

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 -

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

111

Chapter 111: Why Is There Always Something Blocking This Process?

Evelyn's POV

77%

“That’s impossible! Aria bolted upright, eyes wide. ‘I’ve seen how Alistair acts with you the forehead kisses, holding your hand. I thought you two had something before he met Rowan, and you stepped back when he found his mate.

“God, no, I shook my head. ‘We’re just friends. He does that stuff to ward off girl who won’t take a hint. The triplets do the same things, but to them, I’m basically their little sister.”

The conversation made my mind wander. Should I find someone to practice with before meeting my mate? I didn’t want to seem clueless, but I also didn’t want to give away something that should be special. I buried my face in my hand groaning.

“This whole thing is a mess,’ I muttered. “I don’t want to hook up with someone who isn’t my mate, but what if my inexperience drives him away? Or what if having experience makes him reject me? Either way, I lose.” My breathing quickened as anxiety crept in.

“Whoa, slow down,” Aria said, sitting beside me with a gentle hand on my shoulder. “First off, guys don’t overthink this stuff like you are. They’re mostly running on instinct and hormones – always using that ‘biological need’ BS as an excuse. And if your mate hasn’t saved himself for you, he’s got zero right to

judge.”

Her voice softened. “If it doesn’t feel right, then don’t do it. Trust your gut and your wolf. Your perception skills are off the charts – use them for yourself

She stood up, stretching. “Anyway, let’s finish this homework and start packing. I’m dying to get back to the training center and finally get our Sentinel mark. No wonder Taric and Shepherd were so impatient – we’re crawling along while there’s clearly major werewolf activity happening here.”

Aria disappeared into the bathroom, emerging ten minutes later ready for bed, still glued to her phone, thumbs flying across the screen.

“Who’re you texting like the world’s ending?” I asked.

“Looking up those guys from dinner,” she replied without looking up. “I was so focused on surveillance I didn’t catch their names. Ember says they’re students too, and one was asking if we’re a couple.” She made a face. “Like, romantically. You’re gorgeous and all, but girls aren’t my thing.”

She laughed, continuing, “But seriously, I missed basic details because I was so mission-focused. We definitely need more training – even during ops, incomplete observation can bite you in the ass.”

Roland and Neo,” I said, eyes still on my laptop.

“What?”

“Their names. Roland and Neo. Sophomores, football team though I’m not sure they actually play or just say they do. Roland’s in finance, Neo’s in sports medicine.”

When I glanced up, Aria was staring at me, mouth slightly open.

“What?” I asked.

“You barely said two words all night, and you picked up all that?”

“Just because I don’t talk doesn’t mean I’m not listening,” I smirked. “Lily was listening so hard she practically had a neon sign over her head, but she wasn’t paying attention to their answers.” I shook my head. “She was just trying to get tired. It did help with our mission, though. What did you mean about them asking if we were together?”

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Chapter 111: Why Is There Always Something Blocking This Process?

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Exactly what you think, she snorted. They wanted to know if we'd be up for a reesome or foursome. And if one of us wasn't into it, Ember even offered to step in and make it a party."

I couldn't help laughing at the absurdity. Who asks that within five minutes of meeting someone?"

"Judge all you want,' Aria shrugged, "but I think Lily would be perfect for them. least to find out if they're worth the time. I'd want to know if they're actually interesting beyond their pickup lines."

The weather turned brutal. No snow yet, but morning frost clung stubbornly to everything, and the wind had a vicious bite.

"Just a few more days!" Aria bounced around excitedly. "I seriously can't wait!" He imitation of those college girls was adorable, though I couldn't understand their obsession with nail polish or store sales. But the excitement about going home? That I got.

Home. The word stirred something strange in me. The training center had become home. The castle was home. Even the residence in Polaris City felt like home now. But would they still feel the same after we returned? Less than a year with the Sentinels had changed me profoundly.

I missed Sophia, Mark, and Cyrus. They'd accepted me instantly, knowing almost nothing about me then. They knew the shortened version about my scars – even Aria had asked after seeing them whenever Luna Selena and Sebastian dressed me up. They knew I'd been attacked and drugged before arriving. But they never saw me as weak – just a survivor who'd made it through hell. I was starting to believe them, feeling stronger despite my small size.

The front door suddenly banged open, jolting me from my thoughts as Conrad stomped in, covered in snow.

"What the hell?" Aria jumped up.

"Blizzard's coming," Conrad said, shaking ice from his hair and boots. "Felt it days ago but didn't expect this intensity. Team's headed back to base in case the storm spreads south. I've got supplies, but we need to prepare for being stuck here a while."

"No way!" Aria's fists clenched tight. "We're supposed to meet the elder council this weekend for our Sentinel marks! Why is something always blocking this? It's like some force doesn't want us completing the ritual!"

She paced the room, face twisted with frustration. I felt it too – we both desperately wanted those marks. Conrad's news hit like a bucket of ice water.

“Maybe the timing isn’t right yet,’ Conrad said while sorting supplies, his voice showing unusual thoughtfulness. “Maybe since Arias already eighteen, her mate might be nearby, and the Goddess is preventing the marking to protect that connection. Or simpler maybe She’s warning those who treat you like chess pieces that you’re worth more than they realize.”

He took a deep breath, moving to the kitchen to check our food stores. He’d said more in those few sentences than he typically did in a day, clearly

frustrated by the situation too.

From the start, Conrad had insisted we shouldn’t be on this high-risk mission. I tried discussing it with him several times, but he only ever said it was a “gut feeling. Still, his protectiveness toward us was obvious, perfectly aligned with whatever premonition had him so worried.

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Chapter 112: Come Get Me When You’re Ready

X 77%

Evelyn’s POV

“He doesn’t hover over Celine like this, I muttered to Aria. “She’s barely older than you, also without a mate, but got her mark with zero drama. What’s his

deal with us?

I watched Conrad rummaging through kitchen cabinets, his broad back turned to s. “He’s been against this mission from day one but never gives a straight answer why. If it’s an age thing, you’re eighteen now. If it’s experience, we’ve proven ourselves these past months. So what’s really bugging him?”

“Maybe it’s your freakishly early wolf awakening?” Aria suggested.

I shook my head. “Seriously, I don’t know –

Conrad poked his head out from the kitchen. “If this blizzard hits hard, we need to prepare. Power might go out. We can store food in the yard bins if needed. There’s firewood in the shed and more outside. Most important thing is keeping the pipes from freezing.”

With that, he disappeared into his room – his usual routine of giving us space when he wasn’t actively babysitting us. Outside this house, though, he was our constant shadow.

“But seriously,” Aria flopped onto her bed, ‘missing our friends and training sucks but the mark thing is what’s killing me. We need those marks. What’s the point of this mission if we can’t even be tracked in an emergency?”

She sat up, eyes flashing. “Isn’t the whole plan for one of us to get snatched? Then the Sentinels follow us to their hideout. But nobody can solve this untraceable scent problem. Shouldn’t that be our main focus?”

I nodded. We’d been relying so heavily on our natural abilities that we’d neglected considering situations where those abilities might be useless. This was exactly what I’d emphasized when training cubs in Polaris City before their wolves awakened.

“Why don’t they teach Sentinels to track without scent?” I wondered aloud. “Human detectives find people without super-smell. We should learn both methods instead of depending on just one.”

“That’s advanced training,” Conrad called from his room. “You’re newcomers. The standard curriculum covers that after your first year, during wilderness

survival and tracking.”

“This isn’t about us tracking alone,” I said, setting my laptop aside. “Our job is being bait. What’s stopping fully-trained Sentinels from finding us if we get

taken?”

