

The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 173

Sixty-Six: Tobias

Tobias's P.O.V.

My teeth sunk into her flesh, hot blood filling my mouth as Cora screamed. The taste of it washing over my tongue was exciting. All the stress and pain Cora had caused my mate had me dreaming about this moment... about ending her life.

I wanted to rip Cora's throat out, but she turned just in time for me to latch my jaws around her bicep. She rolled to the ground with me, using her powers to pry me off. I felt the Earth moving beneath us before two objects shot through the dirt.

Joselin's scream of terror echoed through my head, and I wanted to get to her. I needed to.

In my head, I could feel myself moving. I knew how to get my legs to work, but they didn't want to listen.

Snarling and yips of pain could be heard as my warriors sprang into action, fighting the witch. I couldn't blink as I lifted my head, staring at the two large spikes of wood impaling me.

My hand wrapped around the closest spike, snapping it in half with a growl of anger before moving to the second one. The shaking was unavoidable as I pushed my body up and off the base of the spikes. Blood poured down my front and back as I felt my torso begin to heal itself.

It took longer than I had hoped before the feeling returned to my legs, and the ringing in my ears faded behind the sound of the war around me.

Aurora had risen and was at my side, helping me up with a groan of pain.

"Do something!" I ordered, knowing it wasn't my place to order her around, but she was a descendant of the Goddess, for fuck's sake. She should be able to blink Cora out of existence if she wanted.

"I can't. Cora is at her strongest right now, having just taken another's magic, and I haven't had time to recover fully. I was away for a long time, and my magic doesn't recharge instantly. It normally takes a few days, sometimes weeks, to replenish." She looked terrified as she peered around me, cringing at whatever she saw. 1

The sound of Joselin letting out a groan of pain had me turning and forcing my damaged body to race toward my mate. Each step sent a stab of agony through me, and I stumbled forward to get to her as my skin tried to pull itself back together.

If Cora thought that was all it would take to kill me, she had another thing coming.

My mate stood on wobbly legs, one hand aimed at the guards and the other at Cora. Blood dripped from her button nose, and her hands shook as she fought to reverse Cora's attack and deal her own damage.

In the second that Joselin glanced at me, Cora sent my men flying through the air and into the hot springs. I could hear them splashing and gargling as the water swirled around them violently. Aurora rushed past me to get to them, her hand up and her lips moving as she mumbled a spell in what I knew to be Latin.

The Earth opened up, and Cora dropped into it just as Aurora pulled the men from the water with a flick of her wrist.

They panted and coughed up the hot liquid as I limped toward Cora as quickly as possible. We weren't equipped to battle a witch this strong, and I worried that we were only in the way. Still, I wasn't going to give up.

Cora rose higher by the second until she was out of the crater Aurora had created. The dirt beneath her feet lifted her back up as she laughed.

"Do you really think any of you stand a chance? I am more powerful now than you could imagine! I will no longer be under anyone's rule when I am done with you. After I deal with Cyrus, those incompetent children wearing the crown will be next! I am doing what is best for our people!" Cora's eyes were glazed over, looking demented as she cackled.

With each wave of power, Cora's shield continued to protect her, and I could feel Joselin growing tired. Still, her anger drove her on and matching her emotions, I pushed forward.

The next blast caused Cora to stumble back, her shield cracking, flickering angrily. My chest swelled with pride at my mate's power and strength, knowing we were getting closer to winning this battle.

As I raced forward, Cora spun. Her hand shot out and sent me back toward the mouth of the cave. Wet bodies crashed into me as I fought against her, my claws digging into the moist Earth. I propelled myself forward and could feel small rocks cutting into my feet, knees, and hands.

I was dragged three feet back for every step I made forward. But my need to get to Joselin motivated me to keep fighting, to resist her spell. Just as I broke past the other warriors, the Earth trembled, and a flat wall shot up, leaving us in complete darkness and trapping us in the hallway that led to the Sanctum.

"No," I growled out, feeling the panic of being unable to see, let alone protect my mate. My shoulder slammed into the thick wall of packed soil, causing dirt to rain down on us.

