

# A WARRIOR LUNA'S AWAKENING

Ascension 346

Third Person's POV

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“Why wasn’t she protected?” Silas snarled, stepping forward before Kade could answer. His hand shot out, fisting the front of Kade’s jacket. “Why did she take that bullet? You were supposed to keep her safe!”

Kade didn’t fight back. His wolf lowered its head inside him, weighed down by guilt. “It’s my fault,” he said quietly, his voice trembling with remorse.

“Why?” Silas demanded, shaking him once.

Kade swallowed hard. “Because I didn’t expect her to jump in front of Parker. No—I should have known she would. Parker is Eric. Her brother. If he was in danger, she’d risk everything.”

The truth sliced through the air like a blade.

Kade’s jaw tightened. “If I’d moved a second faster, if I’d been paying closer attention... she wouldn’t have been hit.”

Silas released him slowly. The Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition took a step back, his shoulders slumping, the anger draining from him until only despair remained.

Eric. Freya's beloved brother. The one she'd spent years searching for, clinging to the hope that he was still alive.

And Silas—he should have been the one to protect her. If only he had gone with her to the negotiation site, instead of keeping his distance, trying to hide his jealousy and confusion. He should have stood at her side, guarded her, shielded her from harm.

But he hadn't.

Now the woman he loved was lying unconscious in a hospital bed, her body riddled with wolfsbane, her life hanging by a thread.

Silas looked down at his wrist. Around it gleamed a bracelet of darkwood and jade—Freya's gift. He traced the carvings absently with his thumb. The words she'd whispered when she'd given it to him echoed faintly in his mind.

"It's for protection. So you'll always come back safe."

She had wished him safety and peace. But what peace was left for him if she wasn't safe?

10:12 Fri, Oct **24**

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"Years of safety," he whispered bitterly. "But how can I be safe if you're not?"

The bracelet suddenly felt heavy, like a shackle.

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Across the city, Parker sat in the dim suite of the Williams estate, the pain in his skull slowly easing as the medication Jenny had given him began to take effect.

His head still throbbed faintly, but at least the pounding had dulled. He pressed his fingers against his temple and exhaled.

Jenny paced in front of him, irritation written across every line of her face.

“We’re leaving The country,” she said sharply. “It’s too dangerous here.”

“Immediately?” Parker looked up, startled. His thoughts flickered to the hospital—to Freya. The image of her falling in front of him, her blood staining his hands, refused to fade. “But I need to see-”

He stopped himself, jaw tightening. He wanted to see her, to make sure she was alive. To thank her.

Jenny caught the hesitation, her expression darkening. “You mean her, don’t you? That woman who threw herself in front of a bullet for you?”

Parker didn’t answer.

Jenny’s wolf bristled; her eyes flashed with something that was not entirely human. “You’re not going anywhere near her,” she said coldly. “She’s dangerous—and so is everything about this place. You’re coming back with me tonight.”

He wanted to argue, but her words pierced through the fog of pain clouding his thoughts.

Jenny’s voice softened, though her tone was still edged. “You forget what’s at stake. If you stay, if you get distracted by her, you’ll lose everything. Do you really want that?”

Parker’s hands clenched. Lose everything. That meant Lina.

Lina's fragile face flashed before his eyes—her laughter, her pale cheeks, her soft voice calling his name. Lina was dying, her blood poisoned by an illness no healer or scientist could yet cure. Without the right marrow match, she had only a few years left.

A few years. Too short. Much too short.

Jenny stepped closer, her expression tightening. "If you don't come with me now, I won't help her. I won't save your precious sister Lina."

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Parker's wolf snarled inside him. "You wouldn't dare."

"Oh, I would." Her tone was low, threatening. "Do you think I forgot what that Freya woman said—calling you her brother in front of everyone? If that story spreads, do you realize what happens to me? To us? To the family name?"

Her nails dug into his sleeve. "You're my only leverage in the Williams Family, Parker. Don't make me lose that."

He looked at her with fury and disgust—but he knew she wasn't bluffing.

He had no choice.

