

The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 152

Forty-Five: Joselin

Joselin's P.O.V.

A ponytail.

A braid.

A bun.

A hat.

A fucking shaved head.

I could have done any number of things before going into Rona's house, but I didn't. I didn't think ahead. I didn't prepare. I went in half-cocked and risked everything.

Now it was coming back to bite me in the ass.

A hair. One hair.

This was Rona, I know it. The fucking she-devil was getting her revenge, and with a piece of my hair, when I couldn't do shit with her blood. Her fucking blood. Her life-source. It was infuriating that she was doing what I couldn't and doing it with so little.

"I need you to pull back." The healer, Flora, said for the hundredth time as she held her hands over me. Apparently, my magic, or magic in general, prevented her from seeing what was wrong. She said it was blocking her, like a wall.

Healers could see and treat injuries and damage to a living being. I didn't have an injury.

I had a vindictive witch trying to kill me from hundreds of miles away.

Tobias growled from my side, his hand still on my head, smoothing my hair back from my face like he was petting a dog. The hair I should have chopped off.

His demand for them to fix me without having to say the words was humorous, and if I weren't so angry at myself, I would have laughed.

Instead, I was fuming, my hands in fists at my sides with a healer rubbing her palms over my body, trying to find something...anything to keep the beast by my head from killing her.

"I can't pull back my magic when I'm not doing anything!" I snapped, my head lifting off the bed to stare at the wide-eyed, young healer. The others were more experienced, but something about Flora told me she was the one to trust. She was strong and had healed me after I was stabbed, she had healed Natalie and Killian several times, and we had all been very impressed with her until now.

Flora looked terrified, like it wasn't Tobias she had to worry about anymore. It was me. I felt feral. Livid.

"I can't find anything wrong!" She insisted defensively, dropping her hands. "You aren't sick or injured!"

My eyes closed, and I counted to ten before going back down to one to control my temper, but it was no use. I was angry with myself, which wouldn't change until Rona died.

One of the doctors stepped forward, and I put my hand up. Until I dealt with Rona, they wouldn't find anything. "We can run some tests."

The last thing I needed was someone else taking my blood and fucking with me. "Don't bother. You won't find anything wrong."

And it was true. They wouldn't find anything wrong because it wasn't my body Rona was targeting but my magic. The part of my soul that my kind can't live without. Once she drained my magic, she would have killed me too.

"My blood?" Tobias asked, making everyone stop. That made three. He said three words in front of others today, the most he had spoken aloud in years.

He was terrified but was masking it with anger. If I couldn't see his eyes or feel him in our mate bond, I wouldn't have been able to tell.

"It wasn't your blood," I said, shaking my head. There was no way it could be. How could something as sacred as claiming a mate before the

Goddess be poisonous? "I marked him; I swallowed some of his blood. It can't be that ...right?"

Flora shook her head quickly, and I let out a relieved sigh. Good. Tobias didn't seem to agree, and his shoulders curled so slightly that if I didn't know him as well as I did, I might not have seen it.

"I would have been able to feel it if it was something in your stomach hurting you."

Hurting me.

That was the wrong choice of words for Tobias to hear, and he rubbed his hand over his mouth. He didn't believe her, and I reached up and touched his side. "It wasn't the blood," I assured him. "Trust me."

If Rona didn't return soon to face me, I would have to go to her before I became too weak to fight her. I wouldn't let that hag take me down.

We had known that Rona had drained her mother of her power and killed her, but no one knew how. I wouldn't have thought doing something so horrible with a single hair was possible. But if she could affect me this way, I couldn't imagine what she was doing to Cora or planned to do to her.

I needed to see and talk to her... if she was still alive.

"The tests would be quite basic, and you can observe." The doctor tried to step forward again, but Tobias bared his teeth at the man in a warning.

"No one is touching my blood. Your healer said I wasn't sick or injured, so there is no point in me being here." No amount of tests he could run would be able to locate the curse Rona was casting.

