

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 71: You're Absolute Lifesavers!

Evelyn's POV

I couldn't help laughing. This was ridiculous. The benches were communal – how could they have “reserved seats”?

“If you could just tell me where to sit instead of playing these games, we'd all save time,” I said, not bothering to hide my impatience.

“Where exactly am I supposed to go?”

Seraphina pointed across the table. “Over there.” This meant I'd have to walk all the way around the crowded cafeteria just to sit opposite

her.

I noted the positioning – directly in her line of sight where everyone could watch her “disciplining” the newcomer. Typical power play.

When I finally reached my designated spot, I started eating without acknowledging them. Their petty attempts to mess with my meal wouldn't work. Orion's advice echoed in my head – proper nutrition was essential.

“Which pack are you from?” the long-haired girl asked, judgment dripping from every word.

“Polaris City,” I answered without looking up.

“How'd you get here at sixteen when the rest of us had to wait till eighteen?” the short-haired girl asked. “I was the best warrior in my

pack in thirty years.”

“Not sure about the specifics,” I shrugged. “After the selection trials, I was supposed to join after finishing school, but things changed.”

“What makes you so special that the Alpha King personally escorted you?” Seraphina’s voice oozed jealousy.

“Many people know the Alpha King,” I kept my tone even. “My age and accelerated training schedule probably explain why he came.”

“Not everyone gets personally escorted by him,” long-hair said pointedly. “Even Seraphina didn’t get that treatment when she arrived after

her eighteenth birthday.”

I just shrugged. I couldn’t control who the Alpha King paid attention to.

“Think you’re better than us?” short-hair dropped the pretense. “Just because you got the Alpha King’s attention and Warrior Taric’s personal instruction, you don’t need to respect us?”

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“Not at all,” I put down my fork and met their eyes. “I’m just like you a Sentinel-in-training. I don’t know how I’ve offended you, but I’m no threat. We’re supposed to work as a team. I just want to become a proper Sentinel. As for respect, that has to go both ways.”

“We are your superiors,” Seraphina raised her voice. “You’d better learn to respect and obey Ellie, Tasha, and me. You haven’t proven

anything yet.”

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She deliberately spoke louder, making sure others could hear: “Maybe you’re just some desperate girl who throws herself at men, so they

sent you here to avoid embarrassing your pack. Bet your Alpha wants to mark you as a Sentinel ASAP so you’ll have to control yourself.”

Conversations around us quieted as people turned to watch.

“You have no idea what you’re talking about,” I stood up, tray in hand, keeping my voice steady. “You’re not worth my respect, let alone

my obedience. What time’s training tomorrow? Five, right? Or is that not early enough for you?”

I’d had enough of her baseless accusations. No one knew why I was really here, and I wouldn’t let anyone provoke me into revealing the

truth.

“Five o’clock, outside the obstacle field,” she finally said, lowering her voice. “Don’t be late.”

“Wouldn’t dream of it,” I headed toward the waste disposal area, already thinking about how to arrange food for early morning.

Sophia, Mark, and Cyrus immediately followed me. We walked into the common area, but I suddenly changed direction toward the kitchen.

“Where are you going?” Sophia grabbed my arm. “We shouldn’t bother them during cleanup.”

“Need to ask about food for tomorrow morning,” I explained quietly. “Seraphina’s clearly trying to sabotage me, and I can’t let her keep

spreading rumors. I’ll be right back.”

In the kitchen, about ten staff members worked efficiently. I spotted two older people – a man and woman – discussing tomorrow’s menu.

“Excuse me,” I approached cautiously. “Got a quick question when you have a minute.”

“You shouldn’t be in here,” the woman said firmly. “Special meal requests go through your floor supervisor.” Of course – Seraphina again.

“Sorry, didn’t know,” I admitted. “I’m Evelyn, just started today and still learning everything.”

“My supervisor scheduled me for 5 AM training, so I’ll miss regular breakfast. Is there any way to get some food beforehand? Even leftovers would be fine. I could even make something myself if there are ingredients available.”

‘Don’t worry,’ the woman’s expression softened. “We’ll make sure you eat. What time’s your training?”

“She wants me outside at five, and breakfast doesn’t start until five-thirty. I don’t want to mess up your prep schedule.”

‘Come down at four-thirty tomorrow and find me I’m Jenny, and this is Henry,’ she gestured to the man beside her. “We’ll take care of

you.”

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I nodded, feeling relieved. “Thanks so much! You’re absolute lifesavers!” In that moment, I almost wanted to hug her like I would Dora back at Polaris, who always slipped me extra food when the boys weren’t looking.

Jenny seemed to read my mind. “Come here, honey.” She opened her arms, and I stepped into them without hesitation.

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Only after arriving at the training center did I realize how much I missed these simple gestures of warmth. Nadia and the boys hugged me too, but it was different from the almost maternal care that Luna Isabella, Queen Selena, or Dora provided.

“If there’s ever anything I can do to help, just let me know,” I said sincerely.

“Go on, see you tomorrow.” Jenny smiled, turning back to Henry, who wore an expression somewhere between confusion and

understanding. I made a mental note to figure that out later.

Outside the kitchen, my friends were waiting. As we headed upstairs, I had one more issue to resolve.

“Any suggestions for waking up tomorrow?” I asked. “No outlets in my room, and we’re not supposed to use electronics freely.”

“Right,” Sophia explained. “All devices are stored in the media room for charging. There are lockers with short cables. Most people charge

overnight, but you might need to do the opposite.”

“I just need a simple alarm clock,” I said. “Maybe Nadia could help get one.”

“Technically, non-essential items need floor supervisor approval,” Cyrus said with a hint of sarcasm in his eyes.

“An alarm clock is definitely essential,” I replied. “I’ll play the clueless newbie card for a few more days. I legitimately need a way to wake

up, especially for study days.”

“Can we drop the rule talk?” Mark groaned. “It’s giving me a headache.”

We hung out in my room until the lights-out bell. As my friends stood to leave, Cyrus paused at the door.

“Here,” he unexpectedly handed me a phone. “For tomorrow. Password’s 0000. Use it as an alarm, and we’ll figure something else out later. Nothing to hide on it – my life’s pretty boring.”

“Want me to add something interesting to make it look more like yours?” I joked.

“Better not,” he chuckled. “My dad still checks it like I’m running a drug operation. Though having a few pictures of girls who aren’t my sister might explain why I guard it so carefully.”

“I’ll consider it. Thanks for this,” I said sincerely. “Seems like not everyone’s eager to help newcomers.”

