

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

Chapter 361

Lylah's POV

“And to see someone dare treat Damon like that...” Grandfather Vargan's voice lowered, thick with restrained fury. “It struck me no differently than if my own grandchildren had been dishonored.”

His gaze drifted, distant-lost in memories only he could see.

“Damon has been loyal to Ezra and Zyrelle since they were barely more than pups,” he continued. “His bloodline has served Moonclaw as Betas for generations. His father stood unwavering beside Ezra's father... and the boy inherited that same iron loyalty.”

A faint, almost proud breath left him.

“Ezra chose him as his Beta with his own hands. And I remember the night Damon swore an oath to remain unmated until Ezra found his Luna. Until Moonclaw stood at its rightful peak, and his duty was fulfilled.”

My chest tightened.

“He's always been that loyal...” I murmured, my voice softer than I intended.

“He still is.” Vargan's expression darkened. “Even now, no one would fault him for finding love -for taking a mate. Yet he refuses. He binds himself to duty, again and again.” His jaw hardened. “And that wretched creature... she destroyed all of it.”

I rested my hand against Ezra's arm.

Beneath my touch, I felt the tension coiled in him-tight as drawn steel. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, it eased.

His hand came over mine, grounding himself... or perhaps grounding me.

“Ezra,” I whispered, though the words felt painfully small, “he'll be alright.”

But even as I said it, my wolf stirred uneasily.

I knew too much.

My study in healing had taught me the truth about forbidden substances, such as Silverroot Lustvine. The damage it left behind wasn't only physical, it carved through the mind, through instinct, through the very soul of a wolf.

Still, I said nothing.

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I couldn't.

Not to Ezra. Not to Vargan. Not to Moonclaw.

When we entered Damon's chamber, the air itself felt subdued. Heavy with the scent of herbs, steel, and something faintly broken.

He lay motionless against the bed, his skin pale as carved marble, his chest rising in shallow, uneven breaths. Even his wolf felt distant... like something buried too deep to reach.

"A month ago," Ezra spoke beside me, his voice quieter now, edged with something raw, "he asked to step back from his duties temporarily. Said he had personal matters to handle."

A pause.

"I suspected it might be about a mate," he admitted. "So I gave him the time."

Regret thickened the air between us.

Now, I'm angry at him," Ezra exhaled, the words strained. "We've known each other since we ere children. Before titles. Before rank. If he had just told me..." His jaw tightened. "I could've elped."

I ran my hand slowly along his arm, feeling the restless energy of his wolf beneath his skin.

Then,

My phone rang.

The sharp sound cut through the stillness like a blade.

I stepped out into the corridor and answered immediately when I saw the caller.

"Lylah, darling," Tiara's aunt greeted warmly, unaware of the unease already tightening in my chest. "You must miss Tiara terribly to have even sent a letter. But she isn't home at the moment."

A frown pulled at my lips.

"Where is she?" I asked, the edge in my voice slipping through despite myself. "I've been messaging her. She also hasn't replied to anything."

There was a brief hesitation on the other end.

“Oh... perhaps she’s still on her way to Starfall,” her aunt said lightly. “She mentioned taking a trip. Tiara has always wanted to visit that Pack since she was young.”

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My pulse stuttered. Cold certainty crept in.

No.

The thought wasn’t mine alone-my wolf rose with it, bristling beneath my skin.

That’s not true.

I knew Tiara. She would have told me if she wanted to visit Starfall. She always told me.

Tiara had lied to her family.

And worse-

She had vanished.

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Lylah’s POV

What choice did I have now?

Tiara was gone, and all I held were fragments, half-answers, and a lie that didn't fit her.

Maybe she just wanted me-time... maybe.

I clung to that possibility as I exhaled, forcing calm into my voice while thanking her aunt before ending the call.

But unease lingered, coiling low in my chest.

When I returned, Ezra and Grandfather Vargan stood just outside Damon's ward, their voices low but heavy with consequence.

"The news has reached his family, Ezra," Vargan was saying. "They're already on their way."

Ezra didn't hesitate. "They deserve the truth. All of it. If they come with anger, I'll meet it head-on. We won't bury this."

There was no wavering in him-only the unyielding authority of an Alpha who would rather bleed than hide dishonor.

Vargan studied him for a long moment before giving a slow, measured nod. "I thought as much." His gaze sharpened. "I'll ask the guards for deeper information. If Damon's family demands answers, we can give a clear and full explanation."

Then, he left without another word.

I stepped closer, drawn by something unspoken. Just looking at Ezra, I could feel the weight pressing down on him. Guilt. Rage. Responsibility. It clung to him like a second skin, thick enough that even my wolf stirred uneasily beneath it.

Without a word, Ezra's hands found my waist.

He guided me away from Damon's ward and into a quiet guest chamber. The moment the door shut behind us, the tension in him seemed to fracture.

He sank onto the bed, pulling me down with him. A low groan slipped from his lips as his fingers pressed against the bridge of his nose, as though he could physically push back the storm raging inside his mind.

My chest tightened at the sight.