After a long silence, he exhaled and said hoarsely, "Fine. I'll go."

Jenny's lips curved in satisfaction. "Good."

She turned away, her heels clicking against the marble floor. "Pack your things. We leave before dawn."

But as she left the room, Parker pressed his hand over his chest, where his heart still ached with a pain he couldn't explain.

He told himself it was just guilt. Gratitude.

But deep down, something older stirred—a buried connection that made his pulse race and his wolf restless.

When Freya's eyes fluttered open again, the first thing she saw was a ceiling washed in sterile white light. For a moment, she couldn't tell where she was.

The faint beeping of monitors, the antiseptic tang in the air—it could only be a hospital.

She tried to move, but the motion sent a sharp jolt of pain through her shoulder. A soft gasp escaped her lips.

Immediately, two voices overlapped: "You're awake!"

Her blurred vision cleared, and she saw Silas and Kade standing at her bedside.

Her lips parted. "My brother," she whispered. "Where's my brother? Is he okay?"

Kade nodded quickly. "He's fine. When I got you out, the police arrived just in time. The kidnappers are in custody now. I gave my statement already—they won't come after us again."

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Relief flooded her chest, dulling the pain for a moment. "Good," she breathed.  
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Silas pressed the nurse call button. "You just woke up. Let the doctors check you before

move.

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Moments later, a team of nurses and a healer rushed in. They worked around her efficiently, scanning her vitals, checking the wound. Freya stayed still, trying not to flinch as they lifted the bandages.

One of the doctors smiled reassuringly. “You were lucky. The wolfsbane–infused round didn’t reach your heart, and we flushed most of it out during surgery. But you need rest. The toxin weakened your wolf–don’t try to shift until we clear you.”

She nodded faintly. Her body still felt hollow, her wolf silent but alive.

When the staff left, Kade lingered by the door, watching her with relief etched deep in his features. “You’ve been out for a whole day,” he said softly. “You scared the hell out of us.”

Freya blinked. “A day?” Her voice trembled. “I need to find my brother. I have to tell him—he is Eric. I have the DNA report, I can prove it.”

She tried to sit up, but the pain in her shoulder forced her back down.

“I need *to* bring him home,” she whispered. “To Stormveil. To our parents’ resting place. They need to know I found him.”

Kade hesitated, his expression tightening. “Freya...”

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person’s POV

“What do you mean, my brother’s gone? You said he was fine!”

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Silas’s jaw tightened. “He is fine. But while you were unconscious... he left. Parker and Jenny returned to C country this morning.”

Freya froze, the blood draining from her face.

Gone? Her brother—Eric—was gone?

Her pulse surged, and she tried to push herself up despite the pain lancing through her shoulder. “Then I’ll go to C country. I have to see him!”

Silas caught her before she could move further, his hand firm on her uninjured shoulder. “Freya, stop. You were shot. You’ve been unconscious for twenty-four hours. If you tear the wound again, your shoulder may never heal.”

“That’s my brother,” she retorted, voice trembling. “Of course I care!”

For a heartbeat, Silas went utterly still. Of course she did. It had always been that way—her heart tethered to the brother she’d lost and found again. He knew this. He had always known.

“Would you throw

throw your life away for him?” His voice cracked under the weight of the question.

The past day had carved deep shadows under his eyes. Every time he’d closed them, he’d seen her lying there—bleeding, limp, her scent growing fainter by the second. It had clawed something raw inside him.

Freya met his gaze steadily. “He’s my

brother.”

Just four words. But they held the gravity of everything she was.

Silas drew in a sharp breath through his teeth, frustration and fear flickering behind his

you knew it was dangerous, why didn’t you call me?”

“If

Her lips were pale and dry. “There was no time. And you... you didn’t owe me anything.” Updates are released by FindNovel.net

Especially not after the way they had last parted—words like blades, silence like frost.

eyes.

“So you’d rather end up like this?” Silas’s voice rose, cracking under the emotion he’d tried so hard to suppress. “Do

“Do you

have any idea what it did to me when I saw you bleeding? Freya-

how could you-how could you-

His voice broke. The words dissolved into something raw and wordless.