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Chapter 72: Prove Yourself

Evelyn's POV

"It's not that they don't want to help, Cyrus said, lingering in the doorway. "You're new and Seraphina's rumors aren't doing you any

favours. But I saw you fight during selection. I know what you're made of. Others will see it too."

A hint of a smile crossed his usually serious face. "Your situation is weird, and some people here hate change, but we'll figure it out."

"*Thanks. Really." I pointed at the phone in his hand. "I'll keep it safe so you can grab it tomorrow. Don't want your dad freaking out

because you're not answering texts."

"Don't take it to training," he said firmly, surprising me with his intensity. Seeing my reaction, he softened his tone. "Sorry - just don't let

Seraphina catch you with it. I bet she'll search your stuff while you're training."

He paused. "I'll get it at lunch. Honestly, if my dad knew I was helping a teammate, he wouldn't mind."

"If you're sure." I smiled. "In case our schedules don't line up, I'll leave it in my top desk drawer."

Cyrus nodded and slipped out, closing the door silently behind him.

I set the alarm for 3:30 AM and crashed immediately. When it buzzed, I felt like I'd barely closed my eyes. Forcing myself up, I silenced it and rolled out of bed. My body screamed for more sleep, but I knew I'd adjust in a few days.

I quickly dressed in my training uniform and packed an extra set just in case. With Seraphina, better safe than sorry. Grabbing my boots, I crept downstairs in my socks to avoid waking anyone.

The kitchen was already buzzing with activity. Steam rose from stovetops and pans sizzled as Omegas filled containers with breakfast

items.

"Excuse me, is Jenny or Henry around?" I asked an Omega who wasn't handling hot cookware,

The obstacle course was pitch black, the sun not yet risen. Though werewolves see well in darkness, this added another layer of difficulty.

Any specific goals that should aim for? I asked.

Just complete it, she replied dismissively, like you supposedly did on your first day.”

Standing at the starting line, I quickly realised this was a setup. Morning dew under everything slippery, and the course layout had completely changed from before.

Move it, shorty she called from the sidelines, I thought you’d done this already. Or was that a lie?

I ignored her and focused. The wooden posts required precise footing. The balance beam swayed violently, and the rings seemed taped farther apart than before. By the time I reached the ropes, my fingers were nearly numb, and I almost slipped multiple times in the final

platforms.

When I finished, I was covered in mud, sweat, and water. My palms were raw from the equipment, and the day had barely begun

Stand up straight! Act like a warrior, Seraphina barked as I caught my breath. I didn’t argue, just straightened up and met her gaze. She

ended the test. To the main field. gave a slight nod. At least now I can confirm your com

She took off into the forest like a shot. Unfamiliar with the area, I followed closely in order to avoid getting lost.

The sun seemed endless, but felt surprisingly good. I realised how long it had been since I’d truly run free, pushing my limits. My wolf stirred in my mind, yearning to shift and be unleashed.

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Chapter 72: Prove Yourself

Don’t worry, we’ll shift often now. No more hiding.

I don’t mind being your secret, she replied, as long as I get out occasionally. I just want to protect you.

When the training center came into view, we slowed down. We retrieved my bag from the obstacle course, and I tried to control my breathing, not wanting to show how tired I felt. I pulled out my energy drink, which drew Seraphina's immediate attention.

"Where did that come from? Storing food in dormitories is prohibited," she demanded.

I shrugged. "Like I said, from the kitchen. Jenny and Henry prepared it."

"The kitchen is closed outside dining hours, so you couldn't have gotten in. Another violation,' her eyes flashed triumphantly. "You clearly

don't take our rules seriously."

I stayed silent, looking straight ahead. No point wasting energy arguing with someone like her.

As we rounded the back of the training center, I was suddenly wrapped in a bear hug.

"You made it back alive!" Mark exclaimed. "I can't believe it!"

"Hold the celebration," I wiggled free, finishing my drink. "Still got the rest of the day to survive."

At least I'd escaped Seraphina temporarily. We walked toward the gathering area where Taric and Conrad were talking quietly. I quickened my pace, knowing she'd be less likely to hassle me in front of them.

"She's here!" Conrad spotted me, his face breaking into a genuine smile as he came over and gave me a side hug. "Been waiting for this day for a long time."

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Chapter 73: Some People Like to Meddle

Evelyn's POV

Conrad leaned in close, keeping his voice low so only I could hear. "Wish you were here under better circumstances. If you need anything, just ask. The knowing look in his eyes told me he understood what had happened in Polaris City. Maybe he even knew the details.

"Everyone!" he called out, straightening up. "Evelyn is our newest member. This week, Taric and I will help her get familiar with everything before she joins regular training."

"Yes, sir!" the group responded in unison.

The morning sun was just starting to paint the horizon gold as we jogged around the perimeter twice. After weeks in a hospital bed, my lungs burned, but I kept my expression neutral. No way was I giving Seraphina ammunition after her earlier

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Chapter 74: Ready for the Challenge

Evelyn's POV

I looked around. "Can these cables hold two people at once, or do we have to go one after another?"

Hunter nodded thoughtfully. "Currently, Leo's team and ours are neck-and-neck, both using single-file strategy. The equipment is sturdy, definitely capable of holding more weight."

"Is the safety connection system part of the training too?" I asked, curious. "I'd like to study that later."

"Sure, but focus on the current task first," he smiled. "Any specific ideas?"

I quickly surveyed the team. “What about pairing up? With twenty people, two-person teams would seriously boost efficiency. Everyone

here is trained, so you should have the coordination skills. Two people crossing together requires trust, but it’s more realistic. In real

emergencies, letting civilians cross alone would be impractical.”

Hunter’s eyes lit up. “You might have just found our breakthrough. I’ll run this by Seraphina.”

Hunter approached Seraphina with my suggestion, speaking quietly. I watched nervously, expecting immediate rejection. To my surprise,

after a brief exchange, her expression shifted from skepticism to consideration, then finally to agreement with a nod. Despite her issues

with me, she obviously still prioritized mission success.

“Listen up!” she announced with undeniable authority. “Tactical change! We’re doing paired traversal today. Each pair will be male-female, with guys handling support while the women ride as lookouts. This isn’t about strength – it’s tactical advantage. Keep proper spacing between pairs. Remember – we need to beat Leo’s team today.”

I exhaled with relief but kept my expression neutral. Now wasn’t the time for gloating.

Mark immediately appeared at my side, slinging his arm over my shoulders. “This little one’s with me.”

Hunter eyed us with an appraising look. “Sure you can handle her?”

Sophia wedged herself between us, patting our shoulders. “Boys, stop fighting over the new girl. Plenty of time to train together later.” She leaned close to me and whispered, “Great idea. Seraphina won’t admit it, but we all know whose suggestion this was. She winked before heading off to join another warrior.

