

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 -

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

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Chapter 11: Worth Appreciating

Evelyn's POV

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Nadia's room looked like a hurricane had hit a clothing store. Dresses, makeup, and accessories scattered everywhere while she moved

around like some kind of styling tornado.

"What about this one?" She held up a deep blue dress. "It'll make your eyes pop.

"I don't really do dresses..." I backed away slightly.

"Come on, trust me here." She wouldn't take no for an answer. "Tonight's special - you need to look the part."

After trying on what felt like half her closet, she finally settled on that blue dress. Simple but classy - not too fancy, not too casual. She

matched it with low silver heels and a delicate necklace.

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"Makeup time," she announced, pointing at her vanity. "Sit."

"Nadia, you really don't need to go all out..."

"Shut up and let the expert work." She laughed, already reaching for her brushes.

Her touch was gentle, keeping everything natural. Light eyeshadow that brought out my smoky blue eyes, just a hint of blush, pale pink

lipstick. Nothing overdone.

For my hair, she pulled half of it up, letting the rest fall over my shoulders. The whole look was elegant but still felt like me – just a

better version.

When she spun me around to face the mirror, I barely recognized myself.

“Damn,” I whispered. “Is that really me?”

“This is the real you,” she said, satisfied. “You just keep her buried most of the time,”

Time flew by. Before I knew it, we were rushing to get ready. Nadia threw on a gorgeous green dress that made her look like some kind of

forest goddess.

“Nervous?” she asked, checking her reflection one last time.

“A little.” I smoothed down the dress. “I’ve never been to anything like this before.”

“Don’t sweat it,” she said, grabbing her purse. “I’ll be right there with you. Besides, Alpha Adam’s family seems pretty cool.”

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The pack house glowed against the darkening sky, every window lit up for tonight’s dinner. My stomach did a little flip as we approached

the front door.

‘Ready? Nadia squeezed my hand.

I took a deep breath. “Ready.”

The second we walked in, warmth and conversation wrapped around us. Alpha Adam and Luna Isabella were greeting people in the living

room. Delta Griffin and his wife Diana chatted by the fireplace, Gamma Thomas nearby.

I noticed my father wasn't here. Not surprising, really.

"Evelyn! Nadia!" Luna Isabella spotted us immediately and came over with a huge smile. "You made it! Welcome!"

She hugged us both, which still felt weird to me. Affection wasn't exactly common in my house.

"Evelyn, you look absolutely stunning tonight," she said warmly. "That dress is perfect on you."

"Thank you, Luna Isabella," I managed, feeling heat creep up my neck.

"And Nadia, it's so wonderful to officially welcome you to our pack," she turned to my friend. "I'm sorry your parents couldn't be here."

"They're bummed they missed it," Nadia replied. "But their research couldn't wait."

"Of course, we totally understand." Alpha Adam joined us. "Dr. Harrison's work is crucial for the pack."

That's when I heard footsteps on the stairs. Elliot and his friends appeared, all dressed up and looking way more mature than usual.

When they saw me, they all just... stopped.

"Whoa, Milo spoke first. "Tiny, you look... different tonight."

"Beautiful, Magnus added, his voice rougher than normal.

Lucian and Orion didn't say anything, but the look in their eyes said enough.

Elliot walked up to me. "My sister, you really do look beautiful tonight."

Hearing him call me "sister" made my heart skip. It had been forever since he'd used that word.

"Thanks," I said quietly.

"Alright, everyone's here," Alpha Adam announced. "Let's eat."

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The dining room looked like something from a magazine. The long table was covered with amazing food, silverware gleaming in the candlelight. Everything felt warm and elegant at the same time.

I ended up seated next to Luna Isabella, with Nadia on my other side. The guys spread out around the table.

“This dinner is to welcome Dr. Harrison’s family to our pack,” Alpha Adam raised his glass, “and to celebrate our unity and growth.”

“To friendship, to family, to the Polaris Pack!”

“To the Polaris Pack!” everyone echoed.

The meal was incredible. Luna Isabella asked Nadia about adjusting to the new school, Delta Griffin talked about training schedules, and

the boys shared some funny stories.

For once, I actually felt included in the conversation. At home, family dinners were pretty much nonexistent, let alone eating with pack

leadership.

“Evelyn’s cub training program is really something special,” Alpha Adam told everyone. “We watched this morning, and those kids were

impressive.”

“Absolutely,” Delta Griffin agreed. “She’s got a real gift for teaching. Those cubs learned skills and teamwork.”

My face got hot. I wasn’t used to this kind of praise.

“You should think about expanding this approach to other age groups,” Luna Isabella suggested. “It could benefit the whole pack.”

“I... I’ll think about it,” I stammered.

After dinner, Alpha Adam and the other adults headed to his study for pack business, leaving us younger wolves in the living room.

“You kids,” Luna Isabella said to the boys, “take Evelyn and Nadia out to the terrace. The moon’s gorgeous tonight – worth appreciating.”

The terrace was bigger than I’d expected, surrounded by moonflowers and small silver pine trees. The evening air carried the scent of flowers and pine. Comfortable wicker chairs sat around a small fire pit burning silver pine wood, giving off warm light and that familiar

scent.

“This is incredible,” Nadia said, looking around. “Luna Isabella has amazing taste.”

“Mom loves her garden,” Magnus explained. “This terrace is her pride and joy.”

We settled into the chairs. I automatically picked one slightly back from the group, but Nadia pulled me right into the center. The five

boys spread out around us, creating this intimate little circle.

“Tonight was perfect,” Milo stretched out in his chair. “That roasted venison was unreal.”

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“Yeah, but that silver pine honey cake was the real winner, Lucian added.

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“You’re always thinking about food,” Orion shook his head. “Tonight was about welcoming Nadia to our pack.”

“Exactly, Magnus looked at Nadia. “Official welcome, Nadia. You’ve only been here a few days, but it feels like you’ve always belonged.”

“Thanks, you guys,” Nadia smiled. “Honestly, I was worried about fitting in somewhere new, but meeting Evie made everything easier.”

She looked at me with genuine gratitude. “I’m lucky to have a friend like her.”

“We’re the lucky ones,” Elliot said suddenly. “This morning’s training showed us stuff we’d been missing.”

I glanced at him, confused about what he meant. But he just smiled without explaining.

Milo sighed. “Speaking of luck, some people haven’t been so fortunate lately. Acacia’s been spreading her bullshit rumors again.”

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Chapter 12: You’re Beautiful Tonight

Evelyn’s POV

The mood shifted so fast I could practically feel the temperature drop. The triplets exchanged looks that screamed “complicated.”

“What rumors?” Nadia asked.

“She’s been telling everyone she’s gonna be the future Luna,” Elliot said. “Claims she’s got some special thing going with the triplets.”

“That’s bullshit,” Nadia frowned. “What makes her think she can just decide that?”

Awkward silence. Magnus cleared his throat. “It’s... complicated.”

“We screwed up last summer,” Lucian’s voice got tight. “End of training party, we drank way too much...”

“Did some really stupid shit,” Magnus picked up where he left off. “Stuff we regret.”

My face burned. I didn’t need the details to know this was definitely not a conversation I wanted to be part of.

“I was there too, but I said no,” Orion’s voice could’ve cut glass. “Even drunk off my ass, I knew it was wrong.”

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“Exactly,” Magnus said firmly. “It was just... drunken stupidity. Didn’t mean anything. But Acacia’s acting like we’re engaged or something.”

“She’s been dropping hints ever since,” Lucian made a bitter face. “Already planning our ‘future’ together.”

“Is that why she’s been such a bitch lately?” I asked quietly.