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Kade stood quietly near the bed, uncharacteristically silent. He’d seen Silas Whitmor furious before, but never like this-never so human, never so afraid.

Freya’s gaze softened. Silas’s eyes were hard, but beneath that steel was a kind of grief that twisted her chest. He looked as if her death would have destroyed him.

“I’m sorry,” she said quietly. “I didn’t mean to worry you.”

Silas’s eyes lowered. After a long pause, he spoke, voice rough. “I’ll have a private jet arranged. You’ll return to The Capital tomorrow. The healers there will take better care of you. Your shoulder needs proper recovery.”

Freya blinked, startled by his sudden practicality.

Kade nodded beside her. “I agree. It’s safer that way. And if you still want to go to C country, you’ll need to go home first and apply for a travel pass through the Pack Council.”

Freya let out a faint, bitter laugh. “Right... of course.”

Her brother was gone, across borders now. Even if she chased after him, she’d have to return first. There was no other way.

“Fine,” she murmured. “I’ll go back.”

Silas straightened, his expression controlled again. “The flight leaves tomorrow morning. I’ll have a medical escort ready. Rest now.”

Without waiting for a reply, he turned and strode out of the room.



Outside, the hallway smelled faintly of antiseptic and steel. Waiting there was Wren, holding a tablet. “Alpha, we’ve identified the shooter,” he reported. “Name’s Gunther Cole, Member of the rogue syndicate who took Jenny Williams. He’s in custody. Lost his right hand.”

“Only his hand?” Silas’s tone was ice. His gaze fell to the photograph attached to the report. Gunther’s scarred face stared back, unrepentant.

That was the bastard who had nearly ended Freya’s life.

If that bullet had been just an inch closer to her heart-

“Make sure he never leaves that cell,” Silas said coldly. “Cripple every limb if you must. I want

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him alive—but in agony—for the rest of his miserable life.”

“Yes, Alpha.”

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Silas turned away, his knuckles white. The monster inside him—the wolf—still raged for blood. But for Freya’s sake, he swallowed it back.

Inside the ward, the air was quieter now. Kade sat at Freya’s bedside, his voice low and apologetic. “Freya... I’m sorry. I should’ve protected you better.”

She looked at him in surprise. “What are you talking about? You did protect me. I’d be dead if it weren’t for you.”

He gave a small, bitter laugh. “If I’d really done my job, you wouldn’t have gotten hurt at all. I thought I could keep you safe. But when it mattered most... I failed.”

His voice faltered.

Freya lifted her right hand and brushed it lightly over his hair, the same way she used to back in their training days. “Don’t say that. If anything, it’s my job to protect you. Don’t forget—I was your captain once.”

Kade froze. For a second, he couldn't breathe. Then, something inside him eased. The tight knot of guilt and helplessness loosened, replaced by the quiet strength that always radiated from her.

"If it were me in danger," he asked softly, "would you protect me the same way?"

"Of course," Freya said without hesitation.

She didn't even think about it. They were more than comrades—they were family forged in blood and battle.

Kade smiled faintly, the shadow lifting from his face.

But deep down, he made a silent vow.

If that day ever came, he would never let her bleed for him again. He would take every wound himself if it meant keeping her safe.

Just outside the door, Silas watched through the narrow glass panel, unseen. His hands curled into fists at his sides, nails biting into his palms. The sight of her smiling at Kade—of Kade so close, so comfortable—burned in his chest like acid.

His jaw clenched, teeth grinding audibly.

## Trapped in You by Morrison Lee: Shadows of Our Love 348

Third Person's POV READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT [findnovel.net](https://findnovel.net)

Silas stood in the corridor long after the voices inside the room had quieted.

She cared for her brother. She cared for Kade.

But what about him?

Would Freya ever care for him that way—enough to fight for him, to protect him, *to* risk everything the way she had for others?

The thought lodged in his throat like a stone. He could command entire battalions under the Ironclad Coalition, yet tonight, he couldn't even summon the courage to open that hospital door and ask her.

