

The King's Tainted Mate Chapter 90 THE END - Tips

"I'm all yours now." Elian's declaration as he made his way back into the king's chambers made my heart flutter. I knew he meant it for the night, but I couldn't help but think of forever. He was mine! Not for a day or a moment, we were forever bonded! Not even our change of hearts could undo the twinning of our souls. Perhaps the gods?

"You certainly did take your time." Choosing to make him suffer a little for abandoning me for this long, I reached for a robe and covered up another of Lord Quent's scandalous night gowns. A lot of those had gotten delivered to me, together with more exquisite garments than I cared to have. My protests had been met with a very reasonable answer from the fourth noble house. No amount of service would ever be enough for what the chosen had done. Which meant it was up to the fourth house's discretion when and how they chose to dress their future queen. In a side note, the noble lord had admitted to how I made his designs appear flawless and prettier than they actually were, which was good for business. And I apparently was too weak to let a family business suffer the loss of their most preferred customer. Even if I was not a paying one.

"My apologies, but I couldn't help but be entranced by the most gorgeous being." Warm lips covered mine in a sweet kiss that made me want to rethink my decision altogether. He'd been tending to our daughter after all.

When the two had finally met, it'd been love at first sight. And since then, none of her cries went unnoticed or unattended to if Elian was around. He'd scared maid's off that duty more times than I could count too.

"I thought I was the most gorgeous being." I pouted.

"Are you jealous, my lady?" Strong arms wrestled the robe from my hands before I could completely cover up. "It doesn't suit you." He flashed me that mischievous smile and I knew I had lost my little game when my heart melted.

"I'm more impatient than jealous." My entire body shivered under my mate's heated gaze that'd gotten darker after beholding what I'd attempted to cover up.

"Not that I hate being the object of my mate's desires, but I thought that after the last time, my lady would be fully satiated or at least be a little more patient." And each time had been glorious, but the intensity of my desire had

merely made each one feel like a little scratch, leaving me longing for more and still miles further from being satiated.

“When is having my mate fill me up ever enough?” I inquired boldly as I leaned into his hand that had somehow found its way in between my thighs and was now gently teasing me.

“That is certainly a blessing I would forever be grateful for to the gods.” His hand came closer, teasing, taunting and driving me insane.

“You and I both.” Barely holding on to that sanity, I reached out and touched too, giving him a taste of his own medicine.

“Damn Shyla!” He hissed, much to my delight. “If you keep up with that, I won’t be held accountable for my actions.” His warning was barely a whisper now and I relished in still being able to stir his need this much even after so long.

“Neither do I have any intentions of holding my king accountable for anything he might deem appropriate to satiate his maiden.”

“I must say I do like the sound of that, chosen.” His lips went to my neck, tongue licking his mark, drawing wicked moans out of me. “Are you sure you wish to be doing this, however? The sun is almost up.”

I barely hid my displeasure when he stopped his assault. “What is this? Are you trying to keep me from what rightfully belongs to me?”

“Never...” I squealed when I lost my footing and found myself being carried to the bed. “But I wouldn’t be a good mate if I didn’t at least warn you about the day ahead.” Honestly, I did not wish to think about any of that. Because as it turned out, being the chosen hadn’t magically made me fall in love with politics or being around multitudes. But then that didn’t mean everyone thought the same. I was the chosen after all and had duties to the realm.

“You’d think restoring the balance would buy me a few years of freedom.” I scoffed.

“It’s not that bad.” Elian looked at me, amused.

“It will be if you keep me from what I really want.”

His hips curved. "I wouldn't dare commit such a crime, my lady." With every intent to give in to my demands, hips crushed on mine and drew me miles away from this realm and all its expectations. To one where only him and I mattered. Where pleasure rained in my blood at his touch. With every one of those simple yet arousing touches, he caressed my body, awakening me in a whole new way again and again. Showing me new worlds as he made love to me.

It was this Elia I had come to love over the months we'd spent getting to know each other. He'd asked to court me again, which I had thought was totally absurd since we were now bonded twice and couldn't really get away from each other. But with my positive answer, he'd gone ahead and proved that being mated was not all it took to fall in love. Our past still remained. With its hurts and pain, it remained a part of us. With Elia grabbing any opportunity to make up for it even when I did not hold it against him anymore.

"Ready to fly with me, my queen?" I wasn't. I wished for more, but the sound of his delicious voice that spoke of what I too had done to him, made me want to spread my wings and fly. To ride the winds of our lovemaking to the highest peak before letting go. I did just that. Arching my hips into him, meeting him thrust for thrust and loving his grunts, curses and moans that ensued. I wasn't innocent of them either as I clung to him while he carried us both to the edges of ecstasy before plunging us right into the sea of it, over and over again until sleep finally wielded its power and caught up with us...

