

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 61: You Have Nothing to Apologize For

Evelyn's POV

“If there was a way to remove all those scars, would you do it?” Taric asked.

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I stared at my hands on the blanket. Despite everything, I wasn't in as much pain as expected. Then again, being out cold for two weeks

probably helped with that.

Would I erase Acacia's handiwork? These marks were daily reminders that justice doesn't always win, that powerful people can hurt others

repeatedly without consequences.

“Never thought it was possible, I finally said. “I figured scars were permanent. The ones with silver residue still reopen when I'm stressed

or tired, which shouldn't happen after all this time. Maybe it's just how silver powder works.”

I met his eyes. “They're from the worst moments of my life, but they also prove I survived. Not sure I want them gone, but I wish they

weren't my weakness.”

“Sounds like a warrior's answer,” Taric nodded. “About your future going back to your old life isn't an option anymore. That should be

clear.”

He leaned against the doorframe, arms crossed. “You could finish high school here, then start Sentinel training after graduation. But your face tells me that’s not your style, even if the people who care about you would prefer it.”

His gaze sharpened. “My recommendation? Continue your education while doing basic training. We’ll adjust your schedule so you can

handle both.”

“Looking at your records – which weren’t easy to get, by the way – you’re only five credits from finishing high school. With some effort, you could wrap that up in one summer.”

He stepped closer, lowering his voice. “I can grant you limited Sentinel training status. You won’t get official identification yet, and no actual missions until you’re 17. But you’ll get a head start on understanding how we operate, away from people who think they know

what’s best for you.”

“Works for me,” I said, trying not to sound too excited. “Going home would just cause more problems, and I’ve got nowhere else. I’ve already finished most of my high school work anyway. Sitting in class relearning stuff would drive me crazy.”

“You’ll face the same standards as all Sentinels,” Taric continued. “During training, no outside contact. Visits are strictly scheduled, and by Alpha King’s order, training details stay confidential.”

“Got it,” I nodded, then thought of something. “Does Elliot know I’m here?”

“He’s been informed about your condition and placement,” Taric answered.

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I just nodded. Being informed’ meant Elliot knew about my beating and approved sending me here. That was both comforting and a little

bitter.

“I know you have more questions,” Taric said, “but now that you’re awake, the doctors need to examine you. We can keep talking if you

don't mind others around."

"Nothing left to hide anyway,' I shrugged, immediately regretting it when my ribs protested.

The door opened, and I nearly jumped the woman who walked in looked strikingly like Nadia.

"You're awake! Finally!" She beamed with excitement. "Nadia's been worried sick. Now, we need to run some tests. Your case is fascinating – medically speaking, of course. Someone your age shouldn't survive that level of trauma and toxicity. I can't wait to figure out what

makes you special!"

"Diana, you're scaring her," a gentle male voice said from behind. "Sorry about my wife she gets excited about medical mysteries. I'm Harrison, and this is Diana, Nadia's parents. Since we both work here, people call us Dr. Diana and Dr. Harrison.*

I nodded cautiously. "Nice to meet you. Is Nadia around? Can I see her?" A familiar face would be nice right about now.

"Now that you're awake, we can arrange that," Dr. Harrison said. "But first, we need samples. Your wounds are healing at different rates, and there's still wolfsbane in your system. Mind if we run some tests?" Dr. Diana held several tubes, eyes gleaming with professional

enthusiasm.

"Have you connected with your wolf yet?" she asked suddenly.

"Not yet," I said, feeling that empty space inside me. "The toxins cut us off. I'll do whatever tests you need – can't hurt worse than what

already happened."

"We'd also like tissue samples from your scarred areas," Dr. Harrison added. I nodded agreement.

They quickly took their samples. Before leaving, Dr. Diana gave me a gentle hug, and Dr. Harrison offered an encouraging smile.

'We'll monitor you until your wolf returns," he said. "Food's on the way – your body needs more than IV nutrients. And when you're ready,

we'll fix your hair."

I touched my head, remembering Acacia hacking off my long hair. I wondered how bad it looked.?

But I pushed those thoughts away hair grows back. I refused to let Acacia win by making me obsess over appearances. That was her thing, not mine.

“So when can I leave, go to school, and start training?” I asked Taric. No point dwelling on stuff I couldn’t change.

“When the doctors clear you,” he said. “Probably after you reconnect with your wolf. Then we’ll set you up at the training center. He paused. “Will you ever tell me the full truth about your enemy?”

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“Probably not, I said bluntly. Talking about her is a waste of time. I never asked to be her target, but I couldn’t just watch her hurt weaker kids. She’ll get what’s coming to her someday, and I hope I’m there to see it. Now tell me more about Sentinel training.”

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For the next few hours, we talked training details. When I asked bold questions, Dr. Harrison would chuckle, and whenever they needed personal information about my injuries, Dr. Diana would pat my shoulder reassuringly.

Dinner arrived – surprisingly good for hospital food. Fresh sandwiches, fruit, veggies, snacks, drinks, even dessert options. My throat still

hurt, but not enough to stop me from enjoying my first real meal in weeks.

Taric left for an hour so I could shower. Standing under the hot water, I kept trying to reach my wolf. I missed her presence, that

companionship. We’d finally gained some freedom, and I couldn’t wait to start this new chapter together.

The doctors checked on me hourly, true to their word. Dr. Diana shared funny stories from Nadia’s childhood with each visit, while Dr.

Harrison maintained his gentle, professional manner.

Over the next few days, I learned about their “adventure” – how Dr. Diana had researched a rare herb abroad, believing it was used in a

poison that wiped out a wolf pack. She had an accident and was rescued by Harrison, which sparked their romance. A single mother and a

solitary researcher falling in love.

They brought Nadia to our pack to continue the research, but their samples were running out. They’d planned to search for more through summer but were recalled by Alpha King for an “emergency” – me, I guessed. That made me feel guilty; they were close to a breakthrough

but had to put everything on hold to care for me.

When I apologized for disrupting their work, Dr. Harrison firmly shook his head. “You have nothing to apologize for.”

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Chapter 62: Would You Like to Go Outside?

Evelyn’s POV

“Sweetie, you’re not a burden,” Dr. Diana waved dismissively, eyes sparkling with interest. ‘Actually, you’re one of the most fascinating cases we’ve seen! We wouldn’t miss working on your recovery for anything.’

‘Don’t see what’s so special,’ I frowned. “Sentinels probably get beat up all the time.”

Diana and Harrison exchanged a look before Harrison cleared his throat.

“You really don’t know what happened to you, do you?” Dr. Diana asked gently, still collecting samples without breaking concentration.

“What’s complicated about getting jumped and beaten unconscious?” I tried joking, but it came out bitter.

“If that were all,” Dr. Harrison said gravely, “you would’ve been dead long before we found you.”

“What do you mean?” I looked between them.

“The toxins in your system,” Dr. Diana explained, “should’ve killed you within minutes. Not to mention the physical trauma on top of that.

Yet you’re recovering like someone who just had a rough training session.”

She set down her instruments and met my eyes. “And this isn’t your first time surviving something like this, is it? Those silver powder

scars...”

