

# The Betrayed Princess Rising ( Lylah And Rowan Blackfang's )

Chapter 191

3rd Person's POV

It had been coincidence—or perhaps fate guided by the Moon Goddess herself.

Finished

Gwyn's father had come to visit his daughter while she was on duty when the ward assistant came running, breathless and panicked, pleading for help. He hadn't come alone. At his side was Yorik—once a dying patient under Lylah's care, now standing strong.

The moment Yorik saw Lylah, he dropped into a bow without hesitation, reverence clear in both posture and scent. "My lady!"

"Lylah, are you alright?!" Gwyn rushed forward as Lylah pushed herself to stand. Her hands hovered, torn between panic and relief. "Are you hurt? You need to be treated immediately!"

"No need, Gwyn," Lylah said softly, steady despite the faint rasp in her voice. "He choked me, but that's all."

Her

gaze shifted to the man standing behind Gwyn. "Thank you for stepping in, sir. I owe you my life."

The man stepped forward.

"Call me Gerald," he said. "I'm a warrior of the Whitepine Pack and Gwyn's father." Then his voice lowered, touched by something almost reverent. "By Selene's grace... forgive my boldness, but—are you, by any chance... related to Lady Vala Stillward?"

The question struck like a blow.

Lylah stilled. "Why do you ask?"

Gerald exhaled slowly, as if steadying himself against something unseen.

“Lady Vala was my mentor,” he said, his voice quieter now, threaded with memory. “The one who trained me... before she passed.” His gaze sharpened again, searching her face. “But when I look at you—your eyes, your presence... it feels as though she’s standing before me once more.”

A beat passed.

“You resemble her too much for it to be a coincidence,” Gerald continued. “There is blood between you.”

Beside him, Gwyn sensed the shift immediately. The tension. “Dad-”

“Quiet, Gwyn,” Gerald cut in, not harsh, but firm with conviction. “I know what I’m saying. This is no idle guess.” His voice deepened, resolute. “Your friend is connected to Lady Vala of Whitepine. I would stake my name on it.”

Silence fell.

Yorik’s eyes widened in shock.

Nearby, Soren and Crystal exchanged tense, disbelieving looks, their instincts prickling at the **weight of** the revelation.

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At the center of it all, Lylah drew in a slow breath.

There was no escaping it now.

“She was... my mother,” Lylah said quietly. “Lady Vala Stillward.” Her voice steadied as she continued. “And Jax Stillward was my father. I carry their blood.”

The truth settled over the room like a shockwave.

Gerald’s breath left him.

“By Selene’s grace....” His hand pressed against his chest as he bowed his head deeply before her—a gesture of both respect and awe. When he looked up again, his eyes burned with something fierce and emotional. “You are the one we have been searching for all these years. Lady Vala’s true daughter. The heir to their legacy—the wolf who carries their bloodline!”

Gwyn stared at Lylah, stunned. “How were you separated from them for so long? Lylah, that must have been unbearable!”

“Switched at birth,” Lylah’s expression dimmed.

But she wasn’t finished. Her next words made everyone gasp.

“I learned it and I kept it hidden. Because Alpha Eldric and Luna Daia of Ironcrest Pack would never allow that truth to rise. They would have buried it along with anyone who dared to *spea*k it.”

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“Alpha Eldric and Luna Daia?” Gerald’s eyes narrowed, a low, instinctive growl threading beneath his voice. “So the girl Vala and Jax raised, the one we all believed to be theirs, was actually adopted... and the real daughter belongs to Ironcrest Pack?”

“You know Cora?” Lylah asked.

“Yeah. I did. All of us who trained under Vala knew her.” Gerald exhaled slowly, jaw tightening. “She told us the true child of Jax and Vala died right after birth.”

“That’s not true. I’m here, alive and well. In fact, Cora and I lived each other’s lives for fifteen years.” Lylah didn’t raise her voice. She spoke as though the truth itself required no force to be heard.

And somehow, that made it all the more powerful.

Gerald stared at her, something shifting in his expression. The calm, control, and quiet authority that mirrored Vala so precisely were almost unsettling.

There was no denying it.

This girl was Vala’s daughter.

“Then why would Cora lie?” Gerald muttered, more to himself than anyone else, disappointment lacing his tone. “We all trusted her—every one of us. Why would she do something like this?”

“Is this the same Cora?” Gwyn spoke up, brows knitting together. “Who has a relationship with Alpha Rowan Blackfang?”

Gerald nodded grimly.

Hearing that, Soren quietly slipped out of the room.

