

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

Chapter 71

3rd Person's POV

Lylah struck Vargan's hands sharply, sending the bouquet tumbling to the floor.

The old man's eyes widened in shock.

Finished

Before he could even form a question, Lylah blurted, her voice tight with panic, "Those are poisonous! Where did you get them?" Fear constricted her chest as she stared at him. "Did no one warn you?"

Her gaze swept over the watching students, disappointment blooming bitterly in her chest. These were trained future healers—educated wolves from the finest academy in Verdanth.

How could none of them show even the smallest shred of awareness? The faintest sense of concern?

How could they stand there smiling, watching an old man carry death in his hands?

"Lady Cora told me to pick them," Vargan said, guilt lining his voice. "She said you loved the lilies, and I, I wanted to bring you something nice. I didn't know they were dangerous. I'm truly sorry."

Lylah's head snapped toward the owner of the sharp voice that had echoed through the hall.

"If you still hold a grudge against me, then face me," Lylah hissed at Cora, her wolf stirring beneath her skin. "Don't use my friend as your weapon. How cruel do you have to be to trick him into carrying Moonshade?"

Cora stood there, not a trace of guilt in her eyes.

"You worried about those stupid flowers, Lylah?" she snapped, clutching the wrist Vargan had brushed against, her face contorted in exaggerated outrage. "That disgusting beggar friend of yours was harassing me! Trying to lay his filthy hands on me! Those flowers are nothing compared to what he did!"

Beggar. Disgusting.

The words struck Lylah like claws to the chest.

She knew Vargan wasn't a beggar. And even if he were, how could Cora spew such venom so casually- without a flicker of shame, without a thought for decency?

Her wolf growled low in her chest, anger and protective instinct coiling tight around Lylah's heart,

"Nothing, you said?" Lylah crouched and gathered the fallen lilies. Rising, she stepped toward Cora and shoved the flowers forward. "Then take them. You're the one who made him pick them. Take responsibility."

"Lylah, are you insane?!" Cora shrieked, recoiling as if struck. But Lylah had already seized her wrist, holding her in place. "You've lost your mind! Those damned things are toxic! You're trying to kill me!"

"But you said they were nothing," Lylah replied coolly, her voice eerily calm. "Nothing compared to being brushed by someone you consider beneath you. So these must be harmless to you."

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Chapter 71

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Finished

Cora's screams drew the medics immediately.

The moment they arrived, Cora collapsed theatrically to the floor, tears streaming as she accused Lylah of trying to poison her, to kill her. Lylah explained what had happened-how Cora had sent Vargan to harvest the Moonshade.

Within minutes, both Cora and Vargan were escorted to the ward for toxin evaluation.

Inside the ward, a Lunar Grace healer finished scanning Vargan's blood.

"The Moonshade had no effect," the healer announced. "No trace of toxin is binding in his system."

Vargan let out a relieved laugh, the sound rough but genuine. "You hear that, Lylah? I'm fine. These old bones and blood have survived worse than a few pretty flowers."

Lylah didn't smile. Her eyes were sharp as they locked on him. "Still, sir... Moonshade is poisonous in every part. Mild exposure can cause vomiting. Severe exposure... it can be fatal. You must never touch it again."

‘I’m so sorry,’ he said quietly, a flicker of guilt crossing his lined features. ‘I never meant to worry you. You can call me Vargan. That’s my name.’

Then, as he realized Lylah had handled the poison herself, his gaze hardened. Deep inside, his ancient wolf stirred, coiling with displeasure.

\*But if you knew how dangerous it was,’ he said, voice tightening like steel, ‘why did you pick it up yourself to confront her? Selene—you must be checked too!’

‘No, there’s no need,’ Lylah replied. ‘I’m fine.’

Vargan’s jaw tightened, a flash of wolfish fury gleaming in his eyes. ‘That woman Cora,’ he growled low, almost under his breath. ‘She’s a wicked thing.’

He turned his gaze to Lylah, guilt softening the edge of his anger.

Lylah’s eyes fell.

Today, Cora had caused a scene and dragged an innocent into her schemes. A chill ran through her wolf; she feared this would not be the last. ‘I’m sorry that because of me, you’ve become her target too.’

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Ruby Walker

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Chapter 72

Lylah’s POV

Finished

“Ah, I am nothing but a poor, insignificant man, Lylah,” Vargan said quietly. “If becoming her target means keeping you safe, then so be it.”

“Don’t say that.” I turned to him, my voice firm. I would not let Cora’s venom take root in his heart. “No wolf is lower than another. Selene did not create ranks to strip us of worth. She created us **as** equals.”

He hesitated. “Even someone like me? With nothing to offer?”

“Yes.” I held his gaze. “Do not ever look down on yourself. Promise me that.”

A faint smile tugged at his lips. “I promise.”

This old man... his clothes were worn, his smile humble, yet his eyes told a different story. They were ancient. Clear. Powerful. As if centuries of secrets and strength lay quietly behind them.

“You should call your mate,” Vargan said gently. “He needs to know what happened today.”

“I don’t think that’s necessary.” I shook my head. “My mate is busy.”

Vargan tilted his head, “Busy enough that he would not help you? What kind of man allows his mate to face trouble alone? He’s such a jerk.”

“No. He isn’t,” I said too quickly. “He’s kind, considerate, gentleman. But his work in tech keeps him occupied. He gets lost in it sometimes. And besides, I don’t want to burden him with something so small.”

Vargan’s jaw dropped slightly. “Considerate, you say?”

I frowned.

He blinked, recovering himself. “Ah—of course. I understand. I have seen many engineers in Lunaris like that. They spend most of their lives buried in their work, creating things far beyond my understanding.”

