

The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 168

Sixty-One: Joselin

Joselin's P.O.V.

Tobias held me tightly that night, and what was supposed to be an hour-long power nap ended up being a full night's sleep. I had a moment of panic when I realized how much time I had lost. We were lucky that nothing had happened with Cora while we were asleep, and I couldn't risk wasting any more time.

Yet, the way Tobias's breath fanned over my neck and he nuzzled against me, felt so good that it almost hurt me to pull away from him when I woke.

As soon as I did, Tobias was up and on high alert. He scanned the room before his gaze landed on me, and I felt guilty that he was so on edge. I knew it wasn't just because of Cora. He was concerned about our relationship too.

His dark hair was in disarray, and his beautiful brown eyes could have melted my soul if he wanted them to.

"Good Morning," I whispered before approaching him and kissing his cheek, hoping he wouldn't smell my morning breath.

Any concern I had about that was washed away when he wrapped his arms around me and kissed his mark on my neck. It sent a shiver through me, and when he pulled back, I could see the warmth and happiness in his eyes.

He looked like a completely different man than last night.

"You look beautiful." His deep voice washed over me, and my cheeks flushed at his compliment. I knew it was a lie. I had just rolled out of bed. My hair and teeth hadn't been brushed, and I knew with my luck that I would probably have dried drool on my chin.

"Thank you," My hands traveled up his biceps, and never in my life had I been happier that he preferred to sleep naked. It was, by far, one of the best sights a woman could wake up to. "You look incredible."

"Last night was one of the best night's sleep I have had in a long time," Tobias murmured as he stepped back, pulling me with him to the bathroom. He looked happy. He sounded happy.

The sudden switch in his demeanor from last night, when he was concerned about our relationship, to now was startling. Something had changed, but I wasn't sure what it was.

"Shower with me." His insistence made my mouth water, and everything in me screamed to agree. I needed to shower anyway, but I could only ignore Cora for so long before she acted out again. Tobias noticed my hesitation as I glanced back to the table where the list of locations sat. He turned my chin to face him. "Please, it can be fast."

The day I said no to showering with him was when I had lost my mind, especially when he said please, like he would be willing to beg for that small moment with me.

My body felt hot, and there was a needy throbbing between my legs as I allowed him to pull me into the bathroom. He stripped my shirt off first, his hands sliding down my sensitive breasts to my waist. His thumbs ran along the band of my shorts before he slowly lowered those as well.

I almost expected him to pin me against the shower wall and fuck me hard and fast. But he didn't.

He left me with a kiss, telling me to use the restroom before leaving the room. I was stunned and would have been embarrassed that he just turned around and walked away if he hadn't been sporting a raging hard-on.

After I took care of my business, washed my hands, and brushed my hair and teeth, I found Tobias standing over the list of Cora's known locations. Only it wasn't the same list as before. A fresh sheet of paper was on top with places I hadn't pinned on the map yet.

Cora was still popping around the world, and I had guards tracking her movements. The list they had given me was shorter than the one before, and I knew she was slowing down. Her magic had to be exhausted.

I would have to look at the bigger map later to see if there was something in each location I had been missing.

He smiled at me before kissing the top of my head and going back into the bathroom.

It was only a minute later that he was done, and I was being pulled from the list once more and dragged away right under the spray of the warm water.

The hot, passionate sex I had anticipated was a distant dream. I had expected it, craved it even, but Tobias never gave in.

He washed every inch of my body more than once, making sure to be thorough with slow and loving touches and strokes. Once satisfied, he took the shower head and rinsed my body with water before following the trail with his lips.

My eyes closed, and I savored every moment of his attention and affection. It reminded me of when he told me that same thing all those weeks ago. Even without sex, having his undivided attention on me and having him show me how much he loved and wanted me was the best feeling in the world. My body melted in his hold, and I felt all my stress leave me briefly.

When it was over, I felt brand new, ready to take on the day and anything that could be thrown my way.

At least, I was until I saw Cyrus moving stiffly toward us through the hallway. He looked sore and in pain. The color hadn't returned to his face, and his eyes were just as bloodshot as they had been the night before.

I was alone with two men that I was keeping important secrets from.

The suspicion that I was withholding from Tobias could wait. I had a reason to keep that one to myself until after we dealt with Cora.

But not telling Cyrus about Cora using the blood I had stolen from him, and she had then stolen from me... it felt awful.

