

The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 183

Seven: Damien

Damien P.O.V.

I hated not having control over my actions. I told myself repeatedly to let the delusional and breathtakingly beautiful wolf go and to mind my own business. Whatever misguided feelings she had for me were just lust. Not a mate bond.

Bears didn't have mates.

Most of them didn't even settle down. When one did, it was a huge deal to my people. They would migrate from all over the world to witness the union.

Most of them would enjoy the company of strangers during their travels. It was common for them to reproduce, but the two parties would separate and go their own way once they had enjoyed each other. Very few mated for life.

I didn't even know who my sire was; not many bears did. I would smell our relationship if I ever crossed him, but my father leaving my mother wasn't traumatic or hurtful the way other species experienced it. There were no abandonment issues under the surface. It was just a part of our life and culture. Our mothers would raise us for the first thirteen to fifteen years of our life, and then we would leave the den, old enough to wander.

I hadn't wanted to live that way, though. As a teenager and in my early twenties, I did my traveling and exploring, but now I was ready to settle down. I built my cabin and wanted to spend my life here.

The occasional woman would pass through my land, but they were always just looking for someone to fuck, perhaps to impregnate them before they went on their way, taking the baby with them whether the man wanted them to or not. Most men didn't even know the women were pregnant

when they parted.

I never had, nor would I let them put me in that situation. I would only fuck in my skin and always wrapped myself up. Even then, I would pull out, trying to be as cautious as possible.

I had planned to make a home. Maybe one day, I would settle down with another bear, fall in love, and have the cubs that my mother pestered me about whenever I visited her. I wasn't going to choose some wanderer who didn't want monogamy and let her take my cubs away from me.

My mother knew my stance on it and was over the moon that her grandchildren would be close enough to visit her.

But now I was confused by everything.

There was a wolf, one of Lycan blood, based on her smell, claiming that I was her soulmate. As much as I wanted to deny it and had, I still found myself being pulled back to her every second of the day.

I hadn't intended to show up here, but my feet started moving when I saw her men leaving without her. Before I knew it, I was at the edge of her camp, watching her carry in a deer and drop it down on an old torn piece of fabric in front of the fire that they had clearly been using for years.

She had already skinned and cleaned it, and I watched as she moved to a pot of water by the side of the camp and poured some over her hands.

Her back stiffened, and I knew she had caught my scent, but she didn't turn. "Damien."

Goddess, the way my name sounded coming from her lips was incredible. When I returned to my home the night before, I still felt her. I was dreaming about the sweet way her skin had tasted and the sound of her soft moan as she rubbed herself against me.

I had been able to smell her on my skin still and knew she would be on my shorts as well. Had they not been soaking wet from the river, I would have slept in them. As soon as that thought went through my mind, I stripped out of my clothes and threw the shorts across the room before sliding into my bed.

Dozens of times last night, I had talked myself down from marching back to her camp and giving in. I wanted to take her lips with mine. I wanted to know if her tongue, among other places, tasted just as good as her skin.

When I finally fell asleep, it was the best one I had in a long while. I dreamt of her, of Charlotte. When I woke up, I couldn't stop myself from seeking her out even if I wanted to, and I didn't want to.

I wanted to explore this feeling. I wanted to understand it even if I couldn't act on it.

I let out a loud exhale through my muzzle in response to her greeting, and she glanced over her shoulder, her hypnotizing green eyes widening when she saw me in my fur. Clearly, she hadn't been expecting me to show up this way, and it made me second guess coming at all. I felt like a teenager again, questioning whether I was wanted or if I was making a fool of myself.

Bears were never wanted by other creatures. The only place I ever felt comfortable and safe was in the forest, alone.

My body froze when she began walking my way. She wasn't dressed the way I had seen her before. Typically, when she was moving through the forest, she wore long pants.

But today, she was in shorts that showed her tanned legs. They were toned and looked like they could go on for miles. There were several positions I wanted to put those legs in.

Her tank top exposed a small strip of skin just above her waistband, and my eyes wanted to roll back in my head.