I smiled faintly, memories surfacing of the first time, I met Bambi—how Alpha Ezra’s brilliance had both fascinated and overwhelmed me.

“And you,” Vargan continued, voice warm, “You are a strong, independent she-wolf. Your mate is fortunate. I will pray to Selene that your bond remains unbroken for all your years.”

“You’re too kind, Vargan,” I said softly. “If anyone is lucky, it’s me.”

Cora was still being treated in the next room. No healer had emerged, and with every passing second, unease coiled tighter in my chest.

“I’m going to check on Cora,” I said quietly.

“And I will not let you **face** that viper alone,” Vargan replied, already pushing himself up from the bed. “If more of her venom waits beyond that door, then it will not meet you without me.”

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Chapter 72

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Finished

Cora’s ward was crowded when we arrived. Students clustered in the doorway, whispering, their scents thick with curiosity and tension. I slipped inside just as her voice carried through the room.

“My face...” Cora whimpered dramatically. “I’ll be hideous! Please, don’t look at me!”

She clutched a mirror, inspecting skin that was perfectly flawless.

Two tall students in white Modern Healing coats stood at her bedside. I recognized one instantly.

Alexander.

The jerk who had insisted on confiscating my laptop for her.

“Cora, your face is fine,” the other male said gently. “Moonshade grown within the Academy grounds has been modified. The toxin is far tamer than those that grow in the wild.”

“But Thane...”

“If Thane says it’s fine, then it’s fine,” Alexander cut in, placing a possessive hand on her shoulder. Then his tone hardened, turning sharp with accusation. “That leech, Lylah, has truly crossed the line this time. She should be punished, or better yet, expelled. Cora kindly offered her the application form, and this is how she repays her?”

My brows lifted.

Application form? What a carefully crafted lie, Cora.’

‘What application form?’ I asked calmly.

Both men turned toward me.

“You!” Alexander snarled, eyes flashing gold as his wolf surged closer to the surface. “How dare you show your face here?! You always made Cora suffer. As long as I’m standing, I will make your life miserable. You will never set foot in our elite Research Project. Never.”

I had no idea what nonsense he was spewing.

But it was almost amusing—him thinking his approval meant anything to me.

“Who do you think you are?” I scoffed softly, letting Selestine’s aura bleed into the room. “Just Cora’s lapdog with delusions of authority. I don’t need your permission to claim any path I choose.”

Alexander’s growl was immediate, low, and feral. His fists clenched as he took a step toward me. “What did you just say?”

I didn’t flinch. I held my ground, waiting for him to advance—to see just how far he dared to go.

But the other male—Thane—lifted a hand, stopping him.

“So you’re Cora’s sister...” Thane studied me closely, his gaze sharp and assessing. For a heartbeat, something strange flickered in his eyes.

Recognition.

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The Betrayed Princess Rising

Ruby Walker

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

Chapter 73

Cora’s POV

Finished

Thane’s stare lingered on Lylah far longer than it should have. My wolf prowled beneath my skin, claws raking against my ribs as dread cinched my chest tight.

Oh, Selene.

Had he sensed it?

Had he realized Lylah was Jax and Vala's true daughter?

But it was impossible. Thane had never met her before. There was no way he could have known—no way he could have scented the truth and connected her to the Stillward warrior's couple.

Unless...

Unless Thane had begun his own investigation long before the night he found me and chose my side. Before he bound his loyalty to me—despite me being only the adopted daughter of Jax and Vala.

To Thane, blood meant nothing compared to a life-debt. Adopted or not, I was still the daughter of the man who had saved him. His wolf would never allow him to abandon that debt.

No. I couldn't let him realize who Lylah truly was!

"Please," I whispered, letting my voice crack just enough to fracture the tension.

Every head turned.

Thane's attention snapped to me instantly. "Cora?"

"Please stop this. All of you." I forced tears to my eyes, "Everything that happened is my fault. I lost the application form before I could meet Lylah. Please... stop yelling at my sister."

I brushed at my cheeks, letting the tears fall freely.

Alexander stepped closer, his hand settled at my back "Alright. It's fine. Just stop crying, okay?"

I nodded obediently.

But when I glanced up, I caught Thane again—still watching Lylah.

This time, his gaze had hardened.

"You heard that?" Thane said to her.

"What?" Lylah lifted her chin, unflinching.

No submission or fear. That alone set my nerves on edge.

“Cora still considers you her sister even after what happened,” Thane said, his tone hard. “So stop dragging

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Chapter 73

Finished

this out, Lylah. You were adopted by Cora’s parents. Because of Cora and her family, you have a decent life. The least you can do to repay them is show some respect.”

“Adopted?” Lylah murmured. The word slipped out softly, more to herself than to him.

She didn’t correct him.

Relief flickered through me.

But then I saw it—the slight curl at the corner of her lips. The look of a wolf already preparing their counterattack.

And I was right.

“Fine,” Lylah said evenly. “If that’s how you choose to see it. Yes, I owe them for raising me. But that debt has been paid. In full. More than full.”

Her gaze cut to mine.

“As for prolonging anything with Cora? I wouldn’t even acknowledge her if she didn’t constantly shove herself into my path and throw blame in my face.”

Alexander snapped.

“How dare you!” His wolf surged, his growl rippling through the room with blooded fury. “You’re nothing but a low-ranking Junior assistant from a pathetic traditional class! How dare you speak about Cora like that!”

Alexander lunged forward—but the old beggar who claimed to be Lylah’s mate’s grandfather, moved first.

Too fast.

His hand shot out and clamped around Alexander’s wrist.

“Ah!” Alexander screamed. The sickening sound of bone grinding against bone filled the room, stealing the breath from everyone present.

