

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

Chapter 241

3rd Person's POV

Fimistond

Cora still remembered the day Eldric discovered her relationship with Rowan Blackfang. The gleam in his eyes hadn't been that of a father-it had been something far sharper with hunger and satisfaction. The unmistakable spark of ambition ignited at the thought that his daughter had captured the attention of an Alpha.

A powerful one.

Connections. Influence. Power.

Those were the things Eldric valued most.

And now, hearing him bring up Lylah's mate so suddenly, Cora felt something dark and uneasy twist deep

n her stomach.

'Father?' she asked carefully, blinking as she masked her unease. "Why are you suddenly interested in Lylah's mate? I thought we agreed not to speak of her at all."

Eldric's gaze sharpened, calculating.

Because apparently, she's found a way to move ahead of us," he said, his voice low with displeasure. "And we were blind to it. Even you after spending all that time in Lunaris, you know nothing of her life now, do you?"

Cora's lips pressed into a thin line.

No-telling them the truth would be a grave mistake.

Cora's fingers curled subtly at her sides, her wolf bristling in quiet defiance. She would never hand them a weapon sharp enough to be turned against her.

'He has wealth, Father, yes,' she said evenly. "But if you think he has surpassed us... that isn't true. Wealth can be fabricated these days."

Eldric's silence told her it wasn't enough.

He wasn't convinced.

Before the tension could sharpen further, Daia reached out, her touch firm against Eldric's shoulder.

"Even if that girl managed to entangle herself with some wealthy male," Daia said coolly, "what of it? Has she preserved her dignity the way Cora has? Will she rise to become an honored Luma?" Her lips curled faintly. "No."

Eldric exhaled, though the crease between his brows remained.

"Father," Cora continued, softening her voice as she reached for his hand, her tone carefully laced with sincerity, "I know you've been disappointed in Rowan and me lately. But I will fix that."

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Her gaze steadied, determined.

Finrobed

"As for investing in others.... give me a little time. I'll speak to Rowan. I'll make things right. He is still far more reliable than any new alliance you might chase."

There's a silence.

Then, slowly, Eldric nodded.

Relief loosened the tightness in Cora's chest-but only slightly.

She was standing at the edge of something fragile.

'Almost,' she thought grimly. 'I almost lost father's favor... because of Lylah.'

By evening, the Traditional Healing building had grown quiet, the usual hum of activity fading into a calm, reverent stillness.

The scent of herbs lingered in the air, mingling with the faint, earthy trace of wolves who had passed through its halls.

Lylah had just finished her work for the day. She had even met with Clark Grimwood in his office-but as she turned to leave, the old wolf's voice stopped her.

“It has been quite some time since you two lived together, if memory serves me right,” Grimwood said, a knowing smile tugging at his lips. “I’m relieved Ezra finally did what he should. Take you to his chamber. Claim you fully.”

Heat rushed to Lylah’s face in an instant.

“Professor-”

Grimwood waved her off with a low chuckle, utterly unbothered.

“No need for modesty, child. I was once a young wolf myself, full of fire and instinct,” he said, eyes glinting with quiet knowing. “I can sense when a mated pair is at the height of their bond.”

“I only mention it for a reason,” he added, his tone shifting slightly. “If you and Ezra intend to have pups... You would do well to be cautious.”

Lylah straightened, immediately assuming he meant her studies-her responsibilities.

“Don’t worry, Professor Grimwood,” she said earnestly. “I won’t allow anything to interfere with my performance.”

A chuckle slipped from him. “That is not what I meant.”

His eyes gleamed then, carrying a weight that made Lylah’s wolf stir uneasily.

“Has he not told you?” Grimwood asked softly. “About the rarity of his genes... and what it might pass on to his offspring?”

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

Ruby Walker

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Chapter 242

Lylah’s POV

“I don’t know about that,” I murmured, shaking my head, confusion knitting my brows.

Professor Grimwood rose slowly from his seat. For a moment, his expression conflicted, as though weighing whether he should say more.

Then he did.

Finished

“Back then, Ezra confided in me,” he began, his voice quieter now. “He carries something exceptionally rare. Likely inherited from his mother’s bloodline. A mutation in his very genes... one that grants him extraordinary strength, yet may one day turn against him.”

My wolf stirred uneasily at his words.

‘What happened to his vision... that is part of it. A symptom of what was diagnosed long ago.’

I nodded slowly.

They had been close once. It wasn’t surprising Ezra had trusted him with something like that.

‘Some healers-fools, if you ask me-claim his offspring will inherit it without fail,’ Grimwood continued, a hint of irritation sharpening his tone. “And that if the child is not as strong as he is, the consequences could be far worse.”

