

The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 169

Sixty-Two: Joselin

Joselin's P.O.V.

It had been the longest day of my life.

I had tried to build a wind barrier down the center of the room to prevent Blanche's voice from reaching me, but a sharp jab from Cyrus's elbow made me drop it. Tobias slammed the spell caster into the wall, and Aurora had to separate them because I was too shocked to do anything but watch.

It was officially the most turned-on I had ever been, seeing him acting so protective and possessive over me. He was like my personal bodyguard, and I had quite a few fantasies I could make into reality.

I would have jumped him during our lunch break if we didn't have an audience in the room. But everyone had their food brought to us and stayed to continue working. Killian was the only one not present, and that was because he had a to-do list longer than the hallway.

Charlie and Damien were in his office, helping him, and I hoped they were catching up and bonding. That relationship needed a little extra focus, but it was their business. I had said my peace with Charlie already.

Aisha and Margot acted very civilly, and I think it was because their hatred for Blanche was strong enough to give them a common enemy. It made me feel good to know they didn't hate me as much as I thought they did. Or at least, they didn't hate me as much as they hated Blanche, and that was something.

The girl had rattled on about everything from her morning before she joined us at breakfast to every fun and historical fact she could think of for each location Cora was popping around to. It made sense now why she stayed in the city and worked in real estate. The woman was book-smart, and I suspected that she had a photographic memory with how she was reciting information like an encyclopedia.

"This was where the war of 2042 started. I read that they had lost over fifty thousand humans in this first battle. It really is a shame that they couldn't get their act together and be a united front. They just had to let their government get in their heads and turn them against each other. If I were there..." Blanche rattled on, and I rubbed my fingers in small circles on my temple.

She was annoying as hell but also very helpful. Every place Cora had gone to had one type of historical event or another happen there. It was the only connection we had found so far. But even the kind of events didn't align. Some had mass deaths; others didn't have a single one.

But a quick search found that there was always something document worthy in the history books or online.

Tobias slid behind me, wrapping his arms around my waist. They overlapped, his palms flat on my sides as his thumb rubbed in soothing circles. I could feel his heartbeat against my back, and I leaned into him as my exhaustion caught up with me.

"You two are just the cutest! When I heard that you had been able to mark him, I just knew that the Goddess had her hand in it. There was no way the mark would have stayed if you weren't mates. Witches have never been able to mark another species before." Blanche said, her eyebrows raised as she stared at us with doe eyes and a goofy smile.

"We are mates." I snapped. I may have been his chosen mate, but we were mates nonetheless, and my short temper with her today didn't allow me to hear her compliment for what it was.

"Oh, I know. I just meant that maybe you didn't feel the fated mate bond because you're not a wolf or Lycan, but that doesn't mean that you weren't fated to be together. Wasn't he the one who found you all those years ago? I remember you showing up here with me. I was so excited there would be another girl in our age group for training, but then they said you were a witch and had to train with Talia. You never left Tobias's side whenever you were out of that castle." Blanche sighed dreamily as she looked over her shoulder to where a tense Cyrus was hunched over the table, staring at the map.

Even he had looked like he wanted to snap at her to shut up a few times. But he was a good man, and even though he was hurting and on the verge of taking it out on someone else, he refused to let that person be innocent, little Blanche.

"The Goddess works in mysterious ways. Perhaps Blanche is onto something. Lycans have difficulty finding fated mates they have for decades, but maybe it's because their mates aren't always the same species?" Aurora offered as she winked encouragingly at me.

I wasn't sure she knew Tobias already had a mate before me. If she did, she probably wouldn't be saying that.

I remembered the voice in my head during our bonding ceremony, telling me to bite him. It was so distinct, so mesmerizing.

'I've always said I didn't believe there was one mate for everyone. Who's to say that each person can't have multiple mates? Maybe they just haven't realized it because other species don't feel the bond.'" Aurora raised her eyebrows at me in a knowing glance that had my hands over Tobias's forearms tightening.