Even mine.

Since when did an old beggar have that kind of strength?

“R-release me, sir!” Alexander pleaded.

The old man straightened. His hunched posture vanished, his presence shifting–growing heavier, charged with a superior aura that pressed against my wolf.

“Back off,” he said quietly. “Don’t you dare lay a hand on her.”

“I will!” Alexander gasped.

When the old man released him, Alexander stumbled back, retreating to Thane’s side.

Cold dread coiled in my stomach.

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Chapter 73

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Finished

I was still staring at the old man when Lylah spoke again.

“Since you admitted you were **at** fault, I expect you to take responsibility.”

I turned to face her. “Yes.”

Our gazes locked, my wolf stirring uneasily beneath my skin.

I had never seen Lylah give in to anger, never seen her fracture. And that made her far more dangerous- because I could never predict when she would strike.

“One thousand gold coins,” she continued. “For Vargan’s next medical expenses. The full amount must be ready this afternoon.”

Alexander barked out a laugh. “You’re insane. No one would spend that much on a beggar.”

Lylah didn’t even blink. “No? Then we let the academy handle it. Vargan still remembers exactly what Cora asked him to do. There are surveillance crystals and witnesses. We can leave the judgment to Lunar Grace.”

“No!” The word tore from my throat before I could stop it.

My blood went cold.

Lylah's smirk widened.

"I'll pay," I said, my throat tight. "One thousand gold. Ready this afternoon."

The words tasted of defeat and ash.

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Ruby Walker

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Lylah's POV

Finished

Cora had suggested a deposit, but I dismissed it immediately. For a man outside the protection of packs and institutions, gold meant survival. So by afternoon, the cash was ready—heavy, gleaming coins tucked deep into the pocket of the worn leather bag Vargan now clutched to his chest as if it were a lifeline.

"Use it," I told him softly. "And don't ever feel guilty over Cora."

His fingers tightened around the strap. "I came to repay the coins you gave me that night," Vargan said, awe flickering in his eyes. "Instead, you give me far more than I could ever return."

"You don't owe me anything," I replied, though guilt coiled tight in my chest. "Coming here for me has dragged you into trouble. I'm sorry."

I could only imagine his confusion, walking into this glittering, merciless academy and being greeted not with welcome, but with barely concealed disdain.

"Selene will repay this kindness, Lylah," he said solemnly. "And if she cannot, then I will."

“Thank you.” I smiled, though something in my chest tightened at the vow.

I walked him to the gates myself and watched until his figure disappeared down the road. Only then did I turn back.

I headed to the Traditional Healing building to retrieve my forgotten items—my laptop, my notes, and the small bundle of supplies I’d left behind. When Iris spotted the blood-stained cotton still in my hand, where the healer had drawn my blood to check the Moonshade’s effects, she nearly lost her mind.

“Lylah!” Iris grabbed my wrist, eyes wide, nostrils flaring as if she could scent lingering pain. “What happened?”

“It’s fine. Truly,” I said quickly. “Just routine testing.”

“Whatever it is you should go home and rest now!” Her voice brooked no argument, authority rising. “I’ll cover today’s lecture. Don’t fight me on this.”

She was already pushing me gently but firmly toward the door.

“All right, all right...” I relented, then hesitated. Something nagged at me. “Iris, do you maybe know anything about the recent project Modern Healing students are working on? The one run by the Vale

research team?”

Her expression shifted. “Ah. The MDT. The Modern Healing–Disciplinary Team,” she said. “Professor Corvin Vale’s elite program. It’s a collaborative approach to advanced disease treatment, mainly for Cancer, blood disorders, and cellular regeneration. It’s cutting-edge and extremely selective.”

“That sounds incredible,” I said.

If Cora had really meant to hand me the form...

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Chapter 74

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Finished

“I heard other students can apply too,” I added. “Even from Traditional Healing. Is no one here interested?”

“I’m sure many are, Lylah. But...” Iris hesitated, her expression tightening. “Forget it.”

“What?”

“You know the Vale team students handle the selection for outsiders themselves,” Iris said. “They’re brilliant but arrogant to their core. It’s an open secret; If you don’t have the standing they respect, then all you have is your mind.” She shook her head. “And the tests? They’re brutal. Many have tried and failed.”

I didn’t answer right away.

Iris studied my face, “Wait. Why are you asking this all of a sudden?” Her eyes widened slightly. “Lylah, are you thinking about applying?”

“I am,” I said. “I’ll try.”

“Oh, Selene!” Iris gasped. “Then I’ll pray for you!”

I nodded, “Thanks.”

I knew Cora had never intended to offer me that form in good faith. It would have been another blade wrapped in silk—an invitation meant to humiliate me, to watch me fail.

But they had forgotten something.

I had almost stood among Corvin Vale’s chosen once. Had earned a place beside his most brilliant students before Rowan and my family sabotaged everything. This was my chance to show that it would take far more than one betrayal to bring me down.

I left the Traditional Healing building.

At the front gates, Damon was already waiting.

The moment he saw me, his posture sharpened.

“Luna,” His eyes dropped to the cotton in my hand, darkening instantly. “What happened? Has someone hurt you?”

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3rd Person POV

The instant Damon saw the cotton pressed to the puncture on his Luna's arm, his wolf surged toward the surface with a low, furious growl.

He was already turning, ready to hunt down the source of her injury himself, when Lylah caught his arm.

"It's fine," she insisted softly, grounding him. "I'm alright."

Reluctantly, Damon forced his wolf back under control. With a tight breath, he yielded. He escorted Lylah back to the apartment, ensuring she was safely inside before leaving.

