

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

Chapter 371

3rd Person's POV

"P-pregnant?" The word left Damon like something torn from him.

His mind refused to piece together the meaning behind her confession. The forest around them seemed to fall unnaturally still, even the wind holding its breath beneath the silver birch canopy.

Then the rest of her words settled in.

'I'm planning to get rid of it.'

Something vicious shifted inside him-a dark snarl echoing through the bond of his soul.

"No." His voice dropped low, "You are not doing that."

Tiara's eyes flashed. "You don't get to decide that."

"You cannot kill a life, Tiara."

A bitter laugh escaped her, sharp enough to cut.

"It barely even has a life yet! Meanwhile, my entire life is already falling apart."

The scent of distress flooded the air around her, tangled with fear and anger.

"If this baby is born without status," she continued, her voice cracking despite her effort to remain cold, "then all it'll inherit is disappointment. There's no future where you and I stand through a mating ceremony, Damon. You know that."

A growl rolled from Damon's chest.

The sound vibrated through the trees so hard that nearby birds scattered into the darkening sky.

His wolf hated the despair in her voice. Hated the thought of her carrying his pup while speaking about it as though it were something disposable. "There are other ways to solve this without killing anyone."

Before she could react, Damon seized her wrist and pulled her after him.

“Damon!”

Tiara struggled instantly, trying to wrench free, but his grip was immovable.

“Let go of me!”

“No.” He dragged her through the treatment center doors with his wolf prowling violently beneath his skin.

Several healers turned at once, startled by the scent of aggression flooding the halls.

Damon stopped in front of the nearest healer.

“Check her,” he ordered. “She’s pregnant.”

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The healer blinked in confusion. “Beta Damon...?”

“Damon, stop!” Tiara snapped, panic finally bleeding into her voice. “Listen to me first—”

“Are you deaf?” Damon roared. “She is carrying a pup.” he snarled, eyes flashing molten gold. “My pup. Check her!”

The healer went pale.

Then-

Crash.

The sharp sound of shattered glass split through the stunned silence.

Everyone turned.

Lady Juniper stood frozen near the corridor entrance, one trembling hand clamped over her mouth while pieces of a fallen glass glittered across the marble floor beneath her.

“Your... your pup?” she breathed. Her eyes widened impossibly as they flew toward Tiara’s stomach. “This young lady is carrying your child, Damon?”

“Mother-”

“Oh, Selene above...” Juniper’s voice broke apart into disbelieving laughter and tears all at once. “You already found your mate? And she carries Moonclaw Beta blood?” Her eyes glistened as she looked between them. “After all these years... It’s a miracle! Selene answered my prayers!”

Damon grimaced faintly. “Mother, it’s not-”

“No explanations.” Juniper waved him off instantly, visibly emotional. “None of them matters right now.”

Tiara stood rigid beside him, her blood running cold.

‘Damn it.’ She cursed inwardly.

This had become infinitely worse.

By the time evening settled over Lunaris, Lylah and Ezra arrived at the treatment center, a healer’s assistant hurried toward them almost immediately.

“Luna Lylah,” the young woman said breathlessly, “we found the father of Lady Tiara’s baby.”

Lylah’s eyes widened.

Without hesitation, she followed the assistant down the corridor, Ezra close behind her.

But the moment they stepped inside the private ward, Ezra stopped short.

His brows knit together faintly.

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‘Why are Uncle Oberon and Aunt Juniper here?’

Confusion flickered briefly across his normally composed features, though his expression smoothed over almost instantly.

“Damon?” Lylah’s voice came out in stunned disbelief as her gaze landed on him standing beside Tiara’s bed. “It was you? The father of Tiara’s baby?”

Silence stretched taut across the room.

Then Juniper turned toward her, eyes still damp with emotion. “Yes, Luna Lylah. This young lady told us she’s your dearest friend.” Her hand pressed lightly against her chest as though she still couldn’t calm her heart. “Selene herself must have blessed this child. Damon’s pup... the future heir of Moonclaw’s Beta bloodline...”

Beside her, Oberon remained quieter, but even his usually stern expression had softened beneath unmistakable relief.

The scent of pride and joy saturated the room.

Only Tiara looked like she was drowning in it.

Sitting stiffly against the bed, her face turned pale beneath the warm lights of the ward, she slowly lifted her

eyes.

“No,” she said quietly.

Every wolf in the room stilled.

Tiara’s fingers curled tightly against the blanket over her lap before she forced the words out. “I won’t be giving birth to it.”

2/2

Ruby Walker

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Chapter 372

3rd Person’s POV

Tiara’s refusal struck the room like a crack through ice.

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Juniper looked the most shaken of all, her silver-blue eyes widening with visible distress. The older she-wolf took an instinctive step forward, maternal worry pouring from her scent so strongly that even the air seemed heavy with it.

“But why, Lady Tiara?” she asked softly. “It’s your pup.”

Her voice trembled.

“The child has a father. A family. A bloodline that has waited so long for this miracle.” Emotion thickened her throat as she pressed a hand against her chest. “You and your baby would be cherished in Moonclaw. You would live in our manor with every comfort provided for you. Maids,

protection, anything your heart desires.” Her gaze dropped briefly toward Tiara’s stomach, reverent. “You would never have to struggle again. And your pup’s future would be secure.”

Tiara swallowed hard.

Moonclaw Manor.

The thought alone made her wolf recoil uneasily beneath her skin.

