

# The Beast And The Blessed

Chapter 189

Thirteen: Damien

Damien's P.O.V.

My palms slid against the fabric of my shorts as I rubbed my legs, trying to distract myself from what I had done. I felt like a complete asshole. I couldn't sleep and ended up torturing myself all night thinking about it.

I wanted Charlotte again. I craved her.

Yet, the guilt of not only taking her virginity but doing it so hard and deep and on the fucking couch when there was a bed one room over had me feeling sick. She deserved so much better.

I should have made her some food and then taken her to my bed. We could have gone slowly until she had adjusted to my size. I didn't need to thrust into Charlotte the way I did. I would make it up to her and ensure she had a better experience next time.

Flowers, candles...romance. Women loved that shit. I couldn't sit back without doing something. I planned to give her a tour of my home when she got here this morning, demanding she relax while I cooked her breakfast. We could talk as we ate our food, and I would make sure she was okay with what happened last night.

While I appreciated her help over the past week, I didn't intend to make her do my chores. She just started helping me one day, which meant a lot to me. No one had helped me before without wanting something in return. Charlotte only wanted to spend time with me to see if we could be more.

I didn't say anything about it, but I didn't stop her either. She wouldn't listen to me, even if I did tell her to stop.

She had no problem doing manual work and getting dirty. Charlotte was incredible. I could picture us doing our daily chores around the house while our kids ran around the yard, and the image was just too good to dismiss.

I wasn't ready to let her go, but I needed to make up for my carelessness before we moved any further.

I walked back and forth from the river all night, wanting to make sure the tank was completely full today before she showed up. There were a lot of chores that if she wanted to help with, she could. But taking over a dozen trips back and forth from the river, carrying buckets of water was not the kind of work I would want my woman doing.

The idea of her becoming my woman sounded better each day we spent together.

I was excited. Nervous but excited.

When morning passed, and the sun began the descent of the afternoon sun, my excitement turned into anxiety. Charlotte hadn't shown up like she had every day before, and I debated going after her. I didn't know if what happened yesterday had hit her last night after she left or if she truly was happy about it.

She said she would give me space to think but that she would be back. I wanted to offer her the same consideration.

I wanted to, but I didn't. I needed to know she was okay.

My hands pressed into my knees as I pushed myself to my feet and stormed out of my cabin. I ended up across the river and standing in the middle of her empty camp before I knew it.

There should have been at least one person here. Charlotte said they always left one person behind to protect their belongings.

Yet, their camp was empty. Worry settled deep in my chest.

Something had to have happened. They wouldn't abandon their camp unless there had been an emergency. Was someone injured?

My head spun from side to side as I scanned the area, looking for any sign of struggle. Was Charlotte okay? If she was my mate, would I be able to feel it if she were in danger or hurt?

I could hear my blood pumping loudly in my head as my breathing picked up. Her scent was still here, and I couldn't pick up traces of blood. Yet, I was coming up with a million thoughts and ideas about what could have happened, and each one was worse than the last.

They had done an excellent job of limiting any marks or tracks someone could follow, but Charlotte's scent made it easy for me to chase her band of mercenaries down.

I wanted to shift to get there faster, but I knew a bear sprinting through the woods would be louder and catch more attention than a man.

It was only an hour later that I reached the outskirts of the town.

The humans had done a good job building a new society after the Great War when Lycan took control of the world and all supernatural creatures came out of hiding, but their population was still only an eighth of the size it used to be.

Their towns and cities were significantly smaller, and most were hidden, still geared up for war against supernatural creatures. Ones like this, though, welcomed the new way of life...to an extent.

The humans still weren't happy with our kind being around, but it was their new normal, and they had accepted that it was better to work with us than to be against us.

As I jogged past them, a woman ushered her children into her waiting car. She knew I wasn't human from her tone and the look she sent me. It was one of the reasons why I hated coming to town, but I had done it enough that people knew of me. They knew I existed, lived nearby, and put up with me, even if they didn't like my kind.

Charlotte's scent was diluted by everyone walking around, and I pushed myself to move faster. I couldn't lose it.

Just as I was jogging past one of the inns, a small body came rushing through the door, smacking into my side.

Sparks erupted across my chest as I wrapped my arms around her and held her to me, steadying us.

"Damien?" Charlotte's soft voice was full of confusion, but a smile stretched across her face when she pulled back and looked up at me. "Damien! What are you doing here?"