What she didn't know was that the moment she stepped away, the Beta went back to Lunar Grace to double back.

Ezra would show no mercy if anyone had dared to touch Lylah, and Damon intended to make certain the guilty party was found.

The penthouse doors slid open, and Lylah stopped short.

Her breath caught in her throat.

"Ezra... what is all this?"

Her gaze swept the living room in disbelief.

Gowns draped over elegant racks. Diamonds glittered in velvet-lined cases—so brilliant that even at a glance, Lylah knew they were worth a fortune. Rows of handcrafted leather shoes stood in perfect order, while opulent shawls were displayed on stands.

Now the living room looks less like a home and more like a private boutique for royalty.

"These are mating gifts from my grandfather," Ezra said, stepping behind her, "They're from the best designers in Moonclaw and Lunaris. Do you like them?"

"Mating gifts?" Lylah turned, stunned. "But I thought he never approved of our mating..."

Ezra's brow lifted slightly. "Who told you that? My family is more than pleased with our bond." He paused, studying her expression. "You don't like the gifts?"

Her eyes widened. "I love them. They're all so beautiful. Please send my thanks to him."

Lylah stood there, still processing, her thoughts slow and scattered. These were gifts fitted for an honored Luna, and the weight of that realization pressed heavily against her chest.

Ezra's wolf stirred suddenly.

His posture shifted subtly, shoulders tightening, eyes sharpening as he sensed it.

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**1:24 pm**

Chapter 75

Finished

Her blood.

Not fresh enough to trigger panic—but fresh enough to matter.

"Lylah." His voice dropped, rougher. "You were injured."

She hesitated only a second. "Earlier at Lunar Grace, a healer took a small blood sample. I brushed against Moonshade Lily by accident, so they wanted to check for any effects. But no worries, the poison didn't take."

Ezra's eyes shifted as his wolf rose to the surface, silently assessing.

He didn't believe her. Lylah was not careless enough to touch a poisonous plant.

But he would uncover the truth later. For now, he chose not to press her. Instead, he watched her as she turned back to the gifts Vargan had sent, her wide, beautiful eyes filled with open awe.

"There are so many," Lylah murmured, turning to him, her gaze wide and innocent. "Will they even fit in my room?"

A faint smile touched Ezra's mouth. "We'll store some in the vault and storage wing. Three Omegas are on their way to catalog and move everything. Keep the ones you love most in your room."

She nodded. "I want to repay your grandfather's kindness. What kind of gift does he like?"

"That old wolf already has everything." Ezra exhaled quietly, amused. "Just thanked him yourself when I take you to meet him someday. He'll love hearing it from you."

Lylah nodded, but her thoughts were already spiraling. Thinking of what kind of gift would be suitable for a wealthy elder from such a powerful pack? Now that Ezra planned to introduce her directly, nervousness crept in.

‘What if Alpha Ezra’s grandfather doesn’t like me?’ the thought whispered through her mind.

Excusing herself, Lylah headed to her room to wash up.

She dropped her bag onto the bed and headed for the bathroom. As she lifted her arm, sharp pain flared from the spot where her blood had been drawn—stronger than she had expected.

She managed to slip out of her clothes and into a bathrobe, but the ache only grew more distracting.

Then,

“Lylah.”

She froze.

After a heartbeat, she opened the door. “Ezra? What are you doing?”

“Helping you,” he said simply. “Your arm just had blood drawn. It’s going to stiffen.”

“Yeah, but...”

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Chapter 75

Finished

Heat rushed to her cheeks at the thought of him helping her wash, but Ezra didn’t give her time to protest. He stepped inside, and his presence filled her bathroom instantly.

Alpha aura. His unmistakable masculine scent.

The narrow space suddenly felt too small, as if she were enclosed by him from every direction. Her heart began to pound in a dangerously unsteady rhythm.

“You really don’t have to do this, Ezra.”

Inside her, Selestine growled in protest.

The naughty wolf clearly approved of having the powerful, devastatingly handsome Alpha this close.

“I’m your mate,” Ezra said quietly. “Of course in a situation like this, I’m the one who helps you. Who else would it be, Damon?”

Lylah couldn’t help but chuckle at his tone. “Alright then if you insist. I was going to wash my hair.”

‘I’ll help you,’ Ezra said, then moved with effortless confidence.

His long hands reached for the shampoo, turning on the shower to wet her hair. Water streamed through her strands, and when his fingers threaded through them, her hair felt impossibly soft in his large palms- a sensation so new it caught him off guard.

Lylah shuddered every time his fingertips brushed her scalp.

He worked in silence, every movement calm yet precise. Each time he leaned forward to reach the sink, his presence wrapped around her, enclosing her smaller frame.

Lylah felt a dangerous, unfamiliar heat gather low in her abdomen.

Tiara’s words from that night echoed in her mind,

‘How long can you stay immune to a man **as** perfect as the Alpha of Moonclaw Pack?’

“Now I’ll rinse it,” Ezra said quietly.

Cool water streamed over her hair, washing away the foam and easing some of the heat rushing through

her veins.

When he finished, he stepped back just enough to give her space,

“Can you take **care** of the rest yourself,” he asked, his voice low, “or should I stay?”

“I’ve got it,” Lylah said quickly. “Thank you, Ezra.”

“Alright. I’ll be outside. Just call if you need anything.”

His hand felt warm as it brushed against hers, before he stepped away.

Then he was gone.

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Chapter 75

Lylah blinked, releasing a long, unsteady breath.

He had been so gentle—so aware of her boundaries, careful, and respectful.

A blush crept over her cheeks as she realized just how far her imagination had wandered.

