

## The Beast And The Blessed by Ashley Breanne Chapter 10

### Chapter 10

#### Ten: Natalie

#### Natalie's P.O.V.

A loud knocking woke me from my dream of running through the forest in my fur, and I

groaned as the memory of it vanished just as quickly. I knew what my dream was about, but once my eyes were open I couldn't picture it any longer. The sights, the smells, the feeling of it... it was all gone.

It had always been my favorite dream, and I had it frequently.

But it was a dream that I had no expectation of ever becoming reality.

Instinctively, my arm slid across the bed, seeking out the warm body that had held me

last night.

While I had been waking up every few minutes before he had joined me, once I was in

his arms, I had the best sleep of my life. Considering he was still a stranger, it seemed

odd that I found that kind of comfort in him.

The lack of his presence made me look to my side, seeing my mate's side of the bed

empty. The blanket had been pulled back smooth against the bed, and the pillow had

no indent to show any sign that he had ever been there.

I knew it had been too good to be true. He probably slept somewhere else last night with one of his women, and I had just been dreaming of him being here.

Yet, the memory of him nuzzling my neck and claiming me as his was strong, unlike

the dreams that had already dissipated from my mind.

I looked around the room to make sure I was still alone and that no one could see me

before leaning over and sniffing the pillow. His smell wasn't as strong as it would have

been if I had shifted, but it was still there. He had been in the bed, holding me.

A smile stretched across my face, and I fell back onto my pillow. The king wasn't as

cold as he acted. He had a soft spot, and if I wanted this to work, I would just need to

work my way into it.

A flash of Jake appeared in my mind, but the pain that I had felt in my chest from the past two days did not accompany it as I had expected. I didn't want to get my heart broken again, but I didn't have much of a choice. I could either try to find happiness here with the man I was to mate with, or I could attempt to live in the shadows as a woman who would only be used for her body.

I lifted my head to glance at the door as the knocking occurred again, the person hitting their knuckles on the wood harder and faster this time, impatient. "One moment," I yelled as I rushed out of the bed, adjusting my pajamas to make sure I was decent before I ran to the door and pulled it open.

Joselin stood with one hand resting on the doorframe tapping her fingers impatiently, while her other hand sat on her hip. "Morning, sleeping beauty." I looked over her shoulder, smirking with amusement as Tobias's eyes trailed over Joselin's backside. "What can I do for you, Joselin?"

Her sports bra and tight yoga pants left little to the imagination, and I figured that Tobias was getting quite the eyeful. "It's time to start your training. You have a job to do, your majesty."

The mocking way she laughed out the title was exactly how I felt. I knew I had no power as of yet, and would not wear a crown until I was marked. The fact that people were bowing to me yesterday and treating me as if I was something special made me want to laugh. There was no reason for them to see me as anything other than a human.

I had expected that I would be thrown into this world quickly and would have to learn what my role in the kingdom was. In my mind, it was a lot of paperwork, and building relationships with members of the court and other countries. The last thing I expected, although I should have based on how she was dressed, was for her to bring me to a giant gym on the north side of the castle.

Several heads turned to stare as I made my way through the rows of machines and free weights with Joselin leading the way to the open mat on the floor. It was the largest room I had ever seen, more than likely spanning the entire bottom

floor of this part of the castle.

There were large metal roll-up doors open leading out to the training field where Lycans and wolves were sparring. The men in their Lycan form towered over the women in their wolf form but watching the women fight was inspiring.

They were stronger than any regular wolf shifter in my old pack. The females born with Lycan blood may not have been able to turn into the Lycan form, but they appeared to be just as strong and possibly faster.

It was incredible.

“I’m going to be sparring against them?” I whispered, feeling stupid when they laughed, having obviously heard me. Heat filled my cheeks, but Joselin just smirked

as she gestured for me to go over the treadmill.

“Not yet, your highness. Today I want to see where you are at, so we have a starting

point.” I got on nervously, aware of all the eyes on me. Those who hadn’t paid me any

attention before all seemed to focus in on me at Joselin’s serious use of my title this

time.

I couldn’t figure out if they wanted me to fail to prove I was not worthy as a human or if

they wanted me to impress them as their king’s chosen.

“Is this for my health, to learn self-defense, or are we actually training for something?”

My question was met by a sharp glare from Joselin. “Is there something I should know?”

“Please begin.” She said as I climbed on the machine.

I nodded, swallowing hard as she increased the speed until I was working at a jog.

There was no way I would be giving up soon. She wanted to see what my starting point was, and I wanted to prove myself.

I had lasted half an hour before I could no longer force myself to keep going. My lungs

were burning, my legs felt hot, and I had sweat coating my clothes, making me uncomfortable as I knew the people around me could smell me.

Joselin was running on the treadmill next to me, not seeming bothered even though she was moving at a sprint.

It was the familiar tickle of my hair standing off my damp neck and arms that encouraged me to keep going. I could feel him getting closer like a wolf stalking a deer.

“Joselin,” His deep voice rang out, silencing the room as every member of his pack

stopped what they were doing to turn to their king. Joselin flickered in the corner of my eye like a hologram before disappearing completely, her treadmill continuing to run even though she had vanished.

I turned my head, unable to resist as I eyed my mate. The white button-up shirt and black dress pants he was wearing made my mouth water, and it was clear by his size

that it was custom-made. He probably spent more time working out in the gym than

anyone in the pack. He was a giant.

I shook my head, trying to clear the memory of him holding me from my mind.

I had to remind myself how badly it hurt when Jake broke my heart. Granted, his betrayal now felt like it was so long ago, so insignificant, even though it had only been

a few days. It was odd how it seemed to bother me less with each passing moment.

That was my previous life, and I had bigger and better things to look forward to. I needed to get on my mate's good side. Even if we wouldn't have the fairytale romance

that I had dreamed of as a little girl, he had intertwined our fates when he selected me. We could at least be friends and have a civil life together to raise our kids in a happy family.

His hazel eyes turned red as he angrily whispered down to Joselin, but his voice could

not be heard over the sound of my machine. I wasn't even sure the people closest to

him would be able to hear him.

My rhythm was disturbed, and I stumbled to correct myself when his angry glare turned to me. Was he angry with how unfit I was? Was my red and sweat-covered body disgusting to him?

I looked away as I grabbed the bar in front of me and regained my pace. As much as I

wanted to call it quits, I couldn't do it. Not with him watching.

There was no way to quiet my panting, and I let out a small squeak as Joselin appeared in front of my machine. The large smile told me that she was pleased with

herself, and I could feel the king walking further away without having to look up.

"Did I do something wrong?" I gasped as I placed my hand on my side, trying to fight

against the stitch in my muscles. I had thought I had worked through it, but it had

come back with a vengeance.

“Not at all. Just mates doing what they do best, being possessive and protective. He was mad that I was working you so hard. I had to tell him that you could have stopped

whenever you wanted to.” She walked around me, moving to stand with a leg on either side of her machine before expertly taking off at a run again, not missing a beat

on the moving belt.

I nodded, lifting my hand to lower my speed to a walk but paused, rejuvenated, and motivated to do more when she spoke again.

“I think you impressed him.”