She had spent her entire life running wild through Blackfang territory. The idea of living inside the Beta family’s ancestral estate, surrounded by servants, watched by elders with expectations carved into their blood...

It felt suffocating.

Like walking willingly into a gilded cage.

“That sounds less like a home,” she muttered quietly, “and more like a prison.”

A dangerous stillness brushed the back of her neck.

Damon stepped closer behind her, close enough for only her heightened senses to catch the heat of him.

“You don’t get to insult my mother’s offer,” his voice rough and low enough for only her to hear. “And if you hate the idea of Moonclaw that much...” His eyes narrowed slightly. “Then tell me the truth, Tiara. Is the pup even mine?”

Her wolf snapped instantly.

Fury flashed through Tiara’s veins, hot and violent, and her hand lifted before she could stop herself-fully prepared to slap him across the face.

But Juniper spoke again before Impact could land.

“Please,” she whispered.

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May

The single word shattered the tension.

Tiara froze.

“I’m begging you, Lady Tiara. Please keep the baby.” Juniper’s composure finally broke apart completely. desperation bleeding openly into her expression now. “You don’t understand what this means to our family. This child... may be the only heir our son will ever have.”

Silence fell heavily across the room.

Tiara blinked in shock. “What?”

Even Lylah stiffened faintly beside Ezra.

Juniper lowered her gaze, grief shadowing her elegant features, “After what happened to Damon...he may never allow another woman close to him again.”

Tiara’s gaze instinctively found Lylah’s across the room.

Lylah held it for one brief second, a subtle understanding passing silently between them.

‘I’ll explain later.

Tiara looked back toward Juniper and Oberon.

For wolves of such status, they suddenly looked painfully vulnerable. Not nobles of Moonclaw-but simply parents terrified their bloodline would end with their son.

Pressure tightened around Tiara’s chest.

“... Alright,” she exhaled quietly at last.

Relief flickered instantly through the room.

“I’ll keep the baby.”

Juniper nearly broke into tears again.

“But,” Tiara added firmly, “I’m not moving to Moonclaw Manor.”

The older couple visibly relaxed anyway, as though that condition mattered far less than the life she had agreed to protect.

Night settled quietly over the private treatment grounds.

Silver moonlight filtered through the birch trees beyond the garden paths, washing the world in pale blue

shadows.

Tiara sat beside Lylah on a stone bench surrounded by jasmine vines, her arms folded tightly across herself against the cool wind.

“Tell me everything,” she said finally. “About Damon.”

Lylah hesitated before answering.

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And then she told her everything.

About Beatrix. Her scheme. The forced heat. The loss of control Damon had endured while another wolf tried to claim him through madness instead of fate.

Tiara stared ahead silently as the pieces settled together in her mind.

“She really did all of that?” she murmured. “Just because she believed he was her mate?”

“Damon is heir of the Beta bloodline of Moonclaw,” Lylah admitted. “And Ezra told me he’s never been seen with a partner in public. That makes she-wolves willing to do almost anything just to be with him.”

The wind stirred through the trees.

“Lady Juniper said she would accept Damon’s woman wholeheartedly,” Tiara murmured. “Was she serious?”

“Yes,” Lylah admitted. “She’s wanted Damon to take a mate for years. Whoever became his mate would be treasured by the entire family.”

Then her expression softened with concern.

“But forget them for a moment, Tiara. What about you?” she asked gently. “What do you truly feel about the baby?”

Tiara fell silent.

Her hand drifted unconsciously toward her stomach.

At first, she had wanted to escape.

A way to erase the disaster before it consumed her life.

But now...

Now the situation looked different.

Complicated.

Dangerous.

Useful.

“You said Damon’s family would give everything to the woman carrying his child,” Tiara said slowly.

Lylah frowned faintly but nodded.

Tiara exhaled softly, her eyes distant beneath the moonlight.

“Right now, my life is collapsing around me, Lylah.” Bitterness threaded through her voice. “And they need an heir desperately enough to offer me the world for one. Meanwhile... I can give them exactly what they’ve been praying for. No matter how I feel about this baby, I won’t erase it.”

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

Ruby Walker

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3rd Person’s POV

The following morning, Tiara Ashcroft was finally discharged from the treatment center.

Before she left, Juniper and Oberon requested breakfast together.

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The atmosphere inside the private dining chamber was strangely warm despite the tension beneath it. Tiara endured it with surprising patience. Then the true purpose of the meeting surfaced. Since

Tiara had refused to move into Moonclaw Manor, the Beta family proposed another arrangement instead.

A monthly allowance.

Not a modest amount, either. The number Oberon calmly placed before her was enough to erase the Ashcroft family's crushing debts in the blink of an eye.

Even Tiara, who prided herself on masking her emotions, went momentarily still.

It was terrifying, in a way.

By the time breakfast ended, the atmosphere around her had shifted entirely. The desperation of yesterday

was gone.

In only a single night, Tiara had managed to regain control of the board beneath her feet.

And she intended to keep it that way."

Outside the treatment center, sleek black vehicles waited near the entrance stairs while the cold morning breeze stirred through the silver birch trees surrounding the grounds.

Tiara adjusted the collar of her coat before turning toward Lylah.

"Lylah, I rented a very nice penthouse here in Lunar. It's gorgeous." A small grin tugged at her lips. "Come stay with me tonight."

Before Lylah could answer, a deep voice cut smoothly through the air.