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Chapter 76

Ezra's POV

Finished

The steady rush of water still echoed from behind the closed door when Lylah told me to leave her alone.

Every instinct in me rebelled.

wanted to stay—to ensure she didn't slip, didn't strain her hand, or push herself past her limits.

But she insisted.

And I refused to let her think I was some brute using her injury as an excuse to invade her space.

So I obeyed.

The moment my chamber door shut behind me, I braced my palm against the wood, my forehead following a second later. My breathing was heavy. Uneven. My blood thundered through my veins like a war drum.

My body burned.

And I wasn't ignorant of the reason.

It was her.

The lingering trace of her floral-sweet scent clung to my skin, wrapped around my senses like a spell. The memory of her soft hair against my fingers. The warmth of her skin beneath my hands. The way my wolf had surged forward, recognizing what my mind tried to deny.

Another second with her, and I wasn't certain I would have had the strength to step away,

Damn it.

You should have pulled me back,' I snarled inwardly at my wolf.

He should have been the voice of restraint. Instead, he basked in Lylah's presence, drawing in her scent until my instincts blurred into hunger.

I stripped and stepped into a cold shower, letting icy water crash over me, trying to drown out the fire in my blood. It helped-barely.

When I emerged, my room was cloaked in its usual darkness-darkness that had become my ally. Darkness that asked nothing of my failing eyes, meaning I no longer needed my glasses.

I grabbed my phone and pulled up Damon's report. The words blurred slightly, but I read them anyway.

Messages from Vargan followed.

I ignored most of them and hit call.

"Ezra?!" he barked. "I was asleep! Are you trying to give a heart attack and kill your elder?"

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Chapter 76

Finished

"You went to see my Luna today," I said, straight to the point. "And she ended up injured."

A sharp inhale.

“Ezra, I am truly sorry about that. I never expected to cross paths with that venomous she-wolf named Cora. My only intention was to meet your mate. I swear it. I never meant for harm to come to her.”

His guilt rang true.

“I know I can’t be forgiven so easily. But to make amends, I sent the gifts. Did Lylah like them?”

“She doesn’t care much for luxuries,” I replied.

“Ah,” Vargan exhaled. “I expected that. You know I’m not very creative when it comes to choosing things someone would truly like. But that doesn’t mean she dislikes them, does it? Besides, is it fitting for the Luna of Moonclaw Pack to have no proper jewelry at all?”

I had thought about that since the first time I brought Lylah here. But over time, I learned that such things weren’t her taste.

“I’ll take her to the boutique next time, so she can choose more for herself.”

“Women love surprises,” Vargan said. “Pick them yourself, then tell her she looks beautiful wearing them. She’ll be touched.”

“I can’t,” I said flatly. “Lylah only knows that I can’t see.”

“What?!” Vargan’s voice nearly shattered my phone. “Did you tell her you’re blind? For Selene’s sake, have you lost your mind? You can’t see properly in sunlight, yes—but that’s not the same as being blind. What possessed you to tell her that?”

I said nothing.

I hated this. It felt like I was punishing Lylah for something that wasn’t her fault.

“My eyesight is degenerating. Lunar’s best healer said it may not last another two years.” I said quietly, “I don’t want Lylah to stay with me out of pity.”

Silence.

“Better to end it before it truly begins,” I added, “than to have her counting down the days with me,”

More silence.

And I realized I actually preferred it when Vargan was roaring and spouting nonsense.

“Ezra, did I hear that right?” His tone shifted into something I didn’t like. “You—my arrogant grandson, the haughty Alpha of Moonclaw Pack. Since when did you become this pessimistic? Ezra, you—”

He couldn’t even finish.

And neither could I answer.

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1:24 pm

Chapter 76

Finished

I let out a bitter breath, something close to a laugh, and nothing like one.

Once, losing my sight would have meant nothing. I still have a powerful pack. I still have command, warriors, and a brilliant life beyond this pack that I clawed my way to the top of. I don't need to be flawless. every moment.

That was until I met her.

Now, weakness feels different. Now, it matters. Now I hate the thought that one *day* I might be fully blind. Who will protect her then? Will I never see her beautiful face again? Never see the warm smile that lights up this cold house?

Everyone has an exception.

And she **is** mine.

214

M

Ruby Walker

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

Chapter 77

Lylah's POV

Finished

The night was too quiet for the storm inside my head. I slipped out of my bedroom with my laptop tucked against my chest, then sat by the balcony and reopened the MDT application form.

Everything had been simple—name, credentials, proposal outline—until I reached the final section.

Supervising Professor.

My fingers stilled over the keyboard.

The supervising professor was someone every student had, and that was the problem. I wasn't a student. I was merely Professor Clark's assistant. Would it be presumptuous to list his name? Would he consider it disrespectful?

I leaned back, pressing my lips together.

Should I call Iris? Ask her what she thought?

Before I could decide, my phone rang. The sharp vibration shattered the quiet. Without checking the caller ID, I answered.

"Hello?"

"Little Moon, it's been so long."

My spine went rigid.

"Rowan?"

A soft chuckle answered me. "Yes, it's me. I'm glad you still recognize my voice." He paused, and I could practically imagine that infuriating smile. "Wait, Lylah—please don't hang up. I really want to talk to you."

"Let me guess, you're calling because you want to hold me accountable for what happened to Cora this afternoon."

"Cora? No." His tone turned impatient. "It has nothing to do with her. I told you before that I don't love her. I'll end things with her."

A hollow laugh rose in my chest.

"Lylah please," he continued, lowering his voice. "I regret it so much. What happened between us—it's destroyed me. I can't live without you..."

Destroyed him.

How poetic.

“This **was** the path you chose yourself, Alpha Rowan Blackfang.”