“Part of it,” Elliot nodded. “She thinks that night gave her some kind of claim on us. She’s dead wrong.”

“Completely wrong,” Orion emphasized. “The Moon Goddess picks our mates. Not some random hookup,”

“Speaking of which,” Nadia jumped in, clearly wanting to change the subject, “I heard you guys have a mating ball here? When’s that

happen?’

The guys visibly relaxed, grateful for the shift.

“Every fall,” Lucian explained. “Usually for eighteen-plus wolves who haven’t found their mates yet. Though high schoolers can go now

too.”

“Sounds awesome!” Nadia’s eyes lit up. “Can we go?”

“Course you can,” Milo laughed. “Though you’re still pretty young. Evie’s what, fifteen?”

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Chapter 12: You’re Beautiful Tonight

“Yeah, fifteen.” I nodded. “Nadia’s a few months older.”

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“We’re all sixteen,” Magnus said. “But you can’t actually sense your mate until after your eighteenth birthday anyway.”

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“Still fun though,” Orion added. “You learn the social stuff, see pack traditions. And...” he paused, ‘real mate bonds aren’t about choices or

random hookups. It’s something deeper than that.”

His words seemed to hit the triplets hard. They all got this thoughtful look.

*Plus you get to wear gorgeous dresses!” Nadia said excitedly, totally missing the undercurrents. “Evie, we have to go!”

My stomach twisted. A ball meant being seen by everyone – exactly what I spent my life avoiding.

“I don’t really know how to dance...” I said quietly.

“We can teach you,” Lucian offered. “Basic steps aren’t that hard.”

“Yeah, and...” Nadia suddenly jumped up. “Luna Isabella!”

We all turned toward the terrace entrance where Luna Isabella was walking over with a tray of desserts.

“What’s got everyone so excited?” she asked warmly.

“We were talking about the mating ball,” Nadia said directly. “I was wondering what color would look best on Evie.”

Luna Isabella studied me thoughtfully. “Blues would be perfect on her – they’d bring out her eyes and hair. Deep sapphire or silver-blue

would both be stunning.”

“I knew it!” Nadia clapped her hands. “I can already picture it!”

Heat rushed to my face and I stared down at my hands.

“Evie, don’t be shy,” Luna isabella said gently. “You’re beautiful tonight, and you’d be absolutely gorgeous in a gown,”

“Okay, okay, stop,” I waved my hands frantically. “Stop talking about me like I’m not here.”

But they clearly had zero intention of stopping. Nadia started describing her vision of the perfect dress, and the guys actually joined in

with their own suggestions.

“Should be simple,” Magnus said. “Something too fancy would just distract from her.”

“Agreed,” Orion nodded. “Simple and elegant works best.”

Watching them seriously discuss my appearance made something weird flutter in my chest. Nobody had ever cared about how I looked

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before.

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"I can't take this anymore," I stood up, pretending to escape. "You guys keep planning – I'm gonna look at the moon."

"Oh no you don't! Nadia immediately chased after me.

I stopped at the edge of the terrace, and she caught me in a hug from behind. "Don't run away – we're just looking out for you."

"I know, it's just... I'm not used to it, I said softly.

That's when Nadia playfully smacked my thigh. "Stop being so shy all the time!"

The sudden contact made me gasp and lean forward slightly.

But something weird happened.

The five guys who'd been chatting animatedly suddenly went dead silent. The whole atmosphere shifted in an instant.

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I turned around to find them all staring at us, but their expressions were... off. Magnus's ears had gone red, Lucian was clearing his throat

like something was stuck, Orion's stare had gotten intense, Milo was suddenly fascinated by the moon, and Elliot looked pissed.

"What's wrong?" Nadia asked, confused.

"Nothing... nothing," Magnus stammered. "We should... we should head back."

"Yeah, it's getting late," Lucian was already standing, movements weirdly rushed.

"Dad's probably waiting, Orion said, already walking toward the exit.

Milo and Magnus quickly followed, leaving just Elliot still sitting there.

"Elliot?" I looked at him, totally lost.

"Yeah, we really should go home." He walked over. "Let me walk you guys back."

"But... what just happened?" I still had no clue what I'd missed.

“Nothing,” Elliot shook his head. “Just getting late.”

Watching the four of them practically run away, I was even more confused.

“Boys are so weird,” Nadia shrugged. “They were fine two seconds ago, then suddenly they’re all fleeing like the place is on fire.*

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‘Yeah, I agreed. “Wonder what the hell that was about.”

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Elliot walked us home after we said goodbye to Luna Isabella and the other adults. He was unusually quiet the whole way, like he was

working through something in his head.

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Chapter 13: Where Did You Go Tonight?

Evelyn’s POV

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The walk home felt different with Elliot beside me. Silver Pines looked almost magical under the moonlight, their branches catching the

silver glow. But my brother was unusually quiet, like he was wrestling with something.

‘I really enjoyed dinner tonight,’ I said, trying to break the silence.

“Yeah.” He stopped suddenly. “Evie, I need to tell you something.”

I turned to face him, confused.

“Dad wasn’t there tonight because I asked Alpha Adam not to tell him.” Elliot’s voice was barely above a whisper. “I know how he treats

you. I wanted you to have one night without worrying about his reaction.”

My stomach dropped. “You knew?”

“Of course I knew.” He looked away toward the forest. “You think I’m blind? I’ve watched him tear you down for years.”

The admission hung between us like a weight.

“I bet you’re wondering why I never said anything, right?” His laugh was bitter. “Why I just stood there and let it happen.”

I stayed quiet, but he was right. That question had burned in my chest for years.

Elliot took a shaky breath. “Remember when we were little? Your fifth birthday when I snuck you that cake I made?”

I nodded. That tiny vanilla cake was still one of my only good birthday memories.

“Dad found out and lost his shit. Locked me in the training room for a whole day, said if I ever ‘betrayed’ him again, he’d strip me of the Beta position.” Elliot’s hands clenched into fists. “I didn’t give a damn about being Beta, but after that, he got even worse with you. I knew

it was punishment for what I did.”

“Elliot...”

“So I convinced myself that staying away would protect you. That if I just kept my distance, maybe he’d ease up. He finally looked at me, eyes bright with unshed tears. “But I was wrong. I was just a coward who chose the easy way out.”

“You were a kid,” I said quietly. “We both were.”

“That’s not an excuse.” He shook his head. “All these years, watching you eat alone, watching you train until you collapsed, watching you shrink into corners... I hated myself for it. But I was too scared to do anything.”

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Chapter 13: Where Did You Go Tonight?

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He reached out and squeezed my shoulder. “That changes now. I don’t care what Dad thinks anymore. You’re my sister, and I should’ve been protecting you this whole time.”

My throat felt tight. “Thank you.”

“Don’t thank me. This is what I should’ve done years ago.” He started walking again. “Come on, let’s get you home.”

The moment I pushed open our front door, a voice cut through the darkness.

“Where did you go tonight?”

My blood turned to ice. Dad sat in the living room shadows, only the glass in his hand catching any light.

“I...” The words stuck in my throat.

Elliot stepped in front of me immediately. ‘I took her out, sir. Alpha Adam hosted a welcome dinner and invited Evie as Nadia’s friend.’

“I asked her, not you.” Dad’s voice could’ve frozen hell over.

I forced myself to meet his glare. ‘I went to dinner at Alpha Adam’s house.’

“Who gave you permission?”

“Alpha Adam and Luna Isabella invited me personally.” I tried to keep my voice steady.

Dad stood up slowly, his massive frame even more intimidating in the dim light. He walked over until I could smell the whiskey on his

breath.

“You think putting on some pretty dress changes who you are?” His voice was deadly quiet. “You think they really want you there?”