Maybe this was what it meant to lose her before he'd ever truly had her.

Maybe the moment she no longer needed him was the moment she would stop caring altogether.

Silas turned away, the steel of his boots echoing against the corridor floor. Wren followed silently behind, sensing the Alpha's stormy aura and wisely keeping his distance.

By the time the sun dipped low the next day, Freya had returned to The Capital.

The journey left her pale, her movements stiff with pain. When Lana saw her best friend lying weakly on the pack infirmary bed, her eyes immediately filled with tears.

"Gods, Freya, you were gone only a few days," Lana scolded, her voice trembling. "And you came back like this? You promised me you'd be careful! Do you know how terrified I was when I couldn't reach you on WolfComm? When Kade finally told me you'd been shot, I thought-"

Freya tried to smile. "I'm sorry. Things happened fast. And honestly, this isn't that bad."

"Not that bad?" Lana's brows drew together in disbelief. "Do you have to be half-dead before you admit it's serious?"

Freya gave a quiet laugh, though it ended in a wince. "I've had worse. Back in the Iron Fang Recon Unit, missions like that were routine."

Lana shot her a glare. "You're impossible."

Across the room, Victor Ashford had pulled Kade aside. The commander's expression was grave. "You're certain Eric Thorne and that illegitimate heir of the Williams family are the

same person?"

Kade nodded, his tone steady. "The DNA report confirms it. Freya and Eric share a direct sibling bond. I'll be submitting the results to the military council once she's stable."

Victor's sharp gaze narrowed. "Then what the hell is going on with the Williams family? Why would they claim him as their bastard son?"

“We’re not sure yet,” Kade said quietly. “From what I gathered, Eric’s memory is gone. He refused testing before. He probably has no idea who he really is.”

Victor folded his arms. “You’re planning to go to C country with her, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” Kade replied without hesitation. “She’ll want to see him herself.”

Victor exhaled heavily. “Be careful. The Williams pack is old blood—ruthless blood. Especially Parker’s father, Everett Williams. He never married, never took a mate. Three years ago he suddenly announced Parker as his son, but everyone knows there’s more to that story. Everett doesn’t do anything without a reason.”

“You think there’s a scheme behind it?” Kade asked.

Victor’s jaw tightened. “There’s always a scheme. Keep your eyes open. Don’t trust anyone connected to that family.”

Kade inclined his head. “Understood.”

Then Victor’s expression softened slightly, though his tone remained stern. “And another thing -you left for Dalen without informing your parents. They were worried sick.”

Kade’s shoulders tensed. “I know. But I had to go. I couldn’t let another chance slip by.”

Victor studied him for a long moment. “Another chance?”

Kade’s gaze dropped. “Three years ago, I didn’t tell her how I felt. I’ve regretted it every day since.”

Victor’s brows lifted, surprise flickering through his usually unreadable face. “And now?”

Kade’s voice grew quieter. “Even if she still sees me as a younger brother, I’ll stay by her side. That’s enough.”

Victor’s expression darkened. “What if Silas Whitmor refuses to step aside?”

Kade’s eyes sharpened, his wolf stirring beneath his calm exterior. “Others might fear the Whitmors. I don’t. If Silas tries to force her hand again, I’ll stand against him—and against his entire pack if I must.”

A long silence hung between them before Victor finally asked, “You care that deeply?”

Kade’s lips curved faintly, but there was no humor in it. “I do. The first time I saw her, I was arrogant, picking fights, trying to provoke her. But later... I realized it wasn’t hate—it was **fear**. The kind of fear you feel when you know one look will undo you.”

He drew a slow breath, lost for a moment in memory.

“I saw her step out of a fighter jet, wind in her hair, the insignia of the Iron Fang Recon Unit gleaming on her uniform. She looked untouchable—like the sky itself had chosen her. I told myself not to fall. But when she carried me through a blizzard to find a medic after I collapsed on a mission... I stopped pretending. That was when I knew.”

