished?” Kade’s laugh was low and edged with steel. “Vaughn, are you joking **with** me? You dare **call** a man who cheats on **his** mate ‘accomplished?’”

12:50 PM P P

The air thickened. Every gaze shifted toward Aurora and Caelum.

+8 Pearls

After all, the story of that fateful banquet night—when a giant display had shown Caelum’s mother Eleanor and sister Giselle conspiring to ruin his own mate, just so he could cast her aside and be with Aurora—had already swept through the upper ranks of the Capital’s packs.

Both Aurora and Caelum flushed a furious crimson.

“**It’s** a misunderstanding,” Vaughn rushed to say.

“Yes,” Caelum echoed. “Aurora and I are only friends.”

“Friends?” Kade’s voice was velvet over razors. “I hear that last month, while your mate traveled alone to retrieve her parents’ remains from overseas after a tragic accident, you were right here in the Capital—keeping this ‘friend’ company.”

Caelum’s heart jolted. How in the moon’s name did Kade know that?

“It **was** sudden,” he explained quickly. “Aurora got a headache, and I had to rush her to the medics. I couldn’t make it in time to accompany my mate.”

“Headache?” Kade’s eyes were shards of ice. “So your friend outweighed your own mate’s grieving parents?”

The unspoken judgment rang through the room. Everyone here was too sharp to buy the word friend. Many already knew Caelum had concealed his marriage, letting the world believe he was unattached.

And the Blackridge bloodline was infamous for its uncompromising loyalty to their mates. In their creed, betrayal was unforgivable.

No wonder more than a few of the guests now looked at Caelum and Aurora not with admiration—but with pity.

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They had come tonight with the clear intent of currying favor with Kade Blackridge.

+8 Pearls

Now, it **was** no longer a matter of building ties—at this point, avoiding his open contempt would be the greatest mercy they could hope for.

A fine sheen of sweat broke across Caelum’s brow. Kade was younger than him, but the sheer dominance in the Alpha’s eyes carried the weight of a seasoned warlord. The pressure coiled in Caelum’s spine like a hunter’s fangs poised over prey.

“Dead wolves can’t be compared to the living,” Ryker drawled suddenly. “Fetching an urn doesn’t take two. But Aurora’s headache, and that could be serious or not. Caelum was simply being considerate.”

A flash of glacial fury lit Kade’s gaze. He rose from his seat in a single, fluid movement and stalked toward Ryker, every step emanating the predatory prowl of an apex Alpha.

“What,” Kade’s voice cracked like a whip, “did you just say?”

Ryker, oblivious to the danger, pressed on. “I said the dead can’t be compared to the living. Freya Thorne’s parents have been dead for three years. Was Caelum supposed to abandon an injured woman just to escort her to collect ashes?”

CRACK.

The sound of Kade’s palm striking flesh split the air like lightning over the mountains. Ryker stumbled back, nearly toppling into the low table beside him.

“Kade, that’s going too far,” Caelum interjected, his voice tight. Ryker was, after all, his beta and friend.

“Too far?” Kade’s snarl rumbled deep in his chest, every syllable bristling with the feral edge of a wolf ready to tear flesh. “I’ve not even begun.”

In a **blur**, his boot slammed into Ryker’s midsection, sending him sprawling to the floor. Before Ryker could **rise**, **Kade’s** heel came down hard, pinning him by the chest.

“Doing what?” Kade’s tone was deathly cold. “Putting down a beast. One who dares speak words only a beast would utter. Freya Thorne’s parents—**are** they yours to disgrace??”

Ryker **wheezed** under the pressure but still managed, “And why not? Freya’s parents can’t be beyond reproach. Three years **married** to Caelum, and all she’s done **is** idle away her days. Everyone knows Aurora is the better choice! Surely even you, Kade **Blackridge**,

aren’t so blinded by **gossip** that you’d pity Freya. That woman doesn’t deserve pity!”