Conrad emerged from his room, his expression unexpectedly relaxed. “Jett’s sending someone. She agrees with you – this has dragged on too long. Once the storm passes, they’ll come give you temporary marks. We’ll skip the full two-day remony.”

“Two days?” Aria’s eyes widened. “The ritual takes that long?”

“Yep. Conrad rubbed his temples. Most of it’s just formality. Each elder makes peech welcoming you. There’s a fancy dinner, more speeches, and reflection time where you sit

alone for hours thinking about your training, accepting limitations on potential mate connections, pledging loyalty to the Alpha King, all that stuff.

He rolled his eyes. "It's not totally meaningless, but you should've thought about all that stuff before deciding to become Sentinels. Then every elder gives individual blessings – takes forever and finally a witch and Alpha King mark you. Hurts like hell, but that's necessary. The magic needs to be powerful enough to work."

"What exactly does the mark do?" I asked, genuinely curious.

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Chapter 112: Come Get Me When You're Ready

"Mainly mental communication, Conrad explained. You can connect with others during shifts and makes your scent more human-like, Other Sentinels can sense out, we can track you. It's saved a lot of lives.

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ntinels across any distance, even oceans. It also keeps your clothes intact our location, so we can find you if you're in danger. Even if you're knocked

Aria and I exchanged surprised looks. "Wait, it diminishes scent?" she asked. "The why are we trying to figure out scent elimination? Seems redundant."

"It only reduces scent, doesn't eliminate it," Conrad clarified. "Every living thing has a scent. It's how we tell friend from foe, predator from prey, poison

from food."

He leaned against the wall, his expression darkening. "What this organization do is completely erase scent trails not just their own, but their victims too. Like a magic eraser wiping away all evidence. It's unnatural and dangerous. The fact such an ability exists is troubling."

"How long will this blizzard last?" I asked, mentally calculating when we might finally get our marks and return to training.

"Hard to say, Conrad shrugged. "Weather service says three to five days, but I'm betting longer."

For five straight days, snow kept falling. Reports said accumulation had passed two feet unheard of this time of year. The snow itself didn't bother us werewolves much. Our

naturally higher body temperature meant cold wasn't a problem, but we still had to pretend to be affected like normal humans to

maintain our cover.

Despite being trapped indoors, we helped nearby residents when possible. Conrad frequently shoveled sidewalks and driveways. Something in him couldn't resist helping others he seemed born to protect and care for people. Aria and I joined in too, though less actively. At least it passed the time in what would've been mind-numbing boredom.

On the morning of the sixth day, the doorbell broke our cabin fever silence. Aria and I leapt up simultaneously, racing and shoving each other toward the door, laughing as we squeezed through together to find a stern-faced stranger standing there, her sharp eyes assessing us.

"I'm looking for Conrad the Sentinel," she said, her voice low and raspy like an old storyteller's. "Don't block the doorway - it's freezing out here, and this trip was unpleasant enough."

We stepped aside immediately, neither wanting to anger the person who might finally mark us. She strode past us into the living room, surveying the space.

The room was simply furnished - pale yellow walls and basic furniture with zero personality, typical of rental properties. The open floor plan connecting living room, dining area, and kitchen had been Conrad's requirement his massive frame needed space to maneuver.

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This place needs cleaning, the woman announced to nobody in particular, then turned. Fetch them, but be careful not to disturb the contents. I need a quiet room

pointed toward the basement door. "I have several bags and boxes in my room. Discuss matters with Conrad. Come get me when you're ready."

Without introducing herself, she headed upstairs with surprising lightness, leaving us staring at each other in confusion.

"What the hell? Aria whispered, eyes wide.

"No idea, but let's do what she says, I replied cautiously. I'm not giving her any excuse to bail on marking us. We've waited long enough."

"Damn straight," Aria nodded firmly, and together we headed to the basement to hepate whatever space this mysterious woman needed for the ritual we'd been desperately waiting for.

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Chapter 113: You Are More Powerful Than You Realize

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Evelyn's POV

Aria and I spent hours clearing space in the basement. After sweeping away cobwebs and moving dusty crates, I gave the floor one final check to make sure nothing would interfere with the ritual.

“This better be good enough,” Aria said, wiping dust from her hands. “I don’t get why we’re doing this in a creepy basement instead of upstairs like normal

people. Shouldn’t a marking ceremony be more... I don’t know, dignified?”

“Maybe magic works better underground,” I said. “Or she just needs privacy. As long as we get marked, I don’t really care where it happens.

We bundled up and headed outside to the witch’s car. The vehicle was packed with bulging canvas bags that smelled like herbs and several heavy plastic

containers.

“Think all this stuff is just for the ritual?” Aria asked as we hauled the items toward the house.

Before I could answer, I felt the hair on my neck stand up. I spun around to find the witch standing right behind us, her face expressionless. Neither of us

had heard her approach.

“Good,” she nodded at our startled reactions. “Don’t be surprised. I used a spell of stillness. Your senses cannot detect me.”

Aria’s voice filled my head. She sounds like she walked straight out of a fantasy movie.

Maybe we should just ask her directly, I replied, though I bet she can hear us anyway

“Very perceptive,” the witch said, looking straight at me. “You’re both special, and both crucial. Conrad will guard the entrance while we work. The spell will leave you weakened and vulnerable. Even without the elders’ formalities, this process takes time.”

She never told us her name. Instead, she silently handed us items from her containers, directing us to place them in specific spots around the basement. She constantly checked a copper compass and old parchment, ensuring everything was positioned exactly right.

Soon the basement was filled with candles of various sizes and colors. Some looked handmade with plant fragments and crystals embedded in the wax. Some were clearly used before, while others were brand new.

Following her instructions, we drew a perfect circle on the floor using grayish-white powder that smelled like minerals and herbs. In the center, she placed a copper tripod holding a black stone bowl already burning with incense that released bluish-purple smoke.

Every corner held natural items: black soil, uniquely shaped stones, vibrant orange-red flowers, dried herbs, and colorful crystals. After three hours of careful arrangement, she finally announced, “The preparations are complete.”

With a wave of her hand, all the candles lit simultaneously. I couldn’t help wondering why she hadn’t used magic for the entire setup instead of making us do it manually.

‘I could have used magic, child,’ she said, reading my thoughts again. “But people never value what comes easily. You must understand these items purposes to truly comprehend their power. Enter the circle now.”

We stepped inside, exchanging nervous glances. She d only instructed us to wear lack training clothes and tie up our hair.

The witch approached the edge of the circle and waved her hand. A bright flame suddenly ignited in the stone bowl between us. I forced myself not to step back in surprise.

She began chanting in a deep, ancient tone. Though I couldn't understand the words, I felt their power. The flames gradually shifted from gold to deep

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Chapter 113: You Are More Powerful Than You Realize

green, casting an eerie light throughout the basement.

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"Tonight," she declared, we welcome these warriors into the ranks of the Sentinel. To mark their loyalty, we bestow upon them the royal Sentinel imprint.?"

The flames turned deep blue as she continued chanting. From within her robe, s produced a long silver instrument etched with complex runes and placed it in the fire.

"Do you pledge allegiance to the Sentinels regardless of what hardships you face dedicating your strength?" she asked.

'I do, we answered together without hesitation.

"Do you pledge to place the pack's safety above yourselves, protecting all members of the kingdom with all your might?"

'I do."

The basement air grew heavy with smoke and a strange electric feeling, like the stillness before lightning strikes.

"Do you pledge to uphold the dignity and honor of Alpha King and Luna Queen?"

"I do."

"Do you pledge to sacrifice your own lives if necessary to protect those who are weak and helpless?"

