

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

Chapter 331

3rd Person's POV

By evening, the stream of congratulations had thinned-but the gifts had not. Lylah's arms were full of them as she made her way to Clark Grimwood's office to submit her work. She nudged the door open with her elbow, careful not to drop anything.

"Come in," he drawled, lounging back in his chair as though the day held no weight at all.

"I apologize for being late, Professor," Lylah said, stepping inside. "The students and judges insisted I join them for lunch. It felt discourteous to refuse."

A dismissive wave of his hand cut her off. "You think I'd take issue with that? No. Today belongs to you. I wouldn't even scold you if you chose not to show up today"

"Truly?"

"Truly." A grin tugged at his lips, boyish and unrestrained-so unlike the imposing mentor he usually was. "What happened today is worth celebrating, Lylah. We crushed Vale and put Eldric in his place. I'd wager Vale is currently reconsidering every life choice that led him here, and hiding from crowds like startled pups."

The image drew a faint smile from Lylah's lips. It was still strange to see her professor in this state.

His expression sharpened. "There's someone you haven't told yet," he added pointedly. "Go. Before he burns this entire academy down waiting."

Lylah blinked-then froze.

Ezra!

The realization struck like a jolt of lightning.

Without another word, she turned and hurried out, the gifts nearly slipping from her grasp as she fumbled for her phone.

The call barely rang once.

"Ezra!" she blurted, breathless.

A pause-then his voice, low and edged with something almost wounded.

“So you

do remember me, love.”

Guilt tightened in her chest. “I’m sorry-truly. I haven’t had a moment to myself since the results were announced. The students and the judges all crowded in at once. I couldn’t get away.”

“I know.” His voice gentled, warmth slipping through the edges of it despite everything. “Don’t trouble yourself over it. Congratulations. You’ve more than earned it.”

Her grip on the phone tightened. “Professor Grimwood told you the result, didn’t he?”

“He did,” Ezra replied without hesitation. “He said you’d be too occupied to call me. Suggested I hear it from him instead. I accepted, of course. Because spending an entire day not knowing what happened to you....” A faint huff escaped him. “I’d rather go to war than endure that kind of torture.”

There was no hint of jest in his voice.

He could be so dramatic-perfectly, absurdly so at times like this, when all she needed was something to break the weight of the day.

And it did.

Lylah laughed, freely and without restraint.

After the call ended, the warmth in Ezra’s expression faded, replaced by something colder.

The room around him reeked of antiseptic and tension.

Healers moved with careful precision, their scents laced with unease as they prepared the injections. Today marked the first stage of his treatment-the attempt to restore what had been taken from his vision.

“Alpha,” one of them began cautiously, stepping forward. “As I mentioned in our meeting before, this procedure is unprecedented. I cannot promise it will be without pain-”

“You talk too much,” Ezra cut in, his voice dropping to a lethal growl. “If you’re incapable, leave. I’ll find someone who isn’t.”

The healer faltered, her pulse spiking-he could hear it, sharp and frantic, like prey caught too close to a predator.

“No, Alpha,” she said quickly, bowing her head. “I will proceed.”

She moved.

The needle pierced near his eye.

Pain followed immediately.

It was no ordinary pain. It tore through him like a living thing-clawing, searing-setting every nerve ablaze as it ripped through every nerve, as though something buried deep within him was being violently forced

awake.

Ezra's jaw locked.

A low, guttural sound escaped him despite himself, his claws extending involuntarily as they bit into the armrests of his chair. The wolf beneath his skin surged, furious and restless, demanding release.

But he held it back.

The healer retreated at once, scrambling for anything that might dull the agony.

Barely a minute after the healer left, the door creaked open once more. A young woman in a healer's assistant coat slipped inside, her steps quiet, as she approached him. A faint smile touched her lips-soft,

almost gentle, yet carrying something that didn't quite reach her eyes.

"Cold cloth," Ezra ground out, his voice strained, dragged raw by the effort of restraint. "Press it to my damn

head."

"Of course, Alpha."

The answer came too swiftly-

And the voice was so... familiar.

Even through the haze of pain, his instincts stirred, his wolf lifting its head.

The cloth settled against his forehead, coolness seeping into fevered skin, a fragile mercy against the inferno consuming him. Ezra's breath faltered. Slowly, he forced his eyes open.

The world wavered, blurred, and unsteady, as though reality itself were slipping through his grasp. But within the distortion, a shape began to take form.

His mate's beautiful face.

"Lylah...?" he breathed, her name falling from his lips like something fragile, half-lost between disbelief and surprise.

Then darkness surged,
and claimed him before he could reach her.

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

George Orwell

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Chapter 332

3rd Person's POV

Her fingers hovered in the air, trembling, suspended between longing and disbelief.

Finished

After what felt like an eternity, she had finally seen them-those eyes. The very eyes that had once undone her, that had bound her to him across lifetimes. And now they were closed.

