

# Chapter 5 of Hunted Hybrid - Aegis War Saga 1

## Elowen POV

By the time I stumbled back through the front door, my knuckles were bruised, my legs ached, and I was still seething.

I didn't say a word to Eron or Maria, who were sitting on the couch like two uptight gargoyles pretending not to eavesdrop. I just stomped upstairs and slammed my bedroom door behind me.

Safe. For now.

I peeled off my training clothes, tossing them into the hamper, and pulled on an oversized hoodie that smelled like cedarwood and sweat. I was halfway through wiping the dried blood from my knuckles when my phone buzzed violently on the nightstand.

7 missed calls - Taya Quinn.

Shit. Right as I grabbed the phone, it lit up again...FaceTime. I hit accept. Her face filled the screen instantly, wild red curls tied up in two messy buns, her eyes wide.

"Oh my GOD, are you alive?!" she shouted. "You ghosted me and the whole pack is talking about 'The Alpha Princess Choke Slam of the Century.' You've gone viral, babe!"

I dropped onto the bed, covering my face with one hand. "Kill me."

"Nah. Too iconic. I'm making you a sticker for it. Says 'Don't spit at wolves unless you wanna die tired.'"

Despite everything, I snorted. She paused, her eyes narrowing. "Wait... you okay?"

"I don't know," I whispered. "Something happened, Tay. I felt like I blacked out but also like I was more awake than ever. I could feel Lyssi in every inch of my bones. It was like... she wasn't just pissed. She was awakened."

"Because she's a bad bitch," Taya said. "And so are you. The princesses had it coming."

Before I could answer, a soft knock tapped against my door. "Come in," I called out, expecting Maria with another tight lipped warning.

But it was Eron. He carried a small, ancient looking chest with black wood, silver hardware, glowing faintly with runes. "Leave your phone," he said. "This is important."

I raised an eyebrow but did as I was told, holding the phone away from my face. "Tay, I'll call you back."

"Ooooh mystery box. Don't die. Love you." Click.

Eron placed the chest on my desk like it might bite him. "It was left for you by Caelan. Strict instructions to only open it on your 18th birthday. No sooner."

My breath caught. "You... kept this from me?"

"It wasn't my choice," he said. "The Alpha King himself reinforced the seal."

My heart thundered. "What's in it?"

"No idea. But the enchantments are still intact. Do not open it early, Elowen. I mean it."

He left without another word. I stared at the box. It stared back. And even though my fingers itched to pry it open, I didn't. I couldn't. Not tonight.

Not when my soul still felt like it was unraveling. So I crawled into bed, pulled the blankets up to my chin, and let exhaustion win.

The dreams came fast.

Fire. Screaming. Cages. Wolves muzzled in silver chains. Syringes. Steel walls dripping blood. A girl with my eyes..strapped to a table, screaming for a father who couldn't save her.

I ran through hallways of smoke and shadow, chased by white masked men with blades and needles. Behind them, a symbol burned...a black blade, a silver cage, a white mask.The Aegis Protocol.

A voice echoed in the darkness."You were not born to survive. You were born to end it."

Then light. Blinding. Moonlight pouring like a river of silver. A woman stood before me. She was tall and radiant, with eyes glowing like galaxies. The Moon Goddess. "Find the others. Unite them. Or all will be lost."

I screamed, and sat bolt upright in bed, drenched in sweat, heart hammering like a war drum. "Shit," I whispered. "Shit, shit, shit."

I scrambled out of bed and checked the time.

7:32 AM.

"SHIT."

Ten minutes later, I flew down the road in my rusted out blue Chevy pickup, the windows down, wind tangling my hair into chaos. Silver stars swayed from my rearview mirror, dancing with every bump and turn.

I cranked the volume on my playlist, punk rock screaming through the speakers. This was my morning chaos ritual. It always helped.

Until I pulled into the school lot, jumped out the truck and sprinted into the building...And slammed right into Daxon Stormclaw.

Like, physically. Felt like slamming into a tree and he didn't even move. I narrowed my eyes and growled.

We both froze, inches apart. I was holding a textbook. He was holding a protein bar. Neither of us moved.

"Watch it," he said, his voice low and venomous. "Wouldn't want you tackling anyone else this week."

I glared. "Funny, coming from the guy who had his sister's ego in a headlock last night."

He smirked. "You're lucky I pulled you off."

"Oh, trust me," I said, shoving past him, "you are."

I didn't wait for a reply. I stormed down the hall and into Wolf Pack Politics, sliding into the seat beside Taya. She raised a brow. "That bad?"

I dropped my head onto the desk. "You have no idea."

I hardly had my ass in the seat before Mr. Halden, our eternally cranky Wolf Pack Politics teacher, glanced up from his tablet and raised an unimpressed brow.

"Miss Thorne," he said with a sigh like he'd been waiting his whole life to be disappointed in me. "You're late."

"Yeah, I know, sorry.."

"That's minus ten participation points."

I blinked. "Seriously?"

"You want to make it twenty?"

I gritted my teeth. "No, sir."

Behind me, a snort sounded like nails on a chalkboard. Vaela. Of course.

"Rough morning, Thorne?" she cooed, her voice like poisoned honey. "Looks like someone forgot how to set an alarm."

Soria coughed from the next row over, followed by Brielle muttering, "Slut," behind her hand.

I clenched my jaw. Taya muttered, "I will maul them."

And that's when I felt it. The breeze. The very cool breeze. Against my stomach. And my boobs.

I looked down...and nearly died. In my panic this morning, I'd grabbed a thin white shirt from the clean laundry pile. No bra. Slightly sheer. Full moon on full display under the goddamn fluorescent lights.

Kill. Me. Now. A whistle rang out from two rows behind me. Then another.

"Nice top, Thorne!" someone called. "Where's the rest of it?"

"I volunteer for mate duty!"

Laughter broke out like wildfire, and my face went up in flames. Taya's jaw dropped. "If I had a knife right now..."

Vaela coughed again. "Desperate much?"

And that's when Lyssira let out a low, rolling growl in the back of my skull. "Let me at her."

No.

"Just one lunge."

No.

"One claw to the face, it will be very educational."

"Stop," I whispered under my breath, gripping the edge of my desk so hard it creaked.

"El."

"I said stop!"

Mr. Halden didn't even look up. "Miss Thorne," he said flatly, "unless you'd like to spend the rest of class in detention, I suggest you stop talking to yourself."

I inhaled slowly, pressing my thighs together, grounding myself before I launched over another desk and ruined my entire life. Taya reached over under the table and gave my hand a squeeze. I squeezed back.

"Breathe, babe," she whispered. "You made it through the Choke Slam of Vaela 2025. You can survive a little nipple drama."

I snorted under my breath and shook my head. But inside me, Lyssira didn't let go. She was still pacing.

Still watching.

Still waiting.