"Sorry," Ezra said from behind her, "my Luna doesn't sleep far away from me."

Tiara blinked once.

A flicker of irritation crossed her face-quick and fleeting-but she surrendered immediately beneath the pressure of Ezra's presence.

"Alright, Alpha Ezra, I'll let it go this time." Then her lips curved faintly. "I should leave now anyway. I need to prepare my new residence." Her gaze shifted briefly toward Lylah. "Whenever you want to visit, you're welcome."

And with that, she slipped into the waiting car and disappeared beyond the gates.

Lylah watched the vehicle vanish down the winding road.

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“It still doesn’t feel real,” she admitted softly once she and Ezra were finally alone. “Damon and Tiara...” She shook her head faintly. “Did you ever imagine something like this happening?”

“No,” Ezra answered honestly. “But maybe it’s good for both of them.”

His voice carried no mockery. No disbelief. Only quiet acceptance.

“Damon’s parents had nearly given up hope.” A faint smile touched his mouth. “And now suddenly, your best friend appears carrying their future heir.”

Lylah laughed quietly beneath her breath.

“You’re right, Ezra,” she murmured. Then concern softened her expression. “Still, it’ll be months before the pup is born. Do you really think those two can survive being around each other that long?”

Ezra shrugged lightly.

“They’re adults.”

Though amusement flickered briefly in his eyes.

“Whether they fight or mate is their problem, my love.” His gaze darkened slowly as it settled fully on her. “I have more important things occupying my mind.”

Lylah blinked up at him innocently. “And what exactly is that?”

The next second, Ezra’s arm wrapped firmly around her waist.

A startled breath escaped her as he pulled her flush against his chest, his body heat instantly surrounding her like wildfire.

“Ezra-”

“This,” he murmured against the curve of her neck.

His lips brushed slowly across her skin, deliberate and possessive, while his wolf stirred beneath the surface with unmistakable satisfaction.

“My beautiful Luna.”

Another kiss.

“The center of my world.”

Lylah let out a soft laugh despite herself, though heat rushed beneath her skin at the intimacy of it.

“The healers can see us,” she whispered weakly.

“I don’t care.”

And she knew he truly didn’t.

A few steps away, someone passed through the corridor garden.

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Lylah’s smile faded instantly.

Her body stiffened.

Violet eyes met hers once more.

The healer’s assistant.

She stood half-hidden beneath the archway covered in climbing jasmine vines, frozen in place as she watched Ezra holding Lylah so intimately. The same haunting familiarity that made Lylah’s wolf stir uneasily beneath her skin.

But it wasn’t only shock that unsettled her this time.

It was the emotion burning inside the young woman’s gaze.

Pain.

Like someone witnessing the life they could never have.

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Chapter 374

Cora's POV

Days drifted by after the night of my engagement, yet the unrest festering beneath my skin only deepened with time, clinging to me like a wound that refused to close. But with the Lunar business gathering only two days away, I decided to focus on something simpler tonight-finding the perfect gown.

Alone.

I had asked Rowan to come with me earlier, but he refused without hesitation. For a male who had only recently marked his lady publicly through our engagement, Rowan had become distant in a way my wolf deeply disliked.

And people noticed.

They always noticed.

The thought made irritation crawl beneath my skin.

I pushed it aside as I stepped deeper into the boutique, surrounded by shimmering fabrics and soft golden light. Expensive scents filled the air-silk, perfume, polished wood. Then I saw it.

A satin violet gown displayed beneath the chandelier lights, elegant and breathtaking. The fabric caught the light like liquid moonlight, rich enough for royalty.

Perfect.

"I want this one," I said immediately, pointing toward it.

The clerk's smile faltered. "My apologies, Lady Cora, but that gown has already been reserved."

I frowned. "Reserved?"

"Yes, my lady. It was personally selected for someone's mate."

Mate.

Something about that word snagged unpleasantly inside my chest.

What kind of male personally chose gowns for his mate?

And why did the idea bother me so much?

“He hasn’t paid for it yet, has he?” I asked smoothly. “Surely this boutique understands priority clientele.”

The woman visibly tensed beneath my gaze.

“I-I’m sorry, Lady Cora, but I can’t release it. If you wish, you may speak with the gentleman directly.”

I nearly scoffed.

Ridiculous.

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Still, I followed the direction she pointed toward, heels clicking sharply against polished marble as I approached one of the private waiting lounges near the back of the boutique.

The moment I stepped inside, my wolf stiffened violently.

A man stood near the window with his back facing me, speaking quietly on the phone. Tall. Broad shoulders beneath perfectly tailored black clothing. Even from behind, there was something unnervingly commanding about him.

Then his aura hit me.

My breath caught.

Alpha.

Power rolled off him so heavily that my wolf immediately lowered its head beneath the pressure. The air itself felt sharper around him, charged with something ancient and predatory.

I had felt powerful Alphas before.

But this was different.

Terrifyingly different.

Recognition struck a second later.

“You...” The words escaped before I could stop them. “You’re Lylah’s mate.”

He turned toward me.

And suddenly, everything inside me went still.

Moon Goddess.

This male looked less like an ordinary wolf and more like a god draped in mortal flesh-cold perfection carved into bone and power-the kind of Alpha who could bring an entire pack to its knees without uttering a single word.

And Lylah belonged to him?

The realization settled bitterly inside me.

His gaze landed on me without warmth.

He recognized me too.