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"Ezra," I said softly, "lie on your stomach."

He didn't respond, so I added gently, "I'll help massage your neck. Let me ease the tension."

But he shook his head.

Instead, his arm tightened around me, drawing me closer until I was resting against him. “No,” he murmured, his voice rough with exhaustion. “You being here is enough.”

His scent wrapped around me like dusk settling over the forest-rich, warm, and quietly intoxicating. It sank into my bones, soothing the restless pulse of my wolf.

“While we wait for Damon’s parents to arrive, stay with me,” he murmured. “Talk to me about anything. You make it easier to breathe.”

“You don’t mind if I ask something?” I murmured. “You look exhausted.”

His lips curved faintly, though his eyes were already heavy with fatigue. “If it’s you... never.”

I shifted carefully in his arms, making sure not to add to the strain in his body.

“Ezra,” I began, my voice thoughtful, “I have a feeling Damon has already found his mate. And what he felt during the Night of Spring... it came from her.” I hesitated, studying his expression. “Did he ever mention anyone to you?”

“Not once.”

The answer came without pause..

I hummed quietly, my thoughts turning over themselves.

“But...” Ezra’s voice came again, lower now, as though dragged from somewhere deeper, “I understand what he did.”

I lifted my head slightly, surprised.

His arm tightened around me, instinctively, as if even in exhaustion he needed to keep me close. “If I were in his place, I’d rather tear into my own flesh than mate with someone I didn’t love.” His voice dropped to a rough whisper. “No matter what forced me.”

Silence settled between us, heavy with meaning.

I swallowed, my chest tightening. “You’re right... I think I would too-”

“No.”

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The word cut through my sentence, soft but absolute.

I stilled, looking up at him.

His eyes were nearly closed now, sleep pulling at him, but there was something fierce-almost desperate-still burning beneath.

“You don’t get to say that,” he murmured. “You don’t get to hurt yourself, Lylah. Not ever.” His fingers curled faintly against me, as if anchoring me in place. “Don’t ever put yourself through that. Not even the smallest wound...” His breath faltered slightly. “I wouldn’t be able to bear it seeing you hurt, even a little.”

“Okay,” I whispered.

That was enough.

His breathing slowed, evening out as sleep finally claimed him, his hold on me loosening just slightly, but never fully letting go.

I leaned in, pressing a soft kiss to his cheek before settling beside him, letting the warmth of him lull me into rest.

When I woke, the sun had dipped low, spilling molten gold through the window in long, hushed ribbons.

moment, everything felt still.

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The door burst open with a sharp bang.

A healer’s assistant rushed in, breathless, eyes wide with urgency.

“Alpha Ezra-are you here?”

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Chapter 363

Lylah's POV

Sleep torn from me so violently it felt like I'd been dragged straight out of a dream—but it wasn't the intrusion that set my pulse racing or sent my wolf stirring beneath my skin.

It was her.

The healer's assistant lingered in the doorway, her presence fleeting-yet the sight of her face stole the breath straight from my lungs.

Those violet eyes.

The sharp line of her features.

That... resemblance.

For one dizzying heartbeat, it felt like I was staring into a warped reflection of myself.

Almost me.

But not quite.

"S-sorry," she murmured, her voice uneven as though she'd felt it too. That strange, unsettling Dull.

he turned, slipping away as quickly as she had appeared, as if staying even a moment would unravel something neither of us understood.

"Wait!" The word tore from me, my body already moving before thought could catch

Behind me, Ezra stirred at the sudden shift. The movement was slight, but I felt his awareness sharpening, his wolf brushing against mine as he pushed himself upright.

"What happened?" he asked, his voice low, edged with concern. "Is everything alright, Lylah?"

I hesitated.

That face...

Those eyes...

"Yes," I said finally, though the certainty didn't quite reach my chest. I forced a breath. "I think Damon's family has arrived. A healer's assistant came to inform us."

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Ezra was silent for a moment longer, as though weighing the truth in my scent. Then he nodded once.

"Then we should go."

And I was right.

By the time we entered Damon's chamber, his parents had already arrived.

The Lord and Lady of Moonclaw's Beta bloodline stood at his bedside, their presence steady and commanding like pillars shaped by generations of loyalty. Yet the moment their eyes fell on Ezra, something in them softened. Not submission, not mere respect... but something deeper. A bond forged long before titles, more intimate than that between Alpha and pack members.

And Ezra...

I felt it immediately.

The rigid tension that had shadowed him all day eased, replaced by something quieter, warmer. When he spoke to them, his voice carried a gentleness I had never heard in his own family. There was no strain, no guarded edge—only trust.

knot in my chest loosened, and I let out a quiet breath of relief.

Damon had opened his eyes.

Propped against the pillows, still pale but better, he met his elders' gaze with quiet defiance.

"So," he said, his voice rough but measured as his gaze settled on his parents, steady and unflinching, "The healer told you my wolf has been scarred—that it may never accept a mate again... even if I were to find her?" A faint, restrained curve touched his lips. "Then if that is the truth, it is simply a truth I will live with."

