

The Selection: Bride Of The Dark Dragon Chapter 116 - Tips

MIRA

The light is strong and it takes some time for my eyes to adjust to it. But when I do, I see three tall figures. One female and two males, men in armour and a woman in an elegantly draped white dress with golden cape. She is the kind of a woman who attracts the attention of anyone who sees her, blue eyes shining like two diamonds, red lips although there's hardly any make-up on her, long black hair with many golden decorations in it – hairpins and thin chains create an intricate pattern – yet it all looks very tasteful. Only one thing bothers me – she does not look happy. And it also seems like she is the one in charge here.

“How dare you!” she starts speaking and I feel like thunder strikes, “Insolent!”

I and my friends look at each other awkwardly while Rien steps forward, covering me with his body and secretly squeezing my chest.

“Leave!” the woman says, “You have failed the test!”

“And yet here you are!” Derrien chuckles and I almost hit him with my elbow as I get in front of him again, looking at him angrily. Not the time to piss off the dragons! And I am pretty sure that the people in front of us are dragons as well. Just to make sure, I change to my magical vision and see that fire surrounds them, although each is in a different shade. But it mostly forms as wings behind them, the same as darkness forms wings around Rien's back when I look at him. Yep, definitely dragons.

“We are looking for Agnegard!” I step forward and feel like Rien is following me. His desire to protect me is cute although I start to get worried that this may cause troubles at the moment.

The woman looks me up and down with a supercilious gaze like I am just a speck of dust under her feet.

“Too bad you couldn't pass the test!” she repeats herself.

“We found the gate, we know your location now,” Rien smirks and I want to hit him again, but this time he catches my elbow in time.

“You are one of us,” the woman says slowly after observing him for a while, “You did this!”

“It was annoying,” Rien says and I just close my eyes exhaling heavily. Doesn’t he know how to be nice to your host? Now they will never...

“Follow me,” the woman says and turns on her heels. My jaw is literally on the floor at the sudden change and Rien grabs my hand, pulling me after him. Dereck, Isidore, and Rick hurry along.

We go through “the gates” and enter... yet another tunnel. Disappointing, to say the least! And to think that dragons would actually live underground instead of high in the skies!

But I bite my tongue when we walk out of the cave. What I see before my eyes surpasses every expectation I had. It’s a whole city before my eyes with tall milky white towers mounted straight into the rock. I guess they do live in the skies! Of sorts. Some of the towers don’t even seem to have staircases leading to them! Dragons don’t need them, after all, they can fly! I notice that each tower has something resembling balconies, but bigger than what we have back at home. They might use those for landing in their dragon forms.

The other amazing thing is how many dragons are there in the skies! Hundreds at least! Of different shapes, colours and sizes! At the bottom of the green valley, there are smaller houses made of the same white material. As they lead us, I stop just for a second to have a better look at what is it made of.

“Gla.ss?” I can’t believe my own eyes! It looks like everything is made out of milky matte glass!

“Flameglass,” the woman with black hair smirks, “Forged by dragon masters with dragon fire. There is no sturdier material in the world! Your steel would break if it comes in contact with it!”

“Impressive,” I smile at her and her face softens just for a second, but next she pulls on her mask of indifference and continues her path. The two men follow us as well and I have no doubt now that they are her guards.

People are coming out of their houses to have a look at us. I guess they don’t have too many guests here. The other thing that they don’t seem to have here is children! I don’t see even one however much I look around.

After a while, the woman stops, and suddenly more men dressed like the two that brought us here surround us.

“You will stay here”, the woman says coldly and then turns to Rien, “And you will follow me!”

“No,” he snorts.

“What did you just say?” fire glows in her eyes, “How dare you disobey me?!”

“I am not leaving Mira alone here!” he crosses his hands on his chest.

“She is not going to be alone, there are four of them if you haven’t noticed,” the dragoness retorts, “They are staying here as... our guests. No one will harm them.”

“And I should believe you because?” he raises his brow.

“Because a dragon would never lie to another dragon,” the woman smirks, “Even though you are just a half-breed!”

He flinches at her words but only I notice that. I hurry to step forward to him.

“Rien, it’s fine!” I smile and put my hand on his, rubbing it gently, “Go and talk to them. This is what we came here for. And I will wait for you here. All I want at the moment is rest anyway.”

He pulls me into a quick embrace and kisses the top of my head, “I’ll come back for you soon. For all of you.”

He nods to Dereck and others and then to the dragons. The woman starts walking without saying her goodbyes to us and he follows her, throwing one last glance at me.

