

The Beast And The Blessed by Ashley Breanne Chapter 5

Five: Natalie

Natalie's P.O.V.

I had never been so happy and terrified at the same time. The house was empty, and everything was free for the taking as I collected a bag with clothes, money, and food. Every few minutes, I would hear the creak of the house shifting or noise outside, and my heart would stop.

I was waiting for them to come home and find me stealing. Even worse, I was waiting for a Lycan to pop out of the walls and rip my heart from my chest.

They had already made their way onto our land. Even without my wolf present, I could feel them. Their power was unlike anything I had ever experienced before. The hairs on my neck and arms were sticking away from my body, and my stomach was rolling with nerves.

I threw my backpack over my shoulder, keeping my bad arm as close to my chest as possible to prevent irritating the damaged appendage further. I had to make it three miles to the border and another six before I reached a human town. Once I was there, I could hop a ride and go anywhere I wanted. I could be free.

The back door squealed as I pushed it open, not bothering to shut it behind me as I took off at a run through the trees. The Lycans would only be able to serve as a distraction for so long. Once my parents got home, I had no idea what would be in store for me. Would they come after me for stealing, or would they let me go so they could be free of me?

Either way, I pushed myself harder, wanting to at least make it off their land before they realized I was gone.

I ran out of breath quickly, the throbbing in my arm distracting me as I stumbled over a branch but caught my footing and continued on. The border felt like it was moving farther away the longer I ran, but I couldn't let myself slow now. I was too close.

A large shadow flashed by my right, hidden in the trees. I gasped, startled as I glanced to the side, not seeing anything there. Yet, the warning in my head was telling me that I was no longer alone. The further I ran, the more I began to notice

my companion. The large, hulking form would appear in the corner of my eye and then disappear when I would turn to look.

It was the loud footsteps and snarling that joined us that sent a shiver all the way down to my toes. The feral sound was more than a warning. It was a threat.

To my left, two more figures appeared, running alongside me on two feet. Their beast-like appearance made my lungs contract in panic, and I couldn't take in any more air.

I had never imagined my end would be at the hands of Lycans.

“You can stop running now, as entertaining as your attempt was.” A female voice called out before she manifested several steps ahead. Her white eyes bore into my soul, and I slid to a stop. My uneven panting seemed to amuse her as she looked me over. It was unsettling not being able to see what she was looking at as she didn't have visible irises to give her away, but the way her head moved told me that I was under her scrutiny as she looked me up and down.

The Lycans moved closer, surrounding me as if they were about to feast on their prey. Their half-shift state was terrifying to see so close. I had stood in the crowd on previous Offerings but never had to face one for myself.

The four around me let out animalistic noises, talking among themselves before one of the monsters on my left reached for me, making me jump to the side.

I could feel the border only a few yards away, and while I knew they would just chase me into the unclaimed land, I was determined not to give up. I stared into the beast's green eyes, seeing the amusement and the challenge in them. He knew I was going to run, but it didn't stop me from turning on my heels and sprinting right into the chest of another.

I screamed as they wrapped their arms around me, throwing me over their shoulder and making my backpack hit me upside the head. My arms and legs thrashed as I continued to struggle, willing to do anything to get free.

His muscular build seemed to tighten further around me like a boa constrictor as he restrained me and took off at a run. The harder I kicked, hit, and struggled to be free, the tighter his hold on me became.

I let out a scoff of disbelief as we broke through the tree line. What had been over twenty minutes of running for me was less than five for the creatures holding me prisoner.

“I’m a human.” The terrified plea came out in a shaky and desperate voice. “I never shifted. I’m just a human.”

The statement was met by laughter from the beasts surrounding the Lycan holding me. They had never required me to be present at The Offering before. I was nobody.

No Lycan would want me as a mate. A simple werewolf didn’t even want me.

The only possibility that made sense to me was that I was about to be punished for something that I more than likely didn’t do. My parents wouldn’t have gone back to their home yet, and unless the Lycans wanted to witness my beating for disrespecting Haylee, they had no use for or reason for me to be brought back to them.

I could hear my pack mumbling in irritation and disbelief as I was carried into view before being unceremoniously dumped onto the ground. The involuntary shout of pain from trying to catch myself with my injured arm silenced the pack, and I panted as I pushed back the tears, staring at the dead grass.

I could feel him, the King.

His powerful aura was calling to me, demanding that I submit to him. I wanted to look up as he approached, but I was petrified. My gaze was locked on the dirt in front of his massive paws, my body shaking with adrenaline and fear as I waited for him to speak. Would he kill me for running during The Offering? Did he even care about a pathetic human’s presence?

A low growl came from the beast before me, and I felt my body warm as goosebumps covered my skin.

I had heard countless growls and snarls in my time among the pack. The sound that came from the king was unlike anything I had ever heard before. There was a darkness to it that made me want to cower away, but also a twisted pleasurable purr beneath the surface that had me convinced he was going to enjoy killing me.

“Her?” The voice that tormented me for years screeched out, and I turned my head to look at the women lined up on their knees. Savannah stared at me in disbelief and disgust before she turned her glare to the king. “You want her? She’s a human!”

My eyes widened at her blatant disrespect, not comprehending her words. He released a loud roar that made every member of the pack flinch and drop their heads lower in submission. With my face only a few inches from the ground, I watched with terror as the king moved away from me and stood before Savannah.

The greater distance between us allowed me to see more of him. He was larger than the other Lycans, his body covered in knotted scars that were visible beneath his fur.

His claw was the size of Savannah’s head as he punched it through her chest, ripping her heart out the other side and sending the pack into a flurry of sobs and terrified mumblings for mercy.

“You will do well to teach your pack to respect those above them.” The witch’s voice called out again, but I was trapped staring at Savannah’s body as the king pulled his hand out, and it fell to the ground.

I was aware of him walking back to me, but I couldn’t take my eyes away. It was the large hand that grabbed me by my backpack and lifted me off the ground like a doll that brought me back to reality, and I instinctively met the glowing red eyes of the Lycan King.

His deep voice sent a chill through me as he spoke, “Mine.”