"Hi," I whispered, almost expecting him to yell at me or attack me for what I had done, but he nodded at us with a tight smile.

"How can I help?" His question was unexpected, but I also hadn't anticipated a greeting or pleasantries after what I had caused. I looked back over my shoulder at Tobias before glancing back at Cyrus. "I was told you've been tracking her, and she's up to something. Maybe I can help figure out what she's planning. I am the one she's trying to kill. I might see something that you've missed."

His tone was hollow. The annoyingly chipper way he usually spoke was gone, and the wrinkles around his eyes that normally stuck out from his constant smiling were barely showing.

If I hadn't felt so guilty when I looked at him, I might have snapped about the slight and seemingly unintentional dig at my abilities.

"We would appreciate the help. After we eat, we can go to Killian's office and work there." My stomach growled, and Tobias touched my lower back, gently guiding me toward the private dining hall. I was in no mood to eat with the rest of the pack.

Cyrus opened his mouth to argue, but one low growl from Tobias had him snapping his jaw shut with a sigh of frustration through his nose.

My stomach only rolled more when we entered the room and saw the group of people already eating. Killian sat at the head of the table with Natalie to his left. Aurora and Henry were on his right, with Aisha and Margot on the other side.

There were still several open seats, and I moved forward to sit next to Natalie, dipping my head in greeting.

"Heard you had us locked up," Aisha said snidely before taking an elbow to the gut from Margot. Those two women couldn't get along even when they had a common enemy. "Would you stop doing that?!"

It was a wonder that they always sat and stood by each other. Like siblings who were stuck together and loved to annoy each other and fight, but they still stood by each other when they had the choice to walk away.

I hadn't realized I had been surrounded by so many families, chosen or by blood, until recently; it wasn't until I started thinking about having one of my own.

"She means to say that we get it, but you should know by now that we would never turn on our people," Margot said with a sickly sweet smile that made me narrow my eyes.

"Maybe you're the one who turned on us, and you're just trying to shift the blame so you can get away with it. You were close with Talia, and she turned on us. Why wouldn't you do the same?" Aisha pointed her fork of eggs in my direction, a chunk plopping onto the tablecloth.

Tobias let out a feral growl as he glared at the fork. She pulled it back and stabbed it into the food on her plate to gather her next bite, silencing him. My eyebrows rose at his overly protective reaction, but he paid me no mind.

"That's enough," Natalie said with the perfected look of a disappointed mother. Boy, she was ready for a baby. "You have all been cleared, and we appreciate your loyalty to the people and the crown. We must work together to get to the bottom of this."

"Yes, Your Majesty," Margot said, with her back straight and her nose up, eating with graceful movements while Aisha dug in next to her like a prisoner, hunched over her plate with an overflowing fork on its way to her big mouth.

My eyes glanced over to Cyrus as servers placed our plates down in front of us. Cyrus didn't bother to lift his fork as he stared at it with disgust.

Yeah, food hadn't been appealing to me after, either.

When there was a knock on the door before it was pushed open again, I turned to look over my shoulder. Everyone had been fed, and the guards knew to remain outside the doors to keep conversations private. The servers only came in and out when needed, and their presence was made known with a knock to inform the room to fall silent if they didn't want other ears to be privy to the conversation.

Blanche stood in the middle of the double doors, shaking like an overexcited puppy. A server rushed up behind her with a plate of food and waited patiently while Blanche curtsied to Killian and Natalie before she took the seat next to Cyrus.

Tobias turned to glare at me, but I just shrugged. 'It wasn't me.'

Cyrus looked downright mortified to have her so close to him, and I didn't know if it was because he was scared for her to see the darkness he had fallen into now or because she had been there to witness it when he had been attacked.

Aisha raised a perfectly manicured eyebrow at her before turning her fork in Blanche's direction. "Are we letting just anyone eat in here now? Who are you?"

"Blanche is going to help us. We spoke briefly last night, and I was very impressed with her quick thinking. She is very intelligent, and I would like her input." Natalie said with a smug smile that faded when she realized what a mistake she had made trying to play matchmaker with that Chihuahua.

The second Blanche opened her mouth, I felt my annoyance spike, and my knuckles turned white around my fork. I couldn't imagine living with that

woman, and if Cyrus chose to be with her, I'd imagine he would go insane rather quickly. My glare turned to Natalie, and she forced an innocent smile.

I was going to kill her for this, but it also would motivate me to find and get rid of Cora quickly to earn my freedom back.