A chill slipped down my spine.

But then his voice softened, “I never believed that. The chances are not absolute. Fate is not so rigid. There

is still every possibility that you and he will have a perfectly healthy pup.”

His gaze rested on me then-not as my mentor, but something gentler.

Something almost paternal.

A warmth I wasn’t used to.

“Child,” he called when I didn’t respond, his brows drawing together slightly. “Have I frightened you?”

“A little...” I admit honestly.

“Oh, fuck me,” he muttered under his breath, running a hand through his hair. “Lylah, that wasn’t my intention. I’ve never had the gift for soft words.”

He stepped closer,

“What I meant is this-there will be many voices in the future. Wolves who will question, who will warn, who will plant doubt about your pup’s health.” His eyes held mine. “When that time comes, you and Ezra must stand firm. Believe in yourselves and in Selene’s grace.”

I swallowed.

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It made sense why Ezra hadn’t told me. This wasn’t something easy to share. Not something you place lightly into the hands of someone you love.

“I’ll remember your words, Professor,” I said softly.

He gave a small nod. “Whether you believe me or not, I will pray for both of you.”

“Thank you.” A genuine smile curved on my lips, warmth blooming in my chest.

And it stayed.

It lingered even after I left his office... even as I stepped beyond the gates of Lunar Grace.

That was when I saw Ezra’s car.

Damon stood by it, waiting.

Without hesitation, I made my way over and opened the passenger door-but the moment I slipped inside-

Thud.

‘Ow!’ I gasped as my head knocked against something solid.

‘Careful.’

[froze.

Ezra.

He was already there.

I rubbed the top of my head, wincing. “That hurt...”

His expression softened instantly. “You don’t need to rush,” he murmured, pulling me gently toward him. His large hand came up, warm and steady, brushing over where I’d hit myself.

“Luna, please be careful,” Damon added from the front, his tone respectful but concerned.

“I’m fine,” I said quickly, still a little flustered. “I just didn’t expect him to be here.”

“Me?” Ezra’s brows drew together slightly. “You don’t like it when I come for you?”

“It’s not that.” Heat rushed to my face before I could stop it.

Because the moment I saw him, my mind betrayed me.

Fragments of memory-his hot breath against my neck, the raw hunger in his eyes, the way he gripped me tightly as he thrust deep inside me yesterday-ignited like sparks under my skin.

I cleared my throat, forcing composure.

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“You usually only come when we have plans,” I said, avoiding his eyes. “Are we going somewhere today?”

“Yes.” His voice remained calm, yet there was a quiet intent beneath it. “We’re going to visit Mina. What do you think?”

“Mina?” My eyes lit up at once as recognition dawned. She was here-in Lunar, so close.

A bright, genuine excitement stirred within me, my wolf responding just as eagerly. “That sounds great!”

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Chapter 243

Lylah's POV

Finished

The stables weren't far from the penthouses-a relief, because it meant I could visit Mina more often.

And they were far larger than I'd imagined.

Rows of polished stalls stretched beneath high wooden beams, the air rich with hay, leather, and the warm breath of living things. Dozens of horses moved within their enclosures, powerful bodies shifting, hooves striking softly against the ground.

"Back in Ironcrest, Nyx had many companions as well," I said before I could stop myself, my voice softening with memory. "Grandma always said horses should never be alone. They're herd creatures by

nature."

Ezra glanced at me, something thoughtful flickering in his eyes. "Then we chose the right place for Nyx's daughter."

A man who I assumed was the caretaker approached, bowing his head slightly before leading us deeper into the stables.

"Luna, she's here."

I caught sight of a few familiar figures lingering near the far stalls-Moonclaw guards I had seen before.

And then it clicked.

This place wasn't just any stable-it belonged to Ezra's Pack.

I turned to him, realization settling in. “Is this stable owned by the Moonclaw Pack?”

“Yes, Luna,” the caretaker answered, “you’re welcome to visit at any time. If you’d like, I ‘can show you the other horses as well. Most of them are Moonclaw-bred. Powerful, intimidating at a glance- but well- trained and very loyal.”

Then I saw Mina.

She nibbled on carrots, soft huffs escaping with each bite. The moment she sensed me, she lifted her head, ears flicking forward. And then she leaned in, nudging me affectionately, her nose brushing through my

hair.

“Hey...” I laughed, warmth spilling into my chest as I stroked her mane. “You seem upset. What happened?”

“It’s the carrots,” the caretaker said. “She prefers green apples.”

I blinked. “Then why are you feeding her that?”

“Because I told him to.”

I turned sharply toward Ezra, brows knitting.

