

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

### **The Beast And The Blessed by Ashley Breanne Chapter 41 - 47**

#### **Forty-One: Killian**

##### **Killian's P.O.V.**

I could feel the others staring at us as I froze beneath my little mate's touch. Her warm body pressed against my beastly form was the last thing I had expected. She didn't seem scared or disgusted by me. The relief coming from her allowed me to relax, and

I gently let my arms wrap around her. I loved it.

"What happened?" Joselin asked from my left. I turned to glare at her for disrupting the moment, only to find that she hadn't been speaking to me at all. She was walking around Tobias as he stood guard for my mate, examining him like he was a museum exhibit.

"Whoever the vampires are working with, they are strong. They baited us with a projection. When Heath ran through the casting, he suffered from internal injuries. The healers are working on him now." I said over Natalie's head as she held herself to my torso. Joselin nodded in response to my explanation but didn't look my way.

"Did you get hurt?" Natalie asked softly as her hands began to calmly explore my back. They weren't shaking, but she moved slowly as if she were unsure if she could or should explore me in this form.

If she was curious, then I would give her what she wanted when

we were alone together. She could touch and explore my beast until she was positively unbothered by my appearance. Every line and path her small fingers drew along my back sent sparks across my skin, and I bit back to urge to purr at her in contentment. Her fingers were hot to the touch, and I felt goosebumps rising along my body. “No, my mate. I am uninjured.” I said, tilting my head to the side as I watched with curiosity as she pull back and looked me over, seeming to be content when she had not felt nor seen any fresh cuts along my skin. “Can you shift back?” She asked as she peaked up at me from beneath her long eyelashes. “Do you not like me in this form?” I asked before changing the subject rapidly, not wanting to hear her say no. I knew she already didn’t like me when I was working. The king that was all business was of no interest to her. I could make adjustments, to that and give her more of my attention during the day, but I could not cast aside the gift the Goddess had directly blessed my people with. “I need to go back out to the road with a larger team to ensure we did not miss anything. Joselin will be coming with us to see to the magic that had been used.” Natalie blushed as she looked away before pressing up on the balls of her feet. “I do, I just wanted to kiss you and tell you that I am glad you are safe.” My back instinctively hunched until my face was within her reach, and my eyes

widened with surprise as she kissed my rough and furry cheek. While I could not kiss her back, I was in awe that she had done so without hesitation. It seemed her previous fears had left her, and a warmth formed in my chest at her acceptance.

“The longer we wait, the harder it will be to find anything,” Joselin said from only a few feet away, having moved to stand closer to us. Natalie jumped, disrupted from her thoughts, and took a step back. I reluctantly released her and turned to Joselin.

“My men are standing ready at the gate,” I said, my muscles relaxing as Natalie placed her hand in mine. She looked determined as I looked down at her and resisted the urge to purr in happiness. Now was not the time. I had a man in the infirmary injured and a mate in mourning. “Joselin and I will be back soon.” Natalie looked up at me with a pout, and I could see that she knew I would not let her out of the castle until we had more information. “Fine, then I will go check on Heath.”

I nodded once, and her face lit up in happiness. It was a great idea. The men adored her and loved that she trained with them. They were excited to interact with and get to know their queen. Having her there could help to boost morale and encourage Heath to heal.

Tobias met my eye over her shoulder, and I knew that he would be extra cautious and vigilant with her. When I told her that she was precious to our people, I meant it. I cared for her a great deal, and I knew one day I could love her

with everything I had.

One day.

But to our people, she was a symbol of our future. She would lead as Pack Mother at

my side and would carry and raise the heirs that would one day lead our pack. The

queen was always more important than the king. A king who did not think that was not

a leader. He was a ruler.

Even with my reluctance to give in to our bond, I knew from the first time I saw her

that she was my forever. I would not be able to live without her, let alone lead our

people.

“Yes,” I cleared my throat, feeling uncomfortable. I was not used to relationships and

did not know the proper way I should say goodbye to my fur. Had I been in my human

form, I would have given her a kiss and then made my way out of the door. Her eyes

lit up, and she pushed herself up on her toes again, placing one palm on my chest

while the other remained firmly in my hand.

My beast purred when her breasts pressed against my bicep as I leaned down. She

giggled, kissing my cheek once more before pulling back. I could see the pain in her

eyes from the loss of her parents, but she was putting on a good show for the others

with her forced smiles.

“I’ll see you soon.” She whispered, her hold on my hand tightening before she pulled it

away and held her hand at a fist at her side. It was the primary trigger that alerted me

to the fact that she was hurting far more than she was letting on.

