

# A Warrior Luna's Awakening

## chapter 71-80

# A Warrior Luna's Awakening

+8 Pearls

The moment Aurora saw Caelum Grafton stride into the terminal hall, she surged forward and threw herself into his arms. Her wolf trembled beneath her skin, eyes glistening as she looked up at him.

“Caelum... you’re angry with me too, aren’t you? You think I was reckless today?” Her voice was low, almost pleading. “But I swear, it wasn’t about Freya Thorne. I was only thinking of pack security, of safety. That’s all.”

Her grip on him tightened. “I know... I misjudged, I didn’t hold back when I should have, and things spun out of control.”

Then, as if her fangs could only sink into one scapegoat, she hissed, “But if Freya had spoken up sooner—if she had told everyone those ashes were her parents’, war martyrs of the Iron Fang Recon Unit—none of this would’ve happened! She wanted me to stumble. She wanted to see me humiliated.”

Aurora placed the blame neatly on Freya’s shoulders, her wolf snarling softly behind the words.

Caelum looked down at the woman in his arms, his Alpha gaze steady. “But Aurora, didn’t Freya’s friend call out, right there, that the ashes were from fallen warriors? You just... didn’t believe them.”

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Aurora stiffened in his embrace, her expression faltering. “Caelum... are you taking her side now? Didn’t you once vow that, no matter the circumstances, you would always stand with me?”

His lips pressed into a thin, grim line. He didn’t give her the affirmation she wanted. Instead, he said, “Let’s sit somewhere. Have something to eat.”

Aurora nodded, but her eyes flickered dangerously the moment he turned away. His attitude was shifting. Was it because of what Freya had whispered before she walked away from him?

Doubt was creeping into the Alpha's heart—and that doubt could unravel everything.

They settled in a private corner of a small restaurant near the terminal, two untouched cups of coffee between them. Aurora broke the silence first, forcing lightness into her tone.

“Because of today, the Airborne Wing has grounded me for a time. I'll be suspended, at least until tempers cool. But I've been thinking—maybe it's for the best. I'll finally have the time to accompany you to Ashbourne, introduce you to my mother's kin. It'll strengthen bonds between Silverfang and Bluemoon. The packs could both benefit.”

Caelum lifted his cup, but the bitter taste of coffee couldn't drown the question burning inside him.

His **eyes** lifted, sharp as a wolf's strike. “Aurora, I need the truth. That night by the river—the night I **was** dragged from the water, bleeding out from eight blade wounds—who was it that saved me?”

Aurora's face drained of color.

“Caelum, what are **you** saying? You doubt me? **Because** of Freya's parting words?” Her voice cracked, both wounded and furious, her wolf bristling with indignation.

“No. No, Aurora.” His voice softened, almost frantic. “I'm not accusing you. I just... I just want clarity. To understand what really happened.”

Aurora forced her tone into something calm, almost scolding. “Clarity? Caelum, it was plain. I saw you in the river. I pulled you out. The medics took you to the healers. You lived because I acted. Everyone saw it. Everyone knows.”

Her words rang with practiced certainty, but sweat beaded cold in her palms.

Caelum's jaw clenched. “And yet... Freya knew. She knew I had fallen, that I had taken eight knives to the flesh. I never told her. No one from Silverfang ever told her. And still she knew.”

Aurora's wolf faltered. Her reply slipped out sharper than she intended: “Then **ask** her how she knew!”

She bit down hard, cursing herself. If Caelum confronted Freya, the truth would crack wide open. Desperately, she reined in her wolf and smoothed her voice. “What happened that night **wasn't** exactly secret. Your classmates knew, the hospital staff knew, the healers talked. News spreads through the packs. Freya must've heard it from

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+8 Pearls

someone. If she were truly your savior, why would she hide it? Why never once claim it until now?"

Caelum said nothing, but silence pressed between them heavier than stone.

If Freya had been the one, why hadn't she spoken sooner? Why had Aurora been the one he saw when his eyes opened?

Aurora leaned closer, her wolf gaze searching his. "Don't you see? Freya must have heard whispers, and now she uses them to wedge herself between us. She wants to break your faith in me. That's all."

Still, Caelum could not shake the images that haunted him: Freya astride at Runestone Grounds, Freya gripping the yoke of an aircraft, Freya standing alone against a dozen attackers, protecting her parents' ashes with teeth bared and wolf unyielding.

He had once thought Aurora's poise, her valor, unmatched. But now... Freya's fire seemed to eclipse hers.

Seeing his silence, Aurora's voice broke into a desperate snarl. "If you truly want to believe Freya Thorne, then go ahead. But I told you from the start—I never wanted reward. Saving you was instinct, nothing more. I never asked to be your savior. The only thing I ever cared about was your trust. If one word from Freya can shatter that, then I'd rather I had never touched you that night at all."

She rose abruptly, turning as though to leave.

But Caelum caught her wrist, his grip firm. "No—Aurora, forgive me. It was wrong of me to doubt. When you saved me, I was nothing, stripped of rank and strength. I know it was your wolf's compassion. I know it."

Aurora held his gaze, her wolf steadying at last. She softened her voice into a velvet blade. "Then remember that, Caelum. I never cared to be your savior. I only care that you believe me. If Freya's words can unmake that... then perhaps you never believed at all."

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A flicker of guilt shadowed Caelum's wolf-gold eyes.

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+8 Pearls

Yes. Back then, when he had nothing—no rank, no forge, no authority—Aurora had saved him. What reason would the daughter of Bluemoon's Beta have to lie about something as sacred as being a wolf's savior?