Part loyalty to Caelum, part **self**-interest—Ryker’s **words** were as much a performance **as** a **defense**. His small company survived only on the **scraps** of contracts Silver Tech Forgeworks tossed his **way**.

Kade laughed then—a sound sharp enough to cut bone. To him, Freya was a name carved high as the mountain peaks, **a** presence **he** revered. And **here** she **was**, reduced to filth in the mouth of this cur.

Worse still, her own mate stood silent.

“You think your mate unworthy compared to Aurora?” Kade’s eyes bored into **Caelum** like a blade.

Caelum hesitated before answering. “In temperament and skill, Freya **falls** short **of** Aurora. **But**

she’s still my mate. Even if she lacks ability, I don’t hold it **against** her.”

Kade withdrew his boot from Ryker’s chest, his expression still like **a** winter storm. “**Her** ability? How much do you even know? Without her, do you think your fledgling company could have **reached the** point of going public in three years?”

“That’s because Caelum’s vision is sharp, his judgment precise, his abilities exceptional,” Aurora interjected **smoothly**.

Caelum met Kade’s **gaze** in silence, clearly agreeing with her. In his mind, his rise had been entirely his own doing.

Kade’s mouth twisted into a cold sneer. “Caelum Grafton, without Freya Thorne’s hand guiding you, you are nothing. The vision **you** boast of, the ability you prize—it was her, always her.”

“What?” Caelum blinked, momentarily thrown.

+8 Pearls

Aurora’s voice sharpened. “Kade, even if you want to defend Freya, you can’t demean Caelum like this.”

“Exactly.” Ryker muttered from the floor, though with far less bravado after the blows. “What skill could Freya possibly have to help Caelum?”

“What skill?” Kade’s contempt deepened, his tone brimming with Alpha authority. “Back in the Iron Fang Recon Unit, her research overhauled the pack’s entire defense grid. In aerial drone applications, she was unmatched—one of the top military specialists in the field. If she hadn’t resigned her commission, she’d have more accolades in drone warfare than you could

count.”

The room fell silent.

Ryker’s eyes widened. “Impossible. How could she-?”

“Do I look like I’d waste my breath on lies?” Kade’s voice was pure frost.

No one dared speak further. The Blackridge heir would never tarnish his name with falsehoods, least of all for a woman he defended with such open ferocity.

Caelum’s face burned. Kade’s words were a dagger driven deep—telling everyone present that the Silverfang Alpha’s renown **as** a tech prodigy was built on Freya’s foundation.

He wanted to deny it, to lash back. But the moment he tried, his mind betrayed him—flashing with memories of Freya standing beside him at late-night strategy tables, pointing out paths he hadn’t seen, sealing deals he couldn’t have won alone.

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A Warrior Luna's Awakening

+8 Pearls

Caelum had always believed it was sheer luck that Freya had been able to help him land certain lucrative contracts for SilverTech Forgeworks.

But now—if it wasn't luck at all?

If every victory, every step toward the pack's rising power in the tech world... was tied to her alone?

A cold film of sweat prickled at the back of his neck, and an icy weight seemed to coil around his chest.

"What 'tech prodigy'? What a load of dung," Kade Blackridge's voice cut through the air, sharp with contempt. "Caelum Grafton, you should be thanking Freya for standing beside you for three years. Her taste in males is the only thing I'll fault, her for—imagine giving so much to someone like you, and you strut around thinking it was all your own doing."

Every word from Kade's mouth landed like a deliberate slash at Caelum's pride.

Worse he couldn't muster a single retort.

Kade turned toward Vaughn, his amber gaze still glinting with the hunt. "Looks like this feast is over. I'm leaving."

Vaughn nodded hastily. "Of course." The Bluemoon elder only prayed their pack hadn't provoked this young warlord of the Capital.

But just before crossing the threshold, Kade paused and looked back at Caelum.

