

The King's Tainted Mate Chapter 3 - Tips

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Everyone claimed one would never feel anything to do with their mate before their first shift. Not their heavenly scent, the undeniable attraction. Not even the pain of their rejection. But as I sat on the spot I had crashed on moments after the royal carriage had disappeared from my sight, I proved those theories wrong. At least the part about being rejected.

I felt it. All of it. His anger. His pain. The hate he'd instantly had for me when he realized what I'd done. But above all else, I felt the ocean of pain that rose all over me when he'd uttered the words I thought I could take if it came down to it. How wrong I was.

As he spoke those words, my whole world had shattered. My throat had gone impossibly thick while my heart clenched so hard I could not breathe. I realized too late how tightly woven the mate bond was. Being rejected felt as though my own soul that had been entwined with his was being ripped away a piece at a time. And when he'd chosen my sister, that pain pounded on me like waves that constantly sought to devour a rocky shore. Even now, ages after he'd left, my heart still felt like it was being shredded into tiny pieces.

My own family's betrayal was like the cherry on top of my cake of pain. They had thrown me away like I was nothing. Like all the years of my life had never existed at all. I could still hear my sister's excitement as she ran back into our tiny house and went out the back to our small garden to report her news to mother and father. They had both walked back inside, ignored me as they offered their congratulations to my mate. None even bothered to say a simple good bye to me when they gladly accepted the prince's invitation to move to the palace. It was as if I had ceased to exist altogether. I was nothing!

A lone tear escaped my eyes, threatening the whole stream to flow right after, but I held them back. It would do me no good at all and I could not afford to be weak.

"Now, now, It's really not the end of the world you know?" I sprang to my feet, recognition hitting me at the sound of that voice. Why was he here? I found myself staring into that ghastly man's eyes from earlier. Except this time around fury did not fill them, hunger did as they took me in. He'd used the back door this time and I wondered if he had left at all.

“What are you doing back here?!”

“Aww, no need to be so hostile little wolf. I’m only here on your account.”

“My account?” I felt a cold chill run down my spine. Surely he wasn’t thinking of—

“Your sister was gracious enough to point out you needed some company and since we seemed to have been denied our chance last night, I’m here to more than make up for it.” He stalked towards me and I stepped back, shocked at his words. There was really no end to the darkness that resided in my sister’s soul. It wasn’t enough that she’d taken everything from me.

“She was gravely mistaken, as I do not need any one’s company, much less a brute like you.” I sneered as I moved closer to the front door, glad to have left it open. Those hungry eyes flickered to it the same moment and before all hell broke loose I slipped through it just as the brute leaped at me. He was quick and I barely escaped his grasp.

I ran out just as a band of royal soldiers were getting off their horses.

“Oh thank the gods! Please, my lord, save me!” I stumbled and fell at the feet of the first soldier, relief washing over me at their perfect timing. My heart still on a full gallop, I heard that beast cursing right behind me at the surprise that greeted him.

“Now why would we save a traitor of Xatis?”

Traitor? I shook my head and dared to look up at him. “I assure you, my lord, I have done nothing against my own kingdom.” This had to be a mistake.

“Are you not Shyla?” The soldier growled, waving a sheet of paper that was rolled up like a scroll in my face.

“I am, but—”

“Are you calling his highness, the prince, a liar then?”

My eyes widened. “T-The p-prince?” I stuttered. He’d sent soldiers and branded me a traitor? “What are my crimes?” I knew what those were. What my one crime was and he was still punishing me for it. It was not enough that

he had rejected me. Choosing my sister wasn't enough too. He would strip me of everything.

The soldier snorted. "And what makes you think you are in a position to question him? We are here on his orders, that is all you need to know and unless you insist on calling him a liar—"

"I am no one my lord." I blurted out when I understood the soldier's intent. Perhaps if I showed my remorse quickly, they would be lenient on me. I had heard how traitors and those accused of treason were treated. It was a wonder these soldiers took time to even speak to me. Some of those banished from the kingdom, never even got to set foot out of their homes, let alone Xatis before they met their fate. I wouldn't be one of those people, I decided as I lowered myself to the ground.

"You are right. You are no one and by his highness's order, you are hereby banished from these lands. You are to never show your face to his highness ever again. If you do, it will be your last."

I didn't know what I felt at the pronouncement. I had accepted my fate and had no intention of seeing him ever again, but this... it carried with it a finality that broke me in ways I never thought possible. It was as if he was rejecting me all over again and all those tears I had held back since his rejection spilled.

"She's all yours." The king's guard crumpled the sheet of paper he'd been reading from and carelessly threw it at my feet. "Do us all a favour and make it quick. None of us is really interested in escorting her to the borders of Xatis."

I had no moment to marvel at how my life had crumbled or to wipe at my tears before pleased growls filled my ears. I had just been served whole for the brute to devour.

"Well now little wolf, it seems you and I are truly destined for—" I did not let the beast finish before breaking out in a sprint. Every born of survival I possessed had suddenly come alive, urging me forward. No one was going to save me. I was all on my own and a little surprise, a little head start, would be the difference between death and keeping the shame of a life I was still determined to hold on to. With no wolf to aid my escape, I had quickly realized how little that difference was.

I dashed for the covering of the trees, my mind racing faster than my feet.

"You don't really think you can out run me little wolf, now do you?" I could hear his heavy breathing and the heavy pounding of his feet on the ground. Twigs snapped easily under them and each time they did, I got a sense of how far back he was. He was getting closer each time and I willed my legs to go faster. I was grateful he thought of me as a weakling and didn't bother to shift, unknowingly giving me a fighting chance. And he was wrong. I wasn't thinking of out running him, only out smarting him. I took a sharp turn and headed in the only direction that would grant me an even bigger fighting chance.

Until today, I had only been here to enjoy it's beauty, and as I emerged from the woods, I prayed the waterfall would be my saving grace. It was a long way down and I hoped I would not be followed. And if I was, I hoped the water would mask my scent long enough to get away once I came up from the river downstream. I slid to a halt when I came to the edge just as more twigs snapped, announcing the arrival of my persuer too. I ignored my racing heart and the protest in my legs as I peered down below.

"Do not be crazy little wolf." He'd finally caught up. "You will only be jumping to your death. I promise I'll make this worth your while. You only have to come with me."

The dirty smile on his lips only worked to strengthen my resolve and he was wrong again. I was crazy. Crazy to survive. So I jumped.