

# The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 187

Eleven: Charlie

Charlie P.O.V.

"Did you feel unsafe?" Damien asked, and I shook my head, but there was a slight delay in my reaction. The truth was there were several times that I had felt unsafe. There were more moments during my time in the castle where I was either in immediate danger or was looking over my shoulder for it than I liked to admit.

"Not with him. My brother scared me a lot, he let his anger and beast get the better of him, but he always walked away. He never physically hurt me. He just yelled and shifted to intimidate everyone around him. It's what the pack knows him for." I kept to myself how many people he had killed in his life because there were too many to count.

Executions alone were in the high double digits; if you bring in all the wars and battles he had fought, Killian had killed at least several hundred creatures, maybe thousands.

Regardless of how cruel he acted at times, he was still my brother. Killian was the only family I had left, and I wanted him to be happy. I wanted him to find his mate so he could see that he could be good.

"Do you feel safe now?" Damien watched me closely. I could still feel his stare when I turned away from him.

I glanced over my shoulder at him. I wasn't sure if he was asking if I felt safe around him or if I felt safe around my men, but the answer, either way, was, "Yes."

That made him smile.

Never in my life had I thought of a man as beautiful before. Pretty, sure. But never beautiful, not until I met Damien. His smile was so pure and genuine that I was determined to see it every day for the rest of my life. It was the kind of smile that would make the Goddess fall to her knees before him if She were to see it.

When I returned to his side, he had stopped chopping and held the head of the ax down on the stump with both hands on the end of the handle.

"Is he your only sibling?"

"Yes, do you have any?" I asked as I grabbed the last few pieces of wood and stacked them in the shed.

"I'm sure I do, but none I have met." His eyes were alight with amusement when he saw my surprise, and he shrugged his shoulders. "My father is a wanderer. I have to assume that I am not his only offspring."

The reminder of our different cultures made me feel sick. Would Damien be like that? Would he walk away once we had children? Had he already? How many women had he been with while traveling who ended up pregnant?

"Is that how all bears live?" It was almost impossible not to offend someone by asking how many love children they might have wandering around.

"No. Most of them do, but not all of us. Some settle down for life." Damien picked up the ax, walking past me to place it in the shed.

He was very clear in his distinct difference between 'them' and 'us.' It was as if he wanted to clarify that he hadn't been a part of the wanderers that lived their life freely with no concern for those they left behind. But settling down for life? That meant there was a chance.

A chance for us.

"What was your favorite job?" I blinked at him, surprised that he wanted to continue our conversation even though he seemed done chopping wood. I followed him up the front steps of his porch and sat down on the bench he had there.

It had clearly been handcrafted, and I was wildly impressed when I sat down on it, and it swung backward. Had Damien built a glider? My mate was a man of many talents, and that impressed me.

The bench rocked back a few inches as he sat down next to me, and I curled my legs beneath me as he began rocking us, pushing off from his feet on the bench.

"It was recent. The men left to deal with a Sprite causing trouble in the town." My cheeks burned, and I looked out at the forest. It was so peaceful here. Everything about the location he had chosen was perfect. People would pay millions to have a house here, and he was a smart man to claim it while he could.

"The men went off; what job did you work?" Damien's thigh pressed against my knee as he adjusted in his seat, and I turned to him with my best attempt at a seductive smile.

"I stayed in the camp to watch our stuff and cook lunch."

It took him a fraction of a second to understand the meaning of my statement, and his eyelids lowered slightly as he glanced down at my lips.

I wanted him to make a move, to lean in and kiss me after I had practically jumped him yesterday. But he held still, so still, I was questioning whether he was even breathing.

Embarrassment washed through me at the realization that maybe I was coming on too strong. I had jumped the man and grabbed his dick yesterday, for fuck's sake.

I adjusted, planning on pulling my knee away to give him space, but as soon as I moved, his large hand grabbed my thigh, holding it in place. I cleared my throat, relaxing again as I stared at his hand. "An Ogre."

He chuckled as I shouted the words loudly, failing to regain control over my body and mind.

"My real favorite was an ogre. He had been picking off kids and teenagers in a small town, about two days' journey from here. It turned out that he hadn't been eating them as quickly as we assumed he would. He was keeping most of them in cages for later. We dealt with him and returned most of the missing kids to their families."

Damien hummed in acknowledgment, nodding slowly as he thought about my answer.