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“This troublesome little thing caused quite a scene at the arena, didn’t she?” he said calmly. “She troubled you. Consider this her little punishment.”

For a moment, I just stared at him.

Then laughter burst out of me-bright and uncontrollable, until my sides ached.

Tears gathered in my eyes as I tried to catch my breath.

“Ezra, you’re ridiculous,” I managed between breaths. “Will that even work?”

“Perhaps. But she’ll remember,” he replied simply. “And she’ll learn.”

I chuckled softly, shaking my head. If he ever owned horses, I could only imagine how strict he’d be-far too severe, like an Alpha disciplining his own unruly offspring.

“Ezra,” I said, glancing at him with lingering amusement, “have you ever had horses before? Do you like riding?”

“No,” he said. “I’ve never been particularly gifted when it comes to bonding with animals. They’ve always seemed wary of me.”

Something in me softened at that.

Without thinking, I reached for Mina’s reins, taking them from the caretaker. The moment I did, she perked up, her tail flicking happily, hooves shifting with eager energy.

“That’s a shame,” I said lightly. “But don’t worry-I’ll teach you.”

Mina gave a pleased little whinny, as if agreeing.

“She won’t mind carrying both of us for a short ride. Especially now that she’s been fed.”

Ezra’s gaze sharpened slightly. “You want to take me riding?”

“Yes.”

It didn’t take long for the caretaker to prepare the saddle.

I mounted first, my body moving with practiced ease, years of familiarity guiding me without thought. Then I turned, offering him a hand-but he didn’t even need it.

Ezra moved with surprising fluidity, strength coiling effortlessly through him as he mounted behind me in

one smooth motion.

Too smooth for someone who claimed no experience.

His hand lifted instinctively toward the reins-then paused. As if catching himself.

Instead, it settled at my waist-firm, possessive.

“You’re right, she won’t mind,” he murmured, his breath brushing against my ear, low and intimate. “And since I have no experience at all, you’ll have to teach me.”

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Firushed

I stilled for a fraction of a second.

Because that movement-that instinct-

It hadn't felt like inexperience.

But I let it go.

"Alright," I said simply.

That evening, we rode out across the open stretch of grass beyond the stables, Mina's hooves beating a steady, rhythmic song against the earth. The wind swept past in cool, silken waves, tangling through my hair. Laughter broke free from my chest.

It had been so long.

So long since I'd felt this... light.

"Are you happy?" Ezra asked softly behind me, his voice brushing just as close as his breath.

"Yes," I answered without hesitation, the truth ringing clear. "So much."

His arms tightened slightly around my waist.

"We can do this every day," he said. "Try new things. Find more reasons for you to laugh like this."

Something deeper lay beneath his words-something almost raw.

"I want to see you happy," he continued quietly. "Free."

A pause.

Then, softer,

"Don't leave me, Lylah. Promise me."

Leave?

A small, almost incredulous thought crossed my mind.

Since the moment I met him, I'd wanted nothing more than to stay.

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Chapter 244

3rd Person's POV

The days that followed unfolded beneath a gentler hush within the penthouse.

Finished

Each dawn slipped through the glass windows, spilling soft gold across Lylah's bedroom-where a single preserved Dawn Rose rested upon her nightstand, quietly bearing witness to the passage of time.

fet, more often than not, that room remained untouched.

Because its owner rarely slept there anymore.

nstead, her nights were spent in the Alpha's chambers.

What began as careful visits-measured, restrained-inevitably dissolved into something far more intimate. By the time the candles burned low, the distance between them would vanish completely, eplaced by tangled sheets and breathless moans-almost every day.

Ezra had seen to everything himself.

The space had been altered, reshaped to suit her presence. What had once been a room untouched by >thers now carried traces of her everywhere.

This morning was no different.

ylah's eyes were heavy, her body still languid from a night that had stretched far too late. Sunlight filtered oftly across her face, warm and persistent, drawing a quiet groan from her lips as she stirred awake.

You can sleep longer later," Ezra's voice came, low and gentle. "But if I remember correctly, you made a >romise to meet Gerald of Whitepine or whatever his name is today."

ylah jolted upright.

Right!” she gasped. “He and Gwyn must already be waiting!”

Without another word, she hurried toward the bathroom-his bathroom.

Ezra could only chuckle under his breath.

Not long after, they were on the road.

The car cut through the quiet lands toward the Rest of Whitepine-a sacred place where the fallen warriors from Whitepine Pack were laid to their final peace.

When they arrived, Gerald was already there.

He stood at the forefront, his posture straight.

Behind him stood rows of warriors-men and women who had once trained under Lylah’s mother.

