

The King's Tainted Mate Chapter 16 - Tips

I wished to hold her. To ensure that she was really alright. That they were both alright. With how delicate her pregnancy was, according to Liira, a thousand reasons of something having had gone wrong while she ran away from the palace troubled me. She could have tripped and fallen or bumped herself into a tree or she could have simply inhaled some scent that she was not aware she was allergic to, all of which had the potential to harm her in her condition.

And what if even after ripping apart every one of those traitors that wanted to harm her, something would still go wrong? My fists clenched and unclenched at the thought as I stared at my mate. She was seated in front of me seeming unhurt, but I still longed to have her in my arms and confirm that for myself.

I wished to be closer than I currently was, to breathe in her scent and calm my anxious heart. I was never one to be anxious or be afraid, but after what had happened tonight, I had made a stark revelation about myself. I was not as immune to fear as I had initially thought. Not when it came to her. It was quite ironic for someone who'd rejected their mate in the first place.

The moment Liira had mind linked me that she could not find her, fear had gripped my heart and for a few precious seconds I couldn't help all the bloody visions that clouded my mind. Each speaking of a brutal end to my mate that left me paralysed.

Finding her surrounded like that in the darkness had unleashed a beast in me that sought to keep those bloody visions from coming to pass in the most violent way. And being betrayed by my own men who had taken a knee and sworn to serve me, only served to anger me even more.

There was protocol for traitors, ways to punish those who betrayed their king in such a manner. I was their king and alpha and could have easily compelled the guards to stand down with my alpha voice too, but the rage I felt at the thought of any harm coming to her, any resolution other than death was not acceptable to either me or my wolf. Any other action would not be enough to avert my fears and as I ended each one of them, as I spilled their traitorous blood, satisfaction is all I felt while that fear melted each time one of them breathed their last.

"Are you alright?" Because I could not take it any longer, I broke the thick air of silence that had filled the carriage ever since we'd stepped into it. We were

on our way to Dovah, against my better judgement. Stepping into the city of outlaws was risky business, but for her sake, I was. Only because she'd made an offer I could not refuse. Not after Liira's words and concerns for her delicate pregnancy and wellbeing. The matriarch had warned about forcing her to return to the palace which I was prepared to do with or without my mate's permission. Even when I knew that it would only serve to alienate her from me even more, the thought of being apart from her was not something I wished to entertain. It was also the only reason I had given in to let this 'Gol' into Xatis and risk being criticized for making such a dangerous decision. There was a reason outlaws were meant to be kept out.

"Fine." She mumbled without even sparing me a glance and I would be lying if I said that did not sting, because it did. More than I cared to admit. I hated how she was able to do this. To remain so composed, unaffected and as though I did not exist at all while I struggled to keep my hands to myself with each passing second. While it took everything in me to endure inhaling her scent and not being able to do anything about it. I wished to claim her, mark her, make her mine, take her in untold ways, and yet she remained so composed as if our bond did not affect her at all.

I kept my gaze on her, finding my only comfort in the fact that she'd decided to stay. It was not a declaration that she was mine, but it was a start. The sight of my cloak wrapping her little frame added to my joy too. It was as if my own hands were wrapped around her and I could swear there were moments I thought I saw her inhale my scent from it. Oh perhaps it was my own mind playing tricks on me as I desperately wished to see any semblance of being wanted by my mate.

We slipped back into silence at her one word answer that did not inspire a whole conversation until her stomach growled. The sound, thankfully, got her snapping up at me and the moment granted me an opportunity to hold her gaze which I did desperately for that fleeting moment before she looked away hastily. But perhaps she was not hasty enough as her eyes betrayed her right before and told me tales of what I wished to know that left my heart leaping. She was not as immune to our bond as she appeared to be and as I bent to the side searching the compartment meant to carry food in the carriage, a smile broke out of my lips. All was not lost after all.

"Here. I'm afraid, this is all there is." I handed her some dried fruit that she only frowned upon. "You need to eat something." I urged, just as another meaner and louder growl sounded from her stomach, announcing just how hungry she was, but she merely shook her head in protest.

“Thank you for your concern, but I cannot.” I stared at her incredulously, hating her flat tone and the fact that she was choosing to starve herself in her condition.

“And why not?” I growled and for a moment I thought she might not answer me.

“Because I just can’t.”

“That is no answer and you know it.” I spat, earning myself a glare that softened when I shot her with a glare of my own.

“Because that is not what I desire at the moment.” She mumbled, more to herself than me.

And what was it she desired?...I struggled to keep my head from wandering in places that would unlock my own. “And what is it you desire then?” I inquired instead and she blushed. That feminine look letting my mind loose to wander in those forbidden places and unlocking a thirst I had fought to keep at bay.

“Would there be any rabbit instead?”

“Rabbit?” I frowned, the odd question effectively dousing all the excitement that had threatened to run wild in my wolf skin.

“That is what I wish to eat.”

“Oh.” My eyes widened, but when she mumbled something about it being too much to ask, I merely smiled. “If it is what you wish to have, then rabbit you shall have, my lady.” I stopped the carriage before she could say anymore. We’d lose time because of it, but I was too excited to care.

“I’m going hunting.” I announced the moment I stepped out of the carriage, much to the dismay of my men. “Light a fire and wait for my return.” Feeling as though I’d been charged with the most important task in the whole realm, I shifted and howled with alpha male pride as I disappeared into the thicket. I had an entire kingdom I was responsible for, but this, providing for my mate was more satisfying than anything else I’d done.

“Are you not overdoing it, your majesty?” The smirk in my best friend’s tone was evident as Rakon taunted in the mindlink, but I did not care for it. She’d finally asked something of me, that is all that mattered.