"Our daughter is quite the princess." Contentment, pride and every other thing I'd never dreamed I'd see painting my mate's face shone when I opened my eyes to the dawn of a new day.

"Is she now?" I grinned, happy to have this face to wake up to. Even if I knew by his words that he'd sneaked out during the night to watch over our daughter and would torture me with every compliment he could shower on her. "Are you sure you would have not preferred a son?" The thought had crossed my mind and bothered me a little even after seeing how Elia kept fawning over our daughter.

"Have you met the fierce women of this royal line? I have no doubt she will be just as fierce. So to answer your question, no." Truth dripped with his words and I couldn't help but smile, knowing he was right about our daughter too. Aryn was already wrapping many hearts around her little finger barely months after being born and she already had a way of demanding for attention when she wanted it too. A trait I thought she took after her great grandmother more

than me. "Are you ready?" Elian suddenly asked, making me sigh at the reminder of what lay ahead.

"Do we really have to?" My gaze fell on the window letting in the morning sun. I was home. Back in Xatis, but I couldn't help the longing for the place where I'd stayed hidden for several months after fighting my uncle.

Carene had been truly a beautiful place with the most beautiful skies. Or perhaps I merely thought so because it was a land free of the blood I'd so generously shed in Xatis and had served as my escape during the months while I battled my demons of war.

It wasn't without its troubles, but the people swore they had never known a better time since the death of its royal house.

Now blessed with another, it'd become a part of Xatis and had been dubbed the chosen's city. My protests against naming it so had fallen on deaf ears as many in Carene had sworn their allegiance to the chosen, to Xatis and its king.

"You know they could wait for centuries if the chosen asked." That they would and it was the reason I had not protested the request to come home, back to Xatis in the first place. That and the toll I knew riding between Xatis and Carene was slowly taking on my mate. Elian had stayed with me in Carene until his duties as king couldn't wait on him anymore. But even after returning to Xatis, he'd ridden to Carene, to me and our daughter as often as he could.

The sound of trumpets and insistent knocks on the king's chamber's doors drew our attention.

"I did tell the maids to link me if there was any danger to Aryn." Elian frowned.

"You and I know the sound of those has nothing to do with our daughter." I wiggled out of Elian's arms and got ready to meet our early morning guest whom I knew we could not turn away even if we wished to.

"The sun has been up for hours already!" Liira's exasperated tone had me jumping out of our bed and grabbing a gown to cover up and look more presentable. Or was it less guilty of our deeds?

Elian did not bother, his amused smile speaking of how he did not care if his grandmother knew what we'd been up to almost the entire night. "You do know she's a wolf and can probably tell—"

"That doesn't mean we should flaunt...aargh!" I exclaimed while he merely sat back, a stupid grin on his face. I was all alone in this show of pretense and I couldn't help suspect he'd known about this visit too.

The door opened and revealed a small entourage led by the lady royalty of Xatis and I wished for the ground to swallow me right then.

"You might possess the chosen's gift, but you will still respect your elders." I blinked at Liira, my mother and Sarabeth, ready to defend or offer apologies, whichever would come first or would sound reasonable for this unknown crime, but Liira's glare morphed into that warm smile that made the matriarch more approachable. "Shyla dear, it's so good to have you home." Home...my heart settled at that as if Liira's words were exactly what I needed. And her warm embrace made me realize just how much I had missed her since the day she'd departed from Carene.

"It's good to be back—" I paused at the frown on Liira's face. "Is something the matter?"

"Oh, it's nothing...nothing there." She patted my belly and stepped back, leaving me confused. A fierce Liira I could understand, but an odd one?

"Nothing, there?" My frown deepened at her odd demeanour.

"She's looking to have another grandchild." Elian's stupid smile made me catch up quicker than I would have.

"She's what?!" I slapped a hand over my mouth when I realized that I'd spoken out loud. Had she expected me to be with child so soon? Wasn't Aryn still too young?

"Aryn is such a sweet child, child. All the more reason to have another." A mischievous smile graced Liira's lips while I blushed terribly. "Perhaps a little more than one. We might get lucky after last night or tonight. If the gods will it." She donned a thoughtful look before waving her thoughts away as if it were nothing, while I wished the ground could swallow me whole. It was one thing for the matriarch to be aware of our love making and totally another to have her refer to it so openly in front of everyone else.

“Is she being serious?”

“About which part? Having a few more babies or about you ending up with a pup or two in your belly after your mating ceremony?”