“I saw you before,” I said quickly, my voice softening instinctively beneath the oppressive force of his presence. “Outside the restaurant during the rain and during the surprise Lylah prepared for you on the Night of Spring.”

At the mention of her name, something shifted subtly in his expression.

Possessiveness.

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“Lylah and I knew each other growing up,” I continued carefully. “The clerk informed me you reserved that gown for her.” I forced a polite smile. “I came to ask whether you’d allow me to purchase it instead. I need it for an important event.”

Silence stretched between us.

Then he lifted one hand toward the clerk waiting nearby.

“Pack everything I selected for my Luna,” he said coldly. “I’ll take all of it.”

For a moment, I genuinely thought I misheard him. “What?”

The clerk immediately hurried to obey.

Heat rushed into my face.

Humiliation.

My wolf snarled restlessly beneath my skin.

“You’re doing this intentionally?” I demanded. “To embarrass me?”

He said nothing.

The calmness in his expression somehow made it worse.

“I approached you respectfully.” I continued sharply. “We have no personal issue with one another. The least you could do is show me respect!”

Then he moved.

Just one step.

But the moment he did, the atmosphere in the room changed completely.

His dominance crashed over me so violently that my wolf nearly whimpered.

“No issue?” His eyes locked onto mine with terrifying intensity, as though he could see straight through flesh and bone and into the darkest parts of my soul “I remember every face that ever hurt my mate. And yours, is one of the clearest.”

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

Chapter 375

3rd Person’s POV

Of course Ezra remembered her.

Cora's face had been burned into his memory long before this lifetime. Before Moonclaw. Before fate finally returned Lylah to him.

In another life, she had worn a different name.

Carmen.

And in that life, Ezra had ripped the breath from her body with his own hands after watching her destroy the woman he loved.

The beast beneath his skin stirred violently now, dark instinct prowling beneath bone and flesh as he stared at her standing in front of him so boldly.

She truly had no idea how close she stood to death.

"Alpha..." Cora said softly, completely unaware of the danger thickening the air around him. To Ezra's disgust, pity flickered across her face. "I understand now why you look at me with such hatred even though we've never met before." Her voice gentled carefully. "Lylah must have lied to you about me."

Ezra nearly laughed.

Never met before?

His wolf remembered her screams.

"Let me tell you the truth," Cora continued quickly. "Lylah and I were raised as sisters. Even though she was adopted, my parents the Alpha and Luna of Ironcrest, treated her like their own blood. They loved her equally. We all did."

Ezra said nothing.

He let her continue.

"Everything changed after her fifteenth Naming Ceremony," Cora whispered, "Lylah became obsessed with the Alpha of Blackfang Pack. Father warned her she was too young to pursue Alpha Rowan, but she refused to listen." Her expression twisted with false sorrow. "She cursed my parents and abandoned Ironcrest to chase after him shamelessly."

The temperature in the room dropped.

"Lylah isn't as innocent as you think she is—"

A sharp scream split through the boutique.

Cora's body jerked violently backward.

Ezra blinked once.

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Lylah stood behind her, eyes blazing with fury while one hand twisted brutally into Cora's hair.

"What," Lylah hissed into her ear, voice low and lethal, "did you just say, Cora? I chased that Blackfang trash when I was fifteen?"

"L-Lylah!" Cora cried out, clawing at her wrist helplessly. "Let go of me! How dare you touch me?!"

Lylah yanked harder. "You think you can stand in front of my mate and rewrite my life?" Her lips curled with disgust. "Even lies have limits."

Then Lylah shoved her away.

Cora stumbled backward, breathless and shaken.

"And don't you ever," Lylah said coldly, "come near my mate again."

Ezra moved instantly.

He stood beside Lylah, close enough that his body heat wrapped around her protectively while his wolf prowled beneath the surface, furious and territorial.

Lylah sensed it immediately.

Before his temper could fully snap loose, she reached for his hand gently. "I'm alright, Ezra."

At the sound of his name, Cora froze

Her face drained of color. "E-Ezra? You're... Alpha Ezra?"

The legendary Alpha of Moonclaw. The wolf whose name spread across Verdanth like myth and warning

alike.

And he was Lylah's mate?

The realization shattered something inside her expression.

Ezra's gaze remained glacial.

"Zyrelle."

The command cracked through the room like thunder.

A shadow detached itself from the corridor instantly as Zyrelle appeared alongside one of Moonclaw's guards.

Ezra never looked away from Cora. "Remove her."

Zyrelle seized Cora immediately while the guard restrained her other arm. Cora tried to protest. humiliation and panic flooding her scent, but neither wolf showed mercy. Within seconds, she disappeared beyond the boutique entrance.

Silence settled again.

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Lylah exhaled slowly, though anger still shimmered beneath her skin.

Ezra turned toward her at once, every trace of cold brutality softening the instant his eyes met hers.

"My love," he murmured, lifting her hand to his lips, "I don't believe a single word she said."

Warmth flickered through Lylah's expression.

"She wasn't entirely lying we're sisters." She admitted. "But she lied about Rowan." A bitter edge entered her voice. "I never chased him, Ezra. I ended up in Blackfang because Eldric cast me out of Ironcrest. Out of his family. That night on my fifteenth Naming day when his real daughter appeared."

Ezra brushed his lips against her knuckles again. "I know."

Lylah looked up at him softly.