It must be Freya, he thought grimly. She must have caught whispers of the incident, and chose to use them now—just to wound him, to drive a wedge into his bond with Aurora.

His voice came steady, resolute, carrying the weight of an Alpha's vow. "Aurora, I believe you. To me, there has only ever been one wolf who pulled me from the river's jaws. My savior is you."

He shouldn't doubt her again. To doubt was to slash her heart open with his own claws.

Relief spread across Aurora's face, her lips curving into a victorious smile. "Good. Then don't ever question me again, Caelum. If you do... I won't forgive you."

"Never again," he swore.

And yet, deep in his chest, his wolf stirred restlessly, claws raking at his ribs with unease.

Aurora had offered to bring him to Ashbourne, to meet her kin of the Bluemoon Pack. But Ashbourne was also the soil of Freya's bloodline—the ancestral ground of the Stormveil Pack.

Perhaps there, he would cross paths with her. If so, he would demand answers from Freya herself. Why had she chosen to strike him with that truth like a blade? Why attempt to deceive him—if deception it was?

When Freya Thorne disembarked the plane, Silas Whitmor walked at her side. She had intended to check into her own lodging, but Silas was not a wolf to be swayed.

"You've agreed to serve **as** my shield for three moons," the Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition reminded her, voice low and implacable. "A guardian wolf does not nest apart. You'll stay with me."

Freya frowned, her hand resting lightly on the wooden urn in her lap. "Tomorrow, I begin the rites for my parents. I'll be consumed by it, Silas. Living under your roof will... complicate things."

**Silas's** silver gaze was calm, unyielding. "I told you before—I do not need you shadowing me every hour. Protect me when you can. Beyond that, your time is your own. But three months is three months, Freya. You swore it to Aldred, and I will hold you to it."

Her lips parted, then closed. He was right. She had sworn.

"...Very **well**," she conceded at **last**. Three moons would **pass** swiftly enough.

The driver awaiting them was a local wolf **of** Ashbourne. After they loaded **their** things, Silas gave a curt order: straight to one of the city's finest dens of food.

Freya settled into the back seat, her **gaze** sliding to the window. Ashbourne was nothing like 'The Capital. Here, the air was gentler, rivers winding like veins of **silver**, streets shaded with heavy green, low buildings rising between weeping willows. Memories stirred like ghosts in her chest.

She had left Ashbourne as a child, trailing Arthur Thorne and Myra Brown to The Capital. The Stormveil Pack's roots had grown distant for her. She had returned once as a teenager, with her parents, to honor the ancestors. After that, duty and studies had always kept her away.

Three years ago, before Arthur and Myra deployed with the Iron Fang Recon Unit, they had promised her. "When this is done, we'll return to Ashbourne together."

Now, she returned—but only with their ashes.

Her fingers brushed the urn, and her wolf keened softly in her chest.

Suddenly, a familiar landmark caught her **eye** beyond the glass. A weathered ancestral hall stood proud against the bustle of

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the city **streets**.

"The Stormveil Hall..." Her breath left her in a whisper.

The driver caught her words and gave a nod. "Aye, that's the Thorne family's ancestral ground. The Stormveil Pack are old blood here in Ashbourne. Thirty years past, when the real estate lords rose, a developer came waving two hundred million to claim that land. He even brought gangs to back his demand.

"But the Stormveil wolves answered. Kin came from every corner of the land, swearing that no coin would ever buy their ancestor's soil. They drew lots of blood—oaths—wolves

willing to lay down their lives so the Hall would stand. One elder, your grandsire perhaps, refused to draw lots at all. He simply bared his blade and declared, ‘My son is grown, my wife gone to the Moon. I have no ties left. I’ll be the one to spill blood for the Hall.’”

The driver’s voice carried reverence. “That was the day the city learned: Stormveil wolves do not sell their dead. The developers fled with tails tucked, and no wolf since has dared cast greedy eyes upon that Hall.”

Freya’s chest tightened. Yes. Arthur had told her of that day—how her grandfather’s silhouette had been a hero’s, standing before the Hall, daring death itself. Stormveil blood was not rich, but it was unyielding, united. That was the marrow of her pack.

The car rolled past, and Freya’s palm tightened around the urn. She would bring her parents back to Stormveil Hall, back to the stones her grandfather had bled to defend. It was their rightful place.

At her side, Silas Whitmor cast her a sidelong glance, something unspoken flickering in his eyes.

Moments later, the car arrived at the restaurant. They stepped into its polished interior. But before Freya could gather her bearings, a voice rang sharp and lilting across the hall.

“Silas? What brings you to Ashbourne?”

Freya’s head lifted. Approaching was a young woman with an oval face framed by sleek hair, golden-rimmed spectacles perched on her nose. Her body gleamed with the newest fashions, her wolf scent thick with wealth and ambition. Even her jewelry sang of high value.

Freya stilled, her wolf bristling faintly. Whoever this female was, she clearly knew Silas—and did not expect to find him here.

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+8 Pearls

Third Person’s POV

The woman’s face, pale and almost sickly, drew Freya’s wolf into cautious alert. Behind her trailed a small group of peers, all moving with the same purposeful step.

Silas Whitmor's voice cut through the tension. "Here on business in Ashbourne."

The woman tilted her head, curiosity glinting in her sharp gaze. "For the island development project, perhaps?"

Silas remained impassive, his wolf scent taut with alertness. She did not press further. "Well then, since fate has brought us together, let us share a meal. My friends have long heard of your exploits, and they would value the chance to meet you."

Freya's ears twitched at the underlying pride in the words. The wolf in her chest bristled at the unspoken challenge in the alpha's tone. Being seen with the Whitmore heir was not just a privilege—it was an assertion of power.