Drawn by instinct more than thought, she made her way to the ward where Cora was on duty.

Fortunately, she was alone.

“Soren?” Cora turned, feigning surprise, her expression soft with practiced innocence. “What are you doing here? Shouldn’t you be with your friend—the one who just had her baby ripped away?” Her lips curved faintly. “I heard the father came and demanded that woman.”

Soren frowned, a slow, dangerous crease forming between her brows. There was something off in Cora’s tone—too light, too entertained. As if her friend’s suffering were nothing more than a passing spectacle.

“Oh, Soren...” Cora drawled, tilting her head as she looked her over. “Who would’ve thought you’d associate with people like that?”

“Like what?” Soren’s voice dropped.

Cora’s smile sharpened. “Like whores.” She let the word linger. “Haven’t you heard? Birds of the **same**

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feather flock together” Her gaze darkened with malice. “It must mean you’re just the same as-

The crack echoed through the ward.

Soren’s hand struck her across the face before she could finish

Cora’s head snapped to the side from the force of the slap, blonde hair spilling across her cheek. For a heartbeat, the room went still—then slowly, she turned back.

The air shifted

Her wolf stirred beneath her skin, a low, dangerous heat rising into her gaze as it locked onto Soren Rage flared—sharp and bright—her dominance pressing outward like a warning snarl.

Soren had struck her.

A mere councilman’s daughter daring to lay hands on the Alpha’s woman.

“How dare you” Cora hissed, her voice dropping into a growl thick with authority, “raise your hand against your Luna?”

Soren didn’t flinch. If anything, she stood taller, chin lifting as her defiance cut clean through the tension. “Luna?” she echoed, her voice laced with cold contempt. “No. A liar. A filthy, calculated liar.”

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Cora’s brows drew together, but Soren pressed on, relentless.

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“All this time, you’ve played the perfect image for Alpha Rowan and the entire Blackfang Pack—my pack,” she said, each word deliberate. “The flawless Ironcrest princess. The girl with such a big heart she convinced her parents to take in a stray and raise her as their own.”

Her lips curled.

“Every bit of it was a lie, Cora.”

A flicker—brief, but unmistakable—crossed Cora’s expression.

“That ‘stray’?” Soren’s eyes sharpened. “Lylah was never some abandoned pup taken in out of pity. You and her...” She stepped closer, her voice dropping into something far more dangerous. “You were switched at birth.”

Silence crashed between them.

Cora swallowed.

“And her parents?” Soren continued, her voice gaining strength with every word. “Not nobodies. Not weak. They’re a high-ranking warrior pair from the Whitepine Pack.”

She let the truth settle, heavy and suffocating.

“That means Lylah carries noble blood,” she said, softer now—but no less cutting. “Blood far more honored than yours will ever be.”

Her gaze turned sharp. Almost pitying.

“And suddenly, everything makes sense. Why you’ve always been so... uneasy around her. It was never just her strength.”

A beat.

“You’re afraid of her, Cora.”

Cora said nothing.

“Afraid,” Soren repeated, “that if the truth ever comes out—if everyone sees Lylah for who she really is she’ll eclipse you completely.”

For a moment, the mask cracked.

Then, just as quickly, it reformed.

A slow, unsettling smile curved along Cora’s lips as she folded her arms, her composure sliding **back into** place like armor.

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“So,” she murmured, almost amused, “you’ve uncovered the truth.”

Her gaze glinted.

“But what exactly do you plan to do with it, Soren?” She tilted her head, studying her like prey she had already chosen. “Do you really think anyone will believe you?”

Her smile sharpened.

“Go on. Spread it. Tell all of Verdanth.”

A pause.

“And I’ll watch as they brand you a traitor—a desperate schemer trying to tear down the future Luna of Blackfang.”

Night fell heavily over Lunaris.

Seated across from Ezra, Lylah’s fingers twisted faintly in her lap as she recounted everything from that afternoon—the moment Gerald recognized her, the weight of his stare, and the invitation *that* followed.

A visit to her parents’ graves... alongside Jax and Vala’s former students.

When she finished, silence settled between them—thick, but not uncomfortable.

“Ezra...” Lylah said quietly, her voice softer now. “Did I make a mistake?”

Her eyes lifted to his, uncertainty flickering beneath their usual steadiness.

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“If this spreads... the truth about me and buried. And she won’t take that lightly.”

Ezra didn’t answer immediately.

He simply watched her.

Then he gave a slight shake of his head.

“You did nothing wrong,” he said, calm but firm. “If the truth comes to light, it isn’t your burden to carry- it’s the consequence of their deception.”