"Yes, Rowan was once part of my past," she whispered. "But that life feels dead to me now. Whatever I once felt, whatever memories remain, they no longer belong to the woman I've become. The only future I recognize now is the one standing in front of me."

Her fingers intertwined with his.

"My heart belongs to you, Ezra." Her voice steadied with quiet certainty. "Alone."

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11:43 Tue, May 12 M

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Chapter 376

3rd Person's POV

The moment Zyrelle dragged Cora beyond the boutique doors, she still intended to handle things quietly.

At first.

“Walk,” Zyrelle ordered coldly, her grip locked around Cora's arm like iron.

But Cora fought like a feral thing.

She twisted violently beneath Zyrelle's hold, nails lashing through the air as her wolf snapped recklessly beneath her skin. She clawed at Ezra's guard hard enough to leave streaks of blood across his jaw before turning on Zyrelle herself with a furious shriek.

“You filthy mutts!” Cora spat. “How dare you touch me?!”

Zyrelle's patience finally shattered.

In one brutal motion, she seized Cora by the throat and slammed her against the nearest stone pillar outside the boutique entrance.

“Listen carefully,” Zyrelle said softly.

That softness was worse than shouting.

Silver flickered briefly through her eyes as her wolf surfaced beneath the restraint of human skin. “You should be grateful our Luna stopped my cousin from tearing you apart inside that store.”

Cora froze.

Fear flashed across her face too late.

Then the slap came.

The crack echoed across the marble walkway loud enough to silence the entire street.

Cora staggered sideways, nearly collapsing before another strike snapped her head back again. Blood bloomed across her split lip instantly.

“You attacked Moonclaw’s Luna with your mouth,” Zyrelle hissed. “Consider this mercy.”

The final shove sent Cora sprawling hard against the pavement beneath the blazing afternoon sun.

Like a discarded stray.

Without another glance, Zyrelle turned away with the guards following silently behind her. Leaving Cora alone on the ground.

“How dare you... Lylah...” she whispered through clenched teeth.

Her trembling fingers brushed the blood coating her mouth before reaching shakily for her phone.

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Not Rowan.

Not Thane.

There was only one person Cora knew would still come running the moment she called.

“J-Jude...” Her voice cracked perfectly with helplessness. “Can we meet? I really need your help.”

The city park of Lunariss shimmered beneath the late afternoon light, silver fountains glistening beneath towering moonwillow trees while distant wolves moved along the pathways dressed in wealth and elegance.

Jude arrived quickly. Still dressed in his dark work suit, broad shoulders tense with concern the moment his eyes landed on her.

“Cora?”

Shock crossed his face instantly. He moved toward her at once.

“What happened to you?” His hands gripped her shoulders carefully as his wolf stirred with protective agitation. “Who did this to your face?”

Cora lowered her gaze at the perfect angle, allowing him to fully see the bruising darkening her cheek and the blood still staining her lips.

“I...” Her voice trembled softly. “I went to pick up a gown today. Something appropriate for the Lunaris business gathering.” Tears welled carefully in her eyes. “I only wanted to look worthy standing beside Rowan.”

Jude’s jaw tightened.

“The boutique employees attacked me, Jude,” she whispered brokenly. “They told me I didn’t belong there.”

“What?” Rage flashed through him immediately. “That makes no sense.”

Jude knew the elite boutiques of Lunaris better than most. His businesses supplied fabrics and luxury imports to half the city’s high-end establishments. Employees in places like that survived by recognizing power. And everyone knew who Cora was.

“I-I didn’t understand either,” Cora continued softly, lowering her lashes while tears slid down her cheeks. “I tried to remain calm. I told them I only needed the gown because I wanted to support Rowan properly during the venture.” Her voice broke beautifully. “I was only trying to be a good mate...”

Jude’s expression darkened instantly.

Sympathy rolled off him so strongly his wolf nearly surfaced with it.

Without hesitation, he pulled her into his arms.

The embrace was warm. Protective. Familiar.

Like an older brother shielding someone precious from the world.

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Chapter 376

Finished

“Don’t go near that place again,” he muttered against her hair, fury still simmering beneath his voice.

Cora closed her eyes briefly against his chest, hiding the satisfaction flickering beneath them.

“But the event...I still need something suitable besides Rowan...”

“You won’t deal with this alone.” Jude pulled back enough to look at her seriously. “I’ll handle it personally. I know better places. Better designers too.”

His protective instincts had fully awakened now.

Just as she intended.

Relief softened her expression instantly as she curled trembling fingers around his sleeve.

“T-Thank you, Jude...” she whispered. “I really don’t know what I would’ve done without you.”

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Chapter 377

3rd Person’s POV

Jude had spent years building his name within Lunaris. Designers and merchants most answered his calls. without hesitation, which was why, at first, he’d been certain Cora’s problem would disappear within the hour.

Yet by late afternoon, not a single boutique had accepted his offer.

The silence itself felt wrong.

His wolf paced uneasily beneath his skin as he stood inside his office overlooking the silver-lit skyline of Lunaris, fingers drumming once against the mahogany desk.

Then his assistant finally entered.

“Sir,” the man said carefully, tension obvious in his scent, “none of the boutiques agreed to serve Lady Coraline’s request.”

Jude frowned immediately.

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“Why?” he asked flatly. “These people practically compete for high-ranking clients. Since when does anyone in Lunaris refuse Cora?”

His assistant hesitated before speaking again.