"Oh, one more thing—none of the Four Great Banks' lawyers will touch your mother's and sister's cases. That's my doing."

Caelum's pupils constricted.

So the **walls** he'd been slamming into for weeks... were Kade's making?

Why?

(

For Freya's sake? **Out** of pity—or something else entirely?

And how did this ruthless Alpha know so much about Freya—down to classified Iron Fang Recon Unit **research**, her being a top-tier unmanned aerial systems expert?

Information Caelum, her own mate, had never even heard.

His mind **flashed** back to an argument with a former project manager who'd once said, "Alpha, **you** don't know your mate at

all.”

Now, that sentence burned with truth.

Kade’s departure **scattered** the **rest** of the gathering; one by one, they made **excuses** and slipped out.

Vaughn **gave** Aurora a meaningful look. “Kade once served in the Iron Fang **Recon** Unit for a time. From the way he spoke tonight, I suspect Freya did **as** well. They may **have...** history.”

Aurora’s eyes widened. “You mean—Kade and Freya might know each other well? Closer than they should?”

“This

young Alpha of the Blackridge line isn’t the sort to raise his hackles for just anyone,” Vaughn said grimly. “If I were you, Alpha Caelum, I’d keep my distance from him.”

Caelum’s jaw Lightened.

The once-lively chamber was now-hushed, with only Caelum, Aurora, and Ryker remaining

Ryker clutched his ribs, grimacing. “That Freya’s got some skill, I’ll give her that—got another male **stepping in** to defend **her**. A male and a female that close... bet the real closeness is in bed, eh?”

“Ryker!” Caelum’s voice **cracked** like a whip. “She’s my mate—watch your tongue.”

+8 Pearls

Ryker blinked, startled, then scoffed. “Since when do you care? You’ve let me talk about her before. Don’t tell me you actually believe Kade’s tail-lifting nonsense—that your company’s rise is all her doing. She’s just an Omega from Iron Fang’s backline. Caelum. She patched supply manifests, not battle drones. She doesn’t even carry a proper wolf scent—weak as a human’s. Military expert? Please. If she were, I’ll go gnaw my own tail.”

Ryker’s **voice** dripped with derision, but Aurora said nothing—her silence telling enough. Both she and Caelum knew that an Alpha like Kade had no reason to spin a false tale.

“Enough. I’ll call you a transport. Get yourself to the healer and check those ribs,” Caelum told Ryker curtly.

Once the **Beta was** on his way, Caelum turned to Aurora, bitterness shading his eyes. “I’ve let you down, haven’t I?”

“Of course not,” Aurora said softly. “But Freya’s strange, Caelum. Already mated to you, yet she hid any past achievements with Iron Fang. If she really is an expert in unmanned aerial systems, she should have patents–blueprints that could grow SilverTech Forgeworks to new heights. If it were me, I’d have given you everything for the sake of the pack.”

Caelum froze. Patents?

If she had those–and they could be fused into SilverTech’s production lines...

His gaze sharpened with a sudden gleam.

“As for your legal trouble,” Aurora went on, “I’ll keep looking. If the Four Great Banks’ lawyers won’t touch it, there are still others. Don’t worry too much.”

Gratitude softened his voice. “Aurora... thank you.”

“I only want the best for you,” she murmured.

After all, she had chosen him. And if her chosen Alpha thrived... so would she.

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A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

+8 Pearls

I had packed the last of my belongings from the Silverfang Alpha’s villa and set them neatly into the trunk of Lana’s car.

Three years

of marriage, and my possessions could fit into a single case.

Lana leaned on the driver’s side door, smirking. “Honestly, I thought you’d have Kade come help you haul your stuff out. That boy would probably leap at the chance.”

I shook my head. “For one suitcase? Not worth calling him.” Kade had offered, of course–he always did–but I had no desire to drag him into this.