Lylah’s teeth pressed into her lower lip.

“It won’t just affect us,” she murmured. “It will drag Alpha Eldric and Luna Daia’s names down with it.. and stain Ironcrest’s reputation.”

For a moment, something like conflict flickered across her expression.

Then Ezra reached across the table.

His fingers closed around hers, warm and steady. He lifted her hand slowly, pressing a soft kiss to her

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knuckles.

“Then let it be, Lylah,” he said quietly.

His eyes met hers, unwavering.

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“We’ll watch their downfall together,” he continued, his voice low but certain. “And whatever comes after that...”

His thumb brushed gently over her skin.

“I won’t let you face it alone.”

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Lylah’s POV

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I had expected Ezra to be displeased—perhaps even cold—when I told him about Gerald. Especially after the tension between him and Gary. But he hadn't reacted that way at all.

Instead, he accepted it with quiet ease.

Relief settled deep in my chest.

Once again, Ezra proved I didn't have to worry about things. Once again, he made the weight of my world feel much lighter.

The next morning was an off day. I had no classes at the academy, and Ezra set aside his work at the research center—just as I had planned. We drove out to a private villa tucked into the serene outskirts of Lunaris, where Vargan and Commander Ivar were staying.

The land there was thick with forest and moon-scent—wild, untouched, alive in a way the city center

could never be.

It had been my idea.

Ezra hadn't agreed at first.

'We could spend the day alone. Only us.' he had said, his voice low, almost coaxing.

But I had been stubborn. If there was even the smallest chance to mend the distance between him and Vargan, I would take it.

"Lylah!"

The moment we stepped out of the car, Vargan came striding toward me.

"You came to visit me! So you didn't lie after all!"

I smiled, warmth rising in my chest. "Of course I would come before you return to Moonclaw, Grandpa."

"Ah, a shame Commander Ivar already left for Whitepine this morning. He has some business to attend to," he said with a snort. His sharp eyes gleamed. "But I've just come back from a run. And a hunt." He leaned closer, voice lowering with excitement. "Do you remember our plan to hunt together?"

I nodded eagerly, the thrill of it sparking through me—

Until Ezra's arm slid around my waist,

“No hunting today,” he said smoothly, his tone leaving no room for argument. “I won’t have my Luna exhausting herself.”

Vargan scoffed. “You’ve always been insufferably dull, son.” His gaze flicked to me, full of mischief. “Lylah, why bring him along? He’ll only ruin all our fun.”

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“Grandpa,” I said gently, glancing at Ezra, “he wants to spend time with us too.”

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Ezra didn’t rise to the provocation. As always, he remained composed—cold on the surface, unreadable. But the steady warmth of his hand at my waist grounded me.

I exhaled quietly.

“I brought down a young deer at first light,” Vargan went on, a hint of pride in his voice. “The chefs are cleaning it now. Let’s set it over the fire and make a proper feast of it. What do you say?”

My eyes lit up. “That sounds perfect.”

Beside me, Ezra gave a faint, reluctant grunt.

I nudged him sharply with my elbow.

After a beat, he sighed. “...Fine.”

The feast that followed was small, but it carried a warmth that settled deep within me.

The scent of roasting meat filled the air, rich and primal, mingling with smoke and pine. Vargan’s laughter echoed through the clearing, blending with the distant hum of the forest. Of course, he and Ezra still bickered. That much hadn’t changed.

But there was something different beneath it now—less hostility, more familiarity. Something almost resembling understanding.

I watched them from a distance, a quiet smile forming as they stood together with Damon as well, handling rifles, exchanging sharp remarks that no longer felt like threats.

Until a sharp voice cut through the air.

“What is this? A party? And no one thought to tell me?” The tone was sharp, indignant. “How vile!”

I turned toward the sound.

A woman stood at the edge of the clearing.

She was strikingly beautiful, her features sharp and unmistakably Moonclaw–dark–eyed, poised, every inch of her radiating noble blood and predator grace.

“Grandpa! Ezra!”

She rushed forward without hesitation, throwing herself into Vargan’s arms. He caught her easily, letting out a rough laugh.

Ezra, however, barely reacted.

“Luna,” Damon murmured, stepping quietly to my side when he noticed my confusion. “That’s Lady Zyrelle–Alpha Ezra’s cousin, from his father’s bloodline.”

Zyrelle turned then, her attention finally shifting.

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But only after she poked Ezra’s arm with a teasing grin. “Still as cold as stone, I see”

“Zyrelle,” Vargan said, gesturing toward me. “Your Luna. Show some respect.”

