

The Lightning Wolf Chronicles Novel

Souls Bound By Promise — Timothy Nelson 8

Chapter 8: We Were Pretending!

Evelyn's POV

They need something to focus on, my wolf said suddenly. A way to get their attention.

I looked around and spotted the demonstration platform in the center – about ten feet high, where instructors usually showed techniques. From up there, I could see the whole field.

I dove back into the chaos, weaving between panicked kids. Little Tommy, Bella... these sweet children looked terrified, not understanding what was happening to them.

Just like me when I was fourteen. That fear when my wolf awakened early – I knew exactly how they felt.

I reached the platform and took a running jump. My hands caught the edge and I pulled myself up, flipping onto the surface.

“Kids! Look here!” I shouted as loud as I could.

My voice carried across the field, but only a few children glanced up. Most kept running around wild.

Need something stronger.

Then I remembered – during training sessions, I always used a specific whistle to gather them. Our signal for “come together.”

I put my fingers to my lips and blew hard.

The sharp sound cut through the noise. Several kids stopped what they were doing, looking around confused.

I whistled again, longer and louder this time.

“It’s Evelyn!” a girl suddenly yelled.

More children stopped and started searching for where the sound came from. When they saw me on the platform, recognition flickered in their eyes.

“Evie?” A little boy looked up at me, tears streaming down his face.

“Yeah, it’s me.” I kept my voice gentle but firm. “Come over here, all of you.”

Some kids started moving toward the platform hesitantly, but plenty were still freaking out.

“Listen up,” I raised my voice so everyone could hear. “I know you’re scared right now.”

I crouched down to look less intimidating. “Remember that breathing thing I taught you guys?”

It was basic stuff I’d shown them during regular training – how to control their breathing when they got worked up.

“Remember...” several children answered quietly.

“Good. Let’s do it together.” I started demonstrating. “Deep breath in... one, two, three, four... now let it out slow... one, two, three, four...”

Some kids began copying me. Their movements were still shaky, but at least they were paying attention now.

“That’s perfect. Let’s do it again. Breathe in... and out...”

More children joined in. Their breathing started getting steadier, and the crazy energy in the air began to calm down.

But a few kids were still losing it, including that seven-year-old boy who'd been smashing equipment.

"Tommy," I called his name directly. "Look at me."

He stopped swinging the wooden stick and stared up at me, confused. His eyes were red from crying.

"Remember last week when you told me you wanted to be the strongest warrior?"

He nodded.

"Real warriors don't destroy stuff. They control their power. Think you can do that?"

Tommy hesitated, then nodded hard.

"Then drop what you're holding and come here." I held out my hand.

He looked at the stick, threw it aside, and slowly walked over to the platform.

The other hesitant kids saw Tommy and started putting down their makeshift weapons too, gathering around me.

Soon most of the children were clustered around the platform, looking up at me. Still scared, but trusting.

"You're all brave little warriors," I said, feeling warmth spread through my chest. "What happened today was scary, but you made it through."

"Evie," a little girl sobbed. "Did we mess up?"

"No way. You didn't do anything wrong." My voice was firm. "This isn't your fault. Now let's all calm down together, okay?"

"Everyone sit down." The children plopped cross-legged on the ground.

"Close your eyes and think about your favorite place. Maybe your cozy bed at home, or when your mom hugs you..."

Their breathing got steadier. The violent atmosphere started fading away.

I glanced toward Nadia – she was watching from the sideline, eyes full of admiration. She shot me a thumbs up and I smiled back.

The crisis seemed over. The kids had all calmed down. Still tired and confused, but not out of control anymore.

Just as I was about to climb down, I felt it. Eyes on me. Lots of them.

I looked toward the entrance.

My smile disappeared instantly.

All the pack leaders stood there – Alpha Adam, Luna Isabella, Delta Griffin, Gamma Thomas... and the five boys.

They were just watching us quietly.

When did they get here? My heart started racing.

The children noticed the leaders too and got nervous again. Some of the little ones started crying.

“It’s okay,” I quickly reassured them. “Don’t be scared.”

I needed to explain what had happened. The platform edge was slippery – probably from water one of the kids had spilled earlier. I didn’t notice and stepped forward, getting ready to jump down.

That’s when my foot slipped.

Shit!

I lost my balance completely. The platform was ten feet up – this was gonna hurt. I squeezed my eyes shut, bracing for impact.

But it never came.

Strong arms caught me instead.

I opened my eyes and found myself staring into deep green ones. Magnus was holding me, his face inches from mine. I could feel his breath.

“You okay?” he asked, voice low and concerned.

I realized he was carrying me bridal style. My face went hot. “I... I’m fine. Thanks.”

He set me down carefully, making sure I was steady before letting go.

That’s when the entire training field exploded in cheers.

“Yeah!!!”

“That was awesome!”

“Evie rocks!”

I stared at the kids in shock. The ones who’d just been “out of control” were jumping around happily, high-fiving each other. Even the “unconscious” children were sitting up, grinning mischievously.

“What the...” I was stunned.

“Sorry, Evelyn!” Several kids ran over. “We were just pretending!”

“Pretending?” I still couldn’t process it.

“Alpha Adam asked us to!” Bella bounced over. “He said to test who could calm us down!”

My brain finally caught up. That’s why their “rampage” looked real but they never actually hurt each other. Why the “unconscious” kids fell in safe spots. Why the equipment got trashed so perfectly.

This was all a setup.