“Oh my God, you too?” The smile on Sarabeth betrayed her thoughts too and I couldn’t get anymore flustered.

“As she said, Aryn is a sweet child, who wouldn’t wish for many more of those?”

“Mother!” I exclaimed, but Florithe merely shrugged, making me sigh, defeated. “The next one might just be an impossible child—”

“And we will still love him or her the same.” Liira grinned as did my mother, Sarabeth and the maids who’d accompanied them, making me realize that I wouldn’t be able to escape this.

“Maybe I should be having this conversation with gods.” I thought. “And what is this about a mating ceremony?” I turned to Elian, but he was gone.

Although escaped sounded more appropriate when a search around the chambers only revealed Astryn and Carlytte who stood beaming at me and acting odd at the same time. It wasn’t as if we had not seen each other over the months I had been in Carene as they had been right there with me, but the two behaved as though that were the case.

“What is it?”

“Uh...nothing.” Both Carlytte and Astryn walked further into the room, but instead of heading in my direction as they usually would, they stopped in front of my mother and only then did I notice the gown bag they carried.

“Don’t tell me that is from Lord Quent.” I sighed.

“Actually, this is from us.” My mother undid the belts used to keep the bag closed and revealed the most gorgeous gown I’d ever led my eyes on. The shiny white pearls that covered it sparkled even more when the sun’s rays hit it. “It is a gift from us. Something from your own house. We hoped you’d wear it today.”

“Wait, there is really going to be a mating ceremony today?” I had thought my return to Xatis was meant for that pending huge gathering of all the important dignitaries from all over the kingdoms wishing to speak of the future now that the chosen was among them. But even if that were not the case, wasn’t this too fancy for a gown meant to be used for a mating ceremony?

“And we do not wish to keep anyone waiting.” Liira headed me into the bath before I could ask anymore.

All the oils that had been poured into the bath water were meant to relax and calm, but none of that happened as I suddenly got nervous. Now that I was paying attention at the chaos unfolding before me as everyone worked to get me ready, I noted a few things that were off. Not only about some of the things that were not consistent with what I remembered of Liira’s lessons over the matter, but Carlytte and Astryn would not quite meet my eyes. And for more than once I was tempted to mind link them and compel them to reveal what they were hiding.

“You look absolutely beautiful.” My mother smiled. Albeit tearfully as she stared at my reflection once I was done. I agreed with her. With everyone whose eyes were now fixated on me after their efforts. I’d many times been clad in exquisite gowns, but this— it brought on waves of emotions that a mere piece of fabric shouldn’t have. And it was by no means merely because my family had gifted it to me. No. It drew me to something I had not cared about, but was suddenly craving. My own wedding ceremony. We’d never spoken of it and now that I thought about it, my mate had never even hinted at wishing for it. My heart surprisingly ached at the fact.

“Time to go.” Liira suddenly announced and I was grateful for the distraction from my own thoughts. The commotion that ensued right after as everyone took places was a welcome distraction too.

Out in the hallway, guards clad in more ceremonial armour lined each side as per the custom, but it was a familiar face I did not expect to see here that drew my attention. He stood with that serious demeanour he’d always donned when I’d first met him.

“Gol?” Breaking away from my entourage, I flung myself at the lord of the Aldeans as though it hadn’t just been mere hours since I’d last seen him. “You are here?” Now that he’d gotten a second chance, I did not see him stepping out of the kingdom he’d once failed to protect.

“Isn’t this unbecoming of a queen?” Gol mind linked, feigning displeasure while his arms that wrapped me in a warm embrace spoke another language.

“I am the chosen. Besides, no one in Xatis will judge me for embracing the man who would have not thought twice about laying down his life to protect this kingdom’s heir. And you do happen to be one of the king’s most trusted allies after ensuring his daughter’s safety.” I grinned, eyes darting to his Aldean armour that now bore the markings of both Carene and Xatis while he merely rolled his eyes. He still hated being praised for his bravery that he and Zastan had portrayed when their little entourage had been ambushed on their way to Carene. And if it weren’t for the others, Liira especially, that tale would have never been repeated in our hearing.

“Zastan assured me that he’d behave himself.” Gol finally pulled back, breaking our private conversation too. And to be clear, his response meant he’d probably scared the daylights out of his younger brother such that the former king of Carene had vowed not to even dare of dreaming of stepping a toe out of line. Gol had probably not even needed his authority as lord to get his brother who’d sworn to make up for all his misdeeds to do his bidding.

“That is...nice of you.” Their relationship was still on the mend and they were probably too far from gaining the trust they once shared, but even I could tell that reuniting with part of his family had mended much more in Gol’s heart than getting Carene back.