“Dad! Elliot tried to step between us.

“Shut the hell up!” Dad roared, then turned back to me. ‘Let me remind you of something, little girl. No matter how you dress up, you can’t change one simple fact – your existence cost her life.”

Each word hit like a physical blow. I’d heard this accusation a thousand times, but it never stopped hurting.

‘If I could’ve chosen, I heard myself say, my voice eerily calm, ‘I would rather it was me who died instead of her.”

Dead silence.

Dad’s face went darker, but he didn’t respond. Just turned and headed for the stairs.

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Chapter 13: Where Did You Go Tonight?

*From now on, you don’t leave this house without my permission. He threw the words over his shoulder before disappearing upstairs.

I stood there feeling like all the air had been sucked out of the room. Elliot steadied my arm.

“Don’t listen to him,” he said quietly. “Go to school tomorrow like normal. I’ll handle this.”

“He’s the Beta. His orders...”

“And I’m the future Beta. Elliot’s voice was firm. “Trust me on this.”

I nodded and dragged myself upstairs. Tonight’s perfect dinner felt like it happened to someone else. I curled up in bed and let the

darkness swallow me whole.

It’s not your fault, my wolf whispered. It never was.

I know, I replied. But knowing something and believing it are two different things.

The next day was Monday, and I got up as usual. Elliot was already in the kitchen when I came down.

“Dad’s already at the pack house,” he said without looking up from his coffee. “Don’t worry about yesterday.”

School passed surprisingly peacefully. Maybe Acacia was still recovering from her embarrassment at Wolf’s Corner, or maybe she was planning something bigger. Either way, Nadia and I made it through classes without incident.

We went through the usual routine classes together, lunch together, everything felt normal.

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Until dismissal.

I was heading to my locker when someone grabbed me from behind. A hand clamped over my mouth while another arm dragged me

backward.

“Don’t fight it – you’ll just make it worse,” an unfamiliar male voice hissed in my ear.

They hauled me into the storage room at the end of the hallway. This area was always deserted, far from the main corridors. The second

the door closed, I knew I was screwed.

Two other guys waited inside, both wearing masks and baseball caps pulled low. Upperclassmen from their size, but obviously not wanting to be recognized.

“This her?” one asked.

“Yeah, let’s make this quick,” said the one holding me.

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Chapter 13: Where Did You Go Tonight?

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They worked fast, tying my hands above my head to the overhead pipes with rope, I tried to struggle, but three against one was impossible. These guys knew what they were doing their movements were too practiced, too efficient.

“What do you want? I managed to gasp.

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A punch to my stomach answered me. The pain knocked the breath right out of my lungs.

“Shut up,” one of them said. “We’re just here to teach someone their place,”

What came next was methodical. Fists, knees, feet they took turns like they were working shifts. I hit down hard, refusing to scream. That would only encourage them.

Let me out! my wolf snarled from deep in my mind. I’ll rip their throats out!

No, I forced her back. Can’t shift. Not here.

The pain made everything blur at the edges. I could taste blood, feel my cheek swelling. Just when I thought I might pass out, a familiar

voice cut through the haze.

“Alright, that’s enough! Don’t kill her.”

Acacia.

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Chapter 14: I Warned You

Evelyn’s POV

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Acacia's heels clicked against the concrete floor like a countdown. She stopped right in front of me, those ice-blue eyes glittering with

satisfaction.

"Look at you now," she said, tilting her head. "Hanging there like a piece of meat."

I tried to lift my head, tasting blood from my split lip.

"Cut her down," Acacia ordered.

The three guys immediately loosened the ropes. My legs buckled and I hit the floor hard, pain shooting through my ribs.

Acacia crouched down and grabbed my chin, forcing me to look at her. "I warned you, didn't I? Told you to stay the hell away from them."

"I didn't-

"Shut up!" Her nails bit into my skin. "You think wearing pretty dresses and going to fancy dinners makes you one of them?"

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She stood up, looking down at me like trash. "Here's something you need to know those boys think you're cute right now, like a lost

puppy. But once they get bored? You're gone."

My wolf snarled inside my head, but I forced her down.

"And just so we're clear," her voice dropped to a whisper, "Magnus and Lucian? Already been there. Orion's next. We're meant to be

together, and some nobody like you isn't gonna change that."

One of the guys pulled out a small bottle. Silver powder.

My blood turned to ice.

"Next time it won't just be fists," Acacia's voice dropped to a whisper. "I'll make sure every inch of your skin gets a taste of this. Trust me,

that kind of pain makes you wish you were dead."

She leaned close to my ear. “And if you even think about telling anyone including your new bestie Nadia – I promise she’ll get it worse

than you just did. You know I can make it happen.”

With that, she turned and walked out. The three boys followed without a word. The storage room door slammed shut, leaving me alone in

the dark.

I don’t know how long I lay there on that cold floor. The sharp pain slowly dulled to a constant ache, but every breath still felt like

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Chapter 14: I Warned You

broken glass in my chest. My wolf was working overtime trying to heal me, but it was slow going.

We need to get out of here, she whispered.

I struggled to my feet, using the wall for support. In the dusty mirror hanging by the door, I looked like hell – split lip, bruised cheek,

blood on my shirt.

I cleaned up as best I could and pulled my hair forward to hide the worst of it. Then I carefully made my way out, grateful the hallways

were mostly empty.

The next few days, I went back to my old routine. Early to school, late to leave, avoiding the five boys. Corner seats in class, isolated

tables at lunch, distance during training.

Nadia noticed immediately.

“What’s wrong with you?” she asked during math class, voice low but urgent. “You’ve been acting weird all week.”

“Just tired,” I said, not meeting her eyes.

“Bullshit.” She frowned. “What happened? Is this about your dad?”

“No, really. I’m fine.”

Nadia’s POV

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Evie was lying through her teeth – I could tell. She’d been dodging everyone for days, including me. That happy girl from dinner last week had vanished, replaced by the shadow I first met.

What really worried me was how she moved. Like every step hurt. And the way she flinched whenever someone got too close.

Something was seriously wrong.

I decided to do something about it.

Evelyn’s POV

Saturday morning, I headed out for my usual run. It was still dark, Polaris quiet except for the occasional night bird. I took a different route this time, avoiding anywhere I might bump into anyone I knew.

When I jogged past Nadia’s house, I automatically sped up. I didn’t want to deal with more questions.

But as I passed, the front door flew open.

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Chapter 14: I Warned You

“I knew you’d come this way,” Nadia stood there, hands on her hips.

“Nadia, I.

“Get inside. Now.”

“I need to finish my run-”

“Evelyn.” She used my full name, which meant she was done playing around.

I followed her upstairs to her room. She locked the door behind us.

“Sit,” she pointed at the bed.

I sat, nervously picking at my sleeves.

“Now tell me what really happened,” she crouched in front of me. “And don’t say it’s nothing.”

“It’s really not-”

Before I could finish, she grabbed my sweatshirt and yanked it up. I was too slow to stop her.

“Oh my God!” The words came out like a sob.

I quickly pulled my shirt down, but too late. She’d seen the bruises, the old scars.

“Evie...” Her voice shook. “Who did this?”

“It’s okay, really,” I tried to calm her down, but tears streamed down her face.

“Okay? You call this okay?” She was almost yelling. “Your back looks like a war zone!”

Seeing her cry over my pain stirred something in my chest. When was the last time anyone cared?

“Don’t cry,” I reached out to wipe her tears. “I’m used to it.”

“Used to it?” She stared at me. “This is abuse! We have to tell someone-”

“No!” I grabbed her hands. “You can’t tell anyone.”

