

The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 166

Fifty-Nine: Joselin

Joselin's P.O.V.

The news was so shocking that I had difficulty picturing it. Cora and Talia. I didn't even know they swung that way, but if they were happy...But, I guess they weren't happy since Talia had chosen Queen Lillian's side during the war a few months ago, knowing it would result in Cora's death if they won.

It made sense for that to be who she had been talking about. But hell... Cora and Talia.

Two women so bitter and angry with the world, living in one house would have been like two angry hornets trapped in a box together. Did they live together? They didn't two decades ago when Aurora had noticed their relationship. Nor did they for the next decade while Talia lived in the tower and was in charge of taking care of me.

I would never forgive Talia for choosing to side with the previous queen and vampires in their attempt to take the crown out of the hands of the Lycans. She had raised me from when I was found at eleven years old until I was an adult.

Then Killian had chosen me to be his Royal Advisor. I was more of an advisor of magic, but I would never argue against the title; it made me feel badass. Talia was livid that she had to step down for the next generation.

Talia had been losing her mind for years at that point, though, and even if he had chosen someone else to take over, I would agree it had been the right choice to remove Talia from her position.

She had been best friends with the queen. Talia became furious, siding with the queen when Lillian went mad after her fated mate and unborn child were killed. The two women had joined together and created an army of vampires to remove Killian, Lillian's son, from wearing the crown.

I had been heartbroken that the woman who had raised me had so easily thrown a dagger into my back on that battlefield. Talia had been willing to kill me just as easily as my own birth mother had.

I had never been more grateful when Natalie killed her, heating her from the inside out until her organs burst and her blood boiled. It was part of why I would always deeply respect Natalie.

But to think that Talia might have been seeing Cora the entire time, and I never knew it...

Aurora's eyebrows pinched together as she eyed me with confusion as if I should have known. But I wasn't the only one in the dark here. Killian didn't know either. 'I don't know how long they were together. After that, I got pregnant, and my visits were few and far between, and I don't know of the others she had been with.'

"No, no, no!" Cyrus's pleading made me turn suddenly, but the healer had already injected the syringe into his arm.

'What are you doing to him?' I snapped, walking over with a glare, but Tobias stopped me with an arm around my waist. I felt more protective over Cyrus than ever before, and I knew it was because of the guilt I had felt about his blood being stolen.

"His body and mind need to recover. It's a sedative that will put him out for a few hours." The man muttered, but Flora looked just as bothered as I was.

As Cyrus closed his eyes, I felt panic bloom in my chest. "Did you not hear him? He doesn't want the darkness! He could barely close his eyes before!"

"He needs to rest. If he were to force himself to stay awake, he would just exacerbate the situation." He meant well, but I was fuming. My hand shot out, and the healer flew back against the wall.

"Joselin!" Killian snapped, his voice deep and layered as his beast came forward. "Stand down. You're out of line."

I held the man against the wall for a few more seconds as I debated refusing Killian's command before giving in and letting the man drop to the floor.

'Let's take this somewhere else. We can get Cyrus to the infirmary with guards and have a private conversation in the office.' Natalie's soothing voice called out, but I shook my head.

'Healers and guards won't be able to do shit if Cora shows up wielding her and Rona's magic,' I argued, knowing Killian was right. I was out of line. They may have been okay with me speaking my mind in private, but there were healers and guards in the room with us, and I was being unprofessional and insubordinate.

'He's unconscious now anyway,' Charlie said, stepping forward as she looked at Cyrus. "What is he?"

His identity was no longer a secret. We had been discussing his powers for a while now, so everyone in the room knew he had magic. Those that weren't in the room would know because he had used magic in front of the packed dining hall.

'He's a spell caster.'

Her emerald eyes widened with surprise, and I was relieved that she immediately understood and didn't ask any stupid questions. "I haven't heard of a male witch in a long time. I remember reading about them when

I was a kid, but it was centuries ago that they were last seen."

Princess Charlotte, a fucking gift from the goddess. She may have abandoned both Killian and me for a life of chasing and hunting down monsters, but having her here was exactly what we needed right now. She had knowledge that no one else did, and her years of hiding from the toxic people of the court and reading books were now coming in handy.

I wasn't ready to forgive her yet, and because her hunting party hadn't been at Rona's cottage, the bitter side of me just figured she had abandoned them too.

'Do you know what book that was in?' Natalie asked, looking around her study like the book would be there. If anything, it would be in the archives, but when Charlie shook her head, disappointment filled me.

'No, I went back for it a few years later, but I couldn't find it. But there had been a whole council of male witches. They had been wiped out, and the council had been replaced.' Charlie moved further into the room, looking uncomfortable but forced a smile on her face and squeezed Natalie's hand in greeting before giving her brother a painfully awkward hug.