Silas's eyes swept over the group, his tone clipped. "I am not interested in dining with acquaintances. Freya Throne, let us go."

Freya moved, but the pale woman stepped forward, stopping her.

"Such coincidence," the woman said with a faint smile, "we share a surname. I am Jocelyn Thorne—Metropolitan Pack, Stormveil Pack line. Silas and I go back a long time. And you, what is your bond with him?"

Freya had barely opened her mouth when Silas's silver gaze froze her. "My bonds are none of your concern."

"I meant no harm. Merely curiosity. If Miss Thorne is... an ally-

"Not merely an ally," Silas interrupted, his hand closing around Freya's wrist, leading her away with the quiet authority of a born Alpha.

Jocelyn's lips pressed into a thin line. Her eyes darkened ever so slightly, and the crowd behind her murmured, half-mocking, half-admiring.

"That one is played like a pup," a male wolf whispered, his voice rough with envy.

"Though they share a surname, she cannot rival me in lineage or standing," another added.

"Yes," a third chimed in, "the Stormveil Pack commands respect. No random pup can claim that heritage."

Inside the private room, Freya and Silas sat. The faint scent of iron and wolf musk lingered in the air, blending with the aroma of Ashbourne's famed dishes.

"This is **your** home pack's soil," **Silas** said, handing over the choice. "Choose our fare."

Freya scanned the menu. Each dish called memories of **her** parents to life—flavors she remembered from childhood, from her first lessons in Stormveil traditions and hospitality.

She selected a few, all favorites of Arthur Thorne and Myra Brown. **Silas** took the menu from her, nodding to the **server**. “Bring these first. If more are needed, we’ll adjust.”

Freya’s brow arched slightly, silently noting his lack of interference. He trusted her choices—or perhaps he did not care. Either way, it suited her wolf just fine.

As the first scents of cooking reached their table, Silas’s eyes flicked toward her, voice softening, yet firm. “At the airport today... the last words you spoke to Caelum Grafton—what were they?”

Freya’s **pulse** quickened, but her expression remained calm. He had noticed. Somehow he had sensed the shift, even without hearing the words.

“Nothing of consequence,” she said lightly. “Merely a passing remark.”

Indeed, saving Caelum had been effortless—a flick of instinct, a thread of gratitude. She had never spoken of it, not then, not after. Only now, in the heat of anger, had she spoken to provoke thought, or perhaps to test him.

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+8 Pearls

Silas’s wolf observed her closely, ever alert. After a moment, he asked casually, “If Caelum were to regret letting you go.... would you return to him?”

Freya’s answer was unwavering, the steel of her pack flowing through her tone. “I would not.”

Silas’s gaze sharpened, almost predatory. “Even if he begged on his knees?”

A wry edge touched Freya’s lips. She returned the question. “And you, Silas? If a bondmate left, only to regret it, *to* come groveling—would you take them back?”

He let a small, cold smirk cross his face. “If I marry, I never release. That is the vow of my blood.”

Freya’s eyes glinted with quiet mockery. Caelum had spoken similarly once—a promise of eternal devotion, only to break it silently, haunted by a white moon in his heart. Yet Silas’s tone bore no faltering; no hesitation.

“You speak of vows with the gravity of a wolf who owns his word,” she murmured. A rare respect pricked at her pack instinct.

Silas inclined his head, silver eyes catching the firelight, unyielding as a wolf on frozen rock. “A bond forged is a bond unbroken. Only death dissolves it.”

Freya’s tail flicked, subtle, beneath the hem of her seat. The Ironclad Alpha before her was no false moonlight—he carried the weight of his pride and his pack like claws in her chest, leaving her wolf alert, watchful, yet intrigued.

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Freya’s POV

+8 Pearls

From the very first moment I saw him, I knew Silas was not a man meant for ordinary love. Not the kind that lingers a lifetime. Not the kind that belongs to just one person.

I tested him with the question that had been gnawing at my thoughts. “And if they don’t love you? If they change their heart and insist on leaving you?”

Silas’s eyes, the silver glint of his Ironclad Alpha dominance in every line of his face, never wavered. “To me, there is no divorce. Only death. If she can kill me, then she may leave. Otherwise... not.”

I blinked, stunned. The words were said so calmly, so plainly, but their weight struck like iron.

“So... if she doesn’t kill you, she can never leave?” I murmured, my wolf curling inward at the unnatural coldness behind that smile.

“Yes,” he said softly, almost serenely. Yet beneath the calm, his wolf shone—fierce, unyielding, like a predator who sees life and death as instinctual law.

For a moment, I froze. The chill in his words cut through the warm scent of the restaurant, leaving me oddly breathless.

Luckily, the server arrived with the first dishes, the aroma of Ashbourne’s finest filling the air, and I let my senses anchor to that small comfort.

I picked up my chopsticks, each bite a memory of my parents’ love for Stormveil Pack’s home flavors. My wolf nuzzled the faint nostalgia lingering in the air. Silas had brought

me here, to Ashbourne's top-tier dining, yet it was not the taste of memory. Somehow, it lacked the simplicity and warmth of the little local restaurants my father had taken me to years ago.

"Not good?" Silas's voice drew me out of my thoughts, sharp as a wolf's fanged smile.

I startled. "No... it's fine. Very good."

"But your expression... you don't seem satisfied," he said, calm but alert. "If this place displeases you, we can go elsewhere."

"No need," I murmured, forcing a small smile. "It's just a meal. Besides, this restaurant is the best in Ashbourne. Far better than those small spots my parents and Eric would take me to."