“Within hours of arriving,” Dr. Harrison added, “your body had already started purging most toxins by itself. We only know the initial

concentration because we tested your clothes. Either your attackers had no idea what they were doing, or...” he paused, they were testing

your limits.”

That left me thinking. During my shower time, Dr. Diana took full advantage, insisting on examining all my scars without the hospital

gown blocking her view. She studied each wound closely, muttering theories about silver powder injuries versus regular ones.

She was cagey about sharing her full theories, not wanting to “skew results,” but promised to explain soon. The whole thing made me feel

like some weird science experiment.

After some back-and-forth, Dr. Diana finally let me wear shorts and a T-shirt, but only if she could cut open the back and secure it with safety pins for easy wound monitoring. This arrangement made me feel less exposed when men entered the room, though I was getting used to showing these marks – not like I had much choice anyway.

Two days later, Nadia was finally allowed to visit. The doctors wanted to be sure the toxins were completely gone first. By then I could eat normally and had gained some weight back, so most of the monitoring equipment was gone.

When Nadia walked in, I almost cried, especially when I caught myself looking behind her for the guys. A wave of guilt hit me as I

realized how much I missed them all.

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None of them could come,” Nadia said, reading my expression. “They re all in Alpha King’s special training. I’m not supposed to talk to

them either it’s the rules.”

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That made me feel better at least I wasn’t the only one being isolated. I’d worried it might be because of rumors Acacia spread, or that

they were mad about me leaving.

“They’re training with other rank leaders,” she continued. “But if they get permission to leave, they try to see me. They’d probably visit

you too if they could.”

That made me think they knew we were in the same place. I wasn’t sure how I’d react if they showed up right now. I didn’t want to talk

about that night, and I had no idea what version of events they’d heard.

Nadia dodged questions about the attack, changing subjects whenever I brought it up. I couldn’t tell if she genuinely didn’t know, was banned from discussing it, or if the whole thing had traumatized her too much.

She was pumped about my early start in Sentinel training though, and we spent hours guessing what it might involve. She kept asking if I’d attend regular classes with her or if all my courses would be at the training center. I made a mental note to ask Taric about it.

Speaking of Taric, he now flat-out refused to answer any training questions, insisting I’d learn everything I needed to know during the actual training, not before leaving the hospital. I figured he was testing my patience on purpose.

A week passed before my wolf showed signs of waking up. I could feel her stirring deep in my mind, but couldn't quite hear her voice. Even though I wasn't sure if she could hear me either, just feeling her presence gave me hope, which had Dr. Diana practically bouncing with excitement.

One morning, I suddenly heard her clearly: Child, you can finally hear me. I've been trying to reach you for days. Everything's been foggy, with hazy memories.

We were attacked, I replied, right before the Mating Ball. Acacia found us. What's the last thing you remember?

The locker room, she recalled slowly. You were nervous about going to the ball with the boys. I remember you walking toward the door. That's

Did you smell anyone coming? Or hear footsteps? I pressed. We're usually good at that. How'd we get jumped so easily?

Nothing, no warning at all, she answered, puzzled. That's why I couldn't react in time.

That's what I thought, I pondered. Dr. Diana will want to hear this. Seems like someone can move through our territory without leaving a scent. Might explain why nobody could track whoever left that Luna mark, and why I was always caught off guard at school. I'm just realizing this now, but it's the only explanation for why I never had a chance to defend myself

You're right, my wolf agreed. Now tell me everything that's happened since.

I filled her in on everything from the locker room attack until now. She was shocked, especially by the fragments I remembered. She kept pressing me to tell the doctors more about Acacia and our history, insisting it would help my recovery.

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I refused, using the same reason I gave Taric - Acacia wasn't worth constantly bringing up and getting stuck in a cycle of anger.

Two days after my wolf started communicating again, Warrior Taric and Alpha King Nathan came to my room to discuss next steps.

“Young warrior,” Nathan began kindly, “you certainly know how to stir up trouble. I know you were eager to join Sentinel training, but I didn’t expect you’d be quite this impatient.”

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I managed a weak smile. “I’ll find a better way next time.”

“Would you like to go outside? I’d like to show you around my territory before settling you into the training center. Then you can start

first thing tomorrow morning.”

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Chapter 63: Welcome to Your Future Home

Evelyn’s POV

“Absolutely!” I nearly jumped out of bed, too excited to care about my body’s protests. “I’m going stir-crazy in here! Three weeks in this

room feels like forever.”

“Speaking of long confinements,” Nathan said with unexpected gentleness, “you’ve been through more than someone your age should have

to deal with.”

“Taric, work on that sense of humor,” Nathan glanced at him, despite having just made a similar joke himself. “Though she does need to get used to this kind of ribbing. Sentinels

won't go easy on her because of her age." He turned to me. "They know your basic situation, so

be ready for that."

"Great," I sighed. "So I'm the training center's new oddity."

Dr. Diana ran one final check-up, promising to keep monitoring me at the training center. Looking around, I realized I had almost nothing to take with me. Acacia and her crew had shredded my clothes, and the hospital's spare stuff barely fit.

I stuffed the few things Nadia had brought into a rough cloth bag and followed Nathan and Taric outside. That first breath of fresh air hit me like a drug, my lungs greedily sucking in the pine-scented mountain breeze.

The hospital itself surprised me. While the inside looked like any medical facility – white walls, soft lighting, fancy equipment – the outside was completely different. Built with deep brown natural stone, arched windows with delicate iron patterns, it blended right into the surrounding forest like it had grown from the mountainside. The entrance garden burst with medicinal plants, beautiful but practical.

From my higher vantage point, I got my first real look at the royal territory. Nothing like Polaris City's neat grid layout – buildings here followed the natural landscape, roads winding sensibly through hills and valleys.

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"Over there," Nathan pointed to the distance. "That's the Alpha King's residence."

I spotted a magnificent structure built into a hillside, but not the fairy-tale castle I'd expected. Instead, sandstone-colored buildings were cleverly integrated into the mountain itself, warm golden hues catching the sunlight. Terraces and platforms extended outward, making the whole thing look like part of nature rather than fighting against it.

We walked through dense pine woods for about half an hour, dappled sunlight filtering through branches overhead. As the forest thinned, the view suddenly opened up to reveal a stunning building.

"Is this the Sentinel training center?" I couldn't hide my surprise.

Nothing like the military barracks I'd pictured. Instead of harsh utilitarian design, this building blended traditional and modern elements gracefully. Deep gray and white stone formed an L-shape around an inner courtyard, with blue-gray slate roofing that caught the light. Large windows everywhere, yet it still felt harmonious with the forest surroundings.

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Welcome to your future home, kid,” Taric said, a hint of pride sneaking into his usually stone-cold voice.

We actually train here?” I asked skeptically. “This looks more like a fancy resort than a warrior boot camp.”

Nathan laughed. “Don’t let the pretty packaging fool you. The training Inside is every bit as brutal as the building is beautiful.”

“I believe you,” I winced, touching my still-healing ribs and remembering those merciless selection matches. “Just didn’t expect all... this. I figured we’d get some spartan bunks and a dirt yard.”

They exchanged a look I couldn’t quite read before leading me along a pebbled path to the main entrance. Two thick stone pillars wrapped in ivy supported the portico, and the door itself was carved from a single massive piece of oak, covered in Sentinel symbols.

