

## **The Beast And The Blessed by Ashley Breanne Chapter 12**

### **Chapter 12**

#### **Twelve: Natalie**

##### **Natalie's p.o.v.**

I felt ridiculous dressed in such a stunning gown. It was the kind of thing that made me

second guess whether or not I was fit to be here. The fabric brushed the ground,

shimmering from a pale blue to a pearly white as the light hit it at different angles.

The deep cut that ran between my breasts left the small diamond-crusted wolf

pendant to be on display from its long silver chain. Contrary to human beliefs, which

they had to learn the hard way, silver did nothing to us, and I adored the necklace as

soon as I saw it.

Killian's eyes widened as I rounded the corner, and I had to remind myself to breathe

normally as he stood tall and proud with his hands clasped in front of him with his feet

shoulder-width apart. The crisp black suit was different than what I had seen him in

before, and I let my eyes roam over the more formal wear.

He was a fine man indeed, one that any woman would be lucky to mate with. But I felt

a brief moment of longing for more, for a relationship. I wanted a man to look at me

the way Killian was and for it to mean something. For him, it seemed to mean nothing,

and that was the way he acted as if he wanted it to stay.

The glowing red eyes of his beast forcing his way forward made me want to melt into

the floor as he stared at me, and heat traveled up my chest and neck as I

blushed. As

I looked back up shyly, the red was gone, and in its place were the cold mask and

hazel eyes that I had grown frustrated by.

As he turned to face the door, I moved up next to him, gently placing my hand in the crook of his arm.

“You’re back to being cold then,” I said softly, trying to keep my voice low enough that others wouldn’t hear. “For a second, I thought you were actually happy that I was joining you for dinner.”

I could feel him looking down at me as I stared ahead at the door. “You look very nice,” I whispered, knowing I was only embarrassing myself further by not keeping my thoughts to myself.

His arm pulled closer to his body, taking my hand with him. My hope that it was a move intended to comfort me vanished as soon as he used the hand of the arm I was holding to adjust his jacket.

It was the first time we were being presented to the pack as a united front. Yet, I still knew nothing about Killian beyond how he smelled when he held me at night, that he was cold, and that he was rumored to be cruel to those that opposed him. I had no knowledge of my place in his world and felt butterflies swarming my stomach.

The servants at the doors stared straight ahead, refusing to look at either of us,

waiting patiently for US to signal that we were ready to enter.

“Before we go in there,” I whispered, looking up at him and seeing his empty hazel

eyes staring back at me. “What am I? Am I to sit back quietly as your chosen, or am I to take the role of your partner before you’ve even marked me?”

...If he were to ever mark me. He didn’t exactly seem to want me here. The uncertainty didn’t sit well with me, and I watched his eyes soften for a moment before he looked back up at the door. “You are my mate and are to be treated as the queen, marked or not.”

I hadn’t realized how tight my grip on his arm was until he placed his hand atop mine and nodded at the servants. They pulled both doors open, revealing the large dining room. The pack sat in row after row of tables. I knew it wasn’t everyone in his pack. There were hundreds, if not thousands more. But having so many eyes on me made me feel like I was back in my old pack, tied to the whipping post with the entire pack watching in satisfaction as I begged for mercy.

“His Majesty, the King,” My chest filled with pride as the pack rose to their feet, and Killian stepped forward with his head held high. The lack of introduction for me, was not surprising as I held no official title yet. Even if people wanted to address me as Her Highness in a smaller setting, it was a title reserved for members of the royal family beneath their ruler. It was not and would never be my title unless he chose to use me as a breeder and then marked another.

