

Wild Tale: True Heir

Nicola Prinsloo

18 April 2022 | u19012502

WILD TALE: TRUE HEIR

FADE IN:

1 INT. ROYAL DINING ROOM - MORNING

A long table lined with chairs on both sides. In the only chair at the head of the table sits KING BREVIS, 60, and to his left sits QUEEN GEORGINA, 58. Both are carefully eating their breakfast while servants loyally stand along one wall.

A well-dressed brown-haired man enters and takes his place to the right of KING BREVIS - PRINCE WALTER.

PRINCE WALTER, late twenties, greets his parents with a nod and starts assembling his breakfast. He says a quick prayer under his breath and opens his eyes determinedly.

PRINCE WALTER
(taking the thin golden crown from
his head and placing it next to
his father's hand)
Find someone else.

QUEEN GEORGINA looks to her husband with empathetic eyes.

Pause.

KING BREVIS
No.
(pushes crown back towards PRINCE
WALTER)

PRINCE WALTER sighs and begins eating his breakfast.

Brown-eyed and bushy-tailed, PRINCESS VALENTINA enters. She makes her way to her seat next to her mother and waits for a servant to pull out her chair before sitting.

Two servants put together PRINCESS VALENTINA's breakfast as she surveys the mood of her family.

PRINCESS VALENTINA
(sees crown and holds her gaze on
it)
This again, brother?
(to KING BREVIS)
You know --

KING BREVIS
 Daughter, it is not your place.

The servants lining the wall slowly start to trickle out of the room.

PRINCESS VALENTINA
 What is not my place is serving a man
 who does not want to be served...
 (clearing her throat)
 Father.

KING BREVIS picks up the small bell to signal the servants.

Silence.

All four royals look around the room questioningly. KING BREVIS rings the bell again.

All the doors to the dining room suddenly close when a HOODED FIGURE enters, a knife to a female servant's neck.

PRINCE WALTER jumps up from his chair and attempts to move towards the HOODED FIGURE.

HOODED FIGURE
 I wouldn't.

The blonde-haired servant whimpers, fear evident in her green eyes, as the knife is held tighter to her throat. PRINCE WALTER stops.

KING BREVIS scours the table for a weapon and sits back bitterly when he realises there are none. QUEEN GEORGINA stills, afraid to move a muscle. PRINCESS VALENTINA smirks.

HOODED FIGURE
 (wickedly)
 No knife Wednesdays, Your Highness.

KING BREVIS
 (bitter)
 Out with it. What do you want?

HOODED FIGURE
 Prince, be so kind?

All eyes turn to PRINCE WALTER, whose brown eyes only show hatred as he keeps his gaze on the HOODED FIGURE.

PRINCE WALTER
Let the servant go. She's --

HOODED FIGURE
(jabs knife into table; holding
servant tightly)
Speak.

PRINCE WALTER
You want someone else on the throne.

HOODED FIGURE
And...?

PRINCE WALTER
And you --

KING BREVIS
Your wants have no say here.

HOODED FIGURE
(picks up knife and moves towards
KING BREVIS with servant)
They do, Brevis.

PRINCE WALTER moves towards HOODED FIGURE as they pass him.
HOODED FIGURE gives servant a shallow cut along her cheek and
PRINCE WALTER takes a step back.

HOODED FIGURE and servant reach KING BREVIS.

HOODED FIGURE
(to KING BREVIS)
Move.

KING BREVIS remains in his seat.

QUEEN GEORGINA
(to KING BREVIS; pleading)
Please --

KING BREVIS
Silence, woman.

HOODED FIGURE whistles and two male servants enter, forcing
KING BREVIS from his chair and restraining him to QUEEN
GEORGINA's chair with rope.

KING BREVIS
(under his breath)
Traitors.

PRINCESS VALENTINA

There was a little girl whose father
had succumbed to his illness and whose
mother met death shortly after --

PRINCE WALTER

At the hand of her brother.

PRINCESS VALENTINA

(smiles at her brother)

The girl was whisked away at the
request of the murderer's wife...

(trails her gaze towards her
mother)

but the servant carrying the child
away from her home did not make it
far.

HOODED FIGURE

He could not let the child grow up
away from the kingdom she was meant to
rule one day.

PRINCESS VALENTINA

So he left the child on the doorstep
of a barren wife and her husband.

(to her father)

They raised her to be strong and
independent. Encouraged her to see the
world and chase her dreams.

HOODED FIGURE

But the girl refused to leave the
people she loved - the kingdom she
loyally served.

PRINCE WALTER

Never knowing that the kingdom was her
birthright,

(moving towards the thin gold
crown)

yet loving it all the same.

PRINCE WALTER moves to set the crown upon LOUISA's head.

LOUISA

(getting up out of her chair)

Forgive me, Your Highnesses, Your
Majesties.

(bowing)

I must take my leave.

HOODED FIGURE whistles again and two more servants enter, blocking LOUISA's path.

HOODED FIGURE
Why do you run, Your High--

LOUISA
Stop calling me that. I am a loyal servant. I will not betray my king and queen.

PRINCESS VALENTINA
The murdering usurpers?

KING BREVIS
Hold your tongue, Daughter. I believe you have said enough.

PRINCE WALTER
No, Father. You have.