Her gaze snapped to mine.

And in an instant, the warmth in her expression vanished.

Her brows drew together, lips curving into a faint, displeased frown.

“Luna? Since when did I have a Luna?”

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Lylah's POV

"Luna? Since when did I have a Luna?"

Zyrelle echoed, her lips curving with disbelief.

Then, she stepped toward me, each movement deliberate, predatory.

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"Grandpa," she said, turning her sharp gaze to Vargan. "If Moonclaw had a Luna, I would know. Would I not? And yet, I hear nothing-until now. So how is it that you stand there and call her my Luna?"

"She is, Zyrelle," Vargan replied, his voice carrying the weight of command. "Our Alpha has completed the mating rites and bound himself to her. The bond is sealed. Lylah is Moonclaw's Luna and Luna to us all."

Zyrelle's eyes returned to me, cold and measuring, like a hunter sizing up prey that had wandered too close.

"When?" she asked.

Silence answered her.

Her gaze sharpened. "When did Ezra do this? And how did it happen without my knowledge?"

"You've been away from Moonclaw for over a year," Vargan said, his tone calm but resolute. "Ezra knew your focus was elsewhere-your studies, your relentless pursuit of becoming a Commander. He chose not to pull you back."

Zyrelle's jaw tightened.

The explanation did little to soften her.

I forced a smile, though the air between us felt razor-thin. Whatever she thought of me, I refused to add fuel to it.

Still, the way she watched me... it was suffocating.

Beneath my skin, Selestine stirred, bristling in quiet warning. My wolf's presence leaked into the air, a low, territorial hum.

Zyrelle's eyes flickered-she felt it..

"Interesting," she murmured.

Then-

Bang!

The crack of gunfire split the air.

Something sliced through the space between us-a violent blur that cracked the air apart,

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The wooden post behind Zyrelle jolted as the bullet slammed into it, splintering deep into its core. My breath caught, my heart leaping painfully into my throat. For the briefest flicker of time, Zyrelle recoiled -her flawless composure slipping, just enough to reveal the instinctive fear beneath.

"Ezra!" she snapped.

I turned sharply.

He stood there, rifle still raised, his expression maddeningly calm-as though he hadn't just fired a shot that could have struck his cousin.

"Accident," he said.

The word fell flat.

Zyrelle's annoyance simmered beneath the surface, barely restrained.

That evening, I found myself outside Zyrelle's door.

The memory of the shot still lingered, sharp and uneasy. Ezra would never apologize-of that, I was certain. So I would.

"Luna," She said the moment I stepped inside, her tone clipped. "What are you doing here? You could have summoned me instead."

"I came to apologize," I said, steadying my voice. "For what happened this morning."

She waved it off, turning toward the window. “Don’t trouble yourself. This isn’t the first time he’s acted as though he might kill his own blood.”

There was a faint, knowing edge to her voice.

‘But I know Ezra,” she continued, her voice measured. “That was no accident, yet neither was it meant to harm. It was a warning. He’s always preferred to speak through action rather than words.”

Her gaze shifted, cutting briefly toward me over her shoulder.

“He was displeased with how I regarded you. If anything...” she added coolly, “I should be the one offering an apology.”

I frowned, stepping closer,

“No,” I said softly, shaking my head. “Perhaps in the past, he would have meant it. But not this time. It truly was an accident, Lady Zyrelle. His vision is failing—he can no longer see, not even where the trigger rests.”

A faint ache tightened in my chest, but I steadied myself. “His instincts are still sharp, his muscle memory flawless—but I know that isn’t enough. I’ll make sure he doesn’t lay a hand on that weapon again.”

Zyrelle turned to me sharply, her eyes narrowing with sudden intensity.

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“What do you mean that Ezra’s vision is failing?”

I blinked, caught off guard. “You didn’t know? Damon told me it started about three years ago-

Zyrelle let out a short, incredulous laugh.

“Why would he lie to you?” she said, her gaze cutting straight through me. “Ezra can see just fine.”

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

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Lylah stilled, the words taking a moment to settle-only to make less sense the longer they lingered.

“What?” she blurted, disbelief slipping through before she could stop it.

Across from her, Zyrelle looked... amused.

There was a glint in her eyes, sharp and curious, as though she were watching a puzzle unfold rather than a conversation. For a fleeting second, she wondered what kind of game Ezra had been playing with this innocent girl-making her his Luna, binding her to him, yet leaving her in the dark.

It stirred an older suspicion.

