

## The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

# Souls Bound By Promise — Timothy Nelson 6

## Chapter 6: Do You Always Wake Up This Early?

Evelyn's POV

"But I..." I hesitated. Going to Alpha Adam's house as a guest? That had never happened before.

"Come on, don't say no," Milo said casually. "You'd be keeping Nadia company, and Luna Isabella's cooking is incredible."

"I..."

"I need you there with me." Nadia grabbed my hand. "Please? I'd feel way more comfortable having a friend around."

Looking at her pleading eyes, I couldn't refuse.

"Okay." I agreed quietly.

"Yes!" Nadia squeezed my hand excitedly. "Six tomorrow night, right?"

"Right." Magnus confirmed, then looked at me. "We'll pick you both up."

"You don't have to –" I started.

"It's no trouble." Lucian smiled. "We're heading that way anyway."

"Settled then." Orion said briefly, then turned to leave.

The others said their goodbyes. Before leaving, Elliot patted my shoulder awkwardly.

I watched them walk away, my emotions all tangled up.

“This is gonna be great!” Nadia said, practically bouncing. “We get to go together!”

“Yeah...” I responded absently.

“What’s wrong?” She caught my mood instantly. “Don’t you want to go?”

“It’s not that.” I shook my head. “I’ve just... never been to something like this before.”

“It’s okay, I’ll be right there with you.” She squeezed my arm. “And you saw how nice they all were.”

Nice because of you, I thought, but just nodded.

“My father might not be cool with it.” I voiced my biggest worry.

“Why not?” Nadia looked confused.

How could I explain that my father barely acknowledged my existence? That he probably wouldn’t even notice if I didn’t come home?

“It’s nothing,” I shook my head. “Should be fine.”

Worst case, I just won’t tell him. He wouldn’t notice anyway.

We walked out as the sunset painted everything orange. Nadia was still chattering excitedly about what to wear tomorrow, while my mind wandered.

A formal dinner at the Alpha’s house with the pack leadership. This should have excited me, but mostly I felt anxious.

Too much has changed, my wolf said. More happened today than all year.

Yeah. I just hope it doesn’t make things worse.

I lay in bed staring at the ceiling. Two AM and sleep was nowhere to be found. Every time I closed my eyes, today replayed in my head – Nadia sitting next to me, her defending me against Acacia, Elliot actually inviting me somewhere.

What if I mess up tomorrow? What if they regret asking me?

At four AM, I gave up. I changed into running gear and crept downstairs, careful not to wake Dad or Elliot.

The cold morning air hit me as I stepped outside. Silver Pines was dead quiet except for the occasional night bird. I started jogging along my usual trail.

Running always cleared my head. Each step took me further from all the social complications, closer to just being myself. This was my time, my space.

When I passed Nadia's house, I slowed down. Lights were still on – warm yellow glow streaming through the windows. Through the living room window, I could see figures moving around. Nadia's mom was organizing something while her stepdad sat with papers.

The scene looked so normal, so warm. Is this what real families were like? Someone waiting up, caring if you were safe?

Just as I was getting lost in thought, the front door opened.

"Evie?" Nadia's surprised voice rang out. "What are you doing here?"

I jumped, nearly losing my balance. She was in workout clothes too, obviously planning to run.

"I was... out for a morning run." I stammered, feeling caught.

"At four-thirty?" She raised an eyebrow, walking down to me. "Do you always wake up this early?"

"It's a habit." I shrugged, trying to play it casual. "When I can't sleep, I run."

Nadia studied me, her amber eyes bright under the streetlight. “Because of tonight’s dinner?”

Her perceptiveness surprised me. “Maybe.”

“I’m nervous too,” she admitted. “That’s why I got up early to move around. Wanna run together?”

Nadia’s POV

Looking at Evelyn standing in front of my house, I felt worried and curious. She looked so small, so tired, like she was carrying the world on her shoulders.

Today made me even more curious about this girl. She was clearly skilled but always tried to hide. Beta’s daughter but bullied by classmates. Even her own brother treated her like she barely existed.

“Sure,” Evelyn replied, interrupting my thoughts. “If you don’t mind.”

“Why would I mind?” I smiled. “Better than running alone. Lead the way.”

Evelyn’s POV

We started jogging side by side, our footsteps echoing on the quiet street. Having company felt weird – I was used to running alone.

“Do you do this every morning?” Nadia asked, breathing still steady.

“Most days, yeah.” I replied. “Especially weekends. Usually up around five, run, then make breakfast.”

“Make breakfast? For your family?”

I nodded, not wanting to get into the complicated family stuff.

“Wait, it’s still Friday. We have school today.” She reminded me.

“Yeah.” I sighed. “At least it’s a light day.”

We ran along Silver Pines' edge. The morning air was crisp and cold, each breath stinging my lungs, but it felt good. The eastern sky started showing pale dawn light.

After about an hour, we circled back to the neighborhood. Nadia's cheeks were flushed from exercise, but her eyes were still bright.

"That was amazing!" She said breathlessly. "This route is gorgeous. Those silver pines looked like they were glowing in the morning light."

I smiled. Most people would rather sleep in than see Silver Pines at dawn.

"I should go change," she said. "See you at school?"

"Yeah."

Watching her jog back home, I felt a strange anticipation. Even though today was just another Friday, with Nadia around, nothing felt ordinary anymore.

I walked home slowly, thinking about the day ahead. Classes, lunch, getting ready for tonight's dinner... it was gonna be long.

When I opened the front door, I heard movement upstairs. Elliot was probably awake. I went to the kitchen and started making breakfast. Even though he'd been decent yesterday, I didn't expect it to last. Better to keep expectations low.

My phone buzzed as I was slicing bread. A text from Nadia:

"Can't wait for school! Today's gonna be awesome!"

I couldn't help but smile. Her enthusiasm was really contagious.