'I do."

The flame turned deep violet, casting a mysterious glow across our faces.

"You will be bestowed a high honor, with the responsibility and power to guard the royal pack. Do you swear with your lives to maintain pure minds during the marking?"

‘I do.’

‘Kneel, extend your right arms, palms up.’

She approached the center of the circle, retrieved the instrument from the purple flame, and walked to Aria first. Chanting softly, she grasped Aria’s wrist and pressed the hot metal against her skin. I heard the hiss of burning flesh and a silvery-white smoke rise. Aria remained silent except for a sharp

breath, but tears fell silently down her cheeks.

The witch returned the instrument to the fire, which immediately turned brilliant silver-white. From an intricate wooden box, she removed several vials and

colored powders. She chanted something that sounded more like a song while sprinkling shimmering substance on Aria’s marked skin.

After treating Aria, she turned to me. Aria’s gaze seemed distant, almost trance-like. The smell of burnt skin made my stomach turn, and I worried I might slip into a panic attack like when I first arrived at the training center. I reminded myself this wasn’t Acacia’s torture but a necessary step to becoming stronger. I’d survived worse, and I wasn’t alone – Aria and Conrad were nearby.

I took a deep breath and met the witch’s eyes, nodding firmly. She retrieved the instrument from the silver-white flame, chanted softly, and repeated the procedure.

The burning pain and smell of charred flesh triggered unpleasant memories, but focused on staying present. My body remained still despite the internal struggle. Through her soothing chants, I heard an unfamiliar voice in my mind – my wolf, but something else entirely.

You are more powerful than you realize, and more important than you imagine. Remember this, little warrior. Those who connect with you will benefit, but beware those who try to use your power. Many trials await you. Persevere, for your resilience exceeds everyone’s expectations. Each person experiences this ritual differently. No Sentinel discusses their experience or insights. Each must complete this journey done, uninfluenced by others. Remember this.

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Chapter 113: You Are More Powerful Than You Realize

I blinked slowly, returning to reality. Aria and I still knelt before the stone bowl,ut the flame had extinguished and all candles had stopped burning. Early morning light filtered down from the stairway. How long had we been here?

“God, it feels like I got trampled by an entire pack, Aria croaked, her voice rough and dry.

Tell me about it, I agreed, trying to blink away the blur in my vision. “Now I get why this ritual usually takes so long.”

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Chapter 114: That Process Was Truly Terrifying

76%

Evelyn's POV

We examined our new Sentinel marks, both moon-shaped but wildly different in details. Aria's featured graceful, intertwining curves while mine was all sharp angles and bold lines - perfectly matching my warrior identity. Surrounding both marks were tiny runes or text, too small to read.

‘Weird, I said, tilting my wrist. “Same tool, completely different results.”

I barely remember anything after it started,’ Aria frowned, voice raspy. “You?”

“More than you, since you went first.” I swallowed painfully. “After the hot metal touched my skin, everything blurred except for this strange voice in my

head.”

“Feel any different?” She winced, rotating her stiff shoulders.

“Like my body’s filled with lead. Every movement takes ridiculous effort.” I squinted against the dim light. “What do you think was in all those materials she

used?

“No clue, but whatever it was knocked us flat. Aria massaged her temples. “I need water and about twelve more hours of sleep. Where’d they go anyway –

the witch and Conrad?”

“No idea.” The basement held only us now. “She warned we’d be weak afterward. Weak’ is putting it mildly – I can barely string thoughts together.”

“Let’s get some water,” Aria groaned, using the wall to pull herself up. “I couldn’t fight off a squirrel right now.”

She offered her hand and we supported each other up the stairs, stumbling toward the kitchen. After downing a glass each, we grabbed refills and dragged ourselves to our bedroom, collapsing onto our beds.

“Glad it’s not just me,” Aria mumbled. “That process was seriously terrifying.”

I managed a weak laugh. “Tell me about it. Let’s talk when we can actually function.” With that, I rolled over and immediately plunged into black, dreamless

sleep.

When I finally surfaced, I couldn’t move. My body felt trapped under invisible weight, even opening my eyes required enormous effort. This wasn’t normal

exhaustion.

“Aria?” I croaked, barely recognizing my own voice.

“Hmm? She sounded equally wrecked.

“What’s happening to us? I tried turning my head, but my vision remained frustratingly blurry. I can barely move.”

Seems like these marks came with a hell of a price tag,’ she answered weakly.

I rubbed my temples, trying to ease the stabbing pain. Remind me not to rush o magical body modification again. Even this tiny bit of light is killing my

head.’

You okay? I've been trying to reach you forever! My wolf's anxious voice suddenly peared in my mind

I'm alive, just feel like garbage. What do you mean by "forever"?

Our connection nearly broke. I could tell you weren't in danger, but I couldn't talk tou - for days.

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Chapter 114: That Process Was Truly Terrifying

Days? The information shocked me. We've been out for days?

Not sure exactly how long, but definitely not just a few hours.

"Aria," I redirected my focus, "can you connect with your wolf?"

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Barely. Everything's fuzzy, like something's blocking us." She shifted uncomfortably. "Yours?"

"Same. According to my wolf, we've been unconscious for days." I tried organizing my scattered thoughts. "Nobody mentioned the mark would mess with our

wolf connection."

'Or that we'd feel like we got hit by a freight train," she added with a bitter smile. It's like the worst hangover imaginable without the fun part beforehand."

I raised an eyebrow. "Never been drunk, but that sounds awful.'

"Seriously?" Aria's eyes widened. "You've never let loose even a little? We definitely need to fix that. Every teenager deserves some fun."

"I'm only sixteen," I reminded her. "And honestly, after seeing Elliot and the guys drunk, I'm not exactly inspired to follow their example."

"You don't have to go blackout," she explained. "Just enough to relax and blend in at social stuff. Sophia would back me up on this.

I rolled my eyes, knowing she was right. Since arriving at the training center, Sophia had constantly tried dragging me to "normal teenage activities,"

insisting I needed to learn how to relax and stop trying to control everything.

*Before college parties, Aria continued, “you should figure out your alcohol tolerance. Otherwise, you’ll pass out after one drink and become everyone’s

favorite joke.”

“I’m not that fragile, I protested. “Why can’t I just be the designated sober friend who makes sure everyone gets home alive?”

“Because you can’t always be the observer,” her tone turned serious. “From a mission perspective, sometimes you need to blend in. If you’re clueless about alcohol, you could blow your cover. Knowing your limits, when to fake-sip, when to switch to water – these are actual skills.”

“Fine, you win with the logic again,” I conceded. “Strategically, it makes sense.”

“Exactly,” she said triumphantly. “You don’t need to become a drinking champion just understand the basics so nobody can slip something in your drink without you noticing. Especially important for us girls.”

Alright, I surrender.” I suddenly raised my voice. “Conrad!”

“What the hell?” Aria jumped at my outburst. “Why are you yelling?”

Since we’re stuck in this blizzard anyway, might as well start your education pla now, I suggested half-jokingly.

The door burst open as Conrad rushed in, face tense and alert. “What happened? Hou two okay? His eyes scanned the room for threats.

“We just underwent magical branding that feels like being chased by wolves all d before hitting a brick wall,” I replied dryly. “How good could we be?”

‘Jesus,’ he exhaled, pressing a hand to his chest. Don’t scare me like that. I thought someone had found your hiding place.”

He didn’t enter the room, just leaned against the doorframe with his eyes closed rying to steady his breathing

‘After all this pain, we need something to take the edge off,” Aria said, eyeing him “Like maybe a drink? Also, what did you mean by found? Is someone. looking for us?”