"Damon!" His mother rose sharply, emotion rippling through her aura like a tide she could no longer hold back.

"Watch your words! By Selene's grace—your elders have waited centuries for the day you would bring your chosen mate to Moonclaw. To our home." Her voice trembled, caught between pride and pain. "For the day we would stand beside you and witness your mating ceremony. How can you speak of it as though it holds no weight?"

“And the day you would give this family an heir to carry our blood forward.” His father’s voice hardened, though something deeper lingered beneath it. “You reckless son... tell me, do you not feel even the faintest pull toward that future? To have pups of your own, raise them, shape them, watch them grow into wolves who will bear our name with pride?”

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Damon didn’t flinch.

“It’s never been my life’s purpose.”

The words fell calm and certain, untouched by doubt.

“If what you wish is to see me fulfill that role,” he continued, “then I will do so in another way. I will remain where I have always stood-at the side of my Alpha and Luna. I will help raise their heirs, guard them, train them, and ensure they grow strong beneath Moonclaw’s name.”

A quiet steel settled into his tone.

“But as for taking a mate, settling into that life...” He exhaled softly. “That was never the path I chose.”

“Damon-

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“Mother.” His voice softened, but the firmness in it remained. “You know me better than anyone.” His eyes dimmed slightly, something deeper surfacing beneath the defiance. “What I have always wanted is to serve Moonclaw. To stand beside Ezra. That’s all I’ve ever aimed for.” His jaw tightened slightly. “And I’ve done it.”

looked away, voice lowering.

So don’t stand there and act like I’ve lost something...like I’m no longer whole.”

The room stilled.

His parents fell silent.

They had no choice. Not when generations of loyalty bound them-heart and soul-to Ezra’s bloodline... to Moonclaw itself. Duty held them in place where emotion could not.

So I stepped forward.

“Damon has stood at Ezra’s side all this time,” I said, my voice steady, carrying more weight than I expected. My wolf stirred beneath my skin, resolute. “Now it’s our turn to repay that.”

Their eyes shifted to me.

I didn't waver.

"We will make sure he's recovered without loss... without anything taken from him." A brief pause.
"Including what you fear."

The Betrayed Princess Rising

Ruby Walker

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Chapter 364

3rd Person's POV

Damon's parents kept their gaze fixed on Lylah.

Finished

Unlike the way they looked at Ezra, their expressions did not soften. There was curiosity there, measured, watchful-but beneath it lay something deeper, more rigid. Respect, yes. But not warmth. Not yet.

This was their first time standing before the Luna of Moonclaw-Ezra's mate,

their Queen. Beyond the instinctive respect carved into their blood, they did not know what else to offer... nor how to reach her without overstepping the invisible line her title had drawn.

"If you say so, Luna Lylah," Damon's father spoke first, his tone even, carefully controlled.

The title rang hollow in her ears.

Lylah drew in a quiet breath. "Please," she said gently, "don't take my words as those of a Luna...

ut as a friend. Damon is my friend, sir." Her voice steadied with quiet resolve. "I am also

dying healing. I will see him restored fully, completely. I won't leave him broken."

A small nod followed-a polite smile.

But it did not reach him.

The distance remained, an invisible wall she could feel but not cross. It pressed faintly against her senses, like a barrier her wolf could not quite claw through.

So this is what it means to be Luna.

To be revered... yet kept at arm's length.

"Thank you for your kindness, Luna," his mother said, her voice softer, though no less composed. "But do not misunderstand us." Her gaze flickered briefly to Damon, then back to Lylah. "When we spoke of his own spring, it was never to deny his duty to you."

A faint smile touched her lips, restrained and brittle.

"We are Beta-born. That loyalty does not waver." Her eyes dimmed, something unspoken passing through them. "And now... I believe my son is right."

The air shifted.

"Whether Damon takes a mate or not," she continued, "it will be you and Alpha Ezra who carry Moonclaw forward. We will serve your pup, protect it, guide it." Her expression softened just a

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fraction, though it never fully warmed. "That is what matters. For us, that is enough."

Enough.

The word settled heavily in Lylah's chest, hollow and cold.

It was meant as reassurance.

Yet it felt like something else entirely.

Damon looked at her the same way he always had-respectful and warm. But Lylah didn't know what he would see if he looked deeper.

Past the title. Past the composure.

Only uncertainty. Thin, restless, and impossible to fully hide, no matter how still she forced herself to stand.

Night fell slowly over the treatment grounds.

Lylah stood alone on the lawn, the cool wind threading through her hair, carrying the sharp scent of pine and nearby riverwater. The forest whispered at the edges of her awareness, her wolf listening, but offering no comfort.

Footsteps approached behind her.

“That was well done, my dear.”

ice was warm, threaded with quiet pride as he came to stand beside her. “You eased in Damon’s parents without force, without command. You stepped into your role tion, not authority.”

He studied her, his gaze softening. “Lylah, I am proud of you.”

She smiled, though it didn’t quite reach her eyes.

A pause followed, filled only by the rustle of leaves.

“About what they said...” Vargan added, almost casually. “You needn’t take it to heart. I certainly don’t dwell on it.”