Inside opened into a bright, spacious hall. Compared to the luxury of Polaris pack house, the style here was more minimalist and practical, but still high-quality. Stone and wood elements created a surprisingly warm atmosphere. Curved staircases on either side led upward.

Through the hall, we entered a common area with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking a lush valley and distant lake. Dark leather sofas

big enough for even the tallest werewolves clustered near a double-sided fireplace that connected to the dining area.

“Communal kitchen,” Taric nodded leftward. “Our warriors take turns cooking; everything you need is right there.”

The kitchen area looked crazy-functional but still stylish. A long island countertop displayed cooking gear with multiple work stations.

Pots and pans hung on walls, industrial-sized fridges lined one side, and a fully-stocked pantry stood opposite.

“So, what do you think?” Nathan asked, studying my face. “Think you can handle living here?”

“Are you kidding?” I couldn’t contain my excitement. “This place is amazing! And I haven’t even seen where we actually train yet!

“Sentinels spend most of their time on missions or field training,” Nathan explained. “We make sure they have somewhere comfortable to recover. Rest time is limited and precious – better environment means more efficient recovery.”

His tone grew more formal. “Let’s see your room first, then Taric will show you the rest.”

‘I’m sorry,’ I suddenly realized, “you didn’t need to personally escort me around, Alpha Nathan.”

“No need for apologies,” he smiled warmly. “I wanted to see your reaction to your new home myself. I do have other business to attend to, but before you continue your tour, we should talk briefly.”

His expression grew serious, like a concerned father stirring something unfamiliar and warm inside me.

“Of course,” I nodded. “I don’t want to waste your time.”

We passed behind the kitchen and took a hidden staircase to the second floor. The hallway was wide and bright, with doors along one side and a railing overlooking the common area on the other.

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“Quick explanation,” Taric said as we walked. “This wing is female housing; males stay on the other side. It’s mostly about convenience,

not strict segregation. Once you earn your Sentinel mark, the divide matters less the mark suppresses certain... physical responses. Intro

courses will explain more.”

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I nodded, getting it. After adapting to wolf form, everyone gets used to different states of undress, especially during shifts. I’d mainly

avoided those situations because of my scars.

“Each Sentinel gets private space,” Nathan continued. “We don’t force incompatible personalities to room together. The mark won’t change

who you are sometimes friction happens between members. Some treat training like life-or-death; others like a game. You’ll figure out

who’s who pretty quick.”

We stopped halfway down the corridor. Taric opened a wooden door and gestured for me to enter.

“Your room,” he said simply. “Basics are provided. Need anything else, floor supervisor can help. I’ll introduce you when she gets back

from her mission.”

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Chapter 64: I Need You to Be Completely Honest With Me

Evelyn’s POV

My new quarters at the Sentinel training center were simple but thoughtful. Gray walls with oak accents created a surprisingly peaceful

space. The single bed had silver-blue bedding that matched my wolf’s fur a detail that touched me more than it probably should have. A

solid desk waited in the corner with training manuals neatly stacked on top.

“You’ll share a bathroom with the other female warriors,” Taric explained. “Omegas clean daily, but keep your own space tidy. They’re not

here to pick up after you.”

“Got it,” I nodded, making mental notes.

Nathan gestured toward the bed. “Have a seat. We need to talk.”

I perched on the edge while Nathan towered over me and Taric leaned against the window. Their positioning wasn’t subtle – I was definitely being interrogated, even if the setting seemed casual.

“I understand why you haven’t told Taric about your attackers,” Nathan began, “but I need you to be completely honest with me now.”

“The attack on you shares too many similarities with the threats against Luna Selena and Isabella to be coincidence,” he continued. “Can you or your wolf remember anything else? Even small details could help.”

He paced slowly, forehead creased with worry. “We’re still investigating the intrusion with little progress. These challengers targeting multiple packs are getting bolder. Usually, such actions come with demands, but so far, we’ve only received threats.”

“I’m sorry,” I sighed, “I can’t remember much. My wolf blacked out right after they broke into the locker room.”

I met his gaze directly. “There were at least three people. The leader rarely got involved except for one slap, but by then my eyes were too swollen to see clearly. I recognized her voice, though.”

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“The two guys holding me down were incredibly strong like Magnus or Lucian strong. But they never spoke, so I couldn’t identify them. Just like with the intrusion, no scents were left behind. Even the leader’s scent vanished completely. Her voice was the only giveaway.”

“I think she wanted me to know it was her,” I added bitterly. “Her way of rubbing in how untouchable she is.”

Nathan sat across from me, his expression softening. “Would you tell me who orchestrated the attack? It’s important for justice.”

“I can’t, Alpha King,” I shook my head. “I have no proof. It would just be my word against hers, and she’s a master at twisting information. She’s built this protective network around herself and dodged consequences for years. Adults who should have noticed never did.”

I looked him straight in the eye. “I don’t want to deal with her anymore or create more trouble by being accused of making false allegations. Karma will get her eventually. I just hope I’m there to see it.”

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“What if she targets others after you leave?” Nathan pressed. “Or if she’s involved in the threats against our packs?”

“I don’t think she will,” I considered. “Everyone’s too scared of her. As long as they stay out of her way and don’t interfere with her chasing the triplets, she’ll leave them alone. That’s partly why I trained the cubs so hard so they’d at least know how to defend themselves.”

I took a deep breath. “She saw me as a threat because of my friendship with the future leaders. She just wants to eliminate anyone who might get between her and what she wants. If someone actually chooses her, that’s their problem. I don’t think the Moon Goddess would

let someone like her become Luna.”

“As for the threats against Queen Selena and Luna Isabella – I doubt she thinks that big. But if you find evidence that kids from Polaris helped those intruders, I’ll tell you everything I know. Until then, I’d rather stay quiet so I don’t mess up your investigation.’

“Following pack law to the letter, aren’t you?” Nathan chuckled. “You’re as good as Taric at withholding information while sounding perfectly reasonable.”

“I won’t push for now,” he conceded. “But if you need to talk, there are plenty of experienced warriors here who might understand what you’ve been through. I hope you’ll trust someone eventually.”

“Thank you,” I said sincerely. “For taking me in when you didn’t have to. It means a lot.”

“Don’t mention it,” Nathan waved dismissively. “If I hadn’t helped, Alistair might have ripped my head off. He’s been anxious these past weeks – even tried pulling rank to visit you, which we refused. Your other friends have been banned from approaching you too, to avoid adding pressure. Hasn’t stopped them from asking about you daily.”

I stared at him in surprise.

“They’re here for leadership training, but clearly distracted,” Nathan smiled. “Knowing you’ve moved to the training center will be good news for all of them. After nearly losing you, those six have grown even closer. Adam and I think some distance would be good for you, given what you’ve been through.”

“Luna Isabella can visit monthly, but during formal training, no other visitors are allowed. I’m looking forward to seeing your progress. You’ll connect with the outside world only on the days you attend regular classes.”

“Thank you again, Alpha King.”

‘I’ll leave you to settle in,” he stood. “Taric will show you around and give you your schedules. Nadia will be thrilled to know you’ll attend some classes at our local school. Since we run year-round, you won’t get a summer break. Given your situation, we want to make things feel as normal as possible.”