I just smiled quietly results mattered, not credit.

A sharp whistle cut through the air, and everyone jumped into action. Pairs formed quickly at the canyon’s edge. The setup consisted of two parallel steel cables about ten feet apart, with connecting bars between them. Usually, you’d grip the upper cable while walking on the lower one. For someone my size, that was almost impossible my arms weren’t long enough to grip the top while keeping balance.

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“Ready for this?” Mark asked as we took our position in the middle of the group.

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Chapter 74: Ready for the Challenge

“Yep, I answered, focusing on the task rather than Seraphina’s attitude. Our team moved with surprising precision, like we’d practiced this

for months.

I climbed onto Mark’s back, wrapping my arms around his shoulders and crossing my legs at his waist. My smaller size actually became an

advantage for once.

Mark gripped the overhead support and tested our combined weight before moving forward. Just as we passed the first support point, I heard mechanical clicking sounds erupting around us. I quickly scanned our surroundings – training officers had set up launchers aimed

our way.

“Heads up ambush,” I said. “Officers setting up launchers all around us.”

“Where?” Mark asked, instantly alert.

“One ahead, two right side, one behind, three left side. They’ve got some kind of devices.”

Mark laughed under his breath. “Smoke bombs. Taric’s favorite trick. They’re loaded with stuff that burns your eyes and throat.”

He picked up speed, though we couldn’t rush too much without risking a fall. I called warnings to the pairs ahead and behind us.

The front pair had just reached safety when the officers fired simultaneously. We were halfway across, about twenty feet from the endpoint. The first bomb hit my arm, bursting into acrid white mist. My airways burned instantly, and my eyes watered. More bombs followed, and soon we were surrounded by dense smoke.

“Can’t see a thing!” Mark growled, apparently hit directly in the face.

I made a split-second decision. “Hold steady, changing position.”

“Don’t move! Too dangerous!”

‘If you can’t see, we both fall. Trust me.’ I quickly maneuvered through his armpits, trying not to throw off our balance, then pulled myself to his front. I lifted the edge of my shirt and wiped his eyes. “Better?”

He blinked several times. “Yeah, but now you’re the target.” As if on cue, I felt several impacts on my back as more smoke erupted around

“Doesn’t matter. Just keep moving. We need to get out of this.”

“Yes, commander,” he said with a slight smile before refocusing.

Looking back, I saw the last pair making similar adjustments, though they were barely visible through the thick smoke.

When another bomb hit the back of my head, I gritted my teeth and locked eyes with Mark. “Full speed, now.”

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Chapter 74: Ready for the Challenge

‘These bars are too slippery!’

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‘Don’t walk slide. Like you’re on ice. Keep moving forward – they’re reloading.’ I meant this for Mark but loud enough for others to hear.

We finally reached the platform, but the officers had reloaded and started a new barrage. Mark set me down, and I noticed more than half

our team still trapped above.

‘Move it!’ I shouted up at them. “This isn’t a nature hike! Get down here!”

They snapped out of their hesitation and descended quickly, though their pace was limited by the slippery chemicals coating the ladder

rungs.

Once everyone reached the ground, we sprinted toward the finish line. I stayed close behind Mark, unsure of the exact direction but knowing these exercises usually had clear endpoints.

“Time’s up! Conrad’s voice echoed across the field. We halted, catching our breath. “Everyone gather up!”

All teams assembled in formation, front row kneeling so those behind could see.

“Team One, complete. Team Two, complete, faster than Team One. Both used standard single-person crossing.” Conrad surveyed everyone before his eyes settled on us. “Team Three, you chose something new and got extra testing because of it.” Unhappy murmurs spread around us. “Can anyone explain why?” he asked, ignoring the complaints.

Seraphina raised her hand. “Our paired strategy increased speed but created vulnerability. Smoke affected both people – the carrier had to balance on slippery supports while blinded, and the rider had to hold onto an equally affected partner.”

“Good analysis,” Conrad nodded. “What countermeasures did Team Three use when this happened?”

“Position exchange, Sophia answered immediately. “The rider moved to the front for visual protection. Reduced fall risk but made the

rider the primary target.”

“Good observation.” Conrad seemed satisfied, then suddenly turned to me. “What could be improved? Evelyn, I’d like your thoughts, since you both benefited from the strategy and took most of the hits.”

I froze, completely unprepared to be singled out. After a moment, I felt Seraphina’s intense gaze fixed on me, her eyes narrowed in what seemed like a silent warning: Don’t mess this up, rookie.

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Chapter 75: Thank You for Your Help Today

Evelyn's POV

Conrad's eyes locked on me, waiting for my answer. I swallowed hard, organizing my thoughts.

I think our biggest weakness was not having a backup plan,' I said, meeting his gaze directly. "When the smoke bombs hit, we realized how fragile our strategy was. We could've stationed people on the ground to distract the instructors and reduce those bomb launches."?

I took a quick breath before continuing. Or maybe had team members cross first, then turn back to cover the others. Bottom line is we stuck too rigidly to the original plan when we should've adapted."

Conrad nodded, exchanging a meaningful glance with Taric that I couldn't read.

'Interesting, Taric's voice cut through the silence. So why didn't anyone try stopping us from launching those bombs? We fired at least thirty times, and you all just stood there watching your teammates get blasted."

I bit my lip, stopping myself from saying 'because you never told us we could," which would sound pathetic. Training was always about figuring out the unwritten rules.

"Who came up with the paired strategy Team Three used?' Conrad asked, scanning our group.

Seraphina immediately straightened up. "As team leader, I approved the tactical adjustment."

Hunter shook his head with a slight smile. "It was actually collective thinking. Sometimes new recruits bring fresh eyes that help us see what we're missing, Execution wasn't perfect, but the concept was solid."

"Spoken like a true commander," Taric said, almost smiling. Alright, anyone covered in that chemical crap, go shower. Everyone else, clean up and get to lunch."

The squad dispersed with synchronized "Yes, sir" responses.

"That was freaking amazing!" Sophia bounced up beside Mark and me, smacking my shoulder excitedly. "When you climbed over Mark to shield his eyes? I nearly lost it! So smart!"

“Just reacted on instinct,” I shrugged, downplaying it. “His vision was completely shot, and those cables were getting slippery as hell. We needed someone who could actually see where we were going.”

I wrinkled my nose, touching my hair. “God, this smoke reeks. I need a shower ASAP

“Go ahead. I’ll save spots in the cafeteria, Sophia promised, her eyes still sparkling with an enthusiasm that somehow survived even the Sentinel mark’s emotion-dampening effects.