Slowly, she sank beside Ezra, her movements careful, reverent. Her fingertip traced the hard line of his jaw, lingering over the faint scar beneath his brow-a mark she knew far too well.

"Ezrael..." she whispered, his name slipping from her lips like a forgotten vow.

Her gaze drifted to his mouth, drawn by memory, when suddenly,

"Ezra!" The door slammed open.

She stiffened.

In an instant, she lowered her head, pulling her mask back into place just as Zyrelle rushed in, panic radiating off her in sharp, frantic waves.

Zyrelle fell to his side, her voice breaking as she shouted, "Who injected him? Call someone-anyone! Is this normal? Is it dangerous? I've never seen Ezra faint like this!" Fear thickened the air, sharp as blood on the wind.

And in that chaos, she slipped away.

Once more, she escaped.

She didn't stop until she reached a quiet corner of the treatment center, far from the scent of antiseptic and fear. Only then did she pull off her mask.

The face beneath it was not the same-

Yet hauntingly familiar.

The same height. The same delicate build. A mirror from another life. A shadow of the current Luna of the Moonclaw Pack.

Of Lylah.

"Almost," she scoffed softly, though the word trembled with something far more volatile. Her eyes shimmered. "After all this time... I finally stood before my Ezrael again."

Her lips curled, bitterness threading through the fragile victory.

"And yet his stupid cousin ruined it." Her gaze flicked to her reflection, studying it like a weapon she had yet to perfect. "But I'll have another chance. I'm here now, working among his people. So close to him." A slow breath. "We will meet again. Again and again, until fate remembers what it once promised."

Her voice dropped into something possessive.

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"Ezrael was mine." A flicker of fury crossed her expression. "Not Lysara's."

But the illusion of triumph shattered as quickly as it formed. The bitterness rose, thick and suffocating, and she bit down hard on her tongue-welcoming the sting, grounding herself in it.

Because even now,

She had almost lost.

Luén's POV

I returned to my quarters in silence, swallowing down the sharp, choking ache of failure.

I was so close to Ezrael.

But I couldn't stay.

Not when their instincts prowled so close to the surface. Not when a single wrong move would have every wolf in this cursed place tearing me apart for daring to approach their Alpha.

All of them are fools.

They act as though he belongs to her alone.

As though that fragile, soft thing has more claim to him than I do.

A bitter laugh curled in my throat.

He is mine just as much as he is hers.

More, even.

I am stronger. Sharper. I would never have been so easily broken by Carmen and her dogs, so easily overlooked.

The thought burned.

Sometimes I feel it-like a fracture beneath my skin. Disappointment coils in my chest, sharp as fangs, sinking deeper with every breath.

Did Ezrael never question it?

Why was it that when the Moon Goddess Selene granted us a second life... Lysara returned empty? Where had her memories gone?

They were never vanished. They lived on-buried deep within me. I remember everything.

Every whisper. Every betrayal. Every promise that turned to ash.

Because I am Luén.

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We used to wonder again and again, through countless quiet nights while Lunareth Kingdom lay slumbering, how much easier it might have been if Selene had simply split us apart. Born as twin princesses. With two bodies. Two fates.

Would he have chosen me then?

Would Ezrael have looked at me the way he looks at her with that quiet, consuming devotion? Or was I always destined to stand in the shadow of something softer, something easier to love?

My jaw tightened.

No.

It was never about worth.

The world simply chose the version of us it could control.

The memories came like claws dragging through old wounds. Silver bit into our small wrists-chains designed to suppress, to weaken, to remind us what we were.

A monster to be managed.

Even as a little pup.

They called us Luén then. It was our childhood name that our mother gave us.

The name they spat like a curse.

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

George Orwell

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

Chapter 333

Luén's POV

It was never meant to be easy for something like us to exist.

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A daughter born of a pureblood Alpha King and a Dark Fae was not a blessing in Lunareth-it was an omen. The elders never said it outright in Father's presence, but their whispers carried through the halls like rot.

Monster.

Our mother was the only one who never looked at us that way. Her hands were always warm, her voice soft with a kind of love that asked for nothing in return. But she was gone before we could even understand what it meant to be safe. Four years old-and already, we were alone.

Father did what kings do. He ruled. He protected his throne. And to protect it, he tried to fix us.

Every rumor about his “tainted” heir was a threat to his crown, and so he sought to carve the impurity out of us.

Rituals.

Endless, brutal rituals.

He summoned seers, witches, and mind-walkers-strangers who reeked of incense and iron-to cleanse what they called the darkness within us. They bound our necks and wrists in silver chains that burned against our skin, forced power into our veins until it felt like our bones would splinter apart.

We screamed. We always screamed.

But it never mattered.

They did not see a pup.

Only something to be corrected.

Something to be contained.

And in the end... it worked.