Nathan patted my shoulder with unexpected warmth. He nodded to Tarle and left.

“Check your closet,” Taric pointed to the corner door. “Your uniforms are ready. Wear them whenever you leave your room. You can wear whatever in here, but since you arrived empty-handed, uniforms are probably your only option.”

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Chapter 65: Just Complete the Entire Course

Evelyn's POV

He turned and left, shutting the door behind him.

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I changed into black training pants, a deep blue sports bra, and a black jacket with the Sentinel emblem. The clothes fit surprisingly well. I dashed to the bathroom for a hair tie and managed to wrangle my now-short hair into a tiny ponytail, making it to the hallway just within Taric's three-minute deadline.

He didn't even glance at me, just turned and continued down the corridor, pointing to a room near the main staircase.

"Your floor supervisor's room," he explained briefly. "See her if you need anything. Seraphina's been here for years and will help you perform at your best. You'll meet her before dinner. Male section's at the other end, same setup. Let's see the living areas first, then the outdoor training grounds."

I followed Taric down the main staircase, taking in the dark carpeting and intricately carved oak handrails. The craftsmanship seemed

almost too fancy for what I'd expected from a training center.

"This way," Taric nodded, turning right into a wide corridor.

"Study area and meeting rooms," he explained as we walked. "If your bedroom's too distracting, come here. Outside visitors are only

allowed in this section, and only if I approve first."

The interior struck a perfect balance between tradition and modern design – wooden panels blending seamlessly with contemporary lighting. We passed a library with floor-to-ceiling shelves packed with books.

"We don't just train warriors, we train thinkers," Taric said. "Every mission needs proper planning. Improvisation usually means disaster."

I nodded, mentally filing this away. This approach was completely different from my previous training in Polaris, which had focused

almost exclusively on physical skills.

We pushed through another set of double doors, and I nearly gasped. Outside stretched an enormous training complex with a massive swimming pool, several hot tubs, and fitness equipment scattered around. Through a row of tall oaks in the distance, I could make out

climbing frames.

‘Basic rules are simple, Taric stopped and faced me. ‘Up at four, breakfast before five, training starts at six sharp. Dinner’s at eight, and if you’re late, nobody saves food. Lights out at ten, no exceptions. We train the elite of the elite, not slackers.’

“I can handle that,” I said firmly, hoping it was true. After weeks in a hospital bed, my body clock was totally screwed up.

“What about weekends? Is the schedule different?”

“Training happens every day,” he replied. “Weekends have modified schedules with some free time on one day. But as a probationary

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member, you’ll need to earn permission to leave.”

His eyes narrowed slightly. “Some have tried sneaking out. It always ends badly. This territory is isolated and monitored. Don’t waste your time trying. Rule-breakers get called out in front of everyone.”

I swallowed hard. This was clearly a warning not to try sneaking out to see Nadia or the guys.

“Hey Taric,” I asked after a moment, “how do people address you here? I’ve noticed other warriors don’t call you by name. I don’t want to stick out more than I already do.”

He raised an eyebrow. “You’re naturally someone who stands out, kid. Sixteen years old, personally escorted by the Alpha King? That’s

enough to draw attention. As for what to call me, I’ve already stated my expectations, and they don’t change based on who’s around.”

He turned and continued walking, leaving me frustrated and confused. Was that his way of saying “be yourself”?

“By the way,” he added suddenly, “in two weeks, Luna Queen Selena wants to see you at the castle. You’ll be excused from training, and

they’ll send proper clothes.”

“Wait, what?” I blinked. “Is that an invitation or an order? Why does she want to see me?”

“All I know is you’ll spend the day and evening there,” he answered flatly, like this was perfectly normal.

Great. Another reason for the other Sentinels to see me as different.

We passed through a hedge opening and reached the training grounds. The size took my breath away – at least three football fields,

divided into different training zones.

The center held combat platforms and weapon racks, surrounded by various obstacle courses: high walls, balance beams, water pits, wire nets, and complex climbing structures. Everything was clearly designed for werewolf abilities, with distances and heights way beyond

human scale.

“Holy crap!” I couldn’t help exclaiming, taking a few steps forward. “This makes Polaris City’s facilities look like a playground!”

A circular track wrapped around the entire field, its surface changing from swamp to sand to rocky terrain as it went. There was even a mock city area with buildings of different heights for urban mission training.

The corner of Taric’s mouth twitched upward. “You seem impressed. Today we’ll assess your current physical condition to establish a

baseline.”

He pointed to a set of obstacles. “This test area measures your power, endurance, and adaptability. Looks basic, but it’ll exhaust ordinary

warriors.”

I studied each obstacle carefully: ten-foot wooden posts standing with irregular spacing; a thirteen-foot smooth wall with barely any handholds; hanging rings suspended high above; plus water pits and crawl spaces.

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For someone my size, these would be especially tough. The jumps between posts would challenge even tall werewolves, and at five-foot- two, I'd need a completely different approach.

“Any specific goals for this test?” I asked. “Time limits? Ways to fail?”

“For now, just finish the whole course,” Taric answered. “We’ll set specific goals based on today’s performance.”

I bit back a sigh. He never gave straight answers. Instead of complaining, I needed to focus on the challenge ahead. Proving I could adapt

was more important than getting clear instructions.

I took my place at the starting line, took a deep breath, and surveyed the obstacles. Tougher than expected, but I wouldn’t back down. I

gave Taric a quick nod to show I was ready.

“Begin,” he said simply.

I sprinted toward the first obstacle, my mind already calculating the best approach for my size and strengths.

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Chapter 66: Better Than Expected

Evelyn’s POV

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I sprinted toward the first obstacle – a maze of wooden posts standing at least ten feet tall with frustratingly smooth surfaces. The posts were spaced irregularly, making the gaps challenging even for tall werewolves. For someone my size, it looked nearly impossible.

Taking a deep breath, I jumped onto the first post, landing solidly and immediately scanning for my next move. The random arrangement was clearly designed to throw off any rhythm. I couldn't make the same long strides as taller warriors, so I'd need to maximize every

jump.

When I leaped to the second post, I nearly shouted in panic – the distance was wider than I'd calculated. My toes barely caught the edge, my body tipping dangerously forward before I managed to steady myself.

"Focus," I muttered, moving carefully to the next post.

After clearing that section, I faced a thirteen-foot smooth wall with virtually no handholds. I backed up a few steps, chose my approach, and sprinted forward, jumping as high as I could. My fingertips just barely caught the top edge. Gritting my teeth, I pulled myself up with shaking arms, finally rolling over the top.

Next came a series of hanging rings suspended at different heights, spaced about six feet apart. I launched myself from the wall to grab the first ring, using my momentum to start swinging. When I'd built enough height, I released and flew toward the next one.

By the sixth ring, my arms were trembling, knuckles white with strain. My shoulders burned fiercely – those weeks in the hospital bed had definitely weakened me. But I wasn't about to quit.

I moved onto what they generously called a "balance beam" – a wooden strip barely three inches wide with an uneven surface. Obstacle poles jutted out from both sides, ready to sweep unwary trainees into the mud below.