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Chapter 114: That Process Was Truly Terrifying

I glanced down, suddenly realizing I was wearing pajamas instead of the training lothes I remembered last. When had I changed?

Til get you water and painkillers, Conrad said, noticeably calmer. “That should lp.”

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“No, you’re missing the point, Aria insisted. “Evelyn needs alcohol basics if she’s going to blend in at campus events. We’re stuck here anyway perfect time to practice. And you still haven’t answered my question is someone after us?”

Conrad stared at her, hesitation flashing in his eyes. “I’m not touching that first estion. But about the alcohol training... Alpha King Nathan would

probably disapprove, but you’re right. You’re not normal teenagers; you’re Sentins on special assignments. You need proper preparation, including social

skills. Come on.”

He motioned for us to follow. “I don’t keep beer tastes like crap to me. But remember, most parties will have it, so you need to know what you’re dealing

with.”

“Conrad,” I called after him, “was passing out normal after the marking? And why don’t I remember changing clothes? How did we get upstairs?”

He paused before turning back. “Mia helped. You two made it up here on your ow, but were barely walking. She helped you change so you could rest

comfortably.” His expression closed off. “The rest isn’t my department.”

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Chapter 115: How Much Did She Drink?

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Evelyn's POV

“So the witch's name is Mia?” I massaged my temples, trying to focus through what felt like cotton stuffed in my brain. The room seemed to be doing a slow spin around me.

Conrad stood at the bottom of the stairs, watching as Aria and I wobbled our way down.

“Sentinel rituals don't usually knock people out this long,” he said, concern edging his voice. “Might be because you're both young. Aria just hit eighteen, which is the standard starting age. And you,” he raised an eyebrow at me, “should be worrying about prom dates and math tests, not field missions.”

“Never cared much for that normal teen stuff anyway, I muttered, attempting to stand straight but my legs felt like they'd been replaced with jelly.

“Since we were just talking about drinking, Conrad said, guiding us both to the kitchen, ‘now's actually perfect timing for some hands-on experience. On missions, a lot of intel exchanges happen in bars. You need to know how to look ke you're drinking without actually getting drunk.’

We sat obediently on kitchen stools while Conrad unlocked a cabinet and pulled out various bottles and glasses.

“Each type of booze has its own profile,” he explained, lining up glasses like a bartender. “You need to know three things: which drink fits which situation without drawing attention, how to pace yourself so you don't get sloppy, and how different stuff hits your particular system.”

He grabbed a clear bottle first. “Vodka. Basically invisible and pretty tasteless in mixed drinks. Good when you don't want people knowing what you're actually drinking.” He poured tiny amounts into shot glasses. “Just take a small s to get familiar with it.”

I cautiously tasted the liquid and immediately felt like I'd swallowed fire.?

“God, that's awful!” I sputtered, coughing. “People seriously drink this for fun?”

*Tons of them,” Conrad laughed. “Now try whiskey, should be easier.”

He poured amber liquid over ice cubes. “Sip it slow, let it sit on your tongue before swallowing.”

Following his instructions, I found the whiskey gentler, with a smoky warmth that spread from my throat to my stomach. The second sip wasn't nearly as shocking.

"This one's better for longer conversations, Conrad explained. "You can nurse on glass for half an hour without looking weird.

He showed us how to mix several basic cocktails, pointing out the most common party drinks and their kick.

Remember, werewolves process alcohol faster than humans, but we've got limits on. Your new marks will affect how you metabolize it."

I was listening carefully when suddenly the room tilted. I grabbed the table edge or support.

"Whoa, that's... weird,' I heard myself slurring slightly.

"That's the alcohol hitting your brain, Conrad nodded. "Affects balance and reaction time first, then judgment.

'Why's my head feel all fuzzy?" The room swayed gently, and everything seemed oth duller and sharper simultaneously a bizarre contradiction.

Aria, meanwhile, was clearly enjoying herself. "This feels awesome! She giggled,er cheeks flushed pink. Finally something that makes you loosen up,

Evie.'

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Chapter 115: How Much Did She Drink?

'Not sure I like this. I tried standing but nearly toppled over. Conrad steadied me with a firm grip.

"Sit down, shorty," he pushed a glass of water into my hand. "Drink this, and you need food. Booze on an empty stomach hits twice as hard."

I was about to protest when the front door opened. A familiar voice called from the living room: "Conrad? You here? Mia sent word the ritual's complete."

Alpha King Nathan! I instantly tried to straighten up, which only made the room spin faster.

‘In the kitchen, Alpha King,’ Conrad called back, embarrassment coloring his voice.

Alpha King Nathan walked in, and seeing our condition, his surprise quickly melted into laughter. I thought they needed rest, not a crash course in

mixology?”

“They need to understand alcohol for missions, Conrad defended, quickly pulling food from the fridge and making sandwiches.

“I’m totally fine!” I attempted to sound professional, but it came out sounding like a squeaky toy.

Alpha King Nathan raised an eyebrow and turned to Conrad. “How much did she Have?”

“Just a few sips, sir. First-timer, so it hit her harder.”

“Interesting,” Alpha King Nathan sat across from me, studying my reactions. “Given your special toxin metabolism, I’ve always wondered how alcohol would

affect you.”

“What special metabolism?” I asked, instantly distracted by the sandwich Conrad placed before me. “Ooh, food!”

I devoured it, amazed that with each bite, the fuzzy feeling diminished. By the time I finished, my head felt almost completely clear.

“That’s incredible, Conrad said, eyes wide. “She metabolized the alcohol just from eating? Even for werewolves, that’s unheard of.”

Alpha King Nathan nodded thoughtfully. “Confirms my theory. Your body has exceptional resistance to foreign substances. It’s why silver powder only left surface damage without poisoning your bloodstream.”

He leaned forward. ‘Evelyn, as a Sentinel, understanding your abilities and limitations is crucial. You’ve just discovered something valuable – you can purge alcohol effects simply by eating. During missions, that’s a serious advantage.’

The blizzard kept us trapped in the safe house for weeks afterward. Conrad used his time to intensify our training, focusing heavily on shifting techniques and testing our alcohol tolerance further. We tried everything from spirits to bee and my pattern held consistent

with food, I could clear any amount of alcohol in minutes; without it, I'd need about an hour.

Aria needed longer to recover, though she still handled it better than any human could.

Our training ramped up considerably. We shifted multiple times daily, running through the enclosed area near the safe house. My wolf grew stronger during this period too. The shifting pain gradually lessened, and the transformation became smoother and faster.

The most satisfying change was in my physical appearance. Seven months ago, I arrived as that skinny, undersized girl. Now my body showed defined muscle tone. I'd put on almost ten pounds of pure muscle, with elegant, powerful lines across my shoulders and back, and firm, springy muscles in my legs. Even relaxed, my stomach showed subtle definition.

Standing before the mirror examining these changes, I couldn't help smiling. Ori always complained I was too thin, saying I needed more muscle to protect myself. If he could see me now, he'd definitely nod in approval.

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The Lightning Wolf Chronicles

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 -

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

116

Chapter 116: Your Progress Isn't Bad Either

Evelyn's POV

< 76%

"Focus!" Conrad's command cut through the cold air.

I closed my eyes, breathing deeply as I visualized my clothes merging with my skin. The mark's energy pulsed through my veins as I directed it to envelop

everything I wore.

"When shifting, think of your clothes as part of yourself, Conrad instructed from the safe house yard. "The mark gives you this ability, but your mind

controls it.