A flicker of something passed in his eyes—interest, curiosity, maybe even the smallest spark of wolf pride.

"**You** rarely **speak** of **your** brother," he observed quietly. His voice was almost lost in the hum of the restaurant, yet it carried the weight of someone who could read the unspoken.

"He disappeared... **five years** ago," I admitted, the **shadow** of the past darkening my tone. Others said he was likely dead, but my wolf refused to believe **it**. Not while **a** shred of Stormveil **Pack** blood still ran in me, not while no body had been found. My brother lived, that much I knew.

Shifting the conversation, I said, "While **I serve as**

**your** protector for the next three months, are there rules or things I should know, Alpha Whitmor?"

"Simple," he replied, his wolf's authority unmistakable. "Take care of your own tasks in Ashbourne. Protect me during your free hours. Attend functions with me when necessary. That is all."

"Understood," I said. Though I had never been a personal bodyguard like this before, I had **faced** protection and combat in the Iron Fang Recon Unit. This **task** would not intimidate me.

"And the most important rule..." His tone deepened, a low rumble like a wolf's growl resting under calm control. "... Under no circumstances may you abandon me."

I choked slightly on my soup. Abandon him? The Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition, heir to the Whitmore authority, feared abandonment? My wolf's hackles flicked instinctively—this was a man accustomed to command, yet vulnerable to betrayal in ways most would never perceive,

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“Of course,” I said firmly. “I will not leave you.”

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A faint smile touched the corners of his cold, sculpted lips. For the first time, a subtle warmth softened his predatory aura. Spring mountains smile indeed. My gaze lingered longer than it probably should have.

After the meal, I excused myself to the restroom. Standing there at the sink, I froze—Jocelyn Thorne, of the Metropolitan Pack’s Stormveil line, was waiting.

“Miss Thorne,” she said, adjusting her gold-rimmed glasses. Her voice was soft, courteous, but there was a subtle edge in her scent that my wolf immediately noted. “Silas said you and he are more than friends. I am curious—what exactly are you?”

I met her gaze evenly. “Nothing,” I said. Nothing at all. Silas and I weren’t friends—barely anything beyond the temporary bond of this protection arrangement.

Jocelyn smiled faintly. “If you prefer not to say, that is fine. But know this—women like you, I see often. They get close to powerful men and mistake attention for significance. In the end, they are nothing more than playthings.”

I raised a brow, letting the wolf in me stir at the challenge. “Is that so? Noted.” I turned and walked away, leaving her observing my back.

And my wolf growled softly, beneath the calm of my exterior. Power, pride, and danger mingled in this room, and I could smell it all—predators in human skin, and the Alpha who had claimed my attention. My senses sharpened, every instinct alive.

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## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

+8 Pearls

Jocelyn Thorne’s eyes narrowed, a subtle shadow of displeasure crossing her otherwise composed, golden face. She stepped in front of me, her smile still polite, but I could smell the tension coiling beneath it.

“Let me be clear,” she said, voice soft yet venomous. “To Silas, you are nothing. He will never love anyone.”

I didn’t flinch. My wolf growled low in my chest, smelling the scent of entitlement and threat she carried. “So.... he won’t love you either?” I asked, voice steady.

Her face flushed crimson. Before she could react further, she swung her hand toward my cheek.

Instinctively, I caught it with one hand, holding it firm. “Between people, there’s no such thing as worthier or lesser,” I said coldly, letting my wolf’s dominance temper my words. “Why do you assume you’re above anyone else?”

“You... you don’t even know who I am! I am-” she tried to assert, her pride flaring.

“I know your name is Jocelyn Thorne,” I interrupted, my voice flat. “As for your pedigree or pack status? I have no interest.” I flicked her hand aside.

A bitter laugh slipped from her lips. “What if I told Silas you pushed me, broke my glasses, even hurt my eye? What do you think he would do to you?”

Before I could respond, she yanked off her glasses and smashed them against the sink. The golden frames shattered, lenses splintering into jagged shards. My wolf flared at the reckless aggression—but I kept calm.

“My eyes... are what Silas cares about most,” she said, venom dripping from every word.

I barely restrained a snarl. She had misread him—and me. Silas was no man to be trifled with, and anyone thinking to manipulate him or threaten those under his protection would discover just how deadly patience could become.

I pressed a button on my phone and flipped it to speaker. The call was already live—Silas’s voice cool and clear filled the restroom. “I

heard everything.”

Jocelyn froze. The chill of Ironclad Alpha authority brushed against her soul like a wolf’s bite. She could feel it in the air, in the tension vibrating off my skin. My wolf purred satisfaction at the fear now crawling across her posture.

From the corner, Silas emerged, **tall** and lethal, his presence radiating dominance. My grip on the phone tightened, wolf instinct guiding my actions. “Since Alpha Whitmor has already heard, I trust he won’t blame me,” I said calmly.

Jocelyn’s **features twisted** with fury. “You **deliberately set** me up!”

“If you hadn’t tried to hurt me, none of this would have happened,” I replied, my words icy but measured.

She lunged at me, but **Silas’s** hand intercepted, a **quiet**

**yet** absolute command. “My people are not yours to touch.” His gaze, as sharp as a wolf’s fang, **rested** on her injured eye. “Next time you weaponize that against anyone, don’t expect my old promises to stand.”

Jocelyn froze. Her arrogance faltered under the weight of his presence. “I... understand,” she whispered finally, a shadow of fear crossing her face.

Silas and I left the restroom. Outside, I felt my pulse steady into its wolf rhythm again. The predator scent lingering from Jocelyn wasn’t strong enough to bother me when Silas walked beside me, an unyielding wall of Alpha authority.