“Their statements were consistent.” He slid a tablet across the desk. “According to them, Lady Coraline has a history of mistreating staff whenever her expectations aren’t met. They claimed she frequently used Alpha Rowan’s name and status to pressure stores into special treatment.”

Jude stared at him.

For a second, the words barely registered.

Cora?

The same soft-spoken girl who smiled so sweetly at him?

“No.” Jude’s jaw tightened. “That doesn’t sound like her.”

“Sir...” His assistant lowered his gaze slightly. “There’s more.”

He tapped the screen.

A video recording began to play.

The boutique.

The confrontation.

Jude watched in silence as Cora struggled against Moonclaw’s wolves with claws bared and fury twisting her face into something almost unrecognizable.

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He saw her strike first. Heard the venom in her voice. Watched Zyrelle retaliate with terrifying restraint only after Cora attacked.

And suddenly.

The version of events Cora had fed him shattered apart like thin glass beneath a hammer.

“That...” Jude blinked slowly. “That was really her? Cora?” Disbelief rippled through him.

No.

Not disbelief.

Betrayal.

His wolf recoiled sharply inside him, disturbed by the deception.

By the time night fell over Lunaris, the city’s moonsilver lights glowing across rain-dark streets, Jude met Cora again inside one of his private lounges.

She arrived smiling.

Almost relieved.

As though she already knew he would fix everything for her.

But the moment her eyes landed on him, her smile faltered slightly. Jude sat motionless on the leather sofa, broad shoulders rigid beneath his dark shirt.

“Jude?” Cora approached carefully. “How did it go? Did you find me another boutique?”

“Yes,” he answered evenly. “Mine.”

Relief flashed across her face instantly.

“You can choose whatever you want there.”

Her shoulders loosened.

But Jude’s expression never softened. “But I want to ask something,” he said quietly, “why didn’t you tell me the truth about what happened this morning?”

The air changed.

He watched her freeze almost imperceptibly.

“I...” Cora faltered. “What do you mean?”

“You weren’t attacked by innocent clerks, Cora.” His gaze held hers steadily now. “You fought first.”

Silence.

For the first time since he’d known her, Jude could hear panic beneath her heartbeat.

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Chapter 37

Cora quickly lowered her lashes, tears gathering beautifully in her eyes. “That was because of Lylah,” she whispered. “She appeared with her mate and humiliated me on purpose.” Her voice trembled softly. “Everything would’ve gone smoothly if she hadn’t been there.”

Jude didn’t answer immediately.

His wolf listened carefully now.

Not to her words.

To the spaces between them.

“If everything had gone smoothly,” he asked at last, “then why did nearly every luxury boutique in Lunaris blacklist you?”

The question landed like a blade.

Cora’s composure cracked for half a second before she forced it back together.

“They didn’t blacklist me,” she said quickly. “Jude, you can’t believe rumors over one incident.” She stepped closer, desperation slipping beneath her sweetness now. “What happened this morning was because of Lylah and her mate. Otherwise, I’m welcomed everywhere.”

Again, silence.

But this time, it felt colder.

Jude studied her quietly, and for the first time, something inside him shifted.

The illusion he’d carried of her-the fragile girl, Jax Stillward’s gentle daughter who needed protecting- began to dissolve beneath the moonlight.

In its place, he saw traces of someone else.

Someone familiar.

Eldric.

That same quiet ability to bend others into carrying burdens for them. To smile while pulling strings from the shadows. Sly. Manipulative.

Dangerous in ways claws never could be.

“Cora,” Jude asked softly, “when I told you I’d help you, even knowing it meant I was supporting your lie, what did you feel?”

She blinked at the question.

Then smiled faintly. “Happy. Of course, I was happy.”

Jude held her gaze.

Indeed, that answer was all he needed.

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

Ruby Walker

Ruby Walker is a rising voice in the world of romance and spicy fiction. With a gift for weaving deep emotions, sizzling chemistry, and unexpected twists, her stories are a blend of passion and drama that captivate readers from start to finish. Ruby’s writing style is bold and irresistible—perfect for those who crave intense, addictive love stories.

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

Chapter 378

3rd Person’s POV

That night, Jude finally gave in to the instincts prowling beneath his skin. His wolf refused to let the matter die quietly. So he summoned Thane and the others.

Ever since Cora arrived in Lunaris, they had protected her because of Jax Stillward. Because they believed she carried the blood of the honorable warrior who had once saved their lives. Out of loyalty to the dead. they had indulged her, defended her, stood at her side without question.

Only now did they realize the truth.

Cora had been using that loyalty like chains wrapped around their throats.

Turning them into obedient dogs that answered at the slightest pull of her hand.

“Adopted or not,” Jude said at last, his voice low with restrained disgust, “there’s nothing of Jax left in Cora.”

His jaw tightened.

“She’s Eldric’s daughter in every way that matters.” A dark edge entered his tone.

A low growl rumbled somewhere in the room.

No one disagreed.

Victor Ross leaned back in his chair, amber eyes cold beneath the dim lighting. “I also realized it the night she got engaged to Rowan Blackfang,” His expression darkened. “Jax was an honorable wolf. That kind of blood leaves traces. Cora has none.”

Silence followed.

“Jax’s real daughter is dead,” Victor muttered heavily, grief roughening his voice. “And now there’s no one left for us to repay that debt to.”

At the far end of the room, Thane Blackridge finally pushed himself away from the wall.

The movement drew every gaze instantly.