She pulled her arms from where they were squished between us and threw them around my neck. It was not the greeting I had been expecting, but I was so happy to see she was okay that my hand grabbed the side of her head, and I kissed her.

She responded eagerly and pushed up on her toes to be closer to me.

"Well, I was not expecting that." A familiar voice called out from my right, and I pulled away to bare my teeth at the pretty boy. Charlotte had told me about the men she traveled with, and I knew this man, Paxton, was the one I liked the least. His constant flirting with Charlotte made me want to tear out his tongue.

"Damien, why did you come to town? I could have picked something up for you if you needed." Charlotte didn't bother to look at Paxton; her bright green eyes were locked on me, and it made me happy that she didn't feel he was worth her attention when I was present.

"You didn't show up, and your camp was empty."

Paxton snorted with amusement next to us, looking as though she were about to make fun of me for rushing into town to find Charlotte before a look of horror crossed his face. "My stuff!"

I raised my eyebrows as he turned on his heels and ran toward the forest. "Don't mind him. Someone stole his favorite pants the other day, and he's been a bit jumpy about leaving camp since."

Charlotte's arms were still around my neck, and she leaned up, kissing my jaw. How could one woman make me feel this way? The small touches she did were everything, and I was addicted to her.

"I didn't mean to worry you. I was rushing out to see you right now. We had to come here to cash in for our last bounty, and they gave us another one." I heard the paper in her hand crinkling as she waved it behind my head, but I was unsure if I wanted to know what danger she was about to put herself in.

Her cheeks lit up in a soft pink glow as she smiled larger than I had ever seen. "You were worried about me. You came after me." "Of course I did. Why wouldn't I come after you? I needed to make sure you were okay, Charlotte." My voice lowered as I began walking her backward and out of the way of a passing couple.

She seemed to pick up on the double meaning of my words, and she kissed me again, nodding as she assured me, "I am more than okay. I've never been happier. I could do without all the human women checking out my shirtless mate, but other than that, I am wonderful."

I didn't bother looking around to see if she was just joking with me or if people had stopped to stare. "I almost showed up in my fur. Then I would be naked." "If you had shown up naked, we would have been giving them a different show altogether." Her eyes sparkled with mischief, and I felt mine widen with surprise.

"Charlotte, what happened yesterday...." "Was perfect, and I would love for it to happen again." She interjected, her body tense, and her smile fell as she went on the defense.

"It will happen again, but not like that." I shook my head, my hands sliding under her shirt to rest on her hips. "If I had known that was your first time, I would have done things differently. I am going to do things differently the next time." "Starting with protection." I thought to myself. I had been careless and desperate to get inside the beautiful woman offering herself to me, begging for me, that I didn't use my brain. A child was the last thing either of us needed, but the thought of not going bare, now that I knew how good it was, was infuriating.

I didn't want anything between us, ever.

"There you are, girl! It's time to go." A large man I recognized from her camp came pushing through the crowd, the others trailing behind him.

"Barley! This is Damien. Damien, this is Barley." Charlotte excitedly gestured between us, and he gave me a nod before discretely looking around.

"Nice to meet you, Damien. We can get to know each other better later. We need to get a move on." Barley gestured for us to begin walking, and I felt myself on high alert, pulling Charlotte behind me by the hand to shield her from whatever had set the big man off.

I began heading toward their camp, but the giant wolf shifter quickly cut in front of me and steered us in the opposite direction. Once we were deep in the forest and out of sight of the town, the group turned and began the long journey back to their camp.

There were only three men with us, so I had to assume one had stayed behind after all. Diego, the loud snorer, was missing from the group, and Paxton had presumably run back when he heard their camp was unattended.

"What happened?" Charlotte asked when the camp came back into view through the trees.

"Seems someone heard you being referred to by Charlotte instead of Charlie, and gossip began to spread about you being in town." Roman chimed in, walking behind us and glancing back and around us every few seconds to ensure we were alone.

My back stiffened. I had called her Charlotte several times, but that was her name. Still, I wondered if I had put her in danger without even knowing it. It didn't make sense, and I wanted to know how people knew her and why it was a big deal for her to be there.

"That's her name. Why would that cause problems?" I asked, not liking the way they glanced at each other. I looked down at Charlotte, but her gaze was locked on the ground, and even when I gently pulled on her hand, she refused to look up.

"I think it would just be best if you called me Charlie when we are in public.

I can't be Charlotte there."