She needed me right now. She needed to be held and to mourn. They may not have been her birth parents, but they had raised her. But I had a job to do and people to protect. I would come back to her as soon as possible, and she would be free to cry on my shoulder in the privacy of our bedroom. Until then, I could only nod to her as I turned and made my way toward the door. I resisted the urge to turn around and get one last glimpse at her. It would do no good and would only slow us down. We needed to get back on the road. We needed to comb the area and inspect the magic used. I had no reason to believe that the vampires or witches would return to the same place. But I was not so ignorant as to return myself without an army prepared for battle. Joselin joined my side, placing her hand on my arm before transporting us to the eager and angry group of men and women standing guard at our gate. Lycans and wolves of all sizes roared as I ran past them, leading them back into the open land and the potential threats that awaited us there.

## **Forty-Two: Natalie**

### **Natalie's P.O.V.**

Tobias grunted as I turned to him and let out a deep breath. My eyes felt dry, and my smile fell as soon as Killian was gone. It finally made sense why I felt so connected to him... why I felt like something was missing when he wasn't around. But what I was feeling now was more than just my mate being away from me. I

felt a crushing pain in my chest from the news of my parents dying. They hadn't birthed me, but they were still my parents. I loved them, and now I had lost them. I couldn't even find it in me to be angry at Killian for showing my mother mercy. He had done right by her and sent her to be with my father in the afterlife. She was dying anyway. He just put her out of her misery. I met Tobias's eye, and he tilted his head toward the hallway. It was time for me to act like the queen and to be there for the man who had risked his life to protect mine. It wasn't time to grieve, and the more I thought about the events of today, the angrier I was becoming. I wanted revenge. I wanted blood. It took a moment for me to collect myself, but I lifted my chin and made my way out of the room. I nodded in greeting to each person I passed on my way to the infirmary, and they dipped into a bow or curtsy in return as I walked by. I could hear the shouting of multiple men over the sound of screaming, and I slowed. Maybe now wasn't a good time... But it was too late. As soon as I reached the doorway, I was spotted and several heads turned my way. Heath was lying on the bed, being restrained by several men. The chains around his wrists and ankles hung free, no longer attached to the floor as he thrashed to get away from his pack mates. His face, neck, and chest were a dark burgundy as he screamed and roared in anger for freedom.

Blood bubbled between his lips and spilled over his chin. My hand twitched at my side as I resisted covering my mouth in horror.

There was a darkness in the room that made the air feel thick and suffocating. It

reminded me of the previous queen's room. The scent of death was hovering like a

plague, ready to strike and take its victim.

I wanted to help. I moved forward only to stop as the screaming cut off. Heath's head

snapped up so that he was looking in my direction. Our eyes met, and a shiver ran

down my spine.

"So the queen has come to grace me with her presence." He hissed, his voice

sounding layered and higher pitched than what I had been expecting. Whenever

Killian had spoken with his beast, it was deep and rumbled as if he was in a constant

state of growling. But Heath's voice sounded light, airy, and melodic.

It sounded evil.

I swallowed hard, the lump in my dry throat barely moving as I did so.

"You were very brave today, Heath. I wanted to come to see how you were and

extend my gratitude. Is there anything I can get you?" It was difficult not to fidget as

his glossy eyes held mine. They swirled, the whites turning black as he let out a dark

laugh.

The men around him remained tense and continued to hold him down even though he

had stopped struggling. The veins were straining beneath his skin as his muscles

remained coiled and tight.

Tobias moved forward until his shoulder was in front of me, standing as a barrier between Heath and me. But I could still see around him. I still watched as a smile stretched over Heath's face, and he flashed his blood-covered teeth at me.

"You're going to die," He whispered. From the corner of my eye, I saw others moving closer to me, keeping their focus on Heath as they stood protectively between us. His eyes never left mine as he pulled at the hands restraining him once again, and began to scream. "I'll kill you myself if I have to! I'll kill you!"

My feet were fused to the ground as I masked my fear behind a blank expression.

He continued to shout, screaming for my death as the healers joined the attempt to hold him down. "I'm going to kill you!"

I blinked quickly as I watched the scene unfold. One of the healers moved in rapidly with a large syringe in their hands, and I flinched as they stabbed the needle into the side of Heath's neck. He struggled for a few more seconds, his glare burning into me before he went limp, and the room fell silent.

