

The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 133

Twenty-Seven: Joselin

Joselin's P.O.V.

He jumped down. His dirty-blond hair appeared brown in the shadows of the trees until he stepped into the sunlight and illuminated the gold strands. He was of average height but still a head shorter than Tobias. He was lanky and thin, almost like he had been starving for months in the woods.

But what fascinated me the most was the subtle pale yellow eyes. Even the powerful aura coming from him didn't bother me. His eyes, though, they did.

They bothered me greatly as they bore into me like he could read my mind and see my soul.

I didn't need confirmation for me to know that it was him. He was the toy the nymphs wanted. He was what everyone on the mountain was hunting.

He was who Aurora and Killian sent me to convince to come back with me.

"Why have you brought me here?" A crooked smile met my question, and he began to circle me with curiosity.

I kept my blade up, turning with him as he examined me how a predator would its prey. "You brought yourself here."

His low snort as he laughed made me pause, and my eyebrows pressed together in confusion. The geekiness of this man made me think there was no way he could be a threat, but then again, most villains got their start the same way.

They were dismissed or looked down upon and became angry or power-hungry.

I wouldn't underestimate a man who had blown up half of a mountain and convinced a descendant of the moon goddess and the king to send me out without backup or magic.

"Funny, but I'm not in the mood for jokes right now. I was sent here to convince you to come back with me. So what will it take?" The tension in my shoulders lowered when I realized I was possibly only a day away from returning to Tobias and having him mark me as I had always dreamed.

"You look hungry. Do you want some food?" He asked, nudging a crushed granola bar with his toe by my emptied bag.

"Why am I here?" I asked again through gritted teeth. This man had taken me away from my home during the best thing that had ever happened to me, and I was not happy about it.

"Because I demanded to speak with the person in charge." He said with a shrug, looking back up at me and away from the scattered food and supplies on the ground. He should have spoken with Killian or even Natalie if he wanted the person in charge. Not me.

My head shot to the side as another explosion erupted, shaking the trees and making the Earth tremble. That one was close.

"Well, that's our queue to get moving.* He said before walking back toward the tree he had been standing in earlier. I didn't move more than to turn and watch his back as he walked away.

Please be a dragon shifter. Please be a dragon shifter.

"Are you coming or not? We can't wait around here all day." He shouted over his shoulder but didn't look back.

My adrenaline was fading rapidly as I stared after the geeky-looking man, trying to decide if it was my curiosity or my duty to my king that made me decide to shove everything back in my backpack quickly and follow him without arguing. He walked briskly before reaching a stone wall, uneven with loose rocks and tiny bits of crumbling dirt that I assumed was the aftermath of all the explosions.

Yet, he walked right through it. His body morphed as he never broke his stride until he was inside the mountain and out of my line of sight.

I hummed with curiosity as I tilted my head from side to side, moving my body until I found the perfect angle to see the almost unnoticeable glimmer of magic. This would be a good place for it if it were an ambush or a trap.

He must have had a witch working for him to build him the sanctuary, and it made my mind go back to the mountain. The real question was which side she was on.

My blade slid from the sheath on my thigh easily as I straightened my back and trailed after him through the rock wall.

It was cool inside the cave, almost damp. I wrinkled my nose at the smell, and the man gave me a sheepish look as he scratched the thick strawberryblond stubble on his chin.

"What are you?" I asked, wondering if it was safe to use magic now that I was with him. It didn't make sense that he would have a protection spell around the mountain without having his witch cast a border. His witch would have to cast preventative measures to ensure he wouldn't be injured or killed if the magic wielder got too close to him when using it.

"They told me about you. When I told the woman with black hair that I wanted to talk to the person in charge, she warned me about you. A few people did, actually." He walked over, picked up a large stick, and poked at the fire pit in the cave's center.

It burst into flames, the smoke going up two feet before being sucked into a flat magical barrier.

"You were warned about me, and yet you still requested that I take time out of my schedule to come here, so speak." My demand made him smile, and I looked away to examine the rest of his cave. There wasn't much around, but I had to imagine that he was pretty comfortable if he had a witch working for him.

"It really is an honor to meet you. I'm Cyrus." He said, stepping forward with his hand out, and I spun to face him, lifting my dagger between us, making him stop several feet away. He had seen how much damage I could do with it.

"I did not ask your name. I asked what you are."

His smile started to fall, and a moment of guilt washed through me. Something I had never felt before for a stranger.

I cursed Tobias. He made me feel. He made me show emotions.

I missed him.

His aura was vaguely familiar but not something that I recognized. "Are you Fae, a hybrid or a shifter? What do you shift into, a dragon?"

The man stared at me with confusion, his smile completely gone. "I'm not a shifter. I'm a spell caster, just like you."

I shook my head, "That's not possible. There aren't any male witches."

I watched as a flame zipped across the cave from the fire, dancing over his palm as he bent it to his will. I stared at him, unamused, as the flame took on the appearance of my face, silently mimicking me when I spoke.

His eyes were bright with amusement, and I scowled at him. Seeing it for myself didn't make it any easier to believe. My mind was moving a mile a minute, trying to find an explanation. Yet, as he sat back in an invisible chair, the air catching him, I had no choice but to consider the possibility.

"Oh, but it is!" He laughed, letting out another small snort as his cheeks turned pink, and he looked away from me. I watched his smile fall slowly as he got lost in his mind. His face hardened as he pushed down his emotions and looked back at me, blinking back into reality. "That's why I asked for the witch in charge. I've heard stories of how cutthroat you are, and I need your help."

I lowered my dagger, keeping it in my hand as I examined him. With him sitting, his legs looked ever skinnier, the sharp bones of his knees visible through his pants. His cheeks were slightly sunken in, and the light in his eyes dimmed as if he were giving in to the exhaustion.

"What kind of help?"

The flame in his hand went out with a small puff of white smoke as he closed his fist.

"This was the closest I have been able to get to the kingdom in a couple of years. I have been hunted for a long time as some big secret treasure that everyone wants to get their hands on.* He explained with a sigh. "I told someone about me, a girl I was dating. Next thing I know, hunters are coming out from all directions, trying to get to me. I've handled them just fine, but someone else is now after me, someone stronger. If anyone is going to kill me, it will be them. I need help. I need your protection."