Their auras were steady, disciplined, and subdued.

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Finishes

“Welcome,” Gerald said, bowing deeply.

The warriors followed suit in perfect unison.

Lylah stepped forward, with Ezra right behind her-his Alpha aura restrained, yet unmistakable, like a shadow coiled with quiet strength.

“Gerald, Gwyn, Gary, and everyone,” Lylah said softly, her voice carrying across the stillness. “Thank you for coming. For visiting my parents.”

Today, as she had promised Gerald in the ward, she came to pay her respects to her parents and meet them.

And Ezra stood beside her-not just as an escort, but as her mate.

His gaze lingered briefly on Gary, sharp and assessing. The memory of that evening had not faded entirely, though the other wolf now carried himself with complete submission, his posture instinctively lowered in the Alpha’s presence.

“Lylah,” Gerald said gently, “those flowers you saw upon the mound... we placed them there a week ago, in case you were wondering who had come to visit.”

Her chest tightened.

“Thank you,” she said, her voice gentle, threaded with quiet emotion. “You all have been there for them, time and time again, even when I couldn’t. I won’t forget that.”

Gerald shook his head. “There is no need for thanks. It is our duty to honor Lady Vala and her mate for the rest of our lives.”

A murmur of agreement passed through the warriors.

Yet their eyes lingered on Lylah.

Not with judgment-but with something quieter. Deeper.

Admiration.

They had not expected this. The daughter of their revered mentor-standing before them not with pride, but humility.

“As I look at her now...” one of them murmured under their breath, “I have no doubt anymore.”

Another nodded faintly. “That young lady truly carries Lady Vala’s blood.”

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

Chapter 245

3rd Person’s POV

Finished

‘Gerald mentioned she’s studying in the Healing field at the Academy of Lunar Grace. Sharp-minded, just like her mother. And still so grounded...’

‘She’s grown so beautiful and smart. No unmated male in Lunaris could’ve missed that.’

A low scoff came from beside him. “Idiot-lower your voice. Unless you have a death wish and want the Alpha of Moonclaw tearing your throat out.”

What do you mean?” the first whispered, confusion flickering across his face.

Before the tension could settle or the question be answered, Gerald stepped forward, bowing deeply.

‘Alpha Ezra,’ he said, voice steady despite the tension, “it’s an honor to receive you here. My apologies if we’ve intruded.”

There’s no intrusion,” Ezra replied, his tone calm-almost light. “Not when it concerns my Luna.”

The warriors stiffened at once.

They had sensed the bond between him and Lylah, undeniably mated. That much had been clear.

But this...

His Luna?

They hadn’t expected that-not at all.

After laying her flowers and offering a quiet prayer to her parents, Lylah rose slowly.

Then, to her surprise,

Ezra stepped forward and knelt.

The Alpha of Moonclaw, who bowed to no one, not even his elders, lowered himself before the two nounds without hesitation-an unmistakable gesture of respect.

Ezra, there’s no need,” she said softly as he rose.

He met her gaze, steady and certain. “They are my mate’s parents,” he replied. “Of course, I owe them my

respect.”

Something in her expression softened-quiet, unspoken gratitude blooming beneath her smile.

After the visit to the graves, Gerald welcomed them into his estate.

The household sprang into motion at once-maids moving swiftly to prepare a proper meal, the parlor transformed in moments into a space worthy of receiving the Alpha and his Luna. Gerald and his mate remained visibly stiff, his wolf unsettled beneath the quiet weight of the Moonclaw Alpha's presence.

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But Lylah softened it all.

She moved among them with ease, her warmth easing the tension as she spoke with the warriors. answering their questions with gentle grace.

"Yes, I'm studying in the Traditional Healing field," she said with a small smile. "It's more challenging than I expected. But it's been my dream since I was a pup, so I chose to pursue it."

"She's being modest. Lylah is incredible." Gwyn chimed in, barely containing her excitement. "I told you all about Yorik, didn't I? Lylah treated him. She pulled him back from the brink of death." She was already reaching for her phone, eyes bright. "Do you want to see a picture of her while she was working?"

"Let us see!"

"Gwyn... you took a picture of me?" Lylah laughed softly.

"I couldn't help it," Gwyn admitted with a wink, already pulling out her phone. "I've been a fan since the day we met."

She turned the screen toward them.

A low hum of admiration rippled through the room.

"Incredible..."

"You're truly gifted, Lady Lylah!"

Praise rose around her, warm and genuine.

All but one.

One of the warriors went still, his gaze locking onto the image. When Gwyn swiped to the next picture- revealing a group shot from the MDT visit-his focus snapped to a single figure.