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Chapter 75: Thank You for Your Help Today

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At the dorm level, Mark pointed toward the stairs. “Fifteen minutes at the main staircase. Don’t be late, shorty.”

“Like you’re not the one who takes forever,” I rolled my eyes, rushing to grab my stuff before heading to the bathroom.

Despite scrubbing like crazy, I couldn’t get rid of the acrid smell completely. Annoyed, I dried off, threw on clean clothes, and hurried to

the meeting spot. Mark was already waiting, looking and smelling much fresher than me.

“You smell like you just crawled out of a dumpster fire,” he smirked.

“Shut up, I shoved him lightly. “This crap needs like three washes to come out. And I’m starving, so move it.”

The cafeteria buzzed with activity. Sophia had saved us seats, with Cyrus sitting quietly beside her. She waved frantically when she

spotted us approaching with our overloaded trays.

“Damn, look at all that food. Finally listening to Ori’s advice?” Cyrus remarked, his face expressionless though his eyes held a hint of

amusement.

“Whatever,” I pretended to be irritated. “Next time there are smoke bombs, block them yourself. Don’t expect me to save your ass.”

“About that,” Mark’s tone suddenly turned serious. “Thanks for the help today. I would’ve been stuck on those cables forever with that

smoke in my eyes.”

I looked down at my food, uncomfortable with the gratitude. “I should’ve asked before invading your personal space like that. Just acted on instinct without thinking if you’d be comfortable.”

‘Don’t be stupid,” Mark shook his head, grinning. “You saved the whole team. And honestly,” he winked, “I don’t think any guy here would mind having you that close, Sentinel mark or not.”

Sophia giggled. “Look who’s flirting now! So obvious.”

“I’m not!” Mark and I protested simultaneously, then caught each other’s eye and burst out laughing.

Just as we were settling into our meal, the cafeteria doors swung open. A man in an elegant suit walked in, immediately drawing everyone’s attention. The room fell silent as he scanned the space, his purposeful stride indicating he was on a mission.

“I’m looking for Evelyn,” he announced, his voice carrying across the quiet room. “I have instructions from Luna Queen Selena.

I felt every eye turn to me and reluctantly stood up, walking toward him. I tried to steer him outside for privacy, but he seemed determined to stay put.

“I’m Evelyn,” I said quietly, aware of the eavesdropping cars all around us.

“Luna Queen Selena requests your presence at the royal residence this Saturday at six in the morning for formal attire fitting. Transportation will be arranged, and the Queen will join you for breakfast,” he handed me a gold-embossed envelope with the royal seal.

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Chapter 75: Thank You for Your Help Today

“I was instructed to deliver this personally.”

I took the envelope, surprised by its weight. “Thanks.”

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“Until Saturday, Miss Evelyn,’ he gave a slight bow before turning on his heel, leaving the cafeteria buzzing with whispers.

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I returned to our table clutching the fancy letter, Sophia practically vibrating with excitement.

“Open it already! The suspense is killing me!” she urged. “The Queen never contacts trainees directly. This is huge!”

“Chill, I’m opening it,” I carefully broke the seal and pulled out a thick card decorated with silver patterns. Inside was elegant silver script

that screamed royalty.

I read quietly:

“Dear Evelyn,

You are formally invited to accompany Prince Alistair to the Alpha King’s Annual Council Dinner next Saturday evening. A car will collect you Saturday morning to bring you to the royal residence in preparation for the evening’s events. Considering the activities will continue until late, you are excused from training on both Saturday and Sunday.

I look forward to our reunion and selecting appropriate attire together. I hope your adjustment to Aegis City is proceeding smoothly.

Yours,

Luna Queen Selena”

I looked up to find three shocked faces staring back at me. Sophia broke the silence first.

‘Holy shit! You’re going to be Alistair’s date? This is insane!’

“It’s not a date,” I corrected quickly. “It’s just a formal thing.”

“From what I know,” Cyrus added calmly, “the Prince has turned down every companion request for the past three years.”

‘How’d you pull this off?’ Mark asked, eyebrows raised.

“We met in Polaris City,” I explained, shrugging. ‘We’re just friends. He probably picked me because I’m already here and it’s convenient.’”

As we discussed the unexpected invitation, a cold voice cut in from behind me.

“So that’s why you’re here? Using royal connections to get special treatment?”

Seraphina stood at our table, her eyes flashing with undisguised hatred.

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Chapter 76: I’m Not Your Territory

Evelyn’s POV

“What do you mean?” I turned to face Seraphina, my jaw clenched as I fought to keep my voice level.

She leaned in, close enough that I could smell her mint-laced breath. “It’s pretty simple. Normal people spend years proving themselves

before getting anywhere near the royal residence. Yet here you are, barely unpacked, with a personal invite from the Queen.” Her voice

was low but perfectly audible to everyone nearby. “Just connecting some dots.”

I took a slow breath through my nose. Getting angry would only give her ammunition.

“If you’ve got issues with how the Alpha King or Queen handle their guest list, maybe take it up with them directly instead of

interrogating me in the cafeteria,” I said.

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Her eyes narrowed to slits. “What exactly does ‘reunion’ mean, anyway? What kind of connection do you have with the royals that the rest

of us don’t?”

Sophia shot to her feet so fast her chair nearly toppled. “That’s none of your business! If she’s missing training, Taric and Conrad already

know. Back off.”

“As her floor supervisor, anything affecting training schedules concerns me,” Seraphina snapped.

“Are you seriously questioning royal decisions?” Cyrus asked, his quiet voice somehow cutting through the tension more effectively than if

he’d shouted.

Seraphina froze, suddenly aware she’d ventured into dangerous territory. Questioning the royal family’s judgment wasn’t just rude – it

bordered on insubordination.

Her shoulders tensed, but she recovered quickly. “I just wonder why the Prince would pick you a nobody who hasn’t even earned a Sentinel mark. Maybe he just likes your pretty face, not knowing what you’re actually capable of.”

“Prince Alistair doesn’t need to explain his choices to anyone, especially not you,” I said, then deliberately turned away from her. “So about formal wear – should I bring anything with me? The letter mentions everything being prepared, but I feel like I should have

something as backup.”

Seraphina’s face darkened at being dismissed. “Sooner or later, everyone will see who you really are,” she hissed before stalking off.

Mark watched her go, exhaling loudly. “Well, she’s officially pissed now.”

“Let her be,” I tucked the letter away. “I’d rather focus on not making a fool of myself in front of the Queen than waste energy on her

tantrum.

“Do you actually have anything fancy enough for a royal dinner?” Sophia asked, completely serious.