The young healer that had taken care of my ribs looked up at me, "Your Highness, I

do not think it would be wise to have you here when he wakes." It was respectful and polite, but a clear dismissal. As much as I wanted to be

supportive and helpful to my people. She was right. He had escalated and had the potential to hurt those around him with his need to get to me... to kill me.



My arm reached out, and my fingertips brushed Tobias's lower back to signal to him that I would be leaving. "I would like to stay updated with his status."

She nodded in agreement as I turned and walked away. I would check back later once he was stable.

I was in shock by his outburst. The man who had just been willing to sacrifice himself for me now wanted my blood.

My mind was spinning as I made my way back toward the staircase. I knew very little about vampires and even less about magic, but I wasn't going to be some ignorant damsel in distress. Until Killian returned home, I would go back to the library and study as much as I could.

A loud commotion disrupted my thoughts as I placed my foot on the first step. I turned, looking over my shoulder as a group of men entered the castle with a familiar face struggling in their hold as he cried out in pain. It was the stream of blood coming from his mouth that caught my attention.

"What happened to him?" I asked a young woman who was crying as she followed behind. Her eyes stayed locked on the man being taken to the infirmary, but she dipped her head before wiping under her nose.

"He just dropped down and started screaming. They said it was the same thing that happened to Heath. I don't know what to do!" She sobbed, and I stepped forward, wanting to place a comforting hand on her shoulder, but Tobias stopped me. He shook

his head discretely, and I nodded in understanding.  
“Just be there for him. Thank you for giving me a moment of your time. I’m sorry to have kept you.” I whispered, and she nodded before running down the hall and rejoining who I assumed to be her mate.  
Tobias nodded toward the stairs quickly, wanting me to hurry back to a safer place. As soon as I entered the library, wanting to grab a few books before I made my way to my room, Tobias closed the door behind us. I paced for a moment, and he waited patiently until I had collected my thoughts.  
“I want another guard,” I said, stopping to face him. Tobias raised his eyebrows, but his face hardened as I realized how that would sound to him. “Not to replace you, in addition to you. If I am going to save Killian’s life during the battle, I need to be alive to do it.”  
I took a deep breath as I walked over to the bookshelf that I had been going through last and grabbed the next book on vampires before moving to look for a book on magic.  
“I also want everyone who had had direct physical contact with either man to be quarantined and under surveillance until we can be sure they have no symptoms.”

### **Forty-Three: Killian Killian’s P.O.V.**

I was blinded by rage. I wanted blood more than I wanted my next breath.  
Then I heard those words, “The queen has already placed the

order. Anyone who had been in contact is being quarantined.”

The Queen.

My Queen.

She had not been handed the crown yet, but she was acting every bit within her new title.

She was my queen, my woman. I would have to be dragged down to Hell before I

would let anyone get their hands on her. As soon as I heard that one of my men had

been threatening her, I wanted to end him. But Joselin was right. She needed him.

She needed to use him to trace the magic and learn more about the curse that

seemed to be infecting my people.

If I couldn't kill him myself or have him killed by my guard, I wanted to lock him up until

I was free to do so. Once Joselin was done getting the information she needed, he

would die by my hand.

But Natalie, my future queen, had already placed the order for any potentially infected

person to be held in quarantine until they were able to be cleared.

She was wise, and

I felt a small amount of weight ease off my shoulders as I ran back to the castle, back

to my mate.

She would make a capable and excellent queen. With a little training, she would excel

at her new role. I was proud to have her by my side, but once Joselin vanished at the

gate to return to her tower, I was driven by the desperate and primal need to confirm

for myself that my mate was safe.

Multiple men stood guard in the hallway as I reached my bedroom door, and I lowered my eyebrows in confusion before deciding not to add additional delay in seeing my woman. I would just ask her directly.

She sat rigid on the couch, her eyes staring off into the distance as I entered the room. Her empty eyes blinked once at me before the recognition flashed over her face, and she took a step forward.

I moved to meet her halfway, but she stopped, lifting her hands and staring at me warily. "What is it, my mate?"

She shook her head as she moved around the armchair to my right, keeping a lot of space between us as she examined me. I did not know what she was looking for, but I stood still as I waited for her to finish her search.

"So, it wasn't the location. It had to be through contact." Her small muttering made my ears twitch as I listened to her think out loud.

It was fascinating watching her mind work. She was smart, quick, and sexy as hell when she had that focused expression. Her eyes narrowed, and her lips slightly pursed. I could see her coming to the same conclusion I had.