“Why not? Alpha Adam would help-”

“You don’t understand.” I took a shaky breath. “It was Acacia. She said if I told anyone, she’d do worse to you.”

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Chapter 14: 1 Warned You

Nadia went still. “Acacia did this?”

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“Yeah. I couldn’t look at her. She told me to stay away from the boys. Said they belong to her.”

“That’s insane!’ Nadia jumped up.

“Her dad runs the school board,” I explained. “She always gets away with stuff.”

“What about those guys? Do they know?”

I shook my head. “They believe in survival of the fittest. If I can’t protect myself, I don’t deserve help.”

Nadia looked shocked.

“Besides, I don’t want to be anyone’s burden.”

She was quiet for a long time. Then she took a deep breath.

“Okay,” she finally said. “I won’t tell anyone.”

Relief flooded through me.

“But there’s a condition.”

“What?”

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“Let me take care of you.” Her eyes were determined. “My mom’s a scientist – I’ve picked up medical stuff. I can help treat your wounds.”

“Nadia, you don’t have to-”

“This isn’t a request.” She cut me off. “Either you let me help, or I’m marching straight to those boys right now.”

Looking at her stubborn expression, I knew I was beaten.

‘Fine,’ I said reluctantly.

She went for her medical kit. “Take off your shirt. Let me see how bad this is.”

For the next thirty minutes, she carefully treated every injury. Her technique was gentle but professional.

“These old scars...” She lightly touched a mark. “Silver powder?”

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Chapter 15: Expectations Lead to Disappointment

Evelyn’s POV

I nodded.

Nadia took a shaky breath, her hands trembling as she cleaned another cut. Someday I’m gonna make Acacia pay for this.”

“Don’t.” I grabbed her wrist. “Promise me you won’t try anything. I can handle this, but if something happens to you because of me...”

She met my eyes, and I saw anger mixed with something deeper. “You deserve so much better than this, Evie.”

“Maybe. But this is what I’ve got.”

From that day on, Nadia became my secret lifeline. Every injury got treated in her room, every silver burn got her special ointment that

actually helped with the burning. She never asked questions when I showed up at her window, just pulled me inside and got to work.

The physical pain didn't go away, but knowing someone actually gave a damn? That made everything bearable.

My routine settled back into its old pattern – early runs, classes, training, home. The only difference was having a real friend who knew

the truth and stayed anyway. But I kept my distance from the five boys.

During training, I picked spots far from them. In class, I avoided eye contact. When we passed in hallways, I kept my head down and

walked fast.

Saturday cub training continued, and those guys started showing up regularly. They'd sit in the bleachers watching, sometimes coming

down to help. The kids loved them, especially Milo.

“Sister Evie!” One of the little girls tugged my hand. “Brother Milo says he'll teach us new moves next week!”

“That's great, sweetheart. Better practice hard then.”

I couldn't completely avoid them during training, but I kept conversations short. Just training stuff, nothing personal. I could feel their confusion, especially Elliot trying to corner me for private talks, but I always found excuses to slip away.

Spring was coming to Polaris. Silver Pines sprouted new growth, and the air smelled like fresh flowers. Everything seemed peaceful, if you ignored the occasional lessons' Acacia sent my way.

Orion's POV

'She's avoiding us, I stated the obvious.

The five of us sat at our usual table in Wolf's Corner, but the vibe was all wrong. Ever since that dinner, Evelyn had switched back to

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Chapter 15: Expectations Lead to Disappointment

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being a ghost the girl who lived in shadows.

“No shit, Lucian sighed. ‘Question is why.’”

“Maybe her dad?” Magnus suggested. “Didn’t Elliot say Beta Raymond went ballistic that night?”

Elliot shook his head. ‘Dad was pissed, but I handled it. He’s left her alone since then.’”

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“Then what’s her deal?” Milo asked, genuinely confused. “Did we screw something up?”

I replayed the past few weeks in my head. Evelyn’s change was too sudden from a girl finally showing who she really was, back to that

shadow deliberately making herself invisible. This wasn’t normal.

“Remember that day at the restaurant?” I said suddenly. “After Acacia showed up, she bolted.”

“You think...” Magnus’s eyes narrowed.

“I’m not sure,” I admitted, “but the timing’s pretty fucking suspicious.”

“Acacia.” Lucian’s voice went ice cold. “If that bitch actually did something...”

“We’ve got no proof,” I reminded them. And you know the rules. Unless there’s solid evidence, we can’t step in.”

That was the problem. We were stuck with this “survival of the fittest” bullshit. If Evelyn didn’t ask for help, we couldn’t interfere. Pack

tradition and all that crap we’d been fed since we were kids.

“This rule is stupid as hell,” Milo muttered.

“But it’s still the rule, Magnus said, frustrated.

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Silence fell over us. I knew we were all thinking the same thing we wanted to help her, but our own principles had us tied up in knots.

“By the way,” Elliot spoke up suddenly, “day after tomorrow is Evie’s birthday.”

“What?” All four of us whipped around to stare at him.

“Her sixteenth,” Elliot said.

“Why the hell didn’t you mention this before?” Milo demanded.

Elliot’s expression got complicated. “Because it’s also the anniversary of my mom’s death.”

Another silence, heavier this time.

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Chapter 15: Expectations Lead to Disappointment

“Has she... ever actually celebrated her birthday?” Magnus asked carefully.

“Never. Elliot’s voice was barely audible. “Dad won’t allow it. To him, that day’s only for mourning, not celebrating.”

“That’s fucked up, Lucian said bluntly.

“What if we threw her a party?” The words came out before I could stop them.

‘Are you serious? Magnus looked at me.

‘Hell yeah! Milo’s eyes lit up. “Think about it – she’s never had a real birthday. We could give her something special!*

“She won’t even look at us right now,” Lucian pointed out. “How’s she gonna come to a party we’re throwing?”

‘Simple we don’t tell her we’re throwing it, Milo said. “We get Nadia to help.”

Elliot looked thoughtful. “Maybe... that’s actually not a bad idea. At least she’d know someone remembered.”

I glanced around the table. Magnus was thinking it over, Lucian was already planning, Milo looked hopeful.

“Alright,” I nodded. “But we keep it low-key. Don’t want to freak her out.”

Evelyn’s POV

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I woke up at four AM sharp. Today was my birthday sixteen years old.

Happy birthday, my wolf whispered softly.

Thanks, I replied. At least you remember.

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I got up and pulled on my running gear. Outside was still pitch black, the whole world asleep. Perfect – nobody would remember this day,

so there’d be no awkwardness or disappointment.

I slipped out the front door, cold morning air hitting my face. I took a deep breath and started jogging. Today’s route deliberately avoided

all the usual spots – I didn’t want to run into anyone.

Why do this to yourself? my wolf asked.

Because expectations just lead to disappointment, I answered. I learned not to expect anything.

I remembered being five, thinking birthdays meant cake and presents like other kids. Instead I got dad’s rage and a day locked in my

room. I learned quick – expectations just set you up for disappointment.

The only exception was that tiny cake Elliot secretly made for me. Even though he got punished badly for it later, that small gesture still

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Chapter 15: Expectations Lead to Disappointment

warmed something in my chest.

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My steady running rhythm helped calm my thoughts. Today was Saturday I still had cub training later. Life had to go on. just numbers on a calendar.

Birthdays were

I avoided all the usual spots, taking back roads where I wouldn't run into anyone. When I passed Nadia's house, I noticed it was completely dark. Usually she was up by now, getting ready for our weekend run.

Probably overslept, I told myself, but disappointment still hit. I hadn't told her about my birthday, so I couldn't expect her to remember. Still, some stupid part of me hoped...

Don't be an idiot, I thought. You're not a kid anymore.