His voice softened. “I fell in love with Freya Thorne.”

Victor was silent for a long moment, his eyes glinting with something between surprise and understanding.

Finally, he muttered, “You Blackridge men... always dramatic.”

Kade managed a wry smile. “Don’t worry, Uncle. Even if I go up against Silas and the entire Whitmor line, I won’t drag the Ashfords or the Blackridges into it.”

Victor snorted. “Don’t talk nonsense. The Ashfords don’t pick fights, but we don’t run from them either.”

A faint smile tugged at Kade’s lips. He knew that was Victor’s way of giving approval.

Then Victor asked, “Silas arranged the private jet, didn’t he? So why isn’t he here now?”

Editorial Board

## Trapped in You by Morrison Lee: Shadows of Our Love 349

Third Person’s POV

“He left right after she was admitted. Didn’t even stay to make sure she was stable.”

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Even he found it strange. For a man like Silas Whitmor to walk away without a word—it wasn’t like him.

When Lana and Victor finally left, Freya turned to Kade, her voice still hoarse.

“You should go home too. You came all the way to Dalen with me, then stayed here for two days straight. Now that we’re back, your parents deserve to see you. You need rest.”

Kade shook his head, gentle but firm. “It’s fine. I already spoke with them on WolfComm. They know I’ll be staying here to look after you.”

Freya frowned faintly. “But-”

He cut her off with a small smile. “Have you forgotten? When I got sick in the Iron Fang Recon Unit, you sat by my bed for three nights until my fever broke. I’m just returning the favor.”

Her lips parted, but no words came. The warmth in his tone disarmed her.

“Rest,” he said softly, standing to leave. “I’m going to the Ironclad Coalition headquarters. I need to submit the DNA report and the news about your brother’s recovery. I’ll be back soon.”

Freya nodded. The military had been searching for Eric for years. Now that he was found, it was only right to report it immediately.

When Kade left, the ward fell into silence. The sterile hum of machines and the faint rhythm of her heartbeat were the only sounds left.

Freya lay back against the white pillow, her right arm in a sling, the scent of antiseptic mixing with the faint trace of Kade’s cedar-and-steel scent still lingering in the air.

After a long moment, she unlocked her phone and opened the travel bureau’s page to schedule a visa appointment.

She had already made up her mind—once her shoulder recovered and the documents were ready, she would head to C country.

Her brother was there. She had to see him with her own eyes.

Across the city, in the towering Whitmor estate that overlooked The Capital, Silas sat in his private study.

The faint glow of a desk lamp caught the green gleam of the jade-bead rosary he rolled between his fingers—an old family heirloom said to steady the wolf within.

Across from him sat Dr. Huxley, the Whitmor family physician for three generations. His name was Vaughn, but to most wolves in the Ironclad Coalition, he was known simply as “the healer who dares to scold Alphas.”

“Your insomnia isn’t physical,” Vaughn said calmly, setting down his tablet. “It’s psychological. If you keep increasing your dosage, you’ll poison your body long before the pain goes away. I’m advising you to see a mind-specialist.”

Silas didn’t look up. His thumb kept turning the beads one by one, the rhythm as steady as his heartbeat. “The day Freya returns to my side, my mind will heal. Not before.”

Vaughn sighed. “Silas, you’re an Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition. You command a hundred wolves. You could have anyone—there are hundreds of she-wolves who would kill for your attention.”

“Anyone?” Silas gave a humorless laugh. “You still don’t understand. I’ve searched for years, Vaughn. I found only her. And I’ll never find another.”

Vaughn’s brows knitted. “You’re trapping yourself in this obsession. I’ve known you since we were both young. If I can give you one piece of advice—let her go before you destroy yourself.”

Silas’s voice was quiet, but edged with iron. “Didn’t your father say the same to mine once? Did it work?”

That silenced Vaughn instantly.

His father had served as private physician to Cassian Whitmor, Silas’s father. The man who had once stolen a Luna through force—an act that led to death and disgrace.

That tragedy had marked both their families forever.