As soon as I was informed Nolan had been infected, I pictured the small stream of blood that I had watched fall from Heath's mouth and onto Nolan's arm when he was carrying him back to the city.

I was grateful that the healers were immune to diseases having to handle the blood, but they were not immune to curses. They just had a higher resistance to them. How

many of my men had been infected? How many of the last healers on Earth were going to be tainted by the dark magic?

“Great minds think alike, Little One.” The words came out in a purr. With my enhanced Lycan vision, I watched as her pupils dilated. She loved it when I called her Little One.

She may have been small, but she was strong. I found her more attractive with every passing moment.

‘There is a darkness around the men in the infirmary. At least one of them wants me dead.’ Natalie continued to move around me, stopping when she was between me and the door. I moved with her slowly, keeping my eyes on my woman as she looked over my Lycan form.

An involuntary growl left my throat at the idea of her being threatened or possibly injured. Had Heath touched her, grabbed her...harmed her?

“I was worried you would come home infected too since you went back to the road, but I don’t feel it... the darkness.” Her hands relaxed at her sides as she whispered the confession. Her feelings. She cared.

“No one will ever harm you, least of all me,” I said as I stepped forward, curious as she shuttered and her eyed darkened. She was curious.

‘I heard that you took care of things here while I was away,’ I said as she stood still, allowing me to approach her. My hand, a mixture of human and beast, lifted. My fingertips ran down her arm, leaving a trail of goosebumps behind. “You handled it the

exact same way I would have. I take it the extra guards in the hallway were your doing as well?"

She snapped her mouth shut, nodding silently.

"Good Girl," I purred. 'You will make a worthy queen.'

My head tilted to the side as I spotted her hands trembling at her sides. Her desire

tickled my nose, and I took a greedy inhale of her scent.

Good Girl.

She enjoyed praise. I would have to make a note of that.

"I want you to get comfortable with me in this form. Touch me." I demanded sharply,

feeling my chest swell with pride as she immediately reached up and placed her

hands on my chest. Her fingers were chilled, and I bit back a groan at how good she

felt. ' Tell me what you are thinking.' "I wasn't expecting you to be so... human like this."

I wanted to watch her hand as it traveled over my chest and shoulders, but I couldn't

look away from her as she stared at me in wonder. The skin there was rougher than

before but had no more hair than when I was human. My fur was primarily over

everything except the front of my torso. My head had taken on a closer resemblance

to my beast. My arms were longer, and my legs were more animalistic.

I knew when she found a scar because her eyes narrowed, and she took an extra

moment to trace over the jawline-shaped scar. She would find a lot of those on me.

She was beautiful, and as much as I didn't want to look away from her, my eyes

instinctively closed as she moved up to feel my neck, head, and face. It was pure bliss to have her touching me so calmly... so lovingly. I wanted to experience it forever.

“Your fur is rough and soft at the same time, how is that possible?” She mused as she let one hand run over my jaw and toward the end of my halfshifted muzzle.

A low growl left my throat as I forced my eyes open. My body was frozen as she walked around me, but I wanted more than anything to turn to her and carry her to the bedroom so I could shift back to my skin and have my way with her.

She spent several more minutes familiarizing herself with my form, her hands leaving invisible burn marks across my skin everywhere she touched. I looked over my shoulder as she moved to my side, her hand running down my arm until she reached my deadly claws. Her fingers moved between mine as if she were testing whether we could hold hands in this form before she pressed the tip of her pointer finger against one of my nails. The sharp surface sliced through her skin like butter, and I quickly withdrew my hand.

She let out a gasp at the sudden movement as my other hand grabbed her wrist, and I lifted it until I could see the damage done. It was small. So small that if she had shifted, she would have already been healed. Instead, I lifted her finger to my mouth carefully and licked the cut. Her eyes locked on mine, deepening as I licked it once more. It was then that I smelled it. It was small... subtle. My eyes trailed over her face, from

her wide eyes to her parted lips. Further they fell as I listened to her rapid heartbeat crashing loudly against her ribs and observed the vein in her neck pumping at an accelerated rate.

Fear.

She was scared of me

### **Forty-Four: Natalie**

#### **Natalie's P.O.V.**

The castle was oddly empty, even for the middle of the week. I felt like there were

eyes on me everywhere I went, but then I would turn, and the room or hallways would

be empty beyond my new collection of guards.

I had asked for one extra. Tobias had responded with two.

There was no arguing with a man who refused to talk back. He won almost everytime.