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Chapter 76: I'm Not Your Territory

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“God no. But the letter says they'll provide everything,' I said, gesturing to myself. “I showed up with literally nothing, remember?”

“Which makes it even more interesting, Cyrus observed. “They specifically planned for you. What was your status in Polaris City?”

“Just a Beta's daughter, I laughed humorlessly. “Though my dad hardly acknowledged my existence, so I was basically on my own. Meeting Alistair was pure chance when he visited on some mission.”

“He must've been impressed,” Mark said through a mouthful of food. “I heard he's turned down every date request for like three years

straight including from the fanciest wolf families out there.”

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Sophia practically bounced in her seat. “And he picked you! That's gotta mean something!”

“We're just friends,” I insisted. “Maybe that's exactly why he's comfortable with me - I don't want anything from him. Everyone else

approaches with an agenda, but I have zero interest in becoming royalty.”

“That's crazy talk,” Sophia shook her head. “If the Prince picked me, I'd be all over that opportunity.”

“Different strokes,” I shrugged. “The Queen's job is complicated as hell balancing pack politics, handling disputes, all while looking perfect and saying the right thing. I'm better at punching things than playing diplomat.”

“Speaking of punching things,” Cyrus cut in, checking his watch, “lunch is almost over. Today's afternoon session is wolf-form training.”

A cold knot formed in my stomach. Wolf training meant shifting, which meant exposing my scarred back to everyone. The idea of their

stares and whispers made my skin crawl.

“You okay?” Mark frowned at me. “You look like you just saw a ghost.”

‘I’m fine,” I forced a smile. “Just surprised. Didn’t expect wolf training so soon.”

We dumped our trays and headed to the training grounds, my anxiety building with each step. In Polaris, I’d only shown my scars to people I trusted completely. Now I’d have to expose my most vulnerable side to a group of practical strangers.

“Seriously, you look sick,” Mark pressed. “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing,” I lied, unable to meet his eyes. “Just... not used to shifting around so many people.”

“But you can shift, right?” Cyrus asked carefully. I mean, they wouldn’t have sent you here if you couldn’t.”

“Of course I can,” I nodded. ‘Been a while since I’ve trained that way. Might be rusty, but it’s not a problem.”

When we reached the field, Conrad was already waiting. We all lined up, and he stepped forward.

“This afternoon we’re practicing wolf-form combat,” he announced, voice carrying across the training area. “The goal is control, not injury.

You need to think strategically while shifted. His eyes scanned the line before stopping. “Evelyn, step forward.”

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Chapter 76: I’m Not Your Territory

My heart slammed against my ribs, but I forced my legs to move.

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“Remove your top,” Conrad instructed. “You’ll be shifting during combat. We try to minimize clothing replacements.”

A heavy silence fell as every eye locked onto me. Taking a deep breath, I slowly pulled off my top, revealing the network of scars across

my back and torso. As I turned to face Conrad, I straightened my spine and stared straight ahead, ignoring the murmurs behind me.

“We’ll spar for five minutes,” Conrad explained. “Your job is to stay inside the training circle. When I shift, you shift too. Got it?”

I nodded, pulse racing in my ears. No matter what, I couldn’t show weakness now. This was my chance to prove I belonged here

and all.

– scars

Without warning, Conrad lunged toward me.

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 77: Teamwork is Essential

Evelyn’s POV

Conrad came at me like a freight train, his movements quick but controlled. I sidestepped his first attack, but he adjusted instantly, sweeping his arm toward my waist. When I blocked him, I felt the power behind it he definitely wasn’t pulling his punches.

Stay focused. This is just an assessment, I reminded myself.

I used his momentum to create distance, moving in circles. The training grounds had gone completely quiet; all I could hear was our breathing and footsteps. Conrad watched me with laser focus, tracking my every twitch.

Without warning, he lunged forward, reaching for my shoulders. I ducked and countered with a strike to his stomach. The hit made him

step back slightly, and I caught a flicker of approval in his eyes.

“Nice one,” he said quietly. “Don’t just defend – look for openings.”

We continued our back-and-forth. After weeks in that hospital bed, my stamina was clearly shot. My lungs were already burning and my

muscles starting to shake, but muscle memory kept me moving.

Conrad suddenly kicked it up a notch, launching a barrage that forced me backward. I was running out of space, dangerously close to the

circle’s edge when my wolf stirred.

Now! she urged.

Instead of retreating further, I charged straight at him. The unexpected move made him hesitate for a split second – just long enough for me to slide under him and flip around to safety.

As Conrad turned to face me, his body began to twist. Reddish-brown fur erupted from his skin, muscles reshaping as bones extended. Within seconds, a massive wolf stood where the man had been, eyes gleaming with challenge.

I took a deep breath and let the familiar pain wash over me. My silver-blue fur emerged as bones cracked and reformed. When the transformation finished, I dropped low, ready for whatever came next.

He’s got size, but we’ve got speed, my wolf reminded me.

Conrad’s wolf form was intimidating all rippling muscle and raw power. He circled slowly, looking for the best angle before suddenly lunging forward. I darted aside, but his claws still grazed my flank, sending a hot spike of pain through me.

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Instead of backing away, I jumped onto his back, teeth gripping the thick fur at his neck not to hurt, just to control. He thrashed violently, trying to throw me off, but I held tight.

Then I felt his body changing beneath me he was shifting back! The unexpected move threw me off balance. As his form shrank, I had to release my grip, and he seized the opportunity to flip me over, pinning me down.

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Chapter 77: Teamwork is Essential

I immediately shifted back too, gritting my teeth through the pain. Before he could secure his hold, I twisted free and flipped up into a

defensive stance.

“Time!” the timekeeper called.

We both froze, and Conrad straightened up with a nod. “Not bad at all.”

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Only then did I realize I was basically naked in front of everyone, my scarred back completely exposed. Strangely, I didn’t feel the shame I

expected just relief.

“Heads up! A bundle of fabric flew toward me from the sidelines. I caught it to find a training uniform, with Mark flashing me a thumbs-

“Thanks,” I said, quickly pulling it on.

“These are way more practical than your fancy setup,’ he called over. ‘Plus, we’re probably doing more shifting today.”

Conrad approached me, something almost like respect in his expression. “Good match, Evelyn. Your tactical thinking is impressive.”

“Thanks,” I said, feeling an unfamiliar surge of pride. “Just working with what I’ve got.”

“That’s exactly what makes a great warrior,” Conrad turned to address everyone. “You see that? Evelyn didn’t just play defense – she created opportunities and controlled the pace. She used her advantages to make up for the size difference. That kind of adaptability and combat intelligence is what matters, not just how big or old you are.”