His scent shifted, sharp with sudden recognition.

“Is that the heir of Blackridge Pack?” he murmured, leaning in slightly. “Thane?”

His eyes lifted slowly to Lylah.

“Lady Lylah, he’s studying in the Healing field as well. An honorable young wolf.” He pause. “Does he treat you well?”

Lylah blinked, caught off guard.

“Thane? I wouldn’t know, sir,” she said honestly, a faint crease forming between her brows. “We’re not close. We barely interact.”

Thane Blackridge...

A wolf who lingered at Cora’s side like a silent sentinel, ever watchful, ever near. If anything, what remained in Lylah’s mind was only the cold, fleeting glances he had occasionally cast her way.

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A flicker of disbelief crossed the warrior’s face. “Barely? How is that possible?”

He leaned forward slightly, his tone sharpening with confusion.

“Your father saved his life when he was a pup-a bear attack. He would’ve died if not for him.” His brows furrowed, confusion deepening. “Thane has been searching for Jax Stillward’s daughter ever since. And now that you’re standing right in front of him, how could he barely speak to you?”

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Chapter 246

3rd Person's POV

Finished

“And not just Thane,” the warrior continued, his voice low but edged with meaning. “The others, too- those pups whose lives Jax saved. Victor Ross, Isaac Grey, Logan. Jude... they’ve been searching for you all this time. And yet now that you stand before them, they look straight through you as if you don’t exist. Doesn’t that strike you as strange?”

A heavy silence settled over the room, thick as storm clouds before a shift.

Ezra said nothing, but the truth struck him with the sharp clarity of a wolf’s instinct.

It wasn’t confusion-it was recognition twisted into something else. Thane hadn’t failed to see Lylah.

In his eyes, Jax’s daughter had already been found.

And she wore the face of that cunning vixen-Cora.

Lylah lowered her gaze, her chest tightening. She understood it too well. Why would Thane continue searching... when he believed the lost blood of Jax already stood at his side?

“We need answers,” the warrior went on. “I’ll confront Thane myself when I see him.”

Lylah’s eyes lifted, meeting Ezra’s. No words were needed-something deeper passed between them, like a silent bond beneath the skin.

‘Cora...’ they murmured in unison.

Around them, voices resumed, conversation weaving through the parlor as though nothing had changed. But Ezra’s world had gone unnaturally still. Beneath his calm exterior, his wolf stirred-restless, bristling, eeth bared at an unseen threat.

Cora.

All this time, she had walked freely among Lunaris’ influential figures, basking in a place she had no rightful claim to. Accepted. Protected. Revered.

All while wearing a privilege stolen from its true owner.

A low, dangerous heat simmered in Ezra's chest, his wolf pressing close to the surface, hungry for justice.

Lylah felt it.

Gently, she reached for his hand, her touch grounding, warm against the rising storm within him. "It's alright," she murmured. "Don't let it consume you, Ezra."

His jaw tightened. "She's crossed too many lines. How can she still carry herself so proudly after what she's done to you? She's paraded your name, your blood, mocked you, while claiming everything that should have been yours?"

Lylah's lips curved into a quiet, unshaken smile, her voice calm as moonlight over still water. "And yet..."

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I've lived just fine without any of it."

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Finished

She squeezed his hand, her gaze unwavering. "I don't need Thane. Or his circle. Or the power that comes with them."

Her voice softened, but the truth in it was fierce.

"Because I found something better."

Ezra stilled.

"Ezra... losing all those connections-having them replaced by meeting you, your family, your friends- means far more to me," Lylah said softly. "I don't need what Cora has. I don't even want it. As long as i have you... That's enough."

The words flowed from her heart, unrestrained, like water slipping through open hands.

Something inside him shifted.

The tight coil of anger in Ezra's chest loosened, his wolf retreating from its restless prowl as her warmth seeped into him. The fury that had burned so fiercely moments ago dimmed, soothed by the quiet certainty in her voice. He turned his hand, covering hers, grounding himself in her touch.

His calm exterior returned. But deep within, where instinct ruled, and shadows sharpened into intent, Ezra was already planning.

And when the time came... Cora would answer for every stolen breath.

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Chapter 247

Ezra's POV

Finished

I let out a slow breath, forcing the anger coiled inside me back into its cage—for her sake. For Lylah. I wouldn't let it ruin this moment, wouldn't let the tension poison the fragile peace we still had.

Even after the meeting ended, she never spoke of Thane or Cora again as we made our way back to the penthouse from Gerald's estate.

I caught myself watching her again and again.