In the **car**, Silas finally spoke. “If I hadn’t answered your call, what would you have done?”

Tsmirked faintly, letting the wolf sharpen in my veins. “Then I would have told Jocelyn Thorne—if I wanted to hurt her, she wouldn’t be standing here in one piece.”

“Not afraid she might retaliate?” His voice **was** calm, the iron edge of his command barely hidden.

Life’s too short to live in fear,” I said, feeling the fire of my pack blood flare. “If we fear every possible strike, we’re already

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half dead.”

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Silas’s lips curved, a faint wolfish smile tugging at the corner, and I allowed my gaze to linger on him, wolf and human alike— both Alpha, both predator, and now, for the first time, uneasy allies in this hunt of power and pride.

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

I never sought out trouble. But I was never the kind to fear it either.

+8 Pearls

“She’s from the Ashbourne Throne Family’s first line,” Silas said slowly, his gaze unwavering. “And Freya, you and she share the same surname. Surely you don’t think that’s coincidence.”

My breath caught. In The Ashbourne, there was only one Thorne name worth mentioning—our ancestral hall still stood in the city’s golden heart, shadowed by Stormveil Pack’s banners.

“So it seems,” I said coolly, “that fate has a twisted sense of humor.”

Which meant Jocelyn Thorne of the Metropolitan Pack—was my cousin.

I hadn’t yet returned to my bloodline, and already I’d clashed with her.

Silas tilted his head. “You don’t want to ask what ties I have to Jocelyn?”

“I’m just a bodyguard.” My words were clipped, final.

In other words, whoever Jocelyn was to him—lover, enemy, ghost—it wasn’t my concern.

I refused to drown in the swamp of another man’s tangled past.

But Silas didn’t stop. His voice lowered, rough like iron scraping steel.

“Her eye... almost ruined by my hand. The orb was spared, but her vision never recovered.”

I froze. Jocelyn had once whispered that Silas cared for nothing but her eyes.

His next words made my pulse spike.

“I was eight **years** old. My mind—shattered. I remember my hands on her throat. My nails digging... gouging toward her eye until I almost ripped it from her skull.”

A chill **raced** down my spine. My wolf bristled inside me. I hadn’t expected that.

But outwardly, I kept my face calm. I’d seen enough war, enough carnage in the field with the Iron Fang **Recon** Unit. My youth had been spent staring into the **pits of** conflict beyond our borders. Compared to those flames, this truth did not shake

1. **me.**

“You’re not afraid?” he **pressed**, his obsidian eyes catching the low light.

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“I’ve seen worse,” I said simply. “Perhaps that’s why **fear** doesn’t come **easily** to me.”

I let my gaze linger on him, my wolf brushing the **edges** of his aura. “If anything, I think you and Jocelyn are both... tragic.”

His lips quirked, sharp. “So you pity me?”

No one had ever called Silas Whitmor pitiful. He was the cursed Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition. The beast and the sinner.

“You were eight,” I countered, “lost in madness. That’s not a monster. That’s a child carrying the weight of a curse.”

**His** laugh was low, dangerous. “Careful, little wolf. That kind of sympathy can get you killed. Stay too close to a beast, and one day its teeth might pierce your throat. What if I lose my mind again? Would you fear me tearing out your eyes? Remember, I am **not** a weak child anymore.”

Nared my teeth in something between a smirk and a challenge. “I’m not Jocelyn. If you ever lose yourself with me. Silas, I won’t scream. I’ll put you down with a single strike, make sure you hurt no one again”

For a moment, genuine surprise flickered across his face. Then hunger. Interest

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My wolf shivered under his stare.

He thought me intriguing. He thought he would tire of me in three moons.

But I **saw**

the doubt in his eyes now.

When his car rolled to a stop, I realized we’d arrived at a hospital instead of the Coalition’s compound.

“You need your wounds checked,” he said. “At the airport, you took more than one hit.”

I said nothing, only followed. In truth, I had been planning to pick up medicine anyway.

+8 Pearls

What I didn't expect was for Silas to shadow me through the hallways, towering at my side even **as I** signed in at the clinic.

"Won't you go back first?" I asked.

His mouth curved, a wolf's smile. "You're my shield. Where else would I be but with you?"

I bit back a retort and let him follow.

When my name was called, I stepped into the examination room. After I explained the injuries, the physician gestured at the bed.

"Remove your boots and lie down," the doctor said. "I need to check your abdomen."

I bent to unlace them—then hissed when pain tore through my ribs and stomach, remnants of the Capital's airport skirmish.

The doctor frowned. "In that case, let your husband help you."

My head snapped up. "Husband?"

The doctor's eyes flicked to Silas, looming silent beside me.

Heat rushed to my cheeks. "He's not my husband."

The physician arched a brow. "Then your mate, surely. Don't just stand there, Alpha. Your she-wolf is injured. Help her."

I opened my mouth to protest again, but Silas's hand was already at my ankle, his touch burning like fire through the leather of my boot.

And my wolf... betrayed me with a tremor.

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## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya's POV

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When I bent down to untie my sneakers, the pain at my ribs shot sharp enough to steal my breath.

“Doctor, he’s not—” I started, but my words froze in my throat.

+8 Pearls

Silas Whitmor was already crouched in front of me. The Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition, the man who ruled with steel and fire, was holding my ankle in one hand like it weighed nothing. His other hand moved with precise ease as he worked the knot of my laces free.

“The doctor is right,” he said, voice quiet, edged in iron. “You’re injured. Don’t strain yourself.”