By the time we turned thirteen, the court saw only what Father wanted them to see. The whispers quieted, and the fear dulled into something manageable.

They gave us a new name that day.

A royal name.

Princess Lysara of Lunareth Kingdom.

And just like that... I disappeared.

I sank beneath the surface of our shared soul, watching in silence as Lysara stepped forward—graceful, obedient, everything they had ever demanded. The perfect princess. The untainted heir.

While I remained in the dark.

Watching.

Waiting.

It was that same year Father brought the orphaned pup of one of his fallen guards into the palace.

Carmen.

She arrived with bright eyes and a sweet smile, all innocence and gratitude. Lysara welcomed her without hesitation, blind as always to what lay beneath.

But I saw it.

The hunger.

It coiled inside Carmen like a starving wolf-sharp, patient, waiting for its moment. Lysara would never notice. So I did what she wouldn't.

I reminded Carmen of her place.

There were moments when I forced my way to the surface, seizing control of our body when Lysara's mercy became weakness. I made certain Carmen saw the truth laid bare. What we actually are, what she will never

I broke her.

Bit by bit.

Her little fox pet was the first to die-its fragile neck snapping beneath our hands. Then her nanny. Then Carmen herself, over and over again, until her fear tasted sweet on our tongue.

Lysara should have been grateful.

I was protecting us.

We grew up within the same walls after that, but there was never/equality between us. I was the Crown Princess of Lunareth, while Carmen was just a stray taken in out of pity. Her eyes would linger too long on us, filled with something between dread and hatred.

She never forgot it.

And neither did I.

Everything was unfolding exactly as I intended.

I would take the throne. I would rule Lunareth. Untouched. Unchallenged.

Until fate intervened.

We met him when we were nineteen.

Ezrael.

The Commander of the Lycan war-clans.

A warrior forged in blood and winter.

It was Lysara he saw first-the golden princess who saved those helpless pups and stood radiant against monsters. It was her kindness that caught his eye. Her softness. Her light.

But that wasn't the whole story.

Because the second time we met him...

On that frozen night, beneath a sky heavy with snow and shadow-

It was I who dragged him back from the edge of death.

Me who kept his heart beating.

Me who stood between him and oblivion.

And just like Lysara, I fell for him too.

I felt it take root in my heart during those fleeting moments they shared-a fragile, forbidden love between two wolves born of rival clans that had never known peace.

It was brief... painfully brief.

Because in the end, Lysara and I died by Carmen's betrayal.

A trap so carefully laid that even now I can still taste the bitterness of it, we could have fled, the path had been right there before us, but Lysara insisted on staying, insisted on saving those servants who would have abandoned us without a second thought.

And that weakness-her softness-cost us everything.

Yet death did not keep us, and when we were reborn beneath the silent gaze of the Moon Goddess, I believed fate had finally corrected itself.

I was certain things would unfold as they should. The moment Lysara, or Lylah, or whatever name she wears now, failed to enter the Academy of Lunar Grace, I felt it. The fracture. The quiet unraveling of her spirit.

I thought she would do what she had always done-retreat into herself, disappear into Blackfang, become someone insignificant... someone who would never cross paths with Ezrael again.

It was only natural. She had always been the more fragile one after all. And so I believed that this life would finally belong to me.

But I was wrong.

She did not shatter. She did not fade. She did not make herself lesser. Instead, she became something I had never witnessed-unafraid, alight with a fire that refused to be dimmed, impossible to overlook.

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Chapter 333

And for the first time, something unfamiliar crept beneath my skin.

Uncertainty.

It seems this life will not follow the path I once knew. And that means only one thing-

I will have to be far more careful.

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

George Orwell

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

Chapter 334

Lylah's POV

Finished

I stopped by the market before returning to the penthouse, selecting fresh ingredients with quiet purpose. I wasn't sure when it had started, but it had become ours-a ritual that settled into place as naturally as instinct. Whenever something worth remembering happened, we cooked.

Tonight was no different.

The penthouse greeted me in silence when I arrived. No trace of him yet-but that didn't surprise me. Ezra rarely returned early unless something pulled him away from his work.

Or someone.

I didn't linger on the thought. Instead, I moved straight into the kitchen, setting everything down with practiced ease. If I started now, dinner would be ready by the time he walked through the door.

Fish soup tonight.

My hands worked steadily. Practice had honed me, not just in the academy, but in these quieter moments too. Time slipped by unnoticed, carried on the soft simmer of broth and the faint curl of steam rising into the air.

I was just about done when

My body stiffened.

"Ezra?"

Strong arms closed around my waist from behind. Heat followed-his heat-seeping through the thin fabric at my back. His breath brushed the curve of my neck.

"There's a fire in here," he murmured, his voice dropping low-roughened by something deeper, something his wolf made no effort to conceal. "We should leave. Come, let's go to our room."