I smile and wave at him, even though I am unsettled on the inside. As soon as they disappear from sight, another dragon steps forward – good-looking as all of them, wearing golden armour and white cape.

“We will need you to give us everything you have with you,” he says, “Bags, things, artifacts, clothes.”

“Excuse me!” Isidore chimes in.

“You will change into what we give you,” the man clears his throat, looking at her with apologetic gaze, “These are the rules here.”

Dereck and Rick look at me questioningly and I sigh, “Fine! Let’s do it.”

They lead us to a not so big house with two bedrooms. The guys go and change into one room and Isidore and I into another. Both rooms have connected bathrooms and Isidore runs in to take a bath first. I don’t mind. All I want now is to see Rien again faster.

“He’ll be fine,” Isidore walks out wrapped in a towel, smiling, “He can deal with anything. For you.”

“I hope you are right,” I smile sadly.

I clean myself after so many days and change into what the dragons prepared for us. Which are simple white dresses. Surprisingly they are into white a lot! I thought dragons would be fans of red. But no.

All our things are taken away. Everything except for my engagement bracelet. The blonde guard, whose name is Eric, looks at it for a while and then just leaves it be.

After a few hours, Rien is still not back. We meet with the guys in the small reception room of our little house and just sit there without saying a word. Everyone is in their own thoughts.

But soon the door opens and the guards bring in food, the delicious smell hits our nostrils.

I look at Eric with a raised brow and he smiles, “You are our guests. We would never harm you.”

“It feels more like we are your prisoners,” Isidore chuckles, “And what do you do with your prisoners?”

“We don’t keep them in houses above the ground, that’s for sure,” the man winks at her. I think he likes her. I throw a quick glance at Dereck and he doesn’t look too happy about that.

“Thank you,” I smile weakly, “Any news about Derrien? When will he come to us?”

“Not tonight, I am afraid,” the dragon says, “I am sorry for the inconvenience. But you can rest assured that he is treated well here. He is talking to our king.”

“I see,” I sigh.

As soon as the guard left, my friends are eyeing the food. I take a piece of bread and swallow some. The hunger suddenly is the least of my worries but I wanted to check the food first. Dereck, Rick, and Isidore start eating and sounds of enjoyment fill the room. I eat some more as well but all my thoughts are elsewhere.

Rien is talking to the king. Is it good or bad? A strange thought occurs to me – and what if his father is still alive? What if his father is the kind himself? But that probably would be too good to be true.

I just hope it goes well for him... At least he is reunited with his kind. Even if that girl has called him a half-breed... He is still treated differently to us. They accept him as one of them, right?

It's late at night and all my friends are already fast asleep in comfortable beds. But I keep sitting on the windowsill of our house, watching dragons fly in the sky. The whole day one group leaves and another appears... Sometimes they create flames and it reminds me of fireworks back at home.

I hear footsteps. They are closer and closer to our house and I jump to my feet in hopes that it's Rien.

However, when the door opens the same dragoness with black hair appears before me with a furious face. She holds Aaron Brookland's journal in her hands and throws it at me.

“How the chaos did you get that?!”

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I don't even at once realize what exactly is she talking about. I am just disappointed that it's not Rien. But when I notice Aaron Brookland's journal it suddenly hits me.

“And what is wrong with it?” I raise my brow, picking the poor journal up.

“I asked you a question?! Where the chaos did you get this...thing?!” the dragoness is shaking with anger.

“Are you Agnes?” I ask firmly and she freezes, a surprised expression on her perfect face that doesn’t look older than twenty-five. But if she is who I think she is that. She is much, much older than that.

She doesn’t respond to me and I calmly walk to the sofa and sit on it.

“I take that as a yes”, I smile, “I found it in Rien’s library back at the Gardian Empire. He was buying a lot of books about dragons, anything he could find. This was one of his finds but he couldn’t read it since it’s the ancient Akyrian language. But I could.”

“You are an Akyrian yourself, right?” Agnes looks down on me from the standing position and I gesture for her to sit next to me.

“That’s right,” I admit, “I am.”

“How did you know my name?” she asks, “He never mentions it in the journal.”

“Of course he mentions it,” I chuckle, “In fact, he mentions it a lot.”

She looks at me questioningly and I sigh, opening the journal. She sits next to me at once, still holding her head high, but obviously curious.

“Look here,” I say, Every page, third row third letter, “A, g, n, e, s. And then again, and again and again. He has hidden your name in those pages.”