“I needed to be here. I’m sworn to protect my king and queen. Besides, I wouldn’t miss this for anything.” His lips curved. Albeit faintly, but I saw it and it strangely was the thing to get me to calm down.

“I’m so glad you came.” With one last embrace, I let him take his place ahead of us while the rest of the guards followed after.

The sound of the guard’s boots characterized our little journey and now that I was calm, I focused on getting to my mate. I couldn’t help how giddy I suddenly felt and the smile that formed on my lips at the thought of him and me at this mating ceremony. Once upon a time, it was something I’d thought would prove that I had chosen him. But now— I guessed it would be something we’d do for the sake of fulfilling the royal customs. And perhaps fulfil Liira’s wishes? I blushed at the thought.

“Are you okay, child?” Liira’s voice jolted me out of my thoughts, making me blush even more.

“Yes, I—” I paused, frowning at two gigantic doors that stood before our small entourage. I had not even realized that we had stopped. “The throne room?” Weren’t mating ceremonies supposed to be held in the woods surrounding the palace? I turned to Liira, wishing to make an inquiry about it, but the sound of trumpets sounding from what felt like every corner of Xatis drowned my thoughts as did the sight of everyone bowing towards me.

Confused at the turn of events, I waited for the sounds to die down before turning to Liira, but she was no longer by my side. Neither was my mother or Sarabeth or the other maidens who’d been a part of my entourage. If it weren’t for the many guards that still surrounded me, I would have thought everyone may have been snatched away by an enemy.

“My queen, it is time.” Gol’s words and his unusual reverence caught me off guard and before I could think more of it, the doors to the throne room opened, revealing an unexpected sight which had nothing to do with the multitudes almost flowing out of the huge room with their heads bowed towards me. Or the ceremonial décor in both the king and queen’s colours of scarlet and purple that made the place unrecognizable.

I had expected a bare torso, some skimpy skirt made of faux wolf’s skin covering his nakedness and some ancient beads hanging onto my mate’s neck while he waited on some grassy patch, a priest by his side, but as with my exquisite gown that did not fit a typical mating ceremony, he too was dressed in his royal garments. And not just any formal garment.

My heart skipped several beats as I beheld him in his royal gown in deep scarlet with a train that covered the entire floor behind him. Something that according to Liira, was worn by the king on the most important of occasions. Something I’d only ever seen him wear once. Memories of the moment flashed by, but I let them pass, just like I had learned not to think of any other memory that included Myrna.

I couldn’t help but marvel at the heavy crown atop his head. And the hand that had last night done scandalous things to me, held on to a golden sceptre. I would have blushed at the thought, but his deep gaze found mine. The playfulness in his golden gaze was long gone. It was no wonder that I could not picture the man who’d passionately made love to me just last night?

Rakon stood by his side, dressed in a similar, but more subtle attire and looking so uncomfortable as though he’d have preferred his armour to the

fancy dressing. I would have been amused at the sight too, if only my heart had not decided to beat right out of my chest at what this could all mean.

“Gol, what is going on?” I turned to the man I’d chosen to trust when I’d had no one else, but he was not where I expected him to be. His place was occupied by my father whose hand was stretched out to me. “Father?”

His warm smile greeted me. “Your mother did make a beautiful bride when I wedded her, but you Lily—”

“Wait, bride? I—I am here to—” I snapped my gaze towards my mate before my father could utter another word. Elian had been distracted. By my presence and I would have relished the appreciation in his eyes, but—

“Y-You wish to wed...me?” I mind linked, grateful to have that privacy.

“Does that surprise you?” Even with the distance, I felt the heaviness of his words. The pinch of pain at my disbelief. But to be honest, it did surprise me. I mean, there was no need for it if we were mated and marked, right? Besides, I’d only craved it because of the gown that beautifully covered my frame— How long had he?

His fierce gaze definitely spoke of it being longer than the moment the thought had occurred to me. That and the appearance of a very ancient figure by his side.

The bond keeper! For the first time I let Myrna’s words echo in my mind. Words about the ancient man and the reason for his presence.

“For a second and final time one declares their undying love and unwavering devotion to their wedded mate for all eternity.”

Was that it? I searched my mate’s gaze.

“I love you Shyla and if you’ll have me, eternity is all I wish for.”

If... On any other day I would have scoffed at that. Because this was by no means a question of ‘if’. And as I placed my hand in my father’s, while I let him lead me down the long aisle, towards my mate, while I beheld Elian’s sigh of relief, his breathtaking smile, while my own heart fluttered and my wolf howled, I also knew that it was not a question of simply being mated. I loved him... and eternity was all I wished for too.