Whatever was going on beyond the barrier had the whole place trembling like an Earthquake. My body crashed into the wall again before I faced it and, in desperation, resorted to digging at it like a wild fucking animal.

"Tobias," Henry's voice called out, but I barely heard him over my heavy breathing and my claws ripping chunks out of the wall. "Stop. They will bring the wall down soon. Conserve your strength. Your body is trying to heal."

My muzzle snapped in his direction, spit speckling his face as he placed his hand on my shoulder. The layered voice of my beast was thick with anger as I snarled in his face but made my threat known to every warrior with us. "If you guys don't help me tear this wall down in the next few minutes, I will spend the rest of my life destroying every ounce of happiness you have. Every night patrol, every supply run, double the training. Your families will never see you, and you will be so tired even the healers won't be able to help you. I wouldn't give up on your mates; if you give up on mine, I will make you regret it."

There was only a moment of pause before a body slammed into the wall next to me. I stepped back and matched their speed, crashing my shoulder into the wall, watching with satisfaction as even more dirt fell.

My shoulder ached, and the gaping wound in my chest was still pushing out blood slowly as my body fought to heal while I continued to exert my energy. Henry even gave in and began helping after a few minutes.

It felt like hours before the wall started to crumble, and as soon as my fist shot through it, we hit it again harder.

Aurora was the first one I saw; her body was dripping wet as she gasped for air against the large rocks to our right. The blood that oozed from several lacerations made either apparent that she had been beaten to hell. From the way she stared at us, I knew she had a hand in us taking down the wall.

My eyes widened, and as we rushed out of the tunnel and into the cavern, the sight made us halt. Cora was being held up in the air, screaming in pain as my bloodied mate panted below her. There was a large gash across Joselin's forehead, and we all flinched when Joselin dropped her arm and slammed Cora down onto the ground.

The shimmer of her ward was still present, but it was shattered like glass and was going in and out.

My mate was brutal and impressive.

"Is that all you've got?" Cora laughed, blood spilling down her jaw as she pushed herself onto her hands and knees before standing. Joselin's breathing was ragged, but Cora looked in my direction before I could move forward.

The evil glint in Cora's eye immediately told me she planned to attack me again. I was Joselin's weakness, being her mate, and she would try to exploit that. Joselin never had weaknesses before, just an insane amount of anger and bloodlust.

I had seen her on countless battlefields, and she never faltered. Yet, now that we had mated, she had taken her attention from her target several times to look at me. I knew she was aware of it, but she couldn't seem to help herself. She needed to make sure I was okay as much as I needed to make sure that she was okay.

When her white eyes landed on me, her lids lowered with fear. It was the same feeling I had, knowing she was facing off against Cora. Joselin didn't like me being in the line of fire, but I would take every hit if it meant Joselin didn't have to take a single one.

I let out a growl and charged toward the bloody and beaten Cora as she lifted her hand in my direction.

"I am sick of this!" Joselin growled out, sending a large rock flying from the ground and into Cora's chest.

The woman cried out and stumbled back from the impact as Joselin rushed forward. My heart stopped as Joselin wrapped her arms around Cora, and the two flickered out of the Sanctum.

Everything stilled. The groans of pain from my men were the only sound beyond my heavy breathing, but I couldn't think to spare them my focus.

My mate had just taken one of the most powerful witches I had ever seen to an unknown location, somewhere I couldn't follow them to help. My mate and, potentially, my child was gone.

From how she flickered like static instead of fading, she had gone into the darkness... the place she promised never to go again.

"Where did she go?" I screamed, my voice booming across the opening. Aurora shook her head as Henry moved to her side. I could hear my men letting out sighs of relief that there was a break from fighting if it wasn't over entirely.

But I couldn't seem to pull air in.

'I need Cora's location.' I sent it to Natalie, knowing she was watching the map.

'It's stopped moving.' Natalie's hesitant voice made my anger spike. Queen or not, my mate came first.

'Where did it stop?' I pushed again. 'Where is she?'

'No, Tobias. The crystal stopped. It's not searching for her anymore.'