We spent the next few hours switching between human and wolf forms, practicing various tactics and coordination. With each shift, I found myself caring less about hiding my scars. Maybe because nobody reacted the way I feared, or maybe because here, scars seemed more like badges of honor than marks of shame.

“You’re holding your own, Taric appeared beside me as training wound down. “But you’ve still got a long way to go.”

‘I know,” I nodded. “A month without training definitely shows. I’ve lost strength and endurance.

“It’s more than that,” Taric’s gaze cut right through me. “Your individual skills are solid, but you rely on them too much. Sentinels live and die by teamwork. Tomorrow we’ll do more group training, and you need to step up your coordination.”

“About that,” I hesitated, then decided to just say it. “Seraphina clearly has some kind of issue with me. Will that be a problem?”

Taric’s expression didn’t change. “That’s your challenge to solve. Every team has friction. Learning to work effectively despite personal conflicts is part of becoming a Sentinel.”

His non-answer was actually an answer. In the Sentinel world, relationships aren’t handed to you – they’re earned through actions and

proven worth.

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Chapter 77: Teamwork is Essential

“Got it,” I said. “I’ll handle it.”

‘I know you will,” he nodded, his voice softening just slightly. “Finish strong today. I want to see what you’ve got tomorrow.”

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As Taric walked away, I rejoined the training session. My scars were out in the open now, my concerns addressed. All that remained was

to prove I belonged here. Whatever doubts Seraphina or anyone else had, I’d answer them with results, not words.

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 78: What Should I Do?

Evelyn's POV

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By the time training wrapped up, we were all coated in mud and sweat. Gross as it was, I felt strangely satisfied. Fighting with people who

matched my skill level was something I'd missed. Not just teaching moves, but actually learning from others too. I couldn't wait to tell

Nadia all about it tomorrow.

Dinner was weirdly quiet. Maybe my fight with Conrad had made an impression, or maybe everyone was just wiped out from hours of

shifting. Either way, I welcomed the silence.

"Whenever you're ready to talk about those scars," Sophia said between bites, like she was asking about the weather, 'I'd really like to hear the story. Makes me wonder if they're what made you tough, or if you were tough enough to survive getting them."

I didn't answer right away, just ducked my head and kept eating. Her question hit me in an unexpected way. Most people either stared and never asked, or pretended not to notice. Almost nobody looked at them as something that might have shaped me rather than just

damaged me.

I woke up the next morning in a surprisingly good mood, eager to see Nadia. I grabbed my stuff and headed downstairs to get breakfast

from Jenny.

For once, I was actually looking forward to school. Normally I'd pick training over classrooms any day, but I desperately needed to see Nadia. It felt like forever since we'd really talked, and I needed someone who knew me from before – especially after yesterday's drama with Seraphina and my scars being on display.

Standing in front of that ancient building, I still couldn't get over how impressive it was. I pushed through the heavy doors and headed for my locker. Before I could even start sorting my books, familiar arms wrapped around me from behind.

"God, I miss seeing you every day!" Nadia squealed. "We need to figure out how to hang out more. This sucks!"

Nadia's POV

When I spotted Evelyn at her locker, I couldn't help myself. I sprinted over and threw my arms around her.

"We could study together," she turned and hugged me back, her face breaking into a genuine smile. As long as I tell them where and when ahead of time. Oh man, and I've got crazy news."

She filled me in about Queen Selena's invitation, promising to send pics of the dress fitting. We speculated about whether she'd run into Prince Alistair there, though tradition said guys weren't supposed to be around during fittings.

"Since you left, I haven't heard from Milo," I sighed. "The Queen had me call the guys once to let them know you were okay, but they're not allowed to contact anyone either. That must be the worst part, right? Being cut off from your friends. At least their training ends in summer, but yours goes on for years."

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Chapter 78: What Should I Do?

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I watched her face fall. Even as she'd grown more independent, those boys had been her emotional safety net in Polaris. Having that suddenly yanked away would mess with anyone.

"Any chance you could write to them?" I suggested carefully. "At least to Elliot? Then you'd know how they're doing. I bet they miss you like crazy, especially since you guys just made up before... you know."

"Don't remind me," she winced. "I feel so crappy about how I treated them, and then we just got... separated like that."

"Hey, don't think like that!" I said firmly. "Acacia and her little minions did this." Just saying that witch's name made me want to

personally kick her ass.

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“I can’t remember much about that day,” she frowned, looking troubled. “I remember getting beaten up, then waking up in the royal hospital. Everything in between is just... gone. Your parents ran all those tests but never really explained why. I should probably talk to

them about it.”

I stared at her, surprised. “They haven’t told me anything either. But let’s talk about something else. What kind of dress do you think the

Queen will pick out?”

Evelyn’s POV

We spent lunch talking dresses and possible scenarios for the royal visit. I couldn’t care less what I wore – I was more focused on

convincing the Queen to let Nadia come along for the fitting. If she could be there with the Queen choosing stuff while I just stood

around like a mannequin, that would be perfect. I just wanted time with my friend. We didn’t have any classes together, so these breaks

were all we got.

“You should definitely wear deep jade,” Nadia and her friend Rose insisted. “It would make your eyes pop and look amazing with your

skin.”

“It’s insane that Prince Alistair picked you!” Scarlett gushed. “I heard he’s turned down everyone for like three years! Is it because you

knew each other before?”

“We’re just friends,” I shrugged. “He probably picked me because I’m already here. Convenient.”

“But you don’t actually like him that way?” Scarlett looked shocked. “He’s gorgeous, and with his status... don’t most girls dream of being

queen?”

“I’m pretty realistic,’ I said honestly, “Being Queen takes serious diplomatic and political skills, which I definitely don’t have. I’m better at punching things than navigating fancy parties.”

With the Queen meeting set for tomorrow, I headed back to the training center. Friday’s training was brutal – Seraphina acted like I didn’t exist, which made team challenges nearly impossible. We lost almost every competition by tiny margins. And from what I could tell,

failure wasn’t exactly common in Sentinel training.

It was ridiculous how much she let personal grudges mess with work. And I had no idea how to fix it. I didn’t even know what I’d done to piss her off so badly. Maybe it was her weird hero worship of Taric? Though other trainers talked to me too, saying I was still under

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Chapter 78: What Should I Do?

observation.*

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What more could they possibly be observing? Our training was basically the same every day. I participated in all the team stuff but still couldn’t figure out how to make things work with Seraphina. If it was just between us, I wouldn’t care, but it was affecting the whole

team.

Eventually people would resent her, or me, or both of us. I didn’t want that. If I could find Taric, I’d definitely bring it up. But I hadn’t

seen him all day – probably on some mission for the Alpha King.