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Chapter 77

Finished

He exhaled sharply. “I admit it I made the worst mistake of my life. Yes, I was stupid to give in to a momentary desire.” His voice roughened. “But isn’t that a common mistake? I’m a male. I’m an Alpha,”

My fingers tightened around the phone until the casing creaked.

“You’re still as disgusting as ever,” I said. Then ended the call.

I massaged the bridge of my nose and closed my eyes. Rowan’s voice still echoed in my mind. That arrogant cadence, that stupid excuse of instinct and Alpha privilege.

‘Selene, why did it take so long for you to reveal the rot beneath his facade?’

A warm, sweet scent drifted through the air, wrapping around me before I even realized it.

I opened my eyes.

A mug of hot chocolate now rested beside my laptop, steam curling gently into the air.

“This will help ease your anger,”

I turned.

Ezra stood there.

A small smile tugged at my lips despite myself. “Can you read my mind now too?”

“I heard your conversation with Rowan.” Ezra stepped closer, closing the distance between us.

A flicker of guilt ran through me. I must have raised my voice more than I realized—loud enough to disturb him.

But then, Alpha Ezra said something that stunned me,

“And I’m jealous.”

My breath caught.

“You’re jealous?” I stared at him. “Of Rowan?”

“Yes,” he said calmly. “Because when you speak to him, your emotions are alive.” His eyes darkened slightly. “But with me, it feels like you’re guarding something, like there’s a barrier between us.”

The words sank deep.

Silence stretched between us,

“It’s not like that, Ezra,” I said finally. “I wasn’t upset because of Rowan. He’s insignificant to me.” That part, at least, was true. I gestured toward my laptop. “I want to apply for a project the Modern Healing Department is holding, but it requires a supervising professor. The problem is...I don’t have one.”

Ezra’s expression sharpened, attentive.

“I’m just Professor Clark’s assistant, and he’s not officially my supervisor.” I gave a small shrug. “I don’t

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Chapter 77

even know if I have the right to put his name down.”

0491

Finished

A faint smile touched his lips. “I doubt he would refuse, especially when his name would stand behind someone pursuing knowledge with sincerity and integrity.”

“You really think so?” I asked, hope threading quietly through my voice.

He nodded, utterly certain.

“Meet him tomorrow and speak to him directly. Everything will work out.” His gaze softened, but his voice remained firm. “I’ll be right here if you need, supporting you. Always.”

The certainty in his voice wrapped around me like warmth after a long winter.

For the first time in a long time, I didn’t feel alone.

For the first time, I felt like I truly had someone beside me.

214

M

Ruby Walker

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

The Betrayed Princess Rising

Chapter 78

Third Person's POV

019

Finished

The following morning, Lylah sought Iris out before the corridors filled with students and the hum of lectures began. Pale sunlight streamed through the tall academy windows, casting long bands of gold across the stone floors.

"I'm going to request a meeting with Professor Clark," Lylah said, her voice calm but resolute. "In person."

Iris froze mid-step.

"You want to meet him?" she asked carefully. "Lylah, I've been his junior assistant for months, and I've never actually seen him."

Lylah blinked. "What?"

Iris leaned closer, lowering her voice as if the walls themselves might be listening. "He hardly comes to the academy anymore, and only handles everything through written directives. Research approvals, evaluations, and even thesis sign-offs. He leaves it all to his assistants."

That wasn't what Lylah had expected.

"He wasn't always like this," Iris went on, her voice gentling despite herself. "There's a rumor—years ago, Professor Clark stood on equal footing with Professor Corvin Vale. The two of them were

the academy's twin pillars, relentless and so passionate in their research. Feared and admired in equal measure."

Lylah's pulse quickened at the comparison.

"They say he had a prodigy under his guidance. A student he believed would redefine the Healing system. But one day, that student walked away from the Healing field, abandoned it entirely." Iris hesitated. "It devastated Professor Clack. And since then... he's withdrawn."

The revelation settled heavily in Lylah's chest.

If the rumor held any truth, then Professor Clark's absence wasn't negligence—it was self-preservation.

She exhaled slowly. "Then I won't push him, Iris. If he's chosen isolation, I'll respect it."

Iris's eyes widened. "But without a supervising professor, your application will be rejected outright."

"I'll ask someone else," Lylah replied, lifting her chin. "I'm sure I'll find someone willing to stand with me."

A flicker of admiration passed through Iris's gaze before she broke into her usual bright smile. "Then we'll find one. Come on, let's search through this department properly."

Across the academy grounds, in the courtyard of the Modern Healing wing, Cora moved with grace between marble archways veined in silver sigils. Alexander and Thane flanked her, their presence unmistakably protective.

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Finished

"Cora, you really don't have to push yourself." Thane said, his voice softer this time. "The poison only cleared from your system yesterday. You are still recovering."

"Professor Corvin Vale is returning soon. Thane" she said, adjusting the sleeve of her coat. "It would be inappropriate if one of his students wasn't in the laboratory to welcome him, don't you think?"

Cora had never once stood before Professor Corvin Vale. She had only heard the stories—the brilliance, the ruthless standards, the way even senior wolves straightened under his gaze.

She intended to make a flawless first impression.

Her mood, however, was sour. Eldric had called at dawn, declaring he would arrive in Lunaris within days. She despised how her family seemed to insert themselves into every corner of her life.

Alexander's low whistle cut through her thoughts.

"Well, I'll be damned." he muttered.

Ahead of them stood Jett, a slight delivery student struggling beneath an enormous arrangement of crimson roses.

"Alex, don't start," Thane warned lightly.

But Alexander was already circling the poor student, amused. "Jett, hiding behind flowers now? Finally found yourself a she-wolf?"