He hesitated for a moment.

“Well,” he amended, clearing his throat lightly, “aside from the pups.”

Lylah blinked, caught off guard. “Grandpa?”

part about

you and Ezra having

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A faint chuckle escaped him, though it carried the weight of something older-something longing. “Ah, I must sound insufferable to you.” He shook his head. “Forgive me.”

His gaze drifted, distant, as though he were seeing something far beyond the present.

“In my old age now, I always find my thoughts wandering to simpler things.” A faint smile touched his lips. “Small footsteps echoing through Moonclaw Manor. Laughter filling halls that have grown too quiet. I imagine children with Ezra’s strength and your light,” he continued. “Running wild beneath the moon.”

His voice gentled.

“But that is my dream-not your burden.” He looked at her again. “You will choose your own time. Do not rush for the sake of anyone, not even this old man’s wishes.”

Lylah nodded.

Yet even as he spoke, she felt it-

That quiet, unspoken hope.

Settling softly and sank deep into her bones.

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Chapter 365

3rd Person's POV

Fisted

Steam still clung faintly to Lylah's skin as she stepped out from her bath, the scent of rosewater weaving through her natural pheromones. The treatment center had settled into a hushed stillness for the night, but her mind refused to follow. Vargan's words lingered.

Children.

The thought circled her like a restless wolf, pacing, waiting.

She stood near the window, arms loosely wrapped around herself, the cool night air brushing against her damp skin.

'Should I tell Ezra? Should I ask him what he—'

Before the thought could fully form, warmth closed around her from behind.

Ezra.

His arms slipped around her waist, pulling her back against the firm line of his chest. His presence enveloped her instantly. His breath grazed the curve of her neck as he inhaled deeply, taking in the blend of her scent. Rosewater and her.

His wolf stirred beneath the surface, brushing against hers with quiet intensity. “What makes think standing here whispering my name is enough? You could’ve called for me, love.”

you

His grip tightened just slightly.

“I’ve been waiting too,” he continued, his tone shifting. “There’s something I need to ask you. And it’s urgent.”

Lylah turned within his arms, her brows knitting faintly. “What is it?”

“Do you want it?” he asked.

The question lingered between them, heavy with unspoken meaning.

Her frown deepened, confusion flickering-until he said it.

“Children.”

Lylah blinked, momentarily caught off guard. “So you heard Grandpa and me,” she said softly.

“I was looking for you,” Ezra replied, his voice dropping, deepening as something more primal

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stirred beneath it. His hands settled firmly around her upper arms. “I heard enough. You still haven’t answered me,” he added, quieter now. “Do you want pups?”

Lylah blinked, a little taken aback by how directly he asked it. And yet... part of her understood.

This wasn’t sudden-not really. It had always been there, quietly waiting beneath everything else. Ezra’s family, his bloodline, the weight of Moonclaw’s future, they all wanted the same thing.

But her thoughts drifted elsewhere.

Back to Professor Grimwood. To that quiet, unsettling conversation—the one Ezra had never spoken of himself.

The rare mutation he had inherited from his mother.

The power it gave him and the risk it carried. And the possibility that it could be passed down. To his child. Their child.

Her chest tightened at the thought.

And if their child inherited it... But not his strength?

They carried the burden... without the power to survive it?

The question lingered, heavy and unrelenting, threading fear through everything Lylah tried to steady within herself.

"Ezra..." she breathed, the name barely more than a whisper.

But the thoughts didn't stop there. Another truth surfaced—one just as heavy.

Her studies were unfinished. Her path as a healer still incomplete. The dream she had fought for was not yet within reach. And a child deserved more than divided attention. More than a mother torn between duty and calling.

Fear flickered through her.

Not of the child, but of failing them.

She lifted her gaze to him, steady despite the storm within. "If I say... not for now, would you be offended?"

For a fleeting second, something shifted in his eyes.

Then it was gone.

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"No," Ezra answered. "Why would I be?"

"Then let's wait for the right time. The best time."

He fell silent for a moment, the stillness stretching just long enough to feel it.

"But what if 'the best' never comes?" he asked at last.

His voice remained gentle, but beneath it, something restless stirred. Not anger. Not even frustration. Something deeper.

Something his wolf did not quite know how to quiet.

"It will," Lylah said, steady despite the tightness in her chest. "And if it doesn't, then we wait longer."

The words sounded certain.

She needed them to be.

‘I’m sorry, Ezra,’ she whispered inwardly. ‘You never told me the truth about your condition... but I know. And this is what’s best. For both of us.’

For you.

For the child who might come.

For the future, no one else could see as clearly as she now did.

n him shifted.

gh to break. Never that.

But enough to dim.

Still, Ezra said nothing.

Instead, he lifted her hand, his touch as reverent as ever, and brought her knuckles to his lips.

“As you wish,” he murmured. “My love.”

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Chapter 366

3rd Person’s POV

Rising

A week after Cora's engagement, the damage it left behind did not fade with the night. It lingered. Like rot beneath polished wood, unseen yet unmistakable.