My wolf stirred eagerly. I released the energy, bracing for the familiar bone-shifting pain.

workout clothes remained perfectly intact beneath my fur.

came, but milder than before. When I landed on four paws, my

We did it! my wolf celebrated.

Next to me, Aria began her attempt. Her transformation looked more intense, muscles visibly contorting. She dropped to the ground as a powerful brown

wolf, but while her top survived, her pants had shredded to ribbons.

Conrad immediately turned away. "This is exactly why we practice. Aria, stay shifted while I grab some replacement clothes."

I made a chuffing sound that was definitely wolf laughter.

Quit it. Aria grumbled through our mental link. Last time I shifted back, Conrad go an eyeful. Talk about mortifying.

At least you're getting better, I replied. And Conrad can barely look at you now. Probably the most awkward training he's ever done.

Conrad returned with clothes for Aria, deliberately looking elsewhere. I'll turn around. Let me know when you're done."

I focused on my own shift back, picturing my human form. The transformation flowed more smoothly than ever, and I found myself fully clothed like I'd

never changed at all.

'It worked perfectly! I couldn't hide my excitement.

Aria wasn't as lucky. After returning to human form, she quickly pulled on the pants Conrad had brought.

‘So unfair, she muttered. ‘I concentrated just as hard as you did.

“Might be because she’s smaller, Conrad suggested, turning back to face us. ‘Less surface area to manage. But you’re improving too, Aria. Way better than

last week.”

We trained for several more hours, practicing rapid shifts until exhaustion forces inside.

“Good work, Conrad said, throwing together lunch. “Keep this up and you’ll be ready when the blizzard breaks. Two more weeks, tops.”

“God, I hope so,” Aria sighed, collapsing into a chair. ‘I miss actual people and civilization. The training center never looked so good.”

“Missing those basketball guys already?” I teased.

She tossed a piece of bread at my head. ‘Oh, shut up. Not everyone hides from social interaction like you.” Her expression suddenly turned serious. Actually, I’ve been wondering why are you so determined to wait for your mate?”

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Chapter 116: Your Progress Isn’t Bad Either

I nearly choked. “What?”

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“Come on,” she leaned back. “You never check out guys, even the hot ones. Whenever I mention dating someone, you get this weird look. That’s not typical

teenage behavior, Evie.”

I set down my water, considering how to explain something I barely understood myself.

“I don’t know exactly,” I admitted. “I get what attraction is – I’ve seen enough couples. But when I imagine being with someone who isn’t my mate, my whole

body just... rejects the idea.”

“But you’ve never even experienced a mate bond,” Aria countered. “How do you know what you’re waiting for is worth it?”

“Just instinct, I guess. Like my body knows something my mind doesn’t yet.”

“Your wolf might have recognized your mate already,” Conrad said, surprising us both.

We turned toward him.

‘It happens sometimes,’ he continued, flipping eggs at the stove. A wolf can identify a destined mate before the human part becomes aware. Creates a

natural aversion to other potential partners.”

“But I’m only sixteen, I protested. “The Moon Goddess says no finding mates before eighteen.”

“The rules say you can’t confirm and mark a mate bond before eighteen, Conrad corrected. ‘Doesn’t mean you can’t meet them earlier.’”

Aria slapped the table excitedly. “That’s it! You’ve already met your mate! That’s why you’re not interested in anyone else!”

My cheeks burned. “That’s ridiculous. Even if it were true, who would it be? Everyone I know is practically family.”

‘Doesn’t always feel like romance at first,’ Conrad said, sliding plates of scrambled eggs and bacon in front of us. “Sometimes it’s just comfort or security

rather than attraction.”

Magnus, Lucian, and Orion instantly flashed through my mind. I always felt safes when they were around. But that was just protective older brother energy... right?

‘A mate bond is something else though, Aria said, her voice softening. “My parents have this connection where they barely need words. It’s like they share a

brain.”

‘It’s weird that you’re so protective of mate bonds but still date around,’ I pointed out, grateful to shift focus.

“That’s not contradictory!” she defended. ‘I’ll find my mate eventually, but until then, I want experience. I don’t want to disappoint him, especially if he’s

been with other people.’

“That’s your call,” I shrugged. “I just feel like... when I finally find my mate, I want to be completely his. No baggage, no comparisons.”

Conrad cleared his throat. Both approaches are valid. What matters is following our own instincts.”

We ate quietly for a moment before Aria brightened.

“Speaking of social skills – ready for tomorrow’s party? The basketball team one?

Are we really going?’ My stomach knotted. I’ve never been to a party like that.”

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Chapter 116: Your Progress Isn’t Bad Either

76%

“Exactly why we have to go!” Aria practically bounced in her seat. Perfect chance to gather intel while letting you experience normal teenage stuff. You can’t live in combat mode forever.”

Conrad nodded. She’s right. Social gatherings are intelligence goldmines. If we want to learn about these rogues, a party’s a good place to start.

‘Tine, I surrendered. ‘But I have no idea what to wear or how to act.”

“That’s why you have me!” Aria grabbed my hand, pulling me upstairs. We spent the next few hours trying on clothes while she coached me on party

survival.

“Stick with the same drink all night, but barely touch it,” she instructed. “Keep your head clear for observation. If someone gets too pushy, fake a phone call. And watch out at midnight there’s usually a countdown where drunk guys try to kiss anybody nearby.”

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I nodded, trying to remember everything while my stomach twisted with nerves.

“Relax! This’ll be fun,” Aria squeezed my shoulder. “Think about it your first normal teenage party experience!”

“That’s the problem, I sighed. “I’ve never been normal.”

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Aria took my hand. “I’ll be with you the whole time. Remember why we’re there gathering information, watching for suspicious people. It’s just another type of mission.”

I took a deep breath, feeling steadier. She was right this was just another form training.

“Alright, I finally smiled. ‘Let’s do this.’”

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 -

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

117

Chapter 117: We Need to Accelerate Our Timeline

Evelyn’s POV

The New Year’s party hit me like a wall of sound the moment we stepped inside the mansion. Bass thumped through my chest, and the mixed scents of alcohol, sweat, and perfume assaulted my nose. Bodies packed every inch of space swaying and shouting over music that was way too loud.

“Holy crap, this place is massive!” Aria yelled, eyes bright with excitement.

I leaned closer to her ear. “How exactly are we supposed to do recon when I can barely hear myself think?”

“Loosen up! She grabbed my wrist, dragging me through the crowd. ‘Best surveillance happens when you look like you’re having fun!’”

We squeezed through the living room and finally found a slightly quieter corner the kitchen. At least here I could hear conversations without people

screaming directly into my ear.

‘Ember!’ Aria waved at a girl with a high ponytail who wobbled over to us, clearly tipsy.

“You guys made it! Ember threw her arms around us both. “Thought you’d bailed. Here – Roland’s cocktails are killer.” She thrust red plastic cups of pink liquid into our hands.

I pretended to sip while scanning the room. See any rogues? I asked Aria through our mental link.

Three by the couches on the right. Two more out back, she replied while laughing at something Ember said. Notice how they’re all super alert? Definitely not here

just to party.

I grabbed some chips from a nearby table, using it as an excuse to circle the room. The rogues tried to blend in, but their posture was too rigid, their eyes too watchful. One actually sniffed the air as I passed by.

‘They’re searching for someone, I told Aria when I returned. “And they’re definitely clocking new faces.”

“Then let’s give them something to notice – without being obvious. She winked and pulled me toward a group of dancers.

For the next few hours, we strategically maneuvered through the party, creating “accidental” encounters with the rogues. We posed for plenty of photos, making sure our faces would hit social media without looking deliberate.

As midnight approached, the energy ramped up. Everyone crowded around a giant TV for the countdown.