Killian wrapped his arms around her tightly, glad she was back. He missed her everytime she left, but when she returned and threw little comments at him about how he had let her down and wasn't a good king, he wanted her to leave again.

She wasn't good for him, and I knew her selfish ways were the product of her upbringing. Charlie wasn't good for me either, but I continued as I had been since she walked out of our lives several years ago. I would plaster on a smile, be polite, and show feigned excitement that the princess had returned home.

'No doubt replaced by the ones who led the charge to get rid of them,' I mumbled bitterly. Just how many male witches had been killed? If we kept committing genocide at this rate, there would only be a handful of species left in the next few centuries.

I spun on my heels, making brief eye contact with Tobias before heading toward the door.

'Where are you going?' Natalie called out, sounding curious.

'I need to see the history of the council lineage.' My mind was going a mile a minute. There had been new bloodlines on the council through the decades, but I had suspicions.

I heard Charlie chasing after me and Tobias. She should stay with her brother, see how he is holding up, and reconnect with him.

Even though I doubted she knew they were trying for a baby or some of the changes Killian had made to better the kingdom, I was glad she was joining Tobias and me to locate that book.

'I noticed your mark,' Charlie said softly as we walked down the hallway quickly. I turned to look at her briefly, not sure if I wanted to catch up with her right now. Was there a point to bond when she would just leave us all again when this was over if she even stayed that long?

I couldn't be mad at her for leaving, everyone had to live their own lives at some point, but the way she had gone about it was the coward's way, and I had lost most of my respect for her that day.

'Yes.' My reply made Tobias smile as I glanced at him for help.

Yes. That was not exactly the correct response to that statement.

Charlie picked up on my tension and let out a deep breath before trying again. "Congratulations."

I bit my lip, pushing out a "Thank you" as we reached the library. I was grateful for the subject change as I rushed to the back where the archive was and immediately located the ledger. I flipped through the pages.

Tobias was reading over my shoulder, and he gripped the back of my seat.

It was right there. There had never been a break in her chair's lineage. Her ancestors would have been a part of the genocide that wiped the Earth of the male spell casters.

Cora wanted to keep magic controlled by women, by her.

'Her family was one of the original members. She would have known about what they did to the spell casters. She just lost her... well, whatever Talia was to her, and now Cyrus popped up. She probably felt like her position on the council was threatened too. I wonder if Talia had tried to help her with the ritual in the mountains that night,' I muttered as Charlie continued to search the shelves.

'So, she is trying to keep the council run by women.' Charlie stopped at the end of the aisle, her fingers pushing at the leaning books and straightening them. When she released her hold, they slid back down. Charlie turned with a shake of her head. "I still don't see the book on them."

'She probably took it,' Tobias grumbled, and Charlie's eyes almost popped out of her head.

'You spoke! He spoke!' She shoved her finger in his direction and turned her incredulous stare from him to me. I rolled my eyes as she let out a glee-filled laugh. "When did that happen? Holy crap! Is that a mark, Tobias? I thought the two of you..."

'We are. That is my mark.' I said nonchalantly, looking through the names again. Two generations after the genocide, Aisha's family joined the council. Three after that was when Margot's family joined.

I could only hope that meant they were clear of any involvement.

'Wow! I didn't know you could mark someone. I am so happy for the two of you! I can't believe I missed so much over the past few months.' Her excitement switched to sadness as her curly brown hair slid over her shoulder to shield her face as she looked down at the book I had been studying.

'Yeah, well, that happens when you leave for long periods of time and don't ever check in.' The room fell silent. I closed my eyes and instantly

regretted my words. She walked away for her mental health and left all her responsibilities to Killian and me.

'So, you're mad about that too? I left to find happiness, and I did. I'm sorry that I hurt you when I left.' Charlie whispered, reaching her hand out, but I stepped back with the book.

'I'm just saying next time, maybe let us know that the only heir to the crown is still alive occasionally.' My tongue ran along my lips feeling just how chapped they were. I should really take better care of myself instead of always putting everyone else first.

Charlie smiled sadly at me, and I knew without needing to say it that she understood I had been hurt by her leaving, but I had also been worried about her while she was away. When her hand landed on my arm this time, I didn't move back. "Of course, I'll make sure to stay in touch."

I nodded, swallowing hard. Fucking horm...emotions. Just emotions.

'I need to go check on the location tracker on Cora.' I couldn't get out of the room fast enough. Tobias laced his fingers in mine, giving me the support I needed without a single word.

He pulled me into a side room, cupping my cheeks in his calloused palms. "Are you okay, sweetheart?"

I nodded, leaning up and pressing my lips against his in a greedy kiss. He was all I needed. Even if everyone turned on me or left me, as long as I had him, I would be okay.