I ran longer than usual, watching the eastern sky turn orange-red. Another day starting, same as every other day.

When I got home, I expected the usual empty house. Dad would be at the pack house already - he always avoided this day. Elliot was probably still asleep or already gone too.

I took a deep breath and opened the front door.

"Surprise!"

I nearly jumped out of my skin.

Souls Bound By Promise — Timothy Nelson 16

Chapter 16: You Guys... Really Remember?

Evelyn's POV

I stared at the scene in front of me, completely frozen.

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My living room looked like something from a magazine. Streamers hung everywhere, silver and blue balloons bobbed near the ceiling, and

a massive banner stretched across the wall: "Happy Birthday, Evelyn." On the dining table sat this gorgeous three-layer cake with

flickering candles.

My throat went tight. Was this actually happening?

“Hey, don’t cry on us now.” Nadia rushed over and pulled me into a hug. “Happy birthday, best friend.”

That did it. I completely lost it, burying my face in her shoulder as tears came pouring out. How long had it been since anyone

remembered my birthday?

“It’s okay,” Nadia rubbed my back. “This is supposed to be a good thing.”

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When I finally looked up, I saw everyone standing there – Alpha Adam, Luna Isabella, Delta Griffin and Diana, Gamma Thomas, and all

five boys. They were all smiling at me like this was totally normal.

Elliot stepped forward with his arms open. I didn’t hesitate.

“Happy birthday, Evie,” he whispered. “Dad took off early for work, so we had the house to ourselves.”

“You guys actually remembered?” My voice came out all shaky.

“Course I remembered. You’re my sister.”

Luna Isabella handed me a tissue. “Wipe those tears, sweetie. Today’s for celebrating.”

I tried to pull myself together, looking around at all the details. There were photos of me with the cubs posted on the walls, the table was

loaded with food I actually liked, and I could smell those Silver Pine berry scones from Wolf’s Corner.

‘When did you set all this up?’

“We’ve been planning for days,” Milo said, looking proud of himself. “Wasn’t easy keeping it secret from you.”

“Alright, Alpha Adam said warmly, “let’s get this party started. Come make a wish.”

Everyone gathered around the cake. I closed my eyes and made the simplest wish I could think of just let this feeling last.

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Chapter 16: You Guys... Really Remember?

The second I blew out the candles, everyone started cheering. I cut the first piece and handed it to Nadia.

Thank you, I said quietly.

“Don’t be weird about it,” she laughed, taking the cake. “That’s what friends do.”

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We sat down to eat, and it was incredible. They’d made everything from scratch muffins, fruit salad, bacon, fresh orange juice. Way more

effort than anyone had ever put into anything for me.

“Present time!” Nadia announced, jumping up.

“There are presents?”

“Duh! What kind of birthday doesn’t have presents?” She dragged over a pile of wrapped boxes from the corner.

Milo went first, practically bouncing in his seat. “Hope you like it.”

I unwrapped a beautiful fountain pen – deep blue with my name engraved on it and a tiny wolf design.

“I noticed you always use that beat-up old pen for notes,” he explained. “This one’s custom-made. The ink refills itself.”

“Milo, this is way too expensive – ”

“Shut up, Tiny. Just say thanks.”

Elliot’s gift was a shoebox. Inside were brand new running shoes – silver and blue, obviously high-end stuff designed for distance running.

“You’re out there every morning,” he said. “Figured you deserved proper gear.”

I felt my eyes getting watery again. “Elliot...”

‘Don’t start crying again or you won’t be able to try them on later.’

Nadia gave me this incredibly soft hoodie in pale purple, with a little wolf embroidered on the chest,

“Now you won’t freeze during those crazy early runs,” she said. “Plus purple looks amazing on you.”

Finally, Magnus stepped forward holding a small velvet box.

“This is from all three of us,” he said, opening it.

Inside were the most delicate earrings I’d ever seen. Silver with pale blue stones that caught the light perfectly. Simple but elegant.

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Chapter 16 You Guys. Really Remember?

They re gorgeous. I whispered

“Let me help. Lucian said, stepping closer.

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I brushed my hair aside. His fingers were gentle as he put them on, barely touching my earlobes but somehow making my skin tingle

“Perfect,” he stepped back. “Like they were made for you.”

I walked to the mirror and stared at myself. The earrings sparkled by my face, and for once I actually looked... pretty.

“Thank you,” I turned back to everyone. All of you. This is the best birthday I’ve ever had.”

“Birthday’s not over yet, Luna Isabella smiled. “We’re just getting started.”

The rest of the morning flew by. We played games, shared stories, and just talked. Milo did his impressions that had everyone cracking up. Orion actually told us about being scared of the dark as a kid and sleeping with stuffed animals until he was ten.

“You? Scared of the dark?” I stared at him.

“Everyone’s got their thing,” he shrugged, but I caught him almost smiling.

Alpha Adam shared pack history stories while Delta Griffin told training anecdotes that had us all laughing. The whole room felt warm

and alive.

I sat there surrounded by all these people who actually cared about me, feeling something I'd never felt before like I belonged

somewhere.

"You haven't stopped smiling," Nadia whispered to me.

I realized she was right. I'd been grinning like an idiot the whole time.

"Thanks, Nadia. For making this happen."

"Wasn't just me," she nodded toward the boys. 'Especially the one who came up with the idea in the first place.'

I followed her gaze and caught Orion's eye. He immediately looked away, his ears turning red.

So it was him.

Sunlight streamed through the windows, making everything glow golden. Looking at everyone around me –

adults who actually gave a damn I felt this warmth spreading through my chest.

Maybe sixteen really would be different.

my friends, my brother, the

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Chapter 16: You Guys... Really Remember?

Right in the middle of all this happiness, Nadia suddenly froze like she'd remembered something important.

"Oh shit!" She jumped up and rushed over to the five boys, pulling them into a corner for some urgent whispering.

I watched them curiously. Whatever Nadia was saying made all their faces go serious, and they started nodding.

“We need to head out for a bit, Magnus announced suddenly.

‘We’ll be back soon,’ Lucian added.

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Before I could even ask what was going on, all six of them were rushing toward the door, leaving me sitting there completely confused.

Souls Bound By Promise — Timothy Nelson 17

Chapter 17: This Is All for You

Evelyn’s POV

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Watching them rush out like that, disappointment hit me harder than I expected. Of course. I still didn’t really belong in their circle, did

1? Maybe this whole party was just them being polite.

“Don’t overthink it, sweetheart.” Luna Isabella must’ve read my face because she came over and squeezed my shoulder. “They’ll be back.”

“Those boys are up to something,” Delta Griffin chuckled. “Probably planning another surprise.”

“Come on, let’s finish this cake,” Diana pulled me back to the table. “Can’t let all this deliciousness go to waste.”

The adults kept me distracted with stories and jokes, but I kept glancing at the door. Where had they gone in such a hurry?

“Evelyn,” Alpha Adam said, “Griffin tells me you’ve got real tactical skills.”

“I just... think things through, I guess.”

“Don’t sell yourself short,” Gamma Thomas jumped in. “That predator-prey game was brilliant strategy.”

Half an hour crawled by before the front door burst open again.

Magnus's POV

"Move it! Mall closes early today!" Nadia was practically dragging us behind her.

All six of us sprinted toward Twilight Mall. When she'd suddenly remembered Evelyn needed dresses for the mating ball, we'd all just

stared at her. But seeing how panicked she looked, we got it. This mattered.

"Split up,' I ordered once we hit the main strip. "Everyone grab one or two outfits. Keep it simple, elegant. Nothing that'll make her

uncomfortable."

"On it!" Everyone scattered.