“Ten! Nine! Eight!” the crowd chanted.

‘Watch for midnight kissers,” Aria warned, elbowing me.

“Three! Two! One! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Right on cue, some tall guy with glazed eyes leaned toward me. I sidestepped smoothly, pretending to get bumped by someone else.

‘Sorry!” I called with fake innocence before slipping away through the mass of people.

I ended up in the backyard, gulping in the cold, clear air. My head finally stopped pounding, but then something else caught my attention – an unfamiliar werewolf scent. Not like the rogues inside, but something more powerful, carrying an unmistakable air of authority.

I tensed, scanning the darkness. Nothing visible, but that scent wasn’t my imagination.

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Chapter 117: We Need to Accelerate Our Timeline

“What are you doing out here? It’s freezing! Aria appeared beside me, rubbing her arms dramatically.

“I picked up something weird,’ I said quietly. A strong scent, different from the hers. Definitely Alpha-level, but it disappeared.”

‘Probably patrols from nearby packs,” she suggested. “I’ve heard they monitor campus boundaries, especially during big events.”

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We headed back to the safe house before the party ended. Conrad listened intent as we reported what we’d found, his expression growing more serious by

the second.

“You’re absolutely certain the scent came from outside campus?” he asked me for the third time.

“Positive. It wasn’t just some random rogue.”

He paced the kitchen. “This confirms what we’ve suspected. They’re not just scattered outlaws they’re organized, with territory and hierarchy.”

“Their behavior was weird too, Aria added. “They weren’t looking to hook up or party. They were searching, like they had specific targets.”

Conrad stopped pacing and faced us. “We need to accelerate our timeline. Campus recon is giving us something, but it’s not enough. We need deeper

infiltration.

“What are you thinking?” I asked.

“You need to get into the university system. Early enrollment in college prep courses. That’ll give you legitimate access to places where these rogues keep

showing up.”

I blinked in surprise. “Wait, you’re actually agreeing to let me take university classes? I thought you were against that idea.”

“I still don’t love it,” he admitted, frowning. “But it’s our best play right now. We need strict safety protocols though.”

Aria practically bounced with excitement. “This is perfect! We can take classes together!”

Hold your horses, Conrad warned. “This isn’t a normal college experience. It’s a mission.”

Over the next week, we planned everything down to the smallest detail. Conrad took us through every inch of campus at night, mapping entry points, exit routes, and potential danger zones.

“Rule one: constant contact,” he emphasized as we slipped through the empty biology building. “Mind-link check-ins every twenty minutes, even if it’s just a quick all good.”

“Rule two: never operate alone. You move in pairs, especially in isolated areas.”

“Rule three: know the warning signs. If you notice sudden silence, concentrated ents, or unusual attention from strangers you bail immediately.”

The list went on forever. Don’t take drinks from strangers. Always carry energy bs to metabolize alcohol quickly. Have at least three exit strategies for every location.

“These aren’t suggestions,” Conrad said firmly as we finished our final walkthrough. Break any of these rules, and you’re pulled from the mission. Non-negotiable.

We nodded. His protectiveness might feel suffocating, but I understood where it me from.

Meanwhile, our continued surveillance showed the rogues concentrating in enviromental science and biology programs, giving us clear direction.

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Chapter 117: We Need to Accelerate Our Timeline

I should aim for wildlife management, I told Aria. “That’s where most rogues hg out, and it covers forest territories too.”

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‘I’ll do environmental studies, she agreed. “Well overlap for some classes but cover more ground overall.

Conrad arranged a campus job for me as a biology department assistant, organizing field study data. The position gave me perfect cover and access to labs

where rogues frequently appeared.

Alpha King Nathan fully supported our plan, not only approving resources but personally reviewing my application. We created a background story about a

trust fund from my “deceased father” to explain the tuition payments.

The enrollment process was a nightmare endless forms, interviews, credential verifications, and special exams. Each step required careful preparation to

maintain my cover story.

“This is worse than combat training,” I complained, filling out yet another form. Why can’t I just say ‘I want to take classes’ and be done with it?”

*Because human bureaucracy is the real final boss,” Conrad said, sliding me another coffee. “Get used to it. Real-world missions are way more complicated

than training center drills.”

Aria snickered. “Just wait for finals week – you’ll miss these forms.”

Despite the tedious process, we eventually got through it all. Alpha King Nathan paid the full tuition, and I finally received my official student ID and

course schedule.

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 –

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

118

Chapter 118: Everything is Going Smoothly

Evelyn's POV

Regarding recent changes in the regional large animal populations, who can off some insights Press Daniel echoed through the ?

This was my first official day attending college classes, and it felt both familiar and strange. The classroom setting reminded me of high school, but the atmosphere was completely different more open, more academic, and definitely more nerve-wracking.

I glanced around and noticed most students staring down at their notebooks or papers, deliberately avoiding the professor's gaze. Only a few eager students in the front rows raised their hands. I kept a low profile; even though I knew the answer, drawing attention on my first day didn't align with our mission.

Halfway through class, I noticed something odd. Several muscular guys sitting in the back had a distinctive werewolf scent specifically, ours. They appeared a few years older than typical freshmen but seemed just as focused on the lecture as everyone else.

Right rear, three o'clock position, I informed Conrad through our mind-link. He was monitoring somewhere on campus. At least four rogues, all enrolled in this

basic course.

Stay alert but don't stare, Conrad responded. Document everything, but don't let them notice you watching.

I pretended to take notes while actually recording their appearances and behavior. One stood out; he seemed more relaxed than the others, occasionally explaining concepts to classmates nearby. He had completely adapted to campus life.

When the bell rang, students rushed toward the exit. I deliberately slowed my pace, wanting to see what the rogues would do. They packed up and left normally, indistinguishable from regular students.

Everything looks normal, I reported to Conrad. They're blending in perfectly.

Stay vigilant, follow the schedule. I'm nearby, he responded.

During lunch, I met Aria in the cafeteria. We chose a corner table where we could observe the entire area while being difficult to overhear.

“How’s your side going?” she asked while biting into her sandwich.

Identified several targets,” I answered quietly. “But they re acting completely natural – if I couldn’t smell them, I’d never know. What about you?”

“Same situation in environmental science,” she nodded. They ve integrated perfectly – if it weren’t for their scent and subtle tells, I’d never spot them as

rogues.”

We exchanged observations until it was time for the afternoon field course. This was what I’d been looking forward to most-wildlife management students would visit the nature preserve at the edge of campus. According to our intel, this area bordered forest lands where rogue activity was frequent

Professor Daniel led us across campus toward the wildlife research station, enthusiastically explaining the surrounding ecosystem and the station’s history. He was a typical academic, passionate about his field.

The research station surprised me – not some rustic cabin, but a modern facility equipped with solar panels and wind turbines. Inside was filled with monitoring equipment and research tools.

“This region is home to various large mammals,” Professor Daniel explained to the gathered students. “Including deer, bears, mountain lions, and of course.

wolves.”

“Professor, I raised my hand, trying to sound like a curious freshman, “do wild animals ever approach campus, especially during food shortages?“

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Chapter 118: Everything is Going Smoothly

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“Excellent question, Professor Daniel nodded. “Most wildlife instinctively avoids uman activity. But during scarce seasons, even large predators sometimes venture closer to

settlements. He smiled reassuringly. “Don’t worry though we have comprehensive monitoring systems and safety protocols.”

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‘Have you noticed any unusual behavior recently?’ I pressed. “Like changes in wolf pack numbers or territories?”