"Fire? Save your silly excuse." A breath of laughter slipped from me as I turned in his hold, tilting my head up to meet him. "I was cooking our dinner."

"And you didn't wait for me?" There was a faint edge to it now.

"You hadn't come home yet," I replied lightly. "I wanted everything ready when you arrived."

But as I exhaled, something else reached me.

Sterile scent that belongs to the treatment center.

My brows drew together slightly.

"Where have you been?" I asked, softer now, studying him. "Was the research center that demanding? You're

later than usual."

The question I didn't ask lingered at the back of my mind.

'Did you go somewhere else?'

His gaze didn't waver. "A bit," he admitted. "I left early."

His thumb brushed over my knuckles as he lifted my hand, pressing his lips against my skin with gentleness. “I remembered we had something worth celebrating tonight. Work can wait, but moments like this... I want to be there for all of them. Every single one, with you. No matter what they are.”

Something in my chest softened, warmth blooming outward. “Thank you,” I murmured.

I pulled my hand back reluctantly, stepping away before I lingered too long in his orbit. “Go change. I’ll bring everything out.”

The dining room was ready not long after.

We sat across from each other beneath the familiar glow of the overhead lamp-the same one that had lit so many of our nights. Quiet conversations, shared meals, and the little pieces of gossip I only ever brought home to him.

A home.

“Ezra,” I began, unable to keep the excitement from slipping into my voice, “I still can’t believe it. Eleven marks.” I let out a small breath, almost laughing. “That means half of the judges’ points went to me. Professor Grimwood said it’s never happened before in the Healing Department.”

I shook my head faintly, still struggling to grasp it. “He was so different today. Smiling the entire time endlessly.”

Ezra’s lips curved slightly.

“As he should be,” he said. “It’s been a long time since he’s guided someone worth his time. You’ve given him something rare. And he’ll get used to that feeling.”

A small laugh escaped me. “That’s not just me.”

His brow lifted slightly.

“That night you gave me insight about things you remembered from studying under him.”

“I did nothing.” He dismissed it instantly, almost too quickly. “Advice is meaningless if the mind receiving it lacks the capacity to shape it. What you created was yours, Lylah. Entirely.”

I smiled, unable to help it.

I leaned in slightly, lowering my voice just enough to tease. “You could’ve just simply said your mate is

brilliant.”

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

George Orwell

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

Chapter 335

Lylah's POV

I was still laughing softly when Ezra replied, his voice smooth, laced with quiet amusement.

“Is it a crime if I choose to praise my Luna properly? Brilliant isn’t enough. Not for what you are.”

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The smile lingered on my lips, softer now. “I’ll be meeting the publishing house soon,” I said, brushing my fingers along the edge of the table. “Professor Grimwood wants to refine the work before submission. I might be coming home later than usual.”

“Then focus on that.” Ezra’s tone turned gentle, but there was something unshakable beneath it—something steady as bone. “If you need anything, I’m here.”

“I know.” My voice dropped,

He is always here. From the moment I set foot in Lunaris... from the night our mating license was finalized, Ezra had never caged me. Never demanded. Never tightened his hold the way Alphas were known to do.

Instead, he gave me space.

Trust.

A kind of freedom that spoke louder than control ever could.

For a man of his standing, for someone born to command, it was rare.

My phone rang, slicing clean through the calm.

I glanced at the screen.

Cora.

A faint crease formed between my brows.

“Aren’t you going to answer?” Ezra asked.

I hesitated, “It’s Cora. I don’t know what she wants.” My lips pressed thin. “Maybe she’s calling to cry about the humiliation she brought on herself at the conference.”

“Answer it,” he said simply.

So I did.

“Lylah...” Her voice wavered through the line, thin and unsteady, as if it might splinter at any moment. “I’m calling to apologize. I acted without thinking. I didn’t consider the consequences. I—”

“If an apology could erase what you’ve done,” I cut in, my tone cool and unyielding, “do you really think your father would have slapped you in front of everyone?”

Silence followed.

Chapter 335

Then it shifted.

Finished

“Lylah.” Rowan’s voice cut through-low and sudden, like distant thunder rolling in without warning. “Is this really necessary? Cora already realizes she’s wrong, she feels guilty, and you think this is the time to humiliate her?”

Of course, he was there.

Cora hadn’t called out of guilt.

My wolf stirred at his word, a low, unimpressed flicker beneath my skin. “Did her guilt and apology change anything?”

Silence hummed faintly through the line, but I didn’t stop.

“I was the one wronged. And now I’m expected to accept an apology that carries no weight?” My lips curved faintly, though there was no warmth in them. “What kind of reaction do you expect from me when she chooses to call only after everything is too late? Gratitude?”

The air around me seemed to shift, my wolf pressing closer to the surface.

“You can comfort her, excuse her, just like you always do whenever she makes a mistake. But she won’t get that from me.”

I pulled in a breath, already close to ending the call.