The pack was steering clear of the possibly infectious Lycans that were chained up

and sedated in the infirmary. I hadn't even seen Charlie around since the incident, but

I knew she wasn't far. Every so often, I would see one of her wild men either in the

castle or on the training field.

So far, no one else had shown any signs of the curse or disease, but it was wise of

our people to steer clear of the area for the time being.

What wasn't wise was that I kept trying to get closer to them. I would make it to the

end of the hallway and would stare down the long corridor. The desire to check on

them and support them through their healing was masked by the fear that settled its

way into my bones after the first visit.



What if there weren't enough people to hold them down, and they managed to get out of the reinforced chains? Surely, the healers were keeping them sedated still, but we still had no idea what magic was at play.

Joselin had been rumored to be on the verge of a breakdown while she tried to dissect the curse and magic used. She hadn't been eating or sleeping either.

At one point, Killian had to run out of bed and calm the panic Joselin had started when she manifested in the infirmary at one in the morning. From what Killian told me when he returned to our room, she had sliced Heath's arm right open let him bleed into a bowl for a second, and then vanished, leaving the healers to rush to close the gaping wound.

At first, I had been stunned, but then uncontrollable laughter forced its way free as I pictured Joselin terrifying everyone with her unusual ways. Killian lit up as I laughed, and it was good to see him that way. After he let me explore his Lycan, he shut down. He tried to hide it. He shifted back immediately and went to the shower.

Afterward, he still kissed me goodnight, held me while we slept, and said goodbye in the morning with a heart-stopping, toe-curling kiss. But the look in his eyes was distant. He was distracted and had the right to be. But something about the way the emptiness stayed in his eyes as he looked at me made me feel guilty like I had done something wrong.

I just didn't know what.

Since he didn't seem to want to tell me what I did wrong, the least I could do was try

to help him and take some of the weight off his shoulders.

Joselin had been terrifying the staff, and every time I brought her up Tobias would shift

his weight. He seemed to be just as worried about her as I was.

Killian just seemed

annoyed by her antics. If going to see her would ease some of

Killian's frustrations

and put Tobias at ease so he could focus on his job, then that

was what I was going to

do.

Tobias led the way to the witch's tower, while my two new guards followed behind us.

The silent man was anxious... eager even, to see the pale-haired woman. I bit back a

smile as I thought about how cute it was that he was openly

showing his emotions for

her, even if he wasn't ready to give in to her obvious attempts at seduction.

The grey brick wall was cold and uninviting, but it was the black door covered in handdrawn white and crimson runes that sent a shiver down my spine.

I wasn't sure if I should knock or just enter. It was her tower, but she had also been a

bit preoccupied, and I was almost positive that she wouldn't hear me if I had gone as

far as to try and kick the door down.

Tobias chose for me, pushing the door open without an invitation or warning, and

made his way inside. I followed behind him, shivering as the air thickened in the

doorway. It wasn't unpleasant, but the several inches of what I assumed were magic

was not enjoyable. I had no clue what I had just walked through, but my guards didn't seem to notice.

What did catch their attention was the high-pitched scream of frustration followed by the sound of ceramic shattering against a wall.

"Joselin?" I called out from the entrance of her tower. The area was cold and bland.

My finger ran along the thin layer of dust covering a console table against the wall.

The surface was bare of belongings as she probably rarely ever used the door or dropped her stuff on the table when she came in.

I glanced away an irritated groan echoed down the stairwell.

"Joselin, I'm coming up."

The dark decor and limited lighting beyond the few candles on the table in front of her made me slow as I pushed open the cracked door after going up one flight of stairs.

The black, round table in the center of the room was filled with dancing shadows as the candlelight flickered from the center and the objects on the table disrupted its stream of light.

The witch was leaning over it with her hands gripped tightly around the edge of the table. Tobias approached her slowly, but my attention was taken by the mess on the floor.

Blood was splattered over the light grey walls and decorated the floor beneath it.

Shards of ceramic were scattered over the hardwood, and I stepped over them carefully as I approached Joselin.

Tell me what I can do to help," receiving a sharp side-eye from

Tobias that had me quickly correcting my statement. "We. Tell me what 'we' can do to help."

"You can't do anything. I can't do anything!" Her frustration was thick as she slammed her palms down on the table. "I think it is time to call in the council."

The mutter of defeat made my stomach drop. Who was the council?

"I fucking hate their smug faces. They just love it when I have to ask for help. I just want to smash their heads into the ground!" She exclaimed as she pushed off the table.