Professor Daniel paused slightly, as if weighing his response. Actually, we have recorded some changes in wolf activity over the past few months. Their numbers have increased, possibly related to last year’s unusually cold winter – reced food forcing them to expand their territory.”

His answer sounded reasonable, but I noticed he seemed to deliberately avoid specific details about the wolf packs.

His explanation makes sense, my wolf commented. But he’s definitely holding some ing back.

Think he knows something? I asked.

Not certain. Could just be professor caution, or he might know more. Need more observation.

During the field portion; Professor Daniel showed us various animal signs tracks droppings, territorial markings. His explanations were detailed and professional, completely fitting his academic persona.

As we pushed through some dense undergrowth, I caught an unusual scent – definitely wolf, but more complex than ordinary wolves.

“Professor, I carefully approached, pointing to the area. “What’s special about this spot?”

Professor Daniel looked where I indicated, his expression sharpening. “Very observant, Evelyn. This is indeed an interesting area. We’ve tracked some unusual wolf activity here. Possibly a new pack establishing territory.”

His explanation made sense, but I noticed his gaze lingered on my face longer than necessary, as if assessing my reaction.

“If you’re particularly interested in wildlife behavior,” he continued, “we have additional research projects. I’m always looking for students with sharp

observation skills.”

“That sounds really interesting,” I replied with measured enthusiasm. “I’d love to hear more about it.”

Back at the station, I noticed the rogue students packing up equipment, completely integrated with the group. They chatted and joked about typical college concerns classes, assignments, weekend plans.

‘Professor Daniel’s classes are always worth showing up for,’ I said casually, approaching one group. “His knowledge of wildlife is pretty impressive.”

“He’s the authority in the field,” a bearded student replied friendly. ‘If you’re into wildlife management, you can’t go wrong following him. His field trips are the best part.’”

We chatted about courses and facilities for a few minutes. These rogues were flawless nothing in their behavior raised suspicions. That made them even more dangerous.

Before we left, Professor Daniel found me again and handed me some materials out campus wildlife research.

‘I rarely see freshmen with such sensitivity to these details, he remarked, curiosity evident in his tone. ‘Have you had field experience before?’”

‘I did some conservation work back home,’ I answered vaguely. Mostly tracking ge predator territories and behaviors.”

“Interesting, he nodded thoughtfully. “Consider joining our research group you like more hands-on experience.”

Ill definitely think about it. Thanks for the invitation.”

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Chapter 118: Everything is Going Smoothly

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Walking back to campus alone, I reflected on today’s discoveries. On the surface, everything seemed normal enthusiastic professor, ordinary students, legitimate research facility. But something felt off, like calm water hiding dangers currents.

Professor Daniel is definitely suspicious, my wolf stated.

Yeah, I caught that too, I agreed. His wolf descriptions were too detailed, and those gues seemed awfully comfortable around him.

It's more than that, my wolf continued analyzing. He speaks like he's using two languages at once

– one for regular students, another for those in the know.

Think he knows about the rogues? I asked.

Almost certainly. But is he one of them or just connected somehow? The way he watched you was strange, like he was looking for specific reactions.

Maybe he's screening for those missing girls, I considered. Or worse, helping identify new targets.

Either way, my wolf warned, we need to watch him closely. He definitely knows more than he's showing.

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

Read The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel Chapter 5 -

Souls Bound By Promise – Timothy Nelson

119

Chapter 119: They're Completely Captivated by You

Evelyn's POV

Walking along the campus pathway, I mentally organized everything I'd discovered today. Finding this many rogues on my first day exceeded all expectations. They'd completely blended into campus life – unusual for rogues who typically preferred isolation over mingling with humans.

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I needed to update Conrad. If Professor Daniel actually had connections to these rogues, the research station could be the key we'd been searching for. It

might even explain why so many female werewolves disappeared from this area right at the edge of Polaris City's territory with plenty of cover.

"Hey! New girl! Wait up!"

I turned to find three guys approaching, the tallest one slightly ahead of the others. They looked like typical college students in jeans and casual tees, but

their scent gave them away immediately rogues.

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"Me?" I pointed to myself, feigning surprise.

"Yeah, you, the lead guy smiled, warm brown eyes projecting friendliness. "You're new in Professor Daniel's class, right? I noticed your questions."

*First day," I nodded, feeling my heart quicken. Not from danger but pure social anxiety. I rarely initiated conversations with strange boys - Aria usually

handled this part on our missions.

"I'm Robert, he extended his hand with an easy smile. "These are Brandon and Peter. Your questions weren't the usual freshman stuff. Pretty impressive."

"Thanks," I shook his hand. "I'm Evelyn. Always been into wildlife, especially predators."

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"No way! What a coincidence, Robert's eyes lit up. "We're all about that too. We actually go out pretty often to track wolf packs and other predators."

He leaned slightly closer, invading my personal space. "Man, you're tiny! Couldn't really tell when you were sitting down, but you look like you should still

be in high school."

"Animals in the forest don't care about my height," I shrugged, trying to stay relaxed. "Only humans get hung up on stuff like that."

Robert laughed. "No offense meant. It's just an interesting contrast - you ask questions like a grad student but look like a high schooler."

I shifted uncomfortably, wanting to find Aria but not wanting to miss potential information.

“Should probably go find my sister,” I said, gesturing vaguely behind me.

“We’ll walk with you, Robert jumped in before I could escape. ‘Your sister’s hereo? Pretty rare to see pack sisters both at this school.”

His casual mention of ‘pack’ set off alarms, but I kept my expression neutral.

‘Yeah, environmental science,’ I answered briefly, continuing to walk.

“You ask tons of questions but don’t share much yourself, huh? Robert teased, expression showing he found the challenge interesting rather than

annoying.

‘Best way to get answers is to listen, not talk,’ I replied without thinking.

“Wow, Robert’s eyebrows shot up. “A girl who looks twelve but talks like she’s sixty. Who are you, really?”

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Chapter 119: They’re Completely Captivated by You

Just as I was scrambling for a response, Aria’s voice saved me.

“Evie!” She waved, walking quickly our way. “How was your first day? She hugged me, then turned curious eyes to the guys.

‘Classmates from ecology,” I explained, nodding toward them.

Robert, he introduced himself, extending his hand to Aria. “These are Brandon and Peter.”

‘Nice meeting you guys, Aria smiled, shaking his hand. “I’m Aria, Evie’s sister.”

‘Evie? Robert laughed. “Cute nickname.”

76%

“You followed her all the way to the parking lot without knowing her name?” Aria asked, her tone playfully suspicious.

“Was just about to ask, Robert looked slightly embarrassed. “She keeps dodging my attempts at small talk.”

‘I prefer listening,” I repeated.

Robert’s gaze lingered on me before he seemed to make a decision. “Listen, we all have Thursday mornings free, so Thursday nights we hit the woods. Good weather means bonfires and stargazing. We go running first, then just hang out. you’re interested, I can give you my number.”

He flashed that confident smile like he knew I’d agree. Before I could respond, Ara had already snatched my phone from my pocket, unlocked it, and handed it to him.

“What the hell?” I whispered.

He’s into you, plus he’s connected to the rogues, Aria’s voice filled my head. Perfect opportunity to get closer to our targets.

I rolled my eyes and made a dismissive noise, accidentally louder than intended. Robert paused typing and looked up.

“Problem?” he asked, suddenly uncertain. “If you don’t want my number – ”

“No issue, I laughed awkwardly. “Just my sister being nosy.” This seemed to reassure him, and he went back to typing.

“What are you putting in there?” I reached for my phone, but he held it high above my head. He laughed like a kid who’d successfully pulled a prank.

“You’ll see,” he said with an exaggerated air of mystery.