Vaughn finally muttered, “You once swore you’d never become your father. You said you’d never take what isn’t freely given.”

“I won’t,” Silas said softly. His tone was calm, but the wolf beneath his skin stirred restlessly. “I won’t use chains or threats. I just want what we used to have—the way she laughed when I came home from missions, the quiet peace in her eyes before everything fell apart.”

Vaughn’s gaze hardened. “Then what, Silas? You’ll keep drowning in memories until your body gives out?”

Silas looked up at him then, his expression unreadable. “I didn’t ask for a sermon, Doctor. I asked for a new prescription. The old one’s useless.” This chapter is updated by [findnovel.net](http://findnovel.net)

He tossed the empty bottle across the desk. It clattered loudly before rolling to a stop.

Vaughn caught it, exhaling. “Fine. I’ll change the formula. But if you keep ignoring my orders, I’ll tell Freya myself.”

A small, almost imperceptible smile touched Silas’s lips. “Don’t worry. I won’t die yet.”

Because Freya was still alive.

And as long as she breathed somewhere under the same moon, he couldn’t bring himself to

stop.

A week later, Freya was finally discharged from the hospital.

Her left arm still ached where the bullet had torn muscle, but her wolf healing had taken care of most of the damage. She could walk and move without pain now, though fatigue still tugged at her limbs.

In all that time, Silas never once came to see her.

The absence shouldn’t have mattered. It should have been a relief.

And yet... as Freya stepped out of the hospital gates, the autumn wind tugging at her hair, she couldn’t deny the quiet pang in her chest.

Maybe it was just the last trace of a bond that no longer existed—residual emotion she hadn’t fully shed.



She told herself it would fade with time. It had to.

Kade and Lana came to pick her up. Kade spent the whole drive reminding Lana of every care instruction the doctors had given—what she could eat, how to change her dressing, what to do if the pain flared again.

When they finally reached Lana’s apartment, Kade stayed until nightfall, helping set up her room, arranging the medication, and checking the temperature before he left.

Watching him go, Lana crossed her arms and raised a brow. “You know, he’s awfully attentive for someone you claim isn’t your mate.”

Freya blinked. “Lana...”

“I’m serious,” Lana said with a grin. “He clearly adores you. You really won’t consider giving him a chance?”

Freya’s smile was faint but firm. “I’ve told you before. I’m not ready for that. Not now. My focus

is finding my brother.”

Lana sighed, then asked, “So when do you plan to leave for C country?”

“Once the visa’s ready,” Freya replied. “Two days, maybe three. As soon as I have it, I’ll go

Outside, the night deepened, and the city lights of The Capital shimmered like scattered embers against the sky.

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Editorial Board

## Trapped in You by Morrison Lee: Shadows of Our Love 350

Freya’s POV

“Already?” Lana blinked, wide-eyed. “So soon? But your wound-

“It’s not serious anymore.” I buttoned my jacket and straightened my collar. “I want to see my brother.”

And I wanted to understand why he chose to stay with the Williams family.

“Does Kade know?” she asked, crossing her arms.

“Not yet,” I admitted. “And please-don’t tell him. If he finds out, he’ll try to come with me.”

If I hadn’t known Kade’s feelings before, I might have brushed it off. But now that I did, every thought of him felt heavier-like a favor I could never repay.

Lana sighed. “All right. But speaking of men... how’s everything with Silas Whitmor? I haven’t seen him around since you were admitted to the infirmary.”

I paused, my chest tightening. “Silas and I are over. It’s normal he hasn’t come.”

“Right.” She frowned. “I just thought-after he chartered that private jet to send maybe he still had feelings for you. That he couldn’t let go.”

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back -that

“Maybe he only did it because I was once his mate,” I said flatly. “A courtesy for an ex.”

In truth, I’d told myself the same thing-over and over-trying to bury the ache that still lingered whenever I thought of him.

But two days later, my plans fell apart.

My visa didn’t come through. It got... stuck. Delayed, they said. When I went to ask for the reason, the clerk kept dodging the question, fumbling papers and mumbling excuses. Only after I pressed him, hard, did he finally blurt out the truth:

“It’s from higher up.”