I ducked into this upscale boutique, scanning through racks of dresses. Evelyn was tiny and needed something that'd show her off without making her self-conscious. Finally found this deep blue knee-length number with a classy neckline and subtle waist pleats.

"Gift wrap this," I told the clerk.

"Magnus? Shopping for women's clothes?"

I turned around. Acacia stood there with this weird gleam in her eyes.

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Chapter 17. This Is All for You

Just helping a friend, I said, moving toward the register.

"Wait! She grabbed my arm. 'Is this for me? I knew you still cared!"

I yanked free. "No."

Her voice went sharp. "Then who?"

"None of your business." I took the wrapped dress and headed for the exit.

But she followed. "It's for that freak Evelyn, isn't it? You all went to her birthday!"

I stopped and looked at her. "Yeah. So?"

"She doesn't deserve your attention!" Acacia was practically shrieking. "I should be the one

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“Enough.” I cut her off cold. ‘I’m telling you one last time, Acacia. There’s nothing between us. There never was. That night was a drunken

mistake.

Her face went white. A mistake?”

“Yeah. A mistake.” My voice stayed flat and final. “And quit messing with Evelyn. She’s our friend. Keep targeting her and you’ll deal with

me.”

I didn’t wait for an answer. Just walked away.

Evelyn’s POV

The door opened and all six of them piled in, arms full of shopping bags.

“Surprise round two!” Nadia bounced toward me. “Happy birthday!”

“What’s all this?’ I stared at the bags.

“Clothes! For you!” Her eyes were sparkling. I just remembered the mating ball’s coming up and you need gorgeous dresses. But the mall

was about to close, so I had to drag everyone along.”

“Sorry we bailed on you,’ she looked guilty. ‘Should’ve explained. I just got so worried about finding you something perfect...”

My eyes started watering again. They’d left to buy me clothes.

‘No more crying!” Milo declared. “Tiny’s hit her tear limit for today!”

Everyone laughed.

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Chapter 17 This Is All for You

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“Okay, fashion show time! Nadia pulled me to the couch and started unpacking. Let’s see what we’ve g

First up was Elliot's choice a conservative black pantsuit that looked like funeral attire.

Nadia held it up and sighed. "Elliot, this is for a ball, not a job interview."

"I thought... safer was better," he mumbled.

Next came Milo's contribution a bright red mini dress that barely covered anything, paired with an off-shoulder top.

"Milo!" I gasped. "This is way too..."

"Sexy? Hot? Perfect?" He grinned proudly.

"Revealing! Absolutely not!" Elliot immediately protested.

The other outfits each had their own personality. Lucian had picked an elegant silver gown, Orion chose this sharp suit-style dress, and

Magnus's was that gorgeous blue number.

"They're all beautiful," I said honestly. "Thank you."

"Don't just stand there try them on!" Nadia jumped up. "I'll help.

"Oh, she paused, "we ran into that bitch while shopping.

My stomach dropped. "Acacia?"

"Yeah," Milo rolled his eyes. "She thought we were buying stuff for her. Delusional much?"

"What happened?" I asked carefully.

"We bought our stuff and left, Lucian shrugged. "Who's got time for her drama?*

"She looked pissed," Orion added, then looked directly at me. "But that doesn't matter. What matters is this is all for you."

Something fluttered in my chest at his intense stare. They really did see me as a friend.

"Enough talking!" Nadia hauled me up. "Time for the fashion show! Boys, get your cameras ready!"

"Cameras?" My eyes went wide.

"Obviously! This moment needs to be documented!"

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Chapter 17: This Is All for You

She dragged me to my room and carefully helped me change, making sure every scar stayed hidden under the fabric.

“First up – Elliot’s choice.” She held up the black suit.

Looking at myself in the mirror, I started laughing. “I look like I’m interviewing for an office job.”

“Very Elliot-style,” Nadia giggled. “Maximum coverage, minimum risk.”

The red dress was next. When I put it on, Nadia gasped. “Damn, you’ve got amazing legs!”

“It’s so short...” I tugged at the hem.

“But effective. Shows off what you usually hide.”

We went through each outfit. Every piece reflected its chooser – Lucian’s elegant taste, Orion’s sharp eye, Magnus’s thoughtful

consideration.

When I slipped into Magnus’s blue dress, Nadia actually clapped. “That’s it! Perfect!”

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She was right. This dress fit like it was made for me. The length hit just right classy but not boring. The color made my eyes pop and my

skin glow. Simple but stunning.

“Let me fix your hair,” Nadia worked quickly, adding light makeup. “Ready?”

I took a deep breath. “I think so.”

“Then let’s go blow their minds,” she winked.

We walked out hand in hand. The second I appeared in the living room doorway, all conversation died.

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 -

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

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Chapter 18: There Are More Surprises Tonight

Evelyn's POV

The whole room went dead quiet when I stepped into the doorway. Every single person was staring at me, and I fought the urge to bolt

back to my bedroom. Nadia kept a firm grip on my arm, basically holding me in place.

“Holy shit... Milo breathed out first.

“You look...” Lucian started, then just stopped talking entirely.

“Incredible,” Magnus finished, his voice rougher than usual.

Orion didn't say anything at all, but the way he was looking at me made my face burn. Elliot had this proud big brother expression going

“Turn around, sweetie,” Luna Isabella said gently. “Let us see the whole thing.”

I did a slow spin, feeling the blue fabric swirl around my legs. When I faced forward again, Luna Isabella was whispering something to

Alpha Adam that made him chuckle.

“Send me that video later,” she laughed. “I've never seen these boys look so stunned.”

“Mom! All three triplets protested at once, which got everyone cracking up.

“Magnus's got good taste,” Diana nodded approvingly. “That dress was made for you.”

“Thanks,” I mumbled, staring at my feet.

Alpha Adam checked his watch. “Raymond should be heading home soon. Don’t think he’d want to walk into this scene.”

The mention of Dad killed the mood instantly. Everyone tensed up because they all knew how he felt about me getting any kind of

attention.

‘Don’t sweat it, Magnus said, reading my face. “We set up more stuff at the pack house anyway.”

‘More surprises?’ I blinked at him.

“Obviously, Lucian grinned. “The party’s just getting started.”

“Alright, pack it up,” Luna Isabella started directing traffic. “Boys, go get the cars running.”

Everyone jumped into action. Gifts got stuffed into bags, leftover cake went into boxes, decorations came down. Watching all these people

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Chapter 18 There Are More Surprises Tonight

work together just for me made my chest tight with gratitude.

Elliot appeared beside me. “Just enjoy tonight, okay? You deserve this.”

*Elliot.

‘Nope.’ He held up a finger. “Today’s your day. No arguing.”

Three cars were waiting outside when we walked out – Alpha Adam’s sedan, Delta Griffin’s truck, and the triplets massive SUV that I’d

seen around but never been inside.

“You’re with us,” Orion said, opening the back door.

The interior was even nicer than I’d expected. Soft leather seats, plenty of space, and that familiar scent of silver pine. I ended up

sandwiched between Orion and Elliot in the middle row, with Nadia, Milo, and Lucian crammed into the back.

“Comfortable?” Orion asked, his voice softer than usual.

I nodded, trying not to think about how close we were sitting.

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The drive to the pack house was smooth. Outside the windows, the sunset painted everything orange and pink. I snuck glances around the

car – everything was high-end but tasteful, showing exactly what kind of world these guys lived in.

This is their world, I thought. Do I actually belong here?

“What’s going through your head?” Orion asked quietly.

“Nothing much,” I shook my head. “Just feels like a dream.”

“It’s not a dream,” he said seriously. “This is what you deserve.”