My eyebrows raised in amusement as I watched my new, socially inept friend get

even more worked up. The guard behind me moved forward slowly as if wanting to get between the witch and me, but with my arm at my side, I raised my hand discretely to tell them to back down.

The last thing Joselin needed was to feel threatened. Who knew what would happen to them in that situation. But she wouldn't hurt me.

"Who is the council?" I asked, regretting it instantly when her empty, white glare snapped up to me. Her eyebrows were lowered, and her eyes were narrowed as she laughed malevolently.

"A group of bitter witches who resent that I was chosen as the royal advisor, and they were not. Those fucking bitches. Get ready, your highness. You're about to meet the worst of the best."

## **Forty-Five: Killian Killian's P.O.V.**

Getting the news that Joselin was preparing to summon the council had me on edge.

If the vampires found out, they would know that they had the upper hand. They would know that we were struggling.

Even worse, if the witches on the council had turned on us, we could be bringing in the enemy.

It was exactly what we wanted to avoid, but I had to trust that Joselin knew what she was doing. She was cautious and hated to call upon them if she didn't have to. Of all the people in the world, she hated them the most.

It would take time for them to arrive. As much as I wished they could just pop in, very few witches had that ability. There had only been a few who had that level of strength.

Between her power and loyalty, having Joselin take over as the royal advisor was a no-brainer. The fact that she was my best friend just made the decision that much easier.

I looked up from my computer as my office door was shoved open. The anger of being disrupted so disrespectfully melted away as quickly as it had appeared as my little mate walked in with her head held high. Tobias reached in quietly and closed the door after her, giving us our privacy.

Her big doe-eyes sparkled with determination, and her pink lips pushed out as she seemed to be contemplating what she wanted to say. I pushed my chair back and

patted my thigh, praying that she was here for more than just a conversation.

"We are soulmates, right?" She asked, and I fell against the back of my chair as I watched her, my arm falling on the rest as my eyes scanned her over.

"Yes."

She let out a breath before biting her lip. There was nothing about it that signaled she was trying to seduce me by doing so. She seemed nervous. But from the twitch in my pants, it was still having an effect.

"I am going to be your queen?"

My head tilted to the side as an uncontrollable smile stretched across my face at the thought. I couldn't wait to have her ruling by my side officially, for the entire world to know that she was my one.

"Yes." "You said I smelled like a wolf, so I just need something to help trigger my shift, right?"

My smile fell as my eyebrows pulled together. "Yes, my mate. What has you so bothered?"

My arm lifted again instinctively, and Natalie stared at me for a second longer before she let out a sigh and walked around my desk. All of the noise in my head fell quiet at her touch as she sat across my lap sideways.

The attack, the impending war, and the petty trouble among my people that I was trying to balance and take care of were locked in a box and shoved to the back of my mind.

"You've been distant the past few days, ever since you let me see

you in your Lycan form. I know you've been busy, but I just wanted to make sure that we were okay because I wanted to talk to you about something." I could hear the insecurity in her voice, and I knew without her saying that she was worried that I was shutting down on her again.

Little did she know that I had already given myself to her, and she had already imprinted herself on my heart. It was hers. All of it, and all of me. I wasn't going to change my mind now. She was stuck with me.

I looked over her face, before deciding that now was as good a time as any to have this addressed. "You were scared of me."

Her jaw dropped open, and her eyes widened as she let out a laugh. "I was not scared!" "I could smell it! Before I walked away, you smelled of fear." I looked away

from her with my teeth clenched together. I didn't want her to see just how much it was eating away at my soul. But her continued laughter, while beautiful, was frustrating.

"Killian, look at me, so I can explain." Her demand did little to make me actually look her way until she pinched my chest. I turned to glare at her, but she opened her mouth to speak before snapping it shut and closing her eyes. Her face turned red in a sudden flush, and she shoved it against my chest, making me curious.

"Please don't insult me by denying it. It'll just take time for you to become used to me

in that form. We'll work through it." I said, wrapping my arm around her back tighter and holding her to me. If I needed to shift around her more often, I would as long as she was comfortable with me doing so. She shook her head, and I felt my heart drop. I had already begun compromising for her. I had given up precious time in my days when I should be working to make sure that I was giving her the love and attention that our relationship needed. It was only fair that she at least try to get used to that side of me. "It wasn't that. I swear!" She bit her lip, and I reached up and used my thumb to pull it free from her teeth. "I was actually thinking about what would happen if we had done stuff with you like that. Then I realized how sharp your nails were, and it freaked me out." Her cheeks turned an ever darker red, her forehead joining in until she was lit up like a light. "You... You were attracted to me still?" I couldn't get my mind around it. Shock consumed me as I gaped at her. "Well, you're still you! It's not like you were a wolf!" She began to slide off my lap, but I pulled her back to my chest. "You were just a bit harrier than normal, and your face had only partially shifted... Oh, come on! I feel so embarrassed now! Nothing is going to happen when you're like that! It was just a brief thought! This wasn't what I even came here to talk about!" I laughed, shaking my head as I stared down at her. She was



right that nothing would happen in that form. It didn't mean that I hadn't thought about it too. But the chance of me hurting her was so much higher and not something that I was willing to risk.