No one in Eldric's family spoke of it anymore, but silence did nothing to erase the humiliation. It clung to the air, thick and sour, festering in every glance, every restrained breath. What should have been a triumphant union had instead become a whispered disgrace.

"That ungrateful stray ruined everything." The thought echoed relentlessly in his mind.

Now Lunar's wolves spoke of Lylah's devotion, her spectacle, her romance. Of the way she had claimed the night without even trying. It should have been Cora they praised.

Every word was an insult. Every mention, another twist of the blade.

For three days, Eldric endured it.

Three days of forced composure. Three days of watching his daughter move as though nothing had happened, as though the fracture in their standing did not exist. When he finally demanded an update regarding Commander Ivar, Cora's response had been smooth.

"Commander Ivar will be visiting Lunar's for a meeting with several influential figures, Father. I will extend our thanks personally. There is no need for your involvement. You may remain at home."

The words were respectful.

But the meaning beneath them was not.

Eldric heard it clearly-the boundary she had drawn, the access she had denied.

His temper ignited.

"She grows arrogant again," he snarled, pacing his parlor like a caged beast. The faint shimmer of gold flickered through his eyes, his wolf pressing close to the surface. "Does she think she can handle everything with Rowan alone now?"

"Kenorth!" he barked.

His Beta appeared at once. "Yes, Alpha?"

"Arrange my attendance at Lunar's business gathering-the one those high-ranking wolves here are flocking to."

Kenorth hesitated, unease tightening his expression. “Alpha... that event is strictly by invitation. I’m not certain-”

Eldric turned.

The air shifted.

Golden eyes burned through the dim room, heavy with dominance, with warning.

“Then gold will solve it,” he said coldly. “Find whoever is responsible. Pay them. Threaten them. I don’t care.” His voice dropped, edged with something far more dangerous than anger. “I will be there.”

A slow, anticipatory smile curved Eldric’s lips.

He could already picture Cora’s face when she saw him.

Meanwhile, two days had passed since Lylah and Ezra returned from the treatment center where Damon was recovering.

Today was one of the rare days she had to herself.

Lylah remained in the penthouse, the quiet stretching comfortably around her as she divided

between studying and simple leisure. Open books and scattered notes claimed the space, her pace was unhurried for once.

was at work.

She was alone.

The soft clatter of utensils and the gentle simmer of food filled the space as she moved through the kitchen, grounded in the familiarity of it—until the sharp chime of the doorbell cut cleanly through the calm.

A subtle shift moved through her senses, instinct brushing against the edges of awareness.

“I’m not expecting anyone...” she murmured.

She wiped her hands and stepped toward the door, her movements cautious now, her wolf stirring-alert, listening.

The moment she opened it,

Everything inside her snapped to attention.

“Tiara?!” Shock broke through Lylah’s voice.

Her best friend stood there, but barely.

Tiara’s body swayed where she stood, her figure wrapped tightly in a coat far too heavy for the warmth of early spring. Her skin was flushed, fever burning beneath it, her breath shallow and uneven.

“Your aunt said you went to Starfall,” Lylah rushed, stepping forward, her hands already reaching. “You lied, didn’t you? What happened-”

She never finished.

Tiara collapsed.

Her body gave out completely, folding forward like something cut loose from its tether.

“Tiara!” Lylah caught her just before she hit the ground

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Chapter 367

Lylah’s POV

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Finished

Tiara crumpled into me, her body giving way without warning. The moment our skin met, a wave of heat slammed into me.

Fever.

She felt fragile in my arms, her strength unraveling far too quickly. I steadied myself, then gathered her more securely, one arm firm around her waist as I guided her toward the sofa.

When we reached it, I lowered her gently, easing her down against the cushions, though the heat radiating from her skin still burned against my own.

“I lied,” Tiara whispered, her voice rough, splintered. “I lied to all of them. Aunt... Uncle... even Nana...”

“Shh,” I murmured, smoothing my hand over her hair, letting my wolf’s calm seep gently into the touch. “We can talk about that later. Right now, you need-”

“No!”

The word tore out of her, sharp and desperate. Her eyes flew open, locking onto mine-green, but no longer the bright, steady green I knew. Now they shimmered with fever and something far more jagged. Guilt. Raw. Consuming.

“I messed up, Lylah” she choked. “I’m a terrible daughter, aren’t I? Useless. I couldn’t even help them when everything fell apart. Those rogues...” her breath hitched, her fingers clutching weakly at my sleeve, “...they keep coming back. Again and again. I’ll pay that fucking debt. I swear I will. I just need a little more time... a little more money...”

Her words slurred together, tangled in heat and exhaustion. But the meaning struck clean.

Rogues.

My wolf stirred, a low, dangerous growl rippling beneath my skin.

Rogues don’t wander into pack territory without consequence, not unless something is broken. Not unless someone has failed. A flicker of anger sparked.

But then the truth settled in.

Rowan had been gone too long.

Blackfang had been left in the hands of a council unfit to hold it, leaders in name only, hollow

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where strength should have stood. And now the consequences were bleeding into the lives of those who could least afford it.