Ezra had never been simple. Even as a pup, his mind had been a dark, intricate labyrinth, always moving and calculating. Nothing he did was without reason. Not when it came to power. Not when it came to family.

“How is it that you seem like a stranger to your own husband?” Zyrelle said at last, her tone deceptively light, “Don't tell me that you stood beside him in a mating ceremony and still know nothing about him.”

Lylah hesitated, but lifted her chin. “We were strangers when it started,” she admitted. “But we've been learning from each other little by little. And we still are.”

That only made Zyrelle laugh.

Soft at first-then deeper, richer, until her eyes nearly watered with it.

Learning Ezra?

That was almost laughable..

Zyrelle had known him for over twenty-five full-moon cycles of her life, and even now, he remained an enigma. Calm on the surface, like a still ocean-but beneath it, currents wild enough to drown anything that ventured too close.

“Learned what, exactly?” Zyrelle pressed, tilting her head.

“His preferences,” Lylah answered, steady despite the tension. “What he likes, his habits, the way he is at home-”

“His past?” Zyrelle cut in smoothly. “His secrets?”

Lylah fell silent.

Then she shook her head.

Zyrelle wasn't surprised.

“Let me tell you, Lylah, in this family,” she said, her voice lowering slightly, “I'm probably the only one

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who knows the truth he keeps buried.”

Her gaze drifted, distant for a moment, as if replaying something only she could see.

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“I don't mean to unsettle you,” she added, almost idly. “But before you... I was certain Ezra already had someone.”

Lylah's breath caught.

“A fated mate,” Zyrelle clarified.

The word landed heavier than it should have.

Lylah remembered asking him about it once. Ezra had answered without hesitation-there had been no one. No past, no lingering bond. Just her. He told her she was the one he had been waiting for.

Had he lied?

“You don’t understand,” Zyrelle went on, her voice softening-not with kindness, but with something closer to fascination. “Their bond wasn’t ordinary. I saw it myself.” Her lips curved faintly. “I used to follow him quietly. He never noticed.”

There was a flicker of something almost nostalgic in her expression.

“Every full moon, he would shift and vanish into the forest,” she murmured, “And then he’d howl-so raw it tore through the night itself. Not just any howl, but the kind that comes from a wolf who already feels their mate’s existence in their soul-yet cannot find them.”

Lylah’s chest tightened.

“It was maddening to watch, Lylah,” Zyrelle continued, “He would run for days-no food, no rest. Completely feral and desperate. Searching for someone he couldn’t even name.”

Her eyes darkened slightly.

“He tore through Moonclaw lands like a lunatic, chasing a presence only he could feel. And when he couldn’t find her there...” she paused, “he began to look beyond it.” A quiet breath left her.

“That was when he left.”

Silence stretched between them.

“After that, I didn’t see him much.” Zyrelle admitted, “But I know one thing for certain-before you ever came into his life...” Her gaze slid back to Lylah, sharp and knowing.

“There was someone in his heart”

The words lingered, heavy, suffocating.

And for the first time-

Lylah felt something cold curl in her chest.

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If that was true...

Then who was she?

And more importantly-

Who had once driven Ezra to the edge of madness?

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Moments earlier, before Lylah ever sought Zyrelle out, Ezra found his cousin just outside her chamber, the corridor dimly lit, shadows stretching long across the stone.

The moment he stepped into view, the air shifted.

Cold.

Predatory.

Zyrelle stilled. Of all the sides she had seen of Ezra, this was the one that made danger coil sharpest beneath her skin.

“Cousin?” she said, arching a brow, masking instinct with practiced ease. “What is it now?”

He didn’t answer.

The silence pressed harder than any words. His aura bled into the space between them-thick, dominant, laced with warning. It curled around her wolf like a snare, tightening just enough to remind her of one undeniable truth.

He was her Alpha.

And tonight, he was not in the mood for games.

Zyrelle exhaled slowly, lifting both hands in surrender. “Alright, fine,” she muttered. “I admit it. I regret saying that...” Her voice softened, though it carried a thread of reluctant honesty. “I shouldn’t have doubted that Lylah is your Luna.”

Her lips twitched, attempting lightness.

“You can stop staring at me like you’re about to skin me alive, Ezra. You already nearly put a bullet in my head earlier-I think that got your point across.”

No reaction.

Ezra’s gaze remained fixed.

The weight of it sent a quiet ripple through Zyrelle’s wolf, something instinctive bristling beneath her skin. Never-never-had she seen him like this over anyone.

Over a woman.