Lana chuckled as she popped the trunk shut. “Careful, Freya. He might think you’ve ditched him again. Wouldn’t be the first time he’s cried about it.”

I raised a brow. “Cried? He’s a grown wolf, not a pup fresh out of the den.”

“Oh, trust me,” she said, sliding behind the wheel, “when he found out you’d mated to Caelum without telling him, he bawled in front of everyone after a pack gathering. Kept howling about how you had terrible taste in males—‘Why him? Of all wolves, him!’”

That made me pause. In the Iron Fang Recon Unit, Kade had taken wounds without so much as a wince. The thought of him breaking down over my mating bond **was...** strange.

“Still,” Lana went on, “he wasn’t wrong about Grafton. That Alpha’s not exactly worth the fur on his back.”

“Enough. Just drive,” I said, sliding into the passenger seat.

I planned to stay with Lana for a few days—long enough to take my parents’ ashes back to our homeland for a proper resting place—before returning to The Capital to find my own den.

Lana started the engine. “Oh, and don’t tell Kade I told you about the crying. He bribed me to keep quiet.”

I arched a brow. “What kind of bribe?”

She grinned wickedly. A shirtless sleeping shot of his uncle.”

I choked on **air**. “You’re interested in **his** uncle?”

“I **was**,” she said with a shrug. “He’s a **lawyer**,

cold as winter **steel**. I chased him for a while, but it **got** boring. Males are plentiful; why get stuck on **one** tree when there’s a whole **forest**?”

I caught the **shadow in her eyes** and didn’t pry. Years **ago**, she’d been smitten with that male, but in the **last two** years, his name hadn’t passed her lips.

My phone buzzed then—an unfamiliar number. When I **answered**, a low, commanding voice filled my ear.

“Miss Thorne,” **Silas** Whitmor said, “if you wish to return my **coat**, I’m at the range.”

“The range?” I blinked.

“

Yes. I have time now. If you don’t, then never mind.”

“I have time,” I replied quickly. Better to **sever** this tie now, before the Ironclad Alpha found more **excuses to** cross paths with

1. me.

He sent me the location. I turned to Tana. “Drop me here. Take my **case** to your place—I’ll collect it later.”

She gave me a look. “That **was** Whitnor on the line? What does he want?”

To return something that’s his.”

104

+8 Pearls

The shooting range **was** an exclusive, members-only place—not somewhere just anyone could walk into. Wren, Silas’s ever-efficient Beta assistant, **was** waiting at the gate when I arrived.

“Miss Thorne,” he said with a respectful nod. “This way.”

His deference **was** notable; in The Capital, Wren barely acknowledged most high-born wolves. And yet, he treated me—an Omega with no pack standing here—with something that edged on reverence.

I knew what it meant. Silas Whitmor’s interest was a dangerous thing.

The sharp cracks of gunfire reached my ears as we crossed the open-air range. I didn’t flinch; the sound was as familiar as my own heartbeat. In the Iron Fang days, the rifle range had been my daily haunt.

And then I **saw** him.

Silas stood with the poise of a predator in black, sleeves rolled to the elbow, the hard lines of his forearms taut as he leveled his weapon. A headset covered his ears, his stance balanced and unshakable.

Each pull of the trigger sent another round into the bullseye, the recoil barely moving him.

It was clinical, precise—like watching a wolf hone his claws, every movement under absolute control.

And as the brass casings hit the ground with a soft, metallic chime, I knew one thing—Silas Whitmor didn’t invite me here just to retrieve a coat.

A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya's POV

I watched Silas Whitmor lower his weapon, removing the headset to glance in my direction. His eyes, sharp as betrayed the satisfaction of a hunter seeing prey respond to the lure of the hunt.

“Here you are. Faster than I expected,” he said, his voice as controlled and precise as the rifle he had just fired.

I stepped forward with the neatly folded coat I'd dry-cleaned. “This is the jacket you lent me last time.”