Higher up?

Someone had deliberately interfered.

Someone didn't want me to leave the Capital.

And when I stepped out of the agency, a sleek black car was parked at the curb—its tinted

window lowering just enough for me to see Wren sitting inside.

“Miss Thorne,” he said politely, stepping out and opening the back door. “Alpha Silas would like to see you.”

I froze. “There's no need. We don't have anything to talk about.” READ LATEST CHAPTERS AT [find\(n\)ovel.net](http://find(n)ovel.net)

“If Miss Thorne wishes her visa to be approved,” Wren said evenly, “it would be best to meet with the Alpha.”

My pulse faltered.

Could it be...?

Was he the reason my visa was blocked?

I pressed my lips together. “Fine,” I said quietly, and got into the car.

The drive was silent, heavy with unspoken tension.

We stopped in front of a familiar building—one I had once called home.

The high-rise overlooking the city skyline. The place Silas and I had shared for months.

“Alpha Silas is waiting inside,” Wren said, bowing slightly.

I stepped out, heart pounding. The cold air bit at my skin as I entered the building and took the elevator up. The metallic hum of the ascent only deepened my dread.

When I stood before the apartment door, a wave of memories crashed over me—nights spent laughing, arguing, and pretending that love could tame the beast in him.

I pressed the doorbell. No answer.

After a long pause, I keyed in the old code on instinct.

Beep.

Unlocked.

He hadn't even changed the password.

I pushed open the door and walked inside.

The scent hit me first—black tea and rain.

He was there, sitting on the couch, a tea set neatly arranged before him. His movements were

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calm, precise, almost ritualistic as he poured the steaming liquid into porcelain cups.

“Was it you?” I asked, my voice steady but sharp. “Did you block

Silas didn't even flinch. “Yes.”

My temper spiked. “Why would you do that?”

my visa?”

He glanced up, his silver eyes cool as winter steel. “Because you're injured. You shouldn't be flying.”

“That's not your decision to make,” I snapped. “The wound is healing fine. Even the medics cleared me for travel.”

“I want you to recover completely before you go,” he said simply. “If you're desperate to see Parker Williams, I could have him brought to you instead.”

“Silas!” I cut him off, fury rising. “You don't get to control my life anymore. prefer it if you stopped interfering.”

We're over. I'd

His hand paused mid-motion, teacup hovering. Then he slowly set it down. “And if I refuse?”

“Then I’ll go through the Iron Fang Recon Unit,” I said coldly. “They’ll get my visa through military channels. You might control the Ironclad Coalition, Silas, but you don’t control the entire Capital.”

A muscle ticked in his jaw. “You’d really risk aggravating your wound just to defy me?”

“This has nothing to do with you,” I said. “Not anymore.”

He poured a fresh cup of tea, sliding it across the table toward me.

“Drink it,” he said quietly. “Tell me if it’s still how you like it.”

“I didn’t come here for tea.”

“Then drink it as a favor,” he murmured, his eyes darkening. “If you do, I’ll release the hold on your visa. Unless... you despise me so much that you can’t even take one sip?”

My hand hesitated—then I took the cup.

The tea was still warm against my palms, its scent painfully familiar.

I downed it in one breath. “I don’t despise you.”

His lips curved faintly. “Good,” he said softly. “I hope you’ll still feel that way... in a moment.”

“What—” I started, but a wave of dizziness slammed into me.

The room blurred. My legs faltered. My vision fractured into fragments of light and shadow. The teacup slipped from my fingers, shattering on the floor.

Before I hit the ground, strong arms caught me.

The scent of his skin—steel and smoke and the faintest trace of wolfsbane—filled my senses. My pulse quickened, helpless against the Alpha aura radiating from him.

I tried to push away, but my body wouldn’t listen. The world dimmed at the edges, my consciousness unraveling.

“Freya...” His voice was low, close to my ear. “Even if you hate me—”

His breath brushed my temple.

-I still can't let you go."

The darkness swallowed me whole.

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