

# The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 143

Thirty-Six: Joselin

Joselin's P.O.V.

My eyes were glued to Cora all day. She was happier than I had ever seen her, making me anxious not to know what was happening inside her head. The curvy woman walked quickly, with only a small limp, as she practically danced around the castle.

If it weren't for her long skirt that cut off mid-shin, no one would know about her prosthetic leg.

Having Rona gone made everyone happy.

I wasn't aware of another explanation for Cora's behavior. The only thing that changed was Rona leaving. It made me think that I had been right.

Even I knew walking up to her and asking Cora about Rona's trophy wouldn't be appropriate. How would I word that? Hey Cora, have you seen your leg lately?

The middle-aged woman would probably try to skin me alive. Her leg was a sensitive topic. Granted, it had not only been cut off years ago in a battle, but the person responsible for her losing it had it as a keepsake and was probably using it against her. I would have slaughtered Rona long ago if I were missing the limb.

Her dishwater blonde hair shined in the sunlight, visible to me even with a window and a lot of space between us. The stripes of silver that gave away the plump woman's age seemed to be thickening by the day. I had to wonder, if I told her about her leg being on display in Rona's bedroom, would she do my job for me? Would knowing about it be enough to have her go mad and kill Rona, so I wouldn't have to deal with her anymore?

It almost seemed too easy. I could bait Cora and sit back to enjoy the show. But then, it would make finding out if anyone else was involved more difficult. There was no point in killing Rona if she had others working with her. Cutting off the head of the snake only worked when it was a one headed serpent.

"You've been very nosey today." Cyrus teased from my right. I turned with an unamused stare, forcing my eyes away from the courtyard through the window of the great room in the front of the castle.

She was going into town. It wasn't unusual for her, but it meant I couldn't follow. I had been watching her all day, and following her into town would only make her suspicious of me.

I disliked her, as did Aisha and Margot... so I disliked the entire council. But the last thing I needed was her turning hostile on me when I already had Rona to deal with.

It would be suspicious for the council to turn down a descendant of the moon goddess from joining us if she pledged. She was all but guaranteed a spot. With Aurora on my side, I hoped that the last council seat would be someone worthy of trust and respect.

I ignored Cyrus's comment and narrowed my eyes at him. We needed to get him alone to discuss the issue of Rona and the part he was to play in it.

"You'll be joining us for dinner tonight, cousin." The emphasis on his cover made him roll his eyes.

"As I have since I got here/ His snarky retort reminded me of the conversations I would hold with Killian. It was how friends bantered, but I didn't know how to make friends, and there were only three people that I trusted fully.

"No, not at the dining hall. It will be at my mate's home." I wrinkled my nose, wishing I could say it was my home too. But I hadn't moved in yet. It was still his even though I had stayed there every night since returning.

"Ah, who's going to cook? I haven't seen either of you eat anything that wasn't served to you." He laughed but fell silent when another presence joined us in the room. My heartbeat sped up, and the hairs on my neck prickled from Tobias's gaze.

I had worn my hair up because he liked it when I did that. Even before we mated, his focus on me was always more intent when I pulled my hair up. Now whenever I did it, his eyes always seemed to stay on my mark, and he would lift his head with pride.

His woody scent filled my senses, and my eyes closed as I took a deep breath, feeling him stop behind me. When he didn't move or speak, even in the mate bond, I opened my eyes to see him holding a single red rose before me.

His large, calloused hand looked so threatening compared to the flower. While he had taken the time and care to remove the thorns, it also felt like he could snap it at any moment.

My hands moved up to take the stem from him, smiling as I spun and met his beautiful brown eyes.

"How cute! Look at you, all domesticated. Like a big teddy bear." Cyrus teased Tobias, but his smile fell when Tobias's hand shot forward and grabbed the front of his shirt, lifting him from the ground. "Not like a teddy bear! I meant a rabid wolf! A strong, very deadly rabid wolf!"

I hoped Cyrus was aware of how unimpressed I was. The weak, nerdy persona he put off contradicted the power radiating from him. No wonder Cyrus needed shelter in the castle with the council and the guards. He had no idea what he was capable of.

I had already known when I realized he was using human landmines to defend himself against hunters, but it was almost sad how little he lived up to his potential. Being in hiding for so long has not done him any favors.

Maybe when he was no longer hiding, he could embrace his magic. But for now, he was like the runt of the litter.

Tobias dropped Cyrus, letting the man stumble back a step before Tobias placed his hand possessively on my hip. His jaw ticked as he clenched his teeth, but I was still focused on the rose he brought me.

It was one of the sweetest things he had done for me. The small gesture let me know that he had been thinking about me, even though we had been apart for most of the day. He was so strong, quiet, and, as Cyrus said, deadly.

For some reason, it meant more to me than all the big things that happened in our relationship because this had no motive and no intentions. There was no game. Tobias just wanted to give me something beautiful.