“You will apologize to her,” Ezra said at last, his voice low and absolute. “I don’t take anything lightly when it comes to Lylah, Zyrelle. Even if your intent was... playful.”

Zyrelle almost scoffed-but she didn’t.

“Alright, alright,” she relented, waving a hand. “I will.”

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Only then did the pressure ease-slightly. Ezra gave a short nod, as if that alone settled the matter.

The arrogance in it was so familiar.

Annoyingly so.

It hadn't changed since they were pups.

Zyrelle clicked her tongue and jabbed a finger into his arm, not hard-but enough to make a point. "But you don't get to throw all the blame on me,"

Ezra's brow lifted faintly.

"Dear cousin," she continued, her tone sharpening, "you're well aware of who you are. In Moonclaw. In our family." Her gaze held his, unflinching now. "You're the Alpha. Your mating isn't some trivial affair, it's something we've all been waiting for!"

A flicker of something-hurt, buried under irritation-passed through her expression.

"And then, out of nowhere, you go and do it in secret?" she pressed. "No announcement. No word. Not even my own parents told me." Her arms crossed tightly. "If I hadn't come here, would I still be in the dark?"

Ezra's jaw tightened. "I didn't want to trouble-"

"Shut it," Zyrelle cut him off. "You didn't want to trouble me? Or you just didn't care?"

She exhaled, shaking it off before it could root too deeply.

"Whatever, Ezra," she muttered. Then, tilting her head, her eyes gleamed with renewed curiosity. "But tell me this instead-how did you even meet Lylah? And more importantly..." A slow, teasing smirk crept onto her lips. "How did you convince her to become your Luna with that personality of yours?"

Ezra huffed under his breath.

Zyrelle rolled her eyes. "And let's not forget you just almost shot me. Honestly, Ezra, Lylah now probably thinks you're some unhinged, trigger-happy menace instead of a respectable Alpha."

Silence stretched between them.

"She wouldn't think I did it on purpose!" Ezra said at last, his tone calm-almost too calm.

Zyrelle blinked. "How? It's not like you couldn't see where you were aiming!"

Ezra didn't answer.

And that-more than anything-made her eyes narrow.

Zyrelle studied him closely, something sharper than curiosity settling in. She knew him too well. Knew the way his mind worked, the way he calculated ten steps ahead without ever showing his hand.

This-his silence-was not hesitation. But a concealment.

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A plan.

Something he hadn't said... something he wouldn't say.

Slowly, realization began to take shape.

"Ezra..." Zyrelle murmured, suspicion threading through her voice.

But he had already turned away.

And in that moment, Ezra knew Zyrelle would ask. She would go to Lylah, piece together what didn't align, chase the gaps until she found the truth-or something close enough to it.

Which meant...

He needed an explanation.

And fast.

Before the illusion he had built began to crack.

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1:05 pm p p pp.

The Betrayed Princess Rising

Ruby Walker

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drama that captivate readers from start to finish. Ruby's writing style is bold and irresistible—perfect for those who crave intense, addictive love stories.

# The Betrayed Princess Rising ( Lylah And Rowan Blackfang's )

Chapter 198

3rd Person's POV

Night had settled softly over the villa by the time Lylah stepped outside.

Finished

The air was cool, kissed by the quiet hush of the forest, while a scatter of stars stretched endlessly above. Dinner with Vargan and Zyrelle had only just ended, yet something had tugged at her instincts the moment Ezra slipped away. So she followed.

She found him in the garden, crouched low, a blade glinting faintly beneath the moonlight as he drew it slowly across a whetstone.

“Come here, Lylah,” Ezra said without looking up. “I know you have something to ask me.”

She paused.

Her steps had been silent—she was certain of it. But of course... he would sense her presence. He always

did.

Lylah cleared her throat and approached.

“About what Zyrelle told you, right?” he added, his voice calm, almost knowing.

She stopped beside him, her gaze lingering on his profile. “Ezra, why didn't you ever tell me you had a cousin that close to you? Zyrelle clearly cares about you... And yet, not once did you ever mention her to me.”

Ezra finally lifted his gaze.

For a moment, the sharpness in his eyes eased.

'I'm sorry,' he said. "I thought you wouldn't be interested in my family. Considering how our mating started. Come here,"

He offered his hand, and Lylah took it without hesitation. With a gentle tug, he drew her down beside him.

'But now you know I am,' she said quietly. "I always was."

Something shifted in his expression then—a small smile touched the corner of his lips. "So you want to know about her."

Lylah nodded.

'We were close when we were young. Pups,' he began. "Always paired together in training because of your same skill level and drive." A faint huff of amusement left him. "Zyrelle was a relentless fighter. She still is."