'What did you want to talk to me about then, my mate?' I asked, my fingers finding the skin of her hip where her shirt had ridden up during her wiggling, and I began to rub them back and forth.

"Killian, I..." She trailed off, her hand moving up to cup my cheek. Her fingertips trailed over the scruff that I hadn't had time to shave. I leaned forward, unable to resist

tasting her soft flesh after not having her for several days. Now that I knew what was going through her mind, it was all I could think about.

Kissing every now and then was amazing, but I needed more.

After resisting her for so

long when I first brought her here, I still felt like I had a lot of time to make up for.

Whenever she was around, I wanted to hear her gasping my name and moaning for

me as I made her cum until she couldn't breathe. I wanted to satisfy her to the point

that all I had to do was look at her and order for her to cum, and she would.

Her breathing faltered as I left open-mouthed kisses along her neck, licking and

tasting the skin there. Her hands tightened around my biceps as she turned to press

her chest against mine, and I let out a growl of pleasure as I could feel her hard

nipples through her top.

She had come to speak to me, but as I pulled back and looked at

her, I knew we would have to come back to it. She needed a release as much as I did. The stress was too much, and I wanted nothing more than to give my woman what she wanted.

I lifted my hand, cupping the side of her neck and lifting her jaw with my thumb until her lips brushed against mine easily.

'I love it when you say my name.' The growl made her eyes snap open, and her pupils expanded with desire as she licked her lips. She was just as turned on, if not more. "I

was hoping you would come to see me today."

Her nails dug into my shoulder at my confession, and I leaned in to steal a kiss. She

pressed against me eagerly, her body twisting as she adjusted herself. I groaned in

pleasure as she bit down on my bottom lip and pulled it gently while she moved to straddle me.

"I came in here to talk to you," She whispered as she pulled back slightly, her nose

still touching mine. "I promised myself that I wouldn't leave here until I talked to you."

"And if I don't want you to leave?" My hands gripped her hips tightly as I ground

against her. Her eyes widened before rolling back as she gasped in pleasure. I could

smell her arousal, and wanted nothing more than to please my mate. "Would you like

to talk now, or later?"

I was okay with either option. Whether we talked before I fucked her or after, I would

still be sinking myself deep inside her either way.

"A..After." She muttered as her hips began to rock against me.

“Stand up,” I ordered, and a flicker of excitement flashed over her face. But she did as I asked without hesitation. “Turn around and face the door.” She glanced down at my lap before swallowing and doing as I ordered.

“Good girl.”

I stared at her for a moment, sensing her excitement and listening to her heart race.

### **Forty-Seven: Natalie**

#### **Natalie’s P.O.V.**

“Absolutely not!” I snapped as we walked away.

Joselin pursed her lips as she looked away from me and to Killian as if she was

expecting him to take her side over mine. ‘She felt it!’

He let out a deep breath, and I knew that if I looked back he would be pinching the

bridge of his nose. It was his tell that he was frustrated. But I didn’t look back,

because I knew in my heart that we had grown past this. He wouldn’t be taking her

side over mine, not over something as significant as blood.

“It couldn’t hurt to do some testing.”

My body went still, and he caught himself just as his chest collided with my back. His

hands found my hips, and he steadied me as Joselin smirked in victory. He didn’t

bother to unhand me as I spun around in his arms, glaring up at him.

“Seriously? It’s my body, my blood. I said no.”

He must have not realized how angry it would make me for the two of them to not

respect my decision.