I could only stare, stunned, as he slid my shoe off, then the other.

The Alpha of Ironclad... taking off my shoes? My heart thudded unevenly in my chest. It felt wrong, surreal—like the moon herself had flipped the world upside down.

Before I could recover, he scooped me into his arms.

“What—what are you doing?” My voice came out sharper than I intended, nerves prickling down my spine.

“You want to walk barefoot on hospital floors?” His tone stayed maddeningly calm, as if this was nothing, as if carrying me was a simple necessity.

He laid me gently on the examination cot, careful enough that it sent another confusing twist through my chest. The doctor began his work, prodding bruises, muttering about fractures and resilience, while Silas waited beyond the curtain, expression unreadable.

When it was over, the doctor prescribed medicine and waved us off.

Back in the **car**, I couldn’t stop glancing at Silas’s hands. Strong, elegant, dangerous—hands made for wielding claws, for tearing throats, for commanding an army. Yet those same hands had just loosened my shoelaces with ridiculous care. And later... tied them back again.

“You really do like my hands, don’t you?” His **voice** cut the silence, smooth and sudden.

Heat flushed my cheeks, and I coughed to cover it. “I **was**

... just thinking. About earlier. Thank you, for... helping me.”

“You should thank me. I don’t do that for people,” he replied simply.

The **car** fell quiet again until his low voice came once more. “How do you plan on thanking me?”

I blinked, caught off guard. “Didn’t I **just...**?”

oward

His gaze flicked toward me, sharp enough to pin me in **place**. “Or **are you** the kind who only says thanks with words?”

My lips pressed together. “Then maybe **I** should return the favor. Take off your shoes. Tie your laces.”

His mouth curved in something that wasn’t quite a

smile. “Not necessary. But there is one thing I want. Stop calling me ‘Mr. Whitmor. It’s 100... distant.”

I frowned. The problem **was**, I wanted distance. “Then... what? Should I call you Alpha?”

“Call me Silas.” His tone left no room for argument. “Three months. Freya. For three months, you’ll be at my side. No need for titles between us.”

exhaled slowly. “Fine. Silas”

“Good.” His lips shaped my name, but softer, lower. “And I’ll call you Freya. Or perhaps... little wolf.”

The sound slid down my spine like claws tracing **over** skin. I stiffened, forcing my expression flat. Too many **people** had called me Freya before—my father, my mother, my brother, packmates. But never like this. His voice made it sound **like**

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something else entirely: a claim, a warning, a temptation.

I shook it off, burying the strange shiver in my chest.

+8 Pearls

By the time the car stopped, I looked up to see a sprawling estate. Whitmor territory. Silas’s stronghold within the city.

“This is my residence when I’m in the Ashbourne,” he explained, leading me inside. “You’ll stay in the room next to mine. Close enough to guard me.”

The halls smelled of polished wood and old steel, tinged faintly with wolf. Servants moved with quiet efficiency, eyes lowered in submission. This was no simple house—it was a den carved in iron.

“You may enter any room you like,” Silas continued as he stopped at a corridor. “Except one. The door at the end of the third floor. That one, you will never open.”

I froze. The words slotted into me like a story whispered at the edge of firelight.

A forbidden door. A command wrapped in shadow.

Like something out of an old tale where the monster hides its secrets in a locked room.

And I had just been warned not to look.

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Third Person's POV

Freya didn't dwell on things she had no business prying into.

+8 Pearls

So when **Silas** warned her not to touch the room at the end of the third-floor corridor, she nodded without hesitation.

“Understood,” she said calmly, shifting the urn of her parents' ashes in her arms. “Anything else I should know?”

“That's all,” Silas replied. His expression was unreadable, voice clipped with the kind of command that came naturally to an Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition. “Settle your belongings. If you need anything, the steward will see to it.”

Freya inclined her head in acknowledgment and stepped into the chamber prepared for her.

The room was decadent, far too ornate for her taste. Gilded molding, velvet curtains, and a sweeping carpet in faded crimson gave it the heavy fragrance of a bygone age. The furniture was French-inspired, romantic, almost suffocating in its excess. Freya preferred sharp lines and practicality—nothing like this.

But this wasn't her home. She was here on obligation, under an arrangement meant to last three months. She could endure anything for three months.

She placed the urn gently on the nightstand, its weight heavier than steel in her arms. Then, pulling out her WolfComm, she called the keepers of the Stormveil ancestral hall.

She had already contacted them back in the Capital, confirming the rites: three days in the Stormveil Primal Hall, then a place in the Ashbourne Legion's Hall of Martyrs. Still, she wanted to be sure.

The line connected quickly.

"This is Freya Thorne, from the Bloodrnoon pack, which is the fifth branch of Stormveil. I've returned to Ashbourne. Tomorrow, I'll bring my parents' ashes to the Stormveil Primal Hall for the three-day vigil, before setting their spirit tablets."

The voice on the other end was gruff but not unkind. "Understood. Come tomorrow. We'll prepare for the rite."

Elsewhere, in the dim corridors of the Stormveil Pack's main seat, Jocelyn Thorne walked beside her uncle **James**, Arthur's seventh cousin, the weary caretaker of **the** Hall.

"Uncle Jmaes," she asked smoothly, "who was that on the call?"

"A girl from the fifth branch," **he** answered with a sigh. "Freya Thorne. She'll be bringing Arthur and Myra's ashes tomorrow."

Jocelyn's eyes **gleamed** with faint amusement. "The fifth branch? The Bloodmoon? I thought they were gone."