“You asked for it, Aria whispered as Brandon and Peter snickered, apparently finding my annoyance entertaining.

I took a deep breath, then made my move – grabbing Robert’s arm as leverage to propel myself up and snatch the phone from his hand. The motion was fluid and natural, looking more like playful roughhousing than a professionally executed tactic.

“Whoa!” Robert’s eyes widened. ‘You’re quick!’

‘No big deal,’ I shrugged, glancing down to see he’d entered his number.

“So, Thursday night?’ he pressed. “Promise it’ll be fun.”

“Need to check my schedule,” I hedged. “I’ll think about it.”

“Don’t think too long,” his smile remained bright. “And you’re both welcome. Mor friends means more fun.”

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Chapter 119: They’re Completely Captivated by You

Thanks for the invite,” Aria said warmly. “If Evie goes, I might tag along.”

Robert seemed satisfied and gave me one last lingering look before leaving with
is friends.

That guy is totally into you,” Aria said the second they were out of earshot. “And not just a little. His eyes barely left your face.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, I felt my face warming. “He was just being friendly.”

“Friendly?” Aria let out an incredulous laugh. “Evie, you’re so clueless. They were completely captivated by you!”

I frowned. “It wasn’t that dramatic.”

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“Seriously? I’ve been in classes with those guys for over a month and barely started talking to them. You show up late to one class, and suddenly there are three guys following you around, competing to talk to you. What’s your secret?”

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 120: We'll Definitely Figure This Out

Evelyn's POV

'I didn't do anything special,' I said with a shrug. "Just asked questions I was actually curious about. Being new gave me the perfect excuse to dig deeper without seeming weird."

Aria waved her hands excitedly. "That's exactly it! You came across as genuinely interested, not just some girl fishing for attention. No makeup, no fancy outfit, yet you still caught their eye."

"You sound ridiculous, I laughed. "You and Nadia always try to make mountains out of molehills. They just see me as the curious new kid. Once Robert and his friends find out I'm sixteen, they'll lose interest faster than you can say 'jailbait. College guys like them especially ones who seem serious about their studies aren't usually into high schoolers.

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As we approached Conrad's car, something about his posture set off alarm bells in my head. His smile looked plastered on, never quite reaching his eyes. His entire body was coiled tight.

"What's got you two giggling?" he asked, voice forcibly casual.

"You won't believe it," Aria jumped in. "Evelyn's been in class for one day, and already these guys were practically fighting over her number! One even invited us to some forest hangout on Thursday."

I ignored Aria's exaggeration and studied Conrad's face. "What happened?"

Conrad took a deep breath, eyes locked on the road. "Mia's missing. His voice was tight. "She was supposed to head back to her settlement after your

marking ritual. No one's heard from her since. It's been almost three months now!

He rubbed his face, exhaustion bleeding through every movement.

"You think the rogues took her," I said. It wasn't a question.

Mia's power had been overwhelming during our ritual. What could possibly overpower a witch that strong? If these rogues could take someone like her, they must have found a way to suppress magic and hide their tracks.

‘But they slipped up,’ I thought aloud. “Everyone knows Mia wouldn’t go silent without a damn good reason. They had to know we’d start looking. After

staying hidden so long, why risk exposure now?”

I noticed the subtle shift in Conrad – jaw clenching, eyes flickering, fingers curling unnaturally.

“Conrad, I asked quietly, “what is she to you?”

For a moment, the car filled with heavy silence.

‘She’s my mate,’ he finally said.

“What?’ Aria’s jaw dropped. ‘But you’re not marked! Why would you become a Sentinel instead of staying with her?’”

‘It’s complicated,’ Conrad kept his eyes on the road. “She leads her coven, with a the responsibilities that entails. Their traditions dictate she should pair with a wizard to produce magically gifted offspring.”

Aria gasped. A chill ran down my spine.

“She refused those arrangements, turned down other matches,” Conrad continued But I worried she’d eventually have to choose between duty and

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happiness. So I joined the Sentinels. I couldn’t accept anyone else as my mate, he didn’t want to hold her back.”

A thought suddenly clicked. ‘Did they take her because of her magic, or because her connection to werewolves?’”

Conrad’s head snapped up, face draining of color. ‘Shit. I never considered that. She’s the most powerful caster in her coven. If someone saw her werewolf mate bond as contamination...”

He didn't finish before slamming the accelerator. I could feel him mind-linking famously with someone, the car thick with his rage and fear. Minutes later, we screeched to a halt at the safe house.

Taric was already waiting on the porch. After a brief exchange, Conrad bolted to the training sandbag in the yard and unleashed hell on it. Each punch channeled raw emotion rage, helplessness, fear the bag swinging violently with each impact.

Taric watched silently, not interfering, just making sure Conrad didn't completely lose control. Eventually, Conrad's attacks grew wilder, less controlled, until a final devastating blow split the bag, sand spilling everywhere. He dropped to his knees, breathing hard, knuckles bloody. Only then did Taric approach, resting a hand on his shoulder.

Aria and I watched from a distance, that choking feeling of powerlessness all too familiar. I remembered nearly destroying the gym at the training center in

similar frustration. That memory seemed like a lifetime ago now.

"Get it together," Taric said quietly. "We have some leads, but we need more." He turned to us. "We need your observations."

We nodded and approached Conrad. I crouched down, gently turning his face toward mine. The emptiness in his eyes broke something inside me.

"We'll figure this out," I said firmly. "This isn't just a mission anymore - it's family.

*Can you promise that? His voice held a vulnerability I'd never heard before.

I promise. You don't know what I'm capable of when protecting people I care about. Alpha King Nathan says I'm different - time to prove it."

"Is it true you can flush out any toxin?" he asked suddenly.

"Yeah. Can't explain how it works, though. That's for Dr. Harrison to figure out."

Conrad looked straight into my eyes. "I just want her back, Evelyn. The raw pain in his voice was suffocating.

I swear by the Goddess, we'll find her,' I squeezed his hand. "Whatever it takes, we're bringing her home."

He nodded slightly and rose to his feet. Together, we headed inside.

The living room was packed. Besides Taric, Jett, Celine, and Shepherd had arrived a clear sign of how serious things had become, I suspected other teams were watching the safe house from nearby.

“What have you found?” Taric asked, tension edging his voice.

“Just an increasing number of male rogues registering for courses this semester,” reported. No rumors about missing guls or anything obviously

suspicious.’

“But, Aria added, “Evelyn got invited running with the rogues. First time they’ve approached either of us directly.”

All eyes turned to me, and I didn’t like what I saw that look that said they wanted to bench me for my own safety. A low growl rumbled in my chest, my wolf bristling at the very idea of being sidelined.

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“Relax, little one,” Taric said. “Nobody’s pulling you from this. You’re already too eep. But don’t blame us for worrying. Rogue activity spiked when you arrived, and they approached only after seeing you in class. That’s no coincidence

He continued: “No signs of rogues near Polaris City for five months, but two smaller packs were completely wiped out. If anyone survived, we haven’t found them. Both Alphas and Lunas were found dead in the ruins. Ilis voice barely confined his grief.

‘So they must be here,” I said, frustration mounting. “The Rogue Wolf King and screw. Do we have any solid leads on their location?”

These rogues were constantly one step ahead, and it was maddening.

“All we know for certain is rogues are gathering here with no pack affiliation, which is suspicious as hell, Taric said, “Universities are neutral ground for werewolves – no pack claims territory there. Alpha King Nathan protects werewolf students, but no group fully controls such places.”

He turned to me. “They invited you on your first day?” I nodded. “That stinks of a trap.”