Then Rowan spoke again.

And this time, it wasn't sharp.

"Is this really you, Lylah...?"

The words came low, uneven-like something dragged out from a place not meant to be seen.

"I don't recognize you anymore." A faint rasp followed, as though even speaking it cost him something. "Where did the old you go? The way you used to understand... everything?"

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George Orwell

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

Chapter 336

3rd Person's POV

Lylah pulled the phone away from her ear, her expression tightening with quiet disgust. The old her? The words lingered like something sour on her tongue. She despised the way Rowan clung to a past she had long since buried-how he spoke as if that version of her still existed, waiting to be reclaimed.

It didn't.

She had destroyed that girl with her own hands.

And yet, the audacity of him-sounding wounded, as though he hadn't been one of the very reasons she'd changed-made her wolf stir beneath her skin, restless and sharp.

Before she could respond, Ezra moved.

He had listened to every word in silence, his presence steady as a mountain at her side. But this time, something in his gaze shifted.

Without hesitation, he took the phone from her hand.

“Nothing has changed,” Ezra said, his voice calm, but threaded with quiet dominance that didn’t need to be raised to be felt. “Her gentleness isn’t gone. I decide where it’s given and where it’s not. You simply lost the right to ever see it again.”

And then he ended the call.

It wasn’t jealousy that drove him. Not insecurity. Rowan posed no threat.

But Lylah’s mood had shifted, her scent tinged with irritation, her wolf unsettled-and that alone was enough. He did not tolerate interruptions.

Not to her peace. Not to what was his.

On the other end, the line went dead.

For a heartbeat, Rowan stood frozen.

Then the storm broke.

His hand tightened around the phone before he hurled it across the room. It struck the glass table with a violent crack, splintering it into jagged shards.

Cora flinched.

“Rowan...” she asked carefully, her voice small against the suffocating pressure in the room. “Was that Lylah’s

mate?”

She had heard the voice-clear, controlled, carrying an authority that pressed instinctively against her wolf, demanding recognition whether she willed it or not. It was nothing like what she had expected. Not from a low-ranked stray she had assumed stood beneath them.

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“That bastard,” Rowan’s eyes burned, his wolf surging dangerously close to the surface. “He must be enjoying this. Twisting her against me, corrupting everything she used to be-” His jaw clenched. “And then he dares say nothing has changed?” His fist tightened at his side. “He’s turned her into someone I don’t even recognize!”

Cora’s breath caught.

His reaction... it was too intense.

And it had only taken a few words from Lylah’s mate to provoke it.

Cautiously, she stepped closer. Ignoring the warning edge of his aura, even as her instincts screamed at her to keep her distance.

“Who is he?” she pressed softly. “Lylah’s mate... You know him, don’t you? More than just a name or rank. He’s not just anyone, is he?”

For a moment, Rowan said nothing.

Then, reluctantly-

“Even so? He’s still beneath me. A leech clinging to his family name, pretending it gives him weight.” His voice hardened, defensive pride lacing every word. “I’m angered by his audacity, not because I feel threatened.”

So Cora’s suspicion was confirmed-Rowan didn’t just know of Lylah’s mate. There was something deeper there.

Still... it didn’t matter.

In Rowan’s eyes, that male remained beneath him. Beneath them. And that was all Cora needed.

A quiet breath slipped past her lips, tension easing from her shoulders as relief settled in.

Carefully maintaining her tear-streaked face, Cora stepped into him, pressing herself against his chest as though she had nowhere else to go.

“I’ve lost everything, Rowan.” she murmured, “Father is furious with me... Mother won’t even speak. They’ve cast me out. I have no one now...” A soft, practiced cough followed. “After everything I’ve done for them, after being the perfect daughter they always wanted, was I really so easy to discard?”

Rowan was her only leverage now. The fastest path back to everything she’d lost. If she wanted to reclaim everything, then he was the fastest path back to it. And Cora would play whatever role was necessary to secure that.

Soft. Fragile. Devoted.

Whatever he liked to see.

His hand slid into her pale, snow-soft strands. “You think I’ll let Eldric play saint and do that?”

Her lashes lowered, pressing closer as if seeking comfort. But hidden from his view-

A smile unfurled across her lips.

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3rd Person's POV

Rowan was the first to break the silence.

“And what of that decrepit mentor of yours?” he scoffed, bitterness curling beneath his tone. “Corvin Vale has no right to play the righteous judge and cast all the blame on you. He’s done far worse to Lylah, things no one dares speak aloud.”

Cora straightened slightly in his arms, though the movement seemed to cost her. “It’s fine,” she murmured, her voice soft, almost indulgent. “He’s a man who worships his reputation. I can understand his perspective.”

A cough tore through her then-sharper this time, echoing faintly in the room. Rowan’s gaze sharpened instantly, the Alpha in him surfacing as instinct took hold.

Only now did he truly look at her.

