

The King's Tainted Mate Chapter 12 - Tips

I was a monster after all...her monster. I brought my cup of wine to my lips, relishing its sweet taste while a sense of victory caressed my insides. She was still mine. She'd cursed, sworn and called on the powers that be to strike me dead, but none of that was going to stop me from keeping her from leaving. How could she expect me to let her go after what I'd learned. We were still bonded! How that was even remotely possible had eluded me. If not for those sweet sparks and the obvious way she reacted to my touch and I to hers, the thought would have never occurred to me until it was too late.

Once she had accepted my rejection, there was no doubt of our bond breaking as evidenced by the onslaught of pain on me and my wolf right after, but once that pain had finally ceased and my wolf had a semblance of control back, the desire to reclaim her had been instant. For a moment I had thought it was my regret and my desperate need to earn her forgiveness talking, not until I had laid my hands on her and been proven otherwise. The discovery had only served to deepen the desire to reclaim. I had been granted one more chance!

Pronouncing a guilty judgement and labelling her a criminal to keep her from leaving was probably not the best way to make use of that chance, but I had my reasons. With the palace walls having eyes and ears, I could not risk letting the knowledge of my mate's presence falling into the wrong hands. A maiden who had been brought to my study bound and then suddenly seen walking out free would send tongues wagging and wolves sniffing out in places they had no business sniffing. I only needed a few hours to keep the lie up and she would finally be free.

Her face was distorted with rage as she was led away and as much as it killed me to see her in that position, I let the lie play out, knowing her natural reaction to my injustice sold it perfectly. It was one more sin against her that I would need atoning for but so be it.

The sun was way over the horizon now and as I stared out at the splash of colour, I couldn't help the smile that broke out of my lips. Colour... That's what she was. A splash of colour to my otherwise bleak existence. My temper had simmered with her presence and anyone would mistake me for a calm king. She was perfect. With all her rage and cursing, she was perfect and I thanked the heavens for granting me one more chance. Somewhere in my thought

journey, I had also thanked the moon goddess for letting it be her that had stumbled into my room at the inn.

I had shamelessly turned the memories of that night over and over again in my head. Reliving the parts I could remember vividly. And now that I knew that the stranger was my mate, I couldn't stop the raging desire to have her again.

"Your Majesty." Fury laced Rakon's voice probably because of the awkward position I had placed him in when as the captain of the king's guard, he had to be the one to drag my mate to the dungeons.

"How is she?" I ignored my best friend's piercing gaze entirely,

"She still wants your head or something worse." He spat, eyes flickering to my pants in warning. "Now will you tell me what the hell is going on because stupidity has never been your strong suit, your majesty."

"She's pregnant." I ignored his insult too, knowing I deserved it after what he'd witnessed.

"She's what?! Are you sure? Is it even yours?" I growled at his last question. "You know what I mean." He reached for the wine and gulped it all down hastily. "So what was this?"

"Protecting my mate."

"You call that protecting her?! And what do you mean mate? Did she not just accept your rejection?"

"That is what I need Liira for." And talking about the oldest royal—

"What is the meaning of this, your majesty?" Liira, the only person I could trust with what I needed done stood in front of me, arms akimbo. Her stance spoke of the kind of relationship we shared.

"Must it always take a royal summon for me to get to see you grandmother?"

"This lad claimed it was a matter of life and death." Liira glared at the messenger before turning back to me with arched eyebrows.

"I figured news of my impending death might get you to reconsider."

She scoffed. "And how did that work out for you?"

"You are here aren't you?" She'd taken her damn time, but that was something I had expected, knowing her dislike for the royal palace. It also gave me enough time to prepare for all the scolding that would be coming my way. "I need you to do something."

"Don't they all." She scoffed as she reluctantly approached me. As the best nurse in the military hospital, attending to more men than anyone, I understood her remark. It was in no way a complaint, however, as it was her favourite past time. Away from the treacherous walls of the palace. "Out with it." She urged.

"I need you to do an examination on someone." Being out in the open, my voice was low, making her frown.

"What kind of an examination?"

"I need you to determine if the said person is with child and how far along they are."

Happiness flashed in her eyes, but I shook my head. "It is not the queen."

"Oh?"

"Will you do it?"

"You have many midwives in the palace, so why trouble an old lady like me?" Arms folded, she bored her eyes into mine with that unmistakable scrutiny.

"I wish for no one to know. At least not yet."

"Hmm. This person, who does she happen to be?"

I sighed, knowing she wouldn't let that go and neither could I afford to lie to her. "My mate."

Eyes wide, she pulled me to the side before scanning our surrounding for intruders. "And you choose to tell me this in the open?"

"Well, you always did insist that the garden was more—"

“Not for such a delicate matter, it’s not!” She scolded as she led me away from the garden and into the palace. Many servants cleared the hallways at the sight of her, while the curious ones risked glares to get a glimpse of the rare face of the matriarch. Of course, Liira did not bother with the curious eyes as she led me up to my least visited part of the palace. The hallways were quiet, not even the presence of guards. Just as she preferred her wing to be. According to her, it lessened the possibility of enemies lurking in the shadows. Which mattered less since she opted to spend her days away from the palace. “Now what business have you wedding a chosen mate when you found your true mate?!”

I flinched at her tone. “It’s a long story I’m afraid.”

She pinned me with a pointed look. “If you expect me to do any of this, you are going to have to do better than that, your majesty.” No surprise there. Like a child threatened, I fell into narrating the whole ordeal, while I endured her glares, frowns, and scolding looks from her, but by the time my narration ended, she wore a broad smile. That was not the reaction I expected from the woman. At the very least, a speech aimed at scolding would have been fitting, but only because I was a king and raising one’s hand to a king could attract the worst of punishments for the perpetrator. The worst being death if the king so desired. Though I highly doubted it would ever come to that as no one would really be willing to carry out such a sentence as it would only expose them to the worse wrath of the matriarch.

“What is there to smile about?” I raised a brow.

“Because for once, your lack of control may have just saved you from suffering the worst heartache known to a wolf.” Her gaze shamelessly flickered to my bottom garments and it took me a moment to catch her line of thought. When I did, I was still confused, however, and she tsked at my slowness to understand.

“I do not get it.”

She rolled her eyes. “It means you have this little gift growing inside your mate’s belly for saving your bond.” I’d never heard of wolves being bonded by a pregnancy before but that did not make me any less grateful for it. “Of course it doesn’t mean you are out of the woods yet.”

“How so?”

"If you do not mark her by the time she bears your heir, you can kiss the fragile link between you goodbye."

"You mean I have as little as the months of her pregnancy to win her heart?"

"Good luck with that." Rakon scoffed in the mind link and I glared at him. Hearing that I could lose her all over again brought a bitter taste in my mouth.

"From your narration, it's actually less." I frowned and Liira rolled her eyes yet again. "From what you expect me to discover and according to your account, I'd say she's been pregnant for a little while already. So if you still wish to have her in your life after you meet your son or daughter, I suggest you get on with it."

If I still wished to have her? That was definitely not a question.

"You should probably also know that for your bond to be completely restored, she has to be willing to take your mark. Meaning, you can only mark her after she has marked you."

Now that was the question!