His words made my heart skip. I turned to look out the window, trying to get my emotions under control.

“We’re here!” Magnus announced.

When we pulled up to the pack house, I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. The entire backyard looked like something from a fairy tale. String lights wrapped around every tree branch, twinkling in the gathering dusk. Colorful streamers and balloons floated everywhere.

In the center of the yard, several grills were ready to go, with long tables loaded with food. A huge banner stretched between two silver pines: ‘Happy Birthday Evelyn! May Your Sixteenth Year Be Magical!’

“Oh my God...” I covered my mouth.

“Like it? Lucian asked hopefully.

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Chapter 18 There Are More Surprises Tonight

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This is too much.” My voice cracked. “When did you guys do all this?”

“We’ve been planning for days, Milo said proudly. “The triplets came up with most of it we just helped execute.”

I turned to look at the three brothers, who all suddenly found their shoes very interesting.

“Thank you,” I said, meaning every word. “All of you.”

“Quit standing around, Alpha Adam was already at the grill. “Let’s get this party started!”

What happened next felt like the best kind of dream. Alpha Adam took charge of the barbecue, flipping meat like a pro. Luna Isabella and

Diana handled salads and sides while the boys set up tables and chairs.

“Can I help?” I tried to join in.

“Today you’re the guest of honor, Nadia pulled me back. “Your job is to sit there and look pretty.”

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She pointed to what was obviously the “birthday throne a chair decorated with ribbons and flowers. I had to sit there and watch

everyone work, which felt weird but also amazing. Nobody had ever made this kind of fuss over me before.

Orion dropped into the chair next to mine. “Penny for your thoughts?”

“Trying to figure out what I did to deserve all this,” I said quietly.

“Don’t talk like that.” His voice got intense. “You deserve everything good, Evie. We were just too stupid to see it before.”

I looked at him in surprise. This was the most direct Orion had ever been about... well, anything.

“The past is the past,” I said. “What matters is right now.”

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He smiled an actual, real smile. “Yeah. Right now, and whatever comes next.”

“Dinner’s ready!” Alpha Adam called out.

Everyone gathered around the long table, which was loaded with grilled meat, roasted vegetables, salads, and drinks. Under the warm

lights, everyone looked happy and relaxed.

Alpha Adam raised his glass. “Before we dig in, let’s toast our birthday girl one more time. Evelyn, may your life shine as bright as

tonight’s stars.”

“Happy birthday!” everyone chorused.

I lifted my juice glass, my heart full. “Thank you, everyone. This is the best birthday I’ve ever had.”

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Chapter 18 There Are More Surprises Tonight

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Disney was peext Steps got shared, jokes few around the table, and someone even started singing. For the first time in my life, I felt

A 1 N Nagtwee Me I was part of a real famih

the wax Nagad vare, hele not done yet.

Now eves weet wach

We grinned trees). The best surprises always come last.

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 –

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

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Chapter 19: Let's Prepare the Final Surprise

Lucian's POV

Watching Evelyn's face light up, something twisted tight in my chest. She sat there under the string lights, that blue dress catching the glow, our earrings glinting at her ears. She looked... damn.

"Quit staring," Orion muttered next to me.

"You're doing it too," I shot back, catching his gaze locked on her.

"At least I'm not being obvious about it," he said.

So

Magnus dropped into the chair beside us. "Could you two be any more pathetic? Elliot's already giving us the death glare."

Sure enough, Elliot had that whole protective brother thing going strong. But honestly? I didn't give a shit. Seeing Evie actually happy for

once made it worth whatever attitude he wanted to throw around.

"Lucian!" Evie's voice cut through my thoughts. "Your steak's burning!"

I bolted to the grill. The meat was definitely getting crispy around the edges.

"Smooth move, Romeo," Milo laughed.

"Shut it." I flipped the steak, trying to save what I could.

"For real though," Milo's voice got serious, "I've never seen her like this. She used to just... disappear into corners.*"

"Yeah." The guilt hit hard when I thought about how we'd basically ignored her existence for years.

"But things are different now," Milo clapped my shoulder, "We've got her back, right?"

"Damn right we do."

Evelyn's POV

After dinner, everyone started up different games. Truth or dare got intense fast – Elliot had to admit he once ate an entire jar of honey as a kid and got chased by a swarm of bees. Milo tried showing off his “amazing” spoon-balancing skills and face-planted spectacularly.

“So what do you guys actually want to do with your lives?” Nadia asked, leaning into Milo. Those two were getting cozy tonight.

“Take over Alpha duties,” Magnus said without missing a beat. “Make the pack stronger.”

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Chapter 19 Let's Prepare the Final Surprise

I want to change some of the bullshit rules we follow Orim said catching eve of quart Four tradem

Like what? Delta Griffin looked interested

Like this whole survival of the fittest crap we keep preaching Orim planted my way. Strong wishes should pre

ignore them when they're getting torn apart.”

Silence dropped over the group. I stared at him, shocked he'd actually said it out hovudi.

“Well put,” Alpha Adam nodded. Real leaders understand when to show

“What about you, Evie?” Nadia turned to me. What's your dream?”

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I hesitated. Should I tell them the truth? That I used to fantasize about running far away from here?

“I want to be a warrior,” I finally said. “Not to prove anything to anyone. Just to protect the people I actually give a damn about.”

“You already are one,” Griffin said firmly. The second you started looking out for those cubs, you became a rea

His words hit something deep in my chest. I thought about the old me – that girl who desperately wanted to escape this place. But now

Now I've got reasons to stay, I realized. People worth protecting.

“Anything else?” Lucian pressed. “Besides the warrior thing.”

I thought about it. “I want to be able to run free someday. Without hiding or pretending to be someone I'm not.”

“You will,” Orion's voice was quiet but certain. “I promise you that.”

The night deepened, stars popping out one by one. The party buzz was still going strong, but exhaustion was starting to creep in today

had been a marathon of emotions.

“Getting tired?” Elliot asked.

“A little, I admitted.

“Perfect timing for the final surprise, Magnus stood up.

Before I could react, Lucian scooped me up in his arms.

“Lucian!” I yelled, automatically wrapping my arms around his neck.

“Don't fight it, little one,” he grinned. “Just trust us.”

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Chapter 19 Let's Prepare the Final Surprise

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The others got to their feet, wearing identical mysterious smiles. Under the knowing looks from the adults, the boys started carrying me

toward the back of the yard.

Nadia linked arms with Milo as they followed, moonlight making her look almost ethereal.

We followed a stone path lined with silver pines swaying in the night breeze. The walkway was embedded with moonstones that gave off this soft silver-blue glow, like something out of a fairy tale.

“Where are we going?” I demanded.

“Patience,” Orion said, leading the way.

Soon I heard water running. When we rounded the last corner, my breath caught.

A circular marble fountain sat in the clearing, with this incredible wolf sculpture in the center. Water poured from its mouth, catching starlight like scattered diamonds. Night-blooming flowers surrounded the whole thing, their scent hanging sweet in the air.

“Holy shit...” I whispered.

Lucian set me down but kept his hands on my waist, steadying me.

“This is Luna Isabella’s secret fountain,” Magnus explained. “Legend says birthday wishes made here actually come true.”

“Especially the important ones,” Milo added.

I walked to the fountain’s edge, staring at the clear water reflecting the stars above. It was shallow, maybe ankle-deep, with smooth white

stones covering the bottom.

“Make a wish,” Orion held out a silver coin.

I took it, closing my eyes. This time my wish was crystal clear – I wanted to keep these people, protect this happiness.

The coin hit the water with a soft splash, sending ripples across the surface.

“One more surprise,” Magnus said cryptically. “Come on.”