Those eyes of hers... deep, luminous, holding a quiet kind of truth most wolves spent a lifetime trying to understand. There was no deceit in them. No bitterness. Just something achingly sincere.

As if she had already accepted it all—Cora's betrayal, the cruelty of fate—as though it had been written long before either of us was born, etched into the bones of the world.

But what Cora did to her in the past life should have been enough. It was enough.

If she dared to touch Lylah again now—

I swore, on blood and fang, I would make her suffer for it.

‘What are you staring at?’ I asked, my voice quieter than I intended.

Lylah had rolled the window down, letting the night air curl through her hair. Damon eased the car into a

lower glide. Lunaris city lights blurred past us, but she wasn’t looking at them.

‘The stars,’ she murmured, her gaze lifted to the sky. ‘Among all the souls in Selene’s Kingdom, my parents are there. Watching us.’

A faint smile tugged at my lips.

Goddess... she was too pure for this world. Too precious for those fools who had failed her so completely.

Ezra,

Hm?”

“Do you think...” She hesitated, her voice thinning, fragile as spun glass. “If Jax and Vala were still alive. would they love me?”

Something in my chest tightened.

“Or would they be like Eldric and Daia?” she continued softly. “Would they look at me and see a mistake of a daughter-someone fated to live and fade beneath Cora’s shadow?”

Her scent shifted-grief, doubt, old wounds reopening. It stirred something violent inside me, something primal. Ragnar bristled beneath my skin, claws itching to tear into anything that had ever made her feel

this way.

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Finished

“I would love them, Ezra,” Lylah went on, her voice barely above a whisper. “More than I love myself. But would they... love me the same way? Or would they be disappointed that their daughter isn’t Cora? But just someone ordinary like me?”

Ordinary?

The word alone made my jaw tighten.

I didn't know every detail of what Eldric and his mate had done to her-and I didn't need to. The scars were there, etched deep into her soul, and that alone was enough to stir the beast within me, claws sharpening beneath my skin.

"It's not that I want to talk badly about them," she added quickly. "Eldric and Daia did love me once. I remember it. Orion too. Our home was warm. They laughed with me. It was real."

Her voice faltered.

"Before that night on my fifteenth naming day."

The air in the car seemed to shift.

"After that, everything is blank. Or maybe it's not. Maybe I just stopped living after that. Maybe I've only been surviving ever since."

Cora.

Even her name tasted like poison.

She had taken too much and left too much broken in her wake.

'Come here,' I said, my control snapping just enough.

I didn't wait for permission. I pulled Lylah into me, wrapping her in my arms, anchoring her against my chest where my wolf could feel her-real, alive, mine to protect.

'Listen to me,' I murmured against her hair. "Your parents are not Eldric and Daia. Jax and Vala were honorable wolves with pure hearts. Their love wouldn't shatter at the sight of another child. It wouldn't turn cold because of someone as insignificant as Cora."

I pressed a kiss to the crown of her head, lingering there.

"They would love you, Lylah," I said firmly. "Deeply. Completely. Without condition. The way you deserve."

She tilted her face up to me, her eyes shining-not with sorrow this time, but something softer. Something

warmer.

"I would love them like that too," she whispered.

Then she leaned in, her lips brushing mine.

So soft and fleeting, like the whisper of a feather.

2/3

Chapter 247

“Thank you,” she breathed. “For giving me peace again.”

Finished

And in that moment, with her in my arms and the moon watching from above, I made a silent vow to the Goddess herself-

No one would ever take that peace from her again.

556

2:52 pm pppp.

The Betrayed Princess Rising

Ruby Walker

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

Chapter 248

3rd Person’s POV

Finished

By the time they reached the penthouse, Lylah was already drifting at the edge of sleep, her strength spent. Ezra didn’t wake her. He simply gathered her into his arms, instinct guiding the motion as naturally as breath, and carried her into his room-their room now.

He laid her down with a care that belied the power coiled beneath his skin. Her shoes were slipped off, a billow tucked beneath her head, the blanket drawn up to her chest. For a moment, he lingered. Watching. Assured only when her breathing deepened into the slow, even rhythm of true sleep.

Only then did he leave.

The study was dim, shadows stretching long across the walls. Ezra closed the door behind him, his expression hardening as the Alpha replaced the man who had just carried a sleeping girl to bed.

Damon had answers tonight.

Everything Ezra had ordered him to uncover-the truth behind how Cora had woven herself so seamlessly into Thane Blackridge's circle.

Ezra had always known Thane to be more open than most wolves. Easier. Less guarded. But not careless. Never careless enough to extend protection to a near stranger without reason.

It had to be more than charm.

It had to be deception.