He plucked the attached card before Jett could protest. "Oh-this is from Rowan Blackfang."

The moment Alexander read the name, Cora's eyes brightened.

He turned toward her with a knowing smirk. "Cora. This has to be yours."

She stepped forward gracefully, already imagining the weight of the gesture.

"Oh, they're so beautiful," Cora breathed, her voice soft and coquettish as her fingers hovered over the petals.

"Beautiful?" Alexander scoffed. "That man didn't even show his face when you were poisoned and had to be treated in the infirmary. And now he sends flowers to win your heart?"

"Alex, Rowan has responsibilities. He can't always be at my side."

Even as she defended him, a small fracture of doubt pressed at her pride.

Alexander rolled his eyes, still bitter about Rowan's absence during yesterday's incident.

"Wait," Alexander muttered, noticing the folded card nestled between the stems. "He wrote something."

His gaze moved across the elegant script. Then he read aloud.

"I sent this as an apology... To the moon of my heart. My beloved Lylah."

The world seemed to tilt.

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Chapter 78

Finished

Alexander went utterly still.

So did Cora.

“W–what?” Her voice cracked.

She snatched the card from his hand, her fingers trembling as her eyes scanned the ink again.

A low, wounded sound left her throat before fury swallowed it whole. The paper tore sharply between her fingers, ripped into shreds that scattered at her feet like fallen feathers.

Alexander’s face flushed a dangerous red, his wolf bristling beneath the surface. “Why would Alpha Rowan send flowers to that leech instead of you? Is he out of his mind?”

Jett, the delivery student, paled visibly. He was only a low–ranking wolf trying to earn coin by running errands around the academy.

“I–I was just told to deliver it to the Traditional Healing wing,” he stammered weakly.

But Alexander wasn’t listening.

“Rowan Blackfang must be brain–dead,” he snarled, fury radiating off him in waves. “This is an insult!”

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◦

Ruby Walker

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

Chapter 79

Ezra's POV

Finished

The small reunion was interrupted by the sudden vibration of my phone against the wooden table. The moment I saw Lylah's name, my wolf stilled, attention sharpening. I answered immediately.

"Ezra, I might be late tonight." she said softly. "I'm having dinner outside with my friend Iris."

"Don't worry," I told her, keeping my tone gentle-gentler than I ever allowed it to be with anyone else. "Damon will pick you up when you're done. Take your time. Enjoy yourself."

A small pause. Relief.

Then the line went dead.

I lowered the phone slowly.

Across from me, the old wolf watched everything.

Clark Grimwood lounged deep in his armchair, one arm draped lazily over the side, but his eyes were sharp-glinted with something between shock and bitter amusement.

Time had not been kind to him.

The professor I remembered had once stood straight as a spear, his presence commanding entire lecture halls, now his shoulders sagged a little. The hollowness in his eyes spoke of old wounds that had never healed.

I had arranged this meeting the moment Lylah confessed her fears last night-her anxiety over finding a supervising professor.

"This is the first time I've heard you speak so softly." Clark chuckled dryly. "You must love this woman far too much, Ezra." He said my name like it tasted foul.

"But no. Even if you throw a fortune at my feet-or try to break me with Moonclaw force-I won't take your Luna as my student. I'm not taking damned students anymore."

My wolf stirred at his tone, bristling at the disrespect.

But I forced him down.

"My Luna's application requires a supervisor," I said calmly. "This project is important for her."

Clark barked out a laugh,

“Ungrateful brat who abandoned my class to chase the tech world has no right to talk to me about what’s important,” he snapped. “You’re a fool if you think I’ve forgotten my disappointment.”

I didn’t answer immediately.

Instead, I let him look at me. Let him pour every ounce of his lingering hate into his stare.

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Chapter 79

Finished

“Sir Grimwood,” I said at last. “It’s you who told me to walk away from Healing field.”

“And why the hell do you think I did that?” he roared. “Because you treated patients like they were disposable! Like experiments!”

His breathing grew uneven with emotion.

“During your hospital internship, the complaints piled higher than I’d ever seen. For Selene’s sake, Ezra, you didn’t heal them. You pushed them to the edge of death!”

I said nothing.

Because he wasn’t entirely wrong.

Back then, we had been unstoppable; Prodigy and master bound by ambition—the most admired and respected pair in the Healing division.

Until I realized I didn’t belong in his world.

I had been young. Barely more than a boy. He was the one who told me that if I ever felt I was walking the wrong path, I should leave before it’s too late.

So I listened. I walked away.

And the moment I did, he became a different man. Not the mentor who had guided me, but a wounded wolf, betrayed and feral, lashing out at every student he had once claimed as his legacy.

“Do you know what those patients called you?” Clark continued, laughing bitterly. “The God of Death.”

He leaned forward.

“And now I hear you speaking like some gentle, devoted mate. If you’d shown even a fraction of that mercy to your patients, everything would have been different.”

“That was impossible,” I said.

His eyes snapped to mine. “What?”

“I can only be gentle with Lylah.”

The truth settled between us like a blade.

“To anyone else...” I shrugged faintly. “It doesn’t exist.”

Clark stared at me as if seeing me for the first time.

Then he leaned back heavily, dragging a hand down his face.

“Selene save me,” he muttered. “You were already insufferable. Now you’re a lovesick fool too.” A humorless laugh escaped him. “What a nightmare.”

Silence stretched.

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Chapter 79

**0:31**

Finished

Finally, he waved a dismissive hand. “Just find another professor for your Luna.”

“None of them are good enough.”

His gaze sharpened. “What makes her deserve the best?”

Everything.

But I gave him the answer he would understand.