"Nearly," he said, his **voice** lined with **regret**. "Arthur **fell** with the Iron Fang Recon Unit, Myra **never** returned from the field. Their son, Eric, gone years ago. All **that** remains is the daughter."

Jocelyn tilted her head, lips curving faintly. "Will you be **receiving** her in **person**?"

He hesitated. Technically, duty demanded it. But duty was **heavy**, and the lure of his nightly card game was heavier still.

"I ought to, but..."

"Then allow me," Jocelyn interrupted, her tone honey-smooth. "I've been meaning to take a few friends to see the Stormveil Primal Hall. I'll greet Freya on your behalf."

Her uncle chuckled, relieved. "Ah, Jocelyn, always so thoughtful. You'll save me the trouble."

She smiled sweetly. But when she lowered her **gaze**, the warmth in her **eyes** cooled into steel.

So the outcast returns with ashes in her arms...

Freya Thome. Tomorrow, let's see how you endure what I arrange for you.

+8 Pearls

That same night, in the Whitmore stronghold, Silas stood alone at the far end of the third-floor corridor.

The **air** here **was** colder, as though shadows themselves bent to the Alpha's presence. On the wall hung an oil painting—two men tall; framed in **heavy** iron.

The portrait was **of** a woman, breathtaking in her beauty. She wore a jewel-toned qipao, Whitmore jade glittering on her wrist. Her gaze held both pride and fire, but beneath the paint one could almost sense the desperation that had haunted her

end.

Silas's jaw tightened. The memory came unbidden.

The jade bracelet, shattered against stone. Her voice, raw and sharp:

"I don't want the Whitmore heirlooms. I don't want the Whitmore chains. Let me go! You're all mad. Every last one of you!"

Later, her beauty had withered, like a rose burned from the inside out. At the end, she had clutched his hand, nails biting deep, words carved into his soul:

"You are his son. You will inherit his madness. That blood runs in you. So listen to me, boy—don't love. Never love. You are not fit to love. You will destroy everything you touch."

Silas stood before the portrait, silent, his broad shoulders taut with the echo of a curse that wasn't of witches, but of bloodline.

And now, Freya Thorne-

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The daughter of the fallen, the last ember of Stormveil's fifth branch-

was in the room just beyond.

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Silas' POV

+8 Pearls

“Mother...” My voice **was** low, rough. “I won’t be like him. I won’t descend into madness. And as you wished, I will never love anyone.”

Love destroyed her. Love turned my father into a monster.

This estate, the Whitmor stronghold, had once been her cage. My father locked her here, shackled her spirit until it withered away. She died clawing at the bars, begging to escape. And still, she was buried in Whitmor soil, bound to this house even in death.

My father never recovered. He bled his soul into rage, obsession, and bloodshed. His wolf became feral, unhinged. I remember his eyes—red, fevered, wild—as he stood before her grave and told me:

“You are ours, boy. Hers and mine. You’ll inherit our curse. When you love, you will burn the world for it. When you’ll be stone, no matter how the weak beg for your mercy. Which ending will you choose, Silas?”

you

don’t,

His laugh still echoes in my ears, a jagged howl that crawls under my skin.

Neither, I swore to myself. Neither.

I turned from the portrait and descended the stairs, my boots silent against the marble. At the second floor, I stopped. Freya had just stepped from her chamber, a pale figure clutching shadows and secrets.

Her scent hit me—wolf, storm, faint ashes of loss. It lingered in the air, a thorn at the edge of my senses.

“Tell me,” I asked suddenly, my voice sharper than intended, “do you think I am capable of loving anyone? Or do you think I will never love at **all**?”

She blinked, startled, her gaze locking onto mine. There was a flicker in her eyes—wariness, but also something else. Something that made my wolf shift beneath my skin.

“What’s wrong with you?” she asked softly.

“Answer me.” My tone left no room for **escape**. “Will I love? Or will I never love?”

Her lips pressed **together** before **she** said, “That **isn’t** for me to judge. Only you can decide whom you love—**or**

**if** you love no

one”

My wolf snarled **at** the **evasion**, but I pressed, my words colder. “And what about you, Freya? You once loved Caelum Grafton, didn’t you? **Yet you cut** him away, **clean as a blade**, when the Lunar Severance Phase came. If it was truly love, wouldn’t you have clawed your **way** to him no matter **the cost?**”

Her jaw tightened. “Even if I love someone, if **he does** not return it, I will **leave**. Love is not chains. And as for Caelum... whatever I felt for him, it is gone. **He** is not the one I want to love.”

Something in her voice was unshakable, **a quiet fire**. My curiosity pricked deeper. “Then what sort of male do love?”

you

want to

Her gaze drifted, softening. “Someone who will walk beside me. Who will never abandon me, no matter what storm we face. Someone who will stay even unto death.”

Her words were foreign to me, alien. Her vision of love was nothing but weakness. And yet, my chest tightened as she spoke, because **my** mother had never known that kind of bond. My father had never given it.

“I don’t believe such wolves **exist**.” I muttered.

“My parents were like that,” she said firmly. “Arthur Thorne and Myra—my father and mother. They stood together through everything, even in death. They loved each other truly.” Her **eyes** glistened with the memory, but her lips curved upward **in**

the faintest smile.

Her truth cut me, because it stood in perfect defiance of everything I had lived. My **parents** had been ruin and fire. **Hers** had

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been unity and devotion. She and I... opposites in every way.

+8 Pearls

That night, after dinner, I returned to my quarters. I had begun unfastening my belt when I heard the door creak open. I froze, turning my head.

Freya.

**She had** stumbled into my chamber through the adjoining door. The one that connected our rooms. She froze, too, but her eyes caught on the scars etched across my back—ribbons of battles fought, wounds carved by claw and steel.