Tobias raised one eyebrow at me, and I knew without words that he was asking why I was alone with Cyrus. He hated the man, but Cyrus was growing on me.

"Cyrus will be coming to dinner to catch up."

Tobias immediately understood the hidden meaning behind the phrase 'catch up,' and I smiled as I let my hand rest on his chest, leaning further into him with the rose between us.

'Not in our house.' He ordered, but I ignored his refusal, focused solely on his statement of it being ours. Tobias turned his burning glare on Cyrus, his brown eyes swirling to the black of his beast at the thought of the spell caster invading the privacy of our home.

"Am I coming for dinner, or will I be the dinner?" Cyrus asked hesitantly.

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That night, I had dinner in the oven and plates set on the table before Cyrus arrived. When he did, his lips pursed, and his eyebrows met his hairline when he entered the house. He was slow to enter but didn't hesitate to disapprove of the decor.

"For two people who fuck like bunnies, I imagined this place would be... different. This almost looks normal." He stated, and I looked around the room, not seeing what was so wrong with it. The dark grey couch had a few black throw pillows on it. The coffee table and entertainment center matched the pillows.

It was neat, stylish, and minimalistic.

I bit my tongue, wanting to tell him I didn't ask for his opinion, but tonight was all about winning him over.

"Doesn't look very kid-friendly either." He muttered, and I glared at him.

"We don't need it to be kid friendly.' I snapped. We weren't there yet. I hadn't even moved in yet and wanted to keep Tobias to myself longer." That's none of your business."

"I just thought when the heirs are born, you'd have them over sometimes. You guys seemed close." He uttered, rubbing the back of his neck again as his cheeks turned pink. "I was going to the kitchen late last night, and I walked in on... well. Queen Natalie was demanding that the King get her good and pregnant, so I just assumed... Forget it."

He cleared his throat just as Tobias rounded the corner, handing me my glass of wine.

"Thank you," I muttered, but my mind was locked on the idea of us having kids. What if they looked like me? What if they had powers instead of the wolf gene? What if they were born as humans since I had human parents?

We should have discussed these things before we mated but have yet to get around to it. Would Tobias be okay with that, or would that be a deal breaker? Did he even want kids with me one day?

"It's weird that you invited me for dinner, right? This feels weird." Cyrus tried to laugh, but Tobias and I just stared at him, all three of us out of our comfort zone.

I knew I should say something corny like, Make yourself at home," or "I'm glad you could make it,' but we all knew it would be a blatant lie. I wouldn't sound convincing at all. Somehow my mind and mouth settled on "Sit."

Tobias turned to me, raising his eyebrows in amusement, and Cyrus chuckled at my command.

"Like, right here?" He started to crouch with a broad smile, his slightly crooked teeth on display as I groaned in annoyance. "Or can I at least use a chair?"

I knew this would be a bad idea.

Even worse was that he wasn't affected by me at all. There was no intimidation, no hesitation, or fear. The yellow-eyed spell caster was as annoying as Killian was when we were kids, like a little brother. I wanted to smack him upside the head whenever a sarcastic comment flew from his mouth.

"I'm going to check the food," I muttered as my hands tightened into fists, and I spun on my heels to walk away. There was nothing to check. I had purchased a frozen tray of lasagna from the store and had thrown it in the oven. It still had half an hour to cook, and I dreaded every second.

I placed my glass of wine on the counter before rubbing my temples with one hand.

I heard Cyrus try to start a conversation with Tobias as they followed me and made their way to the dining room connected to the open kitchen.

"So, kill anyone lately?" The lanky man asked my mate, and Tobias growled in annoyance.

This was not going well. Not at all.

But that was my opening, so I took it. "Things seem pretty quiet for you. Any threats or attempts on your life lately?"

Beyond the occasional explosion on the mountain from the traps he had left behind, things had been going well, almost too well. It was like the calm before the storm, and I was unprepared.

"Besides Rona trying to give me a heart attack? No. She pops up everywhere, always rubbing against me." His cheeks turned pink, and I rolled my eyes as he pulled a chair from the table and sat, facing me in the kitchen. "I'm not sure she's the one trying to kill me."

I let out a huff that made Cyrus tilt his head in curiosity. "What makes you say that?"

His face moved down the scale of red from light pink to the color of my wine. "Because she seems genuinely attracted to me."

Tobias scoffed, not bothering to hide his amusement when Cyrus glared at him.

"It's true!" He defended, but even I let out a noise and lifted my eyebrows in disbelief. "Don't make that noise! She is! You weren't there! She kissed me, took my hand and put it down.... Look, she was attracted to me!"

The image he conjured in my mind made me cringe in disgust before I realized this could work in our favor. "We need to know for certain. If Rona is attracted to you, it won't be hard for you to get her to tell you what she is up to. She's hiding something, and it will be your job to get close to her and figure out what it is.