Then again, I felt ridiculous even wanting to talk to him about it. He definitely didn’t need to hear some sixteen-year-old whining about

how the other kids didn’t like her. He had actual important stuff to deal with.

But he did specifically tell me to let him know about anything that happened. So should I follow his instructions or avoid bothering him

with stupid teenage drama? The question kept circling in my head, driving me crazy.

Between the Queen meeting tomorrow, Seraphina's issues, and trying to navigate relationships at the training center – everything was

tangled up in my brain, leaving me feeling completely lost.

What should I do?

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 79: Bullying Isn't Welcome Here

Evelyn's POV

Despite days of grueling training, sleep eluded me. I kept picturing myself tripping in front of Queen Selena or using the wrong fork at dinner. Sure, she'd been nothing but kind when we met, but that just made me more afraid of disappointing her.

What little etiquette I'd learned as a kid had long faded from memory. Those lessons were for Elliot, the future Beta, not me. I'd spent my time learning how to fight, not which spoon to use for dessert. What if I embarrassed myself? Or worse, what if I embarrassed Prince

Alistair?

When morning finally came, I almost felt relieved. At least now I could stop pretending to sleep. I washed up and put on my cleanest

training clothes, hoping they'd be acceptable.

The cafeteria was empty when I arrived, so I headed to the kitchen hoping to find Jenny.

"Morning," I said, poking my head through the doorway. "Got a minute?"

“Come in, dear,” Jenny waved me over with a warm smile. “Nervous about the royal visit, I bet?”

“A little,” I admitted. “I have no idea how to act around the Queen.”

“Don’t worry yourself,” she said, placing a muffin and tea in front of me. “Queen Selena invited you because she likes you, not to test your table manners. Just be respectful and yourself.”

“But what if other important people are there?” I chewed my lip.

“Unlikely,” Jenny assured me. “And even if there are, you’re the Queen’s guest. Nobody would dare be rude to you.”

“Heard someone’s heading to the castle today,” Cyrus’s deep voice came from behind me. He stood in the doorway with his breakfast tray.

“Why are you up so early?” I asked as he sat across from me.,

“Old habits,” he shrugged. “If it helps, my dad always says there are just three rules to follow: think before speaking, watch when you’re not sure, and admit when you’re wrong. Do that and you’ll be fine.”

“Thanks,” I said, surprised by his advice. “I’ll try to remember that.”

“About training tomorrow,” he continued quietly, “If Seraphina gives you grief about missing it, I’ll back you up. Already talked to some

instructors about it.”

I looked at him, confused. “You don’t have to do that.”

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Chapter 79: Bullying Isn’t Welcome Here

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‘Sentinels look out for each other,’ he stated simply. “Besides, watching Seraphina’s face turn red when she’s angry is pretty entertaining.

I laughed. “I thought you didn’t get involved in other people’s drama.”

“Usually I don’t,” he said between bites. “But someone needs to show that bullying isn’t welcome here, no matter who the target is.”

We finished eating in comfortable silence, then walked together to the front courtyard. Dawn mist still hung over the grounds, giving

everything a dreamlike quality.

“That looks like a royal vehicle,” Cyrus pointed toward the gate, where a sleek black sedan was approaching.

The car stopped, and a man in a perfectly pressed gray suit stepped out. He scanned the area before his eyes settled on me.

“Miss Evelyn?” he asked politely.

“That’s me,” I nodded, my stomach suddenly in knots.

“I’m Sebastian, the Queen’s personal assistant,” he introduced himself with a slight bow.

“Her Majesty has sent me to escort you to the

royal residence. Are you ready?”

“Yes, thanks for coming to get me,” I managed, trying to keep my voice steady.

Cyrus gave my shoulder a reassuring pat. “Just be yourself. See you tonight.”

Sebastian opened the car door for me. The interior smelled like leather and vanilla, with seats so comfortable I immediately wanted to

curl up and take a nap.

In the driver’s seat, Sebastian fastened his seatbelt and pulled out a phone to send a text.

“You use a phone?” I asked, genuinely curious. “Not mind links?”

His eyes met mine in the rearview mirror, a small smile playing at his lips. “I can’t use mind links anymore.”

“How’s that possible?” I blurted, then winced. “Sorry, that’s probably too personal.”

“It’s all right,” he said, starting the engine. “My mate died in an attack years ago. My wolf couldn’t handle the grief and became ill. Eventually, I lost it and nearly followed. The Queen and Alpha King helped me find reasons to live. Now I serve as her assistant. I still have werewolf strength and senses, just no wolf.”

“I’m so sorry,” I said softly. “I didn’t know anyone could survive losing their wolf.”

“Dr. Harrison’s medical breakthrough,” Sebastian explained. “He and Dr. Diana helped me through that time.”

“They’re my friend Nadia’s parents!” I exclaimed. “They treated me when I first got here.”

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Chapter 79: Bullying Isn’t Welcome Here

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Sebastian nodded. “They mentioned you. I know some of your story. As the Queen’s assistant, I gather information. When she couldn’t visit you personally, I reported on your recovery.”

I ducked my head. “So you saw me at my worst.”

“I saw someone with extraordinary resilience,” he corrected firmly. “I’ve seen many warriors return from missions in worse shape. Among

Sentinels, scars aren’t shameful – they’re proof of survival.”

I nodded gratefully. “Can I ask about the royal residence? The buildings look like they’re actually part of the mountain.”

For the rest of the drive, Sebastian told me about the royal pack’s history – how Alpha King Nathan’s great-great-grandfather established

the territory and how werewolf kings typically ruled for nearly a century before passing power to their heirs.

“About tomorrow’s event,” I finally worked up the courage to ask, “could my friend Nadia come with me for the dress fitting? She’s way

better at fashion stuff than I am, and having her there would make me less nervous.”

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“Reasonable request,” Sebastian nodded. “I’ll ask the Queen, but I doubt she’d object. She values young friendships.”

“Thanks,” I said, then hesitated. “One more thing... what exactly is my role at the training center? People seem confused about why I’m

invited to royal activities.”

Sebastian’s eyes found mine in the mirror. “You’re perceptive, Evelyn. First, Prince Alistair rarely makes genuine friends like he did in Polaris. That time meant a lot to him – a chance to escape royal burdens for a while.”

He continued, “Second, you’re a capable young woman who can protect herself. At these events, the Prince becomes a target for families eager to form royal connections. You provide him both social support and security.”

“Sounds like politics,” I sighed. “I’m glad that’s usually Elliot and the triplets’ problem, not mine.”

Sebastian laughed. “Politics is everywhere, even in the simplest pack interactions. Learning to navigate that is part of growing up.”