“Lylah is brilliant and diligent,” I said. “Under your guidance, she will become the new star in the Healing field.”

Clark scoffed. “I don’t believe in promises anymore.”

I leaned forward slightly.

“Sir Grimwood,” I said, already certain this would strike where reason had failed, “you’ve truly lost your edge.”

His fingers twitched against the armrest.

“It’s no surprise then, that Corvin Vale, the man who once stood in your shadow, now rules Lunar Grace’s Healing division like a king.”

‘Ezra!’ Clark surged forward, his eyes blazing, all the hollowness gone in an instant, replaced by raw, furious life. “You always did know exactly where to sink your claws! That’s not true! I won’t accept that!”

I only smiled and lifted my glass, letting the dark wine roll slowly across my tongue. “Then perhaps, you should change your mind.”

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3/3

Ruby Walker

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

Chapter 80

Lylah’s POV

Finished

Damon drives me to the restaurant where Eldric demanded I meet him, his abrupt call this afternoon leaving no room for refusal. He told me to come, and made it clear that if I didn’t, he would show up at my mate’s house himself.

As if that wasn’t enough, a delivery boy arrived not long after the call, struggling beneath the weight of an enormous bunch of roses. When he said they were from Rowan, something bitter twisted inside my chest. I hadn’t even let the bouquet sit on my table.

I told him to deliver them straight to the Modern Healing building—to Cora. Let her enjoy his pretty lies.

Now, as I step into the private room, my gaze immediately collides with hers.

Cora looks as perfect as ever, graceful and sweet, but her knuckles are white against the table, the only sign of tension she can't fully hide. Beside her sits Eldric and a stranger who isn't entirely unfamiliar.

My stomach turns.

“Sorry,” I say, my voice clipped. “Traffic was bad.”

“It's alright, daughter,” Eldric replies warmly.

False.

“Come in, don't just stand there. And say hello to Sir Barth Hollow. He's one of the tutors in the Lunar Grace Healing division as well.”

My gaze shifts to the old man, and revulsion rises instantly.

His teeth are sparse and yellow, his lips sunken around them, and when he smiles, it's the kind of smile that makes my wolf bristle in instinctive disgust.

Iris's voice from this afternoon when she showed me his photograph echoes in my head.

“Of all the tutors, stay away from Barth Hollow, Lylah,” she'd said. “He's a sick old pervert. If it weren't for his family connections, he would've been thrown out a long time ago.”

When I don't move, Cora's smile falters, a faint frown creasing her brow.

“Lylah, where are your manners?” she says gently as she rises to her feet. “Father invited Sir Hollow to help you. You've been having trouble finding a supervisor, haven't you?”

Her smile **is** flawless.

Poison hidden behind sugar.

“To help me?” I ask, feigning confusion.

“Yes,” she says brightly, stepping **closer**. “I overheard some students talking. You've been trying **to** apply **to**

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Chapter 80

0191

Finished

the MDT team and searching everywhere for a mentor to sponsor you. As your sister, how could I stay silent?"

"And Alpha Eldric and Lady Cora have told me all about you," Barth Hollow says as he **rises** from his chair.

The stench hits me first—sour wine soaked into his breath, stale cigarettes clinging to his clothes. Selestine recoils violently, snarling beneath my skin as his yellowed eyes roam over me without shame.

"A young lady who fled from her pack and came to Lunaris alone," he continues, his voice oily with interest. "Who formed a mating bond without her family's consent, then rose to become a teaching assistant through her own efforts. Tell me, what is that if not bravery?"

His gaze locks onto mine, heavy and invasive.

"You are quite spirited."

He winks.

"And I've always had a fondness for a spirited young wolf."

My stomach churns.

I have to look away to keep the nausea down.

Beside him, Eldric pours wine into his glass as if none of this **is** wrong. "Sir Hollow and I are old acquaintances," he says calmly.

He thinks I don't remember.

But I do.

I was only a pup when Barth Hollow came to Ironcrest. Eldric and Daia locked me in my room for the entire day, making sure I stayed hidden until the old alcoholic left. Making sure he never laid eyes on me.

And now, Eldric is handing me over to him himself.

“Sir Hollow was kind enough *to* agree to guide you personally, Lylah.” Cora’s smile widens, “Father invited you so we could tell this good news ourselves.” She chuckled, waving her hand lightly, “No need to thank

us.”

The words feel like chains.

“And under my guidance, I will shape you into an unstoppable young lady,” Barth adds, lifting a glass and offering another to me.

When his fingers brush mine, something feral ignites inside me.

It feels like fire flooding my veins. My wolf lunges forward in raw, violent fury as every instinct howls at me to tear his hand away and destroy whatever they think they can force on me.

“Let us toast,” Barth **says**, smiling. “To our agreement.”

The glass never reaches my hand.

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**1:24 pm**

Chapter 80

CRACK!

**0191**

Finished

The sound rings through the room as I slap his wrist away, sending the fragile stemware crashing onto the floor.

Red wine splashes across the tiles, dark and vivid like spilled blood..

“Lylah!” Eldric roars. “I arranged all of this for you, and this is how you behave? You are truly an ungrateful, mad bitch!”

“Not as mad as you, Alpha Eldric.” My hand shoots toward Barth, my finger trembling with rage. “You know exactly what he is,” I spit. “A filthy drunk. A gambler. A female abuser. You know it—and you still tried to shove me into his hands and call it help?”

My chest heaves.

This man standing in front of me... was this really the same man I once called father?

“You disgust me,” I snarl. “Don’t stand there and pretend you did this for me. You didn’t. You just sold me off and expected me to smile and thank you for it.”

214

3/3

Ruby Walker

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