His wolf flickered dangerously close to the surface, gold briefly igniting in his eyes before fading again. But his scent had changed.

As though some instinct buried deep within him had suddenly awakened.

“Or,” Thane said quietly, “maybe she never died at all.”

The room stilled.

Even the wolves fell silent beneath their skin.

Logan Silver frowned first. “What are you talking about?”

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Thane’s gaze lifted slowly. “There’s only one person I can think of.” His voice remained calm, but the weight behind it made the air feel colder. “Lylah.”

The name settled over them like thunder before a storm.

Jude straightened immediately.

Victor's eyes narrowed.

Isaac looked genuinely shaken.

Thane continued, "What if Eldric lied from the beginning? What if Lylah wasn't adopted?" His wolf stirred violently now, instincts sharpening with every piece falling into place. "What if she and Cora were switched from birth?"

The silence that followed felt almost supernatural, as if fate itself had stepped into the room.

"My sister Iris is close to Lylah," Isaac said slowly, his brows drawn tight as old conversations resurfaced in his mind. "She once told me Lylah believed she was born in Ironcrest. And grew up thinking Eldric and Daia were her real parents... until they cast her out like she meant nothing."

His voice darkened with quiet anger.

"If Lylah truly had another family somewhere in Ironcrest, she would've known she was adopted." Isaac Grey looked around the room grimly. "But she didn't. Which means she probably never was."

The air grew heavier.

"And there's something else," Isaac continued. "When Lylah found her mate here in Lunaris, no birth family came for the mating ceremony." His gaze sharpened. "Among our kind, that doesn't happen unless there's no family left to come."

Silence fell instantly.

Then Isaac spoke the thought none of them had wanted to voice aloud.

"What if Lylah's real parents were already dead? And what if those parents were Jax and Vala Stillward?"

No one moved. No one breathed.

And slowly, horribly, all their thoughts drifted toward the same two names.

Jax and Vala Stillward.

The pieces fit too perfectly now.

Lylah's eyes. The quiet familiarity in the way she carried herself. The dignity she held onto even after everything she had suffered.

Jude dragged a hand down his face, his wolf pacing violently now as guilt began clawing through his chest. If this were true...

“I’ll investigate deeper,” Isaac said finally, his voice grim. “Pack records. Birth archives. Anything Eldric may have buried.”

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Thane gave a slow nod, though his gaze had already drifted elsewhere. “And I’ll check the surveillance wards at the Rest of Whitepine,” he said quietly.

Victor frowned.

Thane’s eyes darkened. “Something tells me, Lylah’s already been there.”

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

Chapter 379

Lylah’s POV

The confrontation with Cora at the boutique yesterday had already slipped from my mind like something trivial-scattered and forgotten beneath the passing wind. This morning, Ezra and I moved through our usual routine together, peaceful in the quiet intimacy only mates could understand.

The rich scent of cedarwood and dark spice lingered around him as he sat across from me at breakfast, sunlight pouring through the towering windows behind him and glinting faintly against the silver threaded through his dark hair.

Then my phone suddenly lit up against the table.

Tiara.

The moment I opened the message, my eyes widened.

“You have to hear this,” I looked up at him. “Tiara’s going to Moonclaw tomorrow. To Damon’s family estate.”

Ezra’s brow lifted slightly.

I quickly read the rest of the message, disbelief growing with every line

“She said she and Damon’s parents made an agreement.” I blinked slowly. “Tiara agreed to keep the baby and pretend to become Damon’s mate for two years. In exchange, Damon’s family will support her financially, protect her, and help erase suspicion surrounding the pregnancy.”

Even saying it aloud sounded surreal.

“And when the agreement ends,” I continued, “they’ll give her assets here in Lunaris. Businesses. Property. Enough for her to build a future entirely on her own.”

For a second, I could only stare at the screen.

Then a laugh escaped me softly. “She actually agreed to it.”

Across from me, Ezra leaned back in his chair, completely unsurprised.

“That sounds beneficial for both sides,” he said calmly. “Your best friend is smarter than most.”

I nodded slowly.

It really did sound exactly like Tiara. Even cornered, she always found a way to turn the game back in her favor.

As if sensing we were talking about her, my phone suddenly buzzed with an incoming call.

I answered immediately.

“Tiara,” I said, barely waiting for greetings, “does Damon even know about this arrangement between you and his parents?”

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A lazy yawn drifted through the phone.

“Maybe,” she replied carelessly. “Maybe not. But does he actually care?” Her tone turned dry. “It’s his family desperate for an heir. Whether he knows or not, I doubt it matters to him.”

Something about her words made my wolf stir uneasily.

I remembered the look in Damon’s eyes at the treatment center-the violent possessiveness. that had erupted the moment Tiara said she wont giving birth to the pup.

“You’re really going tomorrow?” I asked quietly.

“Unfortunately yes,” Tiara sighed. “A deal is a deal.”

My fingers tightened slightly around the phone.

Images from my own visit to Moonclaw rose instantly in my mind-the suffocating scrutiny of Ezra’s insufferable elders, their sharp eyes and colder words hidden beneath noble smiles. The thought of Tiara walking alone into the same den of wolves made unease tighten painfully in my chest.

“I have classes tomorrow,” I said carefully, “but maybe I can leave early and accompany you there. If you don’t want to go alone-”

“Lylah.” Tiara cut me off immediately, sounding half amused. “That’s completely unnecessary.”

I hesitated.