PRINCE WALTER grabs a cloth from the table and gags his father.

QUEEN GEORGINA
Walter! How dare --

PRINCESS VALENTINA
How dare you, Mother?
(bitterly)
You sit on that throne, knowing full well it was never yours.
(leaning close to her mother)
Knowing that as soon as Father dies --

HOODED FIGURE
Killed, more likely.

PRINCESS VALENTINA
You will be nothing more than you were before.

QUEEN GEORGINA
(weakly)
I will be queen.

PRINCE WALTER
No, Mother.
(looks his father square in the eyes)
A woman cannot rule, remember?

QUEEN GEORGINA

(looking hesitantly at her husband)
 No, I can...
 (realisation passes over her face)
 Then you will take over, Walter.

PRINCE WALTER

I will not.
 (points to LOUISA; smiling)
 She will.

QUEEN GEORGINA

You just said that "a woman cannot rule", did you not?

PRINCESS VALENTINA

There is no law behind it, Mother. It is his belief alone.

PRINCE WALTER

A belief he has instilled in the whole kingdom.

LOUISA

(speaking her thoughts)
 It will not die with him...

PRINCE WALTER

It will if the three recognised royals stand together and recognise Princess Louisa as the true heir.

LOUISA

I can't, don't you see, Your Highness? I would lead the kingdom to ruin.

PRINCE WALTER

You would help the kingdom thrive,
 (bowing to Louisa)
 Your Highness.

HOODED FIGURE

Your deeds as a loyal servant have not gone unnoticed. All the other servants look up to you, Your Highness.

LOUISA

Being kind to and helping servants is one thing. Ruling a kingdom is something else entirely. It's not... me.

QUEEN GEORGINA

It is, Louisa.

(pause)

Your Highness, I mean. That you do not want it is exactly why you deserve the throne.

KING BREVIS suddenly comes to life in outrage, his words muffled.

PRINCESS VALENTINA

Give it a rest, Father. Your wants have no say here... anymore.

QUEEN GEORGINA

The first time I saw you roaming these halls, Your Highness... guilt overwhelmed me.

(taking Louisa's hand)

Please accept my sincerest apologies for the part I played in your parents' demise.

QUEEN GEORGINA starts to get out of her chair and bow. LOUISA stops her.

LOUISA

Please, Your Majesty. You don't need to kneel.

QUEEN GEORGINA

I do, Your Highness. I am no queen and I never was.

LOUISA

I forgive you, Your... Georgina.

PRINCE WALTER

What of my father, Your Highness?

HOODED FIGURE

(picking up the knife and moving towards KING BREVIS)

I've got it.

LOUISA

No.

HOODED FIGURE

But, Your Highness --

LOUISA

I will not become him. I will not be a queen with his death on my conscience.

PRINCESS VALENTINA

(smiling wickedly)

He should be the one to crown you as queen, Your Highness. So that there is no objection from the kingdom.

LOUISA

Great idea, Valentina.

A look of fear passes over KING BREVIS' face when HOODED FIGURE nears him.

HOODED FIGURE

One more thing to do before I go about my leave.

(cuts KING BREVIS loose and holds his arms behind his back; to KING BREVIS)

Kneel.

KING BREVIS attempts to fight against HOODED FIGURE.

PRINCESS VALENTINA

It is over, Father.

PRINCESS VALENTINA kneels in front of LOUISA. QUEEN GEORGINA bows her head in submission to LOUISA.

PRINCE WALTER and KING BREVIS lock eyes. Desperation is evident in KING BREVIS' eyes as PRINCE WALTER smiles and kneels in front of LOUISA as well.

Defeat consumes KING BREVIS as he kneels.

HOODED FIGURE rings the bell. All the servants enter the room and kneel in submission to LOUISA.

HOODED FIGURE is the last to kneel.

LOUISA

(awkwardly clears her throat)

Valentina.

PRINCESS VALENTINA raises her head.

LOUISA (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 How do I get them to stop?

PRINCESS VALENTINA chuckles and stands.

PRINCESS VALENTINA
 (to crowd)
 Thank you, all. You may resume your
 duties.

The servants disperse quickly. QUEEN GEORGINA gives one last look towards her husband and leaves as well.

PRINCE WALTER places the thin golden crown upon LOUISA's head and she smiles gratefully.

PRINCESS VALENTINA
 (embraces HOODED FIGURE)
 Thank you.
 (turns to LOUISA)
 Your Highness. I would like to
 introduce you to the servant who
 whisked you away all those years ago.
 Jonah.

HOODED FIGURE removes his hood.

JONAH (HOODED FIGURE)
 (respectfully)
 Glad to be of service.

LOUISA embraces JONAH.

JONAH (CONT'D)
 (laughs)
 We'll have to work on that, Your
 Highness. Queens rarely embrace
 servants.

LOUISA
 (laughs)
 We have time.

JONAH
 Before we work on that, please do
 accept my apologies for handling you
 so roughly before...
 (touches the open wound on her
 cheek)
 and for this.

LOUISA waves her hand nonchalantly. PRINCESS VALENTINA approaches her kneeling father.

PRINCESS VALENTINA
(whispering; wickedly)
Looks like women are not as weak as
you thought, Father.

FADE OUT.

THE END