I took my first careful step, noting how the beam subtly swayed. This was trickier than it looked. I tried to move deliberately while keeping my body loose enough to react quickly.

After the balance beam came a sixteen-foot water gap with floating wooden platforms that looked sketchy at best. I needed to cross by stepping on these boards, knowing each would start sinking after bearing weight.

My first step confirmed my suspicions the board sank much faster than expected. I barely jumped to the next one before it submerged completely. By the time I reached the other side, I was soaked through.

A low wire net waited next. Sharp stones covered the ground beneath it, forcing me to crawl on elbows and knees. The net got progressively lower until it was only about sixteen inches high, forcing me to press almost flat against the ground. The stones bit into my skin, but compared to what I'd lived through, this was nothing.

Several vertical climbing ropes came next, attached to a horizontal bar sixteen feet up. I grabbed the rough hemp, pulling myself up with already exhausted arms. At the top, I had to hang upside down and traverse the entire horizontal bar, inching along despite my muscles

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Chapter 66: Better Than Expected

screaming in protest.

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The next section featured jumping platforms of different heights, each less than two square feet in area. The distances between them

varied unpredictably, forcing me to calculate each jump carefully while maintaining my balance.

The final stretch was a weighted sprint through soft sand that seemed to grab at my feet with each step. I pushed my burning legs to

accelerate, lungs on fire and muscles twitching, but refusing to slow down.

ZD

When I crossed the finish line, I could barely stand. Sweat soaked my uniform, and every muscle in my body trembled violently. Hospital recovery had definitely wrecked my stamina, but I'd managed to complete the entire course that's what mattered.

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I forced myself to regulate my breathing and stand straight as I approached Taric. Even feeling like I might collapse, I refused to show

weakness on my first day.

Standing next to Taric was a red-haired woman who I guessed was my floor supervisor. She looked me up and down with a critical eye.

“Barely acceptable,” she remarked coolly. “At least she didn’t collapse halfway through.”

I stood before them, fighting to control my breathing while pain radiated through every muscle.

Taric scribbled something on his clipboard. “Better than expected,” he said briefly.

The red-haired woman turned to me. “I’m Seraphina, supervisor for your floor. Come to me with any needs, assuming you last until

tomorrow.”

I nodded politely, still waiting for some feedback on my performance. When none came, I gathered my courage and looked Taric in the

eye.

“Warrior Taric, what areas should I focus on improving? I need clear goals to get better.”

Seraphina looked surprised by my directness, but I kept my attention on Taric.

“This was just a baseline assessment,” he replied, “to gauge your post-injury recovery and fitness level. Your training plan will need adjustments details tomorrow.”

He checked his watch. “One hour until dinner, Seraphina, show her around. And you,” he directed at me, “take a twenty minute hot bath for those ribs. Tomorrow you’ll really feel today’s training.”

“Yes, sir,” I responded, recognizing the dismissal.

“Follow me, newbie,” Seraphina said, heading toward the fitness area and pool. “The others should be finishing up training now.”

I silently followed, trying to memorize our surroundings to avoid getting lost later. Until I made friends here, I had to assume I was on my

own.

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Chapter 66: Better Than Expected

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As we approached the massive hot tub already filled with tall, muscular warriors, nervousness swept through me. Everyone here towered

over me and was obviously much older.

In that moment, I finally understood why Isabella and Queen Selena had been concerned about me joining Sentinel training early.

‘Little one! It really is you!’ A tall, muscular guy jumped out of the hot tub and rushed toward me, dripping water everywhere. “Sixteen

and already here? How the hell did Taric recruit you?”

Before I could answer, he scooped me into a bear hug, lifting me clear off the ground.

“Mark? Seriously?” I laughed, dangling helplessly. “With your navigation skills, I’m worried about surviving tomorrow. Sure hope you’re

better on real missions than in those selection trials.”

He set me down with a hearty laugh, leaving my front completely soaked.

“This little one slipped away from us twice during selection,” he explained to the others watching us. “And landed an uppercut that nearly

knocked my teeth loose.”

Seraphina crossed her arms, clearly annoyed. “Since you already have a guide, I won’t waste my time.” Without another word, she turned

and marched away.

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

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Souls Bound By Promise — Timothy Nelson

Chapter 67: How Did You Get In Here?

Evelyn's POV

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"Evelyn! You made it!" A familiar voice called from the hot tub. Sophia waved excitedly, her face lighting up. "That strategy you came up

with during trials was brilliant. I knew you'd end up here!"

She climbed out and gave me another wet hug. "Sit with me. I'll introduce you to everyone."

I carefully rolled up my pants and dipped my feet into the water. The warmth immediately melted into my sore muscles, bringing instant

relief. Mental note: bring actual swimwear tomorrow, though plenty of Sentinels didn't seem too concerned about modesty.

"How many people from trials got picked?" I asked, curious.

Mark sat back down with a splash. "You're the last one to show up. Though your situation is... different."

Sophia started rattling off names and roles of people around us

-

too many to remember at once.

A blond guy sitting across from us raised an eyebrow. "So how'd you end up with 'Number One' as a nickname?"

Mark and I exchanged amused glances.

"He was my first opponent," I explained. "Didn't have time for introductions, so I just gave him a number in my head."

"Nicknames after one fight? Sounds suspicious," Blondie smirked.

Sophia jumped in before I could respond. "She didn't just nickname him. This girl took over our entire team during the challenge phase. Analyzed the field, developed a complete

strategy, even patched up Raven's broken nose while still giving orders. Our team scored highest

in the whole event.”

‘I couldn't have done it without your scouting,’ I said, meaning it. “Your intel was crucial.”

“No joke,” Mark added. “When enemies hit us from both sides, she slipped straight through their lines and snagged four flags without

getting caught. Had to see it to believe someone so small could move that fast.”

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“Wait – that was you?” A warrior named Cyrus suddenly stared at me with new interest. “You're the one who dislocated my shoulder in the

simulation?”

Blondie's eyes widened. “Her? No way! You described her as a ‘dangerous hulk like some wild buffalo! She's tiny!”

Cyrus rubbed his shoulder awkwardly, clearly embarrassed.

I couldn't help laughing. “Just used your weight against you. Not my fault you charged at me without thinking.”

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Chapter 67: How Did You Get In Here?

“Remember our final strategy?” Sophia turned to Mark. “Evelyn made each of us play to our strengths. Like conducting an orchestra.

*She fought everyone in our squad,” Mark added. “Don't let the size fool you. On the field, she's like a shadow impossible to catch.”

Blondie leaned forward, studying me. “So, shadow girl, what's your story? Sentinels usually take adults who've finished their education.

Taric personally brought you there must be a reason.”

I hesitated. The last thing I wanted was to drag Acacia and all that darkness into my fresh start. These people didn't need my baggage.

"Honestly, didn't expect to come this early," I finally said. "Just did well in the Polaris City selection. Later, Nathan and Taric decided I

should train here." I shrugged. "Their call, not mine."

"Using the Alpha King's and Sentinel's names," Seraphina's cold voice cut in from the other end of the tub. I hadn't even noticed her there.

"Your arrogance is remarkable."

"They asked me to call them that," I answered truthfully, though I shifted uncomfortably.

"Proper respect should still be maintained," she said icily. "Don't think being special in your old pack means anything here. No one will

coddle you."