We circled the fountain and followed another path. Warm steam started hitting my face, and then I saw it a natural hot spring pool

surrounded by moonflowers and silver pines.

The water glowed pale blue in the moonlight, steam rising like ghostly veils. Smooth round stones lined the pool’s edge, dotted with glowing moonstones that made everything look magical but cozy at the same time.

“A hot spring?” I looked at them in surprise.

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Chapter 19: Let's Prepare the Final Surprise

“Birthday tradition, Lucian explained, already kicking off his shoes. “You’ve got to spend midnight in the hot spring before the new day

officially starts.”

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“We didn’t bring swimsuits...” I pointed out.

“Just go in with clothes on,” Orion was already stepping into the water. “They’ll dry.”

The boys got in first, the warm water immediately surrounding them. Nadia grabbed my hand. “Come on, trust me. This is going to be

incredible.”

I carefully walked down the stone steps, warm spring water gradually covering my ankles, then my calves, then my knees. The heat chased

away the night’s chill instantly, and I couldn’t help sighing with relief.

“Feels good, right?” Milo asked with a grin.

I nodded, finding a spot to sit. The depth was perfect when sitting, the water came up to my chest. My dress floated around me, but

somehow I didn’t care.

We formed a loose circle, everyone relaxing into the spring’s warmth. Starlight scattered across the water’s surface in tiny points of light.

Elliot moved closer. “Evie, as your brother, I’m sorry I wasn’t there for you before. All those years I should’ve had your back. But I promise

I’m going to make up for lost time – not just this year, but every year after.”

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 -

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

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Chapter 20: Too Late!

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Evelyn's POV

The determination in Elliot's eyes was something I'd never seen before. It made it impossible to doubt he meant every word. Sitting here

in the warm spring water, surrounded by actual friends and laughter, I let myself believe that maybe things really could be different.

Maybe I'd finally found where I belonged.

"Don't overthink it," Elliot said, gently patting my head. "Just enjoy this."

I nodded and settled back into the perfect temperature. The hot spring hit just right when I sat down, the water came up to my chest.

My dress floated around me, but honestly, I didn't care. The heat chased away the night chill, and everything felt right.

The triplets had all moved closer without me really noticing. Magnus sat on my right, his broad shoulder almost touching mine. Lucian

was on my left, making casual conversation. Orion sat across from me, not saying much but catching my eye every now and then.

Elliot had climbed out and was perched on the stone edge with some leftover grilled meat and a glass of wine, looking totally relaxed.

Check those two out, Lucian said quietly, nodding toward something behind me.

I turned and couldn't help grinning. Milo and Nadia were sitting close together a little ways off, with Milo whispering something in her

ear that made her giggle.

"They're moving fast," Magnus observed. "Yesterday they were just messing with each other, and now they're..."

"It's called love at first sight," I said. "Nadia told me she thought Milo was special the second she saw him."

"Same with Milo, Orion added - which was rare for him. "He was asking about Nadia all last night."

Watching them together made my chest warm up. Nadia deserved to be treated like this. And Milo, for all his joking around, got serious

when it mattered.

"Better watch out, Milo," Elliot called from the edge. "Nadia's stepdad's a scientist. Piss him off and he might invent some weird shit to

use on you.'

"Elliot!" I scolded, but everyone cracked up.

Time slipped by in warmth and easy conversation. We talked about everything - training disasters, embarrassing childhood stories, future plans. The guys made harmless jokes, and for once I found myself naturally joining in instead of staying quiet.

But exhaustion was creeping in. Today had been a marathon morning training, birthday surprises, dinner, and everything else. The hot spring's heat made my eyelids heavy.

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Chapter 20 Too Late!

"Getting sleepy? Magnus noticed me yawning.

A little..." I rubbed my eyes, trying to stay alert.

"Long day, Lucian said. 'Want to head back?'"

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I shook my head, not wanting to break this perfect moment. But another yawn betrayed me, bringing tears to my eyes.

“Alright, birthday girl needs to go home,” Elliot set down his glass and stood. “Come on.”

‘I can walk myself,’ I protested as he approached.

But he was already leaning down, scooping me up before I could react. “You’re half asleep. What if you trip?”

“Elliot! Put me down!” I struggled, my wet clothes clinging uncomfortably.

“Wait, Magnus stood too. “Why doesn’t Evie just stay here tonight? We’ve got guest rooms.”

“Yeah,” Lucian agreed. “Save us the drive.”

“And it’s the weekend,” Orion added. “No school tomorrow.”

“Really, I don’t need to Elliot, put me down!” My struggle wasn’t about not wanting to stay. It was because my soaked shit was sticking to my back, and if Elliot shifted his grip, he might feel the wounds underneath. Those bruises were extra tender after soaking in hot

water.

“Stop squirming, Elliot adjusted his hold to get a better grip.

His palm pressed against my back.

I couldn’t stop the sharp intake of breath that escaped.

Elliot went rigid. His hand explored lightly through the wet fabric, feeling the raised, uneven tissue beneath

“What the hell... his voice shook.

I knew I was caught. My shirt had ridden up during the struggle, exposing most of my back.

“Shit! What is that?!” Elliot’s voice cracked with shock and rage.

He carefully set me on the stone edge, then moved behind me. I heard his breath catch, followed by deathly slemmez.

Evie, what are those marks? His voice trembled, blue eyes starting to flicker with dangerous silver.

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Chapter 20: Too Late!

The others were climbing out now, water splashing as they saw it the crisscrossing whip marks, pink scars from silver powder burns, bruises around my ribs that hadn't fully faded.

"It's nothing. Just scrapes from training." I yanked my shirt down, voice pitched too high.

"Bullshit." Orion's tone went deadly quiet. "Those are silver powder burns."

"Really, it's not a big deal. Just some accidents -

"Evie," Milo's voice was rarely this serious. "Nobody in group training could hurt you like this except us or the senior warriors. And these aren't normal injuries."

"Who did this?" Elliot was practically growling. "Tell me and I'll fucking destroy them."

Seeing their angry faces, something inside me finally exploded.

"No!" I shouted. "You don't get to care about this now!"

They all froze.

"These scars, this pain - it's been my life for years. And all of you, every single one, never even noticed I existed until today!"

I pointed at Elliot. "You're my brother. You should've been the first to see. But when's the last time you actually looked at me?"

"I..." Elliot had nothing.

"You were all too busy with your own shit. Future leader training, dating, whatever - just never had time to notice my pain. Now suddenly, because I'm part of your little group, you want to play hero? Too fucking late!"

“Evie, we didn’t know...” Magnus tried.

“Exactly! You didn’t know because you never really looked.” My voice cracked. “Delta Griffin saw it. Luna Isabella saw it. But they respected my choice. Nadia figured it out on day one, and she respected my decision too.”

“Wait, Nadia knew?” Milo turned to her.

“Yes, I knew,” Nadia said firmly. “But I respected Evie’s choice.”

“This isn’t just about me!” Tears were streaming now. “You preach ‘survival of the fittest’ all the damn time, turning blind eyes to weak kids getting torn apart. Now, just because the victim is me, you want to step up? Too late!”

“I don’t need your pity or your protection. I’ve always handled my own shit, and I’ll keep doing it.”

I turned and ran, ignoring their shouts behind me. Tears blurred everything, but I didn’t stop.

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Chapter 20: Too Late!

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Tonight was supposed to be perfect, but reality had shattered it like always. I couldn’t bear to see their faces.

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I ran through Luna Isabella’s garden, along the moonstone path toward home. Cold wind cut through my wet clothes, making me shiver. But this chill was nothing compared to the ice in my chest.

I should’ve known this happiness wouldn’t last. Beautiful things always get broken by the truth.