+8 Pearls

wolf's,

skimmed the fabric with casual indifference. Wren moved to take the clothing from my hands, his posture rigid

Silas's

gaze with deference.

“Then I'll take my leave,” I said, turning to step away.

Silas's voice cut through the air, calm but commanding. “Since you've come all this way, why not shoot a few rounds? Consider it a way to repay me for lending you the coat.”

I pursed my lips. “A few rounds?”

“Five rounds. Ten shots each,” he replied.

A staff member set the pistols, ammunition, and ear protection before me. I looked down at the weapon, and instinct surged through my veins.

Even after leaving the Iron Fang Recon Unit, even after stepping away from military life, my hands remembered. Checking the pistol, loading it, donning the headset—all of it felt as natural as breathing. Muscle memory carved deep into my bones.

I raised the gun, aiming at the distant target.

Bang. Bang. Bang.

Each shot echoed in the open range, sharp and controlled. My eyes were steady, my expression cold, **precise**—the calm, lethal calm of a soldier **still** etched into me.

Silas watched me, and for a fleeting moment, **his** controlled exterior seemed to falter, almost dazzled by the

presence of another predator. **He** remembered the past—the chaos of war, the rubble, the moments when he'd thought **all** was lost. He **had**

felt **that** same glint of survival then, and now, in my steady hands and unyielding gaze, it returned.

Round **after** round passed. We alternated shots, **our** scores almost neck and neck. Five rounds later, **I set** the gun **down** and exhaled, **a** long, satisfying breath. It had been a game for him, but for me, it was the kind of sharp, intoxicating release I hadn't **felt** in years.

"You **are** the most skilled female shooter I've **ever** seen," Silas said, **his voice** calm, but **there** was a weight behind it.

"Thank you," **I** replied politely. "But **there** are many **women** in **the** unit whose aim **surpassed** mine. I'm not the best."

Silas tilted his **head** slightly, curious. "Then why, with your skills, did you choose Caelum Grafton?"

My **face** darkened. "That is my private matter. I don't owe an explanation."

He smiled faintly, a predator's smile. "And if I don't like him... if I wanted **to** make him pay, what would you do?"

I kept my tone flat, neutral. "Do what you will. I will not interfere."

"**Then** you don't **care** about Caelum?" he pressed, eyes locked on mine.

turned to leave, dismissing the question, but his **voice stopped** me.

"And Kade? What about him?"

I froze. Kade... how did he know about my history with the Blackridge Alpha?

+8 Pearls

Silas's voice cut again, smooth as ice. "If I moved against him, what would you do? I'm genuinely curious."

My hands curled into fists, fury and instinct rising in tandem. In a heartbeat, I spun on him, closing the distance in a blur of motion, and yanked at his collar, my amber eyes blazing.

"Don't you dare touch Kade!"

It **was** both a warning and a threat.

Wren froze beside us, pale and stiff. In The Capital, who had the audacity to seize the collar of the Ironclad Alpha? No one. And yet, there I stood, my teeth gritted, my wolf's instinct sharp and raw.

Silas's gaze stayed locked on me, unwavering. His amber eyes, so often calm as the dead, now burned with an intensity that rivaled the sun itself—but not for me. For another male. A rival.

"You hear me? Don't touch Kade. He is not a toy for your amusement!" I growled, every word laced with the predator's edge of my lineage.

Silas's eyes narrowed. "And you? Would you stay by my side, then? For a while?"

I faltered. "What... do you mean?"

"If I leave Kade alone, you remain here, with me. That's the condition," he said, calm as a frozen lake, as if negotiating the most ordinary of contracts.

My wolf growled deep in my chest, fury sparking hotter than any gunfire. This man, this Alpha, treated others' lives like pawns. And yet... he dared speak to me as if I were merely a piece on his board.

I **drew** back, amber eyes flashing, heart and wolf both warning me—this was not a man to be underestimated.

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