

## The King's Tainted Mate Chapter 19 - Tips

We were struggling. My wolf and I. To stay calm and to keep from committing untold atrocities. Each time a smile crossed our mate's lips, each time she got that far away look in her beautiful eyes, or when she glared at nothing in particular, the rage brewing deep within threatened to spill out.

She was mindlinking him. The savage I wished to walk through hell's gates instead of the gates to Xatis. I had never hated that ability like I did now, or considered it something intimate. Now that it was happening between some lowlife and my mate, I couldn't help imagining it being some little intimate world where the two were cocooned, away from the world. Away from me.

My chest rumbled at the thought, and the sound of the most beautiful chuckle from her lips didn't help matters either. I wished to shut it off. I had not figured out how it was possible for them to mindlink yet, but I honestly did not care for the how, only that I put a stop to it. I had considered everything from locking her up in some secluded tower only accessible to no one else but me to spilling the savage's guts out. If only they all didn't end with my mate loathing me.

She got that far away look again and this time my heart was pierced with longing. Was it something he'd said? Not knowing was killing me. Not being able to mindlink her, having the two of them keep sharing that kind of intimacy while I watched snapped something in me. I was meant to win her heart, but I couldn't endure this. Couldn't endure her choice anymore.

"Why him?" I growled, startling her. I knew the reason, but for the love of God, I couldn't help thinking she was not mine enough with him around. Without my mark, she was free for the taking, but then I couldn't force her to take it either.

"I do not understand." Her brows furrowed.

"Why this Gol?" I spat. Was 'Gol' even his real name? "You would be safe in the palace. I would ensure it. You would have no need of him. So why would you insist on having him around when he is but a stranger to you? A savage if I might add." I did not know what answer I sought. Or perhaps

"He maybe a savage and a stranger, but he's lavished on me the most kindness and as to why..." She sighed as if it was something that had eluded her too. "Even I do not know why, your majesty. I have not had an opportunity to sit with fate and inquire of it as to why all the things that have befallen me

have done so in the manner that they have. I have merely accepted each and every one of them, Gol included.” She was calm, but every one of her words punched my insides. They screamed of the pain she’d been made to suffer... by me.

Faced with the painful truth, I was at a loss for words and I could only stare at her, regret washing over me anew. She turned away from me after her last words and I found myself being thankful. Because then I was spared of facing the hurt that was painted on her face even though I was not spared of her feelings of sadness.

“Uh, Elian? You might wish to come out here.”

“What is it?” Rakon’s tone had me tensing instantly.

“We have guests. And not the good kind.” The carriage came to an abrupt stop, throwing us both forward.

I regained my stance almost immediately. “How many?” My eyes stayed on my mate as I waited for his response.

“It would be nothing to be concerned about if it was just you and me, but we have precious cargo.” My exact sentiments too, which meant I couldn’t be reckless either.

“We mean you no harm as long as you hand over the maiden.”

“What the hell? Hand over the maiden? How do they know of—”

“You better get out here!” Growls signalling the launch of an attack made me lunge for my mate. This was no simple robbery as expected of in Dovah. We’d been ambushed for something more precious than gold.

“Whatever happens, stay here.” I commanded.

“B-But—”

“Stay Shyla!” I growled. With how quickly the atmosphere outside had turned chaotic, there was no time for anything else. Not even the kiss I so desperately wished to place on her lips to make for my promise to keep her safe. “I will not let them take you.” With that I exited the carriage and bolted its

doors. Not that it mattered much, but one more obstruction to getting to her would serve to buy me time if it came down to it.

“Welcome to the party.” I spotted Rakon as he took down two brown beasts. Countless bodies lay at his feet too, but that only seemed like a dent in the enemy’s numbers.

“There are too many!” I observed as I shifted, easily catching the wolf that had lunged for me by its throat.

“Someone is intent on being successful.”

“They will have to go through me first!” I sneered.

“By the looks of it, that’s what they have in mind.” Something heavy barrelled into me and knocked me off my feet. I had barely landed before shadows came flying out of nowhere and landed on me with painful blows. It took me too long to realize that the shadows were actual wolves. Their element of surprise served them well, but it only lasted for as long as it took me to regain my position. Once I did, I was but a beast driven by one thing only. Keeping her from being taken by taking down anyone who would. The taste of the blood of my enemies spoke of impending victory.

I was ripping through the unwelcome guests, taking down countless victims when I heard the wood to the carriage snap, freezing my blood instantly. Someone got to her.

Fear coursed through every tiny length of my veins at the thought. I needed to get to her but as many as those wretched wolves as I brought down, more appeared. I had to hand it to the one attacking us. Whoever they were, they knew how to use their resources. Keeping me occupied was the only way to get to her. They were like a pack of wild dogs. Replacing those falling so quickly, ensuring their attacking numbers remained constant.

“Rakon?”

“I didn’t know Dovah was this populated.” My best friend’s answer meant he was just as occupied too. And if he was, it meant every one of my men were too and she was alone. Gol... I couldn’t mindlink him, but I hoped he wasn’t as occupied and would be able to aid her. I hoped the bolt would hold a little longer.

“Damn it!” I was knocked down again, but refused to stay down. I couldn’t stay down. Biting and tearing I managed to get back up on my paws, but I was still too far away from being of any help to my mate.

The wood snapped again, its sound announcing that it had been breached. There were no screams however, only painful howls and wolves whimpering. Were those hers? I charged in the carriage’s direction, but my path only kept thickening with more wolves, effectively blocking me from getting to her.

But then I got help. Unexpected help! Moving amongst the enemy pack like a ghost in the shadows taking them down one by one. She was insane and she was beautiful and she drove me out of my damn mind! Shyla...

She turned out to be the thing we needed to tip the scales. What I needed. It took me a moment to realize her intent too. She was coming for me. Every wolf she took down paved a way to me. To my heart that was bursting with pride.

I finally spotted Gol too. Right by her side. The duo looked like the deadliest pair as they cut through the crowd of wolves. But it was her, her wolf and the rage in her eyes that took my breath away. She was glorious. Perfect. So much more than I’d imagined and as she drew closer, I could only do the same. Canines and claws ripping through throats, flesh, until nothing stood between us. Until it was just the two of us in a world I had thought impossible before the attack.

She shifted first and I followed her action just in time for the hottest embrace yet. Delicious sparks erupted as our bodies made contact threatening the little control I possessed to slip.

“You came for me.” She froze at my words and a search in her eyes that were still shining her wolf’s eye colour revealed panic. As though I’d just reminded her of something she shouldn’t have done. “It’s okay.” I sought to comfort as I reached up to her face, but she pulled back and because I couldn’t let her run, couldn’t stomach letting go of this beautiful moment, I did the unthinkable. I crashed my lips on hers, the contact crashing my whole world in return. In the most beautiful way. I needed to wait. Until she accepted me. I knew that, but it was the only way I could get her to stay. Well, not exactly the only one, but the one I preferred. And as I dived in, as she melted into my hands and gave in to me, all was right in my world. Until it wasn’t, until she fought me.

“Shyla?”

“Let me go!” Her cold tone caught me off guard, making me do as she asked hastily. I expected more, curses maybe, but she all but stumbled away from me, making me frown. And before I could put anything together, her steps faltered and she began falling. I caught her, but she was deathly pale, turning my whole world upside down. I couldn’t lose her...

“I- I’m tired.” Her eyes fluttered shut without warning. Not even my shouting could get them to open again.

Then it hit me. She’d shifted! What was that Liira said about her shifting?