His fingers tightened slightly around hers,

'But as we got older, we spoke less. Trained apart. Walked different paths.' He paused. "I was consumed by a relentless drive to chase something I couldn't ignore."

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1:05 pm P ppp.

Chapter 198

She didn't miss a beat. "Someone."

Ezra didn't deny it.

A quiet certainty settled in Lylah's chest then—Zyrelle hadn't lied.

"Who was it?" she asked, her voice steadier than she felt. "Who drove you to that point? To leave Moonclaw... to search like you'd lost your mind?"

Ezra let out a low breath, something darker threading through it. "You really want to know?"

"Yes."

He picked up the blade, then drove its tip into the earth between them.

"It started the night I shifted for the first time," he said.

His voice dropped, rougher now.

Finished

“There was this... hunger.” His jaw tightened. “For her. A pull so violent it felt like something inside me was tearing itself apart.”

“It never stopped,” Ezra continued. “Day or night. It clawed at me. Drove me through every inch of Moonclaw territory.” His hand traced rough lines in the dirt as he spoke, mapping out places long searched and abandoned. “I found nothing.”

His expression darkened.

“The chase wasn’t a thrill, Lylah. It was torture. And if I failed...” His voice lowered to a dangerous murmur. “Ragnar would have ended me himself.”

Lylah’s breath caught.

Ezra didn’t look at her.

“So I kept going. Leaving Moonclaw, to the place where the pull was strongest, where something in me knew our paths would finally meet.” His finger dragged farther across the soil, carving distance into the earth. “Lunaris.”

He sketched the outline of the city... then the sharp lines of a penthouse.

And then,

He stopped.

Lylah frowned, leaning closer. “And after that? Ezra, don’t stop now. What happened next?”

He said quietly, “After all that searching, it ended.”

Her brows knit together. “Ended?”

“The pull,” he clarified. “The hunger. The madness.” His eyes lifted to hers, steady and unflinching. “It disappeared.”

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1:05 pm p p pp.

Chapter 198

047

Finished

“Why?”

“Because I found her.”

Something twisted in Lylah's chest. "You brought her to your penthouse?" she asked, unable to fully hide the note of disappointment that slipped into her voice.

Ezra held her gaze. "Yes."

"That night," he continued, "I picked her up from the station and took her straight to Lunaris City Hall."

Lylah's breath slowed.

"And there," Ezra finished, his voice dropping into something softer-something deeper, "We formalized our mating license."

His fingers tightened around hers. "I found her."

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1:05 pm P p pp.

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## The Betrayed Princess Rising ( Lylah And Rowan Blackfang's )

Chapter 199

3rd Person's POV

For a fleeting moment, the world fell away.

047

Finished

Lylah heard nothing, saw nothing-felt nothing but the warmth of Ezra's hands wrapped around hers and the echo of his words reverberating through her soul.

Then it struck her.

The woman Zyrelle had spoken of... the one Ezra had been searching for all this time...

It was her.

Her breath caught, eyes widening as the realization settled deep into her bones. "You already knew I was your mate?"

Such a thing was not unheard of-but it was rare. Painfully rare. Among wolves, mates were meant to discover each other through instinct, through time, through fate unfolding as it willed. Yet in the oldest prophecies, the oracles spoke of something different-of bonds where one soul recognized the other first. And when that happened...

Not even death could sever them. Not across lifetimes. Not across rebirth.

"But how?" Lylah's voice trembled now.

Ezra's lips curved faintly, though his gaze held a quiet intensity. "You wouldn't believe me even if I told you."

But suddenly, the answer didn't matter anymore.

Because she was the one he had been searching for.

And that was enough.

Driven by instinct, Lylah stepped forward and threw her arms around his neck. Ezra stilled for half a heartbeat-caught off guard-before his arm instinctively wrapped around her slender waist, pulling her

close.

His other hand slid into her hair, fingers threading through the soft strands as he buried his face against the crown of her head, breathing her in like something he had been starved of for years.

Mate.

He hadn't expected this-hadn't expected her to accept him so completely, so easily. The force of it overwhelmed him, a rare crack in the Alpha's control as something dangerously close to joy surged through his chest.

“Ezra... I’m so happy,” she murmured against him.

His hold tightened slightly. “What are you happy for? Tell me.”

1/2

1:05 pm P p p p

Chapter 199

02 Finishe

She leaned back just enough to meet his eyes, “That you knew we were meant to be. That you didn’t hesitate the moment you saw my name on the Mate-Market. If you hadn’t, I can’t even imagine...”