“It can’t be!” she exclaims, grabbing the journal out of my page. With trembling fingers, she checks every single page finding out exactly what I have found already. Since Aaron entered Agnegard he encrypted her name on every page.

“H-how?” she looks at me, startled, “How did you notice? That’s impossible!”

“Well,” I chuckle, “To be honest I had a clue. This is actually a child game in my mother’s family. You hide a secret in the third row third letter of every page. Sometimes it’s the fifth though. And sometimes third and then the fifth. But mostly the third.”

“What the chaos are you talking about?” she looks at me suspiciously.

“My mother is a Brookland,” I admit after hesitating, “I knew where to look.”

“You are a Brookland!” Agnes stands up and starts pacing around the room, “His descendant! He... he... he had children!”

“Not really,” I shrug my shoulders, “We come from his brother’s line. Aaron Brookland... He died in a war. He was a famous traveller and he wrote a book that even now is studied at magical academies. But when war broke out he was mobilized... And... Well, he wasn’t a warrior really.”

A single tear rolls down her cheek and she turns away from me, not wishing for me to witness her moment of weakness.

“He was your soulmate, right?” I ask after a while, “How did... Why did you separate from each other?”

“Agnegard has closed already. We stopped visiting the world of humans. He spent here a few years but then... he wanted to check on his family. Precisely his little brother that you mentioned. He was much younger and...”

“He became a famous mage, opened a few significant laws of magic. Aaron was like a father to him. Or at least that’s what they write in history books,” I inform her.

“Yes, that’s what he was telling me,” she snorts, “Right before he abandoned me!”

I am starting to regret I told her who I am. She seems unconvinced in her hatred of humans and especially Brooklands.

“Thanks for telling me the truth,” she says after another prolonged pause, “I always wanted to know what happened to him.”

“He was just defending his brother and his motherland,” I try to touch her hand but she shrugs away.

“He could have brought his brother here! I would have accepted him as my own!” she says spitefully.

“Maybe he just didn’t have the opportunity after he came back,” I suggest, “Also, you could have gone with him. Why didn’t you?”

She looks at me as if I said the craziest thing in the world.

“Dragons are not allowed to leave Agnegard anymore!”

“Even for their soulmates?” I raise my brow, “I thought you could do anything for them.”

“Unless we are under our King’s order!” Agnes falls back to the sofa, closing her face with her hands, “You cannot disobey the Dragon King. Physically. It’s impossible. When he left, I couldn’t follow him! He promised to come back and I waited... But it was horrible. And one day I finally realized that he isn’t coming back, the pain in my heart became unbearable.”

“How did you survive? Aaron writes that dragons either go crazy or die if they lose their soulmate.”

“That’s true,” she sighs, “I’ve been sick for a long time. On the verge of dying. But I was lucky and I survived in the end. Not everyone does. My own brother died after he lost his mate. And I am one of the very few who managed to continue living. Although, one can hardly call it life now... It’s... existence.”

“I am sorry about that, Agnes...”, I don’t even attempt to touch her anymore, she is clearly not a fan of tactile contact.

“Thank you for the information,” she stands up and regains her control, fixing creases on her elegant dress. She is already at the door when I catch up with her.

“Agnes! Wait!” I stop her, “Tell me, please, where is Rien? When will he be back?”

“I don’t know,” she says and then looks me in the eyes, “He has an audience with the Dragon King. No one is allowed to interrupt them. For you, everything depends on how it goes.”

Agnes leaves without saying anything else and I shrug a bit. I hate not to know what is really going on. But at the same time, I also trust Rien. If anyone can persuade the Dragon King, it would be him.

I go back to the windowsill. There is the best view from this point. An additional advantage – you can see the road that leads to the King's castle. It is also made of milky Flameglass and looks beautiful from afar with its slim tall towers that almost reach the skies...

I don't notice how I fall asleep. But as soon as I feel his presence I open my eyes. I am disappointed to see that I am still alone in the dark room. But then I see the familiar sparks from afar. Sparks of dark magic!

"Rien!" I run out of the house and pass the guards who don't even try to stop me, throwing myself into my fiancé's arms.

"Mira!" he kisses my hair, my forehead, my nose, my lips, and whenever else he gets in the darkness of the night. It feels like we haven't seen each other for years when in fact it's been just a few hours.

"Oh, gods, Rien!" I wrap my hands around his neck, pressing tighter into him, "What happened there! It's been so long! I've been dying without you here!"

"I have some news," he says with some kind of tiredness in his voice and the sound concerns me.

"Tell me everything," I urge him.