Joselin groaned out in irritation, and I turned my glare to her as she spoke up. “I

thought you were over this whole you versus me thing! Friends, remember?" "We are friends, and I'm not mad that he's siding with you right now." I tried to step back, but Killian's hold on me tightened slightly. "I am irritated with both of you equally. I said no to you wanting to take my blood, and I don't need the two of you trying to pressure me or gang up on me, so I am stopping this conversation here before we get into an actual argument." "But you felt the magic. Do you know how rare that is for someone who doesn't come from magic?" She asked, and she lit up with excitement. ' This could explain why you didn't shift!' "I felt death. I felt a darkness that made me want to jump in the shower and scrub myself clean as if I had just been standing in a room full of rotting corpses. There was nothing magical about it." I lowered my voice as I spoke, knowing others could still hear me with their supernatural abilities, but hoping it wasn't loud enough for the sound to get back to the infirmary where said infected men were resting.

"Just a few tests. You can watch me do them, and then you can dispose of the blood yourself." Her pleading was unexpected, but I knew she needed a win. After failing at finding more information on the curse, she seemed eager to get answers about me.

But while I wanted to trust her, I had heard about witches. I had heard what they could do to you if they got their hands on one of your personal items. Handing over blood

was suicide if it got into the wrong hands.

I let out a sigh.

“There is something else I want to try first to trigger my shift.” I felt Killian breathing

pause as he held his breath for a moment, and I knew he was thinking about the mark

I had asked for. “If that doesn’t work, I will let you run your tests, and I will dispose of

my blood when you are done. But... if the council is here, the deal is off. I don’t want

any of the other witches to know about it. They don’t need to get their hands on my blood.”

Joselin pulled her lips in before popping them out and nodding in agreement. “I agree to your terms.”

The sight of Charlotte rounding the corner made us all pause, but it was the furious

look on her face that had Killian moving around me and stepping between me and his

sister. “Are you out of your mind, Killian Amery?” “Oh,” Joselin chuckled darkly. “This

is going to be good.” “Oh, for the love of the Goddess! Whatever it is, we can have

this conversation in my office.” Killian groaned, reaching down to grab my hand before

pulling with him down the hallway and toward the office that we had just fucked in.

My cheeks burned as I remembered how demanding he was. I loved it when he took

control, but that didn’t mean that I would let him do that all the time. At some point,

there were a few fantasies that I wanted to make reality too.

The girls were silent as they followed, Joselin looking positively gleeful and Charlie

fuming. I half expected Killian to burst into flames from her glare on his back. But he wisely bit his tongue until we had reached the office. I smirked when I spied the documents on his desk. They were still pushed off to the side. His laptop was hanging over the edge, and as he pulled me to his side of the desk, he pushed it back onto the surface. "Sit." He commanded, and I looked to the other two women, expecting them to take a seat, but I found all three pairs of eyes staring at me. Killian released my hand, placing his warm palm on my lower back and guiding me toward his chair while he stood at my side. Oh, my heart. It was a sign of respect, one that sent an odd flutter through my chest. I kept my hand down at my side as I resisted the urge to rub away the weird sensation. "You're bringing in the council? We don't know if we can trust them, Killian!" Her voice was deeper than before, more gravelly as if she were trying to prevent herself from shifting. "We have no choice. I will not put our pride before our people. There will be extra precautions in place during their stay, but we need answers. If getting a group of our allies to pool their magic and provide those answers will save not only our family but our people, then that is a chance I am willing to take!" Killian growled, his hand resting on the back of the chair that I was sitting on. "You should have discussed this with me! We could have looked

at other options!”

Charlie refused to sit. Instead, she leaned forward with her hands on the edge of the desk as she glared daggers at her brother.

“I don’t need to discuss anything with you, Charlotte. You are the one who chose to leave. You don’t get a say when you are not even here. I am the King!” His body

shook, and I looked over my shoulder at him. His glowing red eyes were burning bright toward his sister, and I reached up and placed my hand on his.

As soon as we touched, his claws retracted from the leather surface, leaving holes in their wake.

“I did what was best for me! I couldn’t stay here. How long are you going to resent me for leaving? You’re making a mistake bringing them here, Killian!” Charlie’s face was hard and cold. A mask of what she was truly feeling as her voice cracked.

‘You are one person, Charlotte! I am doing what is best for millions!’ Killian stepped forward, keeping his hand beneath mine but moving to stand at my side instead of being behind my shoulder like a bodyguard. “I am happy you left and found peace!

But you don’t get to come in here every time you stop by, trying to take control of the kingdom that you left behind!” ‘And what of Talia? How do you think she will react

when she arrives and learns the truth?” The bitter question was meant with silence,

and I watched with wonder as even the smirk from Joselin’s face fell. She had been

enjoying the bickering, but the second the name left Charlie's lips, her amusement was gone.

Talia.

Who the fuck is Talia?