It was horrific, and I knew those children would be traumatized by what they saw. But I had been hoping that witnessing the ogre's death would give them closure and being with their families who loved them and would support them in their healing, that they would be okay...one day.

It probably wouldn't be any time soon. The trauma those kids experienced would impact the rest of their life. Some would probably wish they were dead at first, but with the right support system, they could return to a semi normal life.

Damien looked unbothered, but from how his grip on my knee tightened, I knew my story bothered him. "There is too much darkness in the world today. I wish you could just stay somewhere safe."

My heart plummeted to my stomach. The fear that Damien could be like the other men I had grown up with made me feel sick. They did their best to lock me in a tower, wanting to keep me from the horrors of my parents and outside threats.

But everything was a threat to the Princess, the heir to the crown. That's all I was to them.

"Most people don't realize it doesn't matter where you hide. The world always has evil, and it will find you." I whispered. My life now was safer than when I had lived in a castle surrounded by guards. There had been limited happiness between my parents, my brother, the toxic women of the court, and my ex.

Now I was free and at peace. I had chosen my own family and had been chosen by them in return.

"That is true." Damien relaxed his hold on my leg, his thumb sliding up and down, unintentionally driving me wild. "You are strong and beautiful. I imagine many evils would want to break your spirit. I'm happy that you did not let them."

"There is very little in this world that I would let break me." There was an unspoken continuation to that sentence, and I wasn't sure he would hear it. 'But you, you can break me.'

Damien held all the power in our relationship. I was ready to dive in head first, but he had reservations. I understood them, but I wasn't happy about it. Still, I could live with not being marked by him, but I didn't know if I could live without him.

"Good." His deep voice sent shivers down my spine, and I felt so out of control around him that I knew I needed to address what happened between us yesterday.

"Damien," I started, and the low growl I received from him in response made a rush of pleasure course through me. "Yesterday. Was that okay? I mean, did you enjoy..."

I was on cloud nine after he left, but my mind started getting the best of me. Every action and every word from yesterday was on replay until I had second-guessed myself so much that I just shut down and decided to talk to him about it today.

Now, we were here. It was time for us to talk about it, and I felt utterly humiliated addressing the elephant in the room.

His calloused hand tightened on my leg, and I stared at it, too embarrassed to make eye contact with him. "Yes, Charlotte. I enjoyed it."

My eyes closed as I let out a sigh of relief. I didn't know what I was doing with him, but I wouldn't tell him that. I couldn't imagine how many women had thrown themselves at him as I had but had experience... women who knew how to please him.

"I know we are figuring things out between us, but the rule you put in place last night stands, and it applies to you too." Damien's hand slid further up my leg, wrapping around my inner thigh.

My rule?

The only thing I could think of was my humiliating declaration to be the only woman Damien should turn to for pleasure when he had given me no indication of ever wanting more.

"Are you saying that if I want an orgasm, you should be the only man I go to?" My body twisted, wanting to face him head-on to read his expression; I wanted no confusion or misunderstanding between us.

"For now, yes." He nodded, his free hand moving to grab my jaw. "We're just getting to know each other, Charlotte, but that doesn't mean that we can't enjoy each other while we do it. I want to take care of you. I want to please you. If you're wet because of me, then only I should be able to touch you."

Yes, please.

I nodded, licking my lips. My eyes dropped, but I couldn't see Damien's hand as he used his thumb to pull down on my bottom lip.

"If things don't work out between us as we get to know each other, if we decide the obstacles to get there are bigger than what we would be worth if we did become something...." Damien looked angry as he spoke like the words tasted wrong or were being forced from him, but I understood where he was coming from. [novelxo.com](http://novelxo.com) fast update

He had already told me he didn't believe we were mates. But I did. And I knew he was mine. I would just have to prove it to him.

"That won't happen, but I can agree to that. I'm going to get you to see this my way. You may resist the idea that you can have a soulmate, but it doesn't make it any less true." I pressed forward, stealing a kiss. He moved his hand from my jaw to grip the back of my head, but I pulled away. I was going to let him make the first move the next time.

Until then, I would enjoy teasing him. I would make him want me so badly that he couldn't think of anything else.

"Come on," I whispered as I stood up and put some space between us, my hips swaying more than usual with each step. "I'm ready for some food. Let's go hunting."

Looking over my shoulder, I saw Damien following behind me. The light in his eyes and the smile on his lips made my nerves melt away.

I would win this. It was just a matter of time.