

# The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 124

Nineteen: Joselin

Joselin's P.O.V.

The food I had gathered for us was long forgotten in the kitchen. My plans for the evening were gone as well. The air in my tower swirled angrily with the threat of a storm caused by me. It had been a very long time since my emotions ruled my magic.

It made me feel inept, and the lack of control was worrisome. I hadn't lost control since I was a teenager.

The pain in my chest was unwelcome, and a few stray tears slid down my cheeks.

My body's betrayal and willingness to show emotion were infuriating, but I knew my true anger was directed at the man downstairs. I was sure he hated being there. With so many people around and trying to talk to him, I knew he would be uncomfortable. Even that knowledge didn't satisfy the petty part of my mind that wanted him to be miserable for hurting me.

If he wanted to go to a mating mixer and look for a wolf to mark, contradicting all the sweet words he shared with me last night, he could.

I was a big girl. I could find a way to get over him. Nothing had worked so far, but that didn't make it impossible.

I could warn Natalie about the unknown threat and have it be her problem. She would be taking over my job soon anyway, so there was no point in letting her get her feet wet. She might as well jump right in.

With her handling that, I would be free to escape and find myself outside this castle.

My gut twisted at the idea of leaving Tobias, though. No matter how upset and angry I was, I would hate it if I left without getting answers. I had loved him for too long just to turn away and never look back. There were so many questions for him, but the most important was why I wasn't enough.

Rona's words played on a loop in my head, reminding me that a man like Tobias wouldn't want a woman who looked like me. My teeth ground together, and my hands were in tight fists as I stopped pacing.

There was only one way I could get an honest answer to ease or confirm my concerns.

It was something I swore I would never do. I had learned to embrace who I was long ago, and while I knew this experiment would be damaging to my mental well-being if it confirmed my suspicions, I didn't see myself having another choice.

If I didn't find out, I would never feel confident enough in myself. I would never be able to be in a relationship without that fear hanging over me. I just had to hope that what I was about to do wouldn't bite me in the ass. I needed to go into this with no expectations to prevent myself from getting hurt further. No hope.

I could do this.

The spell book with this particular enchantment had been shoved up on the highest shelf of my bookcase so it would stay out of sight. With a quick flick of my finger, the dusty and worn item flew across the room and crashed into my waiting palm.

It was a novice-level volume, and I knew what I wanted would be easy to cast.

My chanting was low and hushed for a few minutes before I felt my skin tingling. The usual vibrations of the runes and knots on my skin could still be felt. But when I looked down, I could only see the tanned skin of my arms, no markings in sight.

I had never been able to hold color before, and while most people enjoyed being tan, I felt sick. But it meant the glamour spell was working.

It was difficult to look in the mirror and see this version of me, the fake one. A stranger stared back at me with smooth, flawless skin, long brown hair, and deep blue eyes.

She was beautiful, and I knew she would give Tobias a run for his money. His jaw was bound to drop when he saw me in this form. I just prayed to the Goddess that he didn't let it show.

I kept the same dress on, knowing it was not as formal as these events expected, but I didn't have the patience to choose a new outfit. No one beyond the staff had seen me in it anyway.

It was a dash to get back downstairs. I wanted to get there before Tobias left or chose someone. He had been attending these for years but had never chosen anyone before.

His presence was only surprising because I didn't think he had a reason to show up tonight. I thought he had chosen me. If not as his mate, then maybe to date me. The fact that he was here told me that his priority was to find his mate, and whatever we had would be short-lived if it wasn't already over.

I could feel him as I entered the room, ignoring all the gawking men and women around me. There was surprise on their faces as they watched me, knowing with the glamour, they would smell me as a wolf instead of a witch. But there was still no way to hide my power. My aura would still be stronger than most.

His brown eyes landed on me over the crowd, and my breathing caught when he didn't look away. I took it as a bad sign that he was already interested in the normal-looking version of me.

Yet, I smirked confidently before striding toward him, enjoying how the crowd parted for me. My body buzzed with excitement with every step, and while I knew this moment could completely shatter me, it also almost felt like one of our games.