I sat up, and Flora stepped away as I swung my legs over the edge of the bed.

Killian entered the room with Natalie wrapped around his arm. Aurora was right behind them with the rest of the council. Aisha, Margot, and... Cora. They were right before me, alive and not trying to kill each other for once in their lives.

They all looked worried, and I couldn't stop my eyes from going to Cora. The middle-aged woman had her weight on her good leg, her prosthetic on display with the shorts she had on. But it was how healthy she looked that confused me. Was Rona only attacking me?

If it hit me this hard with just a hair, I couldn't imagine how easily she would decimate Cora once she used her leg.

"What happened?" Natalie asked, stepping away from Killian to approach me. "You had us all worried."

I shook my head. "Nothing happened. Just feeling a little under the weather. " My forced smile didn't appease them as they watched me closely.

They didn't know that I was observing them just the same. We had already determined that Rona was either controlling someone or was being controlled, but the other party involved had yet to be determined. Until it did, I wouldn't trust anyone besides Killian, Natalie, and Tobias.

Killian and Natalie wore the same charm that I did. After the last war, when someone tried to control Killian and his sister Charlie, I personally checked and confirmed the protection enchantment on their pendants at least once a week to ensure there was no risk of them being tampered with.

There was no way someone could control either of them without me knowing.

Tobias, I could feel it. I knew him better than I knew myself, and I couldn't help but lean into his side for support. I would need to find something for him to wear to protect himself, but even without it, he had no magic to control Rona, and if she had controlled him, she would have used that a long time ago to hurt me.

His warm body felt nice as I pressed myself up against him. His smell surrounded me and reminded me of home, of being in bed wrapped in his arms. It was comforting and exactly what I needed, yet I refused to ask for it.

Tobias didn't mind and wrapped his arms around me, holding me close.

I didn't want to share my theory about the hair and Rona's involvement in this, not until I had more information. I didn't want them to know I was onto them if she was working for or with someone in this room.

The sound of footsteps running down the corridor made a few heads turn, but when Cyrus burst in, they relaxed.

"I heard you got hurt. Everyone is talking about it. What the hell happened?" Cyrus pushed through the witches, making Margot grumble in annoyance and cross her arms.

"Watch it."

Cyrus rolled his eyes, a small smile on his face as he approached Tobias and me. "My cousin was just hurt. I need to make sure she is okay. You were the one standing between family."

The wink he sent me made Tobias growl, but it made me happy. I didn't fully trust him, but the more I spent with him, the harder it was not to like the guy.

"I wasn't hurt. I didn't feel good." I said, wishing no one had seen me collapse like that. It would just be another thing for people to talk about among the pack. I had hoped the news of me marking Tobias would travel, giving hope to other mixed mates that a marking was possible.

I didn't expect that good news to be overshadowed by the gossip of the royal advisor passing out in the courtyard.

"I also heard this guy spoke finally. That answers so many questions." Cyrus laughed, but I ignored him and rolled my eyes before closing them and resting my cheek against Tobias's chest. I was feeling much better, but I was exhausted now. Whatever hit me almost felt like a warning, like the worst was yet to come.

"I think I will just go home and lie down for a bit," I muttered and sighed in contentment when Tobias picked me up and began walking with me, not waiting for anyone to respond.

He walked with me quickly but carefully back to our house, ignoring the conversations and whispers among the pack as he walked through the city.

I had no energy to teleport us right now, and after my failed attempt, I was scared to do it until I was free of this curse. If we got stuck in the inbetween, we would never get out.

Tobias sweetly laid me down in the bed, stripped me of my clothes, and pulled one of his shirts over my head before curling around me.

My eyes were closed, my lids feeling heavy, but my mind was alive.

The questions running through my head kept me awake, and an uneasy feeling ran through me. If Rona could curse or drain someone with an item as small as hair, why would she have needed the altar in the mountains? How would she have gotten something from Cyrus to attack him from far away? And if it wasn't her in the mountains, then who was it?