"Let's go," he chuckles, pulling me in the direction opposite from our little house and I look back at our dragon guards.

"Is it all right to just leave like this?" I ask.

"Yes, we aren't prisoners here anymore," Derrien explains, leading me somewhere at a very fast pace. I follow him without saying another word, it seems like this is important to him.

He leads me to a small hill, one side of it observes Agnegard and another looks at a huge mountain river. There is a silver statue of some man with wings, holding a sword up and pointing it to the sky.

Derrien pulls me into another warm embrace and inhales my scent. I know that this always helps him to calm down and just wait until he is ready to speak.

We stand like this for a while and when he seems much calmer, I ask, “Did you find out anything about your father?”

“Yes,” he says somehow sadly and my heart hurts for him.

“What is it, Rien? Just tell me...”

“He is dead, Mira...”

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I hug him and we just stand like that for a while... His pain is my pain and I want to share it. All of it..

“I am so sorry, Rien!” I say, trying to hold back tears, “I so hoped that you will be able to see him! That you would find some real family here...”

“You are all the family I really need, Mira,” he breathes into my hair, “But having said that – I did find some relatives in Agnegard!”

“Really?” I look up at him, suddenly excited again.

“My grandfather is still alive,” he smiles, “And also my aunt.”

“This is amazing!” I exclaim. And he kisses my nose, looking at me as if I am a child who just received candy.

“Wait until you know who they are!” he chuckles and my excitement dies down.

“And now you are simply scaring me! Who are they?” I raise my brow.

“The Dragon King and his daughter,” he says and I gasp.

“Oh, my! You are from royal families on both ends!”, I suddenly feel uncomfortable, “Way to give your fiancée an inferiority complex! Am I really worthy of such honour and...”

He covers my lips in his in a long and possessive kiss. And when he breaks it he smirks, "Sometimes you talk too much, little mage! There is no way you are ever getting out of this engagement, so don't even think of things like this! You are mine forever. Don't even start this who is worthy of who nonsense. You are my soulmate and there will be no other."

"Good," I bury my head in his chest, "And now tell me everything!"

He turns me around and points to the silver statue, "Mira, let me introduce you to my father, Demir the Daring."

"Daring?" I raise my brow, "So, that trait of yours runs in the family then?"

"Naughty little mage," he chuckles, pulling me tighter into his arms, "According to my grandfather I have nothing on this guy. He was simply reckless. A great warrior and a very strong dragon. But his personality failed him."

"How did he die?" I ask.

"I don't know yet," Rien sighs, "The king promised that he will tell me when we see each other next. He also wants to see you. I told him that you are my soulmate."

"And how did he react to that?" I bite my lip really afraid to hear the answer.

"He was happy to know that I found some happiness out there," he chuckles, "It just so happens that since dragons don't leave Agnegard anymore they rarely meet their soulmates or create new families. You probably noticed that they almost don't have children here."

"Can't they mingle with humans and gerdians a bit?" I turn to him and brush my palm over his cheek, "The last time they did they created you. And our world so needs more of you!"

"I am afraid I am one of kind, little mage," he smirks but then sighs, "Also, I am just a half-breed for them. Not a pure dragon..."

"What do they know!" I roll my eyes, "They have been sitting here and doing nothing for centuries!"

"They say that they've been preserving their kind..."

“Well, they did. But there is a limit to everything. I am not sure that life without a future, life without love is worth living. Some of them probably have mates, but what about the others? Imagine if you and I never met and we had to live for centuries! It would be one incredibly boring life! I wouldn’t want it...”

“Neither would I,” he agrees with me.

We come back to our little house together and the guards are still at the entrance, bowing with respect as soon as we arrive. So, they probably know already who Rien is.

“The King will prepare new chambers for us in his palace tomorrow,” my dragon says when I push him to the sofa. There are only two bedrooms here and one is occupied with the boys while Isidore sleeps in the other one. And I don’t want to bother either of them. So Derrien lies on the sofa first and I snuggle into his arms.

“Are you happy that you are here?” I ask him before we drift off to sleep.

“I am happy that I am here with you,” he replies...

In the morning two girls bring us food, they both look startled when they realize that their newfound prince is sleeping on a sofa instead of a normal bed and look either at him or me with curiosity. Yep, it’s obvious that they don’t have too many new people in here. And when Rick and Dereck walk out of their room, both in new white shirts in the latest dragon fashion (or who knows, maybe they were stuck with that as well), the girls start giggling and whispering, eyeing them both.