Once he marked me, I would become the Queen Consort. I would stand at my king’s side as his partner. 1

It was an incredible sight to see each person dip their head in respect at

the same  
time, and Killian guided me to the table at the head of the room, pulling  
out my seat  
before prying my hand from his arm.  
Our table held many other familiar faces, but none of which I had  
interacted with  
beyond Joselin. I was thankful that she sat to my left and that I wouldn't  
be as alone  
as I felt. She dipped her head in respect before smiling brightly at me,  
the black lines  
etched into her skin, seeming to vibrate against their pale background. It  
would have  
appeared ominous to anyone who did not know her. To anyone that did,  
it was still  
clear that she was not someone to be messed with, but was not because  
of her looks.  
It was her temper.  
As I sat, Killian did too, and the rest of the pack followed suit.  
The food was brought out shortly after, and I did my best to hide my  
shaking hands as  
I took small and careful bites. My nerves were winning, and I hated that  
there were so  
many eyes on me. The ones sticking out the most sat at the table directly  
in front of  
me.  
Mira's green eyes landed on me with a forced smile as she continued to  
talk, her  
voice raising with excitement as she continued to tell her story. The  
more she spoke,  
the quieter the room seemed to get, and the tenser Killian became.  
Once I was able to hear her, I felt the food I had managed to get down  
turn to  
concrete in my stomach.  
"She cried out for a while, begging for it to stop, but then she just went  
quiet. I thought

she was dead for a minute. Obviously, she wasn't. I think it was twenty lashes, but she still didn't shift by the end of it. I don't think she'll ever shift." Mira's hands moved in the air as she mimicked my punisher, cracking a whip. I could remember the way the leather bit into my skin like a hot knife slicing through my flesh like butter as I hung from the post. It was their last attempt at trying to force my shift. The Alpha had said that it would force my wolf to come to the surface, wanting to protect and heal me. It didn't. I knew it wasn't the first story she had told of me. If it was, Killian never would have known to call me Tilly. I had been happy to leave my past behind, but it was catching up to me, accelerating with each passing moment. Killian's hand pressed against my knee, the heat of his hold burning through the fabric of my dress and into my leg. It was exactly what I needed to lift my chin. I could feel the support in his touch and knew without words that this was my moment to establish my authority over her. He had told me that I was to be treated as the queen, even without his mark. I just had to hope he was a man of his word. She wasn't telling those stories to reminisce about the good-ole days. She was belittling me, talking about my past and my failures to make me look bad. She wanted to drive the point home that I was just a human. One who cried and begged for the

pain to stop instead of maintaining my dignity.  
Her mate met my eyes, and I knew what he saw there. I was livid.  
He placed his hand on his mate's arm, and I could hear him telling her to stop, but she continued to laugh with the girl across from her.  
"Mira," I called out, my voice sounding a lot stronger than I was feeling at that moment. I felt about three feet tall but sounded like a queen, feeding off Killian's strength and touch. She turned at the call of her name, her smile dropping as she flinched from Killian's glare and met mine. "It has been brought to my attention that you enjoy telling stories about me."  
The room fell silent, but it was the gentle rubbing of Killian's thumb on my thigh that encouraged me to keep going.  
"Yes, your highness." The dip of her head with my false title was minimal, and I knew she was having a hard time with my new ranking being above hers. "I was just explaining how strong you are for what you had to survive."  
"Of course. I can't imagine how funny it was to watch as I had the flesh stripped from my back." I paused, enjoying as she visibly swallowed, and her mate leaned in closer to her as if wanting to protect her from the 'human' that she was just laughing at. "If you are out of your own stories to tell, I would be more than happy to allow you to relive some of mine for yourself. Twenty lashes, was it? We can do it right now if you'd like."  
The few who were still trying to mind their own business fell silent, and I stared Mira

down as she gaped at me. “No!, I, please, no!”

Her desperate look at my mate made me want to laugh as he continued to rub his

thumb harder against my thigh.

I felt my body growing warm, surprised by how deeply his touch was impacting me.

From the corner of my eye, I watched as he lifted his chalice of wine in her direction.

His deep voice filled the room. “You may count your queen merciful. I was ready to rip

your tongue from your mouth.” 1

The open threat didn’t seem to take anyone except Mira by surprise. If anything, they

looked excited. It made me wonder how often they had displays of violence during

their dinners. They seemed to live true to the rumors of their bloodthirsty and harsh

ways.

But then again, I had no problem threatening to spill blood on my ow