So," Ezra said, his voice edged with something dangerous beneath the calm. "Thane and his circle never knew? Not once did they suspect it was Lylah who carried Jax and Vala's blood, not Cora?"

Damon turned the laptop toward him, its cold glow cutting through the dimness. "No, Alpha. According to everything I've found, they only knew one truth-that Cora was not Jax's true-blood. But the rest..." He paused. "They were deliberately kept blind."

Ezra's eyes darkened.

Cora told them the real daughter died at birth," Damon continued. "And she wasn't alone in making that lie convincing. Someone ensured the story held."

Ezra's jaw tightened, the beast within him stirring at the familiar name forming in his mind.

"Eldric," he muttered, the word laced with quiet fury. "Of course."

The lie had spread through Lunaris like wildfire-telling anyone who would listen that Lylah was nothing more than a pitiful orphan Eldric had taken in out of charity. Not the child switched at birth.

No wonder no one questioned it.

No wonder no one looked closer.

1/2

Chapter 248

Finished

“The Ironcrest family is more decayed than a carcass left to fester under a blood moon,” Damon said, his voice cold as steel. “Luna Lylah stood alone while they circled her like vultures, tearing her apart piece by piece. Should we reveal Luna Lylah’s true identity?”

Silence fell.

Beneath Ezra’s skin, his wolf prowled restlessly, anger clawing at his restraint.

The thought of what Lylah had endured-of how thoroughly she had been stripped of her place, her truth -made something feral rise within him.

‘They are never her family,’ he reminded himself coldly.

“Later,” Ezra said. “The perfect timing isn’t here yet.”

Damon shifted slightly before continuing. “There’s more, Alpha. The disguised investment project we orchestrate meant to draw Eldric in. He hasn’t taken the bait.”

Ezra exhaled slowly, the tension in his shoulders easing just enough to suggest this was expected. “Not yet. I knew Eldric wouldn’t pull his resources away from Rowan so easily.”

A faint, humorless curve touched his lips.

“And that greedy little viper Cora will make sure every coin her father has is poured into her mate.” He added.

“Rowan Blackfang has already been stripped of his title as Coravia’s leader, but if Eldric continues backing him, he still has power. There’s still a threat,” Damon said, his voice edged with concern. “What if Rowan makes another move, Alpha?”

Ezra’s gaze sharpened, something predatory flashing in his eyes.

“Power means nothing in the hands of a desperate wolf, Damon,” he said quietly. “And Rowan is nothing but desperate now.”

There was no pity in his tone-only certainty.

“Desperation breeds recklessness,” Ezra continued. “Give a man like that a fortune, and he won’t build anything with it. He’ll destroy himself.”

The room seemed to still around him, the weight of his words settling like a promise.

“We’ll let him.”

556

2/2

12:52 pm p p p p.

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

Chapter 249

Cora's POV

Ever since I returned from Blackfang, everything had begun to unravel. The pressure from Professor Vale. The relentless demands of my projects. My own health. They all bore down on me until each day bled into the next-exhaustion sinking into my bones, my wolf pacing restlessly beneath my skin, worry coiling tight in my chest, anger simmering low and feral, ready to snap.

But none of that compared to Rowan.

After speaking with Father that day, I had gone to him, convinced I could fix things. Convinced he would listen.

I told him Father was losing patience-that he might withdraw his investment, shift his favor elsewhere. That if he did, Rowan would lose one of his strongest alliances.

I had only asked him to soften, just a little. To meet Father halfway.

Instead,

"You speak as if I depend on your father's fortune. On Ironcrest," Rowan had said yesterday, his voice glacial, each word cutting deeper than the last. "If I choose not to, do you really think I'd lose my footing in Lunaris?"

"Rowan, please. This isn't the time for debate-"

"Blackfang stands on its own," he interrupted sharply. "Corlis Prime is already powerful. With Ironcrest or without it, I will thrive." His gaze hardened, something distant and unfamiliar flickering in his eyes. "Rest assured, Cora, I won't miss your father's golds."

The truth of it settled like ice in my veins.

He was pulling away. From me. From my family. From everything that once bound us together.

And whatever path he was choosing... it did not include me.

Since then, things had only worsened.

Even tonight.

I had just returned from Victor's restaurant, where I'd dined with Thane, Isaac, and Jude. What should have been warm-comforting, even-felt instead like standing among strangers.

"Cora, I covered your assignments while you were ill and absent from class," Thane said, his voice stripped of its usual warmth. "But that will be the last time. Don't ask it of me again."

"Y-yes Thane," I managed, the word catching in my throat.

Isaac didn't even look at me the way he used to. Whatever warmth once lingered in his gaze had turned cold-sharpened into something distant, almost predatory.