“Lylah...” Her voice weakened again, barely more than a breath. “I’m a disappointing daughter...”

“No.” I cupped her face, forcing her to look at me. “Listen. You’re not.”

“Yes, I am!” Her fingers tightened around mine with surprising strength. “Aunt told me to leave right before the rogues came back. She gave me money, Lylah. Money. Like I wouldn’t notice.” A broken laugh slipped from her lips. “She thought I’d just go... enjoy myself at Starfall.”

Pain twisted through her expression.

“So I pretended. I left.” Her voice dropped to a whisper. “I have some savings. I just need to earn the rest...”

My chest tightened, something fierce and protective rising within me. My mind raced, turning over every possibility, every path—

And then one name surfaced, steady and undeniable.

“Ezra,” I said softly. “He can help you.”

“No!”

The reaction was immediate-violent. Tiara pushed herself up, panic flaring through her scent, sharp as shattered glass.

ag Alpha Ezra into this,” she said, shaking her head despite the obvious strain it

“I won’t drag you into it either. I won’t have Moonclaw looking at me like I’m some ome parasite to their Luna.”

My wolf bristled at the word.

“Tiara, you’ve helped me more times than I can count. Have you forgotten?” I said, my voice firm despite the tightness in my chest. “Back then, you gave me money for bread and milk even when you barely had enough for yourself.”

My fingers tightened around hers.

“How could I ever turn my back on you?” I continued. “Ezra and Moonclaw would never see you that way. Not as a burden. Not as anything less than someone under my protection.” I held her gaze, letting the certainty in me settle into her bones, into the part of her that was unraveling. “You’re my best friend. And I promise you... They will honor that.”

“Lylah...” Her voice trembled, caught between pride and desperation. “Then... at least let me repay him. One day.”

‘t hesitate. “If that’s what you want.”

ow, that wasn’t what mattered-only what would make her accept help.

ng her safe.

ng her family safe.

stiffened.

ent shifted sharply, something soumanand wrong cutting through the air. One hand flew to outh, the other clutching her stomacichsa’s her body jerked upright, trembling.

e was already moving.

re free from my grasp, stumbling at first before breaking into a frantic rush toward the pom, as if her body could no longer contain whatever was tearing through her.

Ruby Walker

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

Chapter 368

Lylah’s POV

Tiara barely made it to the bathroom before another violent wave hit her.

The sound of her retching tore through me, sharp enough to send panic racing beneath my skin. My wolf surged forward instantly, restless and alarmed, and I hurried after her.

She stood hunched over the sink, trembling fingers braced against the white marble as her body shook with the force of it. The heavy coat she wore hung loosely from her shoulders now, doing nothing to hide how fragile she looked.

“Tiara...” I moved beside her quickly, reaching for her hand. “This isn’t normal. We’re going to the treatment center. A professional healer needs to examine you.”

“No.” The refusal came too fast.

She pulled back slightly, shaking her head as she tried to steady her breathing. “There’s no need for that.”

“You’re feverish, you can barely stand, and now you’re vomiting.” I kept my voice calm despite the unease tightening inside me. “If this keeps up, you’ll become dehydrated and collapse.”

Tiara swallowed hard, avoiding my eyes. “It’s... not exactly a fever. And it only happens in the mornings.”

The moment the words left her mouth, she froze.

Her face drained of color so suddenly it was almost painful to witness, like she had realized too late what she’d revealed.

Suspicion flickered through me.

Slowly, I guided her back toward the couch before she could protest again.

She sank weakly against the cushions while I knelt in front of her, searching her face.

“You noticed a pattern?” I asked carefully. “How long has this been happening?”

“A few days.”

“And you said nothing?” Panic sharpened my voice before I could stop it. “Tiara, if this isn’t a fever, then it could be something far worse.”

“Or...” Her fingers twisted tightly in her lap. “Maybe it isn’t.” There was something strange in her scent now beneath the sickness-fear tangled with uncertainty, fragile hope wrapped in dread.

Her eyes finally lifted to mine.

“Lylah... you’re a healer too.” Her voice dropped almost to a whisper. “You can check me yourself.”

I blinked.

“I just don’t want strangers at the treatment center knowing.” Her throat bobbed nervously. “What if I’m...”

1/3

12:17 Fri, May 8

Chapter 368

69

Finished

The realization struck me before she could finish.

“Pregnant?” I finished.

Tiara stared at me, stunned and silent.

Then, slowly, almost fearfully, she nodded.

For a moment, I could only stare back.

Pregnant.

The idea felt surreal wrapped around someone I had known nearly my entire life. My best friend. Tiara.

“When was your last moon blood?” I asked quietly.

She pressed a hand to her forehead, trying to remember. “I don’t remember exactly. More than two months ago.”

My pulse quickened.

“Lie down,” I said immediately, shifting into healer instinct despite the storm of thoughts racing through me. “If there really is a pup, we need to know as soon as possible.”

She obeyed without argument this time, exhaustion finally outweighing resistance.

I moved carefully, methodically.