Her once-luminous features had somehow grown gaunt; her cheekbones were more pronounced, and her lips were tinged with an unhealthy violet hue.

“Cora...” His voice dropped, roughened by something deeper than anger. “They shouldn’t have treated you this way.” His jaw tightened. “Your illness, did they truly not take it into account? Eldric may not have known... but Vale did. And Lylah-”

He stopped abruptly.

The realization struck like a misstep in battle.

He had almost admitted it-how he had once revealed Cora’s condition, her gastric Moon Rot, to Lylah.

A flicker of unease passed through him, quickly buried.

Instead, he reached up, cupping her face with deliberate gentleness. His thumb brushed over her cold skin as he redirected the moment, his tone hardening again. “They have no right to act superior. They’re no better than the sins they condemn.”

Cora let out a small, breathy laugh, as though his words soothed her. “Let it go. As long as you stand with me, that’s enough.”

She paused then, her fingers curling around his hand.

“So, Rowan...” Her voice softened even further, taking on a fragile and coaxing tone. “When are you going to make it official?”

His brows drew together. “What are you talking about?”

“Our mating ceremony.” She held his gaze, and this time, there was no retreat. “Make me your Luna. There’s nothing left for us to wait for... so what is it that still holds you back?”

For a moment, Rowan said nothing.

“Cora...” he began carefully, his voice measured. “I’m still establishing my dominance here in Lunaris. I

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Finished won’t name you Luna until I’ve secured my power, until Corlis Prime stands at the peak. I want to give you a status worthy of your name. To stand as the strongest Alpha... and offer you a life unmatched.”

But she shook her head, urgency slipping through the cracks of her composure.

“We don’t have that kind of time.” Her grip on his hand tightened, her pulse unsteady beneath his skin. “My time is running out, Rowan.”

The words carried a quiet finality, laced with the inevitability of fate.

“You don’t need to worry about your ascent,” she continued. “The connections I’ve secured for you won’t crumble overnight. Even if I’m gone...” She hesitated just long enough to let the weight settle. “They’ll still see you as mine. As the one bound to me. Logan, Thane, Commander Ivar—they’ll stand behind you. My mate will never stand alone.”

Something flickered in Rowan’s eyes then.

Sharp. Instinctive.

Hunger.

It was there and gone in an instant-buried beneath practiced control-but not before it revealed itself.

And yet, alongside it, there was something else. A quieter, more complicated weight.

“Is that truly how you’ve seen this all along?” he asked, his voice lower now, threaded with something almost like sympathy.

His gaze lingered on her, searching.

He didn't fully understand the turmoil within himself-to whom his heart truly inclined.

But just like Lylah, Cora had been part of his life too. Entwined in it, in ways that could not be easily severed.

And that, at least, was something Rowan could not deny.

George Orwell

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

Chapter 338

3rd Person's POV

"Don't you already know?" Cora answered, fragile, as though each word was drawn from the last of her strength. "As your mate, there's nothing I wouldn't do for you, Rowan. In the end this is all for Blackfang. For our pack."

Her

eyes

shimmered, tears suspended like glass, catching the light in a way that made her seem almost ethereal.

Something in Rowan gave way.

"I won't let you face this alone," he said finally, his voice roughened, a low growl threading through the promise. "After everything you've given me, it's time I give something back."

Her breath stuttered.

"Then you'll make me your Luna? Soon?"

This time, Rowan did not waver.

"Yes."

He lifted her hand, pressing a kiss to her skin. "We'll hold the ceremony here, in Lunaris. And it will be remembered in history. I'll make sure of that."

Tears slipped free down her cheeks.

But beneath the fragile sorrow, something darker flickered, and sharp as a blade beneath silk.

Meanwhile, back at the penthouse, Lylah and Ezra had already finished dinner. The atmosphere settled into something quiet and comfortable as they sat together on the couch, the soft hum of Lunaris beyond the windows fading into the background.

The only sound that filled the space was Lylah's voice as she recounted the events of the day—everything that had unfolded at the conference hall. From Eldric's explosive fury, to the judge's final decision, and finally, the moment Cora's crime was exposed.

"That sounds like an exhausting day," Ezra murmured, his voice low as he buried his face into her hair, breathing in her scent. "My Luna deserves a reward for enduring it."

"What kind of reward?" Lylah asked, tilting her head to glance up at him.

The moment their eyes met, she froze.

There's unmistakable hunger lurking beneath his gaze.

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Regret came instantly.

"I'll reward you with one chance to beg for mercy tonight," Ezra said, his tone dipping into something deeper, threaded with quiet danger.

Right.

She definitely shouldn't have asked.

Still, Lylah refused to give him the satisfaction. Lifting her chin, she met his gaze head-on. "Are you sure that reward is meant for me, and not for you, Ezra?"