“Ladies!” Rick shines his pearly whites, “What a beautiful morning that is! Especially now that you have lightened up our day by your presence.”

Ugh. I can’t believe anyone buys that! But the two dragonesses seem very pleased with sudden attention.

“Thank you!” Rien measures them with his gaze that says “it’s time for you to leave!” and they disappear within seconds.

“So, what is the news?” Dereck sits at our little table and this is when Isidore walks out of her room, wearing the simple white dress we’ve been given yesterday.

“Morning!” she says awkwardly while playing with her long braid. And I notice how Dereck’s mouth is still opened. I really want to c***k a joke but Rien pinches me under the table and I bite my tongue.

“Seriously, Der,” Rick snorts, “If you are not going to do anything about it then I might as well have to!”

A kick of the elbow and Rick is coughing vigorously and laughing at the same time. Dereck is all red and Isidore has no idea what is this all about.

During breakfast we share all the news with our team and after we are off to explore Agnegard. Although I am not sure who is really the explorer here. As wherever we go, people are looking at us like we are something extremely rare and peculiar.

“They really don’t have too many guests here,” Rick chuckles, wincing at new girls at the same time.

“You do realize that they are all older than your grandparents, right?” Isidore snorts.

“As long as they don’t look like them...” he waves to yet another dragoness and the rest of us rolls our eyes simultaneously.

The more we walk down the streets the more we feel the atmosphere of Agnegard. It seems like the people who live here have everything. There is definitely no poverty among the dragons, they are all dressed well, everybody wears expensive jewellery, no one looks hungry or homeless. The city is not just clean, it’s sparkling. Such an idyllic world they have here!

In some sense, I start to understand why they want to live separately from the gerdians, akyrians, and the rest of the world. There is no way we could live in such peace and prosperity for a long time...

And then we arrived at the palace. It was so different from the two palaces I’ve seen before. Milky white glassy walls were decorated with portraits in gold and precious gems. Everything around us was an expensive work of art. For a moment it even seemed to me that every jewel in the world ended up here.

“Dragons love their jewels. Especially rare ones,” Rien explains, pulling me closer, “That’s why my heart chose you.”

“Awww,” Isidore sighs, “You two are two sweet for your own good!”

Two doors at the top of a white staircase open and I have a déjà vu as I see Agnes with two guards standing on top of it.

“The rest of you will enjoy a little lunch in the palace garden as Derrien and Mira will spend time with me and my father,” the dragoness says emotionlessly and I gulp.

I have never even bothered to ask Rien who his aunt is. And now I have a very bad feeling.

“Come nephew,” she says without even smiling and walks away as I look at my fiancé questioningly.

“Don’t tell me...”

“Oh, yes,” he chuckles, “Agnes is the daughter of the king and my aunt. She is also the next heiress of the dragon throne and the one who we should persuade to help us.”

Chaos!

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MIRA

“You mean to tell me that Agnes, the dragoness who hates all humans and especially my family is your aunt and one of the main decision-makers on our case?” I whisper and roll my eyes at the same time as we follow the dragon princess to gods know where.

This doesn’t sound good.

“Why would she hate your family?” Derrien looks at me questioningly.

“Oh, I have news too,” I chuckle, “She was Aaron Brookland’s soulmate. We had a conversation earlier today.”

“That’s a really small world!” my fiancé chuckles, taking my hand, “Everything is going to be all right... Don’t worry!”

“I hope so...”, I sigh, trusting myself to him once again.

We enter a huge room with very high ceilings and a huge balcony on the left. The balcony is where Agnes is heading. White long curtains are being blown by the wind at a peaceful pace and behind them, I notice a figure of a man. Tall and well-built, long black hair – this is not how one would imagine a grandfather.

He turns when he hears our steps and a warm smile spreads over his face.

“Derrien!” he spreads his arms and gives his grandson a long and tight hug. And as soon as he is done, his attention is on me, “And this must be Miradora! What a beauty!”

“Thank you, Your Majesty,” I curtsy but as soon as I am up, I end up in the same warm embrace.

“Mira, this is my grandfather, King Orion,” Rien shines, introducing us.

“Come here, girl! We are practically family now!” the king says and I chuckle at that.

“Thank you,” I say, blushing and notice how Agnes rolls her eyes.

“They are not married yet,” she says and Rien quickly moves towards me, as if he is guarding me against something.

“This has been decided already,” he says to her, “She is mine! She is my soulmate!”

“And her ancestor was my soulmate, nephew. It doesn’t mean as much to them as it does to us. They feel it differently,” she says, taking a seat and leaning on it with her back, her arms crossed on her chest.