"Nice suit." My eyes trailed over him, my voice coming out softer than usual and sounding strange to my ears. Only it wasn't mine. It was hers. Whoever this woman was that I was pretending to be sounded sweet yet seductive.

Tobias's eyes narrowed, and I could see the question in his glare, wondering why I was bothering him.

"I love the strong, silent type." I reached out as one of the servers walked by, grabbing a glass from the tray in their hand and taking a small sip of the sickly sweet beverage. "How is a man like you not claimed?"

I stepped forward, placing my free hand on his chest, gasping when he clamped his tightly around my wrist. His grasp was firm, but he didn't shove me away. If anything, he held my hand against him so I couldn't pull away.

Taking his reaction as an encouragement to continue, I tilted my chin up. A rush of satisfaction and betrayal washed through me when he leaned down, giving me his ear. The closeness caused my breasts to brush against his arm holding mine to his chest, and I felt my nipples pebble at the contact.

"You smell delicious." My teeth nipped his earlobe, and he growled in response. If he hadn't held me so close, I would have considered the sound a warning or threat.

Behind me, I could hear a few new mates enjoying each other, and it wouldn't be long before this room was full of naked men and women. Many wolves and Lycans enjoyed fucking in front of others, claiming their partner for all to see. Mating mixers were notorious for it.

"But I wonder how you would taste." My whisper was followed by the tip of my tongue trailing up his neck. I could feel the goosebumps against his skin at my touch, and he was growing hard against my stomach.

The sinking feeling that he was turned on and enjoyed what I did to him in this form made my stomach hurt, but I also didn't want to stop. He couldn't know it was me behind the enchantment, yet he openly displayed his interest in the female before him.

It seemed that he had chosen after all. I had been a toy, something to play with. Everyone knew we had gone home together last night, so he got the same reward as the others. He probably enjoyed everyone knowing he had the witch in his bed without having to say a single word.

It was impressive. But I was disappointed that after everything, I didn't even get to feel him inside me. I never got to experience what it would be like to make love instead of just fucking.

Tobias's large hand released my wrist, and I was taken aback when he grabbed my drink and pulled away. I watched, shocked, as he placed it, and his water, on the tray of a passing server.

Even with the suit on, I could see the muscles in his back flexed and tensed. Then he turned around, and I gasped when his hand shot up around my throat. It seemed play time was over, even though I knew he was aroused.

A round of cheers echoed through the room, signaling someone had just been claimed, but the timing couldn't have been worse for me. Tobias used the distraction to shove me a few steps back and up against the wall.

There was minimal force behind it, but the action still knocked the breath out of me as he pushed his leg between mine.

The hand around my throat moved up, and he used his thumb to tilt my head to the side. A moan ripped from my throat when his nose trailed over the exposed flesh. He let out a deep growl as he pulled back to meet my gaze with one of his eyebrows raised.

I bit down on my lower lip, fighting back the mixed emotions he pulled from me. I wanted him, and I was enjoying our game. My panties were soaked for him, and if he wanted me, even in this form, I wouldn't say no.

Still, as he said, I adored his attention and affection. My love for him made me desperate to take all I could from him. But it made me sick that it was like this, in this form. I hated that Rona, of all people, had been right.

His warm, calloused hand slid down to the end of my dress on my thigh before moving it up slowly. My eyes closed at the sensation of his fingertips traveling over my skin, and a lone tear slipped free as I turned my head away from him.

I knew he couldn't see the trail of water streaming down my cheek as it was on the other side of my face, closest to the wall. Yet, he pulled his hand away, placing it back on my covered hip.

He was showing mercy.

I was playing a game that my heart hadn't been prepared to lose. The ache in my chest overtook the pleasure of feeling him against me.

My lips pressed together to keep the whine of despair from leaving my mouth as Tobias's nose gently touched my temple, his lips caressing my skin just by my ear.

"I don't know if you wanted me to kill you or fuck you. But this game you are playing, sweetheart, I'm not a fan. Give me back my witch."