Though pregnancy healing wasn’t my strongest field, the signs were familiar enough. Elevated pulse. Heightened body temperature. Hormonal imbalance was woven subtly through her scent. Every small symptom aligned too perfectly to ignore.

Still, I needed certainty.

I placed my hand gently against her abdomen and closed my eyes.

My wolf stirred beneath my skin.

Selestine emerged slowly, silver awareness unfurling through my senses like moonlight spilling across dark water. The world sharpened instantly. Every heartbeat in the penthouse became distinct. Every breath. Every shift of blood beneath flesh.

Professor Grimwood had once told me that wolves destined to walk healing path were born touched by ancient instincts-capable of sensing life itself.

Now I understood exactly what he meant.

For a brief second, there was only silence.

Then.

There.

2/3

12:17 Fri, May 8

Chapter 368

Faint.

Tiny.

A second heartbeat.

Soft as a flutter beneath snowfall, yet unmistakably alive.

My breath caught.

Finished

The pulse was delicate, fragile enough that another healer might have overlooked it entirely. But Selestine heard it clearly, cradled within Tiara's womb like a hidden spark beneath the dark.

A child.

I opened my eyes slowly, emotion tightening unexpectedly in

my

chest.

"Tiara..." I drew in a careful breath, lifting my gaze to hers. "I'm done checking. And from what I can sense... You really are pregnant."

Her lips parted soundlessly.

"But I don't want to risk being wrong," I continued gently. "You're still coming with me to see an experienced healer." My tone turned firmer. "And don't worry. I'll make sure no one will hear of this."

1.3K

B

3/3

12:17 Fri, May 8

The Betrayed Princess Rising

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

Chapter 369

3rd Person's POV

Lylah knew there was only one place where Tiara could be examined without fear of whispers spreading beyond closed doors-the private treatment center owned by Ezra's family.

So she brought Tiara there right away.

The healer assigned to Tiara was discreet, experienced, and bound by Moonclaw loyalty.

The examination did not take long.

And when the results finally came, they confirmed exactly what Lylah had already sensed with Selestine's instincts.

Tiara was pregnant.

The room fell into stunned silence after the healer left them alone.

Tiara sat motionless on the edge of the bed, fingers curled tightly against the blanket resting across her lap Her expression looked distant, almost unreal, as if her mind still struggled to grasp the truth of what was happening inside her body.

"I'm... four weeks?" she whispered at last. Confusion knitted across her face as she looked toward Lylah. "But how is that possible? I was only with him a little over three weeks ago."

Lylah leaned lightly against the nearby table, her expression gentler now.

"In healing, the timing is counted from the first day of your last moon blood," she explained softly. "Not from the exact night conception happened."

Understanding slowly settled over Tiara's features, though it did little to ease the storm in her chest.

Lylah hesitated briefly before speaking again, her voice quieter this time. "Tiara..." Her gaze softened with concern. "What happened between you and the father of the baby... it wasn't coercion, was it?"

Tiara's eyes widened faintly.

"No," she answered immediately, though her voice came out thin and strained. "No, Lylah. It wasn't" She lowered her gaze to her trembling hands. "I knew what was happening that night. At least mostly" A humorless laugh escaped her lips. "I was drunk, but not enough to forget."

The shame woven through her scent made Lylah's chest tighten.

"Who is he?" Lylah asked carefully. "I'm not asking to judge you. I just need to know whether he's dangerous. Rogues, Lunar's criminals, enemies of Blackfang..." Her voice grew firmer. "I need to make sure you and the pup are safe."

Tiara slowly shook her head.

"He's safe. Actually... he's the opposite of dangerous." Her lips curved bitterly. "His reputation is far cleaner and higher than mine."

1/3

69

12:17 Fri, May 8 D

Chapter 369

A small thread of relief loosened inside Lylah.

Still, Tiara's posture remained guarded, her wolf curled tightly inward as though protecting a secret too heavy to expose yet.

Lylah chose not to push further.

Not now.

"You should rest for a while," Lylah said gently instead. "I'll ask the healer to prepare your supplements and prenatal herbs." She brushed a reassuring hand against Tiara's shoulder. "There's a garden outside behind the center if you need air."

Tiara nodded faintly.

The moment Lylah slipped from the room, silence rushed in around her again.

Her thoughts tangled viciously inside her chest until staying still became unbearable.

So she left.

The private forest behind the treatment center stretched beneath the pale warmth of spring sunlight, secluded from the rest of Lunaris city. Artificial though it was, the place still carried traces of wildness- towering silver birch trees, soft moss beneath stone paths, and the distant murmur of water.

The wind moved gently through the branches, carrying scents of earth and blooming jasmine.

Tiara walked slowly beneath the trees, one hand resting unconsciously over her stomach.

Over the tiny life hidden there.

Her pup.

Emotion tightened painfully in her throat.

“Little one...” she whispered, her voice nearly swallowed by the wind. “You came at the worst possible time. Everything is falling apart right now. My family...myself...” Her eyes burned suddenly. “I don’t want you born into all this chaos.”

And then there was him.