“You knew one human, aunt”, Rien snorts, “That’s not enough to judge all of them.”

“Your father knew more and look where it got him,” she shrugs.

“My mother was a gerdian,” Rien says calmly, “We are very different. But, please, by all means, tell me what happened to my father. I want to know this as well...”

“Sit down, son,” the King gestures at the empty seats. I want to take one, but Derrien pulls me by my hand and quickly positions me on his lap. That’s a bit embarrassing in the presence of the royal family of dragons themselves but I decide against making a scene at this point in time. Especially considering they all react as if it’s completely normal. Besides, I want to listen to the story too.

“Your father was a great man,” King Orion starts speaking after looking at the skies for a while, “Ever since he was little, he was very promising. So many talents in one boy... He and Agnes were best of friends... We were a very happy family once...”

His voice is trembling and it feels strange, considering what a massive impression he produces when you see his formidable profile.

“When my wife died... and she was my soulmate... I thought I was going to die as well. Demir took the ruling into his hands and Agnes helped me to survive this and come to my senses. And not long after this, she met her mate, Aaron. You already know how that ended. Demir was doing for his sister what she did for me. He saw the agony, the pain, the consequences... Even if dragons survive after losing their mate, they are never the same... Agnes survived too. We are two of the very few who outlived their mates by a lot. Most die within a year or so. After Demir saw what suffering that is, he swore to never seek his mate. He never wished to find her... But as they say – if you want to make the gods laugh, tell them your plans! He got curious... he wanted to know what is there in the world except for Agnegard. And he flew away... And on his journey, he found a girl, beautiful as a nymph... Blue eyes like sapphires, black as night long hair... She was running away from her brother. Her brother... he was a cruel man. Unhealthy. Obsessed with his sister. Not in a good way. She tried to fight him off but she was weaker than him. Demir saved the maiden but at the last moment, she asked not to kill her brother... She was a kind soul... Demir looked at her and knew that she was his soulmate. And because of her, he let her brother go. And this was the biggest mistake of his life!”

The king sighs heavily and takes a sip of his wine and I feel how Rien clenches his fists until his knuckles are white. Carefully I place my hand on his and give him a light squeeze, bringing him back to reality.

“A dragon cannot leave his soulmate once he or she has found that person,” Orion continues, “And your father couldn’t leave your mother! He kept going to see her and they were planning to escape together. But her brother...that bastard Ghardin! He... he...”

It’s obvious that it is extremely hard for the king to speak about this.

“He captured Demir!” Agnes interjects, standing up from her seat, “He planned it well. It’s next to impossible to capture a dragon but he created a special cell for him. The one which will restrain his powers and make him weak while he is there.”

Rien and I look at each other. I know what he is thinking. This must be the exact same cell that he was kept in during his short imprisonment. It explains so well how they had something like this ready in such a short time!

“Only blood magic can bind magical powers”, I say, “How did they...”

“Get his blood?” Agnes chuckles darkly, “You guess!”

I don’t say a word. By now it’s obvious that it was Rien’s mother who got his blood for Ghardin. But why?

“Yes,” the princess nods, “I see that you are both clever enough to figure out that it was her! She betrayed him! And the worst thing, to capture him, Ghardin threatened him with her life. With a knife at her throat, he made the mighty dragon, the famous warrior, our kind’s best hope for the bright future...to enter the cell willingly! And that cell is where he died! He died in tortures because Ghardin was experimenting on him, studying dragons! He tore his limbs, drained his blood, he picked him apart... It was a horrible death!”

A tear rolls down my cheek and I hold Derrien’s hand as strong as I only can. It seems that I shouldn’t be able to even imagine how he feels right now yet somehow I do! Empty... Like there is a huge black hole inside my heart and I fall down there. Alone, completely alone...

“Rien,” I brush his cheek and make him look at me. I want to tell him so much at that moment but I know that I don’t need you. Somehow, our inner thoughts are in complete synchronization. I feel what he feels and he knows what I want to say.

You are not alone, my love! We will get through this together. You are never going to be alone ever again!

We touch our foreheads and just sit like this for a while, my hands around his shoulders, his – on my waist.

“I went to try and save him with my best warriors,” Agnes continues, “But we only found his dead body. Your mother got married the next day. That’s soulmates for you!”

No one says anything anymore...

“Did you speak to her?” I ask in the middle of this heavy silence and the dragoness looks at me in shock.

“What would I speak to her about?” she sounds appalled, “If I saw her I would have broken her neck! And I swore to Demir to protect the w***e!”