"Me?" His brow lifted, feigning innocence in a way that completely betrayed him. His fingers slid gently through a loose strand of her hair, tucking it behind her ear. "I was simply offering you a massage... and if it becomes too much, you're free to beg me to stop." His lips curved, faintly amused. "But it seems my Luna has something far more interesting in mind."

"Ezra! Don't twist it! That's not what I meant!"

Her protest died in her throat as he moved with predatory speed, lifting her effortlessly as though she weighed no more than air.

“If that’s what my Luna wants,” he murmured, his voice low and laced with heat, “then it’s my duty to grant it.”

There was no hiding the hunger in his tone.

And beneath it, she felt it echo within herself.

Despite his earlier promise, the night that followed held no trace of mercy.

Beneath him, Lylah felt herself unravel. Ezra’s restraint was fleeting at best-his endurance relentless, his strength overwhelming in a way only an Alpha could be. Every movement carried purpose, as though he intended to leave no part of her untouched by him.

And helplessly, she melted beneath it.

At one point-only once-Ezra allowed her a moment to breathe.

She lay beneath him, flushed and breathless, her chest rising and falling as warmth lingered against her skin. A faint sheen of sweat traced along his body, catching the dim light as it moved with every steady breath he took.

Her hands lifted instinctively, settling against the firm planes of his chest, anchoring herself in his solid warmth. As he leaned down once more, closing the distance between them, Lylah finally found her voice.

“My reward... Ezra... don’t go back on your promise...”

For a brief second, he paused.

Then his

gaze darkened.

“It no longer applies, my love,” he murmured, his voice deep, edged with quiet finality. His hand slid along her waist, pulling her closer, leaving no space between them. “You’ll be busy soon. So tonight, I intend to take every moment.”

And with that, he drew her back into him once more.

The world dissolved around her, edges softening into nothing as sensation rose in slow, relentless tides. Thought slipped away, leaving only him-his presence, his pull-until it consumed her entirely, scattering constellations of light behind her eyes.

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George Orwell

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

Chapter 339

Eldric's POV

Five days had passed since Orion sent the letters.

Chapter 339

Eldric's POV

Five days had passed since Orion sent the letters.

Winter had settled into a brittle, watchful silence, and still, nothing-not a single reply. Not even a whisper of acknowledgment from the so-called loyal dogs Cora claimed would stand for her. Not one had come to my door.

I stood on the verge of ending this myself-of handling it the way an Alpha should-when, at last, one of them showed himself.

Orion announced him as Jude Knight of Blackmaw Pack. Not an Alpha. Nor one of those powerful Gods of the tech world I would typically deem worth my time. And yet, he carried weight. The kind forged by his own hand, sharpened through ambition and survival.

It was enough for me to grant him entry.

Dinner was prepared beneath the dim glow of my residence. The finest wine was poured. Every courtesy served. Not that he seemed to notice.

"I still don't understand the purpose of this invitation, Alpha Eldric," Jude said, his tone edged with something dangerously close to disdain. "All this effort wasted on me? Surely your time would be better spent elsewhere. Protecting your daughter at that conference, perhaps. Like a proper father."

My fingers tightened around the silver fork in my hand.

His audacity was almost impressive.

"My daughter has made a regrettable mistake, Sir Knight," I replied, my voice measured, though it cost me more control than I cared to admit. "One that stains both our family and Ironcrest's name. As her father, I know what I must do when she crosses the line."

Beside me, Daia stiffened. She could feel my wolf pressing closer to the surface, restless beneath my skin.

“Sir Knight,” she interjected, her voice gentler, “everything we’ve done, we did out of love for Cora-

“By striking her? By humiliating her before an entire crowd?” Jude’s voice cut clean through the room, sharp as a blade. “That’s not love, that’s how you fracture your own daughter, Luna Dala.” His gaze hardened, something fierce rising beneath it. “And what’s worse, Thane Blackridge, Corvin Vale, standing there like self-appointed gods, passing judgment while tearing her down further.”

A dangerous stillness settled in his posture.

“If none of you are capable

can give Cora a far better life than this.”

My eyes narrowed.

Beneath my skin, my wolf stirred-intrigued rather than enraged. It pressed forward, testing the edges of my control, drawn to the sheer audacity of the male before me.

Such boldness.

It was rare to see this kind of courage in one so young. Rarer still when it came from someone bound to her by nothing more than... loyalty.

Unless-

The realization struck, sudden and sharp.

A faint smile curved my lips, touched with something darker-something pleased.

“You love my daughter.”

“No.” His answer came without hesitation, steady as stone. “What ties me to Cora runs far deeper than that.”

“Then enlighten me, Sir Knight. What could drive you to go to such lengths for her?”

“That isn’t something an outsider would understand,” he replied.

“And we are not outsiders,” I corrected. “We are Cora’s family. Her father. Her mother. Her little brother.” I let my tone soften, just enough to coax rather than command. “So tell me... how deep does your connection to Coraline truly run?”

