

The Unwanted Bride Of Atticus Fawn Book 3: Chapter 40 - Tips

~WILLOW~

One minute to midnight, I'm standing n***d in front of the spring. Dante is in front of me with his back facing me. He's staring at the bright moonlight. I haven't seen it this bright in a long time. It looked beautiful, especially now that I was looking at it with Dante right in front of me.

I slowly walk toward him, he knows I'm here when his shoulders tense. He told me that I was a distraction. I thought I made him uncomfortable, but apparently, I was good at distracting him instead.

When he turns around, he does exactly as he says. He looks into my eyes and avoids looking at the rest of my body.

I tried my best to do the same even though I wanted to drag my eyes down the rest of his body. I felt embarrassed by my own need to see more of him.

The sound of the alarm on Dante's watch tells me that it is now precisely midnight. His mother said to me that there were certain words that we would have to repeat to each other. I wait for Dante to begin.

He looks hesitant or nervous. Maybe he doesn't want to do it with me. I was told that this ceremony was important to have a happy marriage. Maybe Dante doesn't want to stay with me for the rest of his life. I begin to panic at the thought of not being married to him. I don't get to ponder more on that thought when he finally begins the ritual.

"I, Dante Fawn, choose Willow as my partner in this life and any other life I'm blessed with. She is the only woman I want to spend the rest of my life with."
He whispers.

I never knew that words could make me this weak yet alive at the same time. It made me feel things that I wasn't prepared to feel.

He only looks at my face while waiting for me to say my part. I had to repeat everything he'd just said.

"I, Willow Fawn, choose Dante as my partner in this life and any other life I'm blessed with. He is the only man I want to spend the rest of my life with."

There.

It was done. And it felt amazing. I felt complete in so many ways.

“The ritual is complete,” Dante whispers. “I can turn around and wait for you to come out of the water.”

He was determined to ensure that he didn’t see me n***d tonight. I had other plans, however.

Before he can turn around, I gently place my hand on his chest to stop him.

He looks down at my hand, and I can see the confusion and panic in his eyes. “What are you doing, Willow?”

“You don’t have to do that for me, Dante,” I tell him softly. “I know you think that I might be uncomfortable if you see me without any clothes on, but I promise you that I wouldn’t.”

He takes a step back from me, “Willow—”

“I’m not demanding that you look at me, Dante.” I point out. “I’m just saying I would not hate it if you did.”

He looks genuinely surprised to hear me say that. “You would not hate it?” he asks. “Are you sure of that, Willow? I don’t think you understand what you’re saying to me.”

“Why do you always speak to me like a child?” I ask him. “I know what it means when a man looks at a n***d woman. We’re married. It should not be this hard.”

“Willow, I—”

“You don’t need to give any excuses, Dante.” I stop him. “Either you want to see me, or you don’t. It’s your choice.”

He closes his eyes and swallows hard. “It’s not that I don’t want to. It’s hard for me. I keep feeling guilty. Whenever I look at you differently, I feel like I’m betraying your sister. I can’t explain it, Willow. I don’t think this is a good idea.”

"I love my sister, Dante," I say, and he opens his eyes to fix me with a piercing gaze. "Losing her was also hard for me. However, don't you think that it's painful for me when you keep mentioning how much you love her?"

He frowns, "why would that be painful for you, Willow?" he asks. "We were never in love with each other. This marriage only took place because that's what Anya wanted. You knew since the beginning how much I loved her."

"Of course, I know how much you love her, Dante!" I snap. "How can I not know when you take any excuse to remind everyone of it? I'm not a robot. I have feelings. I have to listen to everyone make fun of me. Everyone says that you don't love me. They blame me for my sister's death. They claim that I stole my sister's mate. The rumors have only intensified recently. But you don't seem to care about any of that. All you care about is my sister and disappointing her. I'm happy that she had someone to love her so deeply, but I wish that someone wasn't you!"

Dante looks entirely shocked by my outburst. Even I am surprised by my outburst. Where did all of this even come from? Not once did I ever think I would admit any of this to Dante but hearing him tell me how much he loved Anya seemed to fuel the feelings inside of me.

"I never knew you felt this way." He says, looking at me. "I've never known Willow. I've always thought you were only staying married to me because of Anya. I thought our feelings were mutual. I don't—"

"You don't have to feel sorry for me." I snap. "I just want you to be careful with what you say around me. You have no idea how much it hurts. It hurts me to the point that I think I might be in love with you!"

Oh no.

I didn't just say that!