1/3

Chapter 249

Finished

"Why are you two so cold toward Cora tonight?" Jude frowned, his gaze flicking between them, his wolf bristling at the tension thickening the air. "She's our little sister, Jax's little pup. We swore to treat her like a princess, didn't we?"

Thane exhaled slowly, his amber eyes unyielding. "Then it's time we change. Cora isn't a pup anymore- she's a grown wolf. Jax wouldn't want his bloodline to be helpless. If she can't survive without us, then she was never worthy of the name to begin with."

The words struck like a blade, lodging deep in my chest and clawing their way up my throat until I could barely breathe.

After dinner, I didn't return home.

Instead, I went to the hotel-the same one we had stayed in after the Coravia meeting. The same place where everything had shifted. Where Rowan had disappeared into the night and Gavriel had been found dead

The memory lingered like a shadow.

"Sir, I said, stepping into the surveillance office, my voice carefully composed. "My mate, Alpha Rowan of Blackfang Pack, lost a ring I gave him that night we stayed here. I believe it may have fallen somewhere on the lawn. May I review the footage from that evening?"

The guard recognized me instantly, straightening. "Of course, Lady Cora."

[Islipped a small pouch into his hand. “Thank you for your help. There’s plenty of gold in it for you. Your gift.”

Gold always made things easier.

It didn’t take long before the footage flickered to life before me.

A strange unease settled deep in my chest, my wolf stirring restlessly beneath my skin. This was it—the truth of that night. Rowan had told me he left with Logan Silver. That was the story. That was what I had believed.

But as the images moved across the screen, something inside me began to fracture.

“R-Rowan...?” My breath hitched.

He moved across the moonlit lawn.

He wasn’t with Logan. He was carrying a limp woman in his arms.

The camera caught just enough of her face as her head tilted with the motion—and my world didn’t just crumble, it collapsed into ruin.

Lylah.

2/3

12:52 pm P p pp.

The Betrayed Princess Rising

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

Chapter 250

3rd Person’s POV

Finished

Rowan wasn't merely carrying Lylah-no, it was the way he held her, as if she were something fragile and precious. Again and again, his lips brushed against her forehead, each touch lingering, reverent, intimate in a way that cut deeper than any blade.

That detail shattered something inside Cora.

So that's why that night-when Rowan had disappeared without a word-she had been left alone in her room, unable to find even a moment of peace. Her wolf had paced within her, agitated, snarling, aching as though it sensed something she could not yet see. But it hadn't been mere unease.

It had been painful. A raw, vicious agony she had never felt before.

Because her mate... her mate was kissing another woman.

Her voice broke as tears streamed down her cheeks. "Why would you do this to me, Rowan?"

Her chest tightened as memories clashed violently against the truth now laid bare before her.

"Why her? You said she was nothing-just a tool! Someone you used when you were at your lowest. You said it was me you loved. Me!"

But the footage didn't lie.

It shifted, revealing Rowan speaking to Gavriel.

He ordered Gavriel to lie and send Cora away if she came searching. He didn't want anyone interfering with whatever plan he had with Lylah that night.

And that plan...

There was no mistaking it. Lust coiled in Rowan's eyes, dark and consuming. His wolf prowled just beneath the surface, restless, awakened by something it could not resist. He wanted Lylah.

Cora couldn't bear to watch another second.

She bolted from the room, her grief erupting into a howl that tore through the night sky-a sound so raw it seemed to split her very soul.

"Rowan!" His name ripped from Cora's throat like something dying. "You betrayed me!"

Her hands clenched, nails lengthening into claws as her wolf surged closer to the surface.

"I gave you everything! My sacred maidenhood, my soul, everything i was. I lied, stained myself, and destroyed others for you," she hissed, breath uneven, eyes burning a violent red.

Her chest heaved violently, her wolf howling in tandem with her anguish.

“I loved you...” Her gaze darkened, fury flickering through the grief like wildfire. “And now? Now you want

1/3

Chapter 250

Finished

“You crawl back to Lylah...” Cora muttered, and dangerous laughter escaped her. “And you think I’ll just step aside? Pathetic, Rowan Blackfang...”

Her eyes gleamed like a predator’s in the dark.

“I’m not leaving,” she said, voice dropping into a warning. “You don’t get to erase what’s already yours.”

Her gaze lifted, as if she could see him even from afar.

“If this is your game...” she added, her smile turning razor-sharp, “then let’s play in silence. I’ll smile at your side while I sharpen my claws. We’ll see who’s still standing in the end...”

“...because I won’t be the one who falls.”

556

3/3

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