He hesitated.

I watched the shift in him—the brief flicker of thought, of restraint, as though weighing how much to reveal beneath an Alpha’s gaze. Even my wolf stilled, listening.

Then he spoke.

“What binds me—and the others to her—runs as deep as an oath sworn before the Goddess herself,” he said, his voice steady, carrying a quiet, unshakable conviction. “Loyalty. A debt that can never be repaid.”

The air seemed to thicken.

“To our hero,” he continued. “The one who saved me, Thane, and the others when we were nothing more than helpless pups.” His eyes held mine, unwavering. “Cora’s foster father. Jax Stillward of Whitepine. A warrior who tore us from death’s grasp.”

George Orwell

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

Chapter 340

Eldric’s POV

“Jax’s biological daughter died just after birth, Cora told us that herself. Otherwise, I would have had two sisters to protect.” His gaze didn’t waver. “With her death, Cora was the last piece of Jax Stillward’s family. And so we swore an oath. Every one of us. We would give her everything. Protect her as her father once protected us.”

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By the time he finished, I found myself far more absorbed than I had intended.

Before Cora ever set foot in Ironcrest that night at Lylah’s fifteenth naming ceremony, when she emerged in her wolf form and I recognized her as mine without question, I had known she came from Whitepine. Known she had been raised by a wolf of warrior rank. An ordinary

warrior.

Or so I had believed.

Who would have thought her foster parents, even in death, had left her something far more valuable than wealth?

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A dark realization settled deep within me.

Cora had played a flawless game all along. So clean, so seamless, that I had never thought to question it-never cared enough to look closer. She held that power quietly, entirely in her own grasp. No wonder she had begged me to craft that lie as well... to paint Lylah as nothing more than a stray I had taken in.

Because Cora had already claimed what was never meant to be hers.

Lylah's birthright.

And more than that, she had built a story strong enough to ensure that Jude and the others would never think to search for Jax Stillward's true blood.

My lips curved, more shadow than smile.

She is indeed my clever daughter.

"You've honored your oath admirably, Sir Knight. And fulfilled it flawlessly." I said smoothly.

Jude inclined his head slightly, though his shoulders remained rigid.

"But still..." I continued, "I am older than you. More experienced. I can see what you refuse to name. Your feelings for my daughter run far deeper than your oath."

A flicker crossed his expression-but it was gone in an instant.

"And even if they do? Cora already has a mate. Rowan Blackfang."

No. My wolf bristled at the name. "Rowan is no longer worthy of her. I will not have my daughter reduced to the mate of a cur like him."

That caught his attention.

Jude's eyes narrowed, interest igniting-gold beginning to bleed into the darkness of his irises.

"Listen carefully," I went on, leaning back slightly. "You know of Lylah. My adopted daughter."

"Yes," Jude replied. "I first saw her at Blackfang College's racing event."

"She was gentle once. My obedient, sweet pup." My voice cooled. "Until her fifteenth naming day when her wolf awakened. When she scented her so-called mate. Rowan Blackfang." A sneer ghosted my lips. "She became feral. Turned against the family who had raised her. She abandoned Ironcrest without a second thought and ran straight into Blackfang territory just to be with him. I warned her. Ordered her to return. Begged, even."

My fingers curled subtly against the table's edge, just enough to sell the fracture in my control. "She still chose him. Convinced I stood in her way, she swore she would never call me father again."

Jude's jaw tightened.

"And what did Rowan do in return?" I continued softly, letting the disgust bleed through. "He cast her aside. Broke her and then turned his hunger toward my other daughter-toward Cora. Rowan has already ruined Lylah. I will not allow him to do the same to Cora."

A growl slipped from Jude's chest before he could cage it.

His eyes burned gold, his wolf surging dangerously close to the surface.

"How dare he?" His fist struck the table with a sharp crack, the sound splintering the silence. "I won't let Cora fall into his hands."

"Exactly."

I let the word settle between us.

"And that is why Rowan Blackfang must fall."

Jude's breathing steadied, but the fire in him did not dim. "How? He's already quite a powerful Alpha in his own right. And now he's building influence here as well."

"I'm aware," I said calmly. "I have already begun laying the groundwork. My son, Orion, will enter the same field as him-rise within it, rival him, dismantle what he builds. But there is a complication."

Jude watched me closely now.

"To position Orion where he needs to be, he must gain access to Lunar Research Center." I let out a measured breath. "And that is not easily obtained."

Silence stretched between us, taut as a drawn wire.

Then,

"I'll find a way," Jude said.

My smile unfurled. 'Of course you will.'

One lure, and already, two catch ensnared in the same net.

"Then I place Cora's fate in your hands, Sir Knight," My voice softened to something almost paternal, a father entrusting his most precious daughter.

While beneath it, a darker instinct coiled, a predator closing its jaws and letting another bleed in its stead.

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