I wasn’t worried about Tiara being weak. I was worried about what those elders might say to her. A she-wolf pregnant outside a mating ceremony. Carrying the heir of one of the most powerful bloodlines in Verdanth.

Some would see her as a blessing.

Others would see her as a stain.

As if reading my thoughts perfectly, Tiara snorted softly through the phone.

“Are you worried because... the elders are going to insult me for carrying Damon’s pup outside a mating ceremony?” Her voice sharpened with dangerous confidence. “Without me, their precious Beta bloodline could disappear entirely. They’d better thank me I slept with their son that night.”

A grin tugged at my lips despite myself.

There it was.

That sharp-edged pride. That fearless confidence made Tiara impossible to crush.

Her voice lowered slightly, silk wrapped around steel. “Lylah darling, if any of those old wolves try to bare their teeth at me, I’ll remind them exactly who holds their future in her hands.” A soft laugh followed. “So no, I’m not worried. They are.”

Even through the phone, I could almost feel her wolf lifting its head proudly beneath this twist of fate.

And somehow... instead of worrying more, I found myself smiling. “You’re damn right.”

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

Chapter 380

3rd Person’s POV

Only a few days remained before Lunaris’ annual business venture, yet Eldric still had not secured an accesss. The failure had poisoned the atmosphere inside his temporary residence in Lunaris.

Just yesterday, his rage had torn through the parlor like a storm unleashed. Splintered wood still littered the corners of the room, the scent of shattered cedar and lingering rage thick in the air. Servants moved quietly now, careful not to provoke the Alpha whose temper had been balancing on the edge of violence for days.

Which was why Daia found herself staring at her mate in disbelief this morning.

Eldric stood near the tall arched windows, hands clasped behind his back, smiling far too calmly for a man who had nearly reduced the manor to rubble the night before.

“We’re attending the venture,” he announced smoothly. “All three of us. Me, you, and Orion.”

Daia’s brows immediately pulled together.

“That’s so sudden. You didn’t do anything reckless to secure those invitations, did you?” she asked carefully. “Nothing that could endanger Ironcrest or our family?”

“Reckless?” Eldric scoffed lightly before stepping closer. “Daia, your imagination is worse than your nerves.” A smug glint flashed through his eyes. “An old acquaintance helped me Gamma Fenrir of Blackfang.”

At that, both Daia and Orion frowned.

“Fenrir?” Daia repeated slowly. “I don’t remember meeting anyone by that name.”

“You did. A long time ago.” Eldric said dismissively. “Do you remember when Cora gave that speech at Blackfang College? And Lylah humiliated her in front of everyone by accusing her of stealing it? Afterward,” Eldric continued, “I had to spend the entire evening entertaining Blackfang officials just to repair the damage done to Ironcrest’s reputation.”

Recognition finally crossed Daia’s face.

“Fenrir was there that night,” Eldric said with a sharp clap of his hands, satisfaction flickering through his pale blue eyes.

Daia still looked unconvinced. “And now he suddenly decides to help you?”

“Because things have changed.” Eldric’s smile sharpened. “Fenrir is currently in Lunar is too. He’s seen exactly how far Cora has climbed.”

Pride and greed bled together in his scent.

“Engaged to Rowan Blackfang. Surrounded by influential figures. Favored by the elites of Lamaris and many Packs.” His eyes gleamed dangerously. “And then I mentioned her... special connection to Commander Ivar.”

Eldric gave a low chuckle.

“Fenrir has apparently admired Ivar for years. The fool nearly lost his composure when he learned Cora was

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close to him.”

Daia’s expression slowly paled.

A warning instinct rippled through her wolf. “What exactly did you tell him?”

Eldric waved a hand lazily. “Nothing complicated. I simply told him to visit Commander Ivar and introduce himself as Cora’s trusted family friend.” His grin widened. “I said Ivar adores our girl enough to welcome anyone connected to her. Fenrir gets his meeting...” His eyes flashed with satisfaction. “And in return, he secured our invitations to the venture.”

Silence fell.

Heavy.

Uncomfortable.

Then Orion finally spoke.

“You used Cora’s name without telling her again, father,” he said quietly. “She’ll be furious if she finds out.”

Daia stepped forward at once, anxiety tightening her voice.

“This was reckless, Eldric.” Her fingers curled against her skirts. “You don’t even know where things stand between Cora and Commander Ivar anymore. If something goes wrong-

“And whose fault would that be?” Eldric snapped.

The force of his Alpha aura slammed through the room hard enough to rattle the glasses on the nearby table.

Daia stiffened instinctively.

“If Cora had stopped shutting me out,” he growled, eyes beginning to glow golden beneath the surface, “I wouldn’t have needed to use her name behind her back! She rises higher and higher only to hoard everything for herself. For Rowan. For Blackfang.” His lip curled faintly. “As though she’s forgotten who her true family is.”

The last word came out almost like a snarl.

Then, without another glance toward either of them, Eldric stormed from the parlor.

The heavy doors slammed behind him with enough force to shake the walls.

Daia exhaled slowly, one trembling hand pressing against her chest.

“Your father and your sister...” she murmured, worry shadowing her expression. “Their relationship has grown colder with every passing day.” Her gaze drifted toward the doors Eldric had disappeared through. “I only hope his decision this time doesn’t bring more trouble upon Cora or us.”

Orion remained silent for a moment.

“I hope so too,” he said at last, though uncertainty weighed heavily behind the words.

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