Our conversation carried us the rest of the way. As we rounded the final bend in the mountain road, the royal residence came into full

view.

I couldn’t help but stare in amazement.

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Chapter 5

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Chapter 80: These Days Have Felt Like an Eternity

Evelyn’s POV

Morning sunlight bathed the castle’s sandstone walls in a golden glow as Sebastian pulled up to the entrance. The structure merged

seamlessly with the mountain, like it had grown naturally from the rock face.

The entrance featured massive oak doors carved with wolf totems, flanked by gleaming silver ornaments. Above stretched a stone viewing platform overlooking the valley, while the building itself extended symmetrically on both sides, rising at least five stories with spires

reaching even higher.

“This way, Miss Evelyn,” Sebastian gestured toward the entrance. “The Prince has been waiting. He’s hoping to show you around himself.”

I snapped out of my daze, suddenly aware I’d been gawking like I’d never seen a fancy building before.

“I thought Alistair would be training with the triplets today,” I said, following Sebastian.

He pushed open one of the heavy doors. “The Prince received special permission to attend to other responsibilities. Royal schedules tend

to be... flexible.”

I’d barely stepped into the entrance hall when a familiar figure bolted toward me.

“Finally!” Alistair pulled me into a tight hug. “These days have felt like an eternity! They wouldn’t let us visit during your recovery – not

even a phone call!”

When he released me, his amber eyes scanned me from head to toe, clearly checking for damage.

“I’m fine, really,” I patted his arm awkwardly. “Dr. Diana and Dr. Harrison took great care of me. Everything’s healed, and I’ve even been

cleared for full training.”

Without responding, Alistair grabbed my wrist and pulled me through the magnificent hall. We zipped past corridors lined with ancient statues, up a double spiral staircase to a balcony, then through a dimmer hallway.

We wound through countless ornate rooms and corridors, moving up and down through the maze-like castle until we reached a quiet corner with stained glass windows.

Suddenly, Alistair spun to face me, gripping my shoulders. “Who hurt you? We need the truth!”

“Excuse me?” I pulled away, taking a step back. “Since when do you use that commanding tone? You sound just like Magnus. Guess hanging around those guys has rubbed off on you ordering people around like they own them.”

I turned toward the window, crossing my arms against the sudden chill I felt.

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Chapter 80: These Days Have Felt Like an Eternity

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‘I’m sorry,” Alistair’s voice softened. “I’ve been worried sick. They only told us you were alive everything else was classified. You have no idea how excited I was when I heard you’d be visiting. Magnus nearly stormed the training center looking for you, and Orion was

“Let me guess, your prince card got you special access?” I cut in.

Alistair moved in front of me, shrugging. “It has its perks. But honestly, I’m just glad you’re here and that you agreed to help me out.” His tone grew sincere. “Those scheming elders are terrifying – always trying to match me with ‘suitable’ mates like I’m a prized stallion.”

“So I’m your human shield tonight?” I asked, deliberately changing the subject. “Anyone I should watch out for?”

“Too many to count,” he sighed. “The worst are the elders’ relatives.” Seeing my raised eyebrow, he quickly added, “None with actual skills – just decorative pieces. They’ve never had real training, but they’re experts at looking pretty.”

“Their greatest talent is posing beside me,” Alistair said with a grimace. “Sure, they know all the proper etiquette, but that stuff is mind-

numbing. Worse, they can’t hold a conversation to save their lives – another reason I need your help.”

We continued down the corridor, passing ancient weapons and armor displays.

“You can protect yourself without making a scene, and you can handle those girls who’ll try their ‘social attacks’ on me.” He rolled his eyes

dramatically. “Plus, you can actually talk to Alphas and Lunas as an equal, not just nod and smile. Most importantly – you’re a real friend.

Having you there will make tonight bearable.

We stopped at double doors carved with moons and stars.

“My mother’s reception room,” Alistair said, giving me a quick peck on the cheek.

“Thanks, Evie. You’re a lifesaver.”

He’d barely knocked when the door swung open. Warm arms enveloped me, along with a familiar floral scent.

“My little warrior!” Luna Selena’s voice rang with genuine joy.

“Good to see you too,” I smiled.

“My dear,” she pulled back, holding my face in her hands. “I’ve been so worried. Nathan insisted that special attention might actually hurt

your progress. It’s been torture, especially with Taric and Conrad being so tight-lipped about your training. I’m not sure if it was my

husband creating distance or those warriors being sticklers for protocol.”

She paced around the room, her hands animating her words. I’d never seen her this relaxed before, and my surprise must have shown.

“Don’t look so shocked,” she laughed. “In private, I don’t have to be the perfect Luna Queen the elders expect. No need for the whole

‘model royalty’ act. Her fingers made air quotes, making her seem surprisingly normal.

“Seems like tonight will be more complicated than I thought,” I half-joked. “Alistair mentioned I’ll basically be his shield against potential

mates. Will I have a target on my back?”

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Chapter 80: These Days Have Felt Like an Eternity

“I’m afraid so, she chuckled.

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“Come sit and eat while we talk about tonight’s ‘campaign.’ She led me to a table loaded with food.

“How much do you know about a Luna Queen’s role?” she asked, handing me a clear drink.

“Not much, I admitted. “Similar to other Lunas, I guess, but with some special connection to the Moon Goddess. Beyond that, no clue.”

“Good observation,” she nodded. “I do have a unique connection with Her.”

My eyes widened, food forgotten in my hand. “Can you talk to her directly? How does it work?”

“Don’t get too excited,” she laughed. “It’s not that simple. I can request guidance, but she isn’t always... available. Sometimes my requests

get ‘put aside.’” She winked playfully.

“Usually she contacts me about important matters or emergencies. Mostly she lets us handle things ourselves, but occasionally she needs our help. She actually mentioned you before, which is partly why we visited Polaris City.”

“What?” I nearly choked. “What does she want with me?” A wave of anxiety hit me – had I done something to attract divine attention?

“Relax, child,” Selena said gently. “You’ve done nothing wrong. It’s those who should have protected you who failed. About your situation, I can only tell you this much: the Goddess has special interest in you and has prepared an unusual path. We needed to get you out of

Polaris City before things got worse.”

My jaw dropped. Did the Moon Goddess know everything Acacia had done? Did she know who attacked me in the locker room?

“Close your mouth – you look like a stunned fish,” Selena laughed. “Don’t be surprised when people notice you. You’ve earned that attention through your abilities. There’s nothing wrong with being valued for your talents.”

Faced with this bombshell, all I could manage was: “I have no idea how to process this... it’s way beyond anything I imagined.”