“Don’t speak like this about her,” Rien cuts in, “And if you swore to protect her, then you failed miserably. It was a forced marriage and the husband treated her horribly. Besides, she was already pregnant...”

“And that’s the only thing I regret!” Agnes admits, “I wish I knew! I would have taken you home sooner, protected you...”

“But you were too busy hating all soulmates to find out the other side of the story,” I say, sighing.

“You are too much like him!” Agnes snorts, “Your ancestor!”

“I take that as a compliment!” I grin at her.

“Easy, ladies!” the King suddenly chuckles, “Derrien, my boy, I see why you are so fascinated! She is like a little dragon herself!”

“That she is,” Rien kisses my temple and I give his hand another squeeze.

“Enough of the past!” the King says, “What happened happened! Let’s not drown in sorrows! I want to celebrate finding my grandson! We will have a feast tonight! And all your friends are invited!”

“Grandfather,” Derrien carefully places me on another seat and stands up, “About what we talked about earlier...”

“Yes, my boy, I remember...” the king nods, and his expression changes from excited to a bit sad, “I’ve been thinking about it and I am afraid I came to a conclusion that dragons would not be leaving Agnegard to help you! Derrien, there are just hundreds of us left. We need to preserve our kind and to do that we need to stay here, hidden and secure. I am sorry, my boy, but my answer is no.”

The Selection: Bride Of The Dark Dragon Chapter 120 - Tips

MIRA

The disappointment is heavy in the room. Our perfect plan of how to save everyone has just been shattered into tiny little pieces. If dragons are not going to help us then everything is bad. With just a half of gerdian army, we have a 50% chance of winning the war with Dargen and the Emperor. And then there is Tristan who is not wasting his time and creating dark mages by the minute. And it makes me sick to think what he has to do for that!

“Derrien, Mira,” King Orion calls for us, “I want you to know that I feel for you both... If anything, you are always welcome to stay here with us. You are a part of the royal family, after all!”

He smiles at us and we are both trying to do the same. Although I know very well that Rien’s brain already storming other possible solutions. And so is mine.

“You can think about it more,” the king says, “There is no rush! And my doors will always be open for you. And for now, I want to celebrate your arrival! We will have a feast tonight and all your friends are invited!”

“Thank you, Your Majesty,” I reply as Rien seems too preoccupied with his thoughts, “It would be an honour for us all.”

“Also, you will stay in the palace with Rien. Your friends can keep living in the house we already provided for you.”

“Thank you, grandfather,” my gerdian gathers his thoughts and forces a smile, “If that’s all right, we will leave now...”

“Of course,” Orion chuckles, “You had a long week. Have good rest, my boy”.

I throw one last glance at Agnes before servants come to show us the way and notice that she doesn't look too happy about something. Maybe there is still light at the end of the tunnel?

We are brought to another spacious room, not far from the King's chambers.

"The royal family probably resides in this wing," I shrug my shoulders, but Derrien doesn't reply anything.

I look around. The space is huge with the same high ceilings and a similar balcony. There is a bed on one end, also milky white with a canopy hanging at both sides. Two little sofas in front of each other on the other end and a big desk with everything necessary on top of it. There are two doors not far from the bed and I guess that they must be the bathroom and possibly the wardrobe.

"Rien," I call for my fiancé and he turns on my call, his face looking so tired! I come closer to him and brush my palm over his cheek. "Rien, you do need some rest. Let's go, I'll make you a bath."

He is not saying anything, just does everything that I ask him to as I help him undress while the water is filling the huge marble tub. I make him sit inside and start to carefully wash all the dirt of the past few days off him, using the sponge and soaps provided by the dragon.

"Everything is going to be all right," I say the same phrase for the hundredth time, "We are going to get through this too."

I massage some nice smelling soap into his hair as he closes his eyes. I wonder how I am going to get him out of here if he falls asleep right in the bathroom... He is huge and there is no way...

I don't get to finish my thought as Rien quickly goes underwater and in a few good seconds gets out, washing away all the foam and getting out. I give him a towel quickly and he dries his body, throwing it away.

The next second he is next to me, lifting me up in his hands, walking back to the bed, and throwing me on it as if I weigh nothing.

“Rien!” I exclaim as he relieves me off my dress, his lips caressing his mark on my chest. A soft moan escapes me as I arch my back.

“Mira,” he returns to my lips, covering them with his, “In the long run, you are all that I need...”