I couldn't tell if she genuinely disliked my attitude or was just jealous of my apparent special treatment.

"Yes, ma'am," I replied, trying not to sound sarcastic but probably failing.

She studied me silently, eyes narrowed. Great. My floor supervisor was clearly not a fan.

A bell suddenly rang throughout the training grounds.

"What's that?" I asked.

"Dinner warning, Mark leaped out of the water. "Ten minutes till food. Trust me, you don't want to be last in line.

I followed quickly, with Sophia right behind.

"Which floor are you on?" she asked while drying off.

"Second, middle section. You?"

"Third. I'll come find you after changing. Wear black sweats and a long-sleeve, don't forget slippers."

"Wait, there's a dress code for dinner?" That seemed oddly formal.

“Just an unwritten rule,” she explained. “Training gear in training areas, but comfy clothes at dinner when there’s no training afterward. Everyone dresses the same, so nobody stands out. Seraphina definitely wouldn’t bother telling you this stuff.”

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Chapter 67: How Did You Get In Here?

As we climbed the stairs, she lowered her voice. “She’s got it out for you.”

“Why? I’ve been here like four hours and only did the basic assessment.”

“That might be exactly the problem,” Sophia muttered. “We’ll talk later. Now hurry up. Mark wasn’t kidding about dinner this pack of

hungry wolves won’t leave crumbs for latecomers. Eating here is survival of the fittest.”

She walked me to my door. “Three minutes. Don’t make me wait.”

I rushed inside and changed quickly, not wanting to hold her up. What had Sophia meant about the connection between Seraphina’s

hostility and my basic test?

I’d barely finished when there was a knock, followed immediately by Sophia pushing the door open. I was already learning to appreciate

her directness – she and Nadia would definitely get along.

“Move it! All the good food will be gone! Her eyes sparkled with genuine excitement. “The chef team here is amazing. Everything tastes

incredible!”

Her childlike enthusiasm for food made me smile.

“What’s so funny?” Mark and Cyrus were waiting at the staircase.

“Sophia turns into a five-year-old at the mention of food,” I laughed. “Is it really that good? Is that why we can’t be late?”

“Pretty much,” Cyrus answered, true to his minimalist speaking style.

As we turned the corner into the common area, a wave of noise hit us. People were already lining up for food when we entered the dining hall. The room buzzed with conversation and laughter, everyone radiating an infectious energy. It gave me goosebumps – even my wolf stirred happily inside. This unspoken bond between everyone was exactly what I’d always craved.

‘Only 8:05 and it’s packed,’ Mark whispered. “That’s why you can’t be late. Always chaotic when everyone’s here.”

We joined the buffet line facing an impressive spread – roasted meats, salads, pasta, and desserts. Remembering Orion’s comment about me being too skinny, I loaded my plate. If training was as intense as they claimed, I’d need the fuel.

“Space over there,” Sophia pointed to a far table, leading us through the crowd,
”

The dining hall had an industrial design practical without unnecessary decoration. The walls featured murals of battle scenes and photos of veteran Sentinels. We sat at an ancient oak table covered with years of scratches and marks.

“So tell me about Seraphina,” I asked, cutting into my roast beef. “Why does she hate me already? What’s the connection to my basic test?”

Feels like information I need to survive probation.”

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Chapter 5

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Chapter 68: What Should I Watch Out For?

(ZD)

Evelyn's POV

The three exchanged glances, silently deciding who'd spill the tea. Sophia finally broke the silence.

"So here's the deal," she said, leaning forward. "New recruits normally do their basic test in front of everyone. It's like this big initiation thing. Most people crash and burn, get laughed at, the whole embarrassing package. She took a quick bite of food before continuing. "After selection, they dumped us in these bare-bones cabins overnight, threw training uniforms at us the next morning, and marched us straight to testing. No instructions, just 'begin' and good luck. Out of fifty people, only twenty made it through to get rooms."

I frowned. I did the same test, just without an audience. What's the big deal?"

"Before you showed up, Cyrus said quietly, "Seraphina was the only person Taric ever personally tested. Made her feel special. She was

also the youngest recruit at seventeen."

"And now here you come," Mark jumped in, waving his fork for emphasis, "sixteen years old, personally escorted by the freaking Alpha King, getting to leave for school, and basically stealing all her thunder. But what really set her off was you taking the test without everyone watching. That's like... sacred tradition around here."

I rubbed my forehead. "Great. I've been here half a day and already have enemies. I just want to train and prove I belong here."

"Chill, Mark said, nudging my shoulder. 'She's pretty much the only one with issues. After the selection trials, people wouldn't shut up about you. I got picked as your guide specifically because we worked together before."

He grinned suddenly. "Speaking of school, it's been forever since I set foot in one. Graduated ages ago, but I'd kill to tag along sometime."

Cyrus snorted. "You'd be pissed if you went with her. Think about it - she's sixteen, basically a junior, can graduate by summer, at least a year and a half ahead. Now remember how you barely scraped through?"

When the realization hit Mark, he and Sophia burst out laughing. His shocked expression was so ridiculous I couldn't help joining in.

"Seriously though," I said once we'd calmed down, "what should I watch out for? What stupid mistakes do newbies make that I should avoid?"

If they'd kicked thirty people out on day one, I couldn't afford to screw up.

"Don't be late. Ever, Sophia said immediately. "Be prepared for everything, and try to figure out what they're really asking for beneath the actual instructions." She gave me an encouraging smile. "But honestly, you're already ahead of most. Everyone was talking about your adaptability after selection."

"How long is probation exactly?" I asked, changing the subject. "What happens after I pass?"

"Three phases, Mark explained between bites. "First thirty days is apprenticeship. Nobody will openly mess with you, but nobody will help

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Chapter 68: What Should I Watch Out For?

either. Everyone's watching to see if you've got what it takes."

Sophia picked up where he left off. "Then comes another thirty days of prep. Make it that far and you're officially accepted. You get a temporary Sentinel mark and start doing minor missions."

"What exactly is this mark? Why's it such a big deal?" I asked. "Taric mentioned it earlier too."

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"It's the bond connecting us,' Cyrus pointed to the inside of his right forearm. "Like a special pack link, but just for Sentinels. The mark goes here and doesn't break your original pack bond, just adds you to our network. On missions, you can mind-link with teammates no

matter how far apart you are."

“But what about me? Taric said I could train but no missions until ‘the appropriate time,’” I said, trying not to sound disappointed. “Please

tell me probation won’t drag on for a whole year.”

“Hard to say,” Cyrus shrugged. “The Alpha King and Taric obviously have plans for you, or you wouldn’t be here.”

He paused, then dropped the bomb. “The mark also suppresses mating hormones.”

I nearly choked on my water. “What?”

“After getting marked, you can’t look for a mate or feel any sexual attraction,” he explained matter-of-factly. “We’ve got nearly a hundred warriors crammed in here all strong, energetic, and horny as hell without the mark. Suppressing all that prevents messy hookups and

drama so we can focus on missions.”

“Who does the marking? What if someone wants to keep their chance at finding a mate?” I asked, suddenly concerned.

I might have almost two years before I could technically find a mate, but I wasn’t sure how I felt about that choice being taken away.