I had seen her almost naked before. But seeing her here, dressed for a day around camp instead of trampling through the woods, she was in her element. It looked good on her.

"You're a lot bigger than I imagined," Charlotte whispered, moving slowly as if not to spook me.

My head tilted to the side, and I knew she could tell I was smiling at that comment. Her words had been innocent enough, but after a night of dreaming about how she would feel pressed naked against me, I couldn't my mind from going down a dirty path.

"That's not how I meant that, and you know it.' Her finger pointed in my face as she stopped before me. She was so close I could bend my head forward and touch my nose against her breastbone. Did I want to touch her? Would she even let me after how many times I had walked away from her before now?

My thoughts cut off as she placed her hand on the side of my neck, her fingers lacing into my black fur. I shivered at her touch.

Never in my life had I been more attracted to a woman. After how crazy she drove me last night, I was ready to shift to my skin, back her into a tree, and slam deep inside her. While my body screamed for me to give in and enjoy her, my mind told me it was wrong.

Charlotte wanted something that I didn't know I could give her. She wanted a soul mate. While I felt drawn to her and more than attracted to her, I couldn't get in the way of finding her true mate.

I would settle down and start a family one day, but I didn't know her or if she was the one for me, even though she claimed she was. If she wasn't, it would be cruel for me to claim her as mine and take away her chance to find her other half. Plus, her kind didn't like mine, and mine didn't like hers.

My cheek brushed against her breast as I turned my head to face her at the same time she stepped forward, and I wasn't even ashamed that I didn't move away.

Pressing my cheek against her chest hadn't been intentional, but she wasn't pulling away. If anything, her breathing became deeper, and her fingers curled into my fur, holding me to her. If I ever allowed myself the luxury of fucking this woman, I knew she would be a wild one. No matter how regal she seemed, I knew without a doubt that she would be the kind of woman to ruin a man.

"Would you like to stay for lunch?" Charlotte offered, and I paused for a moment before nodding. It was still early morning, and it would be several hours before lunch, but while my mind said no, my head nodded yes.

The smile that spread across her face made my heart thump furiously against my ribs, and I stepped back, needing to regain my composure and sanity. My body shook as I shifted back to my skin, slightly amused when her eyes immediately dropped to my cock, but not at all ashamed as I grew hard under her stare.

There was no reason to hide my attraction to her, and by the pink in her cheeks and the way she licked her lips, she enjoyed seeing my reaction.

"What are you going to feed me?" The rasp in my voice surprised me, but as I looked her over, thinking about all the places I would put my mouth and how I wanted to worship and feast on her body, I couldn't help it.

"Some stew. It's going to take a little bit to cook. You don't have to help me make it, but if you're hungry now, I can get you a snack.' Her left hand rubbed her hip as if drying her palm, but it only forced my attention back to her curves and how badly I wanted to touch her again.

I wanted to joke with her about making her my snack, but I wasn't sure how she would respond.

"From how you're looking at me, it seems you might be the one in the mood for a snack." I raised my eyebrows at her suggestively and watched her shoulders roll back so slowly that it would be hard to notice if I hadn't been staring at her so intently.

A beautiful blush covered her cheeks, but if the color hadn't given her away, she would have hidden it well behind her mask of indifference.

I had to remind myself to take deep breaths and calm down. I needed to figure out this pull to her and then move on so she could find her true mate and get over her infatuation with me.

A voice in my head told me she was only attracted to me because I was a bear. We were looked down on and frowned upon by her kind, and therefore, spending time with me, and especially fucking me, would be the perfect way for her to rebel.

But I wasn't sure who she was rebelling against. The men in her hunting party didn't seem to mind me. If they did, they would have come after me weeks ago when I first crossed paths with her.

Her eyes looked from my face to my hard-on and then back up. "I was offering you a snack. That would be a full meal."

I felt my eyes roll to the back of my head at the image that came to mind of her feasting on me. When I opened them, ready to throw caution to the wind and make a move on her, she had already turned her back to me and was walking back to the fire