When she spoke again, I felt my chest fill with hope. "I have always felt a pull to Henry, but his beast recognized the mate within his own kind. Even after he left me and began a life with her, that pull to him never went away. My love for him never lessened. Having him with me again only confirms that while I may not have been his match as a wolf, our souls have always been entwined."

Tobias tightened his hold on me, placing a kiss on my mark before resting his cheek against the side of my head.

I had always felt a pull to him. From the day he found me hiding in that log, naked, covered in blood, and terrified, I hadn't gone a single day without thinking of him. I have always loved him, and I always would.

"You think I was able to mark him at our bonding ceremony because I am possibly one of his fated mates?" I asked, unable to hide the excitement at the prospect. I knew it wasn't likely, but it made me incredibly happy that this hunch was coming from the descendant of the moon Goddess. Maybe she knew something that I didn't.

Had it been the Goddess urging me to mark my fate, mate? Was that the sign I needed that our mate bond had always been there even before he marked me and allowed me to feel it?

'Do you think that could be true?' I asked Tobias through our mate link, and he adjusted his hold on my waist to lace his fingers with mine.

'It would explain why I always felt like I belonged to you. I found you first. You were always mine.' Tobias nuzzled his nose against the side of my head, and I heard him take in a deep inhale.

He had told me before how he had always felt guilty about Ana. It wasn't just because of her death but because even when he had found her, he couldn't find it in him to feel the way he thought he should. He had told me how he thought about me far too often and still craved my company, touch, and the sound of my voice.

It wasn't natural for someone to want another over their fated mate. The pull to a fated mate was stronger than anything. Even a marked, chosen mate wouldn't be as strong as the pull to their unmarked, fated mate. It was one of the reasons I had been so hesitant to make a move on Tobias for so many years. I didn't want to be left behind when his true mate came along.

"You two had the bonding ceremony? Oh, that is just the sweetest thing I have ever heard. When I fall in love, I want my man to have a bonding ceremony with me. Can you imagine how romantic it would be? Under the full moon, just the two of us, we would mark each other....' Blanche cut off, startled by Cyrus snapping at us.

"How about instead of daydreaming about mates, you guys help me find the rogue witch on your council who's trying to kill me? Is that too much to ask?" His fingers ran through his hair, and he spun back to face the table without waiting for a response.

The map was littered with pins, and as the day progressed, she started moving faster again. We didn't know where she had slept. She had to have an enchantment on her home to prevent us from locating her there, but as soon as she teleported, we knew about it.

I pulled away from Tobias and moved to Cyrus's side. "I'm sorry. You're right. We got off track. Do we have the new list yet from the past two hours?"

One of the guards immediately raced out of the room, and I knew he was on his way to collect it.

"We are going to find her and put a stop to this. Her moving around like this will only work in our favor. We will figure out her plan or the pattern, and while her magic is exhausted, we will attack." I grabbed and scanned over the pins, hoping to see a pattern in the design since the locations' significance was lost to us.

But there wasn't one. They were so scattered and random that Cora had to have something specific she was doing or looking for in each location.

"Just keep looking," He snapped. I turned to snap back, but his chin was down as he studied the papers, water lining his bottom lid. He must have sensed my stare because he flinched away as if I were about to lash out at him physically. "Please, Joselin."

The plea for help cut me to my core, and I swallowed hard before nodding. The door burst open, and the guard returned, slapping down a piece of paper significantly longer than the last.

Cora was covering a lot of ground and would be weakened very soon. Even if she did have Rona's magic, and therefore Rona's mother's magic, no one could keep going for long at this rate.

My fingers moved quickly, using the coordinates to pin markers in the map before handing the paper to Cyrus first to review and start research. I looked all the red pins over once before moving back to check for a pattern in the coordinates or the location names, but that was pointless. There was no pattern there.

Cyrus glanced up at me briefly before going back to researching the locations. It was just long enough for me to see the fear and panic in his eyes.

He had survived her the first time with minimal damage; this second time had almost killed him and would haunt him for the rest of his life. If she dug her magic in him a third time...

Cyrus wouldn't survive a third time. No one would