“Sentinel elders and a witch do it together,” Cyrus answered. “It’s temporary though, wears off over time. Alpha King makes Sentinels remove it every five years, giving them a year to find a mate if they want.”

“How do you know all this stuff?” I asked, genuinely curious. “Doesn’t seem like common knowledge.”

Cyrus was clearly the quiet, observant type – the kind people overlook but who notices everything. Mark and Sophia seemed just as surprised as me, both turning to stare at him.

He watched me for a moment, like he was deciding something important.

“Came from a normal family,” he finally said, voice low and steady. “During a pack conflict, my mother was killed. Nearly destroyed my dad. After losing his mate, he decided to get stronger to protect what family he had left. He brought me here, then joined the Sentinels himself, using the mark to numb the pain of losing his mate.”

His eyes met mine, creating this unspoken understanding between us. Somehow, he seemed to know about my family situation. I just nodded, acknowledging what went unsaid.

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Chapter 68: What Should I Watch Out For?

Before things could get too heavy, a bell rang, and people throughout the dining hall started clearing tables. Taric wasn't kidding about us being responsible for the place.

Ten minutes later, everything was spotless. The discipline was impressive.

"What happens now?" I asked Sophia after tossing my trash and stacking dishes.

"Free time until lights out," she looped her arm through mine. "Most people shower, then head to their rooms, especially if they've been on missions. Some hang out in the common room. Come on, let's see what everyone's up to."

I spent the next hour meeting other Sentinels, trying to remember names and faces for future reference. It was fascinating watching how

the veterans interacted with the younger members – older Sentinels were all about efficiency, while the younger ones were more open and

energetic.

The lights-out warning bell caught me by surprise. I'd been enjoying the social time more than I expected.

This place already felt strangely like home, but completely different from Polaris City. I wasn't sure what to make of that feeling yet.

"Do those same bells wake us up in the morning?" I asked Sophia as we headed upstairs.

"Nope, that's the floor supervisor's job," she answered with a knowing look.

"Wonderful," I sighed. "Looks like someone's gonna be extra happy to see me tomorrow."

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Chapter 5

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Chapter 69: I Thought You Were Smart Enough

Evelyn's POV

“Could you wake me up tomorrow?” I asked Sophia as we reached my floor. “After the hospital, my sleep schedule's totally wrecked.”

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“No problem,” she nodded. “Though Seraphina should handle that it's literally her job. She'd be embarrassed if someone on her floor

showed up late.”

“Thanks for today,” I said, stopping at my door. “Nice having a friendly face around.”

“We team players stick together,” she winked, heading up to the third floor.

Inside my room, I found some books and a folder on the desk. The first page showed my schedule – I was apparently going to school

tomorrow. While seeing Nadia would be nice, I'd hoped to spend my first day training. After weeks trapped in that hospital bed, I was

itching to move.

Still, I couldn't complain. Getting my education early while starting Sentinel training was a dream scenario. The antique wall clock on my

wall had no alarm function, and there were no outlets in sight. They really meant business about isolating us from tech.

Morning light woke me. I quickly put on my uniform and was checking my course schedule when Sophia burst in, looking frazzled.

“I'm so sorry! Totally forgot to wake you!”

I glanced at the clock – 5:45 AM, definitely too late for breakfast. I stuffed everything into my backpack and followed her out.

‘I didn’t remember until Mark asked if I’d seen you,’ she explained as we rushed downstairs.

“Don’t sweat it,’ I reassured her. “I was up reading and lost track of time. Didn’t hear any wake-up call anyway.”

“You probably didn’t get one,” Mark said when we met him in the entrance hall. “Seraphina’s group is always first out. She’s deliberately messing with you.”

“Great,’ I sighed. “Will we be late? The schedule didn’t specify times.”

“That’s weird,” Mark frowned. “Your floor supervisor should’ve covered all that.”

He led me to a modified four-wheel motorcycle that immediately caught my attention. Definitely learning to drive one of those someday.

“If she’s sabotaging me, who do I check with about my real schedule?” I asked, climbing onto the back seat.

“That’s a good question, Mark started the engine, and I instinctively grabbed his jacket. “I’ve never had issues with her. No idea why she’s being so childish about a new member.”

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Chapter 69: I Thought You Were Smart Enough

He floored it, nearly throwing me off. I yelped and held on tighter as he deliberately accelerated around curves, making me laugh despite everything.

About ten minutes later, we arrived at what looked more like a palace than a school – elaborate stone walls, intricate woodwork, and

colored glass windows that reminded me of some ancient werewolf council chamber.

“This is really a school?” I asked, staring upward.

“Yep, Mark nodded. “Academy for the Alpha King, elders, and high-ranking family members.

My expression hardened. “So it’s all those entitled rich kids? I’ve had enough of stuck-up werewolf brats in Polaris City, and that was a

mixed school.”

“Aren’t you a Beta’s daughter?” Mark asked, looking confused. “Shouldn’t you have been part of that crowd?”

“Yeah, I’m Raymond Beta’s second child,” I said, my voice cooling as I walked toward the entrance. “But as a girl who wasn’t inheriting the

Beta position, some people considered me lower than an Omega.”

I needed to shut this conversation down before saying something I’d regret.

“Wait,” Mark caught up with me. “I didn’t mean anything by it. Just thought kids from high-ranking families had it easy.

“Maybe for firstborn sons like you, or my brother Elliot,” I took a deep breath. “We’ll talk about this another time. Right now, I need to figure out my actual schedule and how much Seraphina has screwed me over.”

Inside, Mark led me to the office where a formidable woman sat behind an elegant desk. Despite being past fifty, she radiated strength. Her deep brown hair had striking silver streaks styled in vintage waves, and she wore a dark green velvet jacket with antique silver jewelry. Most striking were her amber eyes scrutinizing us through half-moon glasses – and the fact that she was even shorter than me.

“Excuse me,” I began politely, figuring I’d start respectful and adjust from there.

She looked me up and down, one eyebrow raised, saying nothing.

“I’m Evelyn, a new student,” I continued. “I was in such a rush this morning that I left my schedule at the training center. Could I get another copy? I don’t want to be late to class.”

She studied me for a moment. “When Alpha King Nathan mentioned you, I thought you were smart enough to remember your own schedule. What makes you think I’d give you another copy?”

I immediately dropped the polite act. I was tired of people making assumptions about me in this new place.

“Honestly? I don’t trust the person who gave me the schedule and wanted to verify the information,” I said bluntly. I hate getting filtered versions of things. If you won’t print another copy, at least let me check if what I have is accurate.”

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Chapter 69: I Thought You Were Smart Enough

“That’s more like it,” her eyes flashed with approval, mouth curving slightly. “Next time, skip the innocent act. It doesn’t suit you.”

I snorted, unable to hold back a laugh. Behind me, Mark chuckled.

“I’m Elara,” she pulled a paper from a mini-printer that was as tiny as she was. “Come to me if you need anything. I’ve seen your

transcript and arranged your schedule myself. You really are different.”

She winked dramatically and handed me the printout. “This is the correct version. If Seraphina’s trying to trip you up on day one, you

must be special.”

Elara reminded me of Griffin’s humor style. I had a feeling we’d get along just fine.