The thought alone made her chest tighten.

A different life. A different mate. He is standing beside someone else.

Her wolf recoiled at the mere idea.

Lylah had always known that finding one’s fated mate was never simple. Some wolves spent their entire lives searching. She herself had shifted late-felt that disconnect more keenly than most.

But now...

All that remained was for Selestine to come into her own realization.

In the warmth of that happiness, the question she had meant to ask him-about his vision-slipped quietly from her mind..

Ezra noticed.

For a moment, something conflicted flickered in his chest.

Relief... or deeper regret.

The next few days passed in a blur. The academy of Lunar Grace fell into the tense rhythm of semester examinations. Now, no longer just a junior assistant, Lylah stood as a student among them-an active participant in the trials. Five days in total, and she had moved through each one with effortless precision.

Today marked the final day.

As she stepped out of the hall, the late afternoon sun brushed against her skin-and her phone rang.

“Hello?”

“Lylah,” came a familiar voice, warm yet formal. “I hope you still remember me.”

Her eyes widened slightly. “Mr. Stone? Of course I remember you.”

A soft chuckle sounded from the other end. “I’m glad to hear that.” He paused, his tone shifting into something more deliberate. “I apologize for calling out of the blue, but I have a request.”

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

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## The Betrayed Princess Rising ( Lylah And Rowan Blackfang's )

Chapter 200

3rd Person’s POV

“Yes, Mr. Stone? Please, go ahead.”

Finished

He had been her mentor back at Blackfang College—one of the very few who had treated her as an equal. While other mentors looked down on her, whispering behind her back, questioning her place, Stone never once did.

“Lylah, the graduation ceremony is tomorrow.” he began, his tone carrying a note of hesitation, “You remember how we always hold a series of events afterward, don’t you?”

A faint smile touched her lips. Of course, she remembered.

“And the students I’ve been mentoring were hoping you might attend as an honored guest.” he continued. A quiet chuckle followed. “It seems they’ve been keeping up with you. They’re very proud you made it into Lunar Grace.”

Before she could respond, he added quickly, “Wait,”

The call shifted.

The screen flickered, then filled with faces-bright-eyed, eager, and aching familiar.

“Lylah-sister! I’m your secret admirer!”

“It’s been so long since you came back! Will you attend this time?”

“Do you still remember us?”

The voices overlapped, full of life and excitement, their energy practically spilling through the screen.

Lylah’s chest tightened.

“Emerie... Ben... Donna,” she said softly, her gaze warming as she took them in one by one, “Of course I remember you all.”

More voices chimed in, calling her name, asking the same question again and again-come back. Visit Blackfang. Please.

“I’m sorry, Lylah,” Stone said, dragging a hand over his face with a sigh. “I tried to reason with them, but they wouldn’t listen.”

Lylah fell silent.

Her fingers tightened slightly around her phone as her thoughts drifted-back to Rowan’s estate, to the cold stares of pack members who had never truly accepted her, and to everything she had given them, even when it had never been returned.

She hadn’t planned to return.

1/2

Chapter 200

Not after everything.

Finished

But beyond the shadows of the past, there were still people waiting for her. People who had looked up to her, who had seen her strength when she had barely believed in it herself.

Her juniors.

Their hopeful voices still echoed in her ears.

It would only be for a day.

\*I think..." she began carefully, then steadied herself. "I think I can come."

"Really?" Stone's voice lit up instantly.

"Yes," Lylah said, though her gaze softened with something more thoughtful. "But there's something you should know. You remember I didn't come to Lunar Grace as a student. I came because of the junior assistant position you offered me."

"Yes, but that's changed now, hasn't it?" Stone replied quickly. "You've already secured your place as an undergraduate Healer."

"I have, but..." Lylah hesitated, her wolf stirring faintly, uneasy. "I don't want to disappoint them. There are others far more suited for recognition. Soren, for example, she arrived and was immediately accepted as a full student."

There was a pause. "You mean Lancel's daughter?"

"Yes."

"Hmm." Stone sounded unconvinced. "I doubt my students even know who Soren is. Let alone have any nterest in seeing her."

Lylah bit the inside of her cheek.

As long as Rowan remained in Lunaris, she should be fine. It would only be for a day after all, she told herself. She could leave as quickly as she arrived.

And she wanted to see them. To surprise Tiara. To meet those Blackfang students again.

That mattered far more than any lingering hate of crossing paths with Rowan again.

"I'll attend," Lylah said finally.

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2/2

1:05 pm P p pp.

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