Damon.

The thought alone made her chest constrict.

Moonclaw’s Beta.

The man she never would have imagined crossing paths with this way. And now somehow-

He’s the father of her baby.

Tiara exhaled shakily and lifted her gaze—

2/3

12:17 Fri, May 8

Chapter 369

Only to freeze.

A tall figure stood several paces ahead among the trees. Broad shoulders. Dark oak-brown hair stirred by the wind.

And beneath the crisp scent of forest air came something unmistakable.

Lemongrass. With a trace of warm masculine spice.

Her wolf reacted instantly beneath her skin, startled and restless all at once.

Tiara’s pulse slammed hard against her ribs. “Damon?”

1.3K

W

12:18 Fri, May 8 D

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

Chapter 370

Damon’s POV

I was in the middle of a call when I heard it. Faint. Almost swallowed by the wind moving through the silver birch trees.

“Damon?”

The voice struck something primal inside me.

Before I could react, a hand caught the back of my coat and jerked me around sharply.

A growl ripped from my chest on instinct, my wolf surging forward at the sudden intrusion. Power flared beneath my skin, sharp enough to crack the tension in the air-

And then I saw her.

Grass-green eyes collided with mine.

Fiery auburn hair spilled over her shoulders in wild disarray, and beneath the scent of spring rain and jasmine lingered the warm vanilla scent that had haunted me for weeks.

Tiara Ashcroft.

For one suspended second, I simply stared.

Not another illusion dragged from the obsession clawing at the back of my mind every damn night since she returned to Blackfang.

Shock hit me hard enough to strip the words from my throat before irritation snapped into place to cover it.

“By the Goddess,” I muttered harshly. “You should’ve already left Lunaris. What the hell are you doing here?”

Her eyes narrowed instantly.

“How do you know I left?” she shot back. Then suspicion flashed across her face. “Wait, have you been stalking me?”

Despite everything, my wolf stirred at the fire in her voice.

Her gaze swept slowly over me before landing on my face. Something mischievous-almost malicious- sparked in her expression.

“Well, Beta Damon of Moonclaw,” she drawled, beginning to circle me slowly, “what exactly are you doing at a treatment center like this? You sick? Don’t tell me it’s some hereditary disease.”

I blinked once.

“What the fuck are you talking about, Tiara Ashcroft?” My voice came out cold as winter steel.

1/3

69

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Chapter 370

But inwardly, I couldn’t stop staring at her.

At the slight flush in her cheeks. In the shadows beneath her eyes. The way her scent felt was weaker than before.

Something twisted unpleasantly in my chest.

Then my wolf slid forward with dark amusement.

Play with her.

A smirk tugged faintly at my mouth. "Yeah, I'm here for degenerative treatment. So what?"

Her eyes widened with vindictive delight.

"So you are dying." She folded her arms. "Honestly, if you had some terrible disease, I'd probably be the first applauding." Then her expression shifted abruptly into irritation. "But unfortunately, that would affect me

too now."

"What does that mean?"

But she only lifted her chin stubbornly.

I moved before thinking.

One second she stood in front of me, and the next my hand had wrapped around her wrist, pinning her firmly against the nearest tree trunk.

The birch bark cracked beneath the force.

Her breath caught.

Those green eyes snapped up to mine-bright, furious, untamed.

"Enough with the riddles," I growled. "Explain yourself."

Unease flashed across her features too quickly."Damon, let me go."

"No." My grip tightened slightly. "Not until you tell me why you're really here." I leaned closer, lowering my voice dangerously. "Or, it's actually you who stalked me?"

Before she could answer, something shifted.

A strange scent hit me.

Sour.

My instincts roared immediately.

Tiara's face lost color beneath the sunlight. One hand flew to her mouth while her body trembled violently.

My eyes widened.

“Tiara-”

2/3

12:18 Fri, May 8

Chapter 370

69

Finisher

She jerked suddenly.

And then she vomited across the front of my clothes.

Shock slammed through me.

“Tiara Ashcroft!” I grabbed both her shoulders instantly, panic shredding through my voice before I could stop it. “What the hell is wrong with you?”

But instead of answering, she shoved my hands away.

Fierce. Defiant even shaking apart.

“You want to know why I’m here?” she snapped, dragging the back of her hand across her mouth as she struggled to steady her breathing. “Fine.”

I came to ask you for money, Damon.”

I stared at her.

“What?”

“Give it to me.”

“You’ve lost your mind.” I frowned deeply. “I already paid you that night.”

A hollow laugh escaped her lips. “That money was for keeping the secret,” she said bitterly. “This is different.”

Something cold crept slowly down my spine.

Tiara lifted her chin, though her entire body looked fragile enough to collapse. “This,” she whispered, “is to get rid of the seed you put inside me.”

The world stopped.

Even the wind seemed to die between the trees.

My wolf froze completely.

Dread flooded my veins like ice.

Tiara's eyes glistened as she delivered the final blow. "I'm pregnant with your pup, Damon. And I'm planning to get rid of it."

1.3K

3/3

69

12:18 Fri, May 8 D

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