After getting my schedule, I followed Mark to my first class. All morning, he tried to keep things light mimicking hunting poses when teachers weren’t looking, doodling tiny wolves on my notes, shooting paper balls at other students. I nearly smacked him until a teacher

warned that further disruption would mean punishment.

The girls were clearly fascinated by the handsome Sentinel but kept their distance, either intimidated by his status or thinking we were together. Didn’t stop him from enjoying the attention.

“You realize they’re all minors, right?” I reminded him when he winked at a blonde for the third time. “And no matter how much they drool over you, you physically can’t respond because of your Sentinel mark. So you’re basically teasing them with something you can’t

deliver. That’s just awkward.”

That finally seemed to get through to him. He stopped his peacocking and actually focused on class.

By lunchtime, I finally spotted Nadia. The second she saw me, she practically tackled me with a hug.

“Oh my god! I’ve been looking everywhere for you!” she squealed, eyes bright with excitement. “But you weren’t in any of my classes because they put you in all those advanced courses! They’re letting you skip regular classes and go straight to graduation requirements!”

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Chapter 5

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Chapter 70: You’re the Bravest Newbie I’ve Ever Seen

Evelyn’s POV

“Great, like I need more attention,” I muttered as Nadia’s excitement about my advanced classes echoed through the cafeteria.

She squeezed my arm, eyes bright. “Do you realize what this means? You could finish school early and jump straight into full-time

Sentinel training!”

“Mind keeping it down?” I whispered, feeling stares from every direction. “I’m already sticking out enough.”

“Sorry!” Her volume dropped, but her enthusiasm didn’t. “It’s just so cool!

“Yeah, it is,” I admitted with a small smile, though my thoughts were already racing ahead to the afternoon’s challenges.

I spent the next several hours catching up on missed coursework. The royal school’s curriculum was impressively efficient – well- structured courses that let me progress quickly. According to my calculations, I could make up the month I’d missed within a week.

Mark drove us back to the training center around six. I’d packed every textbook and study guide Elara had given me, determined not to

fall behind.

“You know, you don’t have to hit the books every second,” Mark teased as we walked. “Even Sentinels need downtime.”

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We’d barely stepped through the main entrance when Seraphina blocked our path, arms crossed and eyes narrowed.

“Skipping mandatory training already?” Her voice dripped with contempt. “If you can’t handle basic requirements, maybe you should crawl back to your pathetic little pack.”

Before I could answer, Mark stepped beside me. “Back off. It’s her first day and she didn’t even get a proper schedule.”

“That’s no excuse, Seraphina kept her eyes locked on me, completely ignoring him. “Once you join Sentinel training, you’re expected to show a warrior’s responsibility, not act like some spoiled princess.”

I raised my hand to stop Mark from saying more. I didn’t need anyone fighting my battles, especially over this petty power play.

“That’s enough,” I said quietly but firmly. “Think whatever you want about me, but I have orders from your superiors, and I’m not letting anyone interfere with those. You don’t have to like me, but if you try to sabotage my schedule again, we’re going to have problems.”

I took a step closer, watching uncertainty flicker across her face.

“Want me in training? Give proper notice. Want me to wake myself? Just say so. Try acting like a real leader instead of using me as your punching bag.” I met her gaze steadily. “Now unless you have something important to say, I’ve got assignments to finish before dinner.”

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Chapter 70: You’re the Bravest Newbie I’ve Ever Seen

She stepped closer, lowering her voice. “Meet me at the testing field at five tomorrow morning, and again at five in the evening for

additional training. No exceptions.”

“Fine. Can I go now? I need to finish my work, and Mark has to report in.”

“Go. Sit with me at dinner tonight.”?

I nodded and walked away. If she thought separating me from my new friends was punishment, she was mistaken.

“Not gonna lie, that was badass!” Mark whispered once we were out of earshot. “You’ve got serious guts for a newbie.”

“You’re such a dork,” I rolled my eyes but couldn’t help smiling.

In the library, Mark stared at my mountain of books. “What is all this? I don’t think I saw this many textbooks my entire high school career.”

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“I’m taking junior and senior courses but missed a month of material,” I explained, flipping through pages. “Need to catch up fast. Wish I

could’ve started during my hospital stay.”

Mark’s expression turned serious. “Hold up – what kind of injury keeps someone in the hospital for a month?”

I mentally kicked myself for the slip. “Not important. Just saying it was boring, and I could’ve used the time to study.”

“Look, you don’t have to talk about it now,” his voice softened, “but eventually you might need to. If it was serious, your mental health matters too. Warriors coming back from rough missions get psychological evaluations for a reason.”

He paused, unusually thoughtful. “Bad experiences can haunt you when you least expect it. I know you’re tough you kicked my ass easily enough – but you wouldn’t be here this early unless something major happened. If you ever need to talk, most of us are willing to listen.”

I raised a skeptical eyebrow.

“Okay, not everyone,” he admitted with a smile, “but you get what I mean.”

I nodded. Nadia had said similar things, as had her parents and the boys back home. But I wasn’t ready to rehash those memories.

“Thanks, but I really need to focus now,” I said gently.

He took the hint. "I'll grab you for dinner later. Even if you're stuck with the drill sergeant, we can at least stand in line together."

After he left, I threw myself into studying, mapping out a plan to complete everything within a week. Seraphina's extra training sessions would complicate things, but I'd manage.

"That's enough, nerd!" Mark's head suddenly popped through the doorway. "Study time's over!"

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Chapter 70: You're the Bravest Newble I've Ever Seen

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Sophia and Cyrus appeared behind him, helping me gather my books. Mark insisted we take everything to my room to prevent tampering.

In the dining hall, I stood near the front of the line as instructed, but apparently this still wasn't good enough.

"I told you to have dinner with me, which includes standing with me in line," Seraphina called from behind us. "Can't follow simple

instructions? Get over here now!"

When Sophia started to speak up, I gently grabbed her arm. This was my battle.

"Actually, you said to come early and sit with you," I replied calmly. "I'm doing both, but you never mentioned where in line I should

stand. I'll wait for you at a table after getting my food."

I turned away, ignoring her fuming. I hadn't come here for petty power games.

While we waited, Cyrus explained the daily training routine, probably trying to help me avoid more schedule mishaps.

"We gather each morning for announcements, learn about available missions, stuff like that," he said.

"We can volunteer for missions?" I asked.

“Sometimes. Simple recon or protection tasks, you can sign up. Bigger missions get assigned based on skills.”

“Have any of you been on missions yet?”

“Nah, we’re all still on probation,” Mark bumped my shoulder. “But soon we’ll start helping around the royal territory.”

“Hope I can join you. Wouldn’t want to miss out.”

Sophia smiled. “You’re years ahead of schedule already.”

After getting my food, I waited for Seraphina while my friends reluctantly moved away. This was even more childish than high school

drama back in Polaris.

“Come along, newbie.”

I followed her to her “exclusive” table that apparently others avoided. It could seat ten people but held only her group of three plus me.

As I moved to sit down, the long-haired girl blocked me. “Don’t sit there, that’s my seat.”

I shifted to the other side.

“That’s my spot,” the short-haired girl immediately snapped.

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The Lightning Wolf Chronicles