“Silly gerdian,” I brush his hair with my fingers, “Nothing is over yet! We’ll find a way to deal with everything. And then we’ll live our long and happy life together! I just know it!”

“Of course!” he chuckles and kisses me again.

He takes me slowly, enjoying every moment of it. And then we both fall asleep in each other’s arms.

When servants wake us up, it is already time to get ready for the feast. We find two sets of clothes for us and I try to hold back a laugh really hard when I see that they prepared a white suit and armour for Derrien. Have they seen him?

He looks at the clothes for a while but then just sighs and puts them on. I am almost done with my dress, which is also white and very beautiful at the same time – with intricate silver embroidery on the edges. Coming close to Rien, I brush my hand over his jacket, changing its colour to black and giggling. Luckily, it’s a very simple illusion spell.

“That’s more like it!” I kiss him on the cheek. He pulls me closer and his hand lands on my bare back – I couldn’t button the dress on my own.

“Oh,” he smirks, “I feel like taking you again right this very moment!”

“But you can’t,” I smirk, “Otherwise we’ll be late! Everyone is waiting for us. And I bet our friends are worried after our disappearance. So, just help me and let’s go!”

“Get married they said,” he mutters, “It’ll be fun they said!”

“You haven’t married me yet?” I chuckle.

“And we need to fix that as soon as possible,” he places a kiss on my naked shoulder and helps me with my buttons.

When we enter the palace's dining hall, I have no words! Another stunning masterpiece of dragons. The hall could fit in thousands of people, yet there is only one long table in the middle, filled with around a hundred people. High ceilings are carved with stories from the past – mighty dragons, warriors, and beautiful maidens...

I notice Dereck, Rick and Isidore from afar and wave at them even before the herald announces our arrival to everyone. All eyes are on us as Rien leads me to the king and Agnes.

"Feeling better after some rest?" the king asks hopefully.

"Yes, Your Majesty," Rien replies.

"My boy, just call me grandfather!" the king chuckles but Derrien says nothing to that.

"Your Majesty, let me introduce to you our friends," I say as our trio comes closer to us, "This is lady Isidore Vierne, Dereck Ashterton, and Rickard Avery. All from prominent families in the Akyrian Kingdom, where I come from. And also the noblest, loyal, and honest of people that I know!"

"This should be true," the king says as Agnes rolls her eyes, "If you managed to pass all our tests."

"They did!" I smile.

"Please, enjoy your stay with us! And also enjoy this evening in your honour!"

Orion says and leaves us to speak to someone else. Agnes follows him.

We spend the night actively, loads of dragons are eager to meet either of us. No wonder, considering they have all the same people here for the last few hundreds of years or so.

As we sit at the table for the actual dinner, I realize for the first time during the day just how hungry I am.

However, before we can start, king Orion raises his glass and everyone gets quiet.

"I want to drink to my beloved grandson!" he smiles, "After so many years since Demir died... Agnes and I had no hope of seeing at least a glimpse of

him again. But now we found his own flesh and blood! And this has become the best present that I could have ever received! Now I can only hope that our dear Derrien and his lovely soulmate Mira will decide to join us and stay here in Agnegard! They are my family now and should be treated accordingly! Their friends are also honoured guests in my house! Here is to Derrien! Our new prince!”

They all raise their glasses to the skies now and I can't help but notice a wave of whispers.

“A soulmate!”

“She is his soulmate!”

“Have you heard? A soulmate!”

Everybody takes a sip of their drinks but suddenly Rien raises from his seat! I look at him questioningly but he just winks at me.

“Pardon me, grandfather! I hope you will let me say a few words as well!” he smiles.

“Of course, my boy!” the king chuckles, and Agnes who is sitting next to him suddenly looks tense.

“Thank you,” Rien nods and then addresses everyone, “You all have no idea what it means for me to find you all! A home and a family! Two things that I have been lacking the most during my life. I am amazed at the beauty of Agnegard and at how welcoming and generous our kind is, even though I am not a pure-blooded dragon... However, I am afraid I cannot stay here.”

Whispers fill the room and I look at my fiancé, hoping that he knows what he is doing!

“As I have already said, I have fallen in love with Agnegard. But I can't imagine living here! For me... real life is when you get to experience new things, meet new people... Real life has no limits. And I am sorry, but this is not what you have here. If I was born here, my life would be sad. I would have never found Mira and a very important piece of my life would be missing forever. I wish that Agnegard was opened and you could go into the real world and experience what I have experienced. I wish that you all could know the

love that you feel towards your soulmate. Because without one... it's not a life worth living!"