Oh,” she breathed. She didn’t turn away. She stared.

The silence stretched until my patience snapped. “How long do you intend to stare?” I growled.

Her body jolted. “Ah—sorry!” She turned quickly, her cheeks flushed, but I’d already seen the way her gaze lingered.

I pulled on my shirt with deliberate slowness, letting the fabric cover the map of scars, and crossed the space between us. “I should have warned you. The door connects our rooms. You can keep your side locked if you wish, though I will leave mine open. If danger comes...” My eyes narrowed as I let the words hang. “...you can rush in. Protect me.”

The irony wasn’t lost on either of us.

She coughed awkwardly, her voice flustered. “Of course. Then I’ll go back now.”

But as she moved to slip away, I braced my palm against the door, blocking her path. My eyes pinned hers, unyielding.

“You saw it, didn’t you?” I asked.

She tilted her head, pretending not to understand. “Saw what?”

“My body. The scars.”

She faltered under my stare, the color in her cheeks deepening. For a soldier, she should have been used to seeing bare skin, battered wolves, blood. And yet—her heartbeat told me this was different,

And I **realized** mine **was** no calmer.

## A Warrior Luna's Awakening

Freya’s POV

I froze in place, breath catching in my throat.

It must have been the shock. Nothing else could explain it.

+8 Pearls

Because I never expected Silas Whitmor's back—Alpha of the Ironclad Coalition, heir of the feared Whitmore bloodline—to be carved over with scars.

Not the kind of marks a warrior earns in battle with rogues. These weren't badges of honor. They were cruel, deliberate. They reeked of punishment. Of abuse.

Abuse?

The lines weren't fresh. Some were years old, healed but jagged, layered one over another. Scars that could only have come from his youth. From when he was still a child.

My stomach twisted, fury knotting inside me. Who would dare? Who would do this to a pup?

The words escaped before I could stop them.

"Those scars on your back... who did that to you?!"

His gaze flicked toward me, unreadable, voice low and cold.

"So you really did see them." He didn't answer my question. Instead, his lips curled faintly. "But are you actually angry, Freya? Angry because of the marks carved into my flesh?"

His calmness jarred me back. My heartbeat steadied. Why was I angry? If he had been beaten, the one responsible was surely long gone—or already dealt with. Silas wasn't some powerless pup anymore. He was Alpha. The predator no one dared to

touch.

I exhaled slowly. "A little angry, **yes**. But it's your past, your scars. It's not my place to pry. I overstepped."

His **lashes** flickered once. Then his hand slid off the doorframe, releasing me. "Go back to your room."

I obeyed, retreating **across** the threshold into my chamber. I shut the adjoining door softly behind me.

But I couldn't stop thinking about **his back**. About the whip-marks carved deep into his flesh. The stories **whispered** in Bloodmoon **Pack** about the Whitmore **line**

came back to me. Silas's father, brutal and unhinged, obsessed with a mate who never returned his **love**. I'd thought those **tales exaggerated**. Now I wasn't so sure.

He could have burned those **scars away** with SkyVex dermal **tech**. He hadn't. He'd kept them, carried them like a weapon etched into his skin. A yow to never **be powerless** again.

That night, I lay awake staring at the ceiling, restless. Tomorrow, I would **have** to walk into the Stormveil Primal Hall. My family's sacred ground. My grandfather had given his **life** protecting **it**, **and** his spirit **still** lingered there. My parents' tablets were enshrined **in** its heart.

I remembered the last time, when I was younger, walking between my father Arthur and my mother Myra as we carried offerings. Eric, my brother, had been by my side. This time, I would go alone.

But someday... when I find Eric again, we'll go together. We'll kneel before our ancestors, before my parents' spirits, and they'll see we endured.

My thoughts shattered as a muffled cry tore through the wall.

I bolted upright. It came from the other side—Silas's room.

Heart pounding, I shoved open the connecting door and stepped inside.

Darkness swallowed the space, but **my** wolf sight cut through the shadows. On the bed, Silas lay writhing, face twisted **in** pain.

His chest heaved, sweat darkening the sheets. His mouth moved, broken words spilling out.

“Pain... **gods**, it hurts... stop—please, stop... I'll obey, I'll be good... obedient...”

+8 Pearls

The sound pierced me. I froze, disbelieving. This was Silas. The man whose very presence cowed entire packs. And yet here he was, begging in his sleep, voice cracked like a child's.

The scars. The abuse. My gut twisted.

“Silas!” I whispered sharply, stepping to his side.

He didn't wake. His body thrashed once, then stilled, lips trembling as he choked out another broken plea.

I reached for him. hand hovering, then brushing against his damp cheek.

Suddenly his grip snapped around my wrist, faster than thought, crushing tight. I gasped, startled by his reflex.

But his eyes stayed closed. His voice—raw, shattered—fell into the space between us.

“Don't leave me....”\*

My throat closed. The predator was gone; in his place was someone unbearably fragile.

I didn't pull away. I let him hold me. Slowly, the tension bled from his frame. His breathing steadied. The nightmare receded.

With

my free hand, I reached for a tissue on the bedside table and gently wiped the sweat from his brow.

I had thought of Silas as a man carved of ice and steel, a void where warmth could not exist. Yet now... he looked breakable. Like a pup in need of shelter.

Minutes passed. His features smoothed, and at last, he sank into a deep, steady sleep.

I glanced down at my wrist, still trapped in his hand. I tried to ease it free-

And stopped, staring at his